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News and Notes

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May 1st = 10th Rabi'ul-Awwal (3rd mo.) 1358 A.H.

This Is The Lord's Doing.

SOMEWHERE in India there is a village with a population of approximately 450 souls, all of whom were formerly Muslims.

To-day about 80 people, including children, belong to the Christian Church. It is a work of God that deserves to be more widely known.

The first to declare his change of faith was M. who, after giving his heart to Christ, set himself to win over his wife and mother-in-law so that all of them might be baptized together. That was twelve years ago. These, with the man's two children—a complete family—were the first-fruits for Christ in that village, a place where faithful work had been done for years without any visible result.

The subsequent growth of the Church has been very largely the result of the faithful witness of that first convert. Though, in the early days, he was forbidden to preach and suffered various forms of petty persecution, Muslims would yet come to him of their own accord to inquire why he had forsaken Islam and embraced Christianity. He took advantage of all such opportunities to teach others. Moreover, the local missionaries and their helpers greatly encouraged the family by their frequent visits, and taught such of their neighbours as were willing to listen.

A factor facilitating the growth of the Christian community is that most of the houses in the village are inter-related by marriage. This is certainly true of the Christian families, now no less than sixteen in number. Further, all these people are agriculturalists and a fair proportion of them own their houses and land. No one has been able to dispute their right to the property, consequently they have not been dispossessed, as is so often the fate of converts. Others, from the first, have continued to work in the fields of their Muslim employers.

There has, of course, been much persecution, particularly at

the hands of the local *maulawis*. Once a big man from another village took it upon himself to come over and upbraid these disciples of Christ, assuring them that they would be damned as *kafirs*. To this one of their number made effective reply; "Would you call Hazrat 'Isa a kafir?" "Certainly not", came the answer. "Then how can I be? I am one of His followers." Often Muslim hostility has taken the form of boycott, "Don't buy from or engage these Christians"; but as the latter have invariably proved themselves good workmen the Muslims have not been willing to part with them. Sometimes life itself has been imperilled, as when a Christian only escaped certain death by taking a precaution which seemed God-inspired. Before lying down on the floor of his hut to sleep he placed a plank behind his head at the foot of the mat wall. At dead of night a fishing-spear was hurled at that spot and stuck fast in the plank.

It gave us great joy recently to visit this village, for one saw a rare light in the eyes of these simple folk—a light that betokened new life and new joy in the Holy Spirit.

In a neighbouring village, some two miles distant, there lives a solitary Christian, a hero indeed. He and his Muslim wife were baptized together a few years ago, but subsequently she left him and returned to live with her mother as a Muslim. This man, the owner of property and a successful farmer, has out of his private means built a small chapel in which he worships daily. We were told that he rings the bell at appointed times with great regularity, though for the most part he worships there alone; at other times he is joined by one of the missionaries or some of the Christians from the other village.

His only friend in the neighbourhood is a daughter by his first wife. On the death of her mother this girl went to live with an aunt who married her to a Muslim farmer. She has not lost her affection for her father, for when freed from her own domestic duties she runs across to do the chores in his house. Thus is preserved a link with his Muslim neighbours. Shall we not pray that, as has happened so frequently in the other village, the cause of Christ may be advanced through this daughter?

It is all the Lord's doing and is marvellous in our eyes.

L. B. J.

Interest.

Translated by Rev. J. W. Sweetman from *Huquq o Fara'id-i-Islam*.

From Jabir. The Prophet cursed the one who takes interest and the one who gives it, the one who writes it down and the one who witnesses it. He said, "They are all equal". (Muslim)

From Abu Huraira. The Prophet said, "Interest is composed of seventy parts, the least of which is that a man marry his mother." (Bukhari)

From Abu Huraira. The Prophet said, "On the night of my journey (*i.e.* Mi'raj). I came upon a tribe with their bellies like houses full of snakes. And they could be seen from outside their bellies. I said 'Who are these?' Gabriel said, 'These are those who take interest.'" (Ahmad and Ibn Maja)

From 'Ubada b. Samit. The Messenger of Allah said, "Gold for gold, silver for silver, grain for grain, barley for barley, dates for dates, salt for salt, in equal quantities from hand to hand is lawful. And when the exchange is not in the same kind then sell how you will when it is from hand to hand. (Bukhari and Muslim)

This means that selling gold, silver, etc. on credit, or a lesser for a greater amount, is wrong. But if the exchange is not in the same kind it is right so long as it is not on credit but from hand to hand. But the Legists disagree in this matter as to whether this is limited to the things mentioned or not. Some draw the analogy that iron and all sorts of grain are included. Hanafis state the conditions which make it unlawful; *viz* :

1. Being anything which comes under the heading of "grain" and credit. 2. Being of the same kind. If both of these are found at the same time then credit and inequality in the amount is prohibited as, for example, three sers for four sers, or three for three but on credit. But if in the transaction only one of these conditions is found, then the prohibition does not hold as far as being unequal in quantity is concerned, but credit is still prohibited. Thus, for example, for four sers of wheat ten sers of barley can be given so long as it is not on credit.

Some learned men think that it is only compound interest which is forbidden in the Law. Thus Razi says, "There are only two kinds of interest, cash and credit. The latter means that in the days of ignorance people used to lend their property to others and take a fixed amount of profit from it every month, the original principle remaining the same. When the time came to redeem the debt and the debtor could not pay, then the creditor increased the principle. This increasing of the amount of the principle was what was really meant by interest in the Law." However much difference of opinion there may be among the Doctors of the Law, simple and compound interest are condemned in Islam, but to take interest from or give interest to any non-Muslim in a Darr-ul-Harb is lawful. Thus the matter is stated in Imam Nasafi's commentary. It is legitimate to take interest from non-Muslims in the way mentioned, because their property is lawfully forfeit so long as there is no breaking of a treaty; and it is legitimate to *give* interest to a *Harbi* because it is not right for a Muslim to live on what has been earned by immorality; but the non-Muslim eats what is taboo without scruple and so if something is given him by way of interest then what greater evil is involved than that he has been fed with something taboo (*haram*). It is not lawful to give interest to Dhimmis in Darr-ul-Islam, because by this the practice of taking interest is likely to spread.

Many learned men have asserted that India is Darr-ul-Harb. Thus Maulana 'Abdul Hayy writes that in the opinion of Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad, Christian administration constitutes it Darr-ul-Harb, because in it pagan practices have spread openly and without fear. Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz also thinks so, and therefore to give and take interest in this country is lawful. But because there is difference of opinion, in opposition to them many Doctors say that so far as possible it is best to abstain from giving and receiving interest. But there is no harm if one is compelled.

Muslim Dissolution of Marriage Bill (India).

IN our March issue it was stated that, according to the new Bill, a Muslim woman on conversion would not be *ipso facto* divorced, as hitherto. She will in future remain with her husband (unless he himself chooses to divorce her); but if he obstructs her in the observance of her religious profession or practice, she may sue for a divorce.

In view of the possibility of bringing a case of this kind to court, women missionaries are asking just what "observance of her religious profession or practice" really involves; and they suggest that if a definite pronouncement on this point could be made now, it might prove of great help in the future to quote it in a court of law.

We ought to know the view of the Christian Church on such an important matter. A number of questions have suggested themselves to our minds and we take this opportunity to invite an expression of opinion from the members of the League.

For instance,

1—Would the Church consider Baptism, attendance at Divine Worship, and partaking of Holy Communion, as essential features in *the religious profession and practice* of such a woman convert?

2—Would the Christian Church allow such converts to attend Divine service, receive baptism, and partake of Holy Communion, *in purdah*? And if the husband were to stipulate that *purdah* must be observed, would the Church be willing to make the necessary arrangements?

3—Would the Church consider that so long as a woman convert "believed in her heart and confessed with her mouth", that would be sufficient "profession" of her new faith?

4—Would she be allowed to continue her practice of praying 5 times a day, *with the customary genuflections*, provided that all were done in the name of Jesus Christ? This might save a lot of trouble in her home.

5—Would the Church commend the practice of allowing such a convert to fast in the month of Ramadan, assuming that she undertook to do so in the name of Christ?

As this is a matter which must be faced sooner or later, we trust members will lose no time in communicating their ideas to us.

V. R. B. J.

Notes.

"*If Thou art the Messiah, tell us plainly*", John x. 24.—But a plain question of this character is never as plain as it sounds. The truth about our Lord's Person was far too big to put into a nutshell like that; besides which the idea of the *Messiah* in the mind of those Jews was very much more materialistic than that of Christ Himself. If He had replied "Yes", their misunderstanding of Him would only have been increased. The fact is that men cannot become intellectually certain about a matter of this kind while they remain morally and spiritually blind. As Jesus said to them on this occasion, "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." (B.R.F. Notes).

Similarly, Muslims are incapacitated *spiritually* from understanding what we mean when we speak of our Lord as the Son of God.

Suggestive passages in Dr. Storm's new book (see review).

"It is not enough just to win a man's friendship by removing his appendix, repairing his hernia, or teaching him English".

"To feel that there are places where God's message of salvation in Christ is too weak to be victorious is to deny its divine character".

"Missionary work is the projection into needy places of the spiritual power of the whole Christian Church".

(The Muslim's) "religious zeal must be replaced by a religion still more vital and real A dynamic, spirit-filled Christianity with Christ crucified and victoriously ascended as its theme, is the only substitute."

The old school and the new.—The following question and answer appeared in the pages of *The Light* (Lahore): *Q. maulavis say* that those men who wear trousers below the ankles are bound to go hell. Is it no use for such people to say prayers and observe fast? Is there no difference between a man who never says prayers and one who says (them) with the pyjama below his ankles? *A.* "This is all nonsense. The pyjama has nothing to do with prayer. The prayer of the *maulvi* with a pious appearance may be sheer hypocrisy in the eyes of God, whereas that of a clean-shaven man thoroughly sincere. Prayer is a matter of the heart."

Fanatical regard for the Qur'an.—The final verdict of the State Judicial Council of Bhopal is awaited in a case in which a Miss Browne, aged 30, was done to death by an enraged Muslim, in November, 1937, for alleged insult to the Qur'an. Miss Browne, as Headmistress of the Sultania Girls' High School, had happened, in clearing out old and obsolete books from the library, to have destroyed a commentary of the Qur'an. Though her apology and explanation were accepted by the State Government and notified in their Gazette, the accused, a month later, stabbed her to death in the public road. The Sessions Judge sentenced the accused to death, subject to confirmation of the High Court and the Qadi. The High Court held the accused guilty of murder and sent the file on to the Qadi. The Qadi passed a *fatwa* of death, but the *mufti's* finding differed. Accordingly the case was referred to the Assembly of Ulemas. They upheld the Qadi. Then the High Court again confirmed the death sentence passed by the Sessions Judge. The final tribunal is the State Judicial Council and to this the accused has now appealed.

Book Reviews.

WHITHER ARABIA? by Dr. W. H. Storm. World Dominion Press, London and New York. Introduction by Dr. Zwemer. Maps and illustrations. pp. 150. 5 sh. (cloth) 3 sh. 6p. (paper).

The present work, another volume in *World Dominion Survey Series*, is the result of a ten months' tour in which the author travelled 5,000 miles, visiting every province. This in itself is a remarkable testimony to the changed attitude of Arab rulers, to whose courtesy and hospitality Dr. Storm pays ready tribute.

The Survey enables the reader to estimate the new forces that have, at last stirred that ancient land. "Every year the motor car is penetrating further into neglected Arabia"—"it will be an important factor in the removal of the veil"; moreover, the air-mail, the radio, and the press, through their extensive service are profoundly affecting the country.

Two chapters on the land and its people serve as a necessary background. Another on *The Impact of the West*, reveals that, while there is to-day more religious toleration and a willingness to listen to the Christian message, the people's outlook is being greatly influenced by the materialism and unbelief of the west, of which they learn through the agencies already noted. *The Story of Missionary Effort* tells of courageous pioneers who brought the needs of Arabia definitely before the conscience of the Church, men like Ian Keith-Falconer, and the veteran Bishop Valpy French; also of the men and women led by Drs. Zwemer and Cantine, of the Arabian Mission, now celebrating its Jubilee. The years have confirmed the importance attached from the first to medical work, for it has proved "the best method of approach in Arabia;" other branches have been primary schools, and, supremely, evangelistic work.

But it is a hard field—there is still no Christian Church there; the number of baptized converts can be numbered on the fingers of both hands; and no indigenous workers are available. In presenting *The Call of Present Opportunity*, the author discusses the facilities and needs of each accessible province, and has much to say of the beneficial rule of Ibn Sa'ud, stating that the future policy of the work will largely turn on the attitude of his successors. "A Christian Arabia would do more for the evangelization of Asia than almost any other factor."

In the closing chapter, *The Price of Success*, there is an unmistakable note of urgency and challenge as Dr. Storm discusses the qualifications of the type of missionary now required and the nature of the work still to be done. The task of the evangelist is the hardest of all, because "the Moslem heart is a heart of stone". . . . "the missionary is loved, but not Christ." Therefore the volunteer for service must first face and answer the two questions—whether he has completely surrendered to God's will, and is sure that God wants him in Arabia.

Seven appendices, including one on the Bible in Arabia (by Dr. Kilgour) and a Bibliography (by Dr. Zwemer) greatly add to the value of this volume.

One correction—surely Dr. Storm does not think that "wealthy Maharajahs of India" (*i.e.*, Hindus) make the pilgrimage to Mecca! (p. 77)

L. BEVAN JONES.

THE GOLDEN MILESTONE, by Samuel M. Zwemer and James Cantine, with a foreword by Lowell Thomas. 150 pp. Revell Company. \$ 1:50. Frontispiece, a photo of the authors.

The Golden Milestone is the story of "What God hath done." It is a narrative full of an adventure of faith, and tells the story of the courageous pioneer work of the Arabian Mission, since its inception fifty years ago.

This Society was organized in 1889 as an undenominational Mission and the first two missionaries sent out were the authors of the book, Revs. J. Cantine and S. M. Zwemer. They went to Beirut for language study, visited Aden, the south coast of the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf ports, with a view to the location of the new Mission, and in doing so encountered much hardship and danger.

Before sailing from America the two men signed a document undertaking not to marry for a certain period. Having fulfilled the promise Dr. Zwemer married one of the pioneer C. M. S. missionaries from Australia, and Dr Cantine, at a considerably later date, found his wife in the first recruit of the Women's Board. Both women proved themselves God-given helpmeets.

Basrah was selected as the first station, and a little Bible shop was opened in the bazaar. The narrative goes on to give thrilling stories of days on mule-back, storms in small open boats at sea, of Bedouin enemies, difficulties with Turkish officials—all met with in the course of those early pioneering days. Subsequently stations were established at Muscat and Bahrein, mission houses and a hospital being built there.

The brave endurance of difficulties, ill-health, and dangers, and the surprising extension of the work is a story well worth reading. The certain source of their courage, strength and success can best be expressed in a sentence on page 138: "One of the most vivid recollections of the early years of our mission is the hours we spent in prayer together, . . . on the slopes of the Lebanons, . . . and afterwards at Aden, Basrah, and Bahrein."

V. R. B. J.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

We are glad to call attention to the following recent publications in Urdu.

Isra'il Ka Nabi (Was Jesus sent to the Lost Sheep of Israel only?) Rev. Barakat Ullah, M.A. 124 pp. price 5 as.

Masihiyat Ki Alamgiri (Universality of Christianity) Rev. Barakat Ullah, M.A. 224 pp. Price 8 as. (We hope to publish a review of these books in our next issue).

Hayat o Khutut-i-Paulus (Life and Letters of St. Paul, by Paterson Smyth). Translated by Rev. S. N. Talibuddin, Saharanpur. 308 pp. Price 12 as.

Jaisi Karni Waisi Bharni, 5th ed. of a well-known tract. 16 pp. one pice.

Yisu Masih Kaun Hai? 4th ed. of the late Dr. Orbison's two-page leaflet 2 as. 100; 1-0-0 per 1,000.

Zakat, almsgiving. 2nd ed. of this tract for women in H.M.S. Series. 8 pp. 4 annas per 100.

Published by the Punjab Religious Book Society, Anarkali, Lahore.

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The Best Friend, the life of Our Lord, specially written for Muslim readers, in simple modern English, will shortly appear in a third edition, revised throughout. Published by the C.L.S. Madras, 74 pp. (with map) 2 annas. Illustrated, 4 as. and 6 as.

FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER.

PRAISE for additional support received for The Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies; pray for God's blessing on the work of teaching at Landour this summer.

PRAY for the Christian father and Muslim daughter (mentioned on page 34); that the latter may be won for Christ and then lead others to Him.

PRAY for a Muslim young man who has broken with his old associates and is now earnestly seeking Christ; also for those who are instructing him (India).

NEW MEMBERS.

Miss L. Evans,	Welsh Mission,	Shaistaganj, Sylhet, Assam.
Dr. H. W. Storm,	Arabian Mission,	Bahrein.

NOTICE.

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. L. Bevan Jones,
Lal Tiba,
Landour, Mussoorie,
N. India.

