

News and Notes

A Monthly Paper printed for the private use of the
Members of the Missionaries to Muslims League.

Series XX

March, 1932.

1st March = 22nd Shawwāl (10th mo.), 1350, A.H.

The All-Muslim Conference at Jerusalem.

SCENES of disorder marred the proceedings of the All-Muslim Conference held in Jerusalem during December, at which several R.T.C. members were present on their way back to India. Resentment of the alleged high-handedness of the Grand Mufti partly accounted for this, but matters were brought to a head by contending factions from Egypt. A disgraceful scene took place, according to an eye-witness, within the precincts of the sacred Mosque of Al Aqsa. We quote: "The intervener, who like the rest was sitting cross-legged on the ground, was set upon by the people round him and beaten to such an extent that his life was certainly at stake. The Mufti himself tried to keep off his attackers and when that proved difficult he drew him away and pushed him into the *mimbar* where, of course, he was safe. The row continued; police had to intervene and it was some time before peace could be restored. The Mufti had in fact to mount the *mimbar* and call upon the people—a very dramatic moment—in the name of Allah to respect both the place and their guests."

Another dramatic incident marked the inaugural night when, at the call of one of the speakers, the entire assembly rose to their feet and took an oath after him that they would 'sell their lives' in defence of their sacred shrines, and, in particular, the Wailing Wall.

Some of the decisions of this Conference will be of interest to members of the League. We briefly enumerate the more outstanding of them:

1. To establish Young Men's Muslim Associations similar to the Y.M.C.A. in all Muslim countries.
2. To create a Muslim University at Jerusalem. In this connection it was laid down that every Muslim throughout the world

- should be asked to contribute one per cent of his income, and a special donation at the time of 'Id-ul-Kabir ('Id-ul-Zuha).
3. To compile 'an Arabic Encyclopædia to meet modern conditions by providing proper Arabic equivalents for all the new words and phrases which the progress of the world has brought into being.' The work is to be done in Cairo, which was considered the most suitable centre for such a project. It was contended that such a compilation would prove the 'corner-stone' of a revival in Islam.
 4. To boycott Jewish goods in all Islamic countries. While Palestinian Jews and Christians were declared to be brethren to the Muslims, Zionism was held to be the enemy of Islam and a menace to her sacred shrines.
 5. That since the Hejaz Railway had been constructed with money obtained from Muslim sources, it was essentially a Muslim *waqf*, accordingly efforts should be made to bring the whole line as soon as possible under a central Muslim body of control.
 6. A message by Reuter, dated 14th December, reported the further decision "to form a Muslim Missionary Society to explain and propagate the Islamic faith and issue pamphlets all over the world. It is expected that this society will combat foreign missionary work among Muslims."

By way of demonstrating the unity of Islam a new departure was made by getting Muhammad Al Ghattaa, Imam of the Shias of Iraq, to lead the *Zuhr* prayers of the Sunni Muslims on the Friday in Al Aqsa Mosque.

The Christian Message and Islam.

A SUMMARY of the discussion in Cairo on the subject, "How can we best present to Muslims the subject of the *Holy Spirit*?"

1. Even amongst Christians there is much inaccuracy and unreality in the teaching given regarding the Holy Spirit. Some claim that they wish to be filled with the Spirit without realising what this means. Others would prescribe the methods which are to be followed if the gift of the Spirit is to be received, and deny that there are any other methods. Extravagant claims are also made as to the results of the Spirit's coming, and if these results do not appear it is suggested that the Spirit has not been given. Whatever we teach must be based on reality.

2. It is not easy for a Muslim at once to understand or accept the Christian teaching about the Holy Spirit. Such references as occur in the Quran to the "Spirit" are interpreted to mean either the angel Gabriel or God's Spirit, and nothing more. The Jewish nation

had to be taught first of all that God is One before it could receive the revelation of our Lord or His teaching about the Holy Spirit. It was only towards the end of our Lord's ministry that He told His disciples about the coming of the Spirit. So, probably, the reception by a Muslim of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit will be slow though progressive.

3. The different stages in the Muslim's apprehension of the Spirit might be summarised as follows:—

- (a) the fact that there is a Holy Spirit Who is one of the divine Persons.
- (b) that there is need in his own life for the Holy Spirit.
- (c) that the guidance of the Holy Spirit is really possible.
- (d) how this guidance is to be appropriated by him.

4. The first thing to do is to get the Muslim to search the Scriptures and thus to help create in him a sense of his own need for a power greater than anything man can give him. How, or in what way the Spirit will be revealed to him, or what the results will be, no one can say. These vary with each individual. The Muslim should be told that the unusual phenomena which accompanied the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost are not necessarily to be expected to-day. The best proof that the Spirit has been received is the power to be an inspiration to others.

5. The Muslim is often not unreceptive of teaching about the Spirit. One point of contact is his belief that God is a Spirit. The human heart, moreover, cannot be satisfied with the belief of Islam in the pure transcendence of God unless it is complemented by a belief in God's Immanence through the Holy Spirit. The Muslim can be shown that it is through the gift of the Holy Spirit that the person of Jesus still lives for us to-day, and that Jesus is not merely a prophet who has lived and died. Again, we should point out how the Spirit of God is at work in the world outside the confines of the Christian Church, both in the realm of nature and of human life. Wherever there is a movement for righteousness and love there the Spirit of God is.

6. At the same time, there is in the N.T. intimate connection between the gift of the Spirit and the life of the Church. It is doubtful whether, as a rule, the gift of the Spirit is given before a man becomes a believer and enters into the fellowship of the Christian Church. Our danger to-day is that our teaching is too individualistic.

7. The gift of the Spirit is given so that men should be witnesses to Christ. It should issue in something very practical. It is not to be sought for its own sake. Moreover, the Christian who teaches the doctrine of the Holy Spirit must show forth something of the grace of the Spirit, or else it is very unlikely that his words will have any effect.

8. The conditions for receiving the gift of the Spirit are those which are essential for all other divine gifts. There must be a desire for holiness, there must be obedience, and there must be faith.

From the Muslim Press of India.

Muslim praise for the work of the B. & F. Bible Society.—Commenting on the achievement of the British and Foreign Bible Society in having produced the Bible in Arabic braille for the use of the Arabic-speaking blind, *The Light* in its issue for 8 February says: 'The book will be distributed free of charge . . . in Arabia, Palestine, Egypt and North Africa. One cannot but admire the zeal with which Christians have propagated their scripture in every spoken language and dialect of the world—notwithstanding the fact that it is no longer considered to be the word of God or Jesus.' (This attitude to the Christian Scriptures is now characteristic of the many of the Ahmadiyyas. *Ed. N. and N.*) This new edition has made the Bible available even to the Arabic-speaking blind the world over. The Mussalmans look upon the Quran as the Word of God, pure and intact to the minutest vowel-point. But what have they done to carry that Word to the non-Muslim world? Even here Christian scholars have done what Muslims neglected to do. They translated the Quran in their own languages. They may have given the work the colour of their own glasses, but none the less their love of learning and spirit of enterprise cannot but be admired. We wish the Mussalmans, who are never tired of calling themselves the "chosen of God," had done something to carry the Word of God, 'if not to the blind, at least to those who can see.' The writer concludes by saying that arrangements have been made to have the Quran translated into German by some competent German scholars.

There is much in the above confession that gives one food for thought. When will the Muslim recognise that there is that in the Bible and in its influence on our lives that *impels* us to share its treasures with others?

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The Light, Lahore, in its issue of 16-12-31, had an article in which it deplored the havoc wrought in Islam through sectarianism. 'Nine-tenths of the causes of the present decadence in Islam may at once be put down to this vicious venom' 'Islam which came, among other things, to purge religion of the evil and lie of priestcraft is becoming itself a prey to the self-same evil, perhaps in a worse form than the Pharisee-type so vehemently exposed and denounced by Jesus Christ in the Gospels!'

The writer hails any sign of a real change in this respect that is coming over the Muslim world, and quotes with cordial approval the report that a Shi'a *imam* led the Friday prayers of the Sunnis during the recent All-Muslim Conference at Jerusalem.

By way of showing the extreme lengths to which fanatical Muslims are apt to go, he recalls an incident that took place 'not many years ago' on the Frontier.

There lived two very powerful and not too-friendly *pirs* in that district. 'Far from any love being lost between them, they were ever at daggers-drawn against each other. And the reader will be surprised to hear that the deadly feud that went on between the followers of these two luminaries of the faith, arose out of no more momentous an issue than as to whether or not, in the daily prayers, the forefinger should be raised in the sitting posture. The followers of the one considered those of the other as the worst of *kafirs*. And one day when by a misadventure, one of the "up-fingers," being a stranger to the place, happened to say his congregation-prayer in the mosque belonging to the "down-finger" fraternity,

he was reminded of his mistake in a rather painful manner. As, in the sitting posture, he raised his forefinger his neighbour on the right saw it and, without minding his prayers and the majesty of the Divine Presence in which they were supposed to be, there and then caught hold of the unfortunate fellow's forefinger and twisted it till it was dislocated How very much like the disputes, jealousies and hatred in the land of the Lilliputians of fiction over such matters as the high or low heels of the boots one happened to wear!"

It is all to the good that the Ahmadiyyas are exposing and denouncing the baneful effects of much of the teaching of the *mullas*.

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Prayers in Turkish.—On the other hand Muslim leaders in India are clearly concerned over the news that by orders of Kemal Pasha prayers from the Quran are to be recited henceforth in the mosques of Turkey in Turkish instead of Arabic. "Henceforth"—the message runs—"the traditional Quran in Arabic, which is not intelligible to the masses in Turkey, will be replaced in services in mosques by the Turkish translation."

The Mussulman, of Calcutta, scarce knows whether to credit the cablegram, but it foresees that were permission to be given to all nationals to offer prayers in their own vernaculars, then congregational prayers in which Muslims of different countries could take part would be impossible.

The Light, Lahore, is much more out-spoken and leaves one in no doubt that the innovation is looked upon as fraught with serious consequences for the future of Islam. The editor writes: 'The arguments advanced in favour of such retention (i.e. of Arabic for the congregational prayers) may be summed up into two. First and foremost, the Arabic Quran is the Word of God and to substitute it by the word of man would be, not to "reform" but to deform it. Secondly, Arabic prayer is a common bond between the far-flung members of the universal brotherhood of Islam. To remove that bond would be to deal a death-blow to that brotherhood' 'Those who have the eyes to see the beauty, the sublimity, the profound wisdom of the Quran, and the ears to enjoy the celestial charm of its unrivalled eloquence and sweet rhythm, will bear testimony to the fact that every word of it carries an imprint of the Fingers of God. Every word of it fills the heart with conviction in the existence of a living God. Ghazi Mustafa Kemal and his gallant band, of whom the world of Islam rightly feels proud for their heroic stand in defence of the liberties of the great Turkish race, have undoubtedly committed a blunder of Himalayan magnitude in thus banishing the living Word of God

'The 'reformers' of Angora have laid the axe at the root of an institution which has for the last thirteen centuries stood the vicissitudes of time and been the wonder of wonders of the historian and the sociologist' 'To have taken a step calculated to pull that brotherhood to pieces is not only a direct contravention of the spirit of Islam but, we should say, a great disservice to humanity, in so far as it tends to smash the highest ideal of society that humanity can dream of.'

The editor feels that steps could have been taken whereby in a short time the meaning of the prescribed Arabic prayers could have been taught through the medium of Turkish, without thus discarding the Arabic altogether. In conclusion he says: 'A retrograde step like this was certainly not expected of a man of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal's spirit of progress and enterprise.'

The offence of Christ.

NO steps that human ingenuity can devise can make the task of Christian evangelism in the face of Hinduism, Buddhism, or Islam easy without destroying its meaning. We may well, however, take pains to make sure that the offence is the offence of Christ, and not a stumbling block which we, not our Master, lay in the footsteps of the enquirer.

W. PATON. INTER. REV. MISS. *January, 1932.*

Notes.

A Parody of Christ.—In stating last month that we had been unable to find any 'authority' for the form of the prayer alleged to have been made by Muhammad on the field of Uhud (*vis.* 'Lord! forgive my people, for they know not'), we overlooked the fact that Goldziher in his *Muhammedanische Studien* Vol. II pp. 381-404 quotes this instance (among others where the very words of Christ are attributed to Muhammad). Dr. Zwemer in his *The Moslem Christ* p. 149 quotes the particulars thus: "Abdullah bin Mas'ud said: 'I saw the Prophet of God, when the people struck him and abused him, that he brushed the blood off his face and said "O God! forgive my people, for they know not what they do." The commentators ignorantly add that Muhammad here quoted a saying of Noah the Prophet!"

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Called by our mother's name.—A member wrote to us some time ago asking whether we had heard Muslims have a way of saying that at the day of judgment we shall be called by our mother's name. 'So and so, son of so and so' (his mother). We should like to know whether this idea is widespread in the Muslim world.

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Writing from the interior of China a member of long-standing, who now feels obliged to transfer his allegiance to the 'Friends of Moslems' in that country, writes to say: 'I have enjoyed *News and Notes* the many years I have had it and hope it will still do a useful work. The Muslim field is truly a difficult field. The people's hearts seem as hard as stone. Nevertheless we are thankful for some among the Dungans and Chanteos who are not too prejudiced to listen to the glad news. We are short of workers. Only three of us in this station for half of this vast Province (Sinkiang), but we are hoping that some of the new 200 recruits may be sent here. I have now spent forty years working among Muslims in Kansu and Sinkiang and am impressed that the most important thing in my dealings with them is to lift up The Christ. I avoid arguing which leads to nowhere. I love to show them Christ on the Cross in the "Broad and Narrow Way."

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'*Society of Friends of Moslems in China*'—Replying to our letter of greeting and well wishes for the Fellowship in China Mr. Isaac Mason replied some time ago: 'We are one with you (the M.M.L.) in spirit

as well as largely the same in object, so our fellowship continues. We might more often mention each other in our respective magazines and join in a wider circle of prayer. We have now more than 50 Life members, and 110 Annual members, and more than 100 others who are interested, to whom our magazine is sent I expect to leave China next spring, after about forty years of service. I hope still to study the subject of Islam in China, and give such help as I can, even when far away.'

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Dissatisfaction with the Muslim delegates to the R.T.C. was expressed some weeks ago in amazing fashion by Dr. Ansari, perhaps the most prominent of the Nationalist Muslims. While opening the "Gandhi Ashram" at Narela, near Delhi, he is reported to have said that the delegates were responsible "for killing the hopes of India at the Conference, just as Judas was responsible for the Crucifixion of Christ." If we are correct in equating 'crucifixion' with 'killing' in this case, does it mean that Dr. Ansari accepts the fact of the death of Christ on the cross?

The Henry Martyn School, Lahore.

EXTENSION COURSES, 1932.

Notification.

The Punjab C.C. Missionary Extension Course will be held from 8th to 12th April. Arrangements are being made for a two hours' session each morning and evening on Friday and Saturday, Monday and Tuesday. The three members of the staff will deliver a series of lectures and it is hoped to secure a few representative Muslims to give some of the evening lectures. The course will probably be held at The Henry Martyn School.

Courses for Missionaries in South India. The Principal's itinerary will be approximately as follows:

Kodaikanal	Sunday, 24th April . . to . .	Sunday, 1st May.
Ootacamund	Sunday, 8th May	„ Sunday, 15th May.
Mysore City	Public Meeting, for Muslims	18th and 19th May.
Bangalore	Friday, 20th May	„ Wednesday, 25th May.

Extension Course at Landour, Monday 13th June—Friday 8th July. At this course all three members of the staff expect to be present and to deliver a series of lectures, probably at the community centre.

Please make these fixtures known. Any enquiries should be addressed to The Principal, 5, Egerton Road, Lahore.

For Praise and Prayer.

- PRaise (1) for the steady progress made each year by the British and Foreign Bible Society in the distribution of the Scriptures, and especially for the completion of the Arabic Bible in Braille type.
- (2) for the "Friends of Moslems" Society among missionaries in China, and prayer that the Society may be richly used of God to extend Christ's Kingdom in that land.

- PRAYER (1) for past students of The Henry Martyn School, and in particular for Mr. R. A. Stephen now working as the Evangelist of the Madras United Hindustani Mission.
- (2) on behalf of Mr. Firman Ali, one of the present students at H.M.S.—a convert from Shia Islam—that a suitable sphere of work may be found for him at the close of this term.
- (3) for God's guidance and blessing on behalf of those responsible for arranging the details of the Extension Courses to be conducted by The Henry Martyn School in different parts of India.
- (4) for Dr. Zwemer, that God will richly bless him as he prepares for his visit to England to address the May meetings.

NEW MEMBERS.

Rev. J. Rogers	I.P.M.	Surat.
Dr. N. M. Ivory	N.Z.B.M.	Chandpur.
Miss M. A. Bradfield	"	Chandpur.
Rev. R. A. Blasdell	M.E.Ch.	Malacca, S.S.

Any notification of change of address, names of new members or remittance of subscription, etc., should be sent to the Superintendent, Orissa Mission Press, Cuttack, India, and *not* to the Secretary of the League. The annual subscription to the League is Rs. 2-0-0 (English 3s. od.).

Matters of interest to members of the League, items of news and requests for prayer should be sent (if possible, early in the month) to the Hony. Secretary :—

Rev. L. Bevan Jones,
5, Egerton Road,
Lahore,
Punjab, India.

