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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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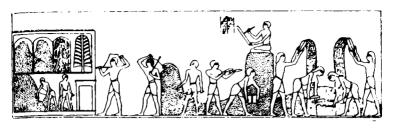
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"Is Thy God Able?"

This is a question which was on the lips of Darius, King of the Medes, as he hastened to the lions' den. He had spent a sleepless night thinking about Daniel. He respected Daniel, and he knew that he could trust him, but he had been tricked into signing a decree which had landed Daniel in the lions' den. He knew something about Daniel's God. He knew that He was not like the gods of the heathen, but, after all, lions were lions and they were used to eating human flesh. Could Daniel's God deliver him from these hungry beasts?

The night had seemed endless, but at last it was morning and he would soon know whether Daniel's God was able to deliver his servant. Perhaps, when he reached the den, it was still too dark to see and as he tried to peer into the gloom he cried with a lamentable voice, "O Daniel, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee

from the lions?" (Dan. 6:20).

Suppose there had been no answer! Suppose that the light of day had revealed only the meagre remains of Daniel among those of other victims! Imagine the King's disappointment! Darius believed in Daniel's God. He had seen in the life of Daniel the evidence of His power. Would God disappoint Darius' faith? Never! More than Daniel's safety depended upon an affirmative answer to the King's cry. Darius' faith depended upon it, and the faith of many of his subjects, yea, and our faith also.

Darius heard the answer to his cry from Daniel's own lips, "O King, live for ever, My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me" (Dan. 6:21, 22). What a relief! What assurance for budding faith! Now Darius knew that Daniel's God was the living God and he could safely confess his faith in Him, and

this he did in a royal decree unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth, saying, "Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for He is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and He worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions" (Dan. 6:25-27).

"Is thy God . . . able?" This question is in the hearts of many today in Muslim lands. The creed of Islam sounds good, but many have come to realize that it cannot deliver the goods, it cannot save, and they are crying in their hearts to us, even though the cry may not be upon their lips, "Is thy God . . . able to deliver?" Have you Christians any-

thing better to offer than our religion provides?"

This cry constitutes a challenge to all believers, both young and old. It constitutes a challenge which cannot be answered merely with words, or clever arguments. It calls for a demonstration of the truth and power of the Gospel to save. Such a demonstration requires two factors working together, the one human and the other divine, namely, genuine faith and implicit obedience on the one hand, and the unfailing faithfulness and power of God on the other. Both of these elements were active in the incident before us, and they must be active if we are to meet the challenge of this heart cry today.

The divine element is constant. God does not change. "I am Jehovah", says He, "I change not" (Mal. 3:6). "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).

It is the human element with which we need to be concerned. Do we believe God? It is not sufficient to subscribe to a creed no matter how orthodox. Is our faith in God genuine? Will it stand the test? What about our obedience? Are we determined to obey God at any cost? Or is our obedience limited by all kinds of "buts", and "ifs"? Daniel's faith was genuine, and his obedience implicit. When only a captive lad at the court of his captor he purposed in his heart that he would allow nothing, even in the way of food and drink, to come between him and his God. When most

of his companions were conforming to the life of the heathen court, Daniel and his three companions took their stand and refused to conform. God honoured their stand.

Through all the years of Daniel's long and successful career at the court of the kings of Babylon, Daniel held firmly to his course, and when, under Darius the Mede, he knew that that course was leading to the lions' den he never wavered. He who in his youth had not been tempted by the king's dainties, would not now be frightened by the king's decree. He knew only one Lord, the Lord his God; and he knew only one path, the path of obedience. Even when he knew that the writing was signed and his enemies were watching, he kept right on, and God honoured him with the conversion of a world monarch, whose confession of faith was a royal decree to all people, nations, and languages in all the earth.

Are we willing to meet the challenge of Islam today? Are we willing to be the material for a demonstration of God's power to save? Then we must choose the path that Daniel chose; we must follow that path without wavering; and even when we know that the writing has been signed which will excommunicate, ostracise, and outlaw us, we must not hesitate, but keep right on, even though it may mean death for us. If we do, God will do the rest.

"I beseech you therefore, . . . by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice . . . unto God . . . And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1, 2).

R. M. PIEPGRASS (Kaduma Ict., Nigeria).



The Bedouin and His Camel

(This is the translation of a story written in Arabic and distributed as a tract amongst Muslimeen).

They say that a Bedouin tied up his camel in the twilight in front of his tent. Sleep came to him and he slept quietly and nothing disturbed him until it was midnight; in that hour his camel awakened him and said to him, "O my master, I have become very cold: do me the favour of allowing me to hide my nose in the tent". His master said to him "No matter", and covered himself again with his cloak and returned to rest.



A Bedouin's Tent

After a little while his camel awoke him again and said to him once more "May there be mercy upon thy parents O my master; my nose is now in a pleasant condition, it would not matter if I brought in my ears?" His master said "Very well, O camel, Good-night". The camel brought in his ears, but after a little while he began to shiver with cold till the tent shook, and awakened his master again, and when he awoke he said to him "What has taken thee?" for he was becoming weary of him. The camel said to him "Forgive me O my master, my neck is shaking with cold . . . add to

me a favour". The master said to him "Bring in thy neck and leave me in peace".

But the camel did not leave him in peace: with the rising of the moon he began again to cry out louder than at first and said to him roughly "Rise, O man". His master sighed and said to him "What wilt thou, O camel?" The camel said "Thou art warm, and I am dying of cold. If thou wilt get out of the way a little, I wish to bring in my forelegs". His master said "Bring them in for I have had enough of thee", but now he was obliged to crouch up in the side of the tent, and remained in much discomfort. Notwithstanding, sleep again came to him till he heard his camel call loudly to him "O my master". The Bedouin answered and said to him "What hast thou, O fool?" The camel said to him "O my master, my body is dying of cold, I must bring it in". His master said "Bring it in, O mule".

And as the camel entered he nearly overturned the tent, and at once it became so suffocating that its master became obliged to push his head out from under the tent's edge to breathe. And without asking leave the camel went on to bring in his legs and lay down in the midst. And now the poor master could not move him and could only drag his arms and legs without and sleep in the cold.

Who was master now in the tent? The true master had given up his place and could not take it again. His strength was not sufficient for turning out his camel, and he let him stay on at his ease.

THE INTERPRETATION.

O boy, I think thou wilt say in thy thoughts "That man was a fool to let his camel enter till he was master of his tent". It may be that thou thyself art like him, for thy heart is like the tent, and thou dost let sin like the camel gain possession bit by bit. And now I will shew thee how it happens to a boy who lets the camel of sin enter his heart. At the first when he is a little fellow and going to school, before the bell rings he plays with dice to gain sweetmeats or half-pence: then he goes on to gamble and rejoices much for he gains money. Now see how sin gradually comes in like the head and forelegs of the camel in the tent.

After a while he delights in card-playing, and runs off for several days from school and lies to his father and to the master of the school to save himself from the stick. And when he runs away, he keeps company with boys who are big and bad and they smoke tobacco and keef, and drink and cat majouna and opium. And he follows them till sometimes he becomes foolish and his reason leaves him or he gets angry till he blasphemes and fights with the other boys, and the police take him to prison, and there he comes into company with wicked lads and they become his comrades and they go together to bad places, and then he steals in order to live, for he does not choose to work, and thus sin takes possession of his conduct and his character, as the body of the camel entered altogether into the tent of his master.

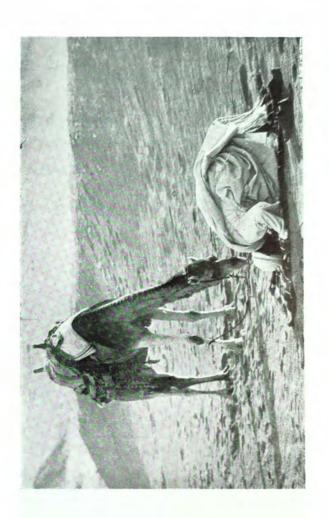
O boy, it may be that as yet thou hast not got so far as this, but the nose of the camel has entered thy tent, that is to say, if only one sin has entered thy heart, it must increase in its power every day. If thou hast begun to lie, or to quarrel, or to steal little things, this shows that sin has begun to enter thy heart, and then little by little it possesses thy heart altogether.

Thou hast no power to resist thy sins, and if thy heart is filled with sin and Satan, how will God receive thee in

the pure heaven?

There was One in this world Who conquered Satan altogether and God has sent Him to save thee: He is our Lord Jesus Christ. He is able to turn out this camel of sin from the tent of thy heart, according as it is said of Him in the Gospel that he was "manifested to destroy the works of the devil". Let Him enter thy heart and He will turn out Satan and all his works. Call to Him to come and save thee before the time passes for thee.

The Late MISS LILIAS TROTTER (Algiers Mission Band).



The Islamic religion has six articles of faith. The Muslim believes:

- (1) in the unity of God.
- (2) in angels.
- (3) in God's books—104 of them, of which the Qur'an is the final and supreme in authority.
- (4) in God's prophets of which six are major—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, the last-named, according to them, surpassing all the rest.
- (5) in the Day of Judgment and Resurrection.
- (6) in the predestination of good and evil.

Let us take our Bibles and in six studies see what God teaches on these subjects and discover, too, how Satan has perverted truth for the followers of the False Prophet.

Our first study, then, is The Unity of God. Let us look at Genesis 1.1. This is, of course, the first mention of God in the Bible. What does it teach us? To get at its true meaning we must remember that the Bible was originally written in the Hebrew language. If the English words "He created" were translated literally they would read "He Gods created". How is this? Because the verb "He created" (one word in Hebrew) is singular, and it is followed (not preceded as in English) by its subject "Elohim", which means "Gods". Nearly all Hebrew verbs are made up of three root letters, so that each verb is a tri-unity; and the first person in Hebrew is not "I" but "he". Now in this verse the "he" is Elohim; but "im" is a plural ending, for example, cherub. singular, cherubim, plural; seraph, singular, seraphim, plural; Elah, singular, Elohim, plural. So we get the literal translation "He Gods created". Now let us look at Genesis 1.26. Here we read "Elohim said 'Let Us (plural) make man in our image'", which is followed in verse 27 by "So Elohim created man in His (singular) image". So we learn that God is both One and Plural, not a single unity but a plural unity.

and Islam

For another example of this truth let us look at Genesis 1.5. It is instructive to note the first mention of the word "one", and see if that also teaches us anything. The word "one" is first used in this verse. We read "the first day". literally "day one". And we see that it is a plural unity made up of "evening and morning". And if you turn to the next chapter. Genesis 2.24, again we find that "one" is made up of a plural unity, "male and female". Now let us read Deuteronomy 6.4. "Hear, O Isreal, Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah". These words are the great confession or witness uttered by Jews as they die. And we find that the word for God is Elohim, a plural one, while the word for "one" is "ahad", singular. In the Jewish Prayer Book they change the word "ahad" to "yacheed", which means "single", to get away from the truth of a plural unity. If you are still interested, look up

Numbers 6.24-27. The word "Lord" in Hebrew is "Jehovah". Here we find "Jehovah" mentioned three times, and then (in verse 27) it is followed by these words, "So shall they put My name (singular) upon the children of Israel".

Isaiah 6.3. You will notice the word "Holy" is here uttered three times, followed by the double call in verse 8, "Whom shall I (singular) send? Who will go for Us?" (plural) and, finally, if we turn to the New Testament, we find in Matthew 28.20 that our Lord Jesus Christ bids His missionary servants baptize in the Name (singular) of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Three Persons but one God. Wondrous mystery. Yet we do not want to leave it at that. There is one further reference we should look up which will help us.

1 John 4.8. "God is Love". This being so, He must have had Someone to love from all eternity. Who but the Son? The Father has always loved the Son, and the Son has always loved the Father. A single unity like that of the Muslims is cold and loveless (cf. Hebrews 12.29).

So we conclude from our first study that where the Jews and the Muslims worship a single unity, the Bible reveals a Blessed One who is a triple unity, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, for God is Love.

Overseas Mail

North-West China. December, 1949.

Dear Elder Brother.

You ask me why I call you "Elder" as you are the same age as myself? We Chinese should think it rude to call anyone young, at least we who have been brought up in the old ways. All the people coming from down-country (down near the mouths of our great rivers), who come here now, have very different ideas.

Now I must tell you about my visit to the Good News Hall. I find that they don't try to make us foreign, in fact the foreigners I saw wore ordinary Chinese clothes and looked quite respectable; some Chinese from down-country have foreign clothes-not only school uniform but other things.

The other thing I noticed was that they didn't say anything about who ought to rule the country; I asked if they wanted the Christians to rule and they said that anyone ruler or ruled, scholar, farmer, artisan or tradesman—would do his work better and be happier if he knew that God so loved him that He sent Jesus Christ to die for him, so that his sins are forgiven.

I almost felt that it must be all true while I was there; then I came home, my father said again that we are all the same—we each get to Heaven in our own way as long as we don't worship idols like the people of Han. Then my uncle came in and he said that everyone who is not a Muslim will go to Hell. I asked about having our sins forgiven and he said. "You are already beginning to fall away from Islam take care!" But that doesn't seem to answer the question, do you think it does? If God is really so great and holy we need some way to get good enough even to pray to Him.

I was allowed to go to help sell bread at the Tibetan Festival the next day as my father said I was not old enough to worry about religion. It was fun seeing them in all their queer robes falling down in front of those stupid idols; except that the Christians seem really sorry for them, and want them to be saved. It made me feel as if that made the Christians better than us. But I must say I enjoyed trying to get more than my father expected for the bread I

sold and spending the extra on sunflower seeds and malt toffee.

On the way home we stopped at a Saint's tomb to ask him to pray for us—I wonder if that is as good as trusting the Lord Jesus, somehow I don't think it is. We stuck sticks of burning incense in front of the tomb. My father says that is not at all the same as burning incense like the heathen. He was cross when I said, "But it gets burnt all the same", so I couldn't ask any more.

Salaam,

From your Younger Brother.

P.S. They seem to have found out about my cousin who is a Christian. My mother begged me this morning not to go to the Good News Hall any more; she seemed so afraid that I should go where my cousin has gone. I was told that he had gone to a school, but my mother and aunt seem very sad about it. When I asked why, mother said the school is a long way off, but it is not only that I am sure which makes them so sad. He looked so happy last time I saw him, saying that (because the Lord Jesus died and rose again) he can call God his Father, in Jesus' Name.



A Saint's Tomb



Overbeard in a Missionary's Study

"Hullo, and who is this coming in my door? Oh! of course, you are one of those Jackwanttoknows!"

"Say, Mr. Stalley, what's that book you've got on your table? It looks more like a chocolate box with all the red and gold patterns on it".

"That is the Qur'an. Have you ever heard of it before?"

"So that is the famous book of the Muslims we have heard about. What funny writing it is!"

"Yes, and I may tell you that the words you happen to be staring at just now, mean 'Let none but the cleansed ones touch it. It is a revelation sent down from the Lord of Heaven and Earth'".

"Really? Mustn't I touch it then?"

"Just put it down now and let me tell you something about it. The Muslim believes that that is the very last of God's revelations to man, and therefore it is very, very holy, and one must hold it very reverently. Before he takes it up to read he must go through a certain washing ceremony, just the same as he does before he says his prayers. Come here and stand by me a minute, and look out of my window into the street".

"Oh! I say, whatever are those two fellows across the way there playing at? One of them is holding a big black kettle, and the other is squatting down on his haunches in front of him and holding out his hands. There, now the other is pouring water into his hands and he is pretending to wash although he hasn't got any soap. Why, now he has taken his shoes off! He looks like a hen, balancing himself on one foot while he's rinsing the other. Now for his head! How different he looks with his high headgear off. Why his hair is close cropped. He is doing it all over with the water, in his ears and behind them too! My, even his nose comes in for it, inside I mean. Now his mouth, it looks as if he is cleaning his teeth and having a gargle at

the same time! What is he doing all that for, and out in the open street too?"

"That is just what I have been telling you about, the washing ceremony which every good Muslim must perform before he says his prayers and also that they are supposed to perform before taking up their sacred book to read. It is so holy that Muslims believe that the simple reading of the Qur'an, even though it is not understood, brings merit not only for the reader himself, but for his ancestors as well. A story is told of a Persian Iman, who one day saw a sinful man being tormented by angels. He became angry because the man was a Muslim. Later on a friend of his noticed that his anger had passed, and asked him why. "Oh!" said the Iman, "that man is no longer tormented but is forgiven and receiving the blessings of God". "And why?" asked the friend. "Because his small son had gone to school and had read one verse from the Qur'an!"

"Sounds more like a box of magic!"

"Yes. I suppose it would be true to say that a very great number of Muslims have more faith in its magic uses than they have understanding of what is written in it. Now tomorrow for example, when you go along some of the native streets. or to the market, you are almost sure to see a man sitting on the ground with a sand tray, one or two books, and paper and ink in front of him. He not only pretends to tell your fortune, but should you desire to assure yourself against sickness, danger from enemies, loss, or perhaps you would like to see somebody you don't like harmed, it's all very simple for him. Just tell him what you want, and he will write out certain verses from the Our'an on a piece of paper. Then he will tell you either to wrap it up in a piece of cloth. or have a little leather sachet made for it, and then either have it sewn into your clothing or hang it round your neck or in your house. These fellows make quite a living out of their poor superstitious countrymen, and not only do they use their so-called 'holy book' for the purpose I have just mentioned, but for many others and more evil ones beside".

"Well, what is this queer sort of book exactly? What does it say, and who wrote it anyway?"

"Three questions all at once? Well, to answer the last one first. This book was written by Muhammed, the founder of the religion of Islam. One day as he was meditating in a lonely cave away in the Arabian desert, he said he had a vision of an angel, who bade him recite certain words. Afterwards, he tried to obtain more of these visions, for he thought 'surely those words that the angel spoke must be the beginning of a new revelation such as was given to the prophets of the Hebrews and Christians of other times'. It was two years though before the visit was renewed, and after this they came quite frequently. Sometimes he declared that it was Gabriel, the archangel, who spoke to



" A man . . . with a sandtray"

him, and once he even said he heard the voice of God. Whenever he received words like these he would repeat them to his followers, who learned them by heart. Over a period of about twenty-one years, his messages numbered hundreds. As he gained more power, a secretary was appointed to write down whatever his master said. At first they were short and spoke against the idolatry of the Arabs, who had hundreds of gods. Here is an example:—'Say, God is one God; the eternal God; He begetteth not, neither is He

begotten; and there is not anyone like Him'. The Muslims hold this in great veneration, and believe it is equal in value to one-third part of the whole Qur'an. They use it as a retort when we talk about the Holy Trinity, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It seems hard for them to understand that our God is One even as the sun is, high above in the heavens, and yet who has shined upon us by sending Christ Jesus to bring us Light and Life, even as the sun sends forth its rays to give physical light and life to the earth; and even as it warms us and gives us strength as we live on earth, so God by the Holy Spirit lives in us as the Divine Comforter of whom we read in John, chapters 14 and 16".

Oh! all this is interesting. I wish I could stop and hear more, but the clock is striking and I must run home. May I come another day and hear some more about this book?"

"Yes, certainly. I am only too willing to tell you as much as you like to listen to. And in the meantime, suppose you read your Bible and see if you can find out what God does teach us there about the Holy Trinity. Goodbye, then, till next time".

H. W. STALLEY

(Algiers Mission Band).



Studying to be teachers of the Qur'an

Missionary Mould

PART 3. THE HYMN.

"And what are you going to be when you grow up?" someone asked Eleanore when she was still small.

"Oh, a medical missionary, of course. A really properly famous one", came the immediate answer, humility not being one of her scanty virtues.

But as she grew up Eleanore found her forecast to be utterly upset, and her plans continually miscarrying by unpredictable circumstances that landed her finally in a

position poles apart from her audacious ambition.

She left school after matriculation, having achieved the coveted position of Head Girl, though the gilt was considerably taken off the gingerbread by the Headmistress's rather cutting affirmation that it was because she was the "least of the evils" available as possibilities for the post that particular term! Her desire to go straight to the university was frustrated by her mother whose very wise council was, that Eleanore should spend one year at home learning domestic ways and home-making (an indispensable part in the training of a missionary) before she plunged into her medical studies. But just as she was beginning to enquire concerning the obtaining of a scholarship towards the end of that year, another block occurred. Mrs. Thomson, her mother, got ill, and had to undergo a serious operation, which left her in such poor health that it was obvious she would need a daughter at home for some considerable time. It was a blow. but Eleanore's optimistic nature stood her in good stead and she determined she would work extra hard to catch up with the others of her age when the time did come for her to go to college.

But two years passed and still she was unable to leave her mother. Discontent and rebellion made life very bitter, and all the world seemed against her, even at times her adored mother. In a household where saintly missionaries and other grand servants of God were frequently entertained there were ample opportunities to learn the secret of a victorious life through a continual abiding in the Lord Jesus Christ. But Eleanore knew full well it could only be obtained by a complete surrender to Him as King, and this she was unprepared to do. Storms of temper were unfortunately quite common occurrences, but even so, the family were utterly taken aback by a particularly violent outburst one morning.

Mrs. Thomson was going the rounds of her fowl-houses, and presently called out in an alarmed tone, "Oh! do come here. Eleanore. Look, one of the ducks is dead".

"Dead?" answered Eleanore, "it can't be; it was all right last night". "Are you sure, dear? Did you look at them carefully? It looks to me as if it may have been ill for a few days".

She handed it to her daughter, whose temper was rising at what she considered accusations on her management of the poultry. She took the bird roughly, and began walking away to the incinerator to have it burned. But Mrs. Thomson called after her, "Don't you think we ought to have a post mortem in case it is some infectious disease?" Eleanore, knowing only too well that her neglect of her work had quite probably been a contributory cause of the duck's death, was furious at the possibility of being found out, and so from where she stood, a few paces away from her mother, she threw the duck with all her force at Mrs. Thomson, shouting "Do it yourself!" Then aghast at the state to which her uncontrolled temper had brought her, she rushed off to her room, still unwilling to admit the true reason of her failure, but instead brooding over her supposed grievances.

But, unrealized as yet by Eleanore, the Lord of the Harvest was watching over His gap-filler and working out His process of moulding her as He wished. Her godly father was much in prayer for her, and one day felt led to suggest that she should have a short holiday. Eleanore was delighted and began making plans to go and stay with an old school friend, not quite sure whether the main attraction was the friend herself or her brother! This young man, although of Christian parentage, had thrown over the faith of his forebears, and was walking in worldly ways. Eleanore's parents knew of the danger but very wisely sought to counteract it by telling their Lord about it, rather than by speaking to the girl herself. No objection was made to her going to this house, but an invitation was given to Eleanore to accompany her father first to a conference at Swanwick for the deepening of spiritual life. As the invitation included her railway fare, and as it was near her friend's house. Eleanore thought the material advantages outweighed the possible tediousness of meetings.

How different it all was from what she had expected! The Lord her King was there waiting for her; He revealed Himself to her and spoke to her very heart. There was nothing Eleanore could do but abdicate quickly in the face of such Love that He poured down upon her. From henceforth she was not her own, to give to the Lord if she so chose, but she was His, for He had bought her, and by His Spirit He lived in her and must claim the right to her undivided allegiance. Bible study and prayer became almost new things, delights instead of drudgery, and her witness was from that time "The Joy of the Lord is your stronghold", such a change from the bad tempered, moody girl which she was temperamentally. But "to know Christ" in this way always involves "cost", and on the last day of the convention Eleanore suddenly realized that her friend's brother could have no place in this new-found union with her Lord. It was brought home in a flash during the singing of the hymn "Nearer still nearer, Lord to be Thine, Sin with its follies I gladly resign; All of its pleasures, pomp and its pride, Give me but Jesus, my Lord crucified". Although the tears almost choked her, vet grace was given to make it a very real sacrifice of praise to her Lord as she sang.

The next day she went on to pay her visit, and though there was no change in her outward show of friendliness, Eleanore made it quite clear that her life had been re-adjusted to God which would leave no room for unions made solely on the earthly plane. And the wonderful thing about it all was that the "cost", which had seemed so great at the beginning, very soon seemed almost insignificant in the light of joyous satisfaction which her Lord Himself gave her now. Surely now she was ready at last to obey His command and "Go... and preach"? She had given her heart to Him a long time ago; her will was now absolutely His: what could hinder any longer? Unfortunately much! And several years more of disciplined training was necessary before this impetuous servant was considered by her Master fit to proceed to the Mission Field.

