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News and Notes

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Series XXVII.

July

1939.

July 1st=13th Jamadiu'l-Awwal (5th mo.) 1358, A.H.

“Bread on Water.”

LET “M.A.” represent to us the name of a Muhammadan who was converted in Jessore, Bengal, under the ministry of either Rev. J. Reid or that of Rev. W. Goldsack. He was sent to Serampore College for training, and later served as a Mission Preacher for some years. Relentless persecution dogged his footsteps, and breaking under its strain, or yielding to some subtle temptation, he reverted to Islam. Yet, in his house, he continued to sing the Christian hymns he had sung at the market places, and his children learned them. He continued to tell the Gospel stories at home, and his children imbibed much Christian truth.

Last month a wealthy, handsome, married woman came to the Pabna Mission House. She had with her her son, a lad of about 13, who spoke quite good English and was distinctly above the average in intelligence. She introduced herself as the daughter of “M.A.,” and asked to be baptized. Her faith was so strong, and her enquiry “What doth hinder me to be baptized? so challenging and insistent, that after much talk and inquiry we had the joy of seeing her confess her Lord in the waters of baptism near our Mission House, before about twenty-five people.

The last night of her stay here, her son also confessed Christ as his Saviour. Mother and son were indeed radiant in their new-found joy.

Her leave up, she returned to Calcutta where she holds a good Government post, and, from her salary, supports twelve others among them her parents. She has gone back with the determination of leading her father to confess Christ once again, and is supported by the lad who, as staunchly, declared he would confess Christ everywhere he could.

Discretion makes us hesitate to publish their names. Persecution is bound to follow them in any case. So let us remember all of them at the Throne of Grace.

C. D. BALDWIN.

A Visit to Mysore

MYSORE is one of the very few cities where special efforts are being made to work among Muslims. The work, though in its early stage, is yet full of promise especially because of the great zeal with which the local missionary and his associates are inspired to exalt the cross of our Saviour among Muslims. The contacts that have already been made by them are remarkable. But the prejudice of the Muslims there against Christianity and their bigotry are so strong as to be compared with that of the Muslims in the N.W.F. Province.

During my stay there arrangements were made for me to address the little group of Christian workers every morning on the approach to Muslims. At midday I used to receive visits from Muslims already interested in Christianity.

One afternoon the *maulvis* and a few leading Muslims were invited for a religious conversation at tea. So strong was their prejudice against Christianity that during the tea they cleverly conducted the conversation in such a manner as to avoid any reference to religion, and immediately after tea they left the room, so that I was left with my Christian friends only!

In the afternoon I was scheduled to meet Muslims in the Reading-Room from 4 to 7 for "personal conversation", followed by a lecture in Urdu with an opportunity for questions afterwards. These meetings were widely advertised by handbills.

The ingenuity which the Muslims displayed to defeat our plan was such as to cause me great surprise. In the Reading-Room the Muslims demanded that the personal conversation should be conducted in the form of a debate, and this in spite of their utter ignorance of the elementary rules of conducting it.

We, however, acceded to their demand, and told them, that though we were prepared to answer their questions, to the best of our ability, it was no desire on our part to score a victory over them, and hence, as far as the question of defeat and triumph was concerned we already acknowledge our defeat. They later on made use of this phrase of mine and circulated thousands of handbills with the headline: "Rev. John Subhan acknowledges his defeat, and compliments the Muslim representatives on their bearing and courtesy."

The question hours sorely tried our patience—these were mostly on the alleged prophecies regarding Muhammad in the Bible, chiefly on "that Prophet," John 1: 21. For they would demand an answer to their question, and after a reply had been given one of them, ignoring the Christian argument, would repeat it over again. There was no alternative but to repeat the answer, with a few verbal alterations, to a mocking and sometimes jeering audience. Thus the Muslims by their ingenuity utilized the hours scheduled for interviews and preaching the Word in such a way as to prevent the

audience from listening to a Christian message or to hold a personal conversation with one.

The last of the series of the lectures was to be given in the Municipal Hall. During question hours the Reading-Room that day was over-crowded. The Muslims had already their private meetings and had decided what steps to take to prevent the lecture and also to put the speaker in an embarrassing situation. In this meeting resolutions were also passed condemning Christian activities in the locality, and urging Muslims to boycott the Mission compound and hospital. These resolutions were afterwards printed and widely circulated.

We found a crowd of Muslims waiting in the Municipal Hall, but when the time came for me to speak, one young Muslim exhorted the audience to leave the Hall. We, however, managed to get a new audience made up entirely of Hindus (with one exception, however; a Muslim youth who, in spite of Muslim protests, came in), and while the Muslims were picketing the entrances to prevent any Muslim from coming into the Hall, I preached in English (for the Muslims in Mysore do not understand Urdu) on "What Christianity means to me." I was followed by Mr. Reynhout, who spoke on "What Christ has done for us." Thus when the Jews refused to listen to us we turned to the Gentiles!

I have given an account of my experience in Mysore to illustrate how the fanaticism with which Tipu, the Muslim ruler of Mysore in the 18th century, had inspired his subjects against the Christians, still persists. Not long ago the Muslims there surrounded the new Roman Catholic Church of St. Philomena and set fire to it. The building was only saved when the police eventually opened fire on the crowd and several of the Muslims were killed.

One of the Muslims, in fact, said to me that he regretted that Tipu was no more, for had he been here to-day we apostates from Islam would have met the fate which we amply deserve! Tipu is venerated as one who championed the cause of Islam and is called a martyr. A Muslim in course of conversation said that "it seems to me as if Tipu died only the other day, and his memory inspires me with such hatred against Christians that if it was not for state protection I would kill them."!

The little band of Christians in Mysore who are thus trying to lead these Muslims to Christ are surely in the midst of a difficult task. Some of them have been bitterly persecuted, and their children have been treated in a revolting manner.

Nevertheless some of these, like St. Paul, must tarry at their Ephesus, for a great and effectual door is opened unto them and there are many adversaries. This little army of Christ, and the inquirers—some of whom come like Nicodemus to learn of Christ their Saviour—need our earnest prayers.

J. A. SUBHAN

Muslim Dissolution of Marriage Bill.

IN our May issue readers were asked to give their opinions on some questions relating to the above Bill.

Two of our members have sent replies and their answers are appended :—

The questions were these (abbreviated)—

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 a woman convert?

2. Would the Christian Church make arrangements for *purdah*, if necessary?

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 the Church sanction the new convert praying five times a day, with the customary genuflections, provided that they were done in the name of Jesus?

5. Would the Church commend the practice of fasting in Ramadan, assuming that it was undertaken in the name of Christ?

One says :—

1. We consider that the New Testament teaches that baptism, attendance at Divine Worship and partaking of the Holy Communion are essentials of Christian profession and practice, and refusal to permit a woman convert's participation in these would constitute obstruction.

In addition we feel that private devotions in the home *i.e.*, daily Bible reading and prayer after the Christian manner as directed by our Lord is an essential of Christian practice.

2. A Muslim husband might consider "purdah" a duty to himself incumbent on a faithful wife. In this case our feeling would be that the Church should make provision for her to fulfil her wifely duty by permitting the "burqah" to be worn and arranging for her baptism to be before a company of women witnesses. The officiating minister would of course, *ipso facto*, be an exception. Is not this also an exemption Islam recognises with regard to its own religious officers performing special rites. (Women are allowed to be seen by, and to serve, visiting pirs. Ed.)

3. Even if "belief in the heart and confession with the mouth" (though our strong feeling is that baptism is also essential) are considered sufficient "profession," they could hardly be understood as embracing the "practice" of Christianity as taught in the New Testament.

4 & 5. While the question of prayer after the Muslim manner and the observance of the fast, both performed in the name of Christ, is in our opinion a matter for the individual conscience enlightened by the Spirit of God, such observances should not be considered justifica

tion for the obstruction of more definite Christian practices and are surely not to be encouraged by the Christian Church. Is it possible to go through the customary "genuflections" without the repetition of the corresponding Arabic formulae of "namaz", which fall short of 'prayer to the Father in heaven'? Likewise the observance of Ramadan might easily be interpreted as a denial of Christ.

Is the law formed in such a way as to invalidate the New Testament directions on the subject, from which it seems clear that the initiative for separation should come from the non-Christian husband and not from the Christian wife, except as her primary loyalty to her new faith, even to Christ, press this upon the adamant Muslim?

(MISS) C. REDMAN

Another Writes:—I notice that the form of the questions is "Would the Church consider—?" It would be difficult to know what body is in a position to answer these questions as they stand. I am merely giving the answers which I think the Church ought to give. My views may, of course, be wrong:

1. Yes.
2. The answer to the first part of this question is, theoretically, "Yes", but the practical difficulties are immense. A good deal would depend on the interpretation the individual Muslim man concerned put on the words "in purdah". A further difficulty is that so far most branches of the Church do not ordain women, hence they could not baptize or celebrate Holy Communion in *purdah*. In answer to the second part of the question I see no reason why arrangements should not be made for *purdah* seats in some churches, though whether that would satisfy the Muslim husband of a convert is a different matter. On the other hand it is unlikely (and to my mind undesirable) that the Church at large will in the near future ordain women.
3. The answer to this question depends on the meaning attached to the words "believed in her heart and confessed with her mouth."
4. There is nothing in Christianity to prevent a woman praying five times a day, and I personally see no harm in the prescribed genuflections. But again there are difficulties. Here are some which occur to me.

- (a) To keep in mind the proper genuflections while concentrating on praying to God in the name of Jesus would be difficult if not impossible unless the woman were given a form of prayer specially composed so that genuflections should come in appropriately. The composition of such a form, without making it void of spirituality would be a very difficult task.
- (b) Presumably it would be necessary, if the woman were to

satisfy her husband and other Muslims in the house, to pray towards Mecca. This could not be tolerated. It does not matter which way a Christian faces while he prays, but if he deliberately turns towards Mecca he is compromising, not merely with Islam, which is bad, but with an older idolatry, which is worse.

5. No. One cannot interfere with one's health in the way a Muslim does in Ramadan in the name of Jesus Christ. There is, however, nothing to prevent her abstaining from food, not in the name of Jesus Christ, but simply on the lines of "Peace at any price".

(Rev.) F. S. BRIGGS

Book Review

Islam, its Belief and Practices, 150 pages, One Rupee; and *The Muslim Prayer*, a pamphlet of 12 pages, Two annas—by the Rev. J. A. Subhan, of The Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies. Published by the Lucknow Publishing House.

For the convenience of his students, and for general information, Mr. Subhan has published extensive notes from his lectures, on the Faith and Practice of Muslims, in the form of this book of reference. The chapter titles indicate the ground covered: The Foundations of Faith (containing a valuable summary of Muslim belief in God); The Prescribed Duties (twelve pages of which deal with *Muslim Prayer*; these have been printed off separately in the form of the pamphlet noted above); Jihad; Marriage and Divorce; Slavery and Punishments; and a last chapter on miscellaneous matters.

The book is replete with Arabic technical terms used by Muslims, and these have been carefully transliterated. Mr. Subhan writes as an authority on this subject through his own personal knowledge and acquaintance with the facts. It is a book which all missionaries working among Muslims will be glad to have close at hand.

We hope to publish shortly a review of Mr. Subhan's earlier and larger work *Sufism*, its saints and shrines.

L. B. J.

Notes.

A Muslim editor has committed himself to the following statement:—"Many of the social reforms of the German Dictator, Herr Hitler, are essentially Islamic. The Hitler Youth Organisation, which comprises practically all the youth population of Germany, is now being taught to avoid the use alcoholic drinks and tobacco That this Quranic truth should now be adopted by a progressive country like Germany, and its nation-builder Leader, should come as a

fresh proof of the profound wisdom underlying Islamic truths. We trust Westernized Muslims who had looked with suspicion on this dictum of the Quran, who were inclining to take the drink-question lightly and considered it good form to indulge in a little "peg," will now hearken to the call of Herr Hitler at least and avoid drink as gall and worm-wood. We hail this reform of Herr Hitler as distinctly Islamic, and wish him every success." *The Light*, May 24, 1939.

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On May 6th a pot of cooked meat accidentally fell down through the window of a Muslim house in Gaya. It touched a Hindu child that happened to stand in the street. This brought the Hindus in full fury, and in the riot that followed 12 Muslims were killed and 65 injured.

* * * * *

What answer would you give? "If in Christ alone is the way of Salvation why did a Just God create you in a Christian environment—where it was comparatively easy for you to become a Christian—and me in a Muhammadan community, where it is the hardest thing in the world to accept Christ?"

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The "Solitary Christian" mentioned on p. 34 of our issue for May, is now happily married! In a nearby village a young Muslim widow, who had been receiving Christian teaching for a long time, recently had her earnest wish fulfilled and was baptized. Two months ago she was married to our "hero." Let us pray that the witness of their home may lead others in the village to follow Christ.

FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER.

PRAISE for the mother and son, mentioned in this number, who have found Christ—pray that "M.A." may now be led to make the great surrender.

PRAISE for the interest, reported from Poona, of the Muslims of the neighbourhood in the preaching of the Gospel, and pray that God may call a man of His own choice to give his whole time to work amongst them.

PRAY for those entering the open door at Mysore and encountering many adversaries, and that God will incline the latter to seek Him in Christ.

NEW MEMBERS.

Miss C. B. Furfhey,	C.M.S.	Aurangabad, Deccan.
Rev. J. N. Hollister,	M.E.Ch.	Bijnor, U.P.
Rev. J. W. Nave,	M.E.Ch.	Moradabad, U.P.
Rev. J. M. Gossip,	Un. Ch. Scot.	Kotah, Rajputana,

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.

