

Missionaries to Muslims League

News and Notes.

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HOW TO PRESENT THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT TO MUSLIMS

I start with the assumption, that while we missionaries ought, in presenting Christian truth to unbelievers, to conform our statements, and our methods of making them, entirely to God's revelation, not dreaming of watering down, or explaining away, any clear statement in the Bible,—at the same time we should, as far as we can consistently with this aim, proceed on the line of least resistance. Sooner or later, and in many cases much sooner than later, we shall have to state the *whole* truth, however unpalatable it may be to our hearers! but at first, in order to win a hearing at all, we may well keep in the background those truths, or those methods of stating them, which specially offend those whom we wish to win, and dwell on other sides of the truth, which are less likely to arouse their opposition. And we may the more safely do this, when we find that the less offensive method was employed by the Apostles, and is therefore decidedly scriptural.

I think these general remarks clearly apply to our presentation of the Atonement to Muslims. For ourselves, indeed, we delight to bask in the full truth that the Sinless One "was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him"; that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself"; that, in fact, He *was* God while He hung on the cross, and that it was His Godhead which imparts the atoning power to His death, even as His Manhood made that death possible. And sooner or later we must not shrink from these statements, specially if questioned by our inquirer about them. For indeed, without them we cannot make our account of the Atonement a logical one. The Atonement would have been impossible without the Incarnation; and the Incarnation postulates the eternal Deity of the Son of God.

But at first is it necessary in every case to state these truths? I think not. Nor do we find that the Apostles did so in their preachings to unbelievers, either Jews or Gentiles. At first, indeed, they seem to have been far more occupied with laying the foundation of all their preaching in the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, and His coming again to judge. They did, indeed, speak of Him as the only Saviour (Acts 4: 12), and proclaimed remission of sins only through His name (Acts 10: 43); but this does not necessarily

imply a full explanation of the Atonement through His death; which they seem to have mentioned far more as the guilty act of the Jews than as an atoning sacrifice. And in these early statements, the Apostles were very careful to explain all the work of Christ as *God's work through Him*, rather than as His own personal work. See Acts 2: 22, 23; 10: 36, 38. The "For God was with Him," in this last verse, seems to express succinctly the way in which the Apostles, in general, set Christ before their hearers. It is very true that St. Paul tells us that, in Corinth, he laid special stress on "the cross of Christ," and that in spite of, and perhaps because of, the opposition to it of philosophic Greeks and sign-seeking Jews; but there is no reason to suppose that, in saying that he "determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," he meant by the last words "the doctrine of the Atonement," as it is often interpreted. To "them that are called," indeed, he expounded the crucified Saviour as thereby "the power of God and the wisdom of God." But this was part of the "wisdom" which he "spoke among them that are perfect," and which even the Christians at Corinth seem to have been, for the most part, too infantile in their faith to apprehend fully.

For my own part, I have always preferred, where possible without misunderstanding, to present Christ's Atonement to Muslims as *God's work* rather than Christ's own work; except of course that God did it *through* Christ, and that the latter submitted Himself willingly to be made God's instrument in this. In other words, that God offered Jesus Christ, the sinless Man, as a sacrifice for the sins of all others; Jesus Himself willingly accepting this part, in perfect submission ("Islam") to God's will, and indeed making that will His own. There seems good ground for thinking this way of putting the matter, as far as it goes, to be scriptural; in fact, to be the way which our Lord Himself often adopted. In John 10: 17, 18, in speaking of His laying down His life for the sheep, though He says, "I lay it down of myself," yet He speaks of Himself as doing this by delegated authority (exousia), and adds, "This commandment I have received of my Father." So in John 14: 31, He explains His allowing "the prince of the world" to come, though "he hath nothing in Me," by saying, "As the Father gave me commandment, so I do." And is not this the way in which the Saviour generally preferred that His work, in all its parts, should be regarded, *viz.*, as carried out in complete subordination to the Father? And have we any reason to suppose that He has changed His mind in this matter since His exaltation? Did He not, in manifesting Himself to St. John in Patmos, love to speak of Him as "my God" (Rev. 3: 2, 12, four times)?

It may be objected to all this, that the Muslim does not concede the initial fact, that Christ died at all. Of course, as long as a person maintains this position, it is useless to talk of His atonement at all; unless, indeed, one can come up to him from the rear so to speak, by proving the necessity for *some* Atonement, and then shewing that only One was worthy of being offered for the sins of all. But this involves a long detour, and would only in certain cases be attempted. All I can say in extenuation of the difficulty is, first, that some Muslims are too ignorant to know, or to remember, that the Quran denies the death of Christ; and on the other hand, that there are many in India now, who are sufficiently educated to know that the historical fact of that Death cannot be denied by any well-informed person.

It is with some diffidence that I have put forth my views on this subject at all, for the perusal of very many who are far more competent to deal with this subject; and I shall be very glad to be criticised without mercy, if my views seem to any to be dishonouring to our divine Master.

W. HOOPER.

Aligarh, 18 Feb., 1916.

DR. ZWEMER'S VISIT TO INDIA

The following communication has been received from the Rev. J. French, M.A., relative to the above :—

“ Dr. Zwemer wishes to visit India on his way to China, and confer with as many as possible on the position of our Missions to Muslims.

“ The Metropolitan (Dr. Lefroy) is anxious to secure such a Conference, if possible. As Dr. Zwemer passes here during the ‘ Monsoon,’ the meeting could be on the plains. A ‘ bill ’ meeting in the clouds and rain is not pleasant, and enquiries have elicited few hopes of the success of such. It means Mussoorie in July, or Simla in October. The first suits few, and the last does not suit Dr. Zwemer.

“ We propose now *Calcutta* as the place and July as the month.

“ Will those who acquiesce in this as the most feasible arrangement kindly put that opinion (or another) on a post card, address and post it to Rev. R. French, S. P. G. Mission, Bynulla, Bombay.”

“ THE MOSLEM WORLD ”

Urgent Appeal from Dr. Zwemer

Dr. Zwemer writes :—

“ Of all countries India occupies the *chief place* in this problem (*i.e.*, in the conversion of Moslems).

Is our Quarterly of real help ?

If it is, will you secure for us some new subscribers ?

Unless we stand by each other in this enterprise, the Quarterly cannot be improved and made to serve its purpose effectively.

No one covets your co-operation more earnestly than does the Editor, and anything you can do to help reach the ideal we have set before us will be greatly appreciated.

We need :

1. Strong articles.

2. Up-to-date information.

3. Above all, *a larger circle of subscribers.*”

The Missionaries to Muslims League numbers over 200 members. That should mean 200 *Subscribers*. Can we not get 250 ?

Who will be local secretary ? Perhaps there is one already. If so, we should like to know who is acting in that capacity.

A USEFUL ILLUSTRATION

A member of the League, in forwarding the following quotation from Drummond's “ The Ideal Life,” writes as follows :—“ The other day I was reading something of Henry Drummond, and was immensely struck with the aptness of the enclosed passage as an illustration for workers among Moslems.”

From Henry Drummond's “ The Ideal Life ”—

“ There are two ways of looking at God's will—one looking at the love side of it, the other at the law ; the one ending in triumph, the other in despair ; the one a liberty, the other a slavery. One might illustrate it in some such way as this.

"Suppose you go into a workshop occasionally and watch the workmen at their task. The majority do their work in an uninterested mechanical sort of way. Everything is done with the most proper exactness and precision—almost with slavish precision. They come exactly at the hour in the morning, and throw down their work to a second exactly when the closing bell has rung.

"There is a certain punctiliousness about them, and a scrupulousness about their work; and as part cause of it, perhaps, you observe an uncomfortable turning of the head occasionally, as if some eye were upon them, then a dogged going on with their work again, as if it were always done under some restraint. But among the workmen you will notice one who seems to work on different principles. There is a buoyancy and cheerfulness about him as he goes about his work, which is foreign to all the rest. You will see him at his place sometimes even before the bell has rung, and if unfinished work be in his hands when closing time has come, he does not mind an extra five minutes when all the others are gone. What strikes you about him is the absence of that punctiliousness, which marked the others' work. It does not seem at all a tyranny to him, but even a freedom and a pleasure; and though he is apparently not so mechanical in his movements as his mates, his work seems better done and greater, despite the ease and light-heartedness which mark him through its course.

"Now the difference between them is this. The first set of men are hired workmen. The man by himself is the master's son. Not that he is outwardly different; he is a common workman in a fustian jacket like the rest. But he is the master's son. The first set work for wages, come in at regular hours lest aught be kept off their wages, keep the workshop laws in terror of losing their place. But the son keeps them, and keeps them better, not for wages, but for love.

"So the Christian keeps the will or the laws of God because of the love of God. It is a privilege to keep them. It consists partly in forgetting that they are laws—in changing their names, commandment, precept, testimony statute, into this—the will of God. No sternness then can enter with the thought, for God's name is in the name, and the help of God, and the power of God, and the constraining love of Christ.

"This takes away the hopelessness of trying to keep God's will. It makes it a personal thing, a relation to a living will, not to didactic law."

NOTES

The Rev. H. A. Walter, M.A.

With the departure on long furlough of the Rev. H. A. Walter, M.A., our League loses the services of a gifted and energetic secretary. Mr. Walter has proved a worthy successor to the able founder and permanent secretary of the League, the Rev. J. Takle, and we are all much indebted to him for the time and labour he has expended in the interests of the League. The good wishes and earnest prayers of many will follow him in his laudable effort to still further equip himself by study, both in America and in Egypt, for the great work of bringing the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Muslims of this land.

Our Paper

We would specially call the attention of the members to Mr. Walter's parting message, which was printed on the first page of the March issue of this paper. He there wrote:—"There is danger of *News and Notes* becoming,

simply one more magazine for the information and inspiration of workers among Muslims, whereas its more important function is to serve as a medium for the interchange of helpful ideas and experiences and, above all, for making possible united effective prayer on behalf of the work throughout our wide field."

This message needs emphasis. The *News and Notes* does not desire to come into competition with Dr. Zwemer's splendid magazine, *The Moslem World*. The special function of the Missionaries to Muslims League, as stated in its constitution, is

To fulfil the vows made at the Lucknow Conference to pray more and work more for the evangelisation of the Muslim world.

To help by prayer and mutual sympathy.

By stimulating each other through news of encouraging work.

By passing on particulars of useful books and tracts for ourselves and for the Muslims among whom we labour.

By comparing notes on methods of work.

By encouraging others to take an interest in this important work.

The confidential nature of our little paper should enable it to become, in a very special manner, the medium for a frank discussion of our difficulties, whilst it should, at the same time, through its *Praise and Prayer* column, enable us to pray more intelligently and definitely for each other and our work. What we need is, not so much long articles of general interest, as short contributions of practical helpfulness to workers among Muslims. Amongst these we would mention helpful illustrations, brief outline addresses, and replies to Muhammadan difficulties and objections that have proved effective. Items for the *Praise and Prayer* column are also earnestly solicited. Let us all unite to make *News and Notes* of real value to the members.

Finance

The League year closes on April 30, and there are still some fifty subscriptions owing on the current year's accounts. It would be a great help if, before the books are closed, members who are in arrears would forward the amount of their subscriptions, plus As. 4 for the Prayer Cycle. So far only Rs. 15-9-0 has been received on this latter account. The bill for printing the Prayer Cycle amounts to Rs. 43-4-0.

The Rev. J. Takle

Members will be glad to know that the Rev. J. Takle is so much better that he has been able to take a number of preaching engagements in New Zealand. God willing, he hopes to return to India in the autumn.

Muslim Disunion in India

Islam in India to-day seems rent with internal dissensions, and the public press draws a lurid picture of the condition of the various Leagues and Anjumans. The annual meeting of the All-India Muslim League, held recently in Bombay, was the scene of most turbulent proceedings, which ended in the abrupt closing of the public sessions in the pandal erected for the purpose; and it was only possible to carry out the business on the agenda by holding a private session in a room of one of the hotels hired for the purpose.

It now transpires that there is also a grave split in the ranks of the party constituting the Panjab Muslim League. According to the *Statesman*, at a largely attended meeting of prominent Muslims, held recently at Lahore, resolutions were passed repudiating the body known as the Panjab Muslim League as not representing the aspirations and interests of the Islamic

community of the Province. A new League was formed, and officers appointed for carrying out the objects of the meeting.

The Ahmadaya sect, which had its rise in the Panjab, is likewise divided into two antagonistic parties ; and in the *Moslem World* for January last Mr. Walter has an illuminating article dealing with this movement.

In Bengal, also, the Muslim vernacular press is divided into two hostile camps, and not a little of the editorial ink is expended in mutual anathemas.

A Unique Divinity School

The present secretary of the Missionaries to Muslims League recently lectured on Islam to the students of the Calcutta Henry Martyn (C.M.S.) Divinity College, by invitation of the principal, the Rev. E. T. Butler, M.A. In this well-appointed institution nearly a score of Bengali students are being trained for the work of the Christian ministry. Many of these are married, and all live in excellently-arranged quarters on the Mission compound. Not only is the assistant lecturer of the College (a Bengali ordained clergyman) a Muslim convert, but the whole of the students, without exception, are either converts or descendants of converts from Islam. This is surely a unique record.

NEW MEMBERS

206. THE REV. W. J. L. WENGER ... Chittagong, Bengal.

The annual Subscription to the League is Rs. 2 (2s. 8d.). Members are requested to send news and requests for prayer to

Jessore, Benqal.

W. GOLDSACK,
Acting Hon. Sec., M. M. League.