

Confidential.

Not to be reproduced without
permission of the Editor.

News and Notes

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

Series XXI

April, 1933.

1st April = 5th Zu'l-Hijjah (12th mo.), 1351, A.H.

27th April, Muslim New Year's Day, 1352.

The Cry of Distress on the Cross

(see News and Notes, September and December, 1932.)

IN the life of every great man, every pioneer for the truth, there comes a moment when he seems to stand alone. He feels that none but he holds the truth, and that if he drops it none other will uphold it. Such is the experience of some missionary toiling for ten long years in an unproductive field without a single convert. Such was the experience of Elijah, holding up his hands and uttering his despairing cry: "I, even I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away." Such was the experience of St. Francis of Assisi, preaching the gospel of love in the camp of the Saracens, while the army of the Crusaders a few hundred yards away denied the gospel in their every word and action.

Into that deepest, bitterest, experience our Saviour entered. He had prayed that if it were possible the cup of suffering might be taken from Him. It was impossible. The love of God for sinful men could not be satisfied until God shared in His own heart the sufferings of men. So Christ bore the cross and bore it alone. All His followers had forsaken Him and fled at the time of the arrest. The two on whose love He could most count had stood by at the foot of the cross; but now, at His bidding, they had gone their way. He was left alone, without human sympathy, and without any signs of help coming from God to remove from Him the last dregs of the cup of pain.

Such were the conditions which drew from Him that most bitter cry, *Eloi, Eloi, lema shabaqtani*. We must own that this is one of the hardest of our Lord's sayings to understand. The difficulty mainly is to enter into our Lord's feelings at such a time, but there is also a linguistic difficulty.

The cry was in Aramaic, the Jewish language of our Lord's day, and is a translation or adaptation of the Hebrew words in the opening of Psalm 22. The Aramaic word *shabaqtani* occurs a few times in the Aramaic parts of the Old Testament in the sense of 'to leave alone,' 'to let go,' and it has the same meaning in the Targum and in Syriac. There would therefore be good linguistic grounds for thinking that our Lord meant, "Why hast thou left me to suffer alone?" or "Why hast thou not answered my prayer and taken the cup from me?" The fact seems generally to have been overlooked that the corresponding Hebrew word in Psalm 22, '*azabhtani*,' can mean 'to leave alone' as well as 'to abandon' or 'to forsake.'

Some Christian commentators have gone so far as to suppose that God had actually forsaken Christ, that God turned His face away from the Lamb who bore the sins of the world. That interpretation is certainly wrong. The bearing of the sins of the world was as much the Father's act as the Son's. In this matter, as in all matters, the will of the Father and of the Son were one. "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father doing." Nor is it much easier to suppose that Christ believed Himself abandoned by God. Such was His trust in the Father, and His knowledge of the essential unity between Himself and the Father, that He could not have imagined, even for an instant, that the Father was not sharing to the full in His experience of suffering.

From such considerations, and from the usage of the Aramaic word, we are probably justified in concluding that the word implied no reproach of God, but was just the agonized question why it was necessary for Him to drink the bitter cup.

The very words, "My God my God," seem to indicate that there was no separation between Christ and God. It was to His own God and Father that Christ appealed for an answer to the problem of the world's suffering which He was now experiencing in Himself. Moreover, it is probable that in quoting the first line of Psalm 22 our Lord had the whole Psalm in mind. Even in the Hebrew the first line may equally well be translated, "My God, my God, why hast thou left me unaided?" and the words that follow, "so far from helping me," bear out the same interpretation. Throughout the Psalm the recurring note is one of trust in God in spite of suffering at the hands of many enemies, and in spite of prayers for help remaining unanswered: "Thou art holy . . . our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted and thou didst deliver them . . . Thou art my God from my mother's womb." And then, as the Psalm draws towards its close, the trust in God rises in a great crescendo of praise: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee . . . All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the Kingdom is the Lord's and He is the Ruler over the nations."

The interpretation referred to above, that God turned away

His face from the cross in the hour of darkness, is blasphemy against His holiness: it would leave us again with that unfeeling God of heathen antiquity who could not be touched by our infirmities. For Christ to have believed such a thing possible would mean that at the critical moment His faith in the loving Father failed. But if the interpretation here offered is true it gives us an insight into the full incarnation of God in man that we had scarcely dreamt of. The taking up of human suffering into the heart of God was no formal matter but a bearing of pain such as our less sensitive natures can have little idea of.

Then let every man who for the truth's sake stands alone with the world against him, who battles on when the cause seems hopeless know assuredly that Christ has been before on that road. Christ had staked all upon the love of God, and for His faith in that love went to the cross. In that hour love was hidden. Hate was the ruling passion that day, and the very skies scowled with black thunder-clouds. The powers of evil seemed triumphant. Yet His plea for enlightenment was addressed to the One in whom He trusted, "My God, my God!"

L. E. BROWNE.

(Notes from an address at a three hours' service on Good Friday)

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.

6. Namaz.

"LOOK, Mother!" said Fatima as she came home from school one day. "I have brought a new friend with me. Her name is Rahel and she lives quite near us. She says she isn't a Muslim like us, but a Christian."

"A Christian!" exclaimed Fatima's mother. "I've never seen a Christian. I should like to meet her mother. Rahel, would your mother come to see me?" "Of course she would," said Rahel, and off she went to bring her. Soon the two women were chatting like old friends, and, as was natural, they began to ask each other questions about their different religious customs. "Do you read *namaz*?" said Fatima's Ma to Rahel's Ma.

Rahel's Ma:—I do say *namaz*, but not just as you do. I hear the *muazzin* call the *azan* in the early morning, but I do not say the *fajr namaz*; I pray in a different way. Not knowing Arabic I cannot understand the call of the *muazzin*, but I have been told that he says, "Prayer is better than sleep." That is a true word,

sister. We Christians also believe it. Perhaps you know that we follow the teaching of Jesus the Messiah as it is written in the Injil.

F's Ma :—Yes, I know that. He is one of our Prophets. I have heard of Him, and of the Injil.

R's Ma :—Good! well it is written in the Injil that Jesus the Messiah used to rise long before daylight to pray to God, and sometimes He would even spend the whole night out on the lonely mountain-side in prayer. One day when He had been praying His disciples wished that they could pray as He did, and they said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray." Then He taught them a prayer which is so simple and so helpful that all Christians know it and use it even to this day. I have taught my Rahel. Would you like to hear her say it?

F's Ma :—Yes indeed I should.

So Rahel's Ma called her, and she came and very shyly repeated the following prayer, which Christians call "The Lord's prayer."

'Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory,
For ever and ever. *Amen.*'

F's Ma :—That is a good prayer and Rahel repeated it very nicely, but why did she not say it in Arabic?

R's Ma :—We do not understand Arabic, so we do not pray in that language. I have taught Rahel and her brothers and sisters that God understands all languages. He is our Heavenly Father. He loves us more than our earthly fathers and mothers do, and He likes us to pray to Him in words that we understand. Every night and morning my children kneel down and pray to God in their own words. As soon as this little one in my arms is able to speak I will teach him to do the same. He will learn to speak to God, asking Him to forgive his sins and help him to be good. Their father and I do this too, and we also have what we call "Family Worship," when we all gather together and read the Bible and pray.

F's Ma :—What! do you pray only twice in the day? We are commanded to pray five times.

R's Ma :—It is good to pray five times or fifty times if we pray from the heart. But we do not count our prayers. We have no commandment on the matter but this, "Pray without ceasing."

F's Ma :—How could anyone pray without ceasing? It is hard even to find time for the five prayers. I could not pray all day. I have my house to clean, and my cooking to do.

R's Ma :—Yes, so have I. But God is near us all the time, and we can speak to Him as we work. When I am sweeping my house I pray, "Oh God, drive Satan from my heart"; when I wash the clothes I pray, "Oh God, make my heart clean ;" and when I feed my children I pray, "Oh God, give me spiritual food." Sister, I do not say many memory prayers as you do. I am afraid I may say them from the lips and not from the heart. Jesus the Messiah warned us to be careful. He said, "When you pray, do not use vain repetitions." He also said, "God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4 : 24)

F's Ma :—Yes, God is Spirit, and we must worship Him. We do. Have you never seen us saying our *namaz* ; how we bow down reverently till our foreheads touch the ground.

R's Ma :—Yes, God is our Creator, and it is right to show reverence either by kneeling or bowing the head before Him. But remember that Jesus the Messiah also said, "Worship in spirit and truth." Many people bow themselves reverently before God and say many prayers with their lips, but in their minds they are not thinking about God at all. We must prepare our minds also for the act of prayer.

F's Ma :—But indeed we must prepare our bodies too. We are commanded to perform the *wazu*. Do you not perform it?

R's Ma :—We must at all times keep our houses, our bodies and our clothing clean, for we are always in God's sight. But the spirit is more important than the body. Of what use is it that my body should be cleansed by performing the *wazu* if my heart is unclean, if it is full of anger, falsehood, trickery and other sins? Did you notice that when Rahel repeated that prayer she said, "Forgive us our sins, as we also forgive those that sin against us"? When we pray to God we must put away our pride and confess our sins and forsake them, and be willing to forgive others.

F's Ma :—It is not easy to do this.

R's Ma :—"No, indeed it is not. But God commands it. He wants us to worship Him with humble, pure and honest hearts. Jesus the Messiah said that God is seeking for those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. How wonderful to think that the Great God is seeking for the worship of even poor ignorant women like us! How comforting to think that He values one little prayer that comes from our hearts more than fifty that come from our lips alone!

F's Ma :—Sister, I have said many prayers in my life-time. I hope that God has accepted them, but how can I know? Who knows of the mind of God?

R's Ma:—Sister, listen. Jesus the Messiah has revealed the mind of God. He said that if we pray in the way that He taught us, then God will certainly accept our prayers and answer them. One day He said such a beautiful thing; "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. What father is there among you who if his son asks for bread will give him a stone, or if he asks for a fish will give him a snake? If you then, although you are sinners, know how to give your children things that are good for them, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11: 9-13)

F's Ma:—Those are indeed beautiful words. Sister, are you sure that they are true? Does the Great God really answer your prayers?

R's Ma:—Yes, indeed He does. I have proved that these words are true. When I asked Him to give me His Spirit to dwell in my heart and teach me to pray, He did so. And now prayer is not just a duty, it is a joy. I know that when I offer thanks to God for all His mercies He accepts my praise; when I tell Him my sorrows He comforts me; when I fall into the snares of Satan and ask Him for forgiveness He sets me free and puts my feet once again upon the straight path.

F's Ma:—We too believe that God is kind. We call Him 'the Compassionate and Merciful.'

R's Ma:—Yes, He is so wonderfully kind that we need not fear to come to Him at any time. He is always ready to listen and to help us. Let us pray to Him now and ask Him to help us to worship Him day by day with a humble, pure and sincere heart.

A Survey of Existing Literature in Urdu for Muslims.

(Continued)

Note on abbreviations shown in brackets :

M. Specially written for Muslims. E. also available in English.

S. Suitable for Muslims. W. from *What God hath Used* (Nile Mission Press, Cairo. 3s.)

PR. To be had from the Punjab Religious Book Society, Lahore, 250 (etc.) number of copies in stock.

V. ON THE TRINITY AND UNITY.

✓ 20. *Khuda ki Jihat-i-Salasa*. (God as Triune: Creator, Incarnate, Atoner). W. H. T. Gairdner, 1928, 1st ed. (1,000), 72 pp., 4¾ × 7. 3 as. An essay in philosophical apology designed to meet the objection that the doctrine is *irrational*; it also stresses the *moral* relationship between man and God. [M.E.P.R. 800].

✓ 21. *Khuda ek hai.* (The Unity of God). Shaikh Abdullah of Cairo, 1931, 1st ed. (20,000). 4 page leaflet, $6 \times 9\frac{1}{2}$. 2 as. a hundred; Re. 1/- a thousand. Sets out to show that unity and plurality are not necessarily contradictory. [M.PR.]

VI. THE SCRIPTURES AND THEIR INSPIRATION.

22. *Qadamat-i-Baibal.* ('How we got our Bible'). Paterson Smyth, 1928, 1st ed. (1,000) 16 pp., $4\frac{3}{4} \times 7$. One anna. Contains the substance of the first 3 chh. of Smyth's famous book, dealing with (1) the sources of the Bible, (2) the ancient manuscripts, (3) ancient versions, and quotations by early writers. Very useful. [S.E.PR. 700].

23. *Baibal ka Ilham.* ('How God inspired the Bible'). Paterson Smyth, 1905, 1st ed. (1,000), 216 pp., $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$, 6 as. cloth 10 as. An examination of popular notions of inspiration, and a frank recognition of both the human element and of the progressive nature of God's revelation, in the Scriptures. A valuable essay. [E.PR. 120].

✓ 24. *Sihat-i-Kutub-i-Muqaddasa.* (The Authenticity of the Books of the Bible). Padre Barakat Ullah, M.A., 1932, 1st ed. (500), 190 pp. $4\frac{3}{4} \times 7$. 8 annas. Deals with the ancient use of manuscripts, copyists' 'errors' and the care taken to eliminate them; shows that none of these amount to 'wilful corruption;' the wealth of our existing MSS., in many languages and their high authenticity. No literature can show such 'purity.' Traces history of the Urdu translation and explains "revision", answering Muslim objections. A book of priceless value to pastors and preachers. [M.PR.]

VII. THE CHRISTIAN MEANING OF PRAYER.

✓ 25. *Du'a ki Haqiqat.* (The Reality of Prayer). P. N. Bushill, 1926, 1st ed. (1,000), 84 pp. $4\frac{3}{4} \times 7$. 4 as. Deals with prayer, worship, thanksgiving, confession, petition, intercession, consecration, congregational, private and family prayers, unanswered prayer. Written primarily for Christians. [S.PR. 800].

VIII. THE CHRISTIAN MEANING OF SIN, REPENTANCE, FORGIVENESS, ETC.

26. *Tariq-ul-Hayat.* (The Path of Life). Pfander, 1875. 4th ed. (3,000), 166 pp., $5\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$. 2 as. Treats of sin, its nature and dire results and the problem of forgiveness. Old in style yet perhaps of value even now for certain types of mind. [M.E.PR. 150].

27. *Insaf ka Din.* (The Day of Judgment). Rouse, 1920, 2nd ed. (2,000) 14 pp., $5\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$. Two pice. Salvation through fear of the wrath of God. [M.E.PR. 130].

A new tract on Divine Forgiveness will be issued shortly in a series by H.M.S.

IX. THE CRUCIFIXION, THE FACT AND ITS MEANING FOR OUR LIVES.

✓ 28. *Masih ki Maut ke Mukhtalif Pahlu.* (Aspects of the

Redemptive Act of Christ). Gairdner, 1924, 1st ed. (1,000), 34 pp., $4\frac{3}{4} \times 7$. 3 as. Sets forth the wealth of meaning in Christ's death—as gateway to Life; fulfilment of 'love unto death;' as overcoming death by meeting it, as unveiling sin. [M.E.PR. 500].

29. *Masla-e-Kaffara*. (The Atonement). John Qalandar, 1924, 4th ed. (total 5,000 N.I. Tract Society), 16 pp., $4\frac{3}{4} \times 7$. One pice. The subject of the atonement treated in the light of *sacrifice* as enjoined in Islam. [M.PR. 800].

30. *Zikr-e-Maslub*. (The Crucifixion). Munshi Kedar Nath, 1928, 1st ed. (500, pubd. by F. Najmuddin), 50 pp., $4\frac{3}{4} \times 7$. 4 as. A poetical rendering of the events in life of Christ, but more especially the Crucifixion. [M.PR. 450].

31. *Haqiqi Shahid*. (The True Martyr). J. J. Lucas, 1929, 3rd ed. (2,000), 32 pp., $4\frac{3}{4} \times 7$. One anna. How the death of Christ differs from the death of prophets, martyrs, patriots. [E.S. PR. 500].

32 and 33. *Intizam-e-Maghfirat*. (The Atonement) K. Feroz Khan of Poona, 1929, 2nd ed. (total 50,000), 8 pp., tracts, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$. 4 as. hundred, Rs. 2/-, thousand each part. An essay in two parts dealing with the coming of Christ as the Redeemer, to make atonement for sin. [M.PR.]

34. *Kya Masih Jabran Maslub hue?* (Did Christ die voluntarily?) Abdullah and Upson, 1931, 1st ed. (2,000), 16 pp., $4\frac{3}{4} \times 7$. Two pice. The affirmative answer is supported by quotations from Scripture. [M.PR. 1,200].

35. *Al Kaffara*. (The Atonement). Goldsack, 1932, 3rd ed. (2,000) 16 pp., $4\frac{3}{4} \times 7$. Two pice. After showing the inadequacy of Islamic teaching on sin and forgiveness he indicates the place of atonement in respect of forgiveness. [M.PR. 1,700].

NEW MEMBER.

Rev. W. Stanley Gould,

A.P.M.

Ambala City, Punjab.

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,
Panjab, India.