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*Challenge*  
and  
*Counter*  
*Challenge*

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## CHALLENGE AND COUNTER-CHALLENGE

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

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## The Story of Geronimo

"A baby for sale, cheap. Who will buy a fine baby?" The streets of Oran in Western Algeria have echoed with many strange cries during the centuries, but none more strange than this. It was uttered by some Spanish soldiers many years ago. The baby offered for sale was a handsome Arab child. The bidding was slow but at last it fell into the hands of the Vicar of Oran, who was delighted with his purchase and brought the lad up in the Catholic faith. When



*An Algerian Boy*

Geronimo (as he was called), was eight years old, he was carried away by some Arab slaves into the interior, and restored to his parents. They received him gladly and tried to make him happy, but in vain. The seed of faith implanted in his heart had taken firm root, and neither spells, incantations, charms nor stormy intreaties could tear it out. So at twenty-five years of age he returned to Oran of his own

accord, and sought out his old friend and father in Christ, telling him "I desire to live forever in the faith and love of Jesus the Divine Saviour of men". He married a young Christian slave girl and for ten years they lived in the sunshine of blissful love.

Then came the first cloud which plunged them into despair. Geronimo had joined the Spanish Guard, where he had gained high honours by his feats of bravery. One day in performance of his duty he was in a small boat on the harbour. Moorish pirates chased and overtook them, and capturing Geronimo, took him to Algiers, where he was brought before Amir Ali, the Governor, who was a Spaniard who had turned Muslim. When it was discovered that the prisoner was an Arab who had become a Christian he was treated with great cruelty.

"Listen, O Geronimo", they said, "all thy heart's desires shall be accorded thee if only thou wilt return to the faith of thy people".

"I am a Christian" quietly responded Geronimo, "I am the servant of Jesus Christ. Not all the riches of the world could compensate for the peace and joy I have found in Him. Therefore keep your offers for those who will accept them".

In anger they loaded him with chains, and tortured him. For four months every day they devised fresh cruelties, but not an inch would he yield. Each time when he was nearly gone with exhaustion they gathered round and offered him liberty, power, riches, and honour. Sometimes too weak to answer he slowly shook his head, signifying his refusal. Once he managed to say "You think you will make me a Muslim. Never! Never, even though you may kill me".

Finally the Amir Ali demanded of the men if Geronimo had recanted. "Is the apostate still obstinate? Then he, the son of a dog, shall suffer as he deserves to suffer". He was at the time standing near a wall which was being built round a fort with big blocks of concrete. Huge empty moulds were used and the liquid concrete poured in and allowed to harden. The Amir decided that Geronimo should be put into one of these moulds and the concrete poured over him and he should then be built into the wall. He ordered the mason who was near him to go and tell Geronimo of his fate. This mason was also a Christian and with a heavy heart he went to the prison and spoke to him. "Brother", he said, "I have

to build you alive into the wall. It will break my heart, but I cannot do otherwise". "God's holy Will be done", responded the prisoner, "Let not those miserable men think they will be able to frighten me out of the faith of Christ by the idea of this cruel cruel death. I am not afraid, Jesus is with me".

He was dragged along the narrow streets of Algiers



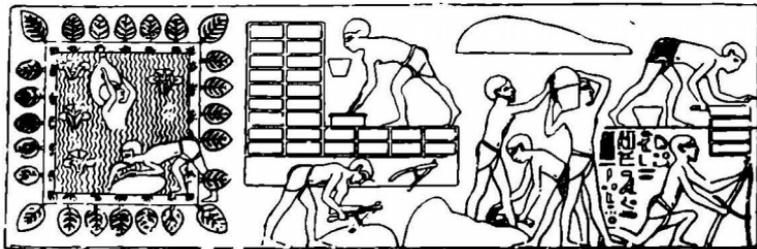
to the gate of Bab el Wad, where he stood near the wall, faint with the blows he had received from the hooting jeering crowd. Slowly and clearly the Amir explained to him the nature of the death he must die if he still held to the faith of Jesus Christ. Then Ali said "Thou son of an infidel, thou dog, dost thou still refuse to embrace the true religion of Islam?"

"Sir, I am a Christian and as a Christian I will die. I cannot deny my Lord. Do thine utmost. Death shall not make me abandon my Lord".

The soldiers came forward and bound him with ropes, then placed him face downwards in the huge cement mould.

The liquid plaster was poured over him. Then one man, more fanatical than the rest, jumped on Geronimo's body and crushed his ribs. What a martyrdom. Bleeding, suffering, slowly dying in the block of plaster as it hardened and suffocated him, amid the cruel taunts and bitter jeers of his enemies. Through the heat of a day, and the long watches of a night he lay there suffering, but as the next morning broke he entered the gates of the heavenly city and joined the noble army of martyrs.

Did it really happen? I can hear you asking. How do you know all this came to pass? For over 300 years the story was handed down from generation to generation until history became so familiar it was only regarded as romance. But in 1853 this wall in Bab el Wad was being demolished, and they discovered a hollow in the wall and in it a human skeleton. A plaster cast was made of the now empty mould, and when the shape was withdrawn it proved conclusively to be that of Geronimo. It may be seen today in a museum in Algiers. Three hundred years of silence, and then the stones as it were, cried out! Surely today they cry out to us "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" Remember that Geronimo's grand decision for Christ took place when he was a lad. It must have been somewhere in those years between being taken from the care of the Vicar of Oran and going back of his own accord that the choice was made, while surrounded by Muslims and with no one to help him. Does it not show that the love of Christ *can* take hold of the boys of this bigoted land and cause them to shine so brightly for Him? "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord" that jewels such as this may be found and won for our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ?" (Adapted.)



## Somebody's Small Brother

Having travelled over a good bit of the earth's surface, I have come to the conclusion that small brothers—say two or three-year-olds, are very much the same everywhere. This is not counting the colour of eyes, hair, skin or suchlike unimportant things.



I once had a cardigan with a zip fastener right up the front; a small English boy in a bus stared for some time, then neither shyness nor politeness could keep back the request "May I pull it?"

More recently it was a Bible which delighted a small Pakistani brother. It too had a zip round three sides. This time it was not in a bus, but in the women's reception room of a Muslim Mission in London. It was the end of Ramadan. I scarcely think my small friend had fasted, but he enjoyed the feast at the end of the month. Perhaps he had done some fasting, taking his evening meal after sunset, or not eating for an hour or two. That would be

considered fasting by some of my English neighbours who are never seen without sweets, toffee-apples, icecream, chewing-gum, or what not in their mouths!

At least he had been taught to say his prayers; as in Islam fasting by day can always be followed by feasting at night, so prayers also have a purely formal meaning. When



*An Eastern Sweetie-Shop!*

Hassan—let's call him that—got tired of the zip, he looked for more interesting disclosures from the handbag which had held the Bible. He was not disappointed; out came single Gospels. He merely glanced at the one with pictures; he clutched the one with a plain black cover. Soon, holding it—upside-down it so happened—in front of him he was intoning, or rather droning baby language. Every now and then the word "Alla-hu" or "La-illah" came distinctly. How I longed to teach him a prayer he could understand, but his mother watched and called off his attention if she saw him listening to them.

This mother was English; she had once called herself a Christian. It may be that she first came into contact with Islam in the same way as did the Englishwoman on my left at the table. She found a Muslim so kind on the occasion of a slight accident, and then had an invitation to their Mission House (a Muslim Mission in London).

We Christians must all take our share of responsibility for the spread of Islam in England, each one, that is, who

obeys the command in Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 5, Verse 16. (Look it up if you have forgotten what it is!) We never know when our deeds are being watched. A Bengali Muslim told me the other day that he did not read our books because his English work-mate is "a funny man, he does not go to church". When I told his Christian work-mate that he must not stop others from hearing of the Lord Jesus Christ whatever he did himself, he answered that he was not hindering other people. Yet he *was* hindering this man from Bengal. I am glad to be able to tell you that the Muslim has now promised to read the Gospel of John which I have given him—perhaps the nice hot cups of tea which I made for them both helped to persuade him!

Just living "in the light" is what we need to do, so that we shall always see what God wants us to do—that is the way to help Muslims. He will bring us to them when we are able to give them a message from Him, if we watch and pray.

O. M. BOTHAM

*(Friends of the Moslems in China.)*



"Was it a Zip-fastener?"

## The Bible

Hullo, boys and girls! Have you got your Bibles ready?

Our study this time is to contrast the BIBLE with the QUR'AN. Let us deal with the latter first.

THE QUR'AN. Although the Muslims recognize the 'Tawrah' (i.e. the Five Books of Moses), the "Zaboor" or Psalms, and the "Injeel" or Gospel, they believe that these are all superseded by the Qur'an. This latter book is very "toilsome reading" and contradictory. For example it speaks of "the day of Christ's death and the day of His resurrection" in one place, and in another it declares "they neither killed Him nor crucified Him, but God made an exchange of body". There is no order of time or thought in it, and its meaning is difficult to understand. Yet it is learnt by heart and fanatically believed in by thousands of Muslims. It is the great counterfeit to the Real Book that God has given to the world. So now let us consider

THE BIBLE under five headings forming an anagram  
TRUTH.

I. First then, its TESTIMONY about itself—

(a) *Psalm 119.105* tells us "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path".

(b) *2 Tim. 3.15.16*. Paul tells us "the Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation" and "All scripture is given by inspiration of God".

(c) *2 Pet. 1.21*. Peter says about the Old Testament "Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost".

(d) *Luke 1.70*. We read that God spake "by holy prophets since the world began".

R. It is a Book of REVELATION and REDEMPTION. It reveals that man has sinned (*Rom. 3.23* and *6.23*) and needs redeeming, buying back from Satan's slavery.

In it, all can hear the voice of Jesus Christ. "in Whom we have Redemption through His Blood, the forgiveness of sins", *Eph. 1.7*.

It tells of Calvary.

## and Islam

U. Its UNITY. Many writers with one theme, the Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ—God's Lamb. Look up *Luke 24, 27 and 44*. He is the key which unlocks Old and New. So we read that—

Moses writes of The Lamb provided by God in *Genesis 22*, and of The Lamb selected, spotless and slain in *Exodus 12*.

Isaiah tells of The Lamb, silent and slaughtered in Chapter 53.

John shows The Lamb as substitute in Chapter 1.

Paul speaks of The Lamb sacrificed for us in *1 Cor. 5.7*.

Peter emphasises The Lamb shedding His precious Blood. *1 Pet. 1*.

And John again provides the crowning chords of harmony by revealing The Lamb worshipped as worthy in *Revelation 5 and 7*.

There is unity, too, when we discover that Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Lord Jesus of the New. "I and My Father are One". See also *Exodus 3.14*, and John's "I AM" *John 6.35, 9.5*, etc.

What unity of theme from many writers over many centuries!

T. Its TRIUMPH. The Jews counted every letter and the Lord Jesus said "Not one jot or tittle shall pass . . . till all be fulfilled" and so despite all attacks it endures. The *spade*, digging up old world secrets has never found anything to make us doubt it; and the *Jew*, scattered and persecuted, yet existing after 4,000 years is another proof. Its triumph too is seen in the countless *lives* changed and regenerated by its power.

H. Lastly, it speaks of a HEAVEN to gain and a HELL to shun.

It shows us a light beyond the grave. Look up *Matt. 25.41 and 46*, and *Heb. 9.27*, so "He that HEARETH My WORD and BELIEVETH on Him that sent ME HATH Everlasting Life", *John 5.24*.

HALLELUJAH!



## Overheard in a Missionary's Study

*Continued*

"Oh, I say, Sir, may I come in? Are you busy or can you spare the time to tell me any more about that book, the Qur'an?"

"So it's my young friend Jack Wantoknow again, is it? All right come in and sit down. What do you want to know this time?"

"Well, I've been thinking. That book was written a good long time ago wasn't it, before printing and all that sort of thing. What did it look like when it was first written?"

"Oh, so our first talk 'set you thinking'. I'm glad of that. There certainly was no printing press in Arabia when the Qur'an was first written. There wasn't even any nice cheap paper, but the friends of Muhammad wrote on almost any surface that would hold ink, bits of cloth, skin, leather, even bones! sheep shoulder blades for preference as they were nice and flat. No one possessed the whole of the book, but a lot of people had scraps".

"That's a funny way to write a book, don't you think?"

"You're right, Master Wantoknow, and you can guess Muhammad had some trouble with all these odds and ends of manuscript. For instance two fellows must have been comparing notes one day, and found that certain passages didn't agree at all, in fact flatly contradicted each other! Then how could they both be the truth? When Muhammad was spoken to about it, he soon settled that. He found another revelation which said 'Whatsoever verses we cancel or cause thee to forget we bring a better or its like'. And on another occasion 'Allah (God) may cancel or confirm as He pleases'. His followers seem to have been satisfied with that; they certainly are today".

"Well, when did they all become one book?"

"Not really till after Muhammad died. But towards the

end of his life when he had become a monarch, he began to put things together a bit. In some chapters, 'Suras', he called them, it looks as if he had strung a number of short passages together, and it makes a nice jumble of reading. If you could read it you would find it difficult to make head or tail of any meaning. But that does not matter to them, for they say that only Allah knows its meaning, and 'believers' must just accept it from Him! Well, after Muhammad's death, many of the men who had learnt the Qur'an direct from the prophet were being killed in the wars which they fought to spread their religion. So his successors decided to gather all the scattered pieces together and make a proper book of them. This they did, careful scribes collecting all that was written".

"Must have looked like a rag and bone shop when it all arrived!"

". . . . Hmmm, yes, and also all that was unwritten, and they put it down in a book. The only order to which they worked as far as I can see was to put the longest chapters first, and the shortest at the tail end".

"But still, doesn't their book show them what sin is and how they can be saved from it?"

"If you mean by sin the coming short of God's standard, missing the mark, no, it doesn't. Occasionally it denounces things like pride and covetousness, but it sets no standard for a man to measure himself by. It has quite a lot to say about what we would call ceremonial offences".

"What are ceremonial offences, please?"

"Well, for example, if you were to say your prayers without doing the washing that you saw from the window last time, that would be a ceremonial offence, a sin in their eyes. Or if you ate a crumb between sunrise and sunset during a certain month of the year, when they have to fast all day, that would be a really grave offence. Or if you ever dared to eat a piece of bacon, ham or pork".

"I see. And has it as strange an idea about salvation too?"

"Indeed, yes. Because there comes the question as to whether a man needs salvation at all? What is a man to be saved from? The Qur'an teaches that God made man of clay, weak and inconsistent. So that if he found himself in a difficulty and to lie was the easiest way out then he would

tell a lie. because God made him like that. It also teaches that man can't help himself, and only does what God wants him to do. that is, if he killed a person he does so because God willed it. Therefore man is sinful, not because his nature is bad, but just because God made him weak”.

“But how do they think they will get to heaven?”

“By performing five religious duties. The first, and the one on which they lay most stress, and by which even a criminal may continue his life of crime and enter heaven at the end, is what they call the ‘witness’. A man raises his hand, index finger pointing upward, and repeats ‘There is no god but God, and Muhammed is His Prophet’. Those words make him a Muslim, and according to the Qur’an he can never be lost, it is his passport to heaven. His other duties include prayers at set times, almsgiving, fasting at certain periods, and pilgrimage”.

“But don't they realize that ‘Nought that defileth can ever enter in?’”



“Prayer at Set Times”



*"Almsgiving"*

"No, although Muhammed declared that he came to confirm the Scriptures that God had already given, he hadn't much idea of what was in them for he couldn't read. So his book has nothing in it to compare with the Ten Commandments, as a standard of righteousness, nor anything like the Old Testament to show what God really thinks of sin, although there are many garbled versions of its stories. There is nothing like the spotless life and example and teaching of the Lord Jesus, nor His Gift or wondrous power to save even to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. Nothing whatever!"

"Then what do the Muslims of today who read our Bible and compare it with their Qur'an think about it all?"

"They of course don't agree with the Bible at all, and they turn to us and say 'You have changed the word and altered its meaning'".

"It must be very hard to convince them of the truth, very very, hard".

"It is indeed, Jack, but don't forget what the Lord Jesus said 'The things which are impossible with men, are possible with God', and if we believe and pray the Holy Spirit is able to work in their minds and hearts and to enlighten them. Now that's enough for today, run away, and don't forget to pray!"

"Thank you, Mr. Stalley, I'll try not to".

HAROLD W. STALLEY,

(Algiers Mission Band).



*Anti-Missionary Propaganda*  
"Beware of the Preachers of Good Tidings"

## Missionary Mould

### PART 4.—THE BOWLER HAT.

Eggs! Eggs!! Eggs!!! EGGS! Baskets of eggs, boxes of eggs, bowls of eggs, buckets of eggs. Eggs white, eggs cream-coloured, eggs brown, and eggs speckled! Endless eggs everywhere! Or at least so thought Eleanore as she vainly struggled to reduce them to order in the egg-room. Each one had to be washed, dried, polished, weighed, graded, and put carefully into the box waiting to go by train up to the large store in London which purchased them from Mrs. Thomson twice a week. For the war-time backyard poultry keeping had developed into a full-time money-making concern on a farm in the West Country. Five very happy years Eleanore spent down there, and at the time it all seemed completely remote from the missionary vision which had been vouchsafed to her. But it wasn't! It was all very much in The Plan, and many a lesson learnt there stood her in good stead when she finally reached the mission field. God knew exactly the type of training which she needed; He never makes any mistakes.

But it was all hidden from Eleanore as she settled down to adapt herself to this new life, so different from what she had previously been used to. There was so much to learn, milking cows, making butter, curing pigs, not to mention the intricacies of incubators, foster-mothers and the lamps belonging to them, which had an incurable habit of going out when one least expected it, in spite of having been cleaned trimmed and filled carefully every morning. However, it was all very good fun, and although the work was heavy, Eleanore did it with a will, and found plenty of time as well for hockey and Guiding, on both of which she was very keen. In fact it looked as if her life had been side-tracked into a pastoral setting, and she might end up as a prosperous farmer's wife!

The only thing which Eleanore didn't seem to have much time for was the nourishing of her own spiritual life. Over the weekend there was time for study and preparation of the talks she gave to her Guides; there was always time for church twice a Sunday, and Bible Class in the afternoon. But when one has to be out feeding hens before 7 a.m. it doesn't really give one much time for quiet waiting upon

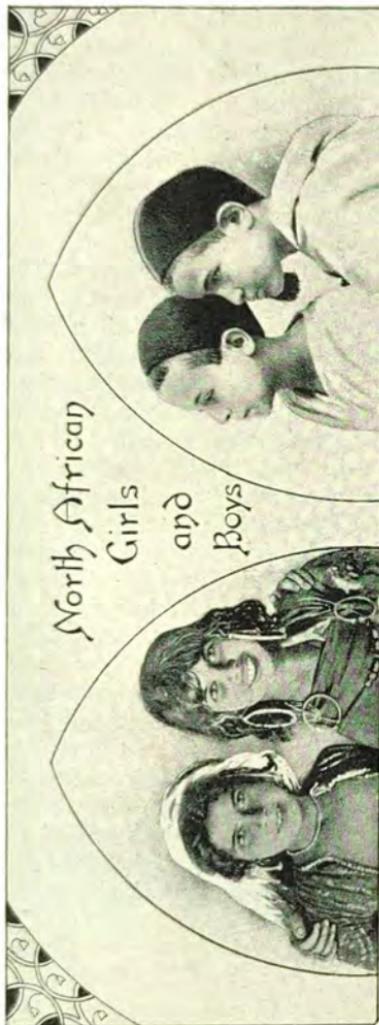
God, unless of course you were like Eleanore's father, who seemed actually to like getting up terribly early! Surely God knew and understood the circumstances. After all, it was very seldom that she neglected to read her Daily Light, and even on those days, one could memorize the verse on the Text calendar which hung in the egg-room. These were her thoughts, but imperceptibly she was slipping back as she ceased to establish vital contact between herself and her Lord and Master day by day. But God had laid hold on this life for Himself, and He continued guiding its course in the direction which He had chosen, even though it must have grieved Him to see such a lack of active co-operation as there was at this period from Eleanore herself.

It was one of those days that can't seem to make up their minds whether they are winter or spring, and so resolve themselves into drizzling rain with a muggy atmosphere. Eleanore let the horse's reins fall on its back as it plodded sturdily up the steep little cart-track alongside the field leading over the knap. This lane finally emerged over the other side on to the main road to the large market town. But Eleanore was in no hurry to get there, in spite of the prospect of an exciting hockey match. For getting there also involved being prepared to give a plain answer "Yes" or "No", and that she was by no means ready to do yet. "Will you share my life?" ran the question in a letter she had received a few days previously from a young Devonshire farmer. He was certainly prosperous; an excellent farmer, he owned his own farm; a God-fearing young man and keen church-worker; and very much in love with her. It all seemed most suitable. But somehow Eleanore was conscious of a check every time she almost decided that "Yes" was to be the answer. Unfortunately, being out of direct touch with the Lord over the every day details of her life, she hadn't been able to "tune in" correctly over this vastly larger matter, and although God was graciously answering her prayer and going to make it clear to her, she hadn't the joy of knowing His Will in her heart and mind, and thereby enjoying peace and assurance as to the outcome of it all.

The horse jogged on, and brought her nearer and nearer to the moment when she would meet the young man and be confronted with the problem. All the advantages and disadvantages kept going through her mind; all the arguments

for and against, all of course from the purely human side. It hardly seemed necessary to bring the spiritual into it this time, for wasn't he a keen Christian? This time, surely, there could be nothing which God would object to? It was just a case of whether she loved him sufficiently or not! But there Eleanore made a big mistake. God had said "Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with ALL thy heart . . . I, the Lord Thy God, am a Jealous God". Our heart's love may not be given to any human being, male or female, unless God Himself directs it so; even though they may be fellow-believers. We must never take anything for granted, but allow Him to choose for us all along the way.

The horse and trap were safely stabled in the yard. Eleanore walked very slowly up the street to the appointed meeting place. She looked in the shop-windows, anything to distract her mind, anything to avoid the crisis, with her mind still not made up. Suddenly she caught sight of him walking across the road. He hadn't yet seen her, but as she looked, she knew! The answer was to be "No". It came perfectly decisively, clearly, and without the shadow of doubt. But how? you say. It all sounds so silly and yet it was used of God to make plain His Will to Eleanore; to prevent her linking herself up to a life at home, when He had purposed one abroad for her. The young man was wearing a bowler hat; Eleanore hated bowler hats, and was annoyed because he had chosen to wear one when meeting her. A petty reason, do you say? Yes, but the very pettiness of it showed Eleanore that the feeling she felt for him was not pure love. True love would not have minded what the lover wore: it doesn't look on the external merely; but right down into the depths of the heart. And so it all proved. Their ways parted that day as regards a closer walking together along life's path, but God was in the divergence and kept both walking with HIM in the particular paths for each which He had marked out.



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