

# Missionaries to Muslims League

News and Notes.

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## THE SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LEAGUE

I think it is Dr. Geo. Adam Smith who, in commenting on Isaiah 21: 11-12, says that the real significance of the passage is—"Watchman, what *off* the night"; in other words, can you see through the darkness any sign of the approach of day? Every annual report brings to a missionary a similar question, and just now when we are in the midst of the fourth year of the most ghastly war of history, the question is still more weighty with meaning.

The year has been exceptionally trying, yet the enthusiasm displayed in the matter of evangelizing the Muslim world has been most marked. We find some evidence of this in the fact that we have enrolled 37 new members during the year, as against 16 in the previous year.

And there is cause for enthusiasm when we think of the doors opening everywhere. Within eight years what hath God wrought? I have been reading the Report of the Edinburgh Conference, and find in it messages to the Church full of glorious promise for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Muslim world. How or when it was to take place no one in the conference could say.

*Take China:* In that Report, Canon Gairdner, of Cairo, said, "In China until recently the problem of Islám has hardly been even studied, much less worked at." But during the past year our *News and Notes* has given evidence of a tremendous move forward. It was a revival started by the prayers of a faithful few. Dr. Zwemer went there to organise. Missionaries everywhere realised, as never before, how the Muhammadans had been neglected, and they were stirred to active interest. An influential committee on work among Muslims has been formed, tracts and books are being printed and distributed, Chinese preachers are being trained to specialise, and the proposal is made to bring out a Bi-lingual Qur'án with footnotes from a Christian standpoint. It is evident that the movement was born of the Spirit and has come to stay. The prospect in China is bright.

*Take Arabia:* At the Edinburgh Conference, a message was read from Dr. Young, of Aden, in which he made what was then a most daring proposal to the Church of Jesus Christ, but now there is a possibility of our seeing its fulfilment. He said—"I think the Church should try and start a large united mission in Mecca and Medina. It may seem Utopian even to dream of starting a mission in Mecca or Medina, but until an effort has been made no one can tell whether or not it will be successful. At any rate an attempt should be made to begin work in Jiddah (the port of Mecca), and a properly equipped hospital established there would do much to teach the pilgrims the meaning of Christian love."

With the events of the past year in mind, the King of the Hedjaz making the pilgrim routes safe, clearing up Jiddah and Mecca, linking up with the Allies in Egypt by wireless and engaging Christians to reform the different branches of the Government in Jiddah, surely there is hope of an early entrance for the Gospel into Arabia, "the Ignored Peninsula." Have we not here another glimpse of the dawn!

*Take Palestine:* The place where liberty for a Muslim to profess Christianity has been rigidly denied. Palestine is now welcoming the Allies as the forerunners of the Kingdom of God. The British flag with its blood-red cross has replaced the sign of the Crescent, and will, we trust, bring in wonderful times of refreshing to the stagnant Eastern churches, to the despised Jews and the defeated Turks.

*Take Mesopotamia:* Canon Gairdner, speaking at Edinburgh, said—"Turning to Mesopotamia, may I remind the Conference of the enormous importance that region is going to have in the future, when the Baghdad railway scheme and Sir W. Willcock's irrigation scheme have been worked out? Is it not vital that the Church should initiate work there on a totally different scale than exists at present?"

Within the last two years what hath God wrought in that land? Scores of steamers that used to ply on the Indian rivers are now busy on the Tigris and Euphrates. Railway lines that used to be a part of branch sections in India are now laid on the Mesopot. front, and will in the days to come give quick transit to the Messenger of the Cross.

*Take the Persian Gulf,* where the brave stand made by the medical missionaries in the midst of frightful disease so impressed the Commanding General of the British Expeditionary Force that he sent a cheque of Rs. 40,000 to the Lansing Memorial Hospital at Basrah, and encouraged the new governing authorities to give liberal grants to mission schools. The possibilities of new work being taken up all round the Gulf are very great.

*Take Egypt:* The Nile Mission Press, in Cairo, shows a ten per cent. increase in the distribution of literature during last year. The Arabic work of this Press alone for other Missions has advanced from four million pages in 1915-16 to nearly ten million pages in 1916-17, and this with the most disastrous war almost at its very doors.

*Take India:* All the time reports of Muslim enquirers, converts, and baptisms are coming in, and they tell not only of the lower classes, but also of educated and well-born men turning from the Prophet to the Saviour.

Openings and opportunities are coming to the Church; are we prepared for a great campaign of love at the end of the war? We hear how governments are reorganising and reconstructing in view of peace being declared. Shall we not need some reconstruction? When Muhammadans everywhere show by their strong tendency to Sufiism that they have a craving for a real communion with a God of Love, shall we not give them a literature and preaching more in line with that craving? Dr. Wherry has urged us so to do. Most of our books and tracts for Muslims need to be re-cast.

Then there is a spirit of expectation among Muslims that the coming of Christ to the Muslim world is imminent: surely that should help us in preaching our message.

We rejoice that so many of our members are urging others to join the League. We rejoice, too, that the Revs. W. Goldsack and H. Walter have returned to India. May God by the Holy Spirit enable us all for the work of another year.

We enclose a list of all our members in different parts of the world.

The League Financial Statement will be given (D.V.) in the next issue.

## BAPTISM—THE TEST AND WRENCH

We have received good news from one of our members in India concerning the baptism of a young Muslim. We will give the main facts for the encouragement of our readers:—

“The lad came to me, saying that he wished to be a Christian. I was naturally suspicious for a long time, but at last I was convinced that the boy was in earnest. From a worldly point of view he had nothing to gain by becoming a Christian, but everything to lose. His father has a good position in Government employ, drawing a large salary, and has saved a considerable amount, which he has invested. The boy is his eldest son, and would naturally have come in for a part of his father's property. The father, by the way, is a graduate of a Christian college. The boy passed his matriculation two years ago, and since then has been reading in a Muslim college.

“In his village some two or three years ago he was given a copy of the Gospel, and from reading it he came to see the Truth. When I was convinced of his sincerity I tried to find Christians with whom he could stay, but was unable to do so, so he came and lived with me. After some days the Muhammadans came to know what he was after,

and one of them sent word to his father. So I sent him elsewhere, and later went and baptised him. He has taken the Christian name of Daud, and is keeping two of his old names. Muslims in the place where he is now staying have heard of the baptism, are very excited about it, and will undoubtedly try (they have already done so) to argue with him. But Daud has a good supply of common sense, knows his Qur'an Sarif fairly well, and will be able, I believe, to hold his own. He has Christian friends on the spot who will help him.

"Daud is about 18 years of age, and is one of the finest types of Indian I have ever come across. He has a splendid face, is spotlessly clean, and looks, as he is, of high family.

"I should like you, if you will, to publish a short account of him, asking for thanks for his baptism and for prayer that he may be strong and of a good courage.

"I wrote to his father, poor man, telling him that his son had been baptized."

## COURSE OF STUDIES FOR WOMEN

Miss Davidson, of the Zenana Hospital, Peshawar, has sent us a set of studies which she has found very useful when giving consecutive lessons to the patients in the hospital. She says—"So many people have asked us for them that we have finally had them printed, though I feel they are not really finished enough, or worked out enough yet. Our idea was to get the Bible-women (1) to study more for themselves and get some fresh ideas; (2) to save the poor Prodigal and Dives and Lazarus from being worked to death; and (3) to try and make them preach a *truth* and not merely tell a story or parable; and (4) try and teach *one* definite point, instead of vaguely teach everything or anything in five minutes. Our plan is to study *with them* the subject, on Saturday evening or Sunday afternoon, and then let them work it out for themselves by the references, and bring in the illustrations merely as introductory. We have felt the need of something fresh for them. If you think other missionaries would find these studies useful for their women, you might tell them that we have some sets over. They are eight annas for the full course.

There are 48 lessons in all, including, among others, Sin, The Cross, The Resurrection, Peace, Burdens, The Way, Qismet, The Trinity, Bakr-Id, Shabarat, etc.

For the 8th week the subject is "*Parables of Islám*," with several Bible references given for teaching.

1. *Tawiz*.—2 Cor. 3: 6 cf.—The Living Word.—Ex., The Healing of the Centurion's Servant.—Matt, 8: 5-18.
2. *Rosary*.—Matt. 6, 7 cf.—The Name of Jesus.—Ex., The Healing of the Lame Man.—Acts 3.

3. *Zemzem Water*.—Jno. 4: 13 cf.—The Water of Life.—Ex., The Samaritan Woman.—Jno. 4: 1-42.
4. *Curing Dust*.—1 Tim. 4: 7; 1 Tim. 1: 15.—Ex., The Blind Man.—Jno. 9.
5. *Dates of Medina*.—Jno. 15: 1-10 cf.—The True Vine.—Ex., Paul.—Acts 28: 1-6.
6. *The Black Stone*.—1 Cor 3: 11 cf.—The Corner Stone.—Ex., Parable of Vineyard.—Matt 21: 33-45.

## FROM FAR AND NEAR

*"All we can do is nothing worth, unless God blesses the deed;  
Vainly we hope for the harvest, till God gives life to the seed;  
Yet nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be,  
When the earth shall be filled with the Glory of God, as the waters cover the sea."*

**A Request from China.**—Mr. Rhodes writes—"I have been trying to get English copy of a short useful imaginary dialogue between a Muslim visitor and a Christian, for translation into Chinese. Do you know of anyone who would and could supply such a useful thing? Chinese would read it gladly, and being in such a form it would be more acceptable. It need not be long, but we want something that will enable our Chinese Christians to know how to deal with Muslim visitors in guest hall work, and a dialogue would be just the thing to enlighten them. The work is so new, and our missionaries are only just feeling their way, so need all the help they can get."

We should be glad if our members could help Mr. Rhodes. There must exist quite a number of suitable dialogues in Urdu tract form. Please help by translating some of them into English and forwarding to the secretary.

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**Among Muslim Women.**—Miss E. Catt, writing from the Patna District, says:—

"It may interest you to hear a little about the attitude of Mussalmani women towards the Gospel, as I find it exhibited by those who come as in-patients to our zanana hospital. Since last November I have been doing the evangelistic work here, with the help of a Biblewoman, *i.e.* teaching in the wards by the bedside of the sick ones, or as they sit around one on the verandah, and have been struck with the evident attention and interest as they hear our version of the birth, life, and death of Christ. Few venture to argue, although one or another will sometimes tell what their books say. Several women bought Gospels for the men at home who could read, and three or four literate women bought books for themselves, one even taking a whole New Testament.

"When questioned on subjects taught, a few clearly show by their answers they have mentally grasped our *teaching* that God has ordained Christ as the only Mediator and Saviour for sinful men, although no one has yet outwardly ventured to accept it for herself to the rejection of other beliefs. They are also interested in the pictures and explanation of the book, *Mirror of the Heart*, and remember it well, quite realising the work Satan does if in possession.

"Although these purdah women are often partially informed about their own religious beliefs and tenaciously hold them, yet is it not a cause for thankfulness that during the quiet days and *weeks* spent in hospital they are willing to listen day after day to Gospel truths and one can pray that they may so ruminate on them in their homes, that eventually some at least may accept them. Of course, sometimes patients come who are unwilling to hear, and one feels a silent influence of opposition. Hindus also come, but I only write now of Mussalmanis.

"Please pray that God will give wisdom to us who teach, and a receptive heart to those who hear. For the dispensaries where Mussalmanis and Hindus gather daily we have a second Biblewoman, and often Gospels and Bhajans and Gazis are constantly bought by those who attend."

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**Dr. Zwemer.**—We hear that in response to an urgent invitation from the Laymen's Missionary Movement and to secure educational advantages for his children, the American Mission has approved of Dr. Zwemer taking furlough. He hoped to sail from Egypt for America *via* Shanghai early in May.

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**A Muslim Enquirer.**—A lad, who previously attended our Bible class in Brahmanbaria, is now a compositor in a printing office. Often he leaves his work on Sunday morning to attend the church service. Last week he brought some Bengali poetry, which he had written and printed himself. To us it is pathetic. It shows a hunger for truth and a desire for vision of the Saviour. May we be guided to help him see Jesus in all His beauty.

Here is a literal translation:

**"Jesus: a Hymn of Love**

"Be pitiful, O Merciful, and stay my fear of the world!  
 O Son of God, come and illumine my dark heart.  
 Where art Thou Jesus? I do not know the truth about Thyself!  
 Say, O Lord of the world! Where may I seek Thee!  
 I have not seen Thee, O devoted Friend who destroys all fear.  
 May this Thy slave not obtain mercy and come to Thy sacred feet?"

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**Their Loss and Ours.**—Mr. Rhodes writes—"I am very sorry to inform you that one of our China members has been called home. Mrs. J. E. Thor, of Shensi Province, died on 16th January, from a heart attack, after two weeks of bronchitis. As the only lady worker giving her whole time to the Muslim people, China has sustained a big loss, and the Muslims have lost a most devoted friend. She had just completed five years' work, and was looking forward to the coming of reinforcements. She took keen interest in Dr. Zwemer's visit to China last summer, and attended his Conference at Kuling Convention. In addition to this loss, we have to record the removal by death of three missionaries, who have done a good deal for the Muslims in their districts by giving some time to this work. Mrs. G. King, of Kansu, wife of Dr. King, one of our Members; and two other friends, unknown to our League but doing very valuable service

in China among the Muhammadans. May others be raised up to take their places."

## BOOK REVIEW

*Observations on the Mussulmauns of India*, by Mrs. Mir Hasan 'Ali, is an old book reprinted. It has 442 pages packed full of interesting information concerning the religious, domestic and social life of the Muslims of Lucknow during the years 1816-1828. Its detailed descriptions remind me of Lane's *Modern Egyptians*.

Mrs. Mir Hasan 'Ali was an Englishwoman, who married a Muhammadan gentleman of good family when he was in England doing translation work of the Government. After her arrival in India, where she remained for twelve years, she spent nearly the whole period in her father-in-law's house, where she had exceptional opportunities for learning the most minute particulars of the inner life of the people, and these she wrote up with the greatest care in 27 letters, which constitute the book. But she has depicted only the best side of Islâm. Probably she was not allowed to see or hear any other. She says: "In my attempt to delineate the Mussulmauns, I have been careful to speak as I have found them, not allowing prejudice to bias my judgment, either on the side of their faults or virtues. But I deem it incumbent to state, that my chief intimacy has been confined to the most worthy of their community; and that the character of a true Mussulmaun has been my aim in description."

This character she found in her father-in-law, a man whose "example and precept kept pace with each other. . . . Prayer was his comfort; meditation and praise his chief delight, . . . even his amusements were gleaned from devotional works, visits of charity, and acts of benevolence. . . . His memory was retentive, and every anecdote he related was a lesson calculated to lead the mind of the auditor to seek, trust, and obey God." The old man was a Shiah and professed Sufi principles.

We imagine the liberty allowed the author in the Muslim home was exceptional. There is evidence that she did not allow her husband to exercise a Muslim's privilege of a plurality of wives. She says: "I was received among them without prejudice, and allowed the free usage of my European habits and religious principles, without a single attempt to bias or control me. Every evening after the reading of a Muhammadan book to our family party, each passage was verbally translated to me by my husband. When that book was finished our Holy Scripture was brought forward, which, as I read, each passage was again translated by my husband, either in Persian or Hindustani, as best suited the understanding of our party at the time. So interesting was the subject, that we have been five or six hours at a time engaged, without tiring or even remembering the flight of those moments which were devoted, I trust, so beneficially to us all."

Although the author gives such a rosy account of Islām that one feels that she almost persuades her readers to become Muslims, yet she states in conclusion the need for Christian missionaries to go forth and win the Muslim world for Christ. She says: "It may be regretted, with all my influence, that I have not been the humble instrument of conversion. None can lament more than myself that I was not deemed worthy to convince them of the necessity, or of the efficacy, of that great Atonement on which my own hopes are founded. . . . I can distinguish one advantage accruing from our intimacy, namely, that they no longer view the professors of Christianity as idolaters, thus a strong barrier being sapped, I trust it may be thrown down by abler servants of our Lord. . . . My heart's desire for the people I have dwelt amongst is that which St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, declares to be his prayer to God for Israel, 'that they might be saved,' and I know not any way in which I could better testify my regard for the Mussulmauns collectively, or my gratitude individually, than by recommending the whole of the tenth chapter of the Romans to the serious consideration of those persons who possess such influence, as that the gospel of peace may be preached to them effectually by well-chosen and tried servants of our Lord, who are duly prepared both in heart and speech to make known the glad tidings to their understandings that 'God so loved the world,' etc." J. T.

## PRAISE AND PRAYER

**Peshawar.**—Miss Davidson writes—"You will have heard of our loss in Dr. Starr's death. (He was murdered by some of the Frontier tribes.) Do *pray* it may mean gain in some way for the North-West Frontier Province. I feel there is an awful fight going on just now, but we praise God for the hearts He is winning to Himself. For one little Muslim (Sayid) girl, sixteen years old, we can safely praise. She died on August third, in the middle of this bigoted city, rejoicing in the love of Jesus. All that night, her father and sister told me, she was remembering *Him* and His love, and her face and eyes were so shining with glory that all the neighbours came in to see her and to wonder. We were all in Kashmir at the time. When I told them the secret of the glory in her face, her bigoted sister and father said, '*We thought* it was that. We had never seen anything like it before. Our people do not die like that.'

"They keep a copy of the hymn, 'Jesus loves me,' in their jewel box as 'Miriam's most precious possession.' She gave it to her father as such just as she was dying, saying *that* was the reason of her joy—so we praise."

*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.