

Confidential.

News and Notes.

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

Series IX.

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A Message From Our New President,

The Rev. Canon Goldsmith of Madras.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE M. M. LEAGUE.

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am asked to write a word of greeting.

It has always seemed to me that if we need one grace more than another, it is that we study to get and to retain, and to develop, more love for the Muslims amongst whom we are called to work, at the same time that we recognize more and more the errors into which they have fallen.

We are to 'love our enemies' (Matt. v. 44), while we 'hate' (Rev. ii. 15) their 'doctrine.' Our Blessed Master, Who denounces so strongly the sins in the Seven Churches (Rev. ii and iii), yet most tenderly nevertheless 'stands at the door and knocks.' (Rev. iii, 20).

Let us distinguish *persons* from *opinions*, and embrace in love all for whom Christ died, and pray for them.

Your fellow-worker,

MALCOLM G. GOLDSMITH.

Royapet House,
Royapettah, Madras.

A Symposium on Establishing Friendship with Muslims.

WE cordially welcome that word from our New President, viz: 'that we study to get, to retain, and to develop, *more love* for the Muslims' around us. As members of this League we are already pledged to more prayer and more work for them, but we shall do both better if, as our President urges, we study to *love* them more.

Henry Drummond used to speak of Love as 'the greatest thing in the world,' and we shall find it no less potent for the Muslim world as we set ourselves to the urgent task of winning these neighbours of ours through friendship.

It is because we feel that the time is clamouring (at least in India) for the missionary to prove himself a friend to Muslims, that we have ventured to approach certain members of the League with the request that they write down for our guidance and encouragement, an account of their experience in establishing friendly contact with Muslims.

This month we publish several valuable contributions and hope we shall receive more later on. It is open to any member of course to send in an account of his or her experiences along this line.

I

FROM my first arrival in India in 1875, and from my first introduction to my first zanana pupil, (a dear Kabuli *begam* who knew no English and very little Urdu, while I knew no Persian and less Urdu than she did!) I have never wanted for *friends* amongst Moslem women.

A friendly visit, sitting down among them with a kindly exchange of greetings, *learning* at every visit something fresh about their families, their faith, their hopes and fears, and *teaching* something of the Gospel message of God's love, has soon won their confidence and affection.

I have never taken the controversial line, but tried always to so present the Lord Jesus that His gracious image might be imprinted on their hearts. His care for poor women made a deep impression on them. If at any time (prompted perhaps by their men folk) they tried to challenge His Divinity, it was sufficient to tell them of the angel Gabriel's definition of His wondrous birth, and to remind them that the Qur'an speaks of Him as Ruh-Ullah, *i.e.* the Spirit of God. With the Old Testament saints they were acquainted at least by name. In the Psalms of David some of the *devout* women found inspiration and comfort, and the Gospel furnished the stories of the Saviour's compassion.

Pictures had to be used sparingly, as to their minds a picture savours of idolatry. In some houses we found it wise not to *sing*, as the Moslem does not use song as worship, but associates it with dancing women.

The good things in their faith were encouraged. I well remember the keen delight of one old lady to whom I explained, word by word, the first *siparah*, which she had been repeating in Arabic all her life without understanding the meaning of it.

I had, however, another point of contact with Moslem women, when I gave medicines to the sick ones—at first just privately in their homes, then in a Dispensary in the city, and after a few years in our Hospital to which all classes and needs were made welcome. There, indeed, the power of the Lord to heal both body and soul was manifest, and we were privileged to see the grace of God bring salvation to not a few of our sick folks.

We had a Christian matron and nurses, and a sister devoted to the care of the patients and ready with the word of Life for all who would listen. Prayers were held in the wards morning and evening, and also in the outpatient department when the women were assembled. A good Biblewoman sat among them reading the word of God to all comers.

Thus we had a Christian atmosphere which told powerfully on the side of the religion of Jesus. One woman who at first cursed us under her breath all the time her dressing was being done, went out transformed as well as cured. A patient just going under with chloroform surprised the whole staff by suddenly repeating the Lord's Prayer without a mistake, and we had not supposed that she had taken it in! A Moslem woman (who had long been a zanana pupil also) died in Hospital with such a bright testimony to the power of the Lord Jesus to save, that her young daughter came afterwards begging for baptism, that she might follow her mother's faith.

I must not prolong my letter. Love and sympathy in the teacher; and a direct appeal to the women's hearts by exhibiting to them the wonderful Person of our Lord with His special compassion for women and children—these are, I believe, sufficient to win friendship from Moslem women.

Singla Hill,
Punjab, March, 1921.

Yours truly,
M. ROSE GREENFIELD.

II

YOUR circular *re* a basis of common friendship between ourselves and Muslims arrived while I was conversing with a Maulvie of our town, who since his boyhood has come under missionary influence and done not a little to bring about a better understanding between the Muslims and ourselves. Knowing their strong antipathy to Christians he has often put the question thus: "When the Quran says that the

Christians are 'People of the Book,' and commands Muslims when in doubt on any matter to consult the same people, then surely they cannot be wholly bad." The villagers admit the validity of his reasoning, but contend that the Christians now are not like those of Muhammad's day. They gather from their books of Tradition that formerly Christians differed little from Muslims in ideas, language, dress and mode of living. They had much in common, but now there is no resemblance.

We pointed out that since they think missionaries are made of such different clay, there should be no such feeling in regard to the Bengali Christian preachers. He said, "Unfortunately too often they are less attractive since they are usually converts from Hindu Society and retain the old Hindu dislike for Muslims, and they cling to religious terms, for instance, the Hindu equivalents for Incarnation and Trinity, which are alright when conversing with Hindus, but alienate Muslim hearers."

We asked the Maulvie to suggest how we might come to a better understanding with his people. He said, "Get closer to them! Wear the Maulvie dress, including the fez, and cultivate a beard; go more to the villages in the interior and talk nothing but Urdu, using only Arabic religious terms. Show that you wish to be one with them."

He added, "'The Injil in its present form irritates them. They ask, 'Who are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? Why should their names appear when Isa brought the Injil?'" The Maulvie thinks that if we added "Sahábí" (companion or associate), to each of these four names the Muslims would better understand, for they honour one with such a title.

Sympathy does much to remove antipathy. A visit to a sick townsman; a letter given to a deserving young man seeking employment; a social talk with better class men over a cup of tea, not in the office, but in one's own drawing-room, all help to bring men into closer touch.

On the religious side it is difficult to avoid controversy, but we find that with most Muslims, including the ignorant, aggressive and fanatical people we meet in the bazaar, they are easily touched by a comparison of the doctrines of *Tariqat* and *Marifat* with the teaching of the New Testament. The Sufi ideas of the inward life, telling of an inner struggle and a divided will, and a craving for love, will usually convince them that we have much more in common with them than with the Hindus.'

J. TAKLE.

Brahmanbaria,
Bengal, March, 1921.

III

NOT long ago a Muhammadan gentleman called on me. We talked freely about the burning questions of the present time; the Khilafat agitation, the growing importance of Arabia, the lowered prestige of Turkey, etc. He held reasonable views on most of these topics. He is a member of the Ahmadiya sect (Qadiani), and since this sect is represented by very few families in Saharanpur, doubtless he felt lonely. The conversation was very pleasant, and when he left I felt that a relationship and friendship had at least been formed.

It would be decidedly worth while to make out a considerable calling list of Muhammadan gentlemen, and make it one's business to cultivate their acquaintance. If a warm, loving, evangelical purpose is present when such calls are made, then even though no word is spoken on religion, such visits will have evangelistic value.

The first step is simple acquaintance and friendship as between man and man. We are greatly lacking in wisdom just here. Let every one interested in the evangelization of the Muhammadan world try at once to make a few such friendships.'

Saharanpur, N. India.

H. D. GRISWOLD.

IV

IT is of the utmost importance in our work, amongst Moslems, that our motives be clear both to ourselves and if possible to them. In the matter of controversy, for instance, it is far more important that we should manifest a spirit of true meekness coupled with an anxious solicitude for his eternal welfare rather than an anxiety to defeat an opponent. There is a story told of a simple village preacher who was asked some very difficult questions in a large market by a Moulvie. The poor Christian could not answer one of them, and forthwith the Moulvie poured out his contempt both for the Christian and his religion in no measured terms. The poor man feeling deeply his own humiliation besought in prayer a blessing on his antagonist. The incident over, the crowd moved away, but the Moulvie later on came to the man and said:—"Your religion must be the true one, for you could not otherwise have listened so patiently to the abuse which I poured out upon you and your religion." This was surely another victory for the cross!

On one occasion a Missionary and his party were preaching in a large market in Bengal, when an up-country Moulvie appeared on the scene, and in fluent Urdu abused the Missionary and his little band of workers. He then forbid any of the Mahommedans in the market to buy the books or to listen to the preaching. His words were so effective that after vainly trying for more than an hour the little band retired to their tents, and gave themselves to fasting and prayer during the greater part of the night. The next morning as they were making their way to a neighbouring village the first person they met was the Moulvie.

The Missionary greeted the Moulvie Saheb, and offered him a Gospel which the Moulvie accepted. The Missionary then told him how they had spent the previous night. The Moulvie was very much surprised, but said:—"Please continue to pray for me that God may have mercy upon me." They never met again, but undoubtedly the prayers will be answered. These incidents are mentioned merely to show the need of having the meek and lowly spirit of our Master if we have to engage in controversy.

But controversy is only one means and as a rule an ineffectual one, of winning Moslems. The real winning power is love—"the love of Christ constraining us"—and love will find its natural outlet, not in controversy, but in friendship. Some years ago I had the privilege of reading the Bible with one of our College Professors who was a deeply religious Mahommedan. Our frequent visits resulted in a better understanding of each other's point of view, and the establishment of a true friendship. After nearly a year of weekly meetings for prayer and Bible study, I was transferred to a different part of the District. At my last visit the Professor remarked on the closeness of our friendship, and said that these studies had opened his eyes to see the beauties of Christ and that now although not yet outwardly a Christian, he was one in heart.

On another occasion a Munshi lived with the writer while giving him lessons in Urdu. He used to sleep on the verandah and wakened the writer for his quiet hour by his early morning prayer. Some six months were thus spent and resulted in a great deal of mutual understanding, while the Munshi, although not yet a professed Christian, appears to be a real believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us seek to make friends with the Moslems in order that they through their friendship with us may get to know the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

ROBERT MORISON.

Rajshahi,
Bengal, March, 1921.

From Our File.

A LADY member in Turkey writes:—"We are looking forward eagerly to the baptism to-morrow of a Turkish friend and his wife and baby. They have been urgently requesting it for some time, but some felt it unwise politically. Now it is unanimously voted, not because conditions have changed, but because all have come to feel that if we wait for political settlement we'll wait for ever, and more, that God is calling us to go forward in our work for Moslems. (We have started two new Sunday School classes for Moslems; the adult class is in Turkish, and so is available for all who wish to come. Usually we have weekly some ten to fifteen present.)"

Our two friends have just opened up like flowers to the sun. Bible teaching for the last two years and a half has found simple, open-hearted response. They have been living, radiant, out-spoken Christian lives for months and are full of joy at this seal on their hope and faith.

This is only one of the signs that the Spirit is working in the hearts of many Moslems. A new Y.M.C.A. branch has just been opened near us—membership largely Moslem—which offers the Secretary in charge a fine chance for personal work such as he longs to do. And now the Y.W. is opening a centre also in this Moslem quarter. All these things help.'

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THE CARE OF CONVERTS.—Not for the first time we fancy is this question brought to the notice of readers of 'News and Notes.' It is a problem that intimately concerns a large number of us, and it would be well if the matter were frankly discussed in these pages. One aspect of the subject, 'The loneliness of the Convert,' is presented in 'The Moslem World' Vol. VIII, No. 2. A member writes to us:— "I am anxious to set on foot enquiries as to what other workers among Mohammedans are doing with converts from Mohammedanism. I think perhaps I have told you that we have a very good Indian worker in B—, our present senior worker, and there are generally some enquirers on hand. The worker is of the opinion that arrangements should be made for the enquirers to be handed on to some other Mission when they are ready to make their confession. There is no room in our Mission, as we are too near to the scene of action, and we are not working in any large town where Urdu speaking people can get work, or hide themselves for a time if necessary. In deference to his superior experience I have tried to arrange with other missionaries to take over such enquirers, but have so far not met with much success. Several enquirers have been spirited away because we have delayed too long and their relatives have found out. Others have endured some persecution and like the seed on rocky ground have withered away. I had been gradually coming to the conclusion that though it seemed dreadfully hard-hearted, we should have to adopt the policy of insisting on their staying on in their homes, even if it meant martyrdom. In fact I had begun to wonder whether the weakness of the present Christian Church was not partly due to the excessive care that missionaries had taken in the past to save converts from persecution. Of course it is easy to theorise without putting one's self in the place of the poor convert about whom one is theorising, and it is not easy to believe that all converts would remain firm, when one thinks of definite cases and the difference in people's dispositions.

Having met Rev. M. T. Titus up at Landour last year I wrote to him asking whether he could help me by taking any enquirers, and I was very interested to find that he had been coming to conclusions something similar to my own, only better expressed. He also mentioned that Rev. Stanley Jones was beginning to advocate the same policy. If sometime or other you thought it was worth while putting a question of this nature into 'News and Notes,' I should be glad to hear what experience others have had, and what policy missionaries are pursuing these days."

Yours sincerely,
G. W. M.

(We have now a number of Indian members in the League, we shall be very glad if they will give us their opinions in regard to this important matter.—Ed.)

NEW MEMBERS.

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|------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 129. | Miss Whitaker, | Kinnaird Hospital, | Lucknow. |
| 140. | Rev. J. R. Chitambar, | Methodist Mission, | Lucknow. |
| 141. | Rev. J. B. Frank, | S. P. G. | Rurki, N. India. |

(New members are at present being given numbers left vacant through resignations, etc.)

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The annual subscription to the League is now only Rs. 2-0-0. The Secretary will be glad to send spare copies to addresses mentioned by members with a view to securing new subscribers. News and requests for prayer will always be welcome and should be sent early in the month to the Hon. Secretary :—

Rev. L. Bevan Jones,
Baptist Mission,
Dacca, Bengal.