

## News and Notes.

A Monthly Paper printed for the private use of the  
Members of the Missionaries to Muslims League.

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### TRADITION THE MAINSTAY OF ISLAM.

The Rev. W. Goldsack has done the brotherhood excellent service by writing another book for his *In Islam* series. It deals with *The Traditions in Islam*, and is largely the product of first-hand research in the libraries of Cairo. After reading its 105 pages at a sitting, we are impressed with the idea that but for tradition the Muhammadans would have been in a sorry plight. It has become the very necessary prop of Islam. Where the Quran fails, Tradition has some way of rescue for every doctrine and difficulty.

As to the origin of Muslim Tradition, it is what one might expect. Up to the time of the death of the Prophet, the people had a final court of appeal in him; but after his death innumerable difficulties arose, and it was necessary to enquire of the widows and companions of Muhammad how he acted and what he said under certain circumstances, and thus obtain some criterion. This gave rise to the rapid growth of traditional sayings on everything in heaven, earth and hell. But since for many years no written record was kept of the sayings, and everyone wished to be known as a reporter of Tradition, it is easily understood how falsification and fabrication might become common.

Mr. Goldsack shows that many sayings were fabricated to aid political schemes and personal ambitions. He gives quotations from Arabic books to prove that even Ayesha, the favourite wife of the Prophet, and certain of his "companions," were "utterly unscrupulous in their behaviour in this respect."

Another reason for the growth of Tradition is found in Muhammad's ignorance of the true Christ and Christianity. The "Isa" of the Quran is a very feeble prophet, and the Christianity of Arabia in the days of Muhammad was a disgrace, but thank God the torch of Truth was still held high in other places, and the followers of Muhammad found this out, and were naturally concerned for the reputation of their

leader. Why could they not make him compare favourably with the divine Logos? Why not make him the Light from eternity lighting every man coming into the world? They did, and he was "enveloped in a halo of almost supernatural glory. Christ worked miracles; so must Muhammad. The Son of Mary is a great Intercessor at the Throne of Grace, and so, in spite of the Quranic verses to the contrary, Muhammad is depicted as the greatest Intercessor."

And the influence of Christian thought on the Muslim mind is seen in the many traditions that teach the need of substitutionary sacrifice.

The last of the six chapters in the book is an appeal to reason. In these days of reconstruction, will educated Muhammadans face the facts in the spirit of historical criticism? Why shouldn't they? If only Muhammadans could be brought to see how absurd and unscientific and utterly lacking in moral perspective the traditions are, we might speedily see a change of religious thought and moral character; and if only they knew the contents of the writings of such standard authorities as Bukhari and Muslim, they would be less aggressive in asserting the inspiration of the *Hadith*.

In an appendix our author gives a list of 37 books—mostly Arabic—quoted in the text, which adds great value to the work. The book is published by the C.L.S. at eight annas.

JOHN TAKLE.

### WHAT MUSLIMS READ.

In the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for February 1919, there is an interesting account of the Persian MSS. in the Rampur State Library, written by Moulvi Hafiz Nazir Ahmad. This famous library, which was founded by Nawab Fayd Allah Khan in the 18th century, contains 8,587 Arabic and Persian MSS., and 13,503 printed books. The library staff consists of 38 persons, ten of whom are engaged exclusively in copying old and rare MSS. The library is considered the best of its kind in India. It may be interesting, therefore, to note the subjects covered by the Persian MSS., of which the library is said to contain 3,392. They are given as follows:—

Astrology ... ..	52	Literature ... ..	167
Astronomy ... ..	58	Logic... ..	6
Biography and Sufism ...	594	Mathematics... ..	22
Commentaries on the Quran	25	Medicine ... ..	245
Calligraphy ... ..	25	Jurisprudence ... ..	8
Chemistry ... ..	19	Tradition ... ..	104
Chirography... ..	5	Veterinary Arts ... ..	20
Chess and Cards ... ..	4	Military Arts... ..	6

Cookery ... ..	8	Miscellaneous ..	70
Dictionary of the Quran ...	4	Music ... ..	13
Ethics ... ..	148	Philosophy ... ..	22
Etymology ... ..	37	Physiognomy ... ..	1
Fortune-telling ... ..	20	Prayer... ..	47
Tales and Poetry ... ..	955	Prosody ... ..	29
Geography ... ..	10	Rhetoric ... ..	44
Geomancy ... ..	25	Surgery ... ..	3
History ... ..	271	Syntax... ..	18
Index of the Quran ..	23	Talisman and Magic ...	19
Interpretation of Dreams ...	4	Theology ... ..	83
Jurisprudence ... ..	27	Various Readings of the Qu-	
Law of Inheritance... ..	6	ran... ..	22
Lexicography ... ..	118		

What will strike the missionary reader of the above list will be the comparative scarcity of books on purely religious subjects. It is difficult to believe, for example, that a Muslim library, of the size and importance indicated, should only contain 25 MS Commentaries of the Quran, and only some 83 MSS. on Theology. On the other hand, the total of 91 MSS., given for the allied subjects of Astrology, Magic and Fortune-telling, is instructive.

It is unfortunate that the author of the original article should have grouped such diverse subjects as Biography and Sufism together. One would much like to know to what extent students of the latter subject have been catered for. Students of both History and Medicine seem to be well supplied, and would-be orators may have the help of no less than 44 separate treatises on the art of speaking.

For the rest : works on Tradition seem fairly numerous ; and Biography, always a favourite subject with the Arabs, seems well represented. It is interesting, too, to find no less than 22 separate MSS. dealing with the various readings of the Quran.

One is surprised to find more than a fourth of the library given up to Fiction and Poetry, and equally disappointed that these subjects have not been kept separate.

W. GOLDSACK.

### CHINA.

The Rev. F. H. Rhodes of Chefoo writes as follows :—

“ One of our leading Mullahs quite recently wished to travel to Arabia, via Egypt and possibly other countries. The Consular authorities firmly refuse to grant him a passport owing I suppose to the unsettled conditions. As this man is the foremost translator our Moslem friends in China have, he feels this

refusal rather keenly. He has written asking my aid in securing the passport, but beyond giving him the name of a missionary in his locality who would give a sympathetic hearing to his case, I was not able to help him on the desired lines. I was able to send him a letter, and also a marked copy of the Psalms asking him to read the verses *re* the Guidance of God. As this man already has a large Arabic Bible, I felt led to send him the Psalms in Chinese marked—he reads both Arabic and Chinese fluently. May his hedged-up way lead him to seek the One who openeth and no man shutteth.”

Mr. Rhodes also asks for prayer

“for a Chinese Mullah who recently wrote to us stating: ‘I believe in God; and in His holy Angels; and in His (holy) Books; and in His Apostles; and in His only Son. In the mosque I have found only ignorance and sin.’ May he see clearly ‘Jesus only’ and accept Him as Saviour, Lord, and King.”

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## NOTES.

**Islam: A Challenge to Faith.**—The Representative Council of Missions in the United Provinces has passed the following resolution, which refers to the proscribing of Dr. Zwemer’s book, “Islam: a Challenge to Faith.”

“Resolved. That this Council wishes to express its astonishment that a standard work on religion published in 1907 should have been placed on the Index twelve years later; that it further regards such action as a dangerous infringement on the principle of religious neutrality, forming a precedent, which if generally followed would be fatal to the science of comparative religion, and banish from private and public libraries such standard works as “The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire” and the “Encyclopaedia Britannica.”

It was moved and carried that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Government of these Provinces, and to the National Missionary Council, in the hope that the Imperial Government may be led to rescind the order referred to in the resolution.

(From *The Christian Patriot*, June 28).

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## AN ENQUIRY.

The Rev. L. Bevan Jones will be glad if anyone who has had experience in the use of a “book-stall, reading-reception room and preaching-hall situated *right amongst the people in the city quarter*” will be good enough to communicate with him, as he is anxious to start this kind of work in Dacca. His address is Baptist Mission, Dacca, Bengal.

### THE GLORY OF THE IMPOSSIBLE.

This is the title of the leading article in the July number of *The Moslem World*, of which we have received an advance copy of the list of contents. There are articles by Dr. Edwin M. Poteat about advance in Moslem work; by the Rev. A. French on the subject of a more vigorous policy in evangelizing Muslims; by the Rev. F. L. Nunn of the Wesleyan Mission in the Fiji Islands; by Dr. Wherry on the superiority of Christ to Mohammed as shown from the Quran; and by Dr. Stanley Mylrea on work in Arabia; as well as many other interesting matters.

May we again impress on our members the importance of studying the problems of Islam through the medium of the pages of *The Moslem World*? The rate of subscription is \$1.25, or 5s., or Rs. 4 per annum post free. Indian subscribers may pay their subscriptions through the Christian Literature Society, Post Box No. 501 Park Town, Madras.

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### THE LEAGUE SUBSCRIPTION.

Several members of the League think the present rate of subscription too high, and would like to have it reduced. One thinks Rs. 1-8-0 would be about right, another suggests Rs. 2-4-0.

The subscription is charged, partly to pay miscellaneous expenses incidental to carrying on the work of the League, and partly for the copy of the monthly paper, *News and Notes*, to which every member is entitled. Originally the subscription was fixed at Rs. 2 and the paper was registered as a publication, and could be sent by post at the rate of one-quarter anna per copy, in open covers. But it was pointed out by one member in 1916 that the privacy essential to the character of *News and Notes* could not be secured as long as it was sent out in open covers, and that these covers often bore marks of having been tampered with. Sometimes envelopes were returned through the Dead Letter Office *with the contents missing*. On account of this representation, the Executive Committee of the League decided to raise the rate of subscription to Rs. 2-8-0, in order to pay the extra postage which was necessary when the paper was to be sent out in closed covers.

The rate was raised on account of the extra postage, and not on account of war rates for paper, printing, etc. But the fact remains that printing is a very heavy item, and seems likely to be so for some time to come. The balance of Rs. 180

which was shown in hand in the last Balance Sheet, has been considerably reduced already by the bills for printing the List of Members, and the Cycle of Prayer, which were issued with the May and July numbers respectively. Besides this, at the time of writing, there are still 45 subscriptions, amounting to nearly Rs. 160 still overdue up to the 30th April last. Taking all things into consideration, the Hon. Sec. is of opinion that it would be unwise to reduce the rate of subscription just at present. If, however, any large number of members should signify their wish that it should be reduced, the matter will be referred to the Committee for decision.

It may be that the monthly paper is being sent month by month to some who do not wish to continue their membership. All whose names are in the List of Members are receiving a copy monthly, with three or four exceptions. But if any members will be good enough to point out the names of any who, to their knowledge, have either passed away, or have gone away from India, and do not wish to continue, it may possibly lead to a curtailment of expenditure.

Will all members who have not yet paid their subscriptions up to the 30th April last be good enough to do so without delay?

Ed. N. & N.

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**NEW MEMBER.**

276 Rt. Rev. H. J. Molony, D.D. Bishop of Chekiang.  
Ningpo, China.

*The Annual Subscription to the League is Rs. 2-8-0 (about 4sh.)  
News and requests for Prayer should be sent as early in the month  
as possible to the Hon. Secretary :*

**Rev. H. J. Lane Smith,**

*Church Mission House,*

*Girgaum,*

*Bombay.*

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Bombay Guardian Press, Bombay.