

Arab mother sings it to her baby to put him to sleep, and at night in the mosque as long as you remain awake, you may hear the same chant repeated in a sort of maddening repetition, till far into the morning hours. And the chant is their short creed, and in it we shall find the secret of the strength of this faith, the faith that has triumphed over all the forces of civilization and Christianity for thirteen hundred years. "La Illah ill Ullah," "There is no god but God." It is this creed that the baby hears as his cradle song, and that the laborer sings as he works, that the religious fanatic chants as he works himself up to a frenzy, and that every pious believer repeats with his last breath, as he passes into the Mercy of God.

"There is no god but God." It means in the first place, *the Omnipotence of God*. We suppose that we believe in the Omnipotence of God, but we have no such belief as has the Arab. If I ask him to come and see me the next day, it is not "Yes" or "No" that he says, but "In shah Lah," "If the Lord wills, I'll come." Secondary causes have disappeared in this universe of God's omnipotence. It rained today because God sent the rain, and tomorrow it will shine because God sends the sunshine, and there is nothing else to it. An old Arab chief one day in Oman, told me that cholera was in the village next to his own. "Now," I said, "cholera comes from little worms in the water—little ones, you cannot see them, but I could show them to you with the microscope. If you will cook all the food that you eat, and boil all the water that you drink, you will not get cholera." The old man drew himself up in his dignity. "Cholera," he said, "is from God," and after that we talked about something else.

"There is no causation but God." This tremendous belief in God's omnipotence is even sufficient to drive superstition out of the Arab's mind, and credulous as he naturally is, I suppose that it is a safe statement that the average Orthodox Mohammedan of Central Arabia is less superstitious than the average American of Chicago. I remember very well when we took a trip across the desert from Bagdad to Damascus, two Arabs and myself. We travelled by night as well as by day, and if there ever was a time to have a rabbit's foot in your pocket, and to wear a charm around your neck, that was the time. But we started out on that journey with the Name of God on our lips and the thought of God in our hearts, and never a word was heard of a spook or a jinn or a ghost or a saint. I remember starting on a sea trip for Kateef. The sailors as we moved out into the sea chanted, "Tuwukkelnā ala Ullah, lasem naoud." "Tuwukkelnā ala Ullah, lasem naoud." "We've trusted in God we must return." The Arab is a credulous Oriental, let him who doubts read Arabian Nights, but his overwhelming view of God's omnipotence has been sufficient to drive all superstition out of his mind. "There is no god but God."

It means in the second place *the Unity of God*. "Do you mean to tell me," said an Arab in his reception room in Kuwait, "That this

prophet of yours who has been through all the disgrace and uncleanness of human birth, is divine, that he is God? Such teaching is infidelity, and we want none of it."

"I was visiting Bombay the other day," said an Arab to me, "and what do you think I saw there? *What do you think that I saw?*"

"Bombay," said I, "is a large city. I do not know what you saw. What did you see?"

"I was curious to see the place where the Indians worship, and I asked them where their worshipping place was. I looked in, and what do you think I saw in there. What do you think I saw?"

"I don't know," I said, "what did you see?"

"I saw," said the Arab with horror, "men—men worshipping a cow."

Those men of India could not have committed any crime or any series of crimes that would have so lowered them in the estimation of that Arab, as did the fact that they were willing to worship a cow. "There is no god but God." It means the Unity of God.

It means something else too, something that would not be put into the same bundle of ideas by a Westerner, but which is part of the same idea, in the Arab mind. It means the *brotherhood of man*. It is true that statement must be qualified, and discounted somewhat. It does not mean the brotherhood of women, so to speak, nor the brotherhood of slaves, nor the brotherhood of unbelievers. But when every allowance is made that must be made, it still remains true, I think, that the most democratic society to be found anywhere in the world today, is to be found in Central Arabia. I well remember when I had been in Arabia only a few weeks, how one evening I saw one of the most impressive sights of all my life. I was on my way to the language teacher's house. It was just after sundown, and I looked into the door of a large mosque by the side of the road, as I passed. The people were gathered for sunset prayers, and the large room was full, row upon row of worshipping Moslems. The rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the high and the low, were there together. They stood on the same prayer mats, and with their faces toward the same Kibla in Mecca, they followed the same leader, and repeated the same prayer together. It was one of the most impressive things that I have ever seen. Do you know where the largest religious convention in the world was held last year, and the year before that, and the year before that? It was not in this country, and it was not in Europe. In a small city of Arabia, there came together a hundred thousand Moslems to go through the ceremonies of their faith. And where did they come from? The Black man was there from Africa, and the Yellow man was there from China. The White man was there from Central Asia, and the Brown man was there from the Philippine Islands. They marched around the same mosque, and they kissed the same black stone, and they went out and listened to the same sermon together, and it did not occur to any-

body that the Black man was not just as good as the White man, or that the Yellow man was not just as good as the Brown man, for "There is no god but God," and men down on this earth stand on the same plane absolutely. So far as I am aware, that is a result which has been accomplished nowhere else. I know that the Christian Church has not done it. Suppose we took the front pew of one of our churches. On the end seat we will put a college professor, and next to him a Pullman porter, next to him will be a banker, and next a Chinese laundryman. Would it work in America? But out there it works. This tremendous conviction of the Omnipotence of God has been sufficient to wipe out the race prejudice of a whole nation, and race prejudice is pretty nearly the deepest running yellow streak that humanity is heir to.

If that were all that is to be said about Mohammedanism, it would be a pleasant thing to talk about, would it not? For the man that cannot see the magnificence of a faith that can accomplish such things, is blind. That Arab conception of God's omnipotence is the right conception. It *did* rain today because God sent the rain, and it will shine tomorrow because *He* sends the sunshine. That conception of the brotherhood of man is the right conception. God does not rank mankind according to color. And in so far as we have yet to attain to a conception as correct and as true as the Arab's, we have something to learn from him. But unfortunately that is not all that there is to be said. On that foundation as splendid, and as beautiful, and as true as it is, has been built a superstructure of faith and practice, which I suppose is without question, the most destructive to all that is good in human nature of any that curses the world today.

THE DESTRUCTIVE SYSTEM

It is a system of STAGNATION. To Islam progress is a sin. In Kuweit, the people decided to organize a Moslem school. It was about the only instance of real co-operative effort that I have ever seen out there. The whole city was divided into two factions over the question as to whether or not arithmetic and geography were to be taught in that school. The Orthodox wing won, and they decided to keep the pure mind of their youth free from such contamination. I never was able to find out just what was the objection to arithmetic, but the case against geography was clear, as the boys might learn that the sun does not set in a pool of black mud, as the Koran says that it does, and their faith would be undermined.

We, in the west, have not learned any too much about hygiene and sanitation. Over there they know nothing, nor do they desire to learn. Busrah is a city of approximately 100,000 people. Irrigation canals intersect it in every direction. There are large ones and small ones, but there is no system of water works, no sewer system. No system indeed, of anything. You pick your way with difficulty along the back

streets, because of the filth of the night before. It all drained down into the irrigation canals. And where do they get their drinking water? Right out of the same canals. Islam is a system of stagnation.

It is a system of CRUELTY. In Kuwait, I was told of the five-year-old grandson of the chief of that city, now dead. The small boy was playing near the sea, with a slave boy of his own age, and the slave boy struck him. The youngster ran away to complain to his grandfather, and the old chief came down from his council chamber immediately. He found the small colored boy on the beach. "Jump into the water." The boy jumped in. "Now swim," and as the small boy swam away from the shore he ordered his retainers to shoot at him, and after they had struck him enough times, he went down. "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."

If one really wants to know the type of mind developed by this system, to realize how completely the mind loses its qualities of mercy and compassion and pity, it is only necessary to read the papers, and learn something of the horrors perpetrated in Armenia, in these days. If you were to shut your eyes and give your imagination absolutely free rein to picture the worst scenes of outrage and cruelty it is capable of painting, I do not suppose that there would be any approach in any of those pictures, to the actual occurrences in Armenia. I know of only one system of faith that will take murder and pillage, iniquity and outrage, mentionable and unmentionable, baptize them with the names of religious duties, and canonize the perpetrators.

It is a system of IMMORALITY. I am aware that someone may declare that there is less immorality in Arabia than there is in America. He will speak the truth. There is no sexual immorality in Arabia. There is no morality there. The conception is lacking. In that country every man may have four legal wives, as many concubines as he has money to pay for. As if that were not enough, he may sell his concubines as he does his cattle, and divorce any one of his wives whenever he wishes, with no legal process whatsoever. A man eats a different sort of potatoes every day, why should he not have a different wife every day? I know of only one system of religious faith in the world that has actually instituted the practice of sex promiscuity, stamped it with the seal of its own religious sanction, and wiped out the human conscience that condemns it, just as completely as the human conscience is capable of being wiped out.

This, then, is the system of Islam—a system as strong, almost, as the very truth of God, and as hideously evil, almost, as the pit itself. A system that stands before the Church of God today in an attitude of insolent defiance. "I defy the armies of Israel today, give me a man that we might fight together." There is perhaps no call to the Church today quite so insistent as that insolent challenge. The fate of two hundred million men and women and children, the Honor of our Lord, indeed, our own self-respect as Christians, are at stake.

Why Pray For Moslems?

A Call to Prayer For Moslems In View of Effect of the World War

BY THE REV. SAMUEL M. ZWEMBER, D.D., CAIRO, EGYPT

Author of "The Disintegration of Islam," etc.

THE present world conflict, both in its fundamental causes, in its progress of events, and in its final issues, deeply concerns those who are laboring and praying for Moslems. There is, therefore, a special need and also a special call for prayer. The evangelization of the Moslem world is not a phrase to be bandied about easily; it is a deep life purpose, a work of faith, a labor of love, a patience of hope.

(1) We need first of all to pray for ourselves and for the churches of Christendom, lest our faith fail and our fears triumph—lest we confound loyalty to the flag with loyalty to Christ, and so confuse issues and the results of the war in the Near East. We need to ask first of all that every one of us may be delivered from fear, from timidity. This has been one of the chief hindrances in the evangelization of Moslem lands. Mr. H. G. Wells in his story, "The Research Magnificent," says that the struggle with fear is the very beginning of the soul's history. "Fear," he writes, "is the foremost and most persistent of the shepherding powers that keep us in the safe fold, that drive us back to the beaten tracks and comfort and—futility. The beginning of all aristocracy is the subjugation of fear." . . . "The modern world thinks too much as though painlessness and freedom from danger were ultimate ends. It is fear-haunted, it is troubled by the thought of pain and death, which it has never met except as well-guarded children meet these things, in exaggerated and untestable form, in the menagerie or in nightmares. And so it thinks the discovery of anæsthetics the crowning triumph of civilization, and cosiness and innocent amusement—those ideals of the nursery—the whole purpose of mankind." This was written before

*Written for the Fellowship of Faith for the Moslems, with headquarters at Cuffnells, Weybridge, Surrey, England.

the war and its Pentecost of heroism.

Fear on the part of a Christian is a denial of God. What kind of a God have we if He is not able to save us from those fears that cripple our lives and thwart our purposes, or make us diffident to undertake the enterprise of faith? We must make our influence felt through prayer and testimony, so that the Church will claim these millions by faith, no matter what the sacrifice may be.

(2) We must intercede for those lands where the door of access to Moslems was open before the war, and where it has not been closed in any way. Among these we may mention India, China, Malaysia and Egypt, together embracing more than one-half of the entire Moslem world. The effect of the war in these lands has not been felt directly and on economic lines, but intellectually and spiritually hearts have been stirred and awakened. Never has there been so great a demand for the Word of God nor has Christian literature been more widely circulated.

(3) There is urgent need for intercession that lands and hearts hitherto closed may be widely opened after the war. No one can be blind to the fact that the events which have transpired in Turkey, Palestine and Arabia must have a deep significance for the future of the Kingdom. If the blood of the martyrs is still the seed of the Church, what a glorious harvest we may expect on the holy fields of Armenia and Northern Persia where so many were massacred. In the new king of the Hedjaz, in the highway from Assyria to Egypt, in the new civilization that has come into Mesopotamia, we can already see something of the fulfilment of the glorious prophecy in the 72d Psalm and the 60th chapter of Isaiah. To read these chapters in the light of the present war is to strengthen our faith and deepen our purpose.

May we not hope that the twenty million Moslems under French rule in Africa, and the number of those in Russia which is nearly as great will be more accessible after peace has been declared? The redistribution or the readjustment of colonial possessions in Africa is also a call for intercession. Prayer moves the Arm that moves the World.

(4) Lastly and most of all we must pray for reinforcements. The present war has shown that man-power is even more important than money-power in a long-drawn conflict. It is calculated that before the close of the year 1916 there had already been eighteen and a half million casualties of which deaths make up one-fourth.

The present need of the Moslem world now—and a need that will be enormously emphasized after the war—is reinforcements. It is the part of wisdom, therefore, to face the new conditions that will obtain after the war in the Turkish Empire, in Persia, in Arabia, in Egypt and North Africa. The issues of the war are so closely related to the issues of the Kingdom that we may well consider them in terms of recruits and of mobilization of these vital forces of the Church after peace is declared.

Such fields as Arabia, Palestine, Asia Minor, Syria and Persia which were terribly undermanned before the war broke out, will make a new appeal of supreme urgency when the period of reconstruction begins. We will then face needs that are appalling in their extent and deep beyond measure in their pathos. Where the Armenian martyr Church has shed its blood is now holy ground; and because of the sacrifice there will be unprecedented opportunities for the practical manifestation of the love of Christ to Moslems in social and spiritual service. In addition to all this there are the unoccupied provinces of the Near East and of Central Asia, a challenge to the venture of faith and utmost Christian boldness. "The great conflict with Islam," said a missionary leader in 1912, "which the coming decades will bring to the Church of Christ, and in comparison with which all that has al-

ready been done among Mohammedans has been only play, only a preliminary skirmish, needs missionaries who will in truth fast and pray; that is to say, who, with new and holy devotion, will cut themselves loose from all that hinders, and become whole-hearted disciples of Jesus Christ; men who are not transiently excited by the flickering light of unconsidered plans and hopes, but who will serve with patience, quietness and constancy, relying with child-like trust on the might of the unseen God."

For the unoccupied fields we need men of the highest type—real pioneers, such as Charles G. Gordon once described in a letter to his sister, "Where will you find an apostle? I will explain what I mean by that term. He must be a man who has died entirely to the world; who has no ties of any sort; who longs for death when it may please God to take him; who can bear the intense dullness of these countries; who seeks for few letters; and who can bear the thought of dying deserted. Now, there are few, very, very few men who can accept this post. But no half-measures will do. . . . A man must give up everything, understand *everything, everything*, to do anything for Christ here. No half nor three-quarter measures will do. And yet, what a field!"

God by his providence has brought thousands of the choicest men from New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Great Britain into closest contact with the Near East during the war. They have seen service in Egypt, at the Dardanelles, in Salonica and Mesopotamia. Their faith in God grew strong among those who knew Him. These Christian men, many of them from the universities and colleges, saw the opportunities for medical, educational and social service. They have come into close touch with Islam and its needs. To them the Near East has spoken for a higher warfare and they have seen the coming of a Kingdom without frontiers or race-barriers. It is for the Church to extend to them the call for reinforcements and to do it now.

BEST METHODS



CONDUCTED BY BELLE M. BRAIN, 38 UNION AVENUE, SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK.

PLANS AND PROGRAMS FOR MISSIONARY MEETINGS

IN recent years we have noted with sorrow the growing tendency to make use of methods at the home base which dishonor God and belittle the cause of missions. Some months ago we set apart a special drawer for articles, clipped from missionary magazines and religious periodicals, describing methods of work that did not seem to us quite above criticism.

This drawer now contains a large amount of material that would amaze and grieve a large majority of missionary workers. Some of these methods have to do with the raising of money; others deal with missionary programs and ways of increasing interest and attendance. Some of them seem positively wrong; others merely foolish and frivolous. It is a serious thing that they have not only been used by individual societies but are advocated by missionary leaders and printed in missionary magazines.

We confess to have spent many a wakeful hour in the night watches grieving over these wrong methods and praying and planning as to how their evil tendencies can best be overcome. It is, therefore, with a deep spirit of thanksgiving that we note a new aspect of seriousness on the part of Christians everywhere. If participation in the great World War, awful as it seems, can check the tide of worldliness and frivolity which threatens to engulf the Church, it may be worth all it is costing.

"The seriousness of the times ought to sober our thinking, bring us to our knees, and deepen our spiritual life," said the Rev. Thomas R. Good, pastor of Union Presbyterian Church, Schenectady, in an Easter message to his people. "Sorrow and sacrifice are for the chastening of the soul. Let us all take our religious life more seriously, and with humble hearts draw nearer to God."

A PLEA FOR SELF-DENIAL

The constant serving of refreshments in connection with church activities is deplored by many Christian workers. It has seemed, in recent years, as tho not even a committee meeting could be held without having something to eat. An occasional missionary tea or get-together church dinner is a delightful and legitimate thing, but the serving of refreshments every time the church doors are open is quite a serious matter. There actually are churches (we know personally of more than one) which have a social hour with light refreshments every Sunday evening at the close of the preaching service.

This mingling of pleasure with service is regarded by many students of prophecy as a significant sign of the times. "The church is in the condition described by the apostles as indicative of the 'last days,'" said the Rev. A. E. Thompson at the Jewish Conference held in Chicago last November. "Its wealth, self-sufficiency, formality and worldliness; the false doctrines that prevail; and the mingling of pleasure with church activities—all these are very significant."

It may be that the entrance of America into the World War will call a halt on this. Soon after the break with Germany, the mistress of the White House, supported by the wives of the Vice-President and members of the cabinet, issued a call for self-denial in social functions of all kinds and religious leaders would do well to follow suit.

In matters of self-denial the Church should take the lead. We are glad to know of one Ladies' Aid Society that has recently given up the teas held in connection with its fortnightly meetings on the ground that they cost too much and take too much time from the relief work

they are doing. "It will be too bad if it keeps anybody away," says one of the members. "But I really think we can get along just as well without those who come from such motives."

The following letter written to Miss Margaret E. Sangster, Jr., by a missionary worker in the Middle West, is one of the best things we have seen on this subject. We reprint it from *The Christian Herald*, and trust that its appeal may meet with quick response.

DROP THOSE "FEEDS."

"*In our church we have a fine missionary society, but—* That's the way a letter from the Middle West begins," says Miss Sangster. This is the way it goes on:

"The missionary society is doing splendid work. By strenuous efforts in the past years we have largely avoided the 'refreshment' craze and have attended to business. Lately there has been developing (and rapidly) the idea of trying to 'win new members by serving refreshments.' Though the character of the 'feed' (as students call it) is supposed to be regulated by rule, yet more and more time, money, and labor is expended upon each passing monthly meeting.

"Lately we had a 'praise service,' with refreshments. Our offering, in envelopes marked 'thank offering,' was twenty-two dollars. The refreshments cost nearly eleven dollars! Out of all proportion is the second to the first.

"Now what can we do to make our good energetic women in the churches realize that *now*—while we are surrounded by such misery as the world has not seen for fifty years—is the time to drop these 'feeds'?

"I believe most heartily in social gatherings, in get-together meetings of social, civil, and religious betterment. Please do not think me a grumbler, for I love people, fun, music, and so forth; but I do believe our women who have their dinner or luncheon at noon, and will have their evening meal at the regular time, are not in need of special refreshment at 4:30 P. M. We feed *not* the hungry, starved mothers of families but those who

come from comfortable homes and probably never have known actual hunger in all of their lives.

"With the thousands of our needy sisters in this and other lands calling for Bible schools, teachers, preachers, hospitals, and *daily* bread, and one decent garment to put on, are we not mocking our Lord with such praise services as mentioned above? Does not our Lord stand before us, and say:

"O my daughters, what will it have advantaged you to give luncheons, teas, and suppers—to serve refreshments when the price of them would have purchased hundreds of loaves of bread and butter for the soul-hungry ones whose uplifted hands appeal to heaven for help?

"At the missionary teas you feed *not* the hungry but the full. The little you make would be trebled if you gave the full cost of time, labor and food. I, the Lord, ask self-denial. The extra feeding is self-indulgence.

"I gave my life for thee. What dost thou offer me?"

"The women of the churches should send out a call to Halt! Look! Consider! and Remedy this extravagance! Thousands in Mexico are starving, so say our missionaries in private letters—so say our native Christians who write to us, begging help; and yet nothing is being done by any organization (as far as I can learn) to relieve the distress *next door*.

"Let your imagination fly over these beautiful states and pause at the multitude of teas, luncheons, and so forth, given in and by the churches to raise the money for strictly missionary work. You'll come home, tired out."

THE UPPER ROOM OR THE SUPPER ROOM?*

The early church prayed in the *Upper Room*; the twentieth century church cooks in the *Supper Room*!

* These striking paragraphs by an author unknown to us may be obtained in leaflet form by addressing the Rev. J. J. D. Hall, Superintendent of the Galilee Mission, 823 Vine Street, Philadelphia, Pa. Price, 20 cents a 100.—B.M.B.