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News and Notes

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Members of the Missionaries to Muslims League.

Series XX

September, 1932.

1st September = 29th Rabi'ul-Akhir (4th mo.), 1351, A.H.

They fasten their eyes on Jesus.

THERE is more than one way of looking at Jesus, as the Gospels remind us.

For instance, we heard a pastor recently counselling a class of communicants to maintain their spiritual life and growth in the knowledge of their Master, by "*keeping their eyes fixed on Jesus.*" This, he urged, could be done in three ways: by reading about Him continually in the New Testament, and especially in the Gospels; by talking to Him in prayer; and by looking out for Him in others, *i.e.*, by seeking to serve the souls around them. Yes, there is the look of need and intense desire, the look that brings new life and hope. How our Lord must have been thrilled when Andrew and Philip, themselves excited, came to report that certain Greeks had said, "Sir, we would see Jesus!"

But the Gospels also speak of evil-minded people, full of malice and guile, who "watched" Jesus, whose eyes were "fastened on him," if haply they might bring a case against Him. Those Pharisees of old have their counterpart in some of the Muslims of to-day. In a determined attempt to dethrone Christ these too "fasten their eyes" upon Him. One sees it in the words of the "last injunction" of the Mirza of Qadian to his followers: (Do not) he said, "waste your precious time in other wearisome wrangles (with Christians). Just concentrate upon the death of Christ. . . . prove that Christ joined the ranks of the dead."

Now we should, as a friend has pointed out to us, really thank God for this "concentration" upon Christ. For it is a summons to us to "uplift" Him before these people. The difficulty has often been that they have wrangled about lesser things. And after all, as Dr. Carnegie Simpson has said in his great book, *The Fact of Christ*,

it is a dangerous process this, of scrutinising Christ too closely; for He has a way of turning His search-light on us. There is the "danger" of conversion!

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On Western Converts to Islam.

THE August issue of *The Islamic Review* (Woking, England) contains an explanation for the acceptance of Islam by yet another nominal Christian. One is frequently asked whether the number of such 'converts' is considerable. It seems to us that we should concern ourselves with a much more important subject of enquiry, *viz*: 'what reasons do these persons give for choosing Islam'?

Well, the case before us is illuminating. In the first place, H. H. . . ., on his own showing, felt he had nothing to lose in forsaking the faith of his fathers. That faith was 'a matter of birth, not of choice'—something that comes to be accepted in later life as a matter of fact. 'We . . . examine everything except our religious faith, particularly if it is Christianity.'

But, while 'almost every Christian home contains the Bible', though 'generally used as a mantle-piece decoration' (and in this sense it is 'the book nobody knows,' whereas 'the Koran is the book everybody reads in Islam'), *this* convert had read 'the text-book of Christianity' many times.

As he tells us of the impressions left on him by his frequent reading of it one is forcibly reminded of Dr. Fosdick's wise counsel in *The Modern Use of the Bible*. Would that H. H. had read his Fosdick also! This is all he says of the Bible: "I doubt if there is a person who does not shudder while reading its pages filled as they are with blood-curdling slaughter, rapine and destruction, along with tales of incest, rape and other vile obscenity. Indeed, after reading the Bible one cannot help but wonder as to the nature of this God of the Christians." (Not a word about the lofty thoughts of the Hebrew prophets, and no suggestion that there is such a thing as the New Testament, or Jesus of Nazareth!) He concludes his brief explanation for forsaking the faith by saying: 'The Bible was the first cause in leading me away from Christianity.'

What then did he find in Islam? "I was particularly attracted to the Islamic faith because it is (1) rational, (2) devoid of obscenity, and (3) does not tax one's credulity. . . . It does not contain the pessimism of Buddhism; it is not void of Divinity like Shintoism or Confucianism, nor is it a money-made religion. I found that it invites and encourages the pursuit of knowledge. The pages of history are filled with facts citing the hindrances which Christianity placed in the path way of progress and civilization. (In other words, the long-past history of Christendom is a reason for rejecting Christianity to-day).

That is the sum total of his explanation. Given the opportun-

ity in an article of 650 words that's all he makes of it. With amazing inconsequence he concludes: "I do not hesitate to state that were Islam better known in the Western World, it would astound the civilized world by its gain in adherents. The reason why it is not better known is that it is with difficulty that one can obtain authorized or even unbiased literature pertaining to the Islamic faith."

One is tempted to ask—does H.H. know Islam as it really is, or do we? True, were Islam *better* known in the West and *then* were it to gain many more adherents, it *would* astound "the civilized world." But as Dr. Weitbrecht Stamon has observed, Islam has gathered its adherents (mainly) "from among Asiatic and African nationalities of not too-widely different stages of culture and social life"; but *not* from the white races. (*An Outline of the Religion of Islam*, published by Church House, Westminster, S.W.1., 52 pp. 1s.).

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The Kurdish Revolt Suppressed.

The Sunrise, the English weekly formerly issued from Qadian, has recently undergone an extraordinary metamorphosis. Once run on lines very similar to *The Light*, Lahore, it is now very ably conducted under the joint-editorship of (Miss) Amina Butt, and (Mr.) Majeed Malik, Lahore. The journal bears no resemblance whatsoever to its predecessor. Its front and back covers are invariably illustrated with reproductions from art pictures, the subject of which, as often as not, is woman.

The scope of the articles includes the utmost variety and indicates an entirely new conception of the purpose of such a journal on the part of the editors. The issue for July 25, from which we quote a paragraph below, contains articles on the *Art of Persian Glass* by Arthur Upham Pope; a review of *The Magazine World*; a contribution to a series of *Real Life Stories*; the part played by *Wives in Wagering Transactions*; a leader on *Communal Award Forecasts* (the sympathies of the paper are definitely Muslim), *The week in India and abroad*, etc.

In the course of a graphic account of the suppression of the Kurdish revolt in Iraq—from the pen of a special correspondent—there occurs the following interesting statement:

"There was every reason for the Government to intervene, . . . Sheikh Ahmad managed to increase the chaos around him by religious complications of an aggravated kind. His tribe, originally Christian, fairly recently turned to Muhammadanism, which developed in a manner not unusual to these mountain regions of Iraq and Persia. The Sheikh's brother before him was venerated for his holiness and was, according to many witnesses, seen to float to heaven from a Turkish gallows in Mosul, where his earthly career came to an abrupt

end. His mantle fell upon Sheikh Ahmad who suddenly declared himself to be a divine incarnation and last summer abandoned Islam altogether, starting a religion of his own. He celebrated his and his followers' freedom from religious prejudice by a banquet of *pig*, and so shocked his orthodox neighbours that a series of small *jihads* were begun against him, bringing about blood-thirsty retaliation and general chaos."

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Tracts for Muslim Women.

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

5. Zakat.

ABDUL'S mother was busy cooking when Joseph's mother called one day to see her.

"I am expecting friends to-day," said she, "that is why we are so busy, but do not go away. We are glad to see you. To-day is the 'Id you know and the fast is over. It will be some little time before Abdul's father returns from the Idgah where he has gone to say the *namaz*, and give alms."

Joseph's mother—"I am sure that God is pleased when we remember the poor, for our Father in heaven has given us so much to be thankful for, and we have received so many blessings from Him, that it is right that we should remember others less fortunate."

Abdul's mother—"And why not, indeed! it is a religious duty, and if we do not give alms I have heard that God will not accept our prayers."

J—"It is certainly a duty but it is a privilege, too, to remember those who are in need, and it is one way of showing our love to God."

A—"What do you mean? You mean that you will get your reward, don't you? Allah is pleased if we do this and if we do not then He will punish us. To give alms is a religious duty."

J—"Listen sister, there are two ways of giving. Let me tell you a story. One morning in the big temple in Jerusalem people were bringing their offerings to God. The rich people were putting quite a lot of money into the treasury, and they were very pleased that others saw what they were giving. They thought that they were specially favoured by God because they were rich and they enjoyed hearing people praise them for putting so much into the treasury. Jesus Christ was in the temple that morning but He did not praise them."

A—"But why not?"

J—"Wait and I will finish the story. A poor widow woman who had very little money came into the temple, too."

A—"Poor thing! The life of a widow is a hard life. May Allah have mercy on all such!"

J—"Jesus Christ saw this poor woman and noticed her putting her two mites into the treasury. She wanted to put something in but her gift was so little that she hoped no one would notice. But Jesus had seen her and He could see into her heart, and knew that she would like to have given more had she been able to. He called His disciples and said to them, 'Look, you see what a lot of money these rich men are giving, yet this poor widow has given more than all of them.'"

A—"Why did He say that? What did He mean?"

J—"Well, He wanted them to know that God did not despise her gift because it was so little. She had given all she had. The rich people had plenty of money to spend on themselves. Their giving was no sacrifice to them, they had all they needed and so they gave to God what they did not require for themselves. There was selfishness and pride in their giving, too. The poor widow had given her all."

A—"But she need not have given. Our religion excuses the very poor."

J—"But she *wanted* to give something to God. She had a thankful heart. The rich men had their reward in the praise of men, and that was the only reward that they would receive. But God looks on the heart, and sees there the *reason* why we do things. It is not how much or how little we give that matters, but the thing that matters most in God's sight is the reason that leads us to give."

A—"We give because it is a duty demanded by our religion."

J—"But there must be a deeper reason than that. When we give our charity we must ask ourselves: are we just giving as a religious duty, or is it that we want to help others because we have received so much? Do we give because we want God to reward us? Do we give so that we may receive? Or do we give because we have received?"

A—"But I never thought about it before in this way."

J—"Then, do you not think it is better to give because we are glad to give, rather than because we must?"

A—"Why, of course, it is better to give gladly."

J—"Yes, God loves a cheerful giver. There was an old prophet about whom we read in our Bible. He was trying to teach the people about the things that God really required from them. He said, 'What doth God really require from thee, but to act justly and to show mercy and to walk humbly with thy God.'"

A—"Good words, indeed!"

J—"You see God looks on us as His children, and He wants us to think of Him as our Heavenly Father. He wants us to be sincere and glad in our giving. He does not want us to perform a lot of religious duties just because we fear that if we do not do them He

will punish us. God *loves* us—think of that!—and believe it is true. We can love Him in return, and one of the ways in which we can show our love to Him is to remember His other children who are in want. He wants us to give our alms out of a grateful heart, and then there need be no limit to the amount we give when we realise that we are all God's children, one big family—and we shall be glad to try to make this world a little better for others."

A—"Well, this is good teaching. Do come again and teach us some more."

J—"I will gladly come again, for there is so much that Jesus taught us about God and His love for us, but you have visitors coming so I will go now. May you have a happy day and may God be with you!"

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"The Muslim Revival."

The Muslim Revival, a quarterly magazine of Muslim Thought and Life, has been started under the general direction of Maulana Muhammad Ali, the leader of the Ahmadiyya Community, Lahore, and under the editorship of Maulvi Muhammad Yakub Khan. According to its own announcement it is to be "devoted to the enlightenment, rejuvenation, uplift and advance of Musalmans," and it sets out to be the "Torch Bearer of the Culture of Islam." Its first issue appeared in March, 1932. Its frontispiece is a picture of the Rani of Sarawak, bearing the following inscription, "H. A. Princess Khair-un-Nissa Dayang Muda of Sarawak, who chose mid-air for her acceptance of Islam." It has several other illustrations besides this one. The aims and objects of the journal are described as follows:

"*Revival!* This is the word that sums up the aims and objects, the ideals and aspirations of *The Muslim Revival*. The world of Islam, after a centuries-long spell of listlessness and stupor, is astir with new life. The old attitude of indifference to the struggle of life is undergoing a new orientation. A universal tide of awakening has swept over the length and breadth of the vast world of Islam and those in the vanguard of Muslim thought and life are dreaming new dreams. Once more has the conviction got hold of the mind of Islam that Islam is certainly not the spent force that, judging from the general withering of life among the Musalmans, it was supposed to be, that it has yet a great role to play and a contribution to make to the destiny of mankind. *The Muslim Revival* is just a ripple of that tide, a spark of that conviction—the harbinger of the Glorious Dawn which is in sight."

The first number contains articles by leading Muslim writers on "Muslim Culture," "A Mughal's contribution to the civilization of India," "The Babi Movement," "Islam's contribution to World Peace," and the Presidential Address of Sir Muhammad Iqbal at the session of the All-India Muslim Conference, held at Lahore, March 21, 22, 1932.

The annual subscription for this quarterly is Rs. 5/-.

J. A. S.

Notes.

Can you supply this need? Missionaries in an important centre in South India are greatly in need of an Evangelist with a knowledge of Urdu, and competent to work among Muslims. If the wife of such a man could do work as a Bible-woman so much the better. Particulars can be supplied by the Secretary.

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What should we do with Converts? Periodically we are faced with the problem of the best way to deal with converts. In the past few weeks letters have reached us from the far North, East and West of India telling us of new converts; in this we all rejoice and praise God. But we are as often asked for guidance as to baptism, further instruction, training and employment. As a rule we advise that a stand be made for Christ in the place where the convert is known. We feel, too, that a *Converts' Home*, here and there, is not the best solution in the matter of further preparation. A responsibility rests upon the local Church to care for these. Alas! the local Church is often quite unfitted for the task.

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Remember the need of Ceylon. It was a great joy to have no less than nineteen missionaries from Ceylon attending the Extension Course of lectures at Kodaikanal, S. India, last April. Yet a member of long-standing writes: "No work is being done amongst Muslim men in Ceylon, and for years and years we (C. of E.) have been striving to get a suitable Evangelist It is good to hear of the harvest in other parts, but one longs for at least some ears of corn to be gathered in here too."

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"A very interesting time." From another part of India a member writes:—"We are having a very interesting time. One of the leading maulvis here, who has been making charms for the last thirty years, has thrown his books into the river, and is being instructed." The change in him is due to the reading of a Gospel. "He will have a good following if he does come out. . . I was very struck with his old mother whom he has been teaching with his children. His wife is dead. . . I would like prayer for them."

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Miftah-ul-Qur'an. Rev. Ahmad Shah has written to say that he still has three or four bound copies of his valuable Dictionary of the Quran, at Rs. 10 per copy, plus Re. 1-4-0 postage. This is a bargain price, at 33 p.c. discount. Apply to him direct at 37, East Canal Road, Dehra Dun, U.P.

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'The People of the Mosque'. The Indian edition of this book by the Secretary—"an introduction to the Study of Islam, with special reference to India"—is being printed by The Wesleyan Mission Press, Mysore, and should be ready by the time this issue reaches our members. It will have about 350 pp., including an Appendix on 'The Church in India and the Convert from Islam,' also a Glossary of about 250 words. Price, paper covers, about Rs. 2-12-0, postage extra. Orders should be placed with The Association Press, 5 Russell St., Calcutta.

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The Stories of the Prophets. We are glad to hear that the P.R.B. Society, Lahore, are undertaking the preparation of an Urdu translation of Part I of Miss McLean's *Stories of the Prophets*, which in a one volume

edition has had a truly remarkable sale in *Bengali*. The two Parts will prove a valuable addition to our literature for Muslims in *Urdu*.

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Tracts for Muslim Women. We publish in this issue a further instalment in the series of Tracts for Muslim women, No. 5, *Zakat*. We are grateful to a member for pointing out a faulty statement in the opening para of Tract No. 4, *Baqr Id*. The paragraph will, accordingly, read as follows:

"It was the day of Baqr Id, Husain's Ma had suddenly heard of the serious illness of her married daughter, *so the next day after celebrating the Feast of Sacrifice 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.

'Yesterday was Baqr Id,' 'said Husain's Ma, 'so I had to stay at home for the sacrifice. Do you Christians keep the Baqr Id?'"

. For Praise and Prayer.

PRAISE for the widespread interest in this work which has been created in N. and S. India, through the H.M.S. Courses of Islamic Studies.

PRAISE for the encouragement that has come to workers in different parts of the country because of cases of definite turning to Christ.

PRAY for guidance in regard to the future movements of recent converts who have been baptized, or are now seeking baptism.

PRAYER is asked "for a young Muslim woman (in North India) in a position of grave moral danger. She is a zanana pupil and has appealed to us for help—we have been trying to do so, but suddenly communication with her has been stopped, and we cannot get in touch with her now."

PRAY for the *Maulvi* who is teaching the members of his family, that he himself may be taught of God and come to a saving knowledge of Christ.

NEW MEMBERS.

Rev. T. Ch. Kelly,
Rev. E. Clatworthy,

Austr. B.M.S.

Pabna, E. Bengal.

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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.