

## Missionaries to Muslims League.

NEWS AND NOTES, SERIES III, No. 5. September 1914.

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### NOTES.

*"Though they gave me the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left to bring me back from my undertaking, yet will I not pause till the Lord carry my cause to victory, or till I die for it!"*

These words are not quoted from the annals of an ardent Christian missionary, as they might well be, but from the sayings of Muhammad, and they help us to understand something of his resolute determination to make Islam the faith of the world. Many of the followers of the Prophet have much of the same spirit, and we would that the Church of Jesus Christ might be consumed with like zeal, but in the better cause of saving the lost.

The Apostle Paul thinking of the condition of the Jews said: "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Severed from Christ and devoted to destruction, as Weymouth says. What a wish! All through his letters it is evident that Paul had the greatest passion for souls. He could make any sacrifice if only the Jews would turn to Him who loved them and gave His life for their redemption. He felt he could even pray to be separated from the Church, the perfecting of which was the great purpose of his life, and be banished for ever from his Lord, if by that means his own people could be brought into harmony with God. What a passion! Myers in his poem puts it thus:—

Then with a rush the intolerable craving  
Shivers through me like a trumpet call,  
Oh, to save these! to perish for their saving,  
Die for their life, be offered for them all!



**A Christian University at Cairo:** We think it was Moody who said, "Make your plans large." Some of the religious leaders in America are making large plans for the founding of a Christian University at Cairo. They believe it to be one of the greatest means yet proposed for the solving of the tremendous problem of winning the Muslim world for Christ. In the July issue of "*Blessed be Egypt*," the scheme is outlined. It is pointed out that Cairo is a strategic location, being as it is the intellectual centre of Islam. "More than 2,500,000 copies of newspapers and periodicals went from Egypt into other Muslim lands in one year, justifying Cairo's claim to

be not merely the great seat of Muslim theology and literature, but also the greatest centre of Arabic journalism."

There are three types of education to be obtained in Cairo at the present time—(1) *The Azhar Type*: "Muslim from centre to circumference, hopelessly unscientific in character." (2) *The Government Type*: "Muslim in character wherever religion is concerned—open on the Christian Sabbath, but closed on Friday, the Muslim Sabbath, the Quran occupying a prominent place in the curriculum, Muslim standards of life and morality prevalent everywhere." (3) *The European Type*: Many Egyptians go to Europe for education, which means too often for them moral and religious shipwreck.

There is scope for a University, but it must be a distinctly *Christian* one. "Its promoters have never conceived of it as sectarian, but they have emphasized its Christian character as a supreme requirement. The supreme need of the world to which this University is to minister is Jesus Christ. The greatest service this institution can render is to make Jesus Christ known."

This is a scheme which all interested in the winning of the Muslim should encourage by prayer, advertisement and money.



**"No Neutrality"**: Lord Headley, the Muslim Peer, has strong views on the method of our approach to Islam. He writes to the *Islamic Review* for July protesting against our present missionary activity among Muslims: he quotes from an address by the Metropolitan in which he had said, "It was a case of the Cross or the Crescent; there could be no neutrality between the two; one or the other must conquer." Lord Headley says this is an invitation to "a conflict with those who are well disposed and peaceful." He thinks rather that "we should recognise how many points of similarity there are between Christianity and Muhammadanism which are really the sister-religions of the East." He goes on to show that Muhammadans are one with the Reformed Church in their opposition to atheism, idolatry and priestcraft. "They are at one on all essential matters, such as duty to God and duty to neighbours, and are separated only by a thin partition, which might well be dispensed with. What can it really matter what we think of the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, or the efficacy of the Sacraments, so long as we endeavour to do what God has told us to do through Christ and the Prophets? . . . It is surely more important to stand firmly together against atheism and idolatry than to squabble and wrangle over the Divinity of Christ, etc."

The noble Lord is seriously mistaken when he says that Islam and Christianity "are at one on all essential matters," for the essentials in our Faith are the Deity and Atoning Sacrifice of Christ; Christianity would be meaningless without these foundation facts, but Muhammad taught that they were a lie, so missionaries cannot agree with the noble Lord that "we are separated only by a thin partition," for the things which to him are of no matter, are our very life and hope and eternal destiny.



"In Muslim lands the great wall of prejudice remains almost intact," writes a missionary recently. It is very hard to overcome Muhammadan prejudice. It blinds the people. Many difficulties would be quickly solved if Muhammadans would only squarely face the facts. Sir W. Robertson Nicol, in his book *The Church's One Foundation*, speaking of a class of

people at home, says : "The trouble is that many will not look straight at Jesus Christ. They turn their heads away." We have the same trouble in the East. The great need is to get the Muhammadans to study the Christ of the Gospels, not the Christ depicted in the books of Islam, or the Christ of the average Christian.

But how to remove their prejudice to the Gospels we distribute is a difficulty. Recently we were conversing with an intelligent Muslim, who for years has had leanings toward Christianity. He deplored the fact that the Bible was not better known to his co-religionists. He said, "If they only knew what sublime teaching Christ gave, they would soon soften towards the Christian religion." One day, in course of conversation with some of the villagers, he gave expression to this opinion, and they almost cursed him, so prejudiced were they against our scriptures. He then took a Bible and read certain passages which were a revelation to his hearers and they all exclaimed, "Is what you are reading really in the Injil of the Christians? It is truly beautiful."

We cannot refrain from quoting Robertson Nicol again : "The earnest bewildered inquirer should lay aside every book until he has in some degree mastered the four Gospels. If he is sincere and patient he will, we believe, see in the end that the history is a true history, and that Christ is the only Saviour."



**The Divine Sonship :** A member writes asking how to meet the Muslim objections to this difficult subject. In *News and Notes* for June 1913, Dr. Zwemer wrote suggesting ways of dealing with such objections. One of the effective arguments we have found is that based on the Muslim doctrine of *Mukhalafa*. We can best illustrate what we mean from a recent experience in the bazaar. A Maulvic and a band of his Madrassa students pestered us with the usual uncouth questions on the Son of God. We told them that they had got hold of an entirely wrong view of the whole subject, and we would explain what we mean by explanations which they themselves give when they have to face certain facts concerning the Godhead as taught in Islam.

"Maulvic Sahib! When in the Qurau we find reference to the God of mercy sitteth on His throne (xx. 4); The Face of Allah (ii. 109). and His eyes [in the singular (xx. 14) and in the plural (liv. 14)] and hands (v. 69), then we might build up a theory of a great physical god, but we know that by your doctrine of *Mukhalafa*, meaning 'difference,' all such expressions concerning God are to be regarded as something not the same as we find in men." The Maulvic saw the point at once and explained to his students that the true Christian view of the Divine Sonship was nothing carnal as they had supposed.

In another part of the bazaar we met another lot of Muhammadans with the same objection, but who could not follow the argument as presented to the Maulvic, so they were dealt with as follows :—

"True! it says in the Injil that Isa Masih is the Son of God! And you call your Muhammad Sahib 'the Friend of God.' Now according to Bengali etiquette true friendship demands an exchange of visits and presents. Can you tell us the date when Allah visited the home of Muhammad taking a nice new cloth and a tray of sweetmeats for the Prophet? Immediately, half a dozen men spoke up and said, "Muhammad was not the Friend of God in that sense." "True!" we replied, "and Jesus was not the Son of God in the sense you mean."

Cardinal Newman, in one of his sermons, makes a shrewd remark which often appeals to us when dealing with Muslims. He says : "Half the

controversies in the world are verbal ones; and could they be brought to a plain issue, they would be brought to a prompt termination . . . . . When men understand each other's meaning, they see, for the most part, that controversy is either superfluous or hopeless."

## SHIAHS IN DACCA, EAST BENGAL.

By REV. L. BEVAN JONES, B.A., B.D.

With each return of the month of Muharram a certain quarter in the city of Dacca becomes abnormally alive. It is the quarter where the Husani-i-dálán is situated. There every year dense crowds of Muslims, of whom nowadays *very few* are Shiahs, keep fresh before the public the sad memories of Hasan and Husain. Time was when the Shiahs of Dacca were both numerous and influential, but their former glory has long since passed away. It is said that in the Mughal period there were at least 300 wealthy Mughal Shiah families here, with their many retainers. These were for the most part merchants, a fact recalled to-day on finding that the name in Dacca for an ordinary miscellaneous store is still 'mughaliya dúkán.' But by 1883 the number of Shiah houses had become reduced to about 100, while now it is likely that in all there are not more than 40, with a total community of something less than 150 souls. Of the surviving families *only two* are in anything like well-to-do circumstances, the rest being both poor and illiterate. This striking diminution in numbers is partly accounted for by the fact that when the British Government, in 1769, acquired the diwání of Bengal many of the oldest and most respected Shiah families migrated to Lucknow and Murshidabad.

It is not known for certain just when the Shiahs first came to Dacca, but it is probable that there were none here in the pre-Mughal days. We find that several of the Mughal Governors of Bengal were Shiahs, the first of these being Islám Khán Mashhadi (1637—39). Shortly after his time (viz. in 1642) during the Viceroyalty of Prince Sultán Sháh Shuja, the Husain-i-dálán of Dacca was erected. It was built, we are told, as an act of piety by a notable Shiah of those days, one Mir Murád, the superintendent of some estates of the Mizámat. An inscription on the building still commemorates this fact, giving the date as 1052 A.H.

After Mir Murád's death the Názims and Náib Názims (deputy Governors) became mutawallis (custodians) of this building. The last of the Náib Názims were all of them Shiahs. These mutawallis year by year paid the sum of Rs. 2,500 out of the income of the Khálisa Mahál (crown property) for the upkeep of the building and the annual celebration during Muharram.

With the passing of the last Náib Názim in 1843 the Khálisa Mahál was confiscated by Government, and as a direct consequence the Husain-i-dálán suffered neglect. For a number of years there were no mutawallis and no Muharram processions. After a time the founder of the present Nawab family at Dacca, Khajeh Alimullah, with a number of leading Sunnis, determined on reviving the Shiah cause in the city. They approached Government with a petition for the release of that part of the income of the Khálisa Mahál by which in former years the expenses of the celebrations had been met. Government replied that it could not accede to their request, but instead promised to make an annual grant of Rs. 2,500 on condition that the Nawab of Dacca and his successors should see that the money so granted was rightly used.

And so the Muharram processions again became a feature of the city, but it was found that the amount was no longer adequate to meet the annual outlay and so in the time of Nawab Sir Ashanullah (the father of the present Nawab) the practice began whereby the Nawab himself paid up any deficit. The present Nawab still continues to do so.

In the great earthquake of 1897 the Husaini-dálan suffered serious damage. It was then entirely rebuilt on the old site at a cost of a lakh and a quarter by the above mentioned Nawab Sir Ahsanullah (a Sunni be it noted).

The approach to the building is through a lofty and handsome gateway. This was built only 40 years or 50 ago by Nawab Abdul Gani, the grandfather of the present Nawab.

Passing through it we observe that the building stands in the middle of a considerable compound. In the space between the gateway and the dálan there are erected during Muharram two rows of refreshment booths facing each other on opposite sides of the main approach to the building. All manner of food stuffs are there for sale and the air is pungent with the smell of boiling mustard oil. The whole space is densely packed, making progress extremely difficult; indeed around the building itself, especially when one of the numerous "processions" with banners comes round, the people in their excitement sweep mere on-lookers off their feet.

Part of the compound is used as a burial-ground, and for the special privilege of depositing their dead there, people have to pay a fee of some Rs. 50.

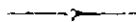
On the further side of the building there is a large tank, and on the tenth night there is a great display of fireworks on boats and other structures set adrift thereon.

The building is two-storied and has above two main sections. In the one is stored up the models of the tombs of Hasan and Husain and the usual relics recalling incidents in their lives. During the annual celebrations this portion is thrown open and people come in to make inspection of these treasures and to leave a little trumpery "offering" made of sola pith.

The other section comprises a spacious hall which looks down through lofty arches on to the tank below. In this hall during the chief nights of Muharram the floor is packed with mourners (most of them Sunnis hired at a nominal sum by the Nawab). These alternately listen to the "Marthiyas" (panegyrics) and break out into wailing, meanwhile swaying to and fro. It is an altogether varied experience, while standing below by that brightly-lighted tank, to look up at these mourners who are gradually working themselves into a fit of excitement.

The present custodian is a young man of perhaps 35 years of age. He is the son of the head of one of the two surviving Shiah families mentioned above. He can speak a little English, but his younger brother, a student in the Dacca College, the only Shiah in Dacca with any pretensions to being educated, can speak it very well. The father is an old Persian, to whose lot it falls year by year to make up the accounts of the expenditures in connection with the Shiah cause.

In view of the rapid diminution of the numbers of the Shiah in Dacca, and the prominent part taken by Sunnis every year in the Muharram celebrations it becomes an interesting question as to what might happen should the Shiah here quite die out.



## OUTLINE OF TALK WITH MUSLIMS. "SON OF GOD."

*(From Bengali tract by Dr. C. S. Mead, Orakandi, Bengal.)*

Wherever we preach to Muslims we expect objections to the Divine Sonship of Christ.

1. *Now why do Christians say that Christ is the Son of God?*
  - (a) Because God Himself regarded Christ as such. It says so in the Injil—Luke iii. 22.
  - (b) Because Jesus Christ required men to believe in Him as such. We find this also in the Injil—Jno. ix. 35, 37.
2. *What is the meaning of the term 'Son of God'?*
  - (a) It is certainly not any physical relationship as Muslims imagine.
  - (b) Evilly-disposed persons are sometimes called by Muslims 'Sons of Satau,' by which they mean that they have a corrupt nature and disposition like Satan's. And that was what Christ meant when once he said to certain unbelieving Jews 'ye are of your father the Devil'—Jno. viii. 44. It was not physical.
  - (c) Speak of anyone as 'the son of man' and we understand that he has not the nature and disposition of a sheep, goat or cow, but of a man, so to speak of Christ as 'Son of God' implies likeness to God in holy nature, loving character and divine attributes.
  - (d) No man can enter into the full meaning of this wonderful likeness and relationship. Christ said, only God the Father really understood—Matt. xi. 25-27. Yet those who are pure in heart and have a childlike faith in and obedience to revealed truth may know the meaning to an amazing extent.

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## PRAISE AND PRAYER.

*We kneel low weak, we rise how full of power!  
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,  
Or others—that we are not always strong,  
That we should ever weak or heartless be,  
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,  
Any joy and strength and courage are with Thee.*

TRENCH.

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*Special Topics Suggested.*

Let us pray—

That the terrible war in Europe may be brought to a speedy end, and that nations may arrange for other means of settling their disputes.

That the scheme for the founding of a Christian University in Cairo may be fully realized.

That the campaign to reach the children of Muslim lands may be most fruitful.

That wisdom and guidance may be given in regard to the proposed new magazine for Muslims.

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**Rangoon, Burma :** Praise God for the baptism of a Muhammadan from Afghanistan, who has shown much determination and courage in thus witnessing for Christ. Shortly after his baptism his father came to visit him, purposing to take him back to his home, but became quite reconciled to his son's remaining here, and when he left took with him an Arabic Bible and an Urdu Bible, promising to read them and to visit us again. Pray for the Holy Spirit's enlightening and convincing power upon both father and son, that they may not only stand firm in obedience to the faith, but bear witness to many others.

H. M. N. ARMSTRONG.

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**Salem, S. India :** Won't you ask our League to pray for the practically *unevangelised* 2,700,000 Moslems of South India? Moplas of West Coast, Labbais of the Centre, and Marakayars of the East Coast—all are converts to Islam within about 100 years.

K. T. PAUL.

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**Cheefoo, N. China :** You will rejoice to know that we have had definite word of three Muslims in China who have this year publicly confessed the Lord Jesus Christ in baptism. It has meant a good deal of persecution in two cases; as to the third, as he made a public refutation of Islam before being baptized, it probably meant a good deal for him: he lives in a big Muslim centre, but details have not yet reached me. Will the members of the League please pray that there may soon be a break in the rank of Mullahs? Several are reading the Scriptures and the Arabic tracts from Cairo, but so far, we know of not one case of conversion.

Thanks to the kind arrangement of the friend who was responsible for the publication of the Bordon Memorial Booklet (Special Edition for Muslims) a second impression is now on the way, and will we trust be greatly blessed to the Chinese Muslims. The adaptation, and translation, was done by Rev. F. W. Baller, and the testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ, as "The Saviour of the World," is made in a most faithful and winning manner. Thirty thousand copies are being now printed in Shanghai, and as applications for twenty-five thousand are waiting to be filled, this second edition will soon be widely scattered.

F. H. RHODES.

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**Panjab :** Bishop Warne of the Methodist Episcopal Church in a recent address said, "Our Mission, through the mass movement, is having more converts from among the Muhammadans in ever-increasing numbers. We have now in our mission in India from Islam over one thousand converts, and over one hundred workers, and some of them have proved themselves to be our most effective Indian preachers and have been the means of bringing thousands to Christ. Some of our District Superintendents report more Muhammadan enquirers than have ever before been known in our work."

## OUR FILE.

There has been a splendid response to the Rev. A. French's appeal in our last issue to start a new magazine for Muslims. We are still awaiting replies from some of our members.

For the benefit of members in Bengal we would say that the following Mussulmani-Bengali tracts have been reprinted by the Calcutta Tract Society:—

Intercession.  
 Atouement.  
 Jesus Christ.  
 The Sinless Prophet.  
 The Quran.  
 Muhammad.  
 The Gospel of Barnabas.

From Mr. Rhodes' letter in this issue it is evident that the printed story of the young millionaire missionary Bordou, who died at Cairo while preparing for work amongst the Muslims of China, is doing good. Would it not be useful if put into Urdu and the other Muslim languages of India?

Lord Headley says, "Of all the Christian sects, the Presbyterians may be said to be most like the Muhammadans, though the differences as regards dogmatic beliefs are as marked as they are with other sects."

The C.L.S. is bringing out a series of 'Papers for Thoughtful Muslims' in English, at half an anna. The first deals with "The witness of the Quran to the Christian Scriptures," the second with "The Prophet of Arabia," and the third "The Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ." The last is a clear answer to the unfounded assertion of the Quadianis that Christ did not die on the cross, but was buried in Kashmir.

## NEW MEMBERS.

131	G. E. King, M.B., Ch.B.	...	...	Kansu, China.
132	H. F. Ridley	...	...	Kansu, China.
133	Rev. Dr. M. Sabisbury	...	...	Aurangabad, Deccan
134	Miss C. Williams	...	...	Mymensingh, Bengal.

*Annual Subscription to the League is Rs. 2 (£0 2s. 8d.). Members are requested to send News and requests for prayer.*

Brakmanbaria,  
 E. Bengal.

J. TAKLE,  
 Hon. Sec. M.M. League.