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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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“Tell Us Plainly.”

DURING the Bradlaugh debate in the House of Commons a speaker said, “But, Mr. Speaker, we all believe in a sort of a something.” Some people’s thought of Christ is equally nebulous, indefinite and imperfect. While to us, by God’s grace, Christ is God manifest in the flesh, who so lived as to present the highest ideal for men and so died that in Him is salvation for the best and hope for the worst, there are men who grope in darkness and lose themselves in the futilities of debate. They cannot make up their minds. They are unconvinced of what to us is life-giving conviction. The challenge for a decisive commitment of themselves has seemingly passed them by or been resisted. Many want such proof of the Christ as to make them intellectually certain before they commit themselves. They lack conviction and so they ask for proof. But proof is no fitting substitute for conviction. Sometimes in our work, when we have, as we think, presented the message of salvation through Christ with cogency and reason, the results fall far short of what we urgently desire. What we intended as an appeal to the highest in man is brought down to the level of debate and we go away sick at heart. What is the reason? When Christ spoke and worked in the world, could He have spoken plainer? Could He have made an appeal fuller and deeper than He did? Are we not perhaps in danger of making a fundamental mistake similar to that of the people who said to Christ “If Thou art the Christ, tell us plainly?”

Now it is true that we cannot possibly be exonerated if we do not put before our hearers all that we can in the way of evidence. May God deliver us from that woolly-mindedness which mistakes mere declamation for preaching. The One who was exhorted by His hearers to tell them plainly whether He were the Christ was also the One of Whom it is said: They marvelled at the words of grace which issued out of His mouth. Let all our wisdom be consecrated to our task of

making the Gospel message plain but let us remember all the while that it is not even irresistible logic, nor anything in *our* word which convicts. It is nothing but the Word of God Himself which quickens the hearer to saving faith.

But there is no marshalling of evidences, no cogent logic, no system of proof, which can make faith unnecessary. Remember the answer to the request of Dives that someone should go and warn his brethren. If one should rise from the dead, they would not believe. When Christ did rise from the dead, they invented a tale to account for it. When He wrought miracles they said it was by the power of the evil one. If we think that there could be something which would make faith inevitable we are making a great mistake. We cannot compel men to believe. Faith is the act of the whole man not of the intellect only. Not long ago a young Muslim said to an evangelist; "Convince me of the truth of these matters and I will become a Christian." We have all heard similar expressions. It is said that D'Aubigne, the historian of the Reformation, when he was a student, was much perplexed by doubts. He used to go to talk with an aged Christian who from time to time was able to help him in his intellectual difficulties. One day the old man said, "Young man, I shall not any more answer your questions. If I settle them one day, more arise the next day and the great question for you is whether you mean to belong altogether to Christ." This is very important. The *will* to believe is indeed all-important. Are our enquirers asking questions with a view to decision, or are they asking out of curiosity? Are they even shirking decision by raising an unimportant question? When our Lord spoke to the woman of Samaria and the conversation became very personal, why did she drag in the question as to whether men ought to worship God in Gerizim or in Jerusalem? How many times have we had parallel experiences in our conversation with enquirers?

Is it not true that if there is not the will or disposition to believe then whatever God did to create faith would be in vain? Faith is a moral act which commits a man to trust and obedience. It is spiritual response and loyalty to Christ, and God Himself cannot compel that without our moral nature becoming an unreal thing. Thus we find that when men desired a sign of Christ He usually refused it. He would not win belief by dazzling men. In His temptation He refused to confound men by a spectacle in the temple precincts and He refused to come down from the cross that He might "prove" that He was the Son of God. What spiritual value would belief have, elicited in such a manner? What mighty works Christ wrought were certainly a sign of His authority but they did not irresistibly win faith from men. Christ's miracles in the present day do not convince everyone.

We do not begin the Christian life with a perfect theology; Questions have to be faced again and again. New ones arise as we progress in the Christian way. *Solvitur ambulando*. Men are not saved by a correct definition but by a moral decision. When we have

settled one question there will be many left unanswered and many problems unsolved but theoretical questions are relatively unimportant. As Amiel says in his *Journal*, the fundamental question is "What is it which saves?" Ultimately the things we preach are not for debate but are the things whereby men *live*. If Barth has done anything for evangelical religion, it is surely that he has shewn us again, lest we should forget, that when the Word of God comes to man it does so with a demand for decision. It does not come so that we may express an opinion about it. It may be inevitable that we should come to an opinion but this is not the supreme end and aim of the preaching of the Word.

Thus when we have used the utmost clarity in our presentation of the message let us not lose sight of the fact that till our hearers yield to the decision—provoking divine Word by an act of willing worship there is nothing that can be clear to them in the truest sense; and let the greater part of our work be our prayers that God's Spirit may use our weakness to work His mighty acts.

J. W. S

Conversion and Salvation.

IN view of the fact that there is frequently a misapprehension among Muslims to the effect that Christians believe in instant salvation by an act of repentance and faith without the subsequent working out of salvation in the life, the following extracts from an article by Dr. A. C. Underwood in the *Baptist Times* is most instructive.

"One defect of evangelical piety is the fatal ease with which some of Christ's followers assume that conversion is the end as well as the beginning of the Christian life. This defect struck even so convinced an evangelical as the late Dr. Alexander Whyte, who said that 'evangelical piety has concentrated on the beginning of the Christian life to the neglect of its later growth and has thus been far less fitted to give guidance in the vicissitudes of its further development.' The present writer may be wrong, but he has the very definite impression that the future of evangelicalism will be very gravely imperilled unless it gives itself to the study and application of the methods by which the soul, after conversion, may make progress in the life of grace. In the long run the Church will be judged, not by its ability to make converts, but to make saints.

"It is high time that we should drop the unscriptural notion that conversion and salvation are one and the same thing. The New Testament does not thus equate salvation with pardon. It sets forth a God revealed in Christ, who sanctifies as well as pardons. The apostle Paul was every bit as anxious about his converts' growth in grace as about their conversion. He wrote the eighth chapter of Romans as well as the seventh. He declared that the aim of the ministry was to 'pre-

sent every man perfect in Christ.' Moreover our Lord himself declared that 'He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.' Conversion is essential but only as a beginning. Few things are more fantastic than the unscriptural notion that at conversion salvation is instantaneously acquired and then automatically retained through life. Without subsequent growth in grace, conversion is both meaningless and valueless. Conversion is the beginning not the end; and no man is really converted to Christ unless he is constantly re-affirming his surrender to Him.

"No Church, then, can rest content with making converts. It must exert itself to promote their growth in grace, which is something it can never do if the impression gets abroad that conversion is enough. All campaigns for converting the outsider must be supplemented by the work of making Church members into saints. Missions to the outsider must be supplemented by internal missions to the Churches themselves. Convert and Church members must learn the joy of going on. They must remember that their Christian life is not healthy unless their notion of what is good and right is always growing richer and finer; unless they are developing into spiritually dynamic personalities."

A Course of Studies in Islamics.

THE members of the Staff of the Henry Martyn School, Lahore, have drawn up the following revised list as suitable for those who desire to make a private study of Islam. The books should be read in the order indicated under each section.

1. Muhammad.

- a. Sell: Life of Muhammad (C.L.S., Madras, 232 pp. Re. 1-6-0).
- b. Margoliouth: Muhammad (Heroes of Nations, Putnam, 507 pp. 7s 6d.)
- c. Muir: Life of Muhammad (revised by Weir. Grant, 675 pp. 15s.)
- d. Tor Andrae: Muhammad: the Man and His Faith (George Allen, 8s 6d.)

2. The Qur'an.

- a. Rodwell's translation, "The Koran" (*chapters in chronological order*, Everyman's Library, Re. 1-8-0).
- b. Palmer's translation, (*best in English*, World's Classics, Oxford University Press, 570 pp. Re. 1-8-0).
- c. Sell: Historical Development of the Qur'an. (S.P.C.K., Madras, 214 pp. Rs. 4-0-0).
- d. Stanton: Teaching of the Qur'an (S.P.C.K., 136 pp. 5s.).

3. Beliefs and Institutions.

- a. Bevan Jones: People of the Mosque, Sect. iii. (Y.M.C.A., Calcutta: Rs. 3-0-0).

- b.* Lammens : Islam (Methuen, 263 pp. 8s 6d.).
 - c.* Sell : Faith of Islam (4th ed. 478 pp. S.P.C.K., Madras, Rs. 6).
 - d.* Macdonald : Religious Life and Attitude in Islam (University of Chicago Press, 334 pp. 7s. 6d.).
 - e.* Margoliouth : Early Development of Muhammadanism, Williams and Norgate, 272 pp. O.P.).
 - f.* Wensinck : The Muslim Creed.
- 4. Islam in India.**
- a.* Bevan Jones : People of the Mosque, Sect. iv.
 - b.* Titus : Indian Islam (Oxford University Press, 306 pp. 12s. 6d.).
 - c.* Herklot's Islam in India (a hundred years' old description of manners and customs, re-edited by Crooke (Oxford University Press, 17s. 6d.).
 - d.* J. A. Subhan : Sufi Saints and Shrines (in printing, Methodist Publishing House, Lucknow).
- 5. Christianity and Islam.**
- a.* Bevan Jones : The People of the Mosque, Sect. v.
 - b.* Vital Forces of Christianity and Islam (Oxford University Press, 250 pp. 3s 6d.).
 - c.* Presentation of Christianity to Moslems (Board of Missionary Preparation, New York, 142 pp. Rs. 2-0-0).
 - d.* Tisdall : Muhammadan Objections to Christianity, S.P.C.K., 239 pp. (3s 6d.).
 - e.* Macdonald : Aspects of Islam (Macmillan, 375 pp. O.P.).
 - f.* L. E. Browne : Eclipse of Christianity in Asia (Cambridge University Press, 10s 6d.).

The Missionaries to Muslims League.

FOR the benefit of new members of the League and for those who are actively engaged or interested in the evangelisation of the Muslim World, and who might consider joining our company, we present the following outline of the history and aims of the League.

The *M.M.L.*, as it has come to be known, was founded in 1912 as a direct outcome of the second (World) Conference of workers among Muslims held in Lucknow during 1911, to fulfil the vows made there to pray and work more for the evangelisation of Muslims. The idea of such a League first occurred to Rev. F. W. Steinthal, at that time one of the secretaries of the Y.M.C.A., Calcutta, who had been present at Lucknow. The one to carry out the idea was the Rev. John Takle of East Bengal, a member of the Australasian Baptist Mission. Mr. Takle began by issuing a four-page monthly paper called *News and Notes* which was to contain information and guidance on matters of interest to workers, with topics for prayer. At first this modest pamphlet used to go to some twenty people, mostly in Bengal.

Since those days of small beginnings the League has grown and spread its branches. Its membership at one time was more than six-hundred. Its members are found in nearly every country where Muslims are found. One of its offshoots is the Society of Friends of the Moslems of China, which issues a quarterly News Letter. It has been singularly privileged in its Presidents; first, the late Dr. E. M. Wherry, then the late Metropolitan, Bishop Lefroy of Calcutta, and now Canon Goldsmith of Madras. *News and Notes* is now an eight-page monthly and is much valued by those who read it. The late Canon Sell of Madras, who came to India about 70 years ago, when very little special work was being done among Muslims, testified to the useful work which this little paper has done in keeping the needs of Muslims constantly before missionaries on the field. The League has been one of the means of utilizing and directing the new and widespread interest that has risen in recent times in this admittedly difficult sphere of missionary enterprise.

Since the formation of the Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies at Lahore, *News and Notes* has become to some extent a bulletin of the school, keeping others informed of the activities of this central organisation.

The aim of the League is to help by prayer and mutual sympathy, to stimulate by news of encouraging work, to pass on particulars of useful books and tracts, to compare notes on methods of work, to circulate thoughts which have been found helpful in the approach to Muslims and to encourage others to take an interest in our important task.

Though primarily for workers among Muslims, friends who will pray are welcomed to the League.

The annual subscription, which includes the cost of *News and Notes*, is Rs. 2-0-0 in India (3s. English). Subscriptions, note of addresses etc., should be sent to the *Superintendent, Orissa Mission Press, Cuttack, India*. Requests for information, or for prayer, matters of interest to members, and items of news should be sent to the Secretary-Editor:—

REV. J. W. SWEETMAN,
Henry Martyn School,
5, Egerton Road,
Lahore, India.

Mecca to be Modernised.

WE hear that Ibn Saud, the King of the Hedjaz, has signed a decree to modernise Mecca, his capital. The Holy City is to be lit by electricity, and electric tramways will replace hired camels and donkeys. A reservoir to provide pure water is to be built and there is to be a modern hotel the staff of which will be Moslems.

New Books.

WE are glad to see that the *Book of Instructions for Catechumens* by the late Canon Gairdner and Miss Padwick is now for sale in its Urdu form under the title *Hidayat barai Kati-ckuman*. It is obtainable from the Punjab Religious Tract Society, Anarkali, Lahore, at eight annas per copy.

Messrs. Allen and Unwin announce the publication of a translation by Theophil Mengel of Professor Tor Andrae's valuable book on Muhammad. The title of this translation is Muhammad, the Man and His Faith. It is published at eight shillings and sixpence. The original work was in German and appeared in the year 1932. This translation will be a most valuable addition to the libraries of all students of Islam who do not use German.

The Moslem World.

MAY we once more draw the attention of all members of the Missionaries to Moslems League to the value of that indispensable quarterly *The Moslem World*. Some of our members are already subscribers but there is urgent need for an increase in the number of subscribers. If for lack of support this journal should go out of publication it would be tragic. It has no equivalent throughout the Christian world. No one can complain that it is too dear. It only costs Rs. 5-8-0 per annum (2 dollars). Recently an index to the whole twenty-five volumes has been published and even those who have not the good fortune to possess a full set of these volumes will find in that index a guide to what is contained in them which is the first step to being able to refer to some subject on which information is required. The price of the index is two dollars.

The People of the Mosque, in Hindi.

To
THE EDITOR,
Sir,

One of the objects which led the author of *The People of the Mosque* (an Introduction to the Study of Islam in India) to prepare that manual was to meet a demand for such a book in HINDI, it having been stated that a considerable number of Christian workers read this vernacular only. The translation has, however, been held up because it appears that some consider that the Urdu version, now on sale, will meet the need.

But those who, in the first instance, advised the author in the matter still hold strongly to the opinion that such a manual is needed in Hindi also.

Will those of your readers who are in a position to express an opinion on the point kindly write to the undersigned at an early date ?

L. BEVAN JONES,
5, Egerton Road, Lahore.

Praise and Prayer.

That zeal only is safe which increases charity directly; and because love to our neighbour and obedience to God are the two great portions of charity, we must never account our zeal to be good but as it advances both these, if it be a matter which relates to both; or severally, if it relates severally. . . . Let our zeal be as great as Paul's was, so it be in affections to others, but not at all in angers against them: in the first there is no danger and in the second there is no safety. In brief, let your zeal be always more severe against thyself than against others.

JEREMY TAYLOR.

LET US PRAY that in our Christian service love, zeal and wisdom may be so happily blended that we may not err in easy indulgence of the wrong-doer, in harshness of judgment, and lack of understanding.

LET US PRAISE God for all guidance and for His continued presence in all our work, the joys He gives in our service for Him and for signs following the preaching of His Word.

LET US PRAY for three young students who are enquirers and who shew an appreciation of the claim of Christ not only on a man's thought but on his life.

LET US PRAY for a Christian student convert from Islam who has to bear a cross among his fellow-students who mock him as an apostate.

LET US PRAY for two Muslims who have expressed their wish to be baptised, one a tailor and the other a day-labourer.

NOTICE.

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 :—

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