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News and Notes

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

Series XX

June, 1932.

1st June = 25th Muharram (1st mo.), 1351, A.H.

How an Indian Convert views our Duty to Evangelise the Muslims.

IT seems necessary in order to bring home the absolute necessity of this work among Muslims, to consider this matter from another angle so that its importance may rightly impress the hearts of all. Did Jesus Christ come for one special people alone? No, He is the Light of the World. Why then did He limit Himself to the Jews? Firstly, because they were in expectation of Him. Their Holy Books were full of prophecies concerning Him. His birth, His trials, His tragic death, His resurrection, His ascension—all these had been already foretold, and it was easy for them to accept Christ. Secondly, because the Jews were very zealous on behalf of their religion. 'Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte' said our Lord. People like them, if they once believed on Christ, would set the world on fire. Thirdly, the mind of Christ while dealing with things most minute, was also very long-sighted and extended far away. So He foresaw that if the Gentiles first accepted Him, they would prove a stumbling-block to the Jews who looked upon all others as outcasts. Untouchables—dogs—they called them. They would then refrain from believing on Him out of national pride. For this reason, Christ said 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' So our Lord's first message was to the Jews. He desired to begin His work with them, and so He did.

What, at that time, was the condition of the Jews is, at this time, the exact condition of the Muhammadans. They are in a position to understand the Scriptures, and the import of all the great prophecies, far better than any other race. Their traditions and those of the Christians are alike. So are all the religious stories and the lives of the prophets. Their metaphors, similes and idioms are, with the exception of a few, absolutely similar. The Law and the

Gospels are common to both. All have the same seers and prophets. How easy, then, it is for them to grasp the truth of the religion of Christ? He is to them a very unique prophet, and, if the truth be told, the greatest of them all. Their Holy Book overflows with His praise. They ever mention His name with respect and show it by adding 'Peace be to Him,' and honour Him with all their heart. Not only so, but His greatness so impresses them that they ascribe to Him Divine attributes. A prophet from his very birth, a born-prophet; His miraculous birth, matchless life, unparalleled miracles. He cleansed lepers, restored sight to the blind, gave power to the halt and lame, aye, raised the dead and even created little birds; He was altogether spotless, absolutely pure, Who never needed to repent although all other prophets were constantly confessing their faults. All these are the admitted beliefs of Muslims. How very near they are to Christianity! They are much nearer to us than are the Jews. For they despised and rejected Christ, but Muslims accept and reverence Him. Is it not meet, then, that attention should be directed to them? For they have the capacity and understanding to grasp the Inspired Word of God and Divine Truth. Surely it is God's will that these people, who are heirs by faith of the prophets and rest upon His Word, should have our attention directed towards them.

Besides this, that religious zeal and evangelistic passion on account of which our Lord gave His first and foremost attention to the Jews, are pre-eminently found among Muslims as I have described above. So I say of them what the apostle said of the Jews: 'I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.'

Thirdly, like the Jews these people have an aversion to so-called untouchables. Accordingly, one of the reasons why Muhammadans did not increase more rapidly in India is that they disliked and hated these outcastes who have embraced Christianity, nor did they want to mix with them. Some, however, did banish all such thoughts of class distinction in their pursuit of the truth and longing for salvation. After accepting Christ they have shown in their daily life that they are above all distinctions of colour and creed, so being free from the bondage to high and low. But it is only after becoming Christians that they rose to this lofty thought and expanded to broad-mindedness, otherwise at first they were very different. For although there is no class-distinction in Islam, yet owing to contact for centuries with Hinduism this thought has, in India, taken root among them.

In a word, if the missionaries had at first fully considered the wisdom and plan of their Master and had worked in India only along these lines, without doubt a very large body of converts from Islam would have enlisted under the banner of Christ and then, entering in themselves, would have drawn in with them those other classes, even the outcastes and untouchables.

As it is at present, those among them who are convinced of the truth of Christianity draw back from public confession, for they consider it a disgrace to enter Christian society. To form domestic ties with them is to them even like a living death. (!)

This was the original and fundamental mistake made by missionaries. It was made by them and so all have to reap the consequences, and there is not much to be seen in the way of spiritual progress. But the opportunity still lasts if we will but take it now . . .

We must make sure of their whole mentality (*i.e.*, of the Muslims) and appoint talented, learned and enthusiastic preachers for this work, particularly converts from among themselves, because they have, after thorough investigation, forsaken their old religion and adopted this new one. So they can, with telling effect, show forth the faults of the one and the beauties of the other. In addition, their conversion is in itself a witness—yea, a living witness to the Truth in Jesus Christ. When a Muhammadan becomes a Christian the news spreads from city to city like fire. All his friends and relations, and even distant connections, become witnesses to this great fact.

Another matter ought to be mentioned in regard to work among Muhammadans. They consider pork a forbidden food and unlawful. The very idea is so disgusting that they dislike mentioning its very name. When they think that Christians eat pork that creates in their hearts a dislike towards them. If all agree for the sake of Christ not to put a stumbling block in the path of a brother, this obstacle will at once be removed. In the Word of God it is plainly declared: 'It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth or is made weak. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died. For meat destroy not the work of God.' Rom. 14, 15-20.

We should also bear in mind that a common fallacy among Muhammadans is that Christians worship three Gods. We believe in the one true God and ought to be very circumspect in our presentation of the Trinity, showing that we, with them, are monotheists. Then again they are often startled at the phrase 'Son of God,' because this gives them the idea of a carnal relationship. Let us remember that there are words and phrases in the Quran itself which we can profitably use in our conversation with them, such as 'Kalimat-Ullah,' which have the same import as Ibn Ullah, the 'Son of God.' We must also be careful in using phraseology which is technical and theological and which is hard for them to understand; such as 'Put on the Lord Jesus'; and let us follow the example of our Lord Who before using that 'hard saying,' "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have no life in you," explained it by saying 'He that cometh to Me shall never hunger'—eating his flesh is coming to Christ; and 'He that believeth on Me shall never thirst'—believing on Him is drinking His blood.

So let us be very careful to bridge the gulf between ourselves

and Muhammadans in every possible way. Why should we not greet them even as our Lord Himself did and bade His disciples to do, with 'Salam Alaikum' (peace be unto you)? Then again never let us hurt their feelings by speaking irreverently of their Prophet.

Let us think of all these matters that have now been mentioned with a calm, deliberate mind so as to remove every obstacle in the way of extending the Kingdom of God. Whatever proves an obstacle to this work of God's—our bodies, our hands, or anything else, let us be willing to sacrifice all for Him as He did for us, and thus show forth His Glory whether it be by life, or by death.

(We publish this for its interest, not because we agree with all that is said.—*Ed.*)

The Christian Message and Islam.

A SUMMARY of the discussion in Cairo on the subject: "What is our responsibility, financial and spiritual, towards converts?"

1. All were agreed that this is by far the most difficult, and at the same time the most important, problem that faces us in our evangelistic work. On the general lines of its solution most workers have for some time been in agreement, and yet little progress towards its realisation can be recorded up to the present. It is possible that the financial restrictions which are necessitating a general review of our missionary methods may compel us to give to this problem the thought and the attention that it deserves.

2. The average convert, or even enquirer, is almost invariably dismissed from his daily work as soon as his interest in Christianity becomes known. It is very difficult to find work for him just because he is a convert. Muslims won't have him. Christians are afraid to employ him. And some are doubtful whether, as a rule, it is good for the convert to be employed by a missionary society. Then we must remember that the convert is always disinherited by his Muslim parents.

3. Amongst the practical suggestions put forward were the following:

(a) That there should be flats, like that at Sharia Doubreh, where converts can live when they are turned out of their homes.

(b) That there should be formed a committee, consisting of Muslim converts of tried experience, and of Egyptian Christians representing the different churches, with possibly a missionary as chairman, to whom all matters concerning all converts and catechumens should be referred.

(c) That to this committee should be entrusted the disbursement of any sums which individuals, churches or missionary societies donate for the relief of worthy converts. Some considered that money

should be loaned to converts rather than given to them, and that help should be offered only to those whose sincerity has been proved.

(d) That converts themselves should be encouraged to form a Savings Bank of their own from which they can help one another.

(e) That the Egyptian churches be urged to take their share in assisting converts either by finding them work or helping them financially. Either the pastors of the churches, or converts themselves, should bring this responsibility home to the churches from time to time.

(f) That different missionary societies or churches should open special shops, or workshops, for the employment of converts, or that they should unite in a co-operative scheme of this kind. It was realised that in all probability such work-centres would have to be run at a loss.

4. It was felt that various conditions must be fulfilled before this problem can be solved satisfactorily :—

(a) We must all enter more sympathetically into "the fellowship of suffering" with the converts. It is very difficult for either the missionary or the Egyptian Christian to understand all that the convert is experiencing.

(b) The convert himself must adopt a less critical attitude towards the Christian by birth, remembering that many converts have been very disappointing in the past.

(c) We must bear in mind that converts are but "babes in Christ," and that it takes many years for them to overcome the influences of their early Muslim environment and upbringing. They need much spiritual teaching, and the kindly influence of human friendship.

(d) What is specially needed is *a gift of spiritual discernment* so that we can appraise more correctly the motives of those who say they wish to be Christians. A few absolutely loyal converts are preferable to a large number of converts of whom some fail dismally, and others, perhaps, go back to Islam.

(e) When rendering financial help to converts or enquirers we must avoid giving the impression that we offer financial inducements for men to ask for baptism. Some believe that far too many of our enquirers to-day approach us because they want financial assistance. *No person should be baptized until he has informed his relatives of his decision, and until his sincerity has been tested.*

(f) We must try to influence the outlook of the general public so as to create an atmosphere in which religious liberty will be possible and conversion can take place without a complete severing of social and economic ties. The ostracism of the convert by the public to-day tends to the formation of a limited circle of Christian converts trying to live their life in isolation, whereas in every other department of life we see everyone is inter-dependent, socially and economically, on everyone else. This isolation is not healthy.

(g) The convert should not be encouraged to look always to the missionary for "protection." This may tend to de-nationalize him. He should rather be urged to bear witness boldly to the faith that is in him.

Book Review.

W. H. T. Gairdner and Constance E. Padwick: *A Book of Instruction for Catechumens. Section I, The Life of the Lord Jesus Christ.* S.P.C.K., London. Price Two Shillings, postage extra.

This volume was planned by the late Canon Gairdner, but the greater part was actually written by Miss Padwick after his death. It is intended for the use of those enquirers who have determined to make a regular study of Christianity and as such can be used by all missionaries throughout the field. As a rule such study will be with a Christian teacher, and we cannot too strongly recommend this book as giving just what is needed for such a course of instruction. The book is divided into forty-four lessons—with hints for thirteen extra lessons, if desired. Each lesson contains reference to a Scripture portion for study with a very careful and simple explanation of it. Special difficulties that might be felt by a Muslim are dealt with. Certain verses are appointed to be learnt by heart, and also a prayer suitable to the subject of study. In the earlier lessons the actual words of the prayer are given, with the recommendation that the pupil should copy it into his note-book for constant use; in the later lessons generally only the subject of the prayer is given, leaving the pupil to frame it in his own words. Subjects for meditation are also given; and it is this combination of intellectual teaching with training in prayer and meditation that gives the book its peculiar value. Several times the pupil is encouraged to consider the difficulties which his Muslim friends may feel about Christianity, though he does not feel them himself, so that he may realise his duty, even at this early stage, of handing on the good news he receives. It will be a great help if the pupil as well as the teacher has a copy of the book, and for this reason it is to be hoped that it may be translated into the vernaculars as soon as possible. Arrangements are, indeed, soon to be made for its translation into Urdu, in which language part of one of the other sections (referred to in the preface of this section) is published by the P.R.B.Soc., Anarkali, Lahore.

L. E. BROWNE.

AN INTERESTING EXPERIMENT.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

I SHOULD like to tell you of an experiment we have just tried. In our two stations of——and——(Bengal) which are eighty miles apart, we have had, for the last couple of years, a spate of inquirers—mostly young Muhammadans of the educated class. In spite of all pleas to be sent away to other districts we have tried to get them to confess their faith in their villages and stay there. They have had different experiences of persecution and intimidation.

We have felt that their great lack is definite teaching. To do something to meet this need we asked fourteen of these young fellows to be the guests of the Mission at a series of meetings lasting five days. Ten responded and were present throughout; for various reasons others could not be present.

Apart from morning and evening prayers there were five meetings each day. Subjects were: The Christian idea of 'God,' 'sin,' 'salvation,' etc.; A short complete review of the Life of Jesus; The power, renunciation and love of Jesus; Prayer and its meaning; Baptism and its meaning, etc. All very elementary, of course. Every meeting was in the nature of a class with plenty of questions from the teacher, and free use of a black-board. One hour each day was allowed for questions and discussion. Each student was asked to write briefly on, "How I first became attracted to Jesus," and later read his experience to the class. Before the meetings finished practically every student had offered one brief prayer in the presence of others.

At the very last meeting after an exhortation to search their own hearts, and a time of silent prayer, those who wished to do so were asked to silently promise God that they would, in the future, in daily life try to do those things which would please Jesus.

All are now back in their homes. Of course we had many entreaties to "send me away to another district for a while," One poor boy of seventeen showed us weals on his body. He said two men held him and his father beat him because he said he was going to the meetings.

We reckon these meetings to have been very well worth while. I think we are under no illusions as to the kind of witness some of these young men will give in their homes. In some cases it will be very weak. What can we expect of them, though, unless they are taught and helped? When asked what he had got out of the meetings one said, "I have learned how much Jesus suffered for me, and I must be prepared to suffer more for Him in my home."

The social side of it—living together—was fine for them all. A few games helped them to freedom with each other, so much so that they learned to give and take a bit of cheek as well as bumps.

The total cost to the Mission was Rs. 43-0-0.

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There is another big question I should like to write to you about some time, *vis.*, How far are we right in making these youths stay at home? A few days ago one of the brightest of them was married, to a Muham-madan girl of course. If they stay in their villages this will happen naturally. More of this later...

The *News and Notes* is much appreciated. Those discussions from Egypt are fine.

Yours sincerely,
H. A. J.

CAN YOU EMPLOY HIM ?

A CONVERT from Islam, who has had special training for work among Muslims, is seeking employment as an evangelist. He passed out from a Bible Training Institute first on the list, and then studied for six months at the Henry Martyn School. Financial stringency alone prevents the Mission who sent him to the School from employing him. We

commend his case to the sympathetic consideration of those members of the League who are in a position to appreciate just what this means to the man. He was converted from Shi'a Islam in the U.P. about ten years ago, and has for some years done the work both of a teacher and evangelist. He does not know much English, having only read up to the entrance standard, but he speaks Urdu fluently, and has a good knowledge of the Qur'an in Arabic, and has learnt Persian. He has a very pleasant disposition and is an earnest worker. He is married and has three small children, the eldest being about seven years old. His wife has had partial training as a nurse at Ludhiana. Your secretary will gladly answer any inquiries concerning him.

Notes.

H.M.S. Extension Work.—At the request of the Punjab Christian Council a brief Extension Course of Lectures was conducted in Lahore from 8-14 April, by the Staff of the Henry Martyn School. There was an average attendance of the thirty at the fifteen lectures, three of which were delivered by educated Muslim gentlemen of Lahore. Members will also be pleased to hear that a most successful course of extension lectures on Islam was conducted in the last week of April, at Kodaikanal, South India. No less than sixty-two missionaries registered their names, representing nineteen different societies. Literature to the value of over Rs. 92-0-0 was sold during the week. The course at Ootacamund has also been a marked success. Over fifty people registered for the course, and the average attendance was forty-five.

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"Thieves and Robbers"—Referring to the leading article in our April issue, a member writes: "If we apply the phrase to the *false Messiahs* who had tried to set up the Kingdom of God by a national revolt against the Romans, then we can point at once to, (a) Barabbas, clearly "a national hero,"—'now Barabbas was a robber': (b) Theudas and Judas of Galilee—in Acts 5, 36-7—who clearly came to 'steal, kill, destroy.'

'We thus draw a distinction between the prophets—Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc; (who used no violence, and cannot be meant) and these nationalist, false Messiahs, who did actually bring not life, but death and destruction.'

We thank our correspondent for this further note.

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Devotion to the Faith among Muslims.—The devotion of Muslims to the cause of Islam has often been commented upon. There is an illuminating passage concerning it in the pamphlet by the convert in North India from which we have ventured to reproduce long extracts in this and our previous issue.

He says: 'I once enquired of a Muslim friend, "How is it that there is so much loyalty and devotion among you, even though Islam is looked down upon with scorn by the civilized world?" To this my talented and experienced friend replied as follows:—

"We have shed bitter tears over our lost empire and sovereignty; our pride has been levelled to the dust; we have washed our hands of wealth and prosperity; we have lost our former knowledge of all the arts

and sciences; even good manners we have bid adieu to. . There is only one thing left remaining to us and that is Devotion to our Faith. That is the prop and stay of our life as a people. Take that away and you take everything away. If this goes, we go with it. If this is lost, then for us all is lost."

FOR PRAYER.

PRAISE for the encouraging response in South India at the extension lectures delivered in April and May: pray that new and abiding interest in this work may be aroused.

PRAY for the Extension Course to be conducted in Landour, from 13th June to 8th July, by the three members of the staff of the Henry Martyn School, Lahore.

PRAY for Dr. and Mrs. Zwemer as they continue their work in the British Isles during June.

NEW MEMBERS.

Rev. P. L. Beals,
Miss Frodsham,
Rev. F. C. Philip,
Rev. S. Dutt,

Ch. of Nazarene,
C.E.Z.M.S.
C.M.S.

Buldana, Berar, C.I.
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Hyderabad, Deccan.
Hyderabad, Deccan.

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, Egerlon Road,
Lahore,
Punjab, India.