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*Challenge*  
and  
*Counter*  
*Challenge*



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## CHALLENGE AND COUNTER-CHALLENGE

A Missionary 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.

Issued by the

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## The Stream and the Source.

A girl-orphan named Shereefa was taken from her village up to the hill country to be married to a peasant, and the old woman who took her there stayed the three days, and then left her. The new home, though only a miserable hut, was yet pleasant owing to the birds singing all around it and the sun shining above it and the fig-tree flowering in the garden, for it was now summer.

Before the summer was finished, she grew anxious and weary, for her mother-in-law was always ill, and her disease caused her to become fractious, and so no one came to visit her. Then the poor girl's husband went off to the grape-harvest, and ordered her not to go out at all, so she was unable to go to the bath, or to the saint's tomb, or even to the cemetery on Fridays to get relief from her cares. In addition to all this, Ramadan fell in the late summer that year, so that the fast days were very long and hot, and no one came to spend the evening with them.

As Shereefa knew that her husband would return home for Lailat-el-Qadr\* she told herself that she would ask him to let her go to visit some of the friends on the day of "Eed-es-Sagheer" (Little Feast). So she prepared him a nice supper to make his heart glad, and then, when she saw his face shining, she ventured to ask him her request. He considered for a time, and then said, "Truly you have been alone the whole summer and did not cry too much; well, I will go and see Aly Ben Sayed at the cafe tonight, and as his house is opposite us, he may perhaps tell his family to take you with them." She was glad to hear this, for she remembered that she had seen Haneefa, the wife of Aly, and had been to her wedding, and that she resembled her own mother's face.

\* The Night of Destiny, in last week of Ramadan.

When her husband arose and went out the next morning, she opened her box of clothes which she had carried away from her wedding, although it is true they were not very many for her dowry was only ten dollars. As soon as she saw them, her joy was turned into sadness, for the box had been an old one, and so the dust had penetrated into it the whole summer, and spoilt her clothes without her knowing anything about it.

However she soothed herself with the thought that there were still left three days in which to wash her things at the stream in the garden and she would do that the next day so as to be ready on the third day.

The wind, however, blew strongly that afternoon and the hut shook all night, and then when the wind ceased in the morning, the rain came down unceasingly all that night along with thunder and lightning, so that her heart fainted and her brain worried over her washing.

When she arose from sleep the third day, that is the day of the Feast, she found the sun shining and the birds singing, so she took her bundle of clothes and went to the stream to wash. The water was not, however, like the



town water, for the rain had stirred up the mud of the ditch and made it all slimy. Still she washed as hard as she could hoping to get them clean at last, but she really made matters

worse, for the clay of the ditch got over the clothes and spoilt them. She then in despair sat down and cried until she could cry no longer, for she would now have to sit indoors like a prisoner, hearing nothing and seeing no one but her husband and her mother-in-law, of both of whom she was quite tired.

While she was sitting crying thus she heard the voices of women going along the road to the village, and this diverted her thoughts and she mounted up on the cactus hedge. There she saw Haneefa, the wife of Aly, and her daughter, carrying their bundles of clothes on their heads.



As they had not yet seen her, she clapped her hands to them. When Haneefa turned, Shareefa called to her to come, and when she walked along the narrow path to the hut, she asked her, "Why are you crying, my daughter? You know that you are coming with me tomorrow to see the world." Shereefa answered her, "That is the reason of my crying, for my clothes are dirty and I cannot get them clean, so how can I come with you and shame myself before people?"

Haneefa said: "You are excused my girl, for you are a town-child, and do not know the country; such as you wash in the stream during the time of rain; do you not know that the spring is here behind that olive tree?" She said, "No, I know nothing about it at all, I am only a little wild animal, how should I know things with no one to teach me?"

Haneefa replied: "Look at the clothes which I have just washed, they are as white as milk, and now I will spread them in the sun to dry. There is yet time, and the sun is still strong, run and ask your mother-in-law to let you return with me to the spring."

Shereefa went and asked the old woman but she turned her face to her matting and said: "That's your business, if your husband comes home and finds you not here, you will get a beating with a stick, so please yourself."

She came away and went with Haneefa, and when they drew near the spring there were lots of women coming and going, those coming up bore bundles of dirty clothes, and those going down had nothing but clean ones. When she looked at the spring she saw why it cleansed away all the dirt-stains, for it came out from a rock and ran as clear crystal. When she soaked her clothes in it, it cleansed away every dirt-mark and all those the muddy ditch had made. With all joy she spread them in the sun and found that that increased the whiteness.

On the day of the Feast, she went along with a heart that nearly leaped for joy, and thought that she had never seen a feast like it, for the days of her loneliness had gone like a dream.

### **The Interpretation (Abridged).**

You know, O sister, that you also, the same as Shereefa, have many days of weariness and loneliness, and your thoughts go upward to heaven as hers did to the coming feast, and perhaps you long for it, and you know it is all purity and so you try to purify yourself now in preparation for it, and you strive to cleanse yourself, not your clothes but your spirit, by doing good works . . . hoping that they will be able to remove your burdens. These good deeds are, however, mixed with worldliness just as the water of the stream was mixed with mud and so they cannot take away your sin . . .

Listen, O sister, . . . for we followers of the Messiah have come near to you just as Haneefa did to Shereefa's garden, and we are able to tell you about a spring of water as clear as crystal; this spring has already washed our sins and filthiness and is able to take away your dirtiness.

This spring is Jesus Christ, our Lord—descended from heaven pure as the stars, nor was there in Him any trace of sin, and therefore when he died for us, he was able to bear our sins. Come unto Him and let Him do the work for you; then on Feast-Day, the great day of Heaven, you will awake quite free and happy. Amen.

From Parables by the late MISS L. TROTTER,  
(Algiers Mission Band).

## Pink-Knees in Palestine.

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After the Unit I was with had moved out of Cairo to the Suez Canal Area, we began to have work coming in from Palestine, and before long it became necessary for teams to go up there for short periods. The Colonel knew how keen I was to get up there, but somehow I was always out somewhere else when the chance came. One quite large team left in June 1947 for Jerusalem, leaving me still in Suez, but soon after their arrival they found they needed another Officer, and that was my opportunity. At last the pinky shade of my knees was deepening, and soon I should be able to "swing the lamp." This is really a sailor's expression, for when they tell their sea stories the weather is usually very stormy, and the swinging lamp is meant to represent the ship getting tossed about.

So just before sunset one evening, about the middle of June, a truck took me into the town of Ismailia. There was plenty of time before the night train left, so I had something to eat, and walked to the Railway Station by 9 p.m. The platform, even at that time, was quite a jumble of bamboo crates, heaps of luggage, and little groups of people sitting quietly on their haunches waiting for the train. One or two porters in long blue robes with brass identification plates, were carting boxes over the footbridge on to the "Up" platform. A small boy came wandering around selling books and magazines. In a dark corner, under the shelter, three little children were snuggling down under a kind of carpet, getting ready for their night's sleep. I was glad, for their sakes, that it was a mild night.

At 9.30 p.m. the train steamed in, and much sooner than I had really expected, we were off, bound for Lydda. We stopped at Kantara, on the Eastern side of the Suez Canal, for a meal, and to get our money changed into Palestinian currency. Then we set off across the desert. Even though the seat was rather hard, it was not long before I dozed off, and woke up to find we were drawing up at Gaza, well within Palestine, for breakfast.



Although there was still a good deal of sand about, the scenery was not that of the real desert. Already the groves of Orange trees were appearing, and the country was beginning to look more cared for. By the time we reached Lydda cultivation was well advanced. That was as far as the train went, because the line to Haifa was blocked, and that to Jerusalem had been out of action for some time. We clambered out and waited for the lorries to take us to Jerusalem 25 miles away. At last they came and we set off up one of the valleys we read about in the Old Testament (Joshua 10.12).

The old name for Lydda is Lod, which we read of in the Bible, and it lies on the low Coastal plain of Palestine. Jerusalem, of course, is up in the mountains, so to reach it we had to go up the Valley of Ajalon. This is a steep valley, quite narrow and with great rocky crags sticking through the sides of the hills. There are quite a lot of trees, many of them planted fairly recently, and this helps to take away some of the barren appearance, but the fields and groves of the plain were soon left behind.

At last the towers of Jerusalem came into sight, and there was the City itself. I was to stay in an old orphanage that the Army had taken over, and before long I had joined the others and settled down to work. Busy I might be, but at least I was in Jerusalem.

On the first Saturday afternoon after I arrived, the Padre arranged a trip to the Dead Sea and Jericho. We set out in trucks, and made our way down through the centre of Jerusalem, past the big concrete blocks of offices and flats, to the huge Y.M.C.A. building made like a sky-scraper. We turned sharply to the left at the cross-roads, and found ourselves travelling along by the old City Wall. Though the walls we saw were not the actual ones built by Nehemiah five hundred years before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, they made a very sharp contrast with the modern buildings of the newer part of the City. On the right we passed the Damascus Gate, probably built on the site of the Gate by which Saul of Tarsus left Jerusalem on that momentous journey he made to Damascus, during which he saw the Lord Jesus Christ. Further on we could see, at times, the Dome of the great Moslem Mosque that has been built on the place where the old Jewish Temple used to stand before it was destroyed by the Romans.

On the other side of the road lay the Garden of Gethsemane where Christ was praying to His Father, when the soldiers took Him away to be tried before Pilate. Now it is a shady little plot with many trees surrounding the two chapels, one The Church of All Nations, built with gifts from very many countries; the other, a Russian Chapel, set a little farther up the lower slope of the Mount of Olives.

Soon we were climbing steadily and turning Eastward round the shoulder of the Mount of Olives. When we were round the other side we stopped for a quick glimpse of Bethany, where Martha, Mary and Lazarus used to live, and where the Lord Jesus sometimes lodged. Then we began the winding descent down the steep hillside on to the road to Jericho. The countryside had become very barren again, and before us stretched only steep, stony hills, covered in patches, with thorny, leafless bushes almost the same colour as the parched ground itself. We stopped for a few minutes by a Hostel half-way along the road, and being taken round the back of the present building, we were shewn the rough outline of an Inn that was supposed to have been the only one on that lonely road at the time when Jesus walked it. The Padre read to us the story the Lord Jesus Christ told, of the Good Samaritan bringing the wounded man to an Inn.



Next, we passed a sign written in Arabic, Hebrew and English saying we were at Sea Level, then we kept on going down into the hot, stuffy air of the Jordan Valley. Then

suddenly, before us stretched the Dead Sea, calm and deserted, as lifeless as the barren hills that surround it. Across its shimmering surface the Hills of Moab stood out dry, stony and uninviting.

After refreshments, the trucks conveyed us to the site of the old City of Jericho which is some distance from the present town, and well away from the River Jordan. Old Jericho is now just a big heap of earth and stones, not at all imposing. Climbing up on this mound we were able to pick out walls and the shape of rooms amidst all the rubbish. A glance Eastward from the top of the heap showed one the result of fresh water coming into that hot, fertile Jordan Valley; the bright green of the groves, the tufty palm trees, and the fruitful fields were very different from the dreary hills through which we had come.

Wanting to be back at Jerusalem before it was dark, we could not stay long at Jericho and soon we were wending our way up that road that goes down from Jerusalem to Jericho.

It had been a full and interesting trip, and it enabled us to put ourselves more clearly into the Bible Stories we read. As we came up the winding road the memory that the Lord Jesus Christ had walked it steadfastly, though He knew that the Cross awaited Him at the end of the journey, made us quiet and rather subdued.

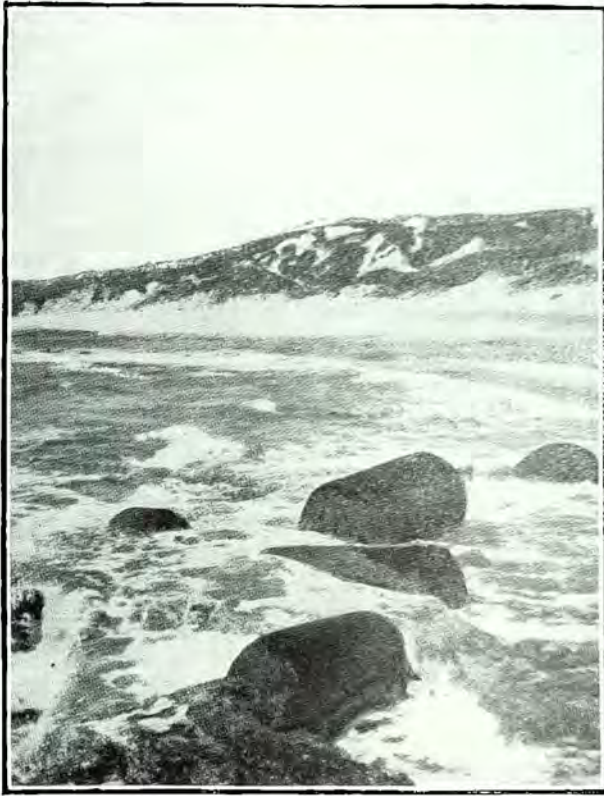
ALAN EAST.  
(All Nations Bible College).

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**“Behold, I have set before thee an  
open door”—**

**“Go ye, therefore.”**

Just North of the Palestine border (now divided into Israel and Jordan) lies the ancient city of Tyre. Once a great seaport whence the Phoenicians came to Britain with their dyes and wares to trade, once the “mart of nations,” now she lies desolate as the prophet Ezekiel foretold “a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea.” Even the most casual visitor can see for himself how literally God’s Word has been fulfilled as he stands on the top of the rocks and sees parts of the ancient pillars lying in the sea and the excavated remains of a Roman arena and temple.



To this very town the Saviour Himself came when he healed the Syrophenician woman's daughter, and many from the coast of Tyre and Sidon "came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases." Can it be that Tyre is now a Moslem town? Yes, very largely, and not only Tyre but over 200 villages in the district around where homes and hearts are dark indeed and crime abounds.

Come with me through the narrow, winding streets with their open sewers filled with refuse and flies, past shuttered windows to the British Syrian Mission compound. For 80 years this house with its school and little Church nearby

has stood as a centre of light in a dark place. Every morning 120 children gather in the school and after prayers the first lesson is always Scripture. Many boys and girls have learnt not only to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour but to walk with Him. A little girl whose father was sick recently said to him: "Father, I want to pray for you." "Pray, my child," said the Father. "No, not here," came the reply. "I will pray at School in the Prayer Hall." The family were astonished. The child felt that in the Christian School real prayers were offered to God and answered by Him. The Moslem atmosphere of her home did not satisfy her young heart, nor the set and formal prayers repeated by her relations at certain times of the day.

So through many a schoolchild an entrance is found for the Gospel messengers into the homes of Tyre. The Saviour has indeed returned there in the person of His servants and as a result of their witness over many years there is now an open door into every home. "Behold I have set before thee an open door": "Go ye, therefore."

Come with me for a day up into one of the mountain villages, all of which are open to the Gospel. We took the road up past the tomb of Hiram, King of Tyre, and after passing many an Arab refugee colony reached Kana. What a welcome awaited us. Immediately we entered a house and the evangelist got out her picture book to tell the old, old story, neighbours crowded in to hear and to invite us to their homes. As I sat listening I could see out through the open door and found myself fascinated by the sight that met my eyes. A crowd of young boys were slowly creeping up the hill one by one, their faces alight with eagerness, until they filled the doorway and remained listening with rapt attention.

Hark! the voice of Jesus crying:  
"Who will go and work to-day?"  
Fields are white and harvest waiting,  
Who will bear the sheaves away?  
Loud and strong the Master calleth,  
Rich reward He offers thee;  
Who will answer, gladly saying,  
"Here am I, send me, send me"?"

ELSA M. THOMSON, B.S.M.

## An Arab girl's testimony to Christ.

(Written at her own dictation)

"When I was a little girl I had never heard of Jesus, neither had my father or mother. Then came the time when I used to join the children who were playing outside the Mission House while waiting to go in for their class and to hear the Word of God. I said to myself, "They will not allow me to go in, but I can play with the children outside." I was glad when I found that they would let me go in too. Every day I used to come and hear the Word of God and I used to listen well but I understood nothing. I used to answer all the questions and say "yes" or "no," but I did not understand what it was all about. For several years I came thus with no understanding until one day I was playing outside and I quarrelled with another little girl who ran away. I said to myself, "When I catch you next time I will strike you!" Then the door opened to me and I went into the big court of the house and found that they were having a meeting for women. I said, "Oh, I would so like to go in and see what they are doing," but the missionary said, "No, the meeting is only for grown-up people, but you can play in the court." I was so eager to get in that I said to one of the women, "I will give you two sous (all I had) if you will let me come in!" However, I had to remain in the court and sat among the shoes at the door amusing myself by arranging them in pairs and at the same time listening to what was being said to the women in the inner room. When they began to drink coffee I was rather ashamed for I said to myself, "They will think I have come hoping to have coffee offered to me." After the coffee was finished I listened to what the missionary was saying and I heard her say, "God says we must be loving even as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us." When I heard those words I was ashamed and said to myself, "I will not strike that girl with whom I have quarrelled," and from that time I stopped fighting with other children.

Then came the big Fast of Ramadan and because I was kept at home to help my mother, I was unable to come in the mornings to the Mission House to "read," but I came instead to the afternoon meetings where things were explained

more fully and little by little I began to understand. I understood that I must not be jealous when I saw other children with prettier dresses than I had. In the past, anger used to fill my heart when I quarrelled with anyone, now I find anger goes away at once and I can be glad. Now I have given all of myself to Christ and I await His coming with joy.



Last night I was thinking what a joy it is to me when the missionary comes to see me in my own home, how I run to spread a carpet for her to sit upon and hasten to make the coffee for her for she is my friend and I love her and she loves me. And because I know I have done nothing to grieve her I am not frightened of her and do not wish to hide myself from her. She knows me and I know her and we are happy together. So shall I do for Christ when He comes. How glad I am when the time draws near for the return of my missionary friend from her own country, for she tells me of the wonders and beauties of her country and of the journey. So will Christ tell me about the wonders and beauties of Heaven.

The time came when I was old enough to keep the Fast, but I wished to break the Fast for Christ's sake. I began to see that we only changed the hours of eating from day to night and did not really fast at all as Christ did. My father was dead by then, but my uncle said, "You must keep the Fast and if you do not I will kill you." I was very sad and cried.



The Missionary said I could not fast at the Mission house so that night I went home and all night I kept crying to God. In the morning I said to my mother, "I cannot fast. I am a Christian." She said to me, "Very well, my daughter, you may do as your heart tells you." My uncle said, "You must fast," but he did not do anything more than that so I went back to the Mission house with joy in my heart and from that time I have not fasted."

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## The Bible and Islam.

### No. 6 "PREDESTINATION OF GOOD AND EVIL"

One day in North Africa some young Muslim students asked me, "Is God Almighty?" "Yes," I said. "Then if I steal or commit adultery, He could stop me?" "Yes," I said. "And yet He hasn't done so?" "No," I agreed. "Well then," say they, "we steal and commit adultery in the Name of 'bism Allah'."

There you have the Muslim philosophy of predestination. God is Almighty; they say, He doesn't stop sin, therefore He is author of it. 'All is written,' a cast-iron fatalism covers everything; and so there is no freedom of choice, no sense of guilt.

But when we come to God's revelation in the Bible, we touch some of the profoundest truths ever revealed to man.

First of all the God of the Bible, the living God, unlike Allah, **is holy**. Read of Adam's expulsion from the Garden (Gen. 3), of Isaiah's shame in the Temple (Isa. 6), of Peter's confession of sinfulness (Luke 5.8), and we realise something of God's awful Holiness.



Secondly we learn of man's freedom of choice. He is not fated to sin for ever, witness all the pleading of the prophets for man to choose aright. Deut. 30.19, Isa. 55.37, Ezek. 18.31, 32.

Now we believe two truths, not a compromise between them—that (1) God is sovereign and (2) that man has freedom of moral choice and so we come to this: that God can foresee from the beginning all man's choice and predestine the final issue, without altering the guilt or innocence of the human agent. This is not easy for the finite mind to grasp, but two **apparent** contradictions are **both** true. We see this in words full of destiny uttered by Peter on the Day of Pentecost: "Him being delivered by the **determinate counsel** and **foreknowledge** of God, ye . . . by **wicked hands** have crucified," Acts 2, and again "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. 13.8.

There we have God's predestination and man's guilt both revealed. No one is predestined to do evil, and if man does evil, he is guilty and liable to punishment—"wicked hands." At the same time God uses even Satan's evil for deeper over-ruling than any have dreamed that He may further His own sovereign invincible plans of bringing in everlasting righteousness. "He hath made Him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

God who hates man's sin can use it for His own glory.

How infinitely more glorious is the Christian philosophy than the Satanic Muhammedan delusion with its robot fatalism, its lack of guilt and lack of blood redemption.

F.A.R.



## Hassan and the Bees.

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Hassan was out of breath and excited. "Come quickly," he gasped, "All the bees have got out and flown away!"

"All the bees?" the Missionary asked.

"Well, millions of them, anyway."

"Where did they fly, Hassan?"

Hassan pointed over the wall. We went down to the spot together. As we passed the hives there was still plenty of normal activity about all of them except one, and that was showing signs of a recent swarm.

"Still plenty of bees about, Hassan."

"Umm! I thought they'd all gone, there were so many," he replied. "Why have they only left one hive and stayed in all the rest?"

"I'll tell you about that in a minute, but let's recapture this swarm first. No, you needn't be afraid. They won't sting this time. You just hold that box there, under the bunch of bees, whilst I shake them into it. That's right! There goes the Queen with them too! Now we are all right again and we have another hive."

After the bees had been safely housed in a new hive the Missionary called to Hassan, "Get that 'face' from the garage and come with me. We'll have a look at the hives together and see what we can learn." Hassan grinned and ran off, presently reappearing with the 'face'—a gauze veil to keep the bees from stinging him. He felt a little safer with that on, but still he kept his hands in his pockets. He was taking no risks. He had been stung before and knew what it felt like. He watched as a little smoke was puffed into a hive, then he helped to take the lid off. The scene that met his eyes there frightened him at first; he had not realised there were so many bees in a hive before. No wonder there were still a lot left even after a big crowd had flown away. He

became so fascinated as his friend took out some frames with all the bees clinging to them, that he forgot to keep his hands in his pockets. He put out his hand to take hold of a frame too; then becoming frightened as he was about to lift it, he suddenly pulled it away. Instantly there was a flash of bees' wings in the sun, and a howl from Hassan. The sting was extracted and Hassan was told that the bee had only stung him because he had frightened her when he moved his hand so quickly. "Always move slowly and deliberately with bees, Hassan," he was cautioned. But Hassan didn't move his hand from his pocket any more. He had decided that no movement at all was the safest with things of uncertain temperament like bees. Still, they were fascinating, those bees. How did all those thousands of them know what to do—or didn't they?

"Oh yes, Hassan, they all know their jobs and they all get on with them without any fuss. I'll tell you a little about them as we work, if you listen. You see those little bees running around poking their heads in those little cells with the white spot on the bottom of them? Well, they are nursemaid bees, and those little white spots are babies that they are feeding. They mix up the food from honey and pollen in just the right proportion and know just how much to give them, and for how long. In exactly nine days from the time they start feeding them, they will put lids on these cells and seal them down until the babies come out as bees. See all those other bees hanging together? They are builders. Just now they are manufacturing wax from the honey and when they have manufactured some tiny, thin sheets of wax, they will build the walls of the cells with them. They always make those cells exactly the same size and shape too for each particular kind of "house." Yes, there are several kinds of "house." There are some for the worker-bees to be born and grow in, some for drones—they are those bigger ones, see?—some for storing honey—they usually slope a bit more so that the honey won't fall out—some for the Queens to be born and grow in. They are special ones. See here are some, like acorns! I'm going to cut them off, though, because I don't want any more Queens in this hive. No, there is only one Queen in the hive. She lays all the eggs. She lays about 2,000 a day and she can make them come out drones or workers, just as she will. No, she doesn't lay Queens, they are not born, but made. Who makes them? Well, I suppose

it's the worker-bees really. It's all a matter of feeding and bringing-up. Any of these tiny eggs you see like little pieces of cotton at the bottom of the cells, can become either a Queen or a worker. If the worker-bees feed the little grub that will hatch in a day or two, with special food called royal jelly—that's what we call it of course; the bees, I guess, have another name, if they bother with names—and build a Queen cell around it, it will become a Queen in less than three weeks. If they just give it ordinary food, it will just be an ordinary worker. After all, they are not much different from human beings in that respect, are they? If Kings and Queens were born in ordinary homes and brought up in an ordinary way, they'd just be ordinary people, and if an ordinary person like you or me, were born in a Palace and brought up as a child of the King, why he might some day be a King too."

"But that's not what I was taught as a Moslem," Hassan interrupted, "We were taught that Allah wills that some people should be rich and some poor, just as he wills that some should go to heaven and some to hell."

"Well, maybe that's what a Moslem believes, Hassan, but it is not what the Bible teaches us. We are all born sons of Adam—all alike, just like these little eggs—but we may become sons of God, Kings and Priests, so the Bible tells us. It isn't royal jelly that makes the difference though, but royal blood. No, you're wrong. I'm not thinking of people who say they have royal blood in their veins. I'm thinking of the blood of Jesus, Who is Kings of Kings, which He shed on the Cross to save us from our sins. You know what I mean, of course, I've told you the story so often." Hassan nodded.

"There is something too that we might call royal jelly—royal food—and that's God's Word, the Bible, which is the food that God provides for His royal children's growth. The Queen bee doesn't just eat royal food until she becomes a Queen, she's specially fed all her life. We can learn a lot from bees, can't we?"

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Readers, can you find any verses in the Bible that tell us that sons of Adam can be sons of God—sons of the King—and others which speak of the Bible as food?

A. WHITEHOUSE (E.G.M.).

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