

Confidential.

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## News and Notes

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

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Series XXIV.

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1st December = 16th Ramajhan (10th mo.) 1355 A.H.

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### Tracts for Muslim Women.

THE following is the proposed eighth tract of the Henry Martyn School Series of Tracts for Women.

Criticisms and suggestions concerning this tract should be sent to Mrs. Bevan Jones, 5, Egerton Road, Lahore, who can supply spare copies of it for translation purposes.

#### 8. Good Friday.

It was Friday morning, Abdullah went off to play with his friend Joseph, and his mother went with him.

"Joseph, Joseph, I've come to play with you," called Abdullah. But Joseph was not playing. He was sitting beside his mother, listening to her reading from a book. Joseph's Ma stopped reading to greet Abdullah's Ma. After the greetings were over, Abdullah's Ma said "Do tell me what you are reading."

Joseph's Ma.—I am reading the story of how the Lord Jesus Christ died on the Cross. To-day is a special day. It is what we call Good Friday, anniversary of the Lord Jesus's death; and so to-day we specially think of that.

A's Ma.—Why do you call a day "good" on which someone died?

J.'s Ma.—It must indeed seem strange to you. Of course our hearts are sad to-day when we think of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, yet it is a "good" day, because we remember that He loved us so much that He gave His life for us all—you and me and everyone—to bring us near to God.

Do you know the story?

A's Ma.—Ah, I have heard it, but how should I remember. Tell it to me again.

J.'s Ma.—You know that in the beginning God created the world and made man that he might serve Him and love Him. But man,

instead of loving God and seeking to do His will, sought instead his own pleasure and wandered far from God. Is that not true?

A.'s Ma.—Yes, very true.

J.'s Ma.—Suppose your little Abdullah, when he grows up, were to wander right away from you and fall into evil habits, how would you feel?

A.'s Ma.—God forbid! I cannot bear to think of it!

J.'s Ma.—But is not that just how man is always treating God, his Creator? How does God feel about it?

A.'s Ma.—Who knows the mind of Allah? He must be very angry at man's sin.

J.'s Ma.—But think. What would you do if you heard that your Abdullah because of his evil ways, was lying ill and helpless in a far strange town? Would you be so angry with him that you would refuse to do anything to help him?

A.'s Ma.—How could I refuse? Is he not the light of my eyes? No matter what he had done, would he not still be my son?

J.'s Ma.—Well said! Of course he is, and of course you would do all you could to win him back to the right path. Do you think God would do any less for man?

A.'s Ma.—God is Merciful.

J.'s Ma.—Yes. That is true. You know something about the prophets, the messengers whom God sent to call men back to Himself and away from their sin. Often they did not listen to them. Sometimes they even killed them.

Supposing that in order to help your son you sent messengers to him, and he refused to listen to them, what would you do?

A.'s Ma.—I should go to him myself to bring him back home.

J.'s Ma.—Such was the gracious act of God for sinful man. Listen! One night when some shepherds were guarding their sheep on the hillside outside the town, an angel came to them and told them that the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, was born, and that they would find Him lying in a manger. They hurried to the town and found the Lord Jesus just as the angel had told them, and they returned to their flocks glorifying and praising God.

We know very little about the boyhood of the Lord Jesus. For many years He remained at home and worked as a carpenter. But when He was about 30 years old, He left His home and went about teaching and preaching to the people about God, and healing many who were ill.

A.'s Ma.—There must have been a great many who followed him about.

J.'s Ma.—Yes. Sometimes great crowds followed Him to see His miracles and listen to His teaching. But all men did not follow Him. Many would not listen to Him. If He had been different, if He had come as a great leader to deliver them from their enemies, they would have accepted Him; but when He taught

them about the holiness and love of God who wanted them to leave their wicked ways and live a new life, they turned away from Him and many hated Him and wanted to kill Him.

Shall I tell you how He came to die ?

**A.'s Ma.**—Yes, that is what I want to hear.

**J.'s Ma.**—There was a quiet garden on the hillside whither the Lord Jesus often went for prayer. One night He and His disciples had supper together for the last time, and after supper went to this garden. The Lord Jesus knew that the time was drawing near when His enemies would put Him to death, and He was full of sorrow because He loved them so much. So He prayed to God, and God, knowing what awaited Him, gave Him consolation and strength.

Almost immediately afterwards there came into the garden a crowd of men carrying swords and staves, to lay hold of Him. They bound Him and led Him away, and took Him before the religious leaders and the rulers, who subjected Him to a false trial. They could find no fault in Him, but the religious leaders and many of the people were so angry with the Lord Jesus, and so eager to have Him put to death, that through fear of them the chief ruler handed the Lord Jesus over to them.

In that country it was the custom when a very wicked man was condemned to death, to crucify Him on a cross, that is, a long thick beam of wood to which another was fixed crosswise. A cross of this kind was given to the Lord Jesus to carry on His shoulders. A number of people followed after Him as He was led out of the town. Some sneered at Him, but others cried in sorrow. Some women also followed Him and wept.

A little way out of the city was a hill called Calvary. The soldiers took the Lord Jesus there, and laying the cross on the ground, put Him upon it, spreading out His hands and nailing them to the cross, and nailing His feet also. Then digging a hole in the ground, they lifted the cross upright and stood it in the hole.

Now the Lord Jesus was in great anguish. For six hours He hung there on the Cross, and at last He uttered this prayer to God, "Into Thy hands I am giving my spirit", and with these words He died.

Alas ! Alas ! How could such a thing ever be ?

**A.'s Ma.**—But tell me, did not all this happen long ago ?

**J.'s Ma.**—Yes, over nineteen hundred years ago.

**A.'s Ma.**—What a long time. But did you not say that He gave His life for you and me ? How could anything that happened so long ago help us ?

**J.'s Ma.**—That is the wonderful part about it. The Lord Jesus died on the Cross, but He did not remain dead. God, by His mighty power, raised Him from the dead on the third day, never to die again. His disciples saw Him several times after that on

earth, and then they saw Him no more. Ever since then in some wonderful way the Lord Jesus has been near those who trust in Him. His last words on earth were "Lo, I am with you always, even until the end of the world." It is just like this that He is with me, although my eyes cannot see Him, and He is with me to bless and save me.

A.'s Ma.—You say the Lord Jesus saves you, but, tell me, does He save you from hell? That is what I want to know.

J.'s Ma.—Yes, and from the fear of hell too! for the salvation that God gives is not merely an escape from punishment in the future, but the forgiveness of all past sins; and God gives us power to do the things which please Him, and to live a new life on earth, without yielding to anger, jealousy, and all kinds of evil.

A.'s Ma.—Can I get this salvation?

J.'s Ma.—Yes, if you are willing to forsake sin and follow the Lord Jesus. Through Him you will get a new understanding of God's character. God is holy, and our sin separates us from Him. I could never have understood what a dreadful thing sin is if the Lord Jesus had not died. When I look at the Cross I see the awfulness of sin, but, I see also the amazing love of God who proves His love for us in this, that while we were yet sinners the Lord Jesus died for us.

How can we turn away from a love like that?

Do you not see now why we call it Good Friday?

When we think of it and of the Cross on which the Lord Jesus died, there is a hymn that we often sing. I would like to sing it to you now—

When I survey the wondrous Cross (or any suitable hymn  
in the vernacular).

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### **Christianity and Muslim Culture.**

The following is an extract from V. V. Barthold's *Mussulman Culture*, translated from Russian by Suhrawardy.

**W**E have a less clear picture of the importance of the VIIIth century in the history of Christian art. It is now known that the Mussulman rulers made use of the service of Christian and Persian artisans in the building of their profane and religious edifices. Artisans were grouped into national economic guilds and separate buildings or parts of large constructions were entrusted to them. Some of the larger churches were forcibly possessed by the Mussulmans, as for instance, the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist at Damascus, on the site of which a splendid mosque was built in the VIIIth century. By an irony of fate the former edifice is still represented by its southern gates where one can read the following inscription in Greek: "Thy

Kingdom, O Christ, is the kingdom of all times and Thy power unto all generations." Generally speaking, however, the Christians were left in possession of their churches. In fact, for a long time, new churches and monasteries were built under Islamic rule without any opposition from the rulers. The so-called Treaty of Omar by which the Christians, as it were, bound themselves not to build new churches nor to repair old ones, was invented by historians much later. Over all the vast area of the Caliphate from St. Vincent in the south-western end of Portugal to Samarkand we see rich Christian foundations endowed with immovable property. The Christian subjects of the Caliphate were not hindered from keeping up relations with the rest of the Christian world nor from accepting contributions for their foundations. In the Council of Constantinople (680-681) Jerusalem was represented by a Christian delegate. Christians in the different parts of the Caliphate were also in close contact with one another. At the time of the Arab conquest Egypt was the only country where industry flourished and the Caliphs took steps to reconstruct it on the Syrian littoral especially at Acre and Tyre. A little before 720 A.D. the doctrines of Greek philosophy were again imported from Alexandria into Antioch.

From the second half of the VIIIth century Christians formed the channel through which the Mussulmans began to learn the Greek sciences. We know that the Caliph Mansur (754-775) asked a Byzantine Emperor to send him manuscripts of mathematical treatises. In the IXth century the chief translator of Greek texts into Syriac and Arabic, Hunain-ibn-ishaq, a Christian Arab, spent two years in the Byzantine possessions studying Greek language and literature and brought home a number of manuscripts from there. The Mussulmans, however, could acquire Greek scholarship from their Christians co-citizens independently of Byzantine. The medical school of Jundishapur continued to flourish for several centuries after the Arab conquest, though the doctors of that town handed down their knowledge from generation to generation only to their intimates and concealed it from outsiders in order not to lose their monopoly. It is not known whether Theophilus of Edessa, the Court Astronomer of the Caliph Mahdi (775-785), who translated the Iliad and the Odyssey into Syriac, ever went to Byzantine.

During the first half of the IXth century the non-Muslims and non-Arabs of the Caliphate were more educated than the Mussulmans and the Arabs. An arrogant consciousness of cultural superiority on the part of the non-Arabs over the Arabs gave birth in the Mussulman world to a number of nationalistic movements grouped under the name of shu'ubia, (shi'b—nation; pl. shu'ub—race). At this epoch a tendency to reconstitute and magnify national and religious culture is noticeable amongst the non-Arabs, who were composed of Christians of different nations and sects, Jews, Persians, Zoroastrians and the last representatives of Hellenistic paganism in the Mesopotamian town of Harran, where in the IXth century Greek philosophical teachings had

been imported from Antioch. The same century witnessed the renaissance of Byzantium. However, the Caliphate had this advantage over the latter country that it united under its sceptre a more numerous and a more varied set of cultural elements, who found under the Arabs, thanks to the tolerance laid down by the Koran, a larger possibility for their activity than under the Byzantine Emperors. The tendency of each group to attach an exaggerated importance to its people or its faith did not hinder it from acquiring knowledge from the other. Thus a Christian could have a Muslim or a pagan pupil or *vice versa*. Though the Christians stood nearer to Hellenism, their common source of culture, than the Mussulmans, it gradually became difficult for them to keep for themselves that place of leadership which they had occupied during the first centuries of Islam. If we compare the life of the Arabs and the Persian Mussulmans with that of others who lived under the Caliphate, we see that the latter grouped themselves into cliques with narrow interests which did not afford sufficient possibilities to their talents.

Christians became acquainted with Greek scholarship at an earlier epoch and in a more thorough manner than the Mussulmans but they could not give it that forward urge nor create models for further scholarly work as was done by the Mussulmans. Even the most enlightened of the Eastern Christian peoples, the Syrians did not produce a single scholar who could compare with Farabi, ibn-Sina, Biruni or ibn-Rushd. The best scholars amongst the Christians and the pagans had more pupils and readers from among the Muslims than their own co-religionists.

Under the influence of the onward march of Arab culture the Syrian Christians lost that contact with Hellenism which had formerly made them superior to the Mussulmans. In the programme of their higher studies the language and literature of the Arabs began to occupy the place which had formerly belonged to Greek language and literature.

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### Book Review.

WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS? By Rev. J. R. Richards, of Shiraz, Persia. Published by C.L.S., Madras, 64 pp. 4 As.

We venture to predict a cordial welcome for this well-reasoned plea for the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. It is written for the educated reader, and proceeds on the assumption that he is already acquainted with the teaching of the New Testament. While in no sense another life of Jesus, it sets forth the salient features in the Gospel narrative and answers the main question in seven short chapters:—Is not this the carpenter?—What think ye of Christ?—Like unto us—Other than ourselves—Jesus in the experience of his disciples—The Birth of the Christian Faith—The Christian Faith and the Modern World.

It is the work of one who knows and states the chief objections commonly raised against Christ's claims, and knows, too, how to answer them. He is interested also to explain to the Muslim, in particular, the secret of that amazing change in certain Jews, who, albeit zealous monotheists, were the first to fall down and worship this Person, even calling him "Lord." The point is repeatedly stressed that it was their experience of Christ's power to cleanse them from sin which led those early disciples to find God in Jesus—and nothing but the same experience in our lives can make us fall down and worship him.

Attractively bound, with the words of the title set inside the curve of a large blue interrogation mark, this little book closes with a momentous question: "Jesus Christ comes to us not only as a solution (surely, *the* solution) of all our problems, but as a personal challenge, a call to decision. What response will *you* make?"

L. BEVAN JONES.

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### Muslims and Palestine.

**A** FRIEND draws our attention to some remarks of the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem in reference to affairs in Palestine. In describing his diocese the Bishop said it extended from Cyprus to Iraq and from the boarders of Egypt to those of Turkey in Asia. The problems of this area were partly racial—fifty different tongues and more than fifty different communities. There were also difficult political problems, *e.g.*, conscience versus the totalitarian state, conflict between church and state, conflict between Jew and Arab. There were grave social problems, on the one hand people living in caves, and on the other hand people living in hotels at £3 a day, here patriarchal nomads and there communist settlements on Marxian principles. In addition there were religious problems—six or eight different churches, Moslems, Jews, etc. Speaking of the religious interest in Jerusalem he said Moslems were turning to that city instead of Mecca and Medina and that since the fall of the Caliphate and the new political arrangements in Arabia, the liberal Moslems have not been tolerated in Mecca and Medina, therefore they were turning to Jerusalem and he mentioned some important Muslim leaders whose bodies had recently been buried at Jerusalem.

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### Notes from Hyderabad.

**W**ITH a view to maintaining uniformity the Ecclesiastical Department is engaged in preparing the various 'Khutbas' (religious sermons) in Arabic for being read in all mosques of the State. The 'Khutbas' are so edited as to suit all months."

The "Anjuman Tarraqi Islam" issues the following notice:—  
 "Vindication of the Prophet of Islam. Peace and blessings of God on him with a scheme for the amalgamation of Indian communities into one nation through one Religion, without which Swaraj or Salvation of India is a vain hope indeed. The Sixth enlarged edition of this beautiful Booklet supplied Post Free on dropping a card to the Secretary, Anjuman Tarraqi Islam, Secunderabad, Deccan." (Capitals not ours!)

In the *Hyderabad Bulletin*.

"It is understood that H.E.H. the Nizam has been pleased to give his patronage to the translation work of the 'Bhokari Sharif' (*sic*) (Traditions of the Prophet), under preparation by Moulana Mohamed Asad, an Austrian who has recently embraced Islam."

"H.E.H. the Nizam has been pleased to appoint Moulana Muhamed Asad as the editor of *The Islamic Culture*, a quarterly which was formerly edited by the late Marmaduke Pickthall."

### Prayer and Praise.

LET US PRAY that in the programme for evangelistic advance due regard may be had to the organisation of the effective witness of the Church of Christ to Islam.

LET US PRAY that guidance may be given in the case of a convert from Bengal, so that his present difficulties may be relieved and a way opened for his future livelihood.

### EDITORIAL NOTE.

We have had some enquiries about the reissue of the list of members of the *M.M.L.* in the form of a prayer cycle. Our desire is that this should be done and the list brought up-to-date but our financial position is the hindrance. If this were bettered then we should be able to do what so many wish.

### NOTICE.

**Note the Editor's change of address.**

Any notification of change of address, names of new members or remittance of subscriptions 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 Honorary Secretary:—

Rev. J. W. Sweetman,  
 30, Mozang Road,  
 Lahore.



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