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Challenge
and
Counter
Challenge



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CHALLENGE AND COUNTER-CHALLENGE.

A Bi-monthly Magazine for Young People desirous of learning more about the challenge of Islam, and of helping to counter it by the proclamation of the Gospel.

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Turning the World Upside Down.

ABOUT nineteen hundred years ago two Missionaries came to a town in Asia Minor, called Thessalonica, and began to preach. They did nobody any harm, and only talked about the love of Jesus Christ for sinners. A great number of people believed and attended their meetings, and for about three weeks the preaching went on unhindered. However, as soon as the enemies of the Gospel saw that Paul and Silas were meeting with success, they did their best to stir up trouble. A mob collected and, with a great deal of noise and shouting, pulled some of the new believers through the streets, crying, "These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also!"

Just as it was in Thessalonica, so it has been in every place where the Gospel has been preached. The Word of God does turn the world upside down. When people are enjoying sinful pleasures they like to be left alone. A thief does not like the policeman's lantern! Supposing there was a country where all the people wore their clothes wrongside out, because they knew no better! When someone came wearing his clothes properly and tried to teach these ignorant people, would they not think him mad and say, why do you not turn your clothes inside out?

That is the way every Muslim regards the Missionary. They often tell them, "You are so good and kind; why don't you accept the true religion and become a believer?" You must not think that the Muslimeen are anxious as a rule to hear the Gospel. They do not know its value, and so they do not know what they are missing. Then when they hear that the Gospel of Jesus Christ commands that they must live a holy life, and forbids all swearing, lying and uncleanness they think the way is too difficult for them to follow. All these topsy-turvy ways and thoughts seem perfectly correct to themselves until God's Spirit enlightens them.

It is no wonder that there is always a lot of trouble when Missionaries preach this Gospel in Muslim lands. When you want to put a thing straight that is upside down, there is sure to be an overturning. The farmer is not sorry because his plough breaks that hard soil, cuts down the weeds, and turns the turf under. He does all this to make better things grow. He waits a few months, and then the whole field is covered with a waving harvest. Ploughing is pretty rough work on the weeds, and preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is pretty rough on Islam. And so we almost hear an echo of the old words "These that turn the world upside down are come hither also . . . saying there is another King, Jesus."



The king of all hearts in the Muslim world is Muhammed. They love his name and imitate his acts much more faithfully, I fear, than we imitate the Lord Jesus, our Example. Herein lies the Challenge of Islam to the Christian Church, the crowning of Muhammed as king instead of the Lord Jesus. And Muhammed has had it pretty much his own way for thirteen hundred years. Only comparatively lately has his right been disputed in those lands where for so long he has reigned. So we must expect a long and hard fight, with wounds and reverses to be faced, as well as victories to rejoice over. When you read of troubles and opposition, of colporteurs ill-treated, or missionaries expelled, of mission stations closed down, or other apparent calamities, you must not think the Gospel is being defeated. It is conquering, for our King goes forth

conquering and to conquer. What we see is only the dust which is left behind by the ploughman. God is turning the world of Islam upside down, that it may be right-side up when the King of Kings comes. We may not be able to see much harvest yet in the Muslim world, but furrow after furrow the soil is getting ready for the seed; the Seed is being dropped deep down into the earth and beginning to germinate; and the harvest is surely coming! Who wants to do a day's ploughing for the King?

Adapted from TOPSY-TURVY LAND.

A Matter of Obedience.

“MARGARET and her Aunt” announced the maid this morning just before breakfast. The Principal's heart sank. She was expecting the visit, but she knew it would not be a pleasant one. “Show them into the office and I'll come immediately” was what she said as she paused for a hasty prayer (like Nehemiah's!) for wisdom. Margaret had been in school for two years. She was being brought up by her mother and aunt. There was never any sign of the father—whether he was dead or living elsewhere was not known. Margaret was utterly spoilt, rather backward, and very difficult.

When she first came to school, she was allowed to take Scripture, to attend prayers and join in hymn singing. Much prayer went up for her, and it was hoped that God's Word would find an entrance into her heart. She did seem to begin to show an interest, and just then, the Government stepped in forbidding the teaching of Scripture to Muslim-teen, forbidding them to enter the prayer hall for either hymn singing or prayers, and Margaret being a Muslim came under this new rule.

Last week there was trouble in Margaret's class in the Arithmetic lesson. Some simple rule had been forgotten by several girls, and they seemed to make no effort to remember or to re-learn it, so the teacher asked them to go to another class where the same rule was being taught. The other children went quietly, and came back having learnt it; but not so Margaret. She refused to enter a lower class—stood outside, tried to way-lay the Principal twice unsuccessfully.

and finally gained her attention, only to find that the Principal's pet theme was 'obedience' as the primary lesson for all pupils, so poor Margaret found the Principal siding with the teacher! Margaret was determined that nothing would induce her to lower her dignity by entering a lower class. What should she do now? To whom could she appeal? Ah! yes! her mother! When the Principal reminded her that the Arithmetic lesson was over for that day, asked her whether she was prepared to obey the following day, in which case she might return to her lessons as usual that day (for she was still standing outside), Margaret replied, "I will ask my mother." "What, ask your mother whether you are to obey? Of course she wants you to obey. She has sent you to school to be taught and trained, and character counts more than knowledge. Once again, are you prepared to obey?" "I'll ask my mother" reiterated Margaret persistently. "All right, you shall go home at once. The Monitress shall take you and give a letter to your mother from me. You may not come back till I have seen your mother and you are prepared to obey." Margaret was not at all concerned, unfortunately she knew her mother better than the school did. Now, here she was back again, but with her aunt, a much stronger personality than her mother.

The interview was all that the Principal feared it would be and more. The aunt was furious, and said so emphatically. *Her* niece go into a lower class? miss the lesson in her own class? It was preposterous. Wasn't the teacher paid to teach? Wasn't it her duty to see the children understood their lessons? How dare she send Margaret out of class, into a lower class? Yes! she wanted Margaret to learn to obey. Margaret was prepared to obey. She would apologise in front of the whole class.—"All right" said the Principal breaking in, She is prepared to obey? Then she is ready to go into the lower class for the one lesson?" "Of course not!—Margaret go down! Margaret enter a lower class! Never! Never! I will take her out of school. She is *quite* ready to obey—anything you like to ask her—but not THAT! It is the teacher's fault, she should never have asked her. I can't let her do it. Anything you like but not THAT."

But 'THAT' was the only thing the Principal wanted, and 'THAT' was the only key that could bring her back into school. The Principal and the Vice-Principal talked and prayed in vain; nothing would induce her to let the child obey, so she finally took Margaret away, leaving sad hearts behind her. How will Margaret ever learn discipline? What will she grow up into with such home training? Margaret seems further away from the Truth than ever now. First, no Scripture, now not even in a Christian school, but as the Principal knelt to pray the words of a well-known hymn came to her mind "Oh! Love that will not let me go!" Yes, that was it. There was a love that would not let Margaret go and she could claim that word in prayer and ask others to claim it too, for Margaret. So will you join in prayer that the Love—which is GOD Himself—will not let Margaret go but will seek after her until He bring her to Himself.



" The Vice-Principal of Margaret's School with some of her school-mates."

Most of Margaret's books are still in her desk so one day she may come back for them. Will she come soon? Will we have another opportunity to seek to persuade her to obey and to return? More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.

IRIS C. NAISH
(*British Syrian Mission*).

Hassan and the Donkey.

HA—A, Ha—a, . . . Anaho, Anaho . . . Yiss! Yis!" That's Egyptian donkey language. All Egyptian donkeys seem to understand it and Hassan's donkey is no exception. He doesn't really belong to Hassan, but it is Hassan's job to ride him to the fields to bring clover for the animals, and to do any other carrying jobs. Yes I know you are anxious to know what that donkey language means so I'll tell you now and then we'll return to the story. The only words I can translate for you are the middle ones, but I can tell you the effect they all have on the donkey. The first two are the crank handle to get him started, the middle two are the accelerator to keep him moving and the last two are the brake to stop him. The middle two mean "Here I am": Here I am" and that generally means: "If you don't keep going, you'll know I'm here all right."



That is the language Hassan uses, but the donkey doesn't speak it of course. He has a language of his own. Have you ever heard a donkey bray? I think he must have the loudest voice of any animal—certainly louder than any as small as he. And the funny and amazing thing about a donkey is that he's like a gramophone record. Once he starts he doesn't stop until he's said all there is to say.

And he appears to say the same thing every time in just as loud a voice and for as long. I should think his speech lasts a full minute at least, and during that time nobody else who wants to talk can be heard. Yes, the donkey is a very rude animal, but it is usually to call attention to his own needs that he brays. Hassan's donkey is very jealous and he can't bear to think that other animals should eat the clover he brings home! so, as soon as he sees it being given to the cows he starts to protest. However, he is very easily satisfied and will be quite happy to eat what the cows leave and if he can't get that he will quite cheerfully go and chew the young saplings we are patiently trying to grow to provide shade. Up to date, amongst other things, he has eaten about six Eucalyptus and a similar number of Fir saplings. As a last resort he will eat straw.

Several times a day Hassan gets on the donkey and trots off on him to do some carrying job or other. There are no stirrups on the saddle Hassan uses, nor are there any reins to guide him. The saddle is for the donkey's comfort, not Hassan's—as you would find out if you rode it any distance with your legs dangling unsupported—and is really a thick pad of straw to protect the donkey's back from the heavy load he carries. To guide him Hassan carries a little stick and when he wants the donkey to turn left he taps him on the right side of his neck. The donkey immediately turns left away from the stick which struck him. It really is quite an effective way of driving.

One day when the donkey's saddle was worn out, we bought him a new one. That day after Hassan had brought back a load of clover from the fields, he mounted him again to go and get some more. Not long after he had left the farm gate, another boy came back leading the donkey. "Where is Hassan"? he was asked. "He fell off", the boy explained, "and is now lying outside Uncle Muhammed's house on the ground crying."

Quickly we went along to the place indicated, only a few yards from our gate and there we found Hassan on the ground as the boy said, crying. One look at him showed that he had broken his leg. We brought him back to the house and sent word to the hospital at Shebeen. Very soon one of the missionaries arrived in a car and Hassan was taken off to the hospital. It was three weeks before he

came back to work, with his leg in plaster, and another three or four weeks before he was able to ride his donkey again.

What happened was a very simple thing. Hassan had not properly fixed the new saddle and as he went along it slipped off—and so did Hassan. That was all. But it has taught him a lesson which we hope he will never forget—the danger of thinking everything is all right and not making sure. He's not the only one who does that of course. Thousands of grown-ups as well as boys and girls make the same mistake, thinking that everything is all right without investigating, and then some day having a painful accident or something even more serious. Some people even think that because they go to church now and then, they will go to heaven eventually, without bothering to find out what the Bible has to say about it, and making sure they are converted. Hassan had another chance to learn from his mistake, but many people who go through life thinking they're saved from sin, may never have a chance to make good their mistake. It's always best to make sure isn't it? and to help others to be sure too.

(next issue : Hassan and "Owleera").

A. W. WHITEHOUSE.

Egypt General Mission.



Orthography.



HOW observant are you? Did you notice in the last copy of "Challenge and Counter-Challenge" that there was an inconsistency in the spelling of some of the Arabic words? Someone did! and it has been suggested we include in this number an explanation of some of these words and a help to the pronunciation of them.

To begin with, there is the name of the founder of the religion of Islam. Sometimes you see it written "Muhammed" and sometimes "Mohammed." Some years ago it was occasionally found spelt "Mohamet." It might even seem as if it were three persons, but they all really refer to the same man. Now which is correct? (By the way, that is the meaning of the fine word at the top . . . Orthography = correct spelling!)

The first style, Muhammed, is the nearest transliteration of the Arabic word, so we suggest that we keep to that form from now on, and try to pronounce it as it is written . . . like this "Moo-ham-med", being careful to sound both m's.

Then there are the words which speak of the followers of Muhammed. For many years they were described as Mohammedans but now it is more usual to use the word by which they call themselves, as it tells of what they consider they have done . . . surrendered, submitted, or obeyed. This verb in Arabic is made up of three consonants. . . S.L.M. and the past participle may be transliterated "muslim" (you can pick out the three consonants!) You find the same three consonants in the very name of their religion "Islam." So shall we use this word "Muslim" when talking about a man who has surrendered to Muhammed, and follows the religion of Islam, and thus come nearer to the Arabic than the more English rendering of "Moslem."

In order to keep up our high standard of orthography (you remember what that means, don't you?) shall we use the correct Arabic plural of the word "Muslim" when speaking of more than one believer in Muhammed? They do not add an "s" for the plural, but "een", so that the word will be "Muslimeen."

Finally, the name of the holy book of the Muslimeen (!) is written either as "Koran" or "Qur'an", but the latter is a better transliteration so we shall adopt it in future. In English the nearest pronunciation is "Caw-raan" ("aa" = "a" as in "farm").

There, it's a shame, in holiday time too, to give such a long lesson. All right, you may shut the book, and rush off for a swim, or game of tennis! But please don't forget!!

Overseas Mail.

North-West China.

July, 1949.

To my dear Egyptian Elder-Brother your Chinese younger-brother sends greeting.

As my uncle is Chaplain to a regiment of the Muslim Forces I am able to send this with some of the dispatches out of China.

I have now been to the Fuh-in Tang (Gospel Hall) and they seem much less frightened there than most of the people are with the Communists coming so near. I find that one of my cousins is really a Christian, but of course he can't tell anyone.

Our great General Ma is now in command of the whole of the north-west as he is the only one able to face the Communists. It was a General of his Family who conquered this part, which used to belong to Tibet, for China. We feel sure that he will keep this part of the country safe, and yet I still think of those people at the Gospel Hall who seemed to feel safe, and didn't hate the Enemy as we do. I will tell you another time about my talks with my cousin.

General Chang, who was here before, was a Christian and he was brave, though he didn't tell us to hate our enemies—it is all very perplexing.

Sa-la-mi.



Missionary Mould.

Part 2. THE PICTURE.

THE picture hung in Eleanore's bedroom. It fascinated her and yet at the same time made her feel very uncomfortable. It was really four pictures in one, as it depicted four scenes in a girl's life. First, she was portrayed sitting up in bed as if having just awakened, frightened by something. Then, alongside was another little picture of the same girl still clad only in her night-clothes, standing by the bedside of her father, waking him up and urging him out of bed. The third scene was out-of-doors where the father was killing a lamb and the girl catching the blood in a basin; and finally one saw a little group gathered round the doorway, upon which the father was placing the blood on the lintel and posts.

It was of course an imaginary story of a Hebrew first-born daughter on the night of the Passover, whose father for some reason or other had neglected to put the blood on the door, which they had been told to do by Moses in order that the firstborn of the Hebrew people might be saved. This girl believed her very life depended on obedience to this act so she determined to make sure it was done.

Eleanore stood before it once again that evening as she had often done before, brushing her hair and thinking about it. Of course she knew the Bible story so well. Only that morning at her school Prize-Giving the Headmistress had made the following announcement. "Scripture prize, Eleanore Thomson." It had created no stir amongst the other girls. It was a foregone conclusion, they would only have been surprised if she had not won it. Not that she was intellectually brilliant but she got so much help from home. I don't mean that her parents helped her write her Scripture essays but they were the sort who believed in the Bible as the inspired Word of God. To them it was as necessary to give their children the unadulterated milk of the Word as it was to give them cow's milk. Eleanore had been soaked in a knowledge of the Bible since her babyhood. So she walked forward to receive the handsomely bound book with smug self-satisfaction. In her heart of hearts she would much rather it had been the Form Prize, still it

was better than nothing. And that lets you into the secret of the difference between Eleanore and her parents. For while she considered it 'better than nothing' they considered it The Best, better than anything else.

She was thinking of that difference as she stood before the picture. As she had sat with her parents while they ate their dessert after dinner that evening, the conversation had turned as it so often did to her father's favourite subject, the Coming Again of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was far from being Eleanore's favourite! On the contrary she hated it, for she knew she was not ready for that Coming. How different she was from the girl in the picture.

It was she who had urged her father into action, while in Eleanore's case the opposite was happening, her father seemed so anxious that she should make a decision. One similarity however became clear; one couldn't depend on one's father to save one; there had to be some definite step taken individually.

But that was what was troubling Eleanore; she wasn't sure how the step should be taken. What if the Lord Jesus came that night? How terrible it would be to wake up in the morning and find her parents gone, her sisters too, and even some of the maids. For she knew well that many of the household had a real believing faith in the Saviour. Tears began to roll down her cheeks. At that minute Nurse came in, as usual to scold "Miss Eleanore, not in bed yet? You are such a lazy girl. Hurry up. I'm going to turn out the light. You must finish in the dark!" And suiting the action to the words, she switched off the light, and flounced away grumbling at the way she always had to 'run after that child to see if she was being obedient or not.'

Eleanore was quite grateful for the darkness as it hid her tears, which she would have been ashamed for Nurse to see. She quickly got into bed, pulled the clothes up, and determined to forget her trouble in sleep. But sleep just didn't come. She tossed and turned again and again, but couldn't go off. After what seemed ages to her, she got up thinking it was the middle of the night. Going out on to the landing she was surprised to find the lights still on downstairs. Her parents were still up! She thought she might go and talk to them, but half way downstairs she felt

shy of her father, and decided not to. So she sat on the stairs, and again began to cry as she worried round her problem and found no way out.

Thus her mother found her as she came up to bed presently. "Whatever is the matter, Eleanore? Have you got earache?" Choking back her sobs, Eleanore shook her head. "Well, you can't sit there; you'll catch cold. Come back with me to the bedroom", and taking her by the hand she led the girl upstairs again. They went into the room, and Mrs. Thomson sat down on the bed, and drew the little shivering form to her, and kissed her. Then she said in a matter of fact voice "Go and have a drink of water, and come back and tell me what the matter is" Her daughter obeyed her, and then blurted out, "I'm frightened of being left behind when the Lord Jesus comes again. You are all so good you'll all go, and I shall be left behind because I'm so naughty."

"Eleanore, think again. You know better than that. When the Lord Jesus comes, who is He coming for?" questioned her mother's gentle voice.

"For those who love Him and belong to Him."

"Yes, that's right. And the way to 'belong' to Him is to ask Him to come into your heart, cleanse it from all sin in His precious blood, believe that He has done it because you have asked, and thank Him for taking possession of you. Why not settle this question tonight, Eleanore? Kneel down beside me, and do it now."

Again Eleanore obeyed, and kneeling beside her mother she said in her own words something of what Mrs. Thomson had told her, finishing with a heartfelt "Thank You." She rose from her knees, and without further words, her mother tucked her into bed, and she snuggled down with a big sigh of relief, and was asleep almost before the light was out, her difficulty solved and speedily forgotten.

But God had not forgotten! Her impulsive offer for missionary service three months previously had indeed been registered in heaven, and now He had enabled her to take the first step towards its fulfilment. He had claimed her heart, and got it. With His great patience and long-suffering He was to press forward His further claims till the whole was fully surrendered and made meet for the Master's use.