

# Missionaries to Muslims League

News and Notes.

Series V, No. 9.

January, 1917.

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## NOTES ON THE USE AND ABUSE OF CONTROVERSY

I. Controversy is a strong and risky weapon. When we consent to employ it we *ipso facto* allow the Muhammadan the use of the same weapon, with the knowledge also that we cannot rely upon his use of it with fairness or with the sole object of arriving at truth as distinguished from a verbal victory and the humbling of his opponent. Controversy alone will not convert the heart, it may, on the contrary, irritate or harden the heart of the adversary unless care is taken to prevent these results. It is a two-edged weapon, and a missionary should not consent to its employment without silent prayer for guidance and the assurance that the course adopted is the best. He should remember with all reverence and solemnity that from his point of view every soul that comes to him for guidance or discussion is in a most dangerous and unhappy condition until it finds the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Each case must, as far as possible, be fully and carefully diagnosed as to its spiritual state, and the best line of treatment adopted, with or without controversy, so that no human hindrance may arise to prevent the Holy Spirit carrying home to the heart the message of salvation through Christ Jesus.

The best way to use any knowledge one may possess of the Muhammadan controversy is to turn it to account in avoiding the opening of controversy. The attempt should rather be made to induce the Muhammadan to read the Bible, either with the Missionary or at home, and in the latter case to come and discuss any difficulties he may come across with the missionary. An earnest attempt should be made to reach the heart by showing him that God offers him in the Gospel just the thing all men need—the Holy Ghost to enlighten blind and ignorant hearts, and a Saviour to save from the guilt and power of sin.

II. Controversy is useful to remove honest doubts and difficulties, to show that the Christian Faith can be thoroughly well defended, and that the Muhammadan position lacks a firm foundation. Though Tradition has highly exalted the position of Muhammad, the evidence on which this rests is not sound, and infinitely more is claimed for Jesus in the Gospel, and on far better evidence.

Controversy *may* be worth while if there is a single unprejudiced man present, who, though taking no part in the discussion himself, is

carefully following its course and noting which side has the best of the argument.

It is a hopeful sign of good to be expected, if, before the controversy opens, the Muhammadan consents to prayer, or if the Missionary can secure for himself a few moments of silent prayer either in the presence of the Muhammadan or in retirement. This will promote a spirit of seriousness which, I think, Henry Martyn said, it is so desirable to maintain in religious discussion, which the Muhammadan so often looks upon as merely a trial of dialectical skill.

III. To turn now to the other side, the abuse or misuse of controversy:—

(1) The Missionary is not making a proper use of the opportunity which he has granted for controversy, if he allows the Muhammadan to talk him down, or fly from one subject to another without a proper discussion of any one. Resolution and firmness may be necessary here to prevent controversy degenerating into desultory talk, a result which the Muhammadan may quite possibly desire and aim at when he sees that things are not turning out as he would like them to do. Fair play must be insisted on, and each side must be allowed to state and support their views.

(2) The Missionary again has failed in his use of the difficult controversial weapon if the Muhammadan succeeds in any degree in disturbing his equilibrium, or ruffling his patience, courtesy and good-temper, or depriving him of his conscious, though not arrogant, superiority in the argument, and his consciousness of Christ's presence and his tremendous responsibility as His witness and representative.

(3) Controversy may be unwisely entered upon if the opponent has merely primed himself with the usual stock objections against Christianity and the Bible, and not studied the Gospel. A general rule might almost be made not to argue with a man about Christianity until he has carefully read the Gospel, and can truthfully say so. Any incorrect statements about the amount read, or the care bestowed upon it, can easily be detected. One cannot imagine an earnest inquirer, if educated, not going to the fountain-head of Christian truth, and a man who comes forward without this preliminary has probably very little idea of what Christianity stands for, and an ignorant and overweening confidence in his own system.

(4) There is little or no hope of profitable controversy if the Muhammadan begins in a tricky fashion, asking the Missionary to prove points acknowledged by both Christian and Muhammadan, such as the mission of Jesus.

(5) I think the Missionary should feel a keen sense of failure if he has dishonoured Christ and the Holy Spirit. If he believes the Gospel message to be the only saving medicine for a sinful world, he will not allow the interview to close without putting in a definite Gospel message and straight appeal to the heart to accept what we believe on the authority of the Gospel to be the only way to obtain acceptance with God. And if, further, he believes that the human heart is blind and ignorant and the will depraved, and that the Holy Spirit alone can

enlighten the heart and change the will, he will faithfully and earnestly impress upon the Muhammadan the need of seeking this indispensable Divine assistance in his search for truth.

(6) A Missionary, with the best intentions, may fail to make a right use of controversy unless properly equipped. Failure to give cogent answers, or the use of weak and inconclusive arguments, may only serve to strengthen the other's convictions. On the other hand, it should ever be remembered that every assault may be repelled, every Christian position made good, and every boastful error refuted from our Divine Treasury and Armoury—the Word of God.

W. A. RICE.

### Deputation Address Outline

## THE MUHAMMADAN WORLD AS A LIFE-WORK

(At a Students' Conference)

*Introduction.* Nature of a missionary call. Growing specialization in missionary preparation. Need of early choice and thorough preparation if accepting challenge of Islām. Its mighty appeal.

1. *Islām, a World Religion.* Not an ethnic faith simply. The worker among Muslims has a world-parish. Inter-relation of all the parts. Illustrate by showing reaction on work in India of happenings among Muslims in China, Africa, Arabia, England. Broadening effect and importance of these relationships.

2. *Islām, a Missionary Religion.* Never yet effectively checked. Early methods of propagation with the sword, traders and travellers. Modern organized efforts:—Egypt and India (the Punjab and Bengal). Power and extent of Muslim press.

3. *Islām, the Final Battleground of Christianity.* Not Krishna, Confucius, or Buddha, but Muhammad Christ's final antagonist—came last and claimed to be final and supreme. Contrast Muhammad, in the past, summoning back to primitive seventh century ethics, with Christ, in the future, summoning on to the heights of moral grandeur none have yet attained. Which shall triumph?

4. *Islām in India,* the most vital spot in the Muslim world to-day. Final religious conflict to be in that land of spiritual background and heritage. Islām least political, most advanced and most accessible there. Actual results of Christian missions in changed conditions and converts.

*Conclusion.* Small band of Christian workers among Muslims in face of gigantic need and challenge.

H. A. WALTER.

## THE WOKING MOSQUE

One of our members, the Rev. E. U. Weitbrecht, PH.D., D.D., in an exceedingly interesting letter gives some particulars of the Muslim

propaganda at Woking, England, and of the steps which are being taken to meet it by Christian workers of that locality. We are sure the members of the League will be glad to read the extracts from this letter which we print below. It is scarcely necessary to remind members of the word "confidential," which stands at the head of our paper, and we trust that due precaution will be taken to prevent the details given below from reaching the members of the Mosque Mission:—

"The Sunday afternoon lectures at the Mosque go on, and are attended principally by young women. It must be remembered that the Mosque is a small building, the square inside of which, with benches round the walls and carpets in the middle, is fairly crowded with an audience of 40. I am told that generally about 30 may be present there on Sunday afternoons, of whom a few are Indians. After the service, those who attend are invited to tea, and in the Summer to tennis, which proves a considerable attraction. The class represented by the audience seems to be such as domestic servants, typists and shop assistants. Mr. D. E. Alley went down to Woking in August last, being put up by a member of the Laymen's Union, and did useful work in discussion at the Mosque and in looking up persons who had been attending it. A number of them came to a Drawing Room Meeting, at which he spoke to them. One girl who had professed Islām came to the door of the house, but said to my friend who opened it that she did not want to come in because, although she had done with the Moslems, she could never again accept the doctrine of the Trinity, and supposed she would not be readmitted to the Church. But I am not sure how much deep conviction there was behind it. In fact, the people who are drawn into the lectures and the like are, generally speaking, such as have the vaguest religious convictions. Those who lecture, so far as I can make out, were previously Unitarian in name or in effect. Several of the members of the Laymen's Union have been going to the Mosque from time to time, to accept the weekly invitation in the advertisements of the Services—'Questions encouraged'—and by means of such questions have helped to clear up the misrepresentations, often very barefaced, of the lecturers, whether of Islāmic doctrine or of Christian teaching. For instance, it is repeatedly stated that permissive bigamy in Islām has abolished the social evil (such things are freely ventilated before the audience of young women), and recently a lecturer stated that John III, 16, was mis-translated in our English Bibles: the original text contained no such word as "only begotten." I think that, as a result of last Sunday's visit, the members of the local Laymen's Movement will form a regular Vigilance Committee, and collect information about those who profess to go over. By that way we may be able before very long to gauge more accurately what the Mosque Mission is doing, as against the sensational reports that they send to India for the purpose of stimulating interest and liberality. To illustrate their ways of discussion, I may mention that they say that no translation of the Koran made by a non-Moslem is correct. The only reliable English rendering will be the one that they are now slowly publishing, side by side with the Arabic text.

When Mr. Alley read to the audience a verse from the English translation of the Koran, this objection was brought forward. His reply was— 'This book is one that you gave to a convert of yours for her spiritual guidance, assuring her that it would make clear to her the way of God.'

"In all probability Mr. Alley will visit the place again. One has to beware of doing anything which gives the Mosque members an opportunity for advertising themselves. At present they are doing a good deal less in this way.

"As regards interest in Islām generally in missionary circles, I am glad to say that our little informal union of 'Friends of the Moslem World' has been successful in moving the United Council of Missionary Education to take up the subject again in one of their text-books, probably the one for 1918, besides getting lectures and addresses delivered on the subject in various missionary gatherings or anniversaries. The missionary Boards and Committees are taking the subject of a definite line of policy regarding Missions to Moslems more and more into consideration, with the view to after-war opportunities, more especially the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society and the C.M.S., and also the Baptist Missionary Society. A meeting on the subject was held again at the last Keswick Conference, at which Bishop Stileman delivered an interesting address. A good many lectures and study classes have been held through the agency of the Board of Study and of the James Long Lecture Fund, connected with the C.M.S. During the past year I have addressed about 270 students in this way, in courses of from four to twelve lectures. Public interest is, of course, considerably roused through the position of Turkey, Egypt and Arabia in connection with the war, and the Working Mission is serving to remind British Christians that against an aggressive opponent the only true defence is attack. But if we continue in prayer and faithful effort, we may hope that this attempt at Moslem propaganda will result in definitely increasing Christian zeal and effort for presenting Christ to the Moslem world."

## NOTES

### Muslims in Rangoon

The Rev. R. H. Courtenay, one of our members, writing from Rangoon, indicates in a word the tremendous need and the tremendous opportunity amongst the Muslims of that great city. He says:—"There are over a thousand Chittagong Sampan Wallahs, all Moslems, here in Rangoon; almost all the hotel servants are Moslems from Dacca. There are Moslem durzies from Madras. A small number of Persian Shiāhs are in business in the town. I fear, though, that there are a very, very few of any education, except so far as reading their own vernacular, and in some cases reading Urdu." Shall we not pray that more workers may be specially set apart by the Missions established in Rangoon for bringing the Gospel to the Muslims of that great city.

## A Modern Jehad

A recent number of the *Missionary Review of the World* contains a vivid description of the response to the call to *jehād* which was made by the Muslims of Eastern Turkey and Persia at the end of 1914. The article was written by an American Missionary, who was in the city of Urumia during the awful massacres of Christians which followed the retirement of the Russian troops from that and other cities. No better reply could be given to modern apologists for Islām of the types of Amir Ali and Chiraj Ali than the article in question, which describes how, under the sanction of religion, men, women and children were indiscriminately massacred for the crime of being Christian, and indescribable horrors perpetrated upon those reserved for a worse fate. No less than seventeen thousand Christian refugees found shelter under the American flag in the premises of the American Mission, and yet, in spite of this, we are told that one-fifth of the total Christian population perished as the direct result of the *jehād*. "The only voice raised openly in defence of these people was that of the American Missionaries. The protection, housing and feeding of these thousands for months, cut off from the outside world, without official status and without the use of force, with repeated evidence of the reality of the perils that terrorized our *protégés*, crowded into brief weeks such responsibilities and sorrows as a long lifetime seldom brings."

Yet there were not wanting Muslims who were better than their creed, and hundreds of Christians were saved by Muslim friends. One "Kurdish chief sent in eleven girls, who were being carried off by another chief"; and we are told of one Turkish officer who shot down looters himself, and of a young Persian who made strenuous efforts to protect the Christians. Yet these were the exceptions and showed human nature revolting at the crimes against humanity which were being perpetrated on every side under the green banner, which was the emblem of *jehād*. "As a military measure," we are told, "the *jehād* was a failure. It intensified fanaticism and hatred, and so multiplied crime and misery. . . . Kurdish Sunnites enlisted for plunder only, and the Persian Shiites were much divided. A proclamation authorizing *jehād* was produced, which purported to emanate from the chief Shiite doctors of sacred law at Kerbala and Nejef, and the local Mullahs were compelled to endorse it, some by being threatened with a loaded pistol. . . . The underlying motive of all this was political and military, and the leaders deliberately made use of religious hatred, race division, economic jealousy, and other influences to destroy the Christian population. . . . Strenuous attempts have been made to arouse the spirit of *jehād* and of Pan-Islāmism. Speeches, banquets, pamphlets, threats, promises and terrorism, were all employed, but they failed to arouse any real religious response."

One cannot read the article from which these extracts have been made without feeling that Islām is its own condemnation. The *jehād* of 1914 was a *jehād* without the religious motives which animated the Muslims of early Muhammadan history. It failed completely to arouse any religious response, and the leaders of it were men who, up to that

time, had shown little if any religious zeal for Islām. On the other hand it gave, under the sanction of religion, reign to the basest passions of the mob, who saw in it an opportunity for plunder and unbridled lust, which they were not slow to seize. Yet the consciences of some of the better Muslims revolted at these excesses; and though this revolt may not find public expression, it furnishes an element of hope for the future. For it must not be forgotten that *jehād* is sanctioned in both Qurán and traditions, and when the conscience of Muslims rises up in protest at the use of force in religion, it will not be long before that same conscience will refuse to longer acknowledge as divine books which sanction such use of force. God speed the day.

### The Song of Revenge

Remarkable evidence of the means employed to foster the spirit of *jehād* is furnished by the Rev. S. R. Harlow, in an article contributed to the *Missionary Review of the World*. Writing from Smyrna, Mr. Harlow says:—"The most popular song in the Turkish schools the past two years is a song known as 'Intikant,' which, being interpreted, means revenge. The words of the chorus, literally translated, run as follows:—

"Revenge, revenge, revenge  
Let us swim up to our necks in their blood.  
Let us wipe these dirty spots off our clothes,  
Revenge, revenge, revenge.

"Young men from the military school march down the street singing these words, with a fire of passionate hatred in their eyes. Boys of seven and six wave the crescent flag and shout it in their rooms, and you hear it in childish voices behind the latticed windows of a school for girls. And on the walls of the schoolrooms are pictures too terrible to describe, scenes of massacre and outrage, pictures intended to arouse all the blackest emotions of the heart. During the past two years I have not seen a single Turkish schoolroom whose walls were unpolluted by such scenes of degradation. But in the pictures it is always Christians killing, slaying, outraging Moslems, and underneath there is always some sentiment, some little verse with a serpent's sting, awaking in the reader hatred and the spirit of revenge."

### The Bible in China

The Rev. D. A. Gordon Harding, of the C.I.M., writes as follows:—"Glad to see the *News and Notes* for October, and the paper by Dr. Wherry appeals to me. I made a practice of presenting the Bible (Arabic) to all the Mullahs I came across, about a dozen in my district in Kansuh, N.-W. China. As the New Testament and portions in Arabic are much dearer than similar books in Chinese, I used some special funds to enable the colporteur to sell at half-price. This resulted in the sale of some 400 New Testaments, &c., in a few months. I shall value prayer for this seed sown."

### Deputation Addresses

Through the kindness of the Rev. H. A. Walter, M.A., we are enabled to print on another page the outline of an address delivered by him at

a Students' Conference. In forwarding this outline Mr. Walter writes as follows:—

“It has occurred to me that since most of us have to do deputation work on furlough, and want to do some of it in connection with the neglected Muslim field, it might be profitable for us to exchange outlines of addresses which we have worked out and actually used ourselves.”

### Farewell

With this number of *News and Notes* the present Editor and Secretary hands over the work of the League to the Rev. J. Takle. Will the members kindly note this, and in future send remittances and communications for *News and Notes* direct to Mr. Takle at Brahmanbaria, Bengal.

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## PRAISE AND PRAYER

“We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.”—Acts 6: 4.

**Pray** for the Arabic scriptures given and sold to Muslims in China, and especially that the Mullahs may be won to Christ.

**Pray** that in Egypt (especially in the Soudan) and in Nigeria, the policy of the British Government may be one that shall not dishonour the Master.

**Pray** for an important movement Christwards which has begun amongst the Muslims in the Jessore district, Bengal; that the Missionaries at work there may be endured with wisdom, and that the Spirit of God may be poured out abundantly upon the people.

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## NEW MEMBERS

220. E. F. GRIMWOOD, ESQ., Chasecourt Gardens, Enfield,  
Middlesex, England.
221. MISS T. MACLEAN, Ackerman-Hoyt Hospital,  
Jhansi, U. P.

*The Annual Subscription to the League is Rs. 2-8-0 (3s. 4d.).  
Members are requested to send news and requests for prayer to*

*Brahmanbaria, Bengal.*

JOHN TAKLE,  
*Hon. Sec., M. M. League.*