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News and Notes

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Members of the Missionaries to Muslims League.

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Have We Advanced ?

SINCE we wrote the article which appeared in March and April, entitled *What are our Plans?*, a letter has come into our hands written by the Rev. Arthur French of the S.P.G. over twenty-one years ago. We reproduce it here and would request our readers to consider its bearing on the plea which we advanced.

S. P. G. HOUSE,
Byculla, Bombay.
January 27th, 1916.

FROM REV. ARTHUR FRENCH.

MY DEAR MR. GOLDSACK,

You are a member of the Lucknow Conference Continuation Committee I send you a letter from the Convener, Dr. Zwemer. From this letter you will perceive that he is in entire sympathy with a proposal I submitted to him to form an All-India Missions to Moslems League on interdenominational lines. The proposal has the approval and support of the Bishop of Calcutta, Dr. Lefroy, who was a prominent member of the Conference, and is a member of the Continuation Committee.

It is strongly felt by many of us that the position of Missions to Moslems in India is weak in the extreme, and calls for Co-operative Action. The forces are weak, scattered and out of touch with each other; we are merged in Missions working generally among Hindoos and native congregations, and there is serious danger that in a few years distinctive Missions to Moslems may even disappear. We number at present under 200 as against five thousand engaged in other sides of Mission work.

Missions in India are coming more and more under the operations of the Indian Missionary Conference which recently met at Matheran close to Bombay. The proposal is to form a Committee

representing Moslem Missions which would be either a Committee of that Conference or an entirely separate organisation sending representatives to that Conference. At present the subject of Missions to Islam is conspicuously absent from the deliberations of the Conference. But if "the conversion of Islam in India is one-fifth of the problem of converting India," it is clear that either we are neglecting our opportunity of availing ourselves of such a powerful lever as this Conference is becoming, or tacitly allowing the Conference to assume the position that Missions to Moslems are inarticulate and unorganised.

We have however virtually the nucleus of an organisation in the "Missions to Moslems League" of which the Rev. J. Takle (on furlough) is Secretary, and the Rev. H. A. Walter, Lahore, Acting Secretary. This League has however no Executive to speak in its name. It can however be used as the ground work of the organisation suggested.

I think it will be generally admitted that we need something prominent and forceful, a body with an Executive which can meet and formulate our policy.

I have received some twenty-nine names as suggested members of this Executive. I write to ask your views on the whole question, and whether you would consent to the formation of a Sub-committee of the Continuation Committee to this extent for *India alone* which has at present only six out of the sixteen members of that Committee?

Ever my dear Mr. Goldsack,

Yours most sincerely,

ARTHUR J. P. FRENCH (S.P.G.),
Missionary to Moslems,
 BOMBAY.

The Light Makes a Slip.

IN the issue of *The Light* of February 8th, exception was taken to the fact that the Very Rev. W. R. Inge, in the current number of the *Hibbert Journal* quoted the words, "If you come across a fine saying, don't hesitate to attribute it to me," as a saying of the Prophet Muhammad. (Actually as quoted by the ex-Dean, the saying concludes, "I must have said it.")

The grounds for the objection are: (1) that "the lines imply an attack on the Prophet's integrity," and (2) that "the Reverend gentleman gives no authority for his quotation." The assertion is even made that "The fact is, there is no such Hadith in any collection of Traditions, not even what is known as 'Za'if' (untrustworthy); whereas "there is a saying of the Prophet to just the opposite effect," *viz.* "Whoever wilfully imputes a false saying to me, he must beware of his abode in fire." Dr. Inge is then asked "either to substantiate his quotation or withdraw it," otherwise he will "stand guilty of the very blemish which his quotation seeks to read into the Prophet's character."

On behalf of that ripe scholar the following should be noted :—

1. Dean Inge can be exonerated from any motive of malicious attack on the Prophet's character. The article in question is entitled "More Gleanings from a Note-book"; and comprises 9 pages of 59 paragraphs of various length, some (like this one under discussion) being limited to two lines only. These deal with pithy sayings of the world's wise men, in ancient, mediæval and modern times, and are served up in the best of good humour.

2. The Hadith in question may be found in the Chapter on Sunnat in the Sunan of Ibn Majah (ed Dehli 1233 A.H., on page 4, line 10 almost facing the tradition about Hell which *The Light* quoted: *Whatever good word has been said, I said it.*

For all that one need not believe that the Prophet ever said so!

On having this pointed out to him the Editor of *The Light* made excuses for the mistake in the following issue of his paper.

L. B. J.

Banking and Communalism.

WE print herewith the translation of a handbill issued recently in Hyderabad and published in the *Hyderabad Bulletin* with the comments of a contributor styled "Amateur Casual." The Muslim banking venture is interesting in view of the prohibition of interest in Muslim religious law. On the other hand the politic appeal for tolerance is a sign of the times.

THE HANDBILL.

"Advice to Muslims"

"Save Islam from Ruin"

"BRETHREN IN ISLAM,

"You might be aware that the celebrations in connection with the Prophet's Birthday, and the Id festivities which are held in every town and village with full sincerity are with a view to consolidate the position of Islam and to defeat the activities of the enemies of Islam. But it is a matter for great sorrow that on account of the indifference and carelessness of Mahommedans, missionaries are reaping the benefit. Thousands, nay, lakhs of rupees of Mahommedans are going towards the building of temples and churches, and all efforts are being made by non-Mahommedan communities to shake the faith of the followers of Islam in the tenets of their own religion. On the other hand, the efforts of our missionaries are handicapped for want of money. Mahommedan orphans and widows are being starved, Muslim students are forced to discontinue their further studies for lack of means. Lakhs of rupees which accrue as interest on their investments in Banks are not claimed by the Muslims and pass over to the enemies of Islam. It is regrettable that, with the help of this money, efforts are

being made against Islam. Everybody knows what happened to the 20 lakhs of rupees which were to the credit of the Zakria Masjid, Bombay. This is the result of dealing with non-Muslim Banks. Of course, there is no doubt that hitherto there has been no Muslim Bank for the investment of the money of Muslims.

“You will be glad to learn that a Bank has at last come into existence in 1934, known as the Deccan Commercial Bank, which is always at your service. If you have sympathy with the Muslims and are interested in Muslim monies, you must start, even from to-day, dealing with the Deccan Commercial Bank, and in this way benefit the Muslims with Muslim money, so that the Muslim Orphanages, etc., shall receive very great help from this Bank.

(for) MAHOMED ANWARUDDIN KHAN,
Managing Director.”

CONTRIBUTOR'S COMMENTS.

The Tragedy of India.

Anything that savours of the communal is hateful to me, for I feel that communal and other distinctions are clogs in the path of national advancement, sedulously set up and exploited by interested parties who are as disloyal to their own community as they are to their country. India reveals a tale of tragedy that cannot be matched for sheer poignancy of misery in other parts of the world, and when I turn from the contemplation of the events in British India to the affairs in Hyderabad, I feel proud that I am privileged to belong to such a State and to be a subject of so enlightened a Ruler as His Exalted Highness.

Communal Mischief Afoot.

When once the communal mischief is afoot, it takes a course that is silent but devastating, and it is with great sorrow that I have to sully these columns—meant for the exposition of justice and the promotion of truth—by a reference to propaganda that is new to the State. I cannot well help the reference, because I hope that if the authorities and the public are so inclined, the mischief can be nipped in the bud and the fair name of Hyderabad for undisturbed communal harmony can be restored to its lustre before much damage is done.

The Deccan Commercial Bank.

I have read—and I invite my readers to do likewise—a hand-bill printed in Urdu under the signature of its Managing Director, boosting up the Deccan Commercial Bank, a branch of which has been opened in Hyderabad. I have no objection to the boosting, but I resent the manner in which it is done. It is open to a bank to canvass business by telling the public the facilities and advantages it gives its constituents; it is certainly not open to it to damn other—and older and better—banks simply because they happen to be its rivals;

and it is most certainly reprehensible that this self-advertisement should be based, not on its merits, but on communalism, pure and simple.

Anti-Islamic.

The Deccan Commercial Bank is presumably conducted by Muslims; but it cannot be anti-non-Muslim, for I do not think that even it has the audacity to boycott non-Muslim constituents. The question that arises is, how far is its fanaticism justified, first, according to the Law of Islam, and, secondly, according to the Law of the land? One of the most admirable features of Islam is its condemnation of money-lending for interest: the Holy Prophet—the blessing of Allah be on Him!—felt that interest is unearned income, generally at the expense of the needy. In so far as the Deccan Bank charges interest on its loans and generally works for profit, it is against the injunctions of the Prophet, the tenets of Islam and the traditions of the great Muslim community. In other words, it is not only non-Islamic but *anti-Islamic*; and it may fairly be argued that if Muslims have to lend or borrow, it is more harmless for them to do so with non-Islamic concerns rather than with one that pretends to be Islamic but is not.

Exploitation of Religion.

The Deccan Bank, let me assume, is sufficiently enlightened to discard the superstition against interest. Very well: but why drag in the name of Islam for a purpose that defies that religion? If a Muslim has any regard at all for his religion, will he not think all the poorer of such a bank, which digs its own grave?

Fanaticism.

The handbill speaks for itself, condemns itself. Its aim is to fanaticism, and it does its work thoroughly well. It says, for example, that the Prophet's Birthday is celebrated "to defeat the activities of the enemies of Islam." The statement is an insult to the Prophet and the religion of tolerance He founded: it breeds hatred between communities, for it insinuates that a non-Muslim is necessarily an "enemy" of Islam. If non-Muslims start banks, does it mean,—except to the jaundiced eye of the Deccan Bank—that their object is "to shake the faith of the followers of Islam in the tenets of their own religion?" A bank is not concerned with politics or religion: it does its business to earn money, and it does not care a snap of its fingers with whom it does its business. But the Deccan Bank pretends ignorance of the very rudiments of banking, and yet seeks to secure business by means that are open to question.

Help—with Honest Money.

There are widows and orphans and impecunious students in every community: they deserve help—provided the money is honestly found. I for one cannot believe that Muslims are so foolish that they

do not claim the interest which accrues on their deposits: but it is a terrible thing to say that the money so unclaimed is being used for "efforts against Islam." I don't know the Zakaria Masjid incident to which the handbill refers, but if it is trotted out to attack Muslims who have accounts with non-Muslim banks, it is funny that the Deccan Bank should, now and here, exploit a matter that rightly belongs to a Court of Law.

The Show Given Away.

The concluding paragraph gives away the whole show. Muslims who have sympathy for the members of their community are begged to patronise the Deccan Bank, to "benefit Muslims with Muslim money." But how, pray? If the Deccan Bank makes a profit of, say, Rs. 10,000 a year, are the Directors prepared to give an undertaking that *all* or even a substantial part of the profits will be allotted to Muslim widows and orphans and impecunious students? I am perfectly certain that they are not; every pie of it, made by whipping up communal jealousy, will go into their own capacious and well-lined pockets. Has the Bank at any time given its profits to Muslim charity, when and how much? If not, this propaganda amounts to bluffing the public by false pretences—and that, by invoking the sacred name of Islam.

Attack on Non-Muslims.

The public may note with interest that the handbill attacks all non-Muslims with charming impartiality: the temples of Hindus and the Churches of Christians come in for castigation, even as the infant bank struggling hard to gain a foothold, in this soil so uncongenial to communalism, comes in for fulsome laudation.

Plea for Public Tranquility.

It is time that such propaganda were checked, at least in Hyderabad. The Prophet Mahommed is as much a figure for veneration to the Hindus and Christians as to Muslims: His Exalted Highness is a Ruler of a far larger number of Hindus than of Muslims. In an atmosphere where hitherto friendliness among the communities has been proverbial, this exotic product from an alien soil has thrust its way in, and brazenly unfurls communal hatred. If it is not firmly met, communal battles may rage—not between banks only. In the interests of the general public and of public tranquility, I suggest to the Government of His Exalted Highness that communal harmony is gravely menaced by this impudent propaganda, and that a warning be issued to the Deccan Bank that if it does not desist, it may well pack up and go back to the place of its birth. Others who have played the dirty communal game have been asked to quit the State: if this Bank wishes to live here, it should either mend its ways or end its existence, so far as Hyderabad is concerned. Firm action, as during the Secunderabad riot, has proved successful in the past: more so now, because the handbill is a direct challenge to the non-communal outlook of His Exalted Highness and his Government.

Hyderabadis, Awake!

One word more before I have done. The handbill bears the picture of a boy carrying a banner on which appear the words "Awake, Awake." I have only to repeat the words especially to the Muslim public. For centuries past the Muslims of Hyderabad have been wholly free from the communal virus; they have lived with non-Muslims, made friends with them, done business with them. Let them recall their Prophet's injunctions, the tolerance of their Ruler and the hoary history of the State. Will they play into the hands of bigots, who are jealous of us because we are Hyderabadis, and because we refuse to think of ourselves as Muslims, Hindus or Christians? Is our State to be exploited by gold-diggers, cloaked in the tatters of a great religion? Surely not: I hope and pray not. The Deccan Bank says it is communal, prejudices and passions are evidently its main sustenance; but it does not say how it will help Muslims more than other Banks. It is out for profit—at any cost. And while it is welcome to its profits, it is for the Muslim public to say whether they will pay the cost of strife and disaffection here. So I repeat, "Awake, Awake."

The Moslem World.

April, 1937.

ISLAM AS A RELIGIOUS PROBLEM.

NOT only because of its vast geographical area and its 250,000,000 adherents, but because of its inherent character and age-long history, Islam is a religious problem of baffling perplexity. This is evident from the current issue of *The Moslem World*. That the Cross of Christ is the missing link in the Moslem creed is the subject of an editorial by Professor E. E. Calverley of Hartford. The senior Editor discusses the Judaic Christian origin of Moslem angelology and offers in this connection a rather new interpretation of Hebrews 1: 6 and the angelic worship of the Messiah. The sacred book of one of the least known of Persian Moslem sects, the *Ahl-al-Haqq*, also called *Alilabhis*, is translated by Rev. Charles R. Pittman, while Edward J. Jurji traces the Sufi doctrine of illumination to Christian sources.

A Roman Catholic scholar raises the question of the difference between Arabization and Islamization in the spread of Mohammed's religion, and shows that the two are far from identical. More popular articles deal with northern Nigeria, north-west China, and Arab Folk-tunes. That Islam is in a state of transition and chaotic readjustment is evident from Professor Levonian's article on Old Turkey, and the pen-picture of Aleppo to-day by another writer. Those who are intrigued by an etymology should read the account of Joseph's shirt—the only garment mentioned in the Koran.

Summer Schools: A Reminder.

EXTENSION Courses in connection with the Henry Martyn School will be held at MUSSOORIE, May 17th to June 12th and at LANDOUR, August 2nd to 28th.

Prayer and Praise.

PRAYER is requested for the extension courses to be held in accordance with the above notice.

PRAISE God for the fidelity of a Pathan convert who has been in great danger from persecution but has escaped alive.

LET US PRAY for the continuance of co-operative enterprise in missionary work for Muslims in India.

“Paul’s faith was not static, but dynamic, not retrogressive but progressive.” Let us pray for a faith like his so that our mountains of difficulty may be removed and that we may win victories for Christ.

LET US PRAY that the whole Church may hear a new call to a discipline and an adventure and the travail of spiritual endeavour wherein souls may be brought to birth.

NOTICE.

Please 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,
Lal Tiba,
Landour,
Mussoorie,
U.P., India.