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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.

June, 1936.

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June 10th Rabi-ul-Awwal 1355.

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### **The Depressed Classes Conference, India.**

**T**HE Depressed Conference, twice postponed, took place from 22nd to 24th May, in Lucknow. The first day was reserved for a Conference of all religions, at which representatives of various faiths presented their statements. Unfortunately Dr. Ambedkar was absent, apparently for reasons of health.

The largest hall in Lucknow was packed when at 5 p.m., the Conference at last commenced and it was noticeable that fully three quarters of the audience were Moslems, with Sikhs scattered throughout the building. The Sikhs had swords and many of the Moslems were armed with *lathis* (stout poles). Police were posted within and without the hall and especially guarded the platform, near to which were seated about 80 representatives of the depressed classes; a small number, no doubt, but hailing from practically all parts of India.

Buddhist and Bahai were followed by no less than six speakers from the Moslem community, representatives of different sects and movements, some of whom held out the promise of absolute equality, including intermarriage. These were followed by the Sikhs. It had previously been arranged that the Rev. J. A. Subhan, of the Henry Martyn School, Lahore, should be the chief speaker for the Christian community, and that his statement should be supplemented by Mrs. Mohini Das, an Indian Christian lady. Their turn came next, but Mr. Subhan had no sooner risen to speak than the Moslems started a hostile demonstration in which, however, the other communities did not join. There was a continuous uproar with the obvious intention of silencing him. Mrs. Das fared better, after making a special appeal for quiet. At this point an unauthorised Christian, a noted controversialist, was permitted by the Chairman to address the meeting and soon created pandemonium. He began to attack the Moslem *pardah* system in such a way that the Moslems rose in a body and howled him

down. The meeting closed at midnight after representatives of other less well-known communities had addressed the assembly.

The proceedings on the Saturday and Sunday, when the depressed classes discussed the whole situation among themselves, including the appeals of the Firday, were orderly and impressive. The delegates had in their hands printed copies of the authorised Christian addresses, (copies of which may be had on application to The Ashram, Lal Bagh, Lucknow, U.P. India). About thirty Christians, drawn from different parts of the country had passes to attend. The Conference maintained its full loyalty to Dr. Ambedkar notwithstanding his absence, and again expressed its determination not to remain in the Hindu fold. It passed a resolution, however, urging the depressed classes not to embrace any other religion until the final decision to be taken at the next All-India Conference. An All-India Committee was appointed with Dr. Ambedkar as President, to prepare a Report on the question of changing over to some other religion and this will be submitted to the next Conference.

Some of the Muslim associations and organisations represented were: Daru'l-Tabligh, Islamic Union, Anjaman-i-Tahaffuz-i-Millat, Daru'l-Muballighin, Jama'at-i-Ahmadiya of Qadian, Jama'at-i-Ahmadiya of Lahore and the Shi'ah organisation of Lucknow (Madrasatu'l-Wa'izin?)

The representative of the Qadianis asked people to consider which religion inculcated truth and equality and ensured equality in practical life, between all its followers. In Islam, he said, the Unity of God and the brotherhood of man were the two foundations of Islam which guaranteed the peace and equality of mankind. Muhammad Yaqub Khan of the Ahmadiya of Lahore said that the depressed classes should see that equality in religion is not theoretical and then he asserted that Christianity was an instance of a religion which preached equality and did not practice it. He pointed out that the demonstration of the equality of man was found in the life of the Prophet Muhammad and also in the daily prayers of the Muslim. Mirza Ahmad Ali the representative of Shi'ah Islam said that the depressed classes were never admitted to the fold of the Hindu religion. Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali representing the Sunni Muslims said that in Islam no distinction was possible between different members of society on the basis of birth or social status. The equality of man in Islam was amply proved from the life of Muhammad, the *Shari'at* and the effect of the *Shari'at* on its followers. The Muslims were free from divisions on the basis of wealth, priesthood or birth. Maulana Sibghat Ullah of Firangi Mahal said that the first four to embrace Islam were a slave, a merchant, a woman, and a young man. Concluding his speech, he said, that the daughters of Firangi Mahal would gladly marry converted Harijans if they later found any difficulty in finding life companions due to class prejudice. In one of the Shi'ah pamphlets which were distributed at the Conference the accusation is made against the mother

of Muawiya the founder of the Umayyads that in the Battle of Uhud a slave took out the liver of the Prophet's uncle Hamza and took it to her and she "chewed it with a sense of satisfaction," so that even while there was unity expressed by the lips the underlying hatred of Shi'ahs for Sunnis was being vented in other ways.

The Sikh representative followed. He, to demonstrate the absence of any class prejudice in his religion, pointed out that every Sikh temple has a free kitchen attached to it and to this members of all communities and creeds were admitted without any discrimination.

It is quite evident that the equality offered was one which was limited to the particular sect or religion represented. All these said "You will be our brethren if . . . ." Only the Christian could say "We *are* brethren."

It is significant that protest was made against the use of the name "Harijans" for the depressed classes. The activities of the "Servants of the Untouchables Society" was characterised as "hollow propaganda."

Those Christians who were present at the Conference came away reassured and full of good cheer with some definite plans for the future. At the close of the Conference the Christians were singled out for gratitude for the unostentatious way in which they had helped throughout.

The continued prayers of God's people are earnestly requested.

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### **Stir in Mysore.**

**Mr. D. Neilson writes us with regard to the conversion of a Muslim in his area to the following effect.**

**S**OON after he was baptised he moved into a house, which is next door to one of the largest mosques in the city, in order to give his physical culture institute a better chance of serving the people in a populous part. Strange to say this particular place, probably on account of being empty for so long, was reputed to be haunted, (the same was said about the first house we occupied and also about the place in which our evangelist lives!); and Muslims made frequent reference to this, no doubt in the vain hope that so "disgraceful" a fellow might be tempted to move his "corrupt" person from the neighbourhood of their sanctuary. He was not so easily moved. None of us by the way have so far heard any eerie sounds or been troubled by ghostly or spectral appearances. As a last resort he was told emphatically that there were four devils in the house, to which he replied, with a twinkle in his eye, that his informant was mistaken, because there were now five! After a while he began to receive visits from various Muslims, among whom were certain Maulvis who were intent on leading him back to Islam. Since then we have

met with him for prayer and Bible Study each Sunday afternoon in his room which overlooks the mosque, and from which, five times every day, may be heard the Muezzin's call to the Faithful to come to prayer. As I have knelt in prayer in that upper room in company with one whose life so lately had been severed from the power of the mosque I recalled the many times when, passing along that same street, so thickly populated by Muslims, my heart, heavily burdened, has been unable to restrain the cry, "Lord, when shall thy light shine here?" In my wildest dreams I had not imagined the answer being given in this way. He has been lonely, because he had to leave his mother and younger brother who did not agree with the step he took. They have been often remembered in our prayers, and some time ago when his brother's wife was in the Mission Hospital, Mrs. Neilson visited her, and there also met his mother. That overcame some of the suspicion with which they looked on us. A few days ago Abdul Aziz came in with a smile to tell us that the whole family had at last come to live with him, bringing all their goods and chattels. To-day when I walked into his room, I saw hanging on the wall, the sheathed sword with which his deceased father had fought in the Burman wars. The home is once again outwardly complete, but we all pray that the deeper and spiritual change will reach out to the others. The influence of this life is by no means confined to his own family. A warm-hearted Muslim friend of mine, who moves in the first rank of Muslim society in this city, and who called to see me yesterday, told me quite frankly that he regarded the conversion of this man as the most remarkable with which the Muslims of Mysore City had been confronted. When I asked him what the attitude of educated Muslims was towards his change of faith, he replied that he was free to do as he pleased, so far as they were concerned. Whither Islam? What trace of Islamic intolerance and the law of apostacy in Islam do we find here? The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. Would that it were so for many more of his kind in this place!

Not long ago we had a Maulvi call on us and spend two hours in talking of Christ. He confessed to having believed in Him for years, and freely admitted that he was the Son of God. But to confess the Saviour openly is more than an aged Maulvi, who is dependent upon the support of his followers, can yet do. This is not impossible and we may pray for him.

Early in February a particular section of the Muslim people, not of a very high order, decided to indulge in a general tirade of abuse, in which Yahya Khan, our evangelist, was portrayed as the arch-deceiver of all honest men! This little indulgence took the form of a printed pamphlet maliciously charging him and his friends with using underhand methods of enticing young Muslims away from the faith of their fathers. One of these hair-brained schemes was to offer them the prospect of marriage with beautiful Christian girls. There was, of course, not an atom of truth in the statement. I have heard since, on

good authority, that Abdul Aziz is supposed to be marrying shortly the daughter of Yahya Khan. However this fairy tale has gained credence is more than we can explain; for the evangelist has been here long enough for any one, so desiring, to know that he has four sons but no daughters! After one of these publications came into my hands I sent word to the writer of it, who was so foolish or perhaps proud as to sign his name at the end, that if any thing of this nature appeared again he would render himself liable to being charged with libel and having to meet heavy claims for damages. We had no intention of doing so but at the same time did not see why they should have all the fun. It did not prevent a second pamphlet from being issued in which Yahya Khan, missionaries, the Methodist Mission Hospital, Untouchables and the cinema all came in for comment or criticism. It did, however, put them on their guard; for this time it was sent out over the very indefinite signature of "The Household of the People of Islam." A note at the foot of the sheet appealed for funds to support the effort. Evidently the budding editor had visions of laying the foundations of a great newspaper, but nothing more has happened. It seems to have lacked the cement of monetary assistance, besides which the relentless tide of contempt, emanating from the more tolerant and educated of the Muslim public, has washed away its foundations of sand. It has made our work a little more difficult in some quarters, but on the whole we have not seen more enquirers at any other time. We have come to regard it all as a great advertisement for the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that even if Christ be preached through the strife of our opponents we may yet learn to glory. One of these enquirers continues to come to us in spite of being ostracized by his Muslim neighbours for doing so. We hope he will come all the way with the Master. We leave these matters with you in the hope that your intercession will help us further to assail the stronghold of the enemy of light.

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### Travancore Muslim Conference.

**A**T Alwaye on May 10th the Second Annual Conference was held under the auspices of the North Travancore Muslim Association. Mr. K. L. Gauba. M.L.A. (a convert from Hinduism) presided. Moslems from different parts of the state and from Cochin were in attendance and among these present were M. Yaqub Khan (Lahore), Haji Ismail Sait (Cochin) and K. M. Seethi of Tellicherry.

Mr. K. L. Gauba was given a great reception by a deputation headed by M. K. Muhammad Pillai Bahadur, President of the Association. An address of welcome on behalf of the Association was presented to him by M. Abdul Hamid. It referred to his mission to spread the Gospel of Islam and concluded with the following words: "The seed sown in Malabar will sprout and bear rich fruit, and in

fulness of time will inspire many of the backward and depressed classes of this coast, and insure spiritual solace and secure social, civic, political and religious independence to the suffering masses of our country."

In his presidential address Mr. Gauba paid tribute to the intelligent and well-informed people of Travancore. Referring to the move towards conversion on the part of the Thiyyas he said that ever since it had begun, missionaries of various religions had been engaged in propaganda work and had been persuading the Thiyyas to embrace their separate religions. Changanacherry, the venue of the Thiyya Conference, was like a regular market, where he witnessed "hawkers" of different religions gathered to offer their goods. The Thiyya looked at those goods with the eyes of a shrewd customer. They had fought for centuries for equality and political rights. He invited them to join Islam for their betterment. In his opinion Islam should stand a good test before the Thiyyas could be brought in to that fold. The Muslims were a minority community and by the conversion of the Thiyyas they would lose that character. The Thiyyas apart from getting social rights should get political rights and the Muslims were ready to entrust those educated people with greater political responsibilities. Mr. Gauba went on to speak of the great awakening of the Thiyya community. If they looked dispassionately and calmly around the Islamic world they could realise that Islam would save them from their present ills.

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### **Tour in Kodaikanal and the Nilgiris.**

**T**HE Secretary of the Missionaries to Muslims League has just returned from a lecturing tour in South India summer resorts.

He was permitted by the Henry Martyn School to undertake this and lectured on the "Presentation of Christian Truth to Muslims." The centres were Kodaikanal, Coonoor, Kotagiri and Ootacamund. At each place there were good audiences and more than 220 missionaries of some sixty missionary societies and institutions attended the lectures. The arrangements for the tour were in the hands of the Madras Representative Christian Council through the Secretary of the Muslim Work Committee, Mr. D. Neilson of Mysore. The tour was a great success and interest has been stimulated among missionaries in the important work of evangelising Muslims. Although Muslims are in a minority in South India there are many reasons why the Christian church there should interest itself in this work. Young Christian communities are growing up and in view of very active Muslim propaganda and the advance of Hyderabad as a centre of Muslim culture it is desirable that missionaries and Indian workers should be strengthened by instruction which will enable them to withstand the insidious attack of Muslims on the Christian faith. Neglect of this work may easily lead immature Christians to suppose that Muslims do not

need the Gospel or that they are just an heretical sort of Christian. Overwhelmed as many missionaries are with the care of the young churches and with the need for entering the opening doors which are appearing on every hand and with resources which are limited it is natural that missionary work among Muslims should take a back seat. But entire neglect of this work will be disastrous for the general work and if large numbers of the depressed classes should decide to embrace Islam then the missions and the church in South India will be confronted with a problem parallel to that which missions have to face in West Africa,

We thank God that there are signs that the church in South India is awakening to this fact and that in the near future steps will be taken in many districts to start or strengthen the work of the evangelisation of Muslims. We consider that the minimum that should be aimed at in South India is that every district should have some one who, though not necessarily in direct evangelistic work, will have special training to help in the defence of the faith and to lead and guide workers so that they may not feel so helpless when they are confronted with an aggressive Islam.

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### The Epiphany.

**D**O you take the Epiphany? If not you should. It is a four-sheet weekly paper in English which is devoted to the answering of the questions which are being asked from time by non-Christians. Many missionaries find it invaluable. It is obtainable for the ridiculous amount of four annas per annum, post-free in India. Friends can give larger subscriptions and thus the paper is made available to a very wide circle. Free packets for distribution are sent to those in charge of colleges, hostels etc., and other responsible persons who will guarantee that the copies thus sent will be properly used. On these packets recipients send the cost of postage. Residents in England may obtain the *Epiphany* from O. M. Office, 35 Wood Street, Westminster, S.W.1 at the following rates—sent weekly, 4s. 6d. per annum or sent monthly 3s. od. per annum. Friends in India who are interested should write to The Manager, 42 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta.

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### A Quaint Letter from Trinidad.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE been prompted by an impulse to pen these lines and I hope it will receive your kind and immediate attention. I am a Muslim by birth, and strictly speaking I am still a Muslim. I had many a time the feelings to give up my Religion owing to certain

abrogation I had discovered. But the fact remains that whatever Religion I perused a lot of fabulous stories is found in them, for example, Hinduism with its numerous gods is far from being a true Religion. Buddhism also demand its followers to worship Buddha as God. As regards Christianity I am dormant, it is not in my capacity to give any version or whatever, because it is still under-study. As Jesus is mentioned in the Holy Quran the studies become easy for me, to compare the Holy Prophet Muhamad and Jesus, Son of Mary—in that light, and at the same time the studies of Gospels is not out of place. My object of writing to you, as you would notice is for intellectual aid, in this respect, I understand your movement stands for this cause, therefore I am sure that through your intervention much would be done. You can send along if there is Booklets, Pamphlets or Tracts dealing with Islam and Christianity in any respect; any useful advises will be gladly accepted. After thanking you for an early reply I am, “Truly” . . . . .

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### Prayer and Praise.

LET US PRAY for a middle-aged man, a convert from Islam who is in great distress of mind.

LET US PRAY that suitable workers may be found for areas in South India where Muslim work is to be started.

LET US PRAY for the young enquirer from Trinidad, and for Abdul Aziz.

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### 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:—

Rev. J. W. Sweetman,  
Kenfield, Nainital,  
U.P., India.





The Henry Martyn School  
of Islamic Studies,  
Lahore,

WILL CONDUCT

An Extension Course of Lectures

AT THE

Hindustani Methodist Church,

(near Grand Hôtel)

Naini Tal

FROM

Monday 25th May, to Friday, 26th June  
1936.

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For Particulars See Within

All three members of the staff of the H. M. S. are to be present in Naini Tal for this Course which, by the kindness of the District Superintendent, will be conducted in the Hindustani Methodist Church, on the Mall.

THE PRINCIPAL will lecture on :

The Muslim attitude to the Christian Scriptures, the Person of Christ, and Christian Doctrine; and on the way of approach to Muslims.

REV. J.A. SUBHAN will lecture on :

The Faith and Practice of Muslims  
Muslim Sects and Religious Orders;  
Mysticism in Islam and Saint-Worship.

REV. J.W. SWEETMAN will lecture on :

The life and times of Muhammad;  
Comparative Theology of Islam and Christianity;  
Sources and Development of Islamic Doctrine.

The Course is open to all Christians, Europeans and Indians, interested in the subject. In order to help to defray expenses there will be a minimum fee of Two Rupees for the Course.

Residents and visitors, unable to take the whole Course, will be welcome at the lectures.

A selection of books from the library in Lahore has been brought up for the use of students, and literature in English and Urdu, bearing on the subject, will be on sale.

Similar courses have already been held in Dalhousie (1931), Kodaikanal, Ootacamund, Bangalore and Landour (1932), Darjeeling (1933), and Simla (1934), and aroused much interest. It is hoped that as many as possible will take advantage of this opportunity.

Any enquiries should be addressed to the Principal, who will be glad to furnish further particulars :—

REV. L. BEVAN JONES,  
Kenfield,  
Ayarpatta,  
Naini Tal.

P. T. O.

The following particulars should be carefully noted :—

1. There will be *two* lectures each morning (Saturdays and Sundays excepted) from 10-30—11-30, 11-30—12-30.

2. The members of the Staff will lecture as follows :—

THE PRINCIPAL—at 10-30 Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays.

MR. SUBHAN—at 11-30 on Mondays, and at 10-30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

MR. SWEETMAN—at 11-30 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays.

*Evening Classes.* The Principal will be glad to arrange for an evening course of lectures for those who may find it impossible to attend in the morning. Will those who desire such an arrangement kindly apply to him in writing at the address given above.