

Missionaries to Muslims League

News and Notes.

Series VII, No. 7.

NOVEMBER, 1918

“MUCH MORE THAN A PROPHET”

John Baptist was a Herald, to announce the coming King; he was also a road-builder, to prepare His way. The people to whom he was sent were a nation of religious professors, whose religion was mainly outward and formal and mixed with hypocrisy. “This people doth honour Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.” They were likened to a barren fig-tree, full of leaves but with no fruit.

Yet they were not idolaters. Why must they be preached to? Why must they “repent”? What had they to repent of? Hypocrisy and formalism are in the sight of God as sinful as idolatry, and must be repented of and pardoned, before the Kingdom of Heaven can be entered.

John's message came to them as a novelty. He came as the *Apostle of Sincerity and Personal Religion*. Well might he have excused himself, pleading the extreme difficulty of preaching sincerity to a formal people, and the much greater simplicity of preaching the truth to those who were openly and frankly heathen, followers of Baal and Moloch, for instance. Yet he went boldly forward, and met a martyr's death, as many another has done in similar circumstances.

The Jewish world of John's day is the type of the Moslem world of to-day. The task before the Church to-day is the anti-type of John's task. It is a stupendous task--over two hundred millions of our fellow-creatures in open rebellion against our Lord and Master. “We will not have this man to reign over us.” There is a close parallel between those Jews and these Moslems. These Moslems, as the Jews did, regard themselves as the chosen favourites of God, who will deal leniently with them, but severely with all others. Moslems are full of zeal for the spread of their religion, like the Jews, who would “compass sea and land to make one proselyte.” Full of a zeal for God, indeed, but “not according to knowledge.” Then again, they are not ashamed of their religion, but are outwardly religious and devout, though their religiousness is largely ritual and formal, and but little concerned with inward purity. Yet how much of the worship of Christendom is little better!

It is much easier to preach to the heathen than to Moslems. This has been very largely the attitude of the Church of Christ, and this has led to the neglect of a large part of its duty. “One might

suppose," writes Dr. Zwemer, "that the Church thought her great commission to evangelize the world did not apply to Moslems." It has been almost as it would have been if *John Baptist had stood silent and messageless in the presence of the formal Jewish Church*. Yet the Church as a corporate whole has been practically silent in the face of the Moslem world. Now, thank God, a change is taking place. The Church is waking up to see her duty towards Islam, and is here and there taking up this great task. The harvest truly is great, the Moslem world is more accessible than it ever has been before, and we may believe that it is soon going to be still more open. Let us, therefore, as we are commanded, pray the Lord of the Harvest that He would send forth labourers specially fitted for this part of the Church's work. Let us pray that they may come in the spirit of Raymund Lull, who wrote, "I come to win the Moslem, not, as people oft do, with arms, but with words; not by force, but by reason; not in hatred, but in love." Let us who are engaged in the work show to the Moslems that, while Islam has "a Prophet," we bring to them Him who is "much more than a Prophet," much greater than John to whom He thus testified. The message we preach is not that of one among many, but that of an absolutely unique Person, who cannot be compared with the Prophet of Islam nor yet with any other Prophet. Let us pray God that we, and the whole Church of Christ, may be an incarnation of the spirit of Christ, as He is the Incarnation of the Being and the love of God Himself, so that He Himself, in the person of His Church, which is His Body, may be seen coming to them to win them by the power of His love. . . . The Muslim world sees Christ just in proportion as the Church shows Him; it feels and knows His power in proportion as the Church is endued with and wields His power; it learns to know Him as greater than any prophet, just in proportion as His Church, His Body, shows herself to be greater in spirituality and in effectiveness than any other religious body or society. The Muslim world can only know Christ *through us*.

John's message would have been ineffective, had it not been enforced by the power of his simple and sincere life. Is not the Church called in these days to reinforce her preaching by the simplicity and sincerity of her life? Will her message be effective if she lives a life of self-indulgence? So, as the Church in response to the call of these tremendous and stirring days throws off her lethargy and selfishness, her message to the Moslem world will gain a new power, and will reach the heart.

H. J. L. S.

PERSONAL

I am sure I am only voicing the wishes of all the members of the M.M. League when I offer to Mr. Takle in their name our sincerest sympathy in the terrible calamity which has befallen the

mission in Brahmanbaria. We earnestly pray that he may be prospered in the arduous toil of rebuilding ruined house, school, and other premises, and that in the meanwhile God will bestow abundant blessing on all the members of the mission, so that they may realize that His hand is with them.

I am honoured by being asked to take up the Secretaryship of the League, which I do willingly, but yet with much fear and trembling, and in the confidence that it will not be as a permanency, and that we may welcome Mr. Takle back into office as soon as his other work permits. We all owe a debt of gratitude to him which we cannot repay, for the energy and devotion which he has put into the work of the League, and which has made it, and its monthly paper, so great a success. I feel great diffidence in undertaking to become his successor, but I pray that I may be enabled to carry on the work with at least some measure of success. I earnestly request both the prayers and also the active co-operation of the members of the League, so that subjects of common interest may be constantly forthcoming to print in *News and Notes* month by month, and also that many live subjects for Prayer and Praise may be regularly brought before us all.

H. J. LANE SMITH.

NOTES

Index for "News and Notes," Vol. VII.—I propose to compile an index for the current volume of *News and Notes*, and with this in view I have caused the pages of this issue to be numbered 51 to 56. The pages of succeeding issues will continue from this. I would therefore suggest that members should alter the paging of the previous issues, which they have by them, so as to make them fit in with this one. The first page of the May, 1918, issue will be page 1, and the last page of the October issue will be page 50.

"Christ Superior to Muhammad."—An English translation of this Urdu Tract was given in *News and Notes* of July last, and a copy of the Urdu original was sent out with each copy of the August issue. It has now been translated into Musalmani-Gujarati, the language of the Bohras and Khojas. If any missionaries have such Musalmans in their districts, and would like to give this tract, they can get it from the Rev. Dr. H. R. Scott, I.P. Mission Press, Surat.

"Umda Lugat-i-Quran."—A very useful dictionary of all the words in the Quran, under the above title, is to be bought for a few annas at any Muhammadan book shop. It is compiled by Muhammad Abdul Majid, and published by Haji Muhammad Said, at 85, Khalasi Tola, Calcutta.

News from South India.—A missionary of over fifty years service writes: "A real change seems to have come over some of the Moslems with regard to their attitude towards Christ and the Scriptures of the New Testament. They now buy copies of the New Testament almost as readily as do the Protestant Christians. Bitter and active opposition is now a thing of the past. South India is being permeated with Christianity, and I verily believe the day is not far distant when many of its inhabitants will be brought to the fold of the Lord Jesus Christ." This refers to the States of Travancore and Cochin, where literacy among Muhammadans is fairly high, but where the Muhammadans form only about 6½ per cent. of the whole population. Let us pray that there may indeed be an ingathering from among these South Indian Musalmans

A Member from Colombo writes:—"I was much interested to read in the September issue about the fish, bearing Arabic characters, which had been caught near Zanzibar. I have seen many pictures of it here, and in one Muhammadan house there was a framed copy hanging up, and I was told it would bring a blessing to any house where a copy of the picture was hung up on the wall! Could not the account be sent to some aquarium scientist, who might be able to throw some light upon the matter?"

Christian Martyrs in Persia.—The following quotation from *The Times* is interesting: "A telegram reached London yesterday (June 5th) from Tabriz, stating the Mar-Shimun, Catholicus or Patriarch of the Nestorian Church, had been killed by the Turks. When, in the first stages of the war, the Turks invaded Northern Persia the Patriarch and his people took refuge in Persia. English sympathizers invited the Patriarch to come to this country for safety during the war. His reply was courteous and brief. After thanking them for their offer of hospitality he said that his duty was to stay with his people and die with them.

Moslem Victims of Turkish Cruelty.—In *Crescent and Iron Cross*, by E. F. Benson, we read a very clear account of the Turkish way of settling those troublesome "questions" which have come up from time to time in the empire, e.g., the "Armenian Question," the "Jewish Question," etc. It is the extirpation of the peoples whose presence in the empire gives rise to the "questions." We read that not only have Christians and Jews been ruthlessly massacred, but that non-Turkish Moslems have also been the victims of this fiendish policy. The *Quarterly Intercession Paper* quotes the following, apparently from an appeal of the Syria and Palestine Relief Fund:—"Alongside of the Armenian refugees there are other war victims, their companions in suffering; such as the Nestorian Syrians, and in some parts Moslem victims. We cannot ignore their needs. . . ." What a splendid opportunity of showing the love and gentleness of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, and of returning kindness for cruelty.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor "NEWS AND NOTES"

MY DEAR SIR,—May the Master be glorified. With reference to "accessibility," as exhibited in "Muslim Opposition in China" of September "N. and N.," may I suggest what will enable some, perhaps, to grip their spiritual sword more firmly, that the inaccessibility of the man is the accessibility to attack of the Evil One. "In my name they shall cast out devils," and "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual hosts of wickedness." Behind the man, as an enemy behind cover, lurks the Evil One. When he shows his presence by directly opposing lies to the Word of God through some speaker, then *he* is accessible to the Sword of the Spirit in the believer's hand; and it should be planted in him, he should be commanded in the KING'S name to leave the man. The devil's plan in lurking behind the man is that argument should take place between the man and the believer, inducing the unbeliever to "proceed farther in ungodliness"; "eating like a gangrene" and "gendering strifes. And the Lord's servant must not strive." As long as our attention is fixed only on the man, we are like one deceived by the "cover."

When the Sword of the Spirit is thus held ready in the hand, the opposition of lying argument is an ever welcome opportunity of driving the spiritual enemy from some of his entrenchments, instead of being, without such readiness, a source of weakening and waste of time in the believer. Having plunged the spiritual sword, *pass on*, in faith that it will assuredly be effective; do not wait to resume argument with the man. And to the Evil One, perhaps tempting in one's own heart, say, "we are unprofitable servants."

A MEMBER.

PRAISE AND PRAYER

China.—Prayer is asked for an aged Mullah, who holds a position of importance. He stated recently to a missionary that he was afraid to die, and hardly dare sleep lest he should die in the night. May his eyes be opened to see Jesus, not only as a Saviour but as his Saviour.

Prayer is also asked for the scattered ex-Moslem converts in some 14 provinces. Some of these are now coming more into prominence, and in taking a more definite position will be specially the targets for the Enemy of Souls. May they be "kept," and greatly used.

F. H. RHODES.

Sholapur.—Prayer is asked for a Muslim young man, who has for some time been an enquirer; and also for his aunt, who has lately been seeking the way of life, that they may both become true followers of

Christ, and that the opposition may be overcome. There are apparently elements in the case which might conceivably lead to a great deal of trouble, and might hinder all the work of the mission.

B. FULCHER (Z.B.M.M.).

Baltistan, North Kashmir.—Prayer is asked for the few baptized ones here, and for the coming of the Kingdom here.

H. C. R.

Bombay.—Prayer is asked for a young Muslim lady, who was baptized a few months ago, that she may grow in the knowledge of our Lord; also that she may come safely through an entanglement with a young man, in which she has unwisely become involved.

H. J. L. S.

Syria.—Prayer that the work of the Syria and Palestine Relief Fund, especially as it touches Muslims, may be greatly used by God in showing to the Muslims the true sympathy of Christ, and may bring many of them to him.

The Turks.—Prayer that the more thinking Musalmans of India may recoil with horror from the Turkish atrocities; and that their eyes may be opened to see how that the tendency of Islam, even at its best, is intolerance; that its propagation, has been largely by forcible means, and that the spirit of love, which desires the real welfare of all peoples, is only to be found in Jesus Christ.

NEW MEMBERS

266.	MISS E. BLOWER,	Z. B. & M. Mission,	Manmad
267.	MISS E. M. HUGHES, B.A.,	do.	Nasik
268.	MISS E. J. HOWES,	C.M.S.,	Kandy
269.	MISS K. KINZLY,	M. E. Mission,	Calcutta
270.	MISS J. MCCRIE,	Ch. of God,	Lahore
271.	THE RT. REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF BOMBAY.		

*The Annual Subscription to the League is Rs. 2-8-0 (3s. 6d.).
Members are requested to send news and requests for prayer to*

C.M.S., Aurangabad, Deccan.

H. J. LANE SMITH,
Hon. Sec., M.M. League.