

# A Thirsty Land



Algiers Mission Band

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"What shall we then say to these things?  
If God be for us, who can be against us?"

"Trained faith is a triumphant gladness in having nothing but God—no nest, no foothold—nothing but Himself; a triumphant gladness in swinging out into the abyss, rejoicing in every emergency that is going to prove Him true. 'The Lord alone'—that is trained faith."

J. L. Trotter.

"Lord, increase our faith."

## Editorial

The Summer number of *A Thirsty Land* was almost ready when news came of the collapse of France, and events have followed tragically and swiftly.

The A.M.B. has worked for over fifty years in French territory and the links of love and friendship formed are strong and deep. We unite in prayer with our French and Algerian brothers and sisters in Christ that out of the darkness light may arise, in God's own time.

Meanwhile we are awaiting news of our workers in Algeria. Enquiries have come to us from friends and relations, but so far we have no tidings to give, except that a cable sent off on July 3 confirmed a letter of June 28 saying that all were well.

We know that they are safe in Jehovah's keeping, and that His work among the Moslems is dearer to Him than it is to us.

We have, in addition to our British missionaries, other members of our Band, both French and Neutrals, who are absolutely one with us in the work.

In our ignorance and perplexity let us pray to our Lord for our beloved workers

that they may be kept from all evil and have all their needs supplied. May they have heavenly wisdom, and may God's full purpose be accomplished in and through them!

It may be that this time of distress will be a time of turning unto the Lord in Moslem lands, including Algeria. Shall we ask this, and also for our fellow-believers—converts from Islam—that they may be kept by the power of God in these difficult days, and may be greatly used as witnesses to Christ.

We shall hope to send out news from time to time in a modified form, but cannot say more till things become clearer. In this number we give jottings which will serve as prayer fuel.

Let us specially remember the Word of God which in the form of Gospels, portions, and in tracts, has been scattered up and down the land.

We shall be grateful for prayer that all needed wisdom may be given in dealing with matters on the Home side.

M. H. ROCHE.

## From the Office Mail Bag

We were able to sell 357 Scripture portions or gospels, and 110 tracts. It was a great joy for us to begin this work again and to see the possibilities. We know what a difficult moment it is, with the great needs and terrible suffering. But we who are Children of God through Christ can say: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." God grant that many in this land may be able to join with us in saying this, because they have received the Word of Life.

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A further joy was to bring back with us samples of the B. & F.B.S.'s latest provision for the souls of our people, all the translated parts of the New Testament bound in one volume; it is a great asset to the work—the four Gospels, Acts, Romans, and the five Epistles mentioned in our jotting of April 28th, in one binding! H. W. B.

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When a boy, he had found an Arabic gospel in the street and started reading it. He asked his father what a certain word meant, showing him the book. The father promptly threw the book into the fire. Five years ago he found that a cousin had come into possession of a *Dictionnaire—La Rousse*. This is more of an encyclopædia than a dictionary. In looking through it he found the name of Christ. He became interested, read what it said, turned up the references given to other parts of the *Dictionnaire* which dealt with connected subjects. He studied all that that *Dictionnaire* had to say about Christ and the Christian faith until he almost had it off by heart. Two nights ago he remarked: "It is just twenty-nine days since I knew you first!" He had been brought along by a friend who had asked him if he wanted to amuse himself for an hour or two. They came together, and it was a free and easy night, when we had a game or two followed by singing and perhaps a short word, I can't quite remember what. He came back once or twice before he revealed himself that

Monday night when he said: "Through studying Him as I have, in the *Dictionnaire* I have learned to love Christ and regard Him as greater than any of the prophets." It was a joy to point him onward, as you can guess, and to put into his hands a New Testament with explanatory notes, which he has just about finished studying now, and to see something of a light of joy in his eyes as he shook hands with us. He is going on, and he and Christian No. 1 are now great pals. Pray hard for them. H. S.

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Then we talked about her own religion, and Serira admitted that she had never met a Moslem who could say from his heart that his sins were forgiven. She had proved for herself that in spite of fasting, prayers, witnessing, etc., her sin remained.

She told me that the day we invited her to work for us, she was terrified that we should turn her heart from her own religion, and she had a talk with her father on the subject. He reassured her by saying that she could please herself about coming to us, but as far as our religion was concerned, he had met an Englishwoman, some years ago who had read to the Arabs from an Arabic Bible, and he had come to the conclusion that we knew the truth, and so she need not fear to listen.

Serira added, "I came, but I was very nervous in the classes lest the words should get an entrance through my ears and mouth to my heart. Lately I have lost that dread, and I say to the words 'come right into my heart.' The other girls in the class still fear and will not listen with their hearts."

Serira said that she could see we were quite different from themselves, our sins were washed away once and for all.

We are certain that God's Spirit is working in this girl's heart, and that she believes in the finished work of Christ.

Serira's parents are hoping to get her married this year, and she needs our prayers.

A. M. F.

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The day after our first round of visits some of the men folk met my companion outside the village and expressed their appreciation of the messages given to the

women and which they had passed on to their husbands, who desired to hear more.

Not the least interesting of our contacts was that with the renowned Marabout about whom I wrote some months ago. We had not been in the town many days before he paid us a visit, and this in order to invite us to lunch at his home. At this meal conversation turned into deeper channels, and we felt that this Marabout was true to his reputation "a man of profound faith in God" May this sincere soul be led into the *full Light*. I. K. N.

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I pass on to be hailed from a Jewish shop. The men who are seated on the ground and are looking at leather and jewellery, call to me, "Give us books in Hebrew, Psalms or Peutateuch. They are so eager for them.

In the Market street boys come for something to read, and S.G.M. books or leaflets are given to the older lads. Even a passing Mozabite may accept an Arabic Tract. Boys come daily asking for tracts and stories, especially those with pictures. Many of them have read all we have. M.D.G.

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In a porch, covered with the thick foliage of a vine, we sat down on beautiful rugs woven by the mistress of the house. An audience of about thirty people gathered and listened for half an hour to our Message of salvation through Christ.

The men asked for literature and promptly all those who could read departed with the written message.

After nine visits we started homeward once more. Two men who were going to the market at B . . . S . . . accompanied us. We were able, as we journeyed, to speak to them of the glorious hope of the children of God, and of how good it is to serve such a Master. They listened eagerly to what we said. A. B.

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Afterwards, I was delighted to receive a visit from this Taleb, and during our conversation he showed a willingness to listen to the simple Gospel message. We read together from the Word and his interest deepened. I gave him a Gospel which he promised to read. Some time

later while at the market an Arab accosted me who proved to be my friend the Taleb. After the customary salutations he made a request which took me completely by surprise. He asked if the books I had given any light on the question of man's justification before God. On the spot, I gave him the salient points of the Christian doctrine of Justification by faith and he seemed to be deeply impressed. Then he asked if he could visit me again. I gladly assured him that nothing would give me greater pleasure, and to my joy, he came up to the mission house, and there with our New Testaments opened at St. Paul's letter to the Romans, the Taleb read for himself what this incomparable epistle had to say on the subject we had discussed earlier. I am sure the Holy Spirit was giving this seeking soul light on this precious Christian truth, and when brought face to face with the two alternatives of justification by faith in the finished work of Christ on the Cross, and man's vain attempt at self-justification by works of the law, he unhesitatingly admitted that man could never win his justification by "work of merit." We are looking to the Lord to bless this precious soul, and to bring him to a full knowledge of the truth in Jesus our Lord. J. G. T.

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Come into the reading-room later on in the day and you will find a young man seated there poring over a book with the deepest interest. That book is the Bible in Arabic, and his face lights up as he grasps some new bit of truth, and understands something more of the possibilities and joys of the Christian life. Was he ever amongst those mischievous, unruly boys of the Thursday morning class? Well, yes. He didn't come often, but he knew the house, and would turn up, like a good many, if there was anything going, just before Christmas, or when the cherries were ripe! So apparently he did not receive much of other good in those early days, but it may be that some little seed was sown, some impression made, that prepared the way for further contacts later on, as God led him step by step into the way of life and salvation. J. S.