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## News and Notes

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Series XX

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1st August = 27th Rabi'ul-Awwal (3rd mo.), 1351, A.H.

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### The Revelation of God's Character.

'This is life eternal to *know* Thee . . . . God.' (John 17: 3)

**I**N the devotional article contributed to these pages by Mr. Reynolds last month, he spoke of our fellowship with God, Who is pure LIGHT. He went on to say that 'light is a perfect blending of seven colours,' and, by a transference of thought, made them out to be the following *attributes* of the Divine Being: Power, Justice, Truth, Holiness, Beauty, Mercy, Grace. Though men, down the years, have perceived one or another of these attributes, it was reserved for Jesus to blend them all through Love in His revelation of God as FATHER. The God of Light thus stands revealed as the God of Love.

All this has reminded us of a question put by a Muslim youth after the lecture we gave in Mysore City on the subject, "How can man *know* God?" We had been describing man's search for God through the centuries and spoke of how men had at last come to believe that where they found love and goodness there they felt sure *God* was to be found; and that it was because men have always found in the soul of Jesus the fulness of Love that they have come to believe that in Him there resides the fulness of God—that the love of Jesus, in all its beauty and strength, *is* the love of God Himself—that the ultimate truth about God is just this, "God is LOVE."

To this, however, the Muslim took objection, and when asked for his view of the ultimate truth about God, replied, "He is *Qāhir*" (*i.e.*, victor, conqueror, subduer). Now, was that not a characteristically Muslim answer? FORCE first, and so Mr. Reynolds places it in the order of the attributes glimpsed by man. But there is no *necessary character* there. *Al-Qāhir* may, however, be 'violent' and 'oppressive.' This Powerful One guarantees nothing, and that is why men, denied the revelation of the Father, are in bondage to *fear*.

Muslims do not know the *character* of the Almighty One. It is our high privilege to lead them out of the bondage of ignorance fear and into the knowledge and liberty of 'Eternal life' in Christ.

### **The Exposure of Nicolas Rotovitch.**

**I**N 1887 Nicolas Notovitch, describing himself as a Russian war-correspondent, visited India and, proceeding into Tibet, gave out that he found, in one of the Buddhist monasteries, an unknown life of Christ, under the name of *Isa*. Eventually, in 1894, he published (in Paris) his story, together with the text of this 'life', in French, in a volume entitled, "La vie inconnue de Jesus Christ." The sensation it caused may be judged from the fact that at least eight editions of the book were printed that year. Further, three separate translations of it were entered for copyright at Washington in May of the same year: one by the novelist, F. Marion Crawford, another by Connelly and Landsberg, and another by Alexina Loranger. That year, too, translations appeared in Italian and German. A copy of the English translation published in London in 1895, the work of Violet Crispe (Hutchinson & Co.), with a portrait of the author, has recently been donated to the library of The Henry Martyn School, Lahore. A Spanish version appeared in Rio de Janeiro, in 1909.

It is a curious fact that one of the American publications referred to above was reprinted as lately as 1926, and that in that year the newspapers of America and other countries served up this 'discovery' once again after so long an interval.

The whole affair is referred to in a volume which appeared last year in America *Strange New Gospels* by E. J. Goodspeed, Ph.D. (Union of Chicago Press, 11s/-). The relevant section has been reproduced recently in the pages of *The United Church Review* (India, May, 1932), to which we are indebted for some of the particulars about the early publications of this 'Life', given above.

It has come to us rather as a surprise to find that the author of *Strange New Gospels* (whose narrative of this 'find' is worth reading) seems not to know of the very prompt exposure that was made of this alleged 'find' nearly 40 years ago. We refer to a modest booklet *Four Years in Tibet*, by Ahmad Shah, (afterwards on the staff of the S.P.G. Mission, Cawnpore), published by Lazarus & Co., Benares, 1906. This journal is long since out of print, but at our earnest request Rev. Ahmad Shah (now living in retirement at Dehra Dun, United Provinces, N. India) has secured a copy from a friend and presented it also to The Henry Martyn School.

In order to give point to the clear declarations made by Mr. Shah we propose first of all to set out briefly the claims made by Notovitch and then conclude with notes we made six years ago when reading the former's journal.

N. declared that while laid up with a broken leg at the monastery of Himis he prevailed on the Chief Lama, who had told him of the existence of the work, to read to him, through an interpreter, the somewhat detached verses of a Tibetan life of *Isa*, said to have been translated from Pali. As produced by N. the 'life' begins with an account of Israel in Egypt and its deliverance by Moses; its neglect of religion, and conquest by the Romans. Then follows an account of the Incarnation. We are told that *Isa*, at thirteen, rather than take a wife, left his home to wander with a merchant caravan to India (Sind) to study the laws of the great Buddhas. After a varied experience, during which he fled from the hostile Brahmins of India to the more kindly Buddhists with whom he learnt Buddhist lore and Pali, he returned at twenty-nine to Palestine, where eventually he met his death through the hostility of Pilate, not the Jews. (Obviously, the intention of the 'producer' is to account for the hidden years of Jesus, between the ages of twelve and thirty).

N. refers to *two large manuscript volumes* read to him by the aforesaid Lama, translated from rolls belonging to the Lassa Library, which in turn are declared to have been brought from India, Nepal, and Maghada 200 years after Christ.

And now for the evidence of Mr. Ahmad Shah.

He accepted an appointment as a doctor at Leh in Ladakh, in March 1894, just about the time when Notovitch's "find" of this unknown Life of Christ was creating a sensation in English and Indian newspapers through the publication of the original French and later, English translations of the book. He therefore determined to take all possible steps to investigate the truth of Notovitch's statements. The latter claimed to have been in that district less than four weeks; Ahmad Shah remained there for four years.

To begin with he met Mr. Knowles, C.M.S. missionary of Kashmir, who told him that he had ascertained from the Leh missionaries that the whole affair was a hoax. Notovitch had never been near Leh.

In Srinagar he met Bakula, son of the Raja of Zaniskar, a man of great importance, head of the monastery of Ispatak—the man who helped Capt. Ramsay to prepare a Tibetan Dictionary. This person when asked if there was among the Tibetans any independent knowledge of *Isa* or a Life of him in Tibetan or Pali, replied that their only source of information was through the missionaries of Leh.

Later, while held up at the broken bridge between Kargil and Leh, Mr. Shah interrogated Colonel Ward (one of the party delayed) about Notovitch. The Colonel told him that the Simla police were after him, believing him to be a Russian spy!

Having crossed, he came to Mulbah convent where Notovitch professed to have first heard the extraordinary news about *Isa*. The Lama of that place, in reply to questioning, said: "I have been on this spot for thirty-eight years, have seen many of our convents, have

gone to Lassa several times, have seen so many learned men of our people and yet I have never heard of such a Buddha (*Isa*) as you describe. I disown any such name."

At Kharbu he met the Treasurer of Ladakh, Munshi Palgais, a staunch Buddhist, who had been twice to Lassa and who knew (besides Tibetan) Panjabi well. This man was a number of the Himis convent, knew all the Lamas there and was well-versed in their lore, and yet confessed to knowing nothing of any book in their convent on the life of *Isa*.

So also at the convent of Lamayuro—the chief Lama seated among thirty others replied that he knew nothing about a book on *Isa*, though Notovitch says it was here that he first heard that such a book existed. Here, too, next day Ahmad Shah saw a Lama of eighty-three years, who had become a Lama at eleven, he had visited all the convents, but had not even heard the name of *Isa*.

At Suspool Mr. Shah met one of the Leh officials, Mustafa, a Muslim, whose brother Habibullah was to be Dr. Shah's assistant. When asked about the Tibetan version of the life of *Isa*, he exclaimed, "*La haul wala quzwat*" (an Arabic exclamation of indignation), and added "I have lived among these people for thirty-two years and I have heard for the first time from your mouth that *Isa (Alaihi's salam)* was among the Tibetan or Hindu infidels."

Arrived at Leh, Mr. Shah asked the missionary, Mr. Shawe, about Notovitch's find. Mr. Shawe had already written a good deal in refutation of Notovitch and now told Ahmad Shah that "Notovitch had never been in the vicinity and that he (Mr. Shawe) had made sure of this fact, having had ample opportunities of doing so."

Notovitch had appealed to Dr. Marx of Leh, who (so Notovitch alleged) treated him for his broken leg. Mr. Shah discovered that this Dr. Marx had died in 1889, five years before the first appearance of Notovitch's book (in French). Nevertheless Mr. Shah had possession of Dr. Marx's medical records and he hunted them from 1885 to 1890, (Notovitch made his journey in 1887) and though he found an entry for treating a certain Mr. Mowbray's dog for scabies, there was no trace of Notovitch's 'fracture.'

His next step was to visit the monastery at Himis where the "find" was alleged to have been made. For this purpose he secured the services of Capt. Godfrey, British Joint-Commissioner at Leh, who wrote for him to the Chief Lama at Himis. The correspondence between these two officials was published at the time in *The Christian* by Rev. J. Weber, Moravian missionary at Leh. The original is still kept among the Joint-Commissioner's office records of 1894. "The Lamas disowned all knowledge of the book, and refused the credit of having tended the broken-legged foreigner!"

Notovitch had asserted that he saw two volumes in which the text of the life of *Isa* was found. There are no books in the commonly accepted sense; all writings are on separate leaves between a pair of wooden slates, and these are wrapped on cloth.

A year later, in May 1895, Prof. J. Archibald Douglas, of Agra Government College, appeared at Leh commissioned by Prof. Max Muller to make an independent investigation, and he came to similar conclusions.

The author of *Strange New Gospels* quotes the scene in the presence of the Chief Lama at Himis monastery when Professor Douglas, as his guest, read to him Notovitch's book. "Lies, lies, lies, nothing but lies," he exclaimed with indignation.

Max Muller and Professor Douglas may be said to have annihilated Notovitch, but due regard should be given to the very early exposure made by Rev. Ahmad Shah.

## The Henry Martyn School, Lahore.

### REPORT ON

#### EXTENSION COURSES IN NORTH AND SOUTH INDIA.

**O**UR friends will doubtless be interested to read the following brief record of the Extension Work undertaken by the members of the Staff this summer.

*Lahore.* Under the auspices of the Punjab C.C., a short course was conducted, at head-quarters, for the benefit of missionaries in and around Lahore. Three of the lectures were specially delivered by Muslim gentlemen. Forty-two persons were enrolled (twenty men, twenty-two women), and these represented twelve societies or institutions. The average attendance at the fifteen lectures was thirty. Literature sales amounted to Rs. 13-9-0.

*Gujranwala, Punjab.* Mr. Subhan lectured to the students of the Vernacular Theological Seminary, 16th-23rd April.

*Sat Tal Ashram.* It had been arranged that Mr. Subhan should be one of the lecturers at an Extension Course (in Bengali) at Barisal, East Bengal, 7th-27th May, but this had to be cancelled owing to a serious outbreak of illness at Barisal. Instead he went to the Sat Tal Ashram (at the invitation of Dr. Stanley Jones) where he delivered a series of lectures, an account of which appeared last month.

The Principal proceeded to South India and delivered short courses of lectures at the following centres:

*Kodaikanal,* 25th-30th April, at the Kodaikanal Missionary Union. Sixty-two persons were enrolled (forty women, twenty-two men), representing nineteen societies. Average attendance at the six lectures, forty-five. Literature sales, Rs. 92-11-0.

*Ootacamund,* 9th-14th May, in the Union Church. Fifty-four were enrolled (twenty-seven men, twenty-seven women), representing twenty-five societies and institutions. Average attendance, forty. Literature sales, Rs. 68-6-6. Orders were taken for thirty-nine copies of *The People of the Mosque*.

*Mysore City.* It was only possible to arrange for one public meeting for Muslims, and this was poorly attended largely because of heavy rain at the time. About thirty gathered to listen to an address on "How can man know God?"

*Bangalore*, 20th-25th May, in the Central Hall of The United Theological College. Thirty-four persons were enrolled (nineteen men, fifteen women), representing fifteen societies. Average attendance, about twenty-eight. Literature sales, Rs. 58-0-6. Orders were taken for twenty copies of *The People of the Mosque*.

On 24th May, through the kindness of Miss Potter, a Garden Party, attended by eighty-five guests, was held in the grounds of the C.E.Z. Mission. The Principal addressed the gathering on the aims and work of the School.

Arrangements had been made for two public addresses in Urdu to Muslims at the Y.M.C.A. Hall. The attendance was, for some reason, very poor. However, about thirty gave very attentive hearing to an address, on the second evening, on *Divine Forgiveness*.

*Landour*, 13th June to 8th July. For this course, which was conducted in the hall of the Landour Community Centre, all three members of the Staff were present. Forty-six persons were enrolled (twenty-four women, twenty-two men), representing seventeen societies and institutions. To this group thirty-two lectures were given, at which the average attendance was twenty-five. Literature sales amounted to Rs. 117-6-6, and orders were taken for sixty-three copies of *The People of the Mosque*.

Apart from the regular course, the Principal gave three special addresses to those who attended the *Landour Community Centre Conference*, 15th-17th June. The average attendance at these was 100.

So that well over 300 persons, attached to about 50 different societies, came into touch with the work of the School during the three months, from 8th April—8th July.

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## The Moslem World Quarterly for July, 1932.

Arabia, The Cradle of Islam.

**T**HIS might be the sub-title of the July number of *The Moslem World* for the Neglected Peninsula comes to its own in this issue of the Quarterly.

The opening article is a review by the Editor, of Professor Hurgronje's "Mekka." This important work was published in German in 1886, but has not until now appeared in English translation. Here we have an accurate picture of Moslem life and thought in the Holy City forty years ago, and although there have been great changes, the sub-soil of Islam remains unchanged, and exclusive fanaticism still reigns in this corner of the world.

The present dynasty of Ibn Sa'ud and his Wahhabi followers is described by Mr. W. F. Smally, who lives on the Arabian border-marches in Transjordan. To-day the number of Christians in Arabia may seem negligible, but before Islam there were Christian tribes in the north-west and a considerable settlement in the south-west in Nejrán and Yamen.

Doctor C. Stanley G. Mylrea, from his long experience and careful observation as a medical missionary in Arabia, reveals some of the present-day heartless cruelty toward man and beast on the part of the Arabs. His article bears the title "Medievalism in Arabia." The Reverend W. G. Greenslade, D.D., tells of the martyrs of Nejrán in the early days.

One article deals with present-day India. It is timely and presents the views of the Reverend B. C. Ishwardas on Hindu-Moslem Relations. Such subjects as the Clash of Races in Macedonia, The Passion Play of Persia, the work among the Blind in Cairo and the story of a Turkish Evangelist, arrest the reader's attention, and, with the usual wealth of book-reviews, current news and an index to periodicals, make this number of the Magazine true to its standard as "the most valuable survey of the world of Islam published in English."

Published by the Missionary Review Publishing Company, 156, Fifth Avenue, New York City. 50c. a copy. \$2.00 year.

## The Macdonald Presentation Volume.

**A** VOLUME of Oriental, Biblical and Other Studies is being prepared at Hartford and will be published by the Princeton University Press, in honor of the Reverend Professor Duncan Black MacDONALD, D.D., for forty years Professor of Semitic Languages in the Hartford Seminary Foundation and foremost Orientalist in his special department of Muslim Theology. The volume is to be presented to him on his seventieth birthday, April 9, 1933.

The contributors and their articles are, in part, as follows:

The Rev. C. C. Adams, Ph.D., D.D., Cairo, Egypt, "*Muhammad 'Abduh and the Modern Literary Revival in Egypt'*"; Professor Moses Baily, Ph.D., Wellesley, "*David the Reubenite, a Messianic Figure in Three Religions*"; the Rev. J. Kingsley Birge, Istanbul, "*Turkey's First great Poet of the People*"; Professor Pierce Butler, Ph.D., University of Chicago, "*The Earliest Arabic Books and Translations Printed in Europe*"; the Rev. D. M. Donaldson, Ph.D., D.D., Meshed, Persia, "*Chapter on 'Jesus and the Gospels' in al-Ya'qubi's 'History'*"; Margaret Doolittle, Hillside School, "*Religious Education of Muslim Children in Syria*"; the Rev. E. E. Elder, Ph.D., Cairo, Egypt, Al-Tahawi's "*'Risala fi Usuli 'l-Din'*"; Joshua Finkel, Ph.D., Brooklyn, "*The Influence of Christianity on Islam*"; Professor G. W. Fiske, Ph.D., Oberlin, "*Modern Objectives in Religious Education*"; Professor J. W. Flight, Ph.D., Haverford, "*Observations on the Origins of the Semitic Alphabet*"; Professor Elihu Grant, Haverford, "*Excavations and their Results at 'Ain Shems*"; the Rev. Yervant Hadidian, Ph.D., New Britain, Conn., "*A Study of Philonism*"; Professor Lewis Hodous, D.D., Hartford, "*The Introduction of Buddhism into China*"; Professor Elmer E. S. Johnson, Ph.D., D.D., Hartford, "*Augustus Charles Thompson; Pioneer American Theological Student in Germany*"; Professor Albert C. Lane, D.D., Hartford, "*Recent Theories Concerning the Name 'Jahweh'*"; Professor Florence Bell Lovell, Ph.D., Vassar, "*The Conception of Christ in the Saying Source of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*"; the Rev. R. F. McNeille, Uppingham, England, "*An Index to the Commentary of Fakr al-Din al-Razi*"; President John E. Merrill, D.D., Aleppo College, Syria, "*A Christian 'Word of Witness'*"; Professor Barnette Miller, Ph.D., F.R.G.S., Wellesley, "*Curriculum of the Palace School of Muhammad II*"; Professor Katharine Hazeltine Paton, Hartford, "*A Report of the First Season's Excavation of Un-sha-gi, Jemez, New Mexico, 1928*"; Professor W. M. Randall, Ph.D., University of Chicago, an Arabic Study; Professor W. G. Shellabear, D.D., Hartford, "*A Malay Treatise on Popular Sufi Practices*"; Professor William Thomson, Ph.D., Harvard, "*The Kharijites*"; the Rev. Murray T. Titus, Ph.D., D.D., Moradabad India, "*The Idea of the Kingdom of God in Relation to Islam*"; the Rev. J. M.

Trout, Sandwich, Mass., "*Social Ethics in the Christian Church*"; Professor Laura H. Wild, Mount Holyoke, "*Tyndale's Linguistic Genius*"; Professor E. C. Worcester, D.D., New Brunswick, "*God and the World: Immanence and Transcendence*."

There will be a photographic frontispiece of Dr. MacDonald and a bibliography of his writings.

To ensure securing copies, subscriptions should be made now. Payment may be made upon receipt of the volume. An order form is appended.

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Price \$5'00 a copy (after publication, the cost will be \$6.00 per copy).

### NOTICE.

Will the Secretaries of the Provincial Committees on work among Muslims (N.C.C., India), please note that all applications to the A.C.L.S.M. for grants for literature for Muslims, should be sent to Dr. M. T. Titus, Secretary of the Literature Committee, on or before 1st October. His address is, Methodist Mission, Moradabad, U.P. Forms of application can be obtained from Dr. Titus.

### NEW MEMBERS.

Miss Bradford,	W.M.M.S.	Hd. Qtrs., London.
Miss (Dr.) B. N. Fletcher,	C.M.S. Hosp.	Multan, Punjab.
Prof. S. N. Talibuddin,	Un. Theol. Coll.	Saharanpur, U.P.
Miss M. Florian	Miss. School	Jai, Meerut Dist.

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.

