

News and Notes

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

Series XX

July, 1932.

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Fellowship with God.

'That which we have seen and heard declare us unto you also that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father.' I John 1: 3.

IN the beginning of this letter John goes out of his way to let us see that this wonderful theme with which he is to deal is firmly based on actual experience. Notice this emphasis in the first verse and repeated in the third. He cannot keep it to himself; he must share it with us.

Fellowship with God! And fellowship means an intimate sharing! The very thought was staggering, and not least to a Jew, and John was a Jew. But he could look back to three wonder years when he and his friends (what a group they were!) through friendship with Jesus made this stupendous discovery. And in the years since it had grown ever more wonderful and beautiful. 'God is Light' (verse 5). We are entitled to the most glorious possible conception of God, and He is beyond that! 'In Him is no darkness at all'; all pure, clear LIGHT. Light is a perfect blending of seven colours: Power, Justice, Truth, Holiness, Beauty, Mercy, Grace. Down the ages men have glimpsed these colours singly, or sometimes even two or three at a time, but Jesus brought them all together in His revelation of the Father, and then a glorious light broke upon the world. God is Light. No darkness at all. Jesus blended the colours through love and made credible to men this Fellowship with God.

'God is Light' becomes 'God is Love' in this letter. 'He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother is in the darkness. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light.' (Chap. 2: 9, 10.). It is worthwhile to look at the nature of this new relationship which that Love has made possible. Two words often found in the vocabulary of

religion are ruled clean out. **DUTY**: 'When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are **UNPROFITABLE** servants; we have done that which it was our **DUTY** to do.' How often duty has been held up as the standard. But in this new relationship Jesus shows how out of place the slave mentality is. 'No longer servants, but friends.' The other word which gets lost is **SACRIFICE**. 'I have a baptism to be baptised with (and the word means 'immersion'); and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.' Love is cramped and restless till it has done its utmost. What love yearns to do is not *sacrifice* to the lover. 'Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross.' Because God is God, and in Him is no darkness, and because the universe is His, Love's utmost wins redemption.

Fellowship is sharing. What is our part? Although God longs to share with us His best, His all, He will not coerce us into this relationship. Jesus shows this so clearly. The disciples were in a boat, buffeted by the waves. 'Jesus cometh unto them . . . and He would have passed by them' (Mark 6: 48). But He longed to be with them. So it was later: 'He made as though He would go further. And they constrained Him.' (Luke 24, 28) He does not need much pressing, but there must be that cry that is uttered from a sense of need. The fellowship must be mutual else it is not fellowship. 'If ye love me ye will keep my commandments'—not from a sense of duty, nor for what we will get. 'If a man love me he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him.' (John 14: 15, 23).

G. D. REYNOLDS.

(Notes from a devotional address by Mr. Reynolds of Agra, at the Landour Community Centre Conference, in June.)

Tracts for Muslim Women

Criticisms and suggestions concerning this tract should be sent to Mrs. Bevan Jones, 5, Egerton Rd., Lahore, who can supply spare printed copies of this and the preceding tracts.

4. Bakr Id.

(It is suggested that this tract be illustrated by a picture of Abraham offering his son. The name *Isaac* not to be mentioned, as it provokes controversy.)

IT was the day of Bakr Id, Husain's Ma had suddenly heard of the serious illness of her married daughter, so instead of spending the day at home she was travelling to see her. In the railway carriage with her was a Christian woman, with her little son David. To her she told her sorrow, and they soon became friends. After a time the train passed a place where hundreds of men in spotlessly clean garments were saying their *namaz*. "To-day is Bakr Id," said

Husain's Ma. After saying their *namaz* they will offer the sacrifices. Do you Christians keep the Bakr Id?"

David's Ma—We don't offer animal sacrifices. Why do you do so?

Husain's Ma—It is commanded in the Quran. Did not the Prophet Musa sacrifice a cow? And did not our Rasul and his Companions sacrifice camels, cows and goats? It is a part of our religion. Every Bakr Id we offer sacrifices in memory of the sacrifice which Ibrahim Khalilu'llah offered. Do you know about that?

D's Ma—Yes, indeed I do, and I am glad that you know it too. What a wonderful story it is! How great was the Prophet's faith! He was willing to offer to God even such a precious treasure as his own beloved son. I often tell that story to David, but I do not teach him that an animal must be sacrificed in memory of it. I tell him that he must be like the Prophet Ibrahim, and trust and obey God, and that even if God asks him to do something that is very hard, he must try to do it.

H's Ma—Then do you Christians not sacrifice animals at all?

D's Ma—No. The Bani Israil and their prophets, Noah, Musa, David Elijah and others, used to offer animal sacrifices. There are many commands about it in the Tauret, but in the Injil it is done away with. We follow the Injil. I cannot understand why your book, which was given after the Injil, has gone back to the teaching of the Tauret instead of following the later teaching.

H's Ma—I am not learned enough to explain that, but I should like to tell you something that I have been thinking about. A few days ago a very wise and good *maulvi* came to our village to teach us, and I was told that he said that it is not sufficient to offer animals as sacrifice, we must offer ourselves.

D's Ma—Oh! That is just what the Injil says! Listen and I will tell you what is written in Romans 12. 1. Our pastor preached about it last Sunday and it is fresh in my mind. Listen:—"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." The preacher said that God does not want the dead bodies of animals. He wants us to offer Him our living bodies, our hands and feet, our eyes and ears, our lips and our hearts for His service. It is easy to offer a cow or a goat, but it is not easy to live a pure and sinless life that will please God.

H's Ma—That is true.

D's Ma—Ever since the creation of the world there has been only one who offered to God the sacrifice of a perfect life and perfect service day by day. The service of God gave Him such satisfaction that He could not live without it. It was like His daily food. He said once "My food is to do the will of God." (John 4. 34) You know his name for you are a Muslim. You call him Isa Rubu'llah.

H's Ma—Yes, I have heard how kind He was. God gave Him the power to work miracles and He healed the sick, and gave eyes to the blind, and raised the dead to life.

D's Ma—Yes, He spent His life serving others. He healed not only people's bodies, but their hearts. He made bad people good, and brought sinners back to God. For this reason Satan hated and feared Him, and stirred up His enemies to kill Him. They beat Him and spat upon Him and ridiculed Him, at last they pierced His hands and feet and nailed Him to the cross. There He gave up His life in unutterable agony.

H's Ma—Why did God not save Him from such a terrible death? He delivered the Prophet Ibrahim's son. A ram was given in his stead.

D's Ma—Yes, I know, but nothing could be given in place of Isa Masih.

He could have saved Himself, but He did not do so because He wanted to save others. He knew it to be the will of God that He should endure the very worst that Satan could do, and He prayed to God saying, "Thy will be done." The hearts of His enemies were full of hatred and anger, but they could not provoke Him to anger. He could have destroyed them all, but His heart was full of love, and even when they pierced His hands and feet with the nails He prayed to God that they might be forgiven. Just as He was sinless in His life, so He was sinless in His death. His enemies destroyed His body but they could not destroy His faith in God and His love to man. He gave His sinless life to save sinners from sin. When I think that it was sin that caused Him such suffering I hate the sins that are in my own heart, and I ask God to forgive me, and sister, when I pray thus, in the name of Jesus, He forgives me and gives me peace.

H's Ma—You say that Isa Ruhu'llah died. We say that He is alive.

D's Ma—He died on a Friday and was buried, but on the Sunday He rose from the grave, triumphing over Satan and sin and death. He *is* alive. He lives in my heart by His Spirit, and helps me to win the victory over sin. And He is preparing a place for me in heaven.

H's Ma—Husain's father told me that he heard a *maulvi* say in his *khutba* that the cow that we sacrifice at Bakr Id will carry us safely to heaven over the *Sirat*, that terrible bridge that is sharper than a knife and finer than a hair. But I cannot understand how a cow that has been killed and eaten can help me.

D's Ma—Sister, it cannot. Your own Quran says, "Their flesh will never reach to God, not yet their blood, but piety on your part will reach Him." (Sura 22.38) Does this not show that the real sacrifice to offer God is a *pure heart*. You cannot make your

own heart pure, but Isa Masih, who died for you, will save you from your sin, cleanse your heart from all evil and take you at last to heaven.

And now we have reached the station where I must get out. And here is David's father. He is taking me to my father's home. My journey is almost over. And just so, sister, when the journey of life is over, Hazrat Isa will take me to my heavenly home. Will you not believe in Him and ask Him to prepare a place for you too?

The Idea of the Kingdom in Islam

A series of lectures delivered in Sat Tal Ashram, N. India, June 1932.

“THE Kingdom of God in Islam” was the subject of a series of four lectures, delivered in the Sat Tal Ashram of Rev. E. Stanley Jones. This was chosen as a subject, because the general theme of the lectures in the Ashram for this year was the “Kingdom of God.” In the first three lectures the different aspects of the Islamic idea of God were discussed. In the first lecture the orthodox idea of the Kingdom of God was presented, and was described as based on the twofold conception of the direct and immediate rule of the Supreme Being, and of the brotherhood of believers. “The rule of Allah over His people is immediate and direct.” When the chief of a tribe who has adopted Islam said to the Prophet, “Thou art our Prince,” Muhammad quickly answered, “The Prince is God, not I.” Islam is the direct government of Allah, the rule of God, whose eyes are upon His people. The principle of unity and order which in other societies is called *Civitas*, *Polis*, State, in Islam is personified by Allah. Allah is the name of the Supreme power, acting in the common interest. The public treasury is the treasury of Allah, the army is the army of Allah, even the public functionaries are “the employees of Allah.” [See *The Legacy of Islam*—Art, Law and Society.] In the second lecture it was stated how this orthodox conception of God had failed to satisfy the advanced and liberal thinkers of Islam during the 8th and the 9th century A.D., and how, as a result of the influence of Greek Philosophy, God was described in the terms of the ultimate reality of the universe. The universe was regarded as the attributes of Allah, and the relation between Allah and His attributes is that of identity. According to these speculative thinkers there is no place for duality in the world—the ultimate reality of the universe is one. To these people the Muslim creed does not merely mean that there is no God but Allah, but also that there is no reality besides Allah; in other words, God, the final reality, is the one substance, the world is a series of phenomena of one great Nuemenon. The Nuemenon is the divine reality which manifests itself in the phenomenal existence of the universe.

Thus the orthodox creed which makes the Supreme will rule the universe, is reduced to the manifestation of an absolute being. (Compare the Philosophic teaching of Ibn-ul-Arabi.)

This conception of pure being as the final reality in turn failed to satisfy the mystical and devotional mind of that class of Muslims known as Sufis. The purely intellectual conception was carried by them into the realm of emotion, and God was conceived as beauty. This was the subject of the third lecture. "Overwhelmed by His beauty the Sufi conceives of him above all things as the eternally beautiful. Hence Sufi hymns borrow the impassioned language of the lover. He is all beautiful, and the whole universe is the mirror of His beauty—and it lies in the nature of the Beauty to desire love." Thus the changes in the universe were regarded, not as the results of the government of a Supreme will, nor merely the manifestations of pure being, but the effects of the all beautiful displaying Himself in innumerable forms. (For further study on the point, see Nicholson's *The Mystics of Islam*.)

In the final lecture the spiritual elements of the varied conceptions of God and His government were summed up to indicate, first, the existence of a spiritual preparation in Islam for the acceptance of the Christian message of the Kingdom of God, and secondly that, in its teachings, Islam does make in certain places points of contact with the Christian conception of the Kingdom of God. There are points where the boundaries of the two Kingdoms touch each other, and Muslims at those points may be led to see the Kingdom of God as preached by Jesus Christ, wherein God is not only the King, but the Father of all mankind, Who not only rules, but loves.

The presentation of the subject from such an angle raised many questions in the minds of certain members of the Ashram, which were answered in course of the lectures, but for further elucidation of certain points a general discussion was held one night, lasting about three hours. As a result of such discussions, it was brought out that in Islam there certainly are unspiritual and un-Christian elements as well, but the Church will gain nothing by emphasising them. The emphasis is to be laid on the points of contact, where the boundaries of the two Kingdoms cross each other. Such points may be observed firstly, in the religious purpose of Islam; secondly, in the emphasis laid in Islam on the unity of God, and on the reality of His Existence; thirdly, in the emphasis that it lays on the exercise of faith in God; fourthly, in the demand made in the Quran for Righteousness; fifthly, in the emphasis laid on the spiritual principles underlying the religious practices, such as Worship, Fasting, Pilgrimage, etc.; sixthly, in the teachings of the Mystics of Islam.

Finally, the fact was made clear that in the kingdom of Islam at present there are signs which indicate the passing of the Islamic Kingdom of Allah into that of the Kingdom of God as preached by Jesus Christ. These signs were described to be as follows. First,

the idea that personality is the medium of God's revelation and not a Book, is gaining ground among Muslims. Secondly, the increase of literacy and with that the growth of the spirit of criticism. Day by day the Muslim is inclined to question most things before he accepts them as his creed. Only Christianity, as the religion of the living Jesus, can stand the test of such modern criticism. Thirdly, the fact that more Muslims are reading the Christian Scriptures to-day than ever before. Many of course do so in a spirit of criticism, but the fact stands, and Christianity is not afraid of criticism. Fourthly, Muslims are realising that in Islam, which for centuries has been recognised as unalterable, there is much which must be changed to suit modern requirements, or even thrown overboard if necessary.

Keen interest was shown by the members of the Ashram in the presentation of the entire subject and in the discussions that followed.

JOHN A. SUBHAN.

Notes.

The series of Discussions in Cairo.—With the article appearing last month on the very important subject of "our responsibility towards converts," we brought to a close the series of papers on *The Christian Message and Islam*, containing the views of groups of workers in Cairo on a variety of topics. These have found a place in our little paper, month by month, since the December issue, 1930.

We know from correspondence received that the opportunity thus given to a very much wider circle of workers to learn what others think on these subjects has been greatly appreciated. Many have found in them valuable guidance in their own problems. We regret all the more that this source of good material is, for the time being, exhausted.

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Tracts for Muslim Women. In the present issue we publish a further instalment to the series of these tracts for Muslim women, and for the use of Bible-women who work among them. It is gratifying to find that these papers, also, are being well received over a wide area. People are asking whether they have yet been translated into any of the vernaculars.

(1) We were agreeably surprised the other day to receive a packet with a covering letter from Miss K. M. Strong of St. Paul's School (British Syrian Mission), Bar Tuma, Damascus, containing sample copies of the first three of these tracts, done into *Arabic*. Miss Strong and her friends believe that these papers will be useful to their evangelists as well as to Muslim women. Copies may be had from Miss Strong at a cost of one Syrian piastre each, i.e., about one-half penny.

(2) Rev. D. A. Chowdhury, of the Church of Scotland Mission, Budge Budge, Bengal, and editor of that very useful four-page *Bengali* monthly paper, *Muslim Suhrid*, (the Muslim's friend) has already translated and published two of these tracts in his paper. It should be easy therefore to get them out in tract form for use in Bengal. Will those who desire to secure copies please apply to him?

(3) Mrs. Bevan Jones has been arranging for the translation into Urdu of the three tracts so far published, and Rev. J. A. Subhan, the editor, has undertaken to have them published, one by one, in *Ukhuwwat*, the Urdu monthly organ of the Brotherhood of Andrew. It will then be only a matter of time for the Punjab Religious Book Society, Anarkali, Lahore, to get them out in tract form. Application for these tracts in Urdu should be made to the Secretary of the P. R. B. Soc., Mr. F. D. Warris.

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Book of Instruction for Catechumens. Orders are coming to hand for copies of this course of studies in the Life and Teaching of Jesus for Muslim inquirers, which Mr. Browne reviewed in our last issue. Miss Padwick writes to say that S.P.C.K. London (Northumberland Avenue) will supply copies at 2s. each, or, in large quantities, at the wholesale price of 1s. 4d. each; in each case, postage extra. If ordered from Miss Monro, agent for the S.P.C.K., C.M.S. Buildings, Boulac, Cairo, they will cost 10 P.T.

We are requesting Mr. F. D. Warris, Secretary of The Punjab Religious Book Society, Anarkali, Lahore, to carry a considerable stock of this to meet the demand that is sure to be made for it in North India. We are arranging for its translation into Urdu at an early date.

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NEW MEMBERS.

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|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
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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.