

# Wonders in Egypt

The Story  
Of  
Egypt General Mission  
By  
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*"Thou ....the Mighty God....has set  
Signs and Wonders in the land of  
Egypt even unto this day"  
Jeremiah 32.20*



## Foreword

The year 1951 marks a new era in the history of the EGYPT GENERAL MISSION. In 1950 the last of those who were called by God to start the work passed into the Glory, and we are now without their presence on earth. It is for this reason, among others, that it was decided to publish this brief account of what has been accomplished during the past fifty-three years, since the first "Seven" sailed for Egypt.

This booklet incorporates some material found in books now out of print, but much which is new; and it brings the story of the Mission right up to date.

It is certainly true of those now working in Egypt that "other men laboured and ye are entered into their labours". Let us pray that where these others have sown we may reap, and that they and we -and the Lord of the harvest Himself -may rejoice together.

J. N. D. ANDERSON,  
Chairman of Home Council.

# Wonders in Egypt

## A Jubilee in Egypt

*"From the glory and the gladness, from the secret place,  
From the rapture of His presence, from the radiance of His face,  
Christ, the Son of God, hath sent me, through the midnight lands,  
Mine the mighty ordination of the pierced Hands."*

In Egypt one December afternoon in 1948, these words could have been heard. Amongst the cheerful voices singing this hymn of amazing facts with triumphant assurance, there was one voice which seemed to carry a weight of emphasis more than any other. This was so, not because of its special purity of tone - which unfortunately was lacking owing to the ravages of a persistent disease - but because behind it lay an experimental knowledge of the truth of the words over a time greatly exceeding that of any one else present.

The occasion was the celebration of the arrival of a missionary in Egypt fifty years before . . . in short; it was Mr. George Swan's Jubilee. At Ezbet-el-Zeitoun, in a hall beautifully decorated with flowers and ferns, were gathered all the missionaries of the Egypt General Mission then on the Field. It was in the nature of an informal family party, and this impression was enhanced by the presence of a two-tiered birthday cake, supported by the seven pillars of wisdom, and surmounted by a large white swan. After tea they sang the hymn from which the above verse is taken and, as it proceeded, many felt it might almost have been written personally for Mr. Swan.

"But I tell you I have seen Him, God's beloved Son . . ." and indeed such a vision had in fact been granted to him fifty-four years before when, as a young man of twenty-two years of age, it had dawned on him that the Lord Jesus had come into the world, not merely to help him make himself good, which he had been struggling to do for eleven years, but to make him good. "I surrendered" said Mr. Swan, "and the result was past all imagining." Never did he dream of such effortless victory over sin, such peace, such assurance, as came into his life. Nor could he foresee what it was going to mean to countless other lives. Past all imagining indeed, that fifty years hence he, then an electrical engineer in Belfast, would be surrounded by a crowd of missionaries and their children—the "Father" of a Mission family.

Not to many is given the privilege of celebrating their Jubilee of service on the foreign mission field. When Mr. Swan was asked to what he ascribed this long residence in the land of his adoption, he would answer, with his blue eyes twinkling and a merry look on his face, that it so happened that owing to asthma he could not live in any other country! But the fact that he was not living an easy, retired life of a semi-invalid, but still working up to the full limit of his failing strength, made others realise that it was far more the power of Christ resting upon him as a result of his glorying in his infirmity.

What amazing changes, with far reaching consequences to missionary work, Mr. Swan had witnessed during the fifty years of his life in Egypt. When he arrived in 1898 the country was a British Protectorate with an autocratic ruler of Turkish origin who was styled the Khedive. The Cabinet Ministers were all nationals, but alongside each was an Englishman as adviser, which meant that British influence was behind all administration. In 1948 we find Egypt an independent kingdom under her second king. She has come through a period of constitutional changes, and democracy is finding its feet. The country is intensely nationalistic and proud of its position as one of the leading Islamic states. This makes a great difference to the opposition which has to be met. In Parliament all legislation is framed to safeguard Islam as the State religion, and missionary work has become restricted by law. In the early years of the

work, the chief opposition was mob fanaticism against individual efforts, with the authorities anxious to protect the missionary, while yet keeping the peace at all costs. The whole status of the foreigner has altered. In 1898 the capitulations were still in force. These, which dated back to the second century and granted certain privileges to foreigners which were denied to the Egyptians, have been abolished, and like-wise the Mixed Courts of Justice. The foreigner comes under Egyptian law. There is an alteration in the attitude of the religious authorities to missionary work. Their pride in the imperviousness of Islam has been shaken and now they are more afraid of effect of Missions. They have had to adjust themselves to modern trends of thought. The nineteenth century the old tradition of the Azhar University, founded about A.D.900, were all they needed. The Qur'an the one text-book and all subsidiary subjects based on it. Now modern subjects have been added to the curriculum, and such innovation as the use of loudspeakers in the mosques permitted. All this is broadening the minds of the once-bigoted Azhar graduates, and some are reading the Bible to find out what it says.

The standards of living have risen tremendously during this past half-century, with introduction of Public Health Service Previously it was the missionaries (whether Protestant or Roman Catholic) who thought of the poor. Now in most places there better sanitation and it is no longer necessary to carry water-filters about as did the missionaries when they travelled in Egypt in the early days. Free Government Dispensaries Hospitals function in all the towns, and serve large districts. There are travelling hospitals and eye clinics which visit the villages, there are mass vaccinations and inoculation frequent intervals. But these have not had crippling effect on medical mission which might have been expected, notwithstanding the fact that on mission compounds both treatment and medicines have to be paid for to help meet the costs. For the Government institutions lack the one great essential for effective healing, which is love. This is quickly recognised and appreciated by the Moslems, who still flock to the place where they know they will find it.

Although life in the villages is still primitive, the townsman is rapidly becoming Europeanised, at least outwardly. Instead of the tarbouche and long flowing robes, one sees the streets full of men in ordinary suits, and many of them hatless. The cities are becoming transformed with huge skyscrapers, and modern cars and the ubiquitous lorry are ousting the slower forms of transport such as donkey, horse and camel. A motor car journey across the desert from Cairo to Suez was reckoned a rather perilous undertaking, when one made preparations for a night's sojourn in case of breakdown. Now a constant service of deluxe coaches does the trip in just over two hours. In this there are advantages and disadvantages for the missionary. Much time is saved on evangelistic trips, but there is the temptation to try too much in one day, and not give sufficient attention to individual souls.

Perhaps the most striking change is seen in the growing emancipation of women, particularly in the towns. The older women have substituted the hat for the veil, and go about their business, shopping and the like, quite unattended. The younger ones are claiming the same liberties as their European sisters. They dress like Paris models, and in the summer go hatless, stockingless and sleeveless. They walk quite openly arm in arm with their boy friends, and the cinema is their chief form of entertainment. However, in the villages (in which some seventy-five per cent. of the people live) the veil and its accompanying black robes are still only too obvious. Although many old customs are passing, even the evil of polygamy, yet unfortunately divorce still flourishes in the same easy manner. There are more than sixty thousand cases a year. Women have, however, more legal redress than they used to have, and also know better how to claim it.

Another outstanding development has been the rapid advance of education. At the beginning of the twentieth century it was almost entirely confined to boys. In the cities there were high schools, but in other places the principal means of instruction were kuttabs (primitive schools in charge of Azhar-trained men) where the syllabus consisted of the three R's and much memory work from the Qur'an. Now primary

education is free for all, boys and girls alike, and is supposed to be compulsory, with State leaving-examinations in all the usual subjects, and scholarships to be won for entrance into secondary schools. The University of Cairo has over eight thousand students, many of them girls.

The effect of all this on missionary education is both advantageous and the opposite. The boys only too soon pass out of our influence. They quickly outgrow the syllabus of Mission schools and go on to the higher education provided by the Government. The salaries of the masters and equipment needed for such type of schools are far beyond our financial resources. On the other hand it means that the girls stay longer with us than before. The custom of early marriage is fading, nor is marriage the only career open to them. In some cases they even question the right of their parents to choose for them, and stand for their own choice. All this is of great advantage to the ultimate end of missionary work for it is enabling the girls who come to know the Lord Jesus in school, to make their claim for liberty, and go on to open confession of faith in baptism. It is still a tremendous fight for them, but it is not such an unequal one as it used to be.

But one thing did not change for Mr. Swan, and that was God's commission to him to preach the Gospel in the land of Egypt. The story of how he and others accomplished this, by God's grace and help, can be read in the following pages.

## CHAPTER 2

### Praying for labourers

"SEVEN men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." It is said that history repeats itself, and though there is no strict analogy in this case, it is remarkable that in these latter days God once again chose out seven men to accomplish a particular piece of work which He wanted done. They were very ordinary young men, taken from varying walks of life, but God laid His hand upon them in an unmistakable way, wishing to reveal the excellency of His power in earthen vessels. As an instrument towards this end He used, in the first instance, a woman.

In the year 1896 Miss Annie Van Somme was living in Egypt with some missionary friends, and working amongst the British soldiers, but the burden of the land and its own needy multitudes lay heavy on her heart. It could only find relief in prayer, but she felt that individual prayer was not enough. So she was led to gather together a small group of God's servants who pledged themselves to pray daily for Egypt, that God would open the windows of Heaven and pour out His Spirit on all His own people in that land, and that He would thrust forth more labourers into His vineyard. It was this pressing need of more labourers that specially burdened Miss Van Sommer.

Missionaries strategically placed in the big cities and towns were labouring magnificently. All could tell of remarkable instances of the work of God's Spirit in their midst, and expectation ran high with regard to the conversion of the Moslems. But as Miss Van Sommer travelled from one large centre to another, she passed through miles and miles of fertile Delta country. Here were hundreds of villages dotted along the banks of the River Nile, peopled by thousands of poor peasants, illiterate and oppressed. These were entirely unreached with the Gospel, and had no likelihood of hearing of the Saviour, for there was a tragic lack of men giving all their time to direct evangelistic work.

The following year Miss Van Sommer returned to England. The voyage took longer in those days than it does now, and one wonders how many of those homeward hours were spent in praying for the land she had just left. Exactly when God's explicit purpose touched her heart and found a response of faith is not known, but gradually there was borne in upon her the desire to ask for seven young men, specially set apart for simple evangelistic work amongst the village folk.

In July of that year, Miss Van Sommer was invited to a Students' Conference at Curbar in Derbyshire. Her hopes rose high. Here surely was her opportunity to tell of the needs of Egypt. But it was a disappointment to find that she was only to be allowed to speak for a quarter-of-an-hour on the last evening. How, in that short time was she to give an adequate vision of the millions of Moslem souls going to a Christless grave? For three weeks preceding the Conference still more prayer ascended to the Throne, that nothing might hinder the outworking of God's purpose through her.

During this time another volume of prayer was going up from potential labourers in Ireland, asking the Lord to show them what was His plan for their lives. In Belfast bands of young men were meeting regularly once a week for a half-night of prayer. It began in connection with an open-air meeting which they were conducting in the streets of the city, but as they continued to wait on the Lord He brought to them more and more the claims of the foreign field. They were totally ignorant of the need of Egypt, and of the existence of Miss Van Sommer and her prayer-burdened friends. But God knew what was working to unite these two forces and make manifest His eternal purpose for the furtherance of His Kingdom in that land.

One memorable night in February, 1897, the Lord drew very near and spoke to each of the thirteen present. It was so beat searching a time that they felt life could never be the same afterwards. Something must be put on record. One of the number drew up declaration which they all signed, putting themselves unreservedly at God's disposal for foreign missionary work as soon as at wherever He called.

One of these was John Martin Cleaver, young Belfast solicitor, who was constant waiting upon God to know where He would have him to go. One day, in April of that year, as he was led out in prayer for missionary work as never before, God seemed to show him that his was not to be a lonely trail, but that He would send him out in company with six others, making a band of seven in all. He also laid on his heart the names of these companions; and this was confirmed, for soon after without any human intervention five of these others joined him, and the little band met as often as they could to ask God where was the place of His appointment for them. For a time there seemed, no light, and then the impression came that perhaps at the Students' Conference at Curbar the Lord would reveal their future sphere of labour. But only four of them were free to go.

Thus it 'happened', on the afternoon of her arrival, that Miss Van Sommer was introduced to J. Martin Cleaver, William Bradley, Fred Cooney, and T. E. (Ned) Swan, four young men from Belfast. Later on she was told their story, with the information that there were really seven of them, and the strange thing was that though they were sure that they were to go to the foreign field together, none of them knew where this was to be! Were these her prayed-for Seven? These young men were attached to no particular Mission. Miss Van Sommer had visualised reinforcements for the existing Societies in Egypt. But this little band of men were expecting to be led forth by the Lord Himself and to look to Him alone for their support. Were these the ones to be launched forth into Egypt, that hard, bigoted, fanatical land? It seemed all far too hazardous; and she dared not tell them of her vision without a clear confirmatory word from her Lord that this was His doing, and that the responsibility was His alone. Again she betook herself to prayer all through the night, alone in her lodging near Curbar. If these were to go, under whose leadership was it to be?

In the early dawn of the next morning the Commander-in-Chief was made known to her as she picked up her well-worn "Daily Light" to read her morning portion. "I have given HIM for a witness to the people, A LEADER and Commander to the people." (Isaiah 55.4.) Faith grasped the glorious possibilities of it all, and quietly but trustingly she left it all with Him. Later in the day she was given an opportunity to talk to these four young men, and quite simply, without any undue pressure or persuasion, she put before them the claim of Egypt, and the burden of the need there which was so much on her heart. The young men listened with growing concern and deepening wonder at the mysterious ways of the Lord. They had thought and talked of many possibilities of other countries, but never of Egypt. It was a new field to them. After some prayer together they felt they must get alone with God over this matter. So they climbed the hillside and then separated.

When they met again, each told how he had been brought to the conclusion, during the night, that whatever it might mean to the others, his lifework was in Egypt! But what about the other three of their group who had not been at Curbar? Elias Thompson, visiting a cousin in the south of France, and many miles from Curbar, quite unexpectedly went over to Algeria and, while there, attended meeting at which the great burden of the need to evangelise the Moslems was laid on his heart. Although he felt then that this would mean a separation from the rest of the band, yet he could not but yield to the insistent call of the Spirit to dedicate himself to this work. What a joy it was when he got back to Belfast and heard of God's dealings with the others, and how amazingly all fitted into the plan.

Another instrument in God's hands for the calling out of this band was a little pamphlet called "A Challenge to Faith" which had been written by a missionary working amongst the Moslems in North



Africa. From the way in which it came into his possession, George Swan knew that it had been sent to him from God, and humbly he accepted it as his call.

Finally, when John Logan, the last of the group, heard of the preparations being made by his companions to follow this call, he was quite convinced that they were being sidetracked by the enemy of souls, and even went over to Belfast to tell them so. But when he heard more completely of how the Lord had led them he changed his mind and wished them God-speed, and went his way. But the Spirit of God went with him, and he could not shake off the thought that there was something in this for him. He had only got as far as Dublin when he was challenged by a servant of God as to whether he were going with the band of young men from Belfast to Egypt. Although he could give no assured affirmative, yet the impression grew stronger and stronger, and shortly afterwards he went to the west of England to consult a friend of his who was known to be a godly man of prayer. In the train he kept wondering, if this were really God's call to him, how he could free himself from his business and other affairs in order to join this outgoing band. He was shown into a room in his friend's house, and there confronting him on the wall were these words: "Come unto Me and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land . . . Regard not your stuff, for the good of the land of Egypt is yours."

Thus the "Seven" were completed, and the vividness and clearness of the call never left them, but was a strength and inspiration throughout all the difficulties, obstacles and dangers which lay ahead of them.

The majority of the Egypt Mission Band, as they were called, sailed from Liverpool on a cold winter's day in January, 1898.

Thus they went forth gladly and joyously for His Name's sake. These young men had seen souls saved in the streets of their home towns, and so it was not strange that the Lord should use their very departure to bring into His fold the much-prayed-for brother of one of their number.

"Four-nine-four!" came the cry over the water, as the boat receded from the wharf, and the answering shout made it clear that the message had been understood. It referred to the number of the well-known hymn, "God be with you till we meet again." God was with them, and they knew it, and were not ashamed to let others know it too.

## CHAPTER 3

### **Blazing the Trail 1898-1903**

"AND they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following." "The Lord ... with them!" It was the reality of His presence with them that distinguished this little band from the very outset, and which helped in the subsequent establishment of the Mission. They had had no specialised theological training at home, but they had learnt to know their God, and thus were valiant souls ready to do exploits.

This was evident from the moment of their arrival in Alexandria on January 31st, 1898, when in the house where they spent the first few days they went down on their knees, asking the Lord to reveal the place of His choice and the centre in which they were to be located. When a suitable flat was found there was nothing externally to distinguish it from any other flats in the vicinity, but the name they gave it spoke volumes as to what it meant to those residing in it: "The House of Praise." There was always so much to praise for as they saw the Spirit's working in lives around in answer to prayer, and prayer meant more to them than just a series of petitions. It meant hours of quiet waiting upon God, when the whole of the rest of the city was wrapt in slumber. Praise quite naturally followed and became a lifelong habit, so that years afterwards George Swan still made his morning greeting to members of his house-hold in the form of this question, "Is there a song in your heart, or only a prayer?"

But let no one imagine that life was one long shout of stirring hymns! The vigour they put into their vocal efforts was equally applied to their study of Arabic, which was their chief occupation during the first year. Here again it was manifest that the Lord was with them. They were in no position to choose suitable teachers for themselves, so they sought and obtained guidance from God with most satisfactory results. And this mastering of the language was not to them a mere matter of prescribed terms, working up to an examination, after which one enjoyed a well-earned rest. Holidays to them meant an even better opportunity for concentrated study, so tents were bought and they betook themselves up to the mountains in the cool Lebanon air where they could study with renewed vigour away from the energy-sapping heat of Egypt. But their right relationship to God kept them from too great absorption in their own affairs. They were ready to use for Him openings which He gave them in many Lebanon villages, and many an older missionary thanked God for the blessing these God-possessed young men brought them at a Missionary Conference which was being held up there that year.

After this summer they returned to Egypt and set about pursuing the main aim of their lives. Another name they chose unconsciously reveals this. It is that of the magazine they published monthly in Arabic: "The Preaching of Peace." Even in the days before they became fluent in the language, they spent what time they could spare from study in this great business. They supplied themselves with tracts and booklets, and distributed thousands of these, partly by means of a book depot and partly in the streets. Conflict with the powers-that-be did not deter them. They suffered stoning from the crowds and, on one occasion, provoked considerable disapproval in Government circles which were at that time under British control.

Towards the end of that year, 1898, they felt the desire to come more into touch with the Egyptians, so they rented a small flat in a densely populated quarter of the town from whence they could, with greater accessibility, visit the Moslems in their own homes, and obtain more practice in the use of the colloquial language. But the time was drawing near when God the Holy Spirit was to lead them forward to the places where the Cross was to be firmly planted for many a year to come. They were led to choose as their

first field of operations the dark province of Sharkia. As its name denotes in Arabic, it lies on the eastern side of the Delta, and at that time held a population of over a million souls who were practically all Moslem. George Swan and Fred Cooney were set apart to occupy for Christ the town of Bilbeis, and thus the first mission station was opened in January, 1900. It is a bigoted Moslem town with a large camel market and is the centre of a district containing some sixty-eight villages. A month later, after much, strenuous prospecting work, done mostly on cycles over rough and sand: tracts, another centre was opened at Shebeen el-Kanater, and there Martin Cleaver and Ned Swan began work. Although their Arabic was still very limited, they visited the home and farms of the peasant people in the surrounding villages, and made contact with the children through small and primitive schools. As they went from house to house and saw the fruit of ignorance and dirt in the many ailments of the suffering people, they tried, following in the Master's steps, to do what they could to relieve the physical suffering. So they carried in their pockets a few simple remedies, and discovered their efficacy breaking down prejudices and gaining entrance to the hearts and homes of the people.

But their preaching commission was "to every creature" and with the eye of faith they looked out to all those enslaved by the bond of Islam. Then the Lord drew their attention to the town of Suez as a strategic centre. Through this port large numbers of pilgrims pass annually from all parts of the Moslem world and when the station here was opened it was the only centre of light on the shore of the Red Sea, and in direct touch with Jedda, the Port of Mecca. John Logan was the one chosen to attempt this venture of faith for such indeed it was. No missionary has ever settled in the town before and the people were very suspicious and unapproachable. It was a veritable Jericho, straitly shut up. For the first five months the heavens seemed, brass, and the earth iron, but the `faith-walk continued steadily. The God-given method of approach here consisted in the opening of a Book Depot and Reading Room, and a circular was issued inviting all and sundry to make use of it. Outside a signboard was hung bearing the inscription "The Soul-food Book Shop." This evoked much mocking at the supposed shopkeeper who was accused of thus; trying to entrap the foolish with boasting signs. But the Depot was left untouched, and not a few heart-hungry souls turning in to see what kind of food was kept there, received from John Logan a personal introduction to His Master, Who is the Bread of Life. Not only did the 'shop' attract Moslems from the Middle East, but many visitors from further afield, even from India and China eastwards, and Morocco in the west. Many strange sects of Islam were touched, besides Jews, Armenians, Copts and Maronites.

While these advance posts were being occupied, the campaign was being actively pressed from the original station. Mr. Cleaver had married and returned to Alexandria, and his wife created a new line of approach by opening, in the Bab Sidra quarter, the first school for girls. With their forces now scattered in four different places, it became obvious that some form of centralised administration must be organised. In this contingency their all-wise God made provision for help by planning for the Rev. Charles Inwood to pay a visit to Egypt at this time. He was a very old friend of the Band. His house had been their home in the early Belfast days, and he had been one of those who had added his signature to the memorable document by which they placed themselves at the Lord's disposal for missionary service whenever any where He chose.

So, in an atmosphere of united prayer, simple form of constitution was drawn up. The government of all matters on the Field was put into the hands of a Field Council consisting at that time, of all the members of the original Band, while a Home Council, with head quarters in Belfast, was to be formed under the Chairmanship of Mr. Inwood from amongst friends whom the Lord had, in a marked way, joined to them. How quietly and unostentatiously the whole work had developed. It was far from their thoughts to form a new missionary society when they heard the call to follow the Lamb; but, in 1903, the Band, as such, ceased to exist, and the Egypt General Mission took its place in the humble hope that it would become, in God's hand, an instrument for the evangelisation of the Moslems in Egypt and the Sudan.

## CHAPTER 4

### Following the Cloud 1904-1921

"We scarcely know as yet how the work will develop, but we are quietly watching the moving of the pillar of cloud." Thus wrote Martin Cleaver shortly after he had opened Shebeen station. As we remind ourselves from the Word of God of how the ancient pillar of cloud guided the children of Israel, we get a better idea of the reasons for the development of the varying types of work.

In the gradual change from the vigorous evangelism which characterised the early days, to what seemed more like institutional work, there was no slackening off of human zeal, nor deviation from a set aim. They were under Divine control and all was developed according to His purpose and plan. Much of the missionary work going on in Egypt when they arrived was being done amongst the Copts, who are the members of an ancient Christian Church. They desperately needed, and still need, that spiritual awakening which comes from personal relationship with the Living Saviour, made known through the preaching of the Word. But God called out the Egypt Mission Band to reach particularly those under the sway of Islam. Thus it was of a pioneering nature, and the founders had no prescribed method to copy. As they followed the Spirit's guidance they were led in the right way.

Let us reconsider for a moment the opening of the second mission station. Picture Martin Cleaver walking from end to end of the village of Shebeen-el-Kanater, searching everywhere for a house to let, but with no success. Tired out, he sat down at a cafe and decided . . . to go home? No, he turned to his Leader and, like Abraham's servant of old, asked for guidance to the spot He had prepared. Almost immediately the proprietor of the cafe volunteered to take him to a friend of his who had a house to let, and in no time the rejoicing servant of the Lord had rented it for two months. He opened a Boys' School there, and wrote in a letter home "Who knows, this might become a very useful second station?" But shortly afterwards he had to go elsewhere, and Elias Thompson took over the work.

It was the sick folk of the village who laid such a claim on his sympathy and pity, and drove him into Christ-like action. Wherever he went, he took with him simple remedies and did his utmost to minister to the physical as well as the spiritual needs of the people. But God moves in a mysterious way, and Elias Thompson "was not, for God took him." What then happened to that very primitive little dispensary work? God laid upon the hearts of faithful stewards of His to build a Hospital in memory of the one who had laid down his life for the souls of that district. Within a few years, in place of the mud hut, there were solid buildings comprising a properly organised outpatients' department, wards for both men and women, a well equipped operating theatre, and comfortable quarters for Doctors, Sisters and Egyptian staff.

Surely there can be no other type of work which gives such a unique opportunity to the Moslem adult for accepting the Gospel as medical work in a hospital, for the patient is under daily instruction in the things of God, and can see practical demonstrations, moment by moment, of the sacrificial love of God in the lives of those who so unsparingly and with such gentle kindness minister to his needs. And this has been proved again and again, until there are many men and women in the district around Shebeen who have found forgiveness of sins in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Meanwhile down at Suez the "Food for Souls" depot was attracting its adults; but the Lord, Who loves little children, was planning for them to be brought to Himself. Truly "His ways are past finding out." An old Turkish judge became friendly with Mr. Logan, and one Friday he preached in the mosque, taking for

his text the Christian missionary, and comparing his life with what he had seen of the lives of the Moslems in Suez! So impressed were his hearers that later a request came from the head of a large Moslem school that Mr. Logan would give English lessons to his boys. This opportunity was eagerly-seized, and thus were created contacts which could be developed outside school hours. Presently, the Coptic community handed over the superintendence of their school to the missionary, and later a Sunday School was started. Then a move northwards was indicated by an urgent request for a school for boys, received from the village of Tel-el-Kebeer. Shortly after, another one was established in Ismailia. These latter places were staffed at first by Egyptian helpers alone, but as the work grew, and the Lord sent out still more labourers from England to join the original seven, missionaries were located there to strengthen the hands of the nationals.

And the girls? At Suez they took matters into their own hands and refused to be left out of the educational programme. They presented themselves at the door of the Boys' School, squeezed in with the lads as they entered, and more or less staged a 'sit-down' strike, till in desperation the poor, harassed bachelor-missionary prevailed upon his sister, who was visiting him at the time, to come to his rescue and provide suitable employment in the way of sewing and knitting for these determined young ladies. With the help of a Syrian woman, lessons were given also to these girls, but an organised Girls' School was not opened until 1906 when sufficient lady missionaries had reached Egypt to allow of this.

Three years later, further reinforcements made it possible to commence a similar girls' work in Ismailia alongside that which was already well established for boys and men. Subsequent investigations at a conference for Moslem converts, as to the influences that led them to Christ, shewed that the predominating factor was the Mission Schools. In them children come under the regular sound of the Gospel and can be taught the great fundamental truths in a systematic and constructive way. They can have their roots firmly imbedded in the Word of God, so that when the storms of persecution beat fiercely upon them they will stand firm. We have had the joy of seeing several of our girls, on leaving school, train as teachers, nurses and Biblewomen, and commence their life's service for the Master in the Mission's employ.

The establishment of the headquarters of the Mission is another example of the following of the cloud. The first step was taken in 1904 when Mr. Swan came to Cairo in order to supervise more easily the editing of the Arabic magazine "The Preaching of Peace." Then for health reasons a move was made out of the city to the suburb of Ezbet-el-Zeitoun. An attractive property, standing by itself in the glorious desert air, was acquired. It was given an Arabic name which meant "Habitation of Peace." After a short while it became clear that the affairs of the Mission could be much more effectively administered if Mr. Logan, who was then Field Secretary, moved here also, as its accessibility to Cairo made it a good centre. A few years later, when a place was needed for a conference for Moslem converts, it was evident that this compound was ideal for the purpose. Isolated from any neighbours, its outstanding virtue was its quietness. In an adjoining vacant plot a tent was pitched to accommodate all invited, and a soul-refreshing time was spent there. Now the deeper purposes of God's leading were made known. Who can estimate what this "Habitation of Peace" has meant to countless hundreds? Missionaries, Egyptian workers, converts and enquirers have spent many a season of coming apart to meet God in the conference hall which was later erected here.

Here, too, was developed the literary work which, by the Grace of God, was such a precious and profitable part of the witness which this Mission was permitted to give in Egypt. George Swan, the man chosen by God to be His instrument in this work, was the one who had been led to this place for health reasons. But as the burden of translation work was laid more and more upon him, the fact of its proximity to Cairo, where the help of like-minded language experts could be obtained, once more revealed the guidance of the Lord.

Before he started on this God-given task, the only Arabic translation of the Bible was in high classical Arabic, which conveys very little to the vast majority of the peasants of Egypt. His special piece of work was that of translating the Scriptures into the colloquial language of the people. As early as 1903 St. Luke's Gospel was translated in this way, and since then the work has gone steadily forward until now several parts of the New Testament are in circulation and some of the Old. What more priceless privilege is there than that of putting into anyone's hands the Word of God.

Yet a third form of enterprise was to find its 'pitch' in this neighbourhood, and to illustrate the goodness of the Lord in guiding to Zeitoun. This was the Home of Safety and Peace, which came into being in 1920. It was the outcome of a vision given to the first lady missionary who joined the ranks of the original Band of Seven. Working for some years in the Girls' Schools her heart ached over many a child who, just as the Light was beginning to penetrate, was torn away from school to be married to a Moslem, and perhaps in a very few years to be divorced at the husband's whim. She longed to gather them into some place where they could be sheltered for a time, learn more of how to appropriate all the strength and deliverance which is ours in Christ, and be in a better position to claim their liberty. The Lover of Souls heard the prayer and answered, and at last a Home for them was opened. It seemed natural that it should nestle for protection in the vicinity of Headquarters, though sufficiently on its own to be hidden from prying eyes. To many a sorely tried and persecuted girl the material safety of this Home has brought a realisation of the refuge and help in time of trouble, which the Lord Himself is to all who trust in Him. Its second title of "Peace" refers only to that inward perfect peace of God which passeth all understanding. The earthly idea of peace (in contradistinction to strife), is often far from its normal state, for the enemy of souls bitterly contests its existence, and fierce conflicts rage round it, chiefly in the spiritual realm, but by no means unknown in the very compound itself!

Thus the aggressive evangelism which had so far characterised the work was, by the overruling of the Lord, saved from becoming haphazard and fleeting.

## CHAPTER 5

### Reaching Their Goal

The story of the Mission has been brought up to the period following the First World War. By this time only Mr. Swan of the original Band was left on the Field.

Perhaps, here, it would not be harmful to pause and obey the injunction of God the Holy Spirit to "remember your leaders ... consider the outcome of their life." (Heb. 13.7 American Standard RN.) From one standpoint we have been considering the outcome of their life as we have traced the development of the work in Egypt which God called them out to do, but there is a much deeper meaning to the Greek word translated "end" in our Authorised Version, than just the thought of result. Young's Concordance translates it as "outgoing", which surely implies the whole direction of their lives. Phillips paraphrases this as "remember how they lived." Our consideration must therefore not end with what they did, but with what they were. What was the inner secret of their lives, the 'outgoing' or aim and ambition? As before, we find that one of the hymns they loved so well helps us here, for again and again their lips delighted to testify thus:

"Mine the message, grand and glorious,  
Strange, unsealed surprise,  
That the goal is God's Beloved,  
Christ in Paradise."

"The goal is God's Beloved, Christ in Paradise." The "end of their conversation . . . (was) . . . Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever." From the time of conversion this was to be their message, known and read of all men literally so in one case, for across the back of his envelope in clear, bold handwriting, Willie Bradley would write "Living for Eternity." From henceforth Eternity's values were to be kept in view, and they counted all things but loss that they might know Christ and the power of His resurrection.

We, have seen how they went forth in faith, not backed by any missionary society, but as Ambassadors for Christ, constrained by His love. This was the great motive of their service in Egypt. They loved the Moslems with the love of God which was given them by the Holy Spirit. This love was sufficient to reach out even to those who bitterly opposed them, ready to pour itself out in death, if in that way only could the fruit be won. Such was the love which Elias Thompson appropriated from His Lord, and it sufficed him even when he realised that he was to follow more closely than many in His Master's steps, for he was called to lay down his life after only three years' service. A few hours before the end, in his delirium, he evaded the vigilance of his nurses, got out of bed and dressed as if to go out. When he was discovered and asked where he was going, his answer was, "To preach to the Mohammedans."

This passion for evangelism did not only grip them in their virile manhood, but to the end of their lives. We saw John Logan using the printed page from his "Food for Souls" depot in Suez to introduce men to the Bread of Life. Nearly fifty years later, in his own homeland and in failing health, whenever possible he was out with his pockets full of tracts to give to those he met. When finally confined to bed, his one regret was "Oh the opportunities I have missed."

At a conference in Ireland which Ned Swan attended in the latter years of his life, he was sought out by some of the younger generation as a confidant of their spiritual needs, and they rarely went away with these unmet. One of his earliest tasks was to found a primitive school for boys at Shebeen, and years later a lecturer at an Egyptian State University confessed that he and his family owed everything to that little school which they had attended as children.

The "Seven" early realised the importance of training the Egyptians themselves to be future spiritual leaders, and to this end lived in close fellowship with them, that they might better train them for preaching the Gospel. It is impossible to prove, and yet one is compelled to wonder, to what extent the blessing which attended the ministries of two of these young Egyptian men was not the direct outcome of the loving, deep interest which was given them unstintedly by John Logan and Willie Bradley respectively. "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile" said the Master to His disciples, and thus also did Willie Bradley seek to follow in 'His steps by taking with him his devoted Evangelist to spend one whole day a week in prayer in the desert on the outskirts of Bilbeis. A photograph of this desert spot, sent home, bore on the back the inscription: "The place where we meet God every Monday and get the glory into our souls." "To meet God" - only God" - only thus could they get the power they needed that the message might penetrate into the darkened minds around them. "And get the glory into their souls" - this they needed for themselves, to counteract the effect of the darkness in which they lived. It manifested itself outwardly in a sweet radiance, which was the special characteristic of one of these men. Whether it was giving a Bible reading in Egypt, or alighting from a railway train after a tiring transcontinental journey, it was his "shining face" that people remarked upon in regard to George Swan. Well, indeed, may we remember how for fifty years in a Moslem land he lived and endured "as seeing Him Who is invisible", like Brother Lawrence of old, practising the presence of God.

Perhaps the most prominent feature of the likeness to their Lord was to be seen in their prayer life. Many were the nights they spent together in prayer in times of crisis or special effort. John Logan wrote, long afterwards, his memories of those times. Egypt was not an easy country in which to pray, the atmosphere was heavy, they were tired after the heat and toil of the day, and a fatal drowsiness was apt to come over them. But they persevered, and as they stirred themselves up to take hold of God a change took place, they seemed to enter into a new atmosphere, and the hours passed like so many minutes. He drew a pen picture of Willie Bradley, who always gave such a lead at these times of waiting upon God. There he was, with a blanket round his shoulders, looking like some Elijah, pleading the promises, glorying in the Cross and standing fast against the forces of darkness. Years later, after his death, his wife described prayer as the secret of his service and life, not only during his set times in the early morning, but when awake at night, or during the day whilst at work, even when travelling in a tram, anywhere he found a place and opportunity for prayer. In this way he continued his missionary life, in ceaseless intercession for the work and workers abroad.

Willie Bradley was not alone in this, for Ned Swan, when he was kept at home on account of poor health, commenced a ministry of prayer the value of which can never be estimated. The same may be said also of John Logan; a letter he wrote shortly before his death mentions name after name of souls in Egypt with whom he had been in contact so long before, and yet whom he was still upholding faithfully in prayer.

How anxious they were to learn of Him Who was meek and lowly in heart. Martin Cleaver wrote asking for prayer that they might be kept in the place of death, that there might be no self-assertion, and that each one might esteem the other better than himself. They were well aware of the subtlety of the Devil, and felt that nothing but the humility of the Lord could keep him out. Truly this prayer was answered where Martin Cleaver was concerned, when it was decided that he should be the one to represent the Mission at home in the position of General Secretary. Here again he proved his Christlikeness and gave to the world an amazing example of leadership in God. He could be relied upon to have the mind of the Lord for he spent many hours alone in the Presence-chamber, bringing his naturally brilliant mental gifts into perfect alignment with the plan and purpose of God. Prayer was the passion of his soul; it was an essential to him. On an occasion when it was with considerable difficulty that it was arranged, he said, "We must have it." He it was, too, who had such a vision of the cost, what it cost God Almighty to give His beloved Son for the redemption of the world., and what it cost that Son to give His life a ransom for many, pouring out His soul even unto death. Thus if the work were to be carried on as He would have it done, it would cost



them, too, their all.

Gladly they surrendered themselves to this condition, they gave their all, to receive God's ALL, in return. They followed the Lamb whithersoever He led them, and now, having been redeemed from the earth, ever stand singing the new song before the Throne, having attained their goal, "God's Beloved, Christ in Paradise."

"Yea, thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning  
He shall suffice me, for He bath sufficed  
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,  
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ."

## CHAPTER 6

### Holding the Ground - 1922-1947

"HE stood in the midst of the ground and defended it . . . and the Lord wrought a great victory."  
(2 Sam. 23.12).

This pen-picture from the Old Testament seems aptly to summarise the story of the Mission for the second twenty-five years of its existence. Perhaps to some the word "defended" may seem wrongly chosen to describe the activities of an avowedly evangelistic body, but it is not always recognised in Christian circles that herein lies one secret of the immense difficulty of work amongst Moslems. Islam is the only one of the dominant non-Christian religions which was founded after our Lord Jesus Christ lived on earth. It claims, therefore, to have the final revelation from God in its Qur'an, and that its prophet Mohammed supersedes the Saviour. It flings down a challenging attack to the Christian faith, and puts it on the defence. The Moslem rejects the "Good News" as completely out of date and pours forth a great torrent of arguments to prove his case. Thus it comes about that in a Moslem land the missionary above all must learn the lesson of Ephesians, Chapter 6, and putting on the whole armour of God, having done all, must stand. Perhaps this was why one of the favourite battlesongs of the Band was one the chorus of which is:

"No retreating, Hell defeating, shoulder to shoulder we stand,  
God look down, with glory crown our conquering band."

God heard, looked down, and very graciously has crowned the Spirit-energised efforts, not only of the original band, but of those whom He has called out from time to time to join their ranks. The growth of the work has been the Lord's doing, and has been marvellous in our eyes.

For the first twenty-five years, work was in the main confined to the eastern fringe of the Delta. Just when the moment seemed to have been reached for expansion, the First World War intervened and arrested all development, because of the lack of reinforcements. The number of missionaries on the Field was only sufficient to occupy existing stations. The nationalistic risings which followed further hampered progress, but after the establishment of Egypt as an independent kingdom, in 1922, with King Fuad I on the throne, things settled down. The time seemed ripe for an advance, and for the ensuing twenty years the Captain of the Hosts of the Lord led on victoriously, though the conflict has often been very fierce, the cost great, and the casualties many.

One of the first who fell in the conflict was the missionary who went down to Suez in 1922 to recommence the witness amongst the men of that town, which had been begun by Mr. Logan in the early days. For four short years he preached the Gospel in season and out of season, making opportunities where there were none, that as many as possible might hear the Good News. Because of the difficulty of gathering the men to hear, he walked three miles down to the dock gates each evening, and then walked back again with the dock-labourers that same distance, talking as he walked, of his Saviour Whom he would have them know and love too. But the Lord saw fit to permit that gallant testimony to cease, and took His servant to be with Him. We cannot see why these gaps are allowed, but one day we may be astonished as we are shown the perfection of the pattern, where the dark threads intermingle with the gold.

"The Gospel of Luke for a penny-farthing." This one sentence was all the Arabic a new recruit of 1923 knew, but armed with it, and a bag full of those very Gospels, he set forth to put the Word of Life into as many hands as would care to receive it. From such a small beginning did the Master bless and prosper

the colportage work which has been carried on through the ensuing years. It now has its headquarters at the Scripture Distribution Centre at Ezbet-el-Zeitoun. Up and down the country has the Word travelled and been dispersed, not only in the Delta, but as far south as Assouan, and in the Fayoum to the west. In its early stages it was thought good if the year's sales amounted to two thousand copies, but with the help of two Egyptian colporteurs these gradually increased until over thirty-one thousand copies of booklets were being distributed annually, including Scripture portions, Bibles, Testaments and tracts.

Still, however, there was very much land to be possessed. The vision of the untouched myriads of peasant dwellers in the Delta villages commanded the thought and mind of the Mission as a whole, and as they prayed, the burden of the Beheira Province, to the south of Alexandria, with its million souls, pressed heavily upon them, and seemed to be the next designed objective. Two lady missionaries went out on a prospecting tour and were led finally to settle in Mahmudiya. Here, in 1923, they opened a Girls' School and an industrial work. Four years later they were joined by two other ladies, who settled in Damanhur, which was the capital of the province. From this town they went out into the surrounding villages and established small clinics, to which the people flocked. Amidst repeated waves of fanaticism in these bigoted places the witness to the Lord has been maintained. Time and again the little mud huts, in which the clinics were held, were the scenes of hostility. Stones and bricks were thrown with such vehemence that it sounded to the missionaries inside like the bursting of shells. But with minds stayed on God, they were kept in perfect peace, believing for, and receiving, the victory of faith. Some glorious trophies of grace have crowned this courageous labour of love.

This particular province gives an instance of the peculiar difficulties of attempting direct evangelistic work on any large scale. At one period a campaign was planned for a team, centred at Damanhur, to pay a day's visit to all the principal villages. Much prayer was concentrated on the effort for weeks beforehand, by the whole circle of the Mission's prayer-partners in the homeland and the auxiliaries. But from the outset it was obvious that the enemy, too, had laid his plans and organised active opposition. Word was passed from village to village, through the Police Stations, for the mayors to oppose the activities of the missionaries. Although it had been proposed to spend three months over the task, in less than three weeks the campaign was brought to an abrupt close. Two separate groups of the team had found themselves in the Police Station of the district in which they had been visiting, and had been escorted back to Damanhur. Here the governor of the city interviewed them and gave instructions for that kind of active propaganda to cease. It has been found since that far more effective work can be done in Egypt by means of institutional work.

Although the original Seven had made Alexandria their first base, later, for various reasons, they left it to move further inland. With the arrival of fresh reinforcements after the First World War, it seemed right to return to Alexandria and another "Food for Souls" Depot was opened there in 1924. But education, once started, advanced rapidly in the cities, and it became obvious that a more modern type of work would better meet the needs of the present-day young students. So the depot was superseded by a club which brought to birth a Christian Alliance of Young Men, by means of which the Gospel is now being clearly and fearlessly proclaimed. Parallel to this development on the men's side has been that of the girls' work. Back in the same year of 1924 the North Africa Mission, which had been working in the Anfoushy district of Alexandria, handed over their Girls' School to the Egypt General Mission. The Second World War was one of the primary causes for this being closed, but later work amongst the girls was restarted in the form of a Homecraft Club. The older ones (who have left the many schools now provided by the Egyptian Government) are attracted by its syllabus, which includes cooking, dressmaking, leathercraft and other such subjects, with the daily Bible Lesson as its focal point.

Some of the most inspiring examples of faith with which the Spirit of Faith Himself has been pleased to bless the Egypt General Mission, have been those of the company of faithful women who have laboured

for Him at an age when they should normally have been retiring and taking their ease. Instead, we find them living in most uncomfortable mud huts, with none of the usual amenities, right amongst the village people, if at all costs they might save some. During the years 1928-1932 such a witness was being maintained both in an original station at Tel-el-Kebeer and a new one at Imbaba, a suburb of Cairo. Physically unable for the long, tiring journeys to outlying villages, which they took, the ladies refused to be outdone, and a little donkey-cart was procured for their transport; but their safe arrival at their destination was never quite assured as they often found themselves in the ditch en route.

In 1901, nine days before his death, Elias Thompson had written home, "We are . . . only beginning to know the difficulties of the task before us, and the real opposition which will meet every forward movement against Islam . . . one feels personally to have failed utterly, yet till marching orders (not inclinations) the ground must be held for Christ." Over thirty years later the Mission was to have an entirely new experience and increased knowledge of what this might mean. In 1933 a wave of opposition spread over the country, fanned by the newspaper-proprietors who found it a splendid way of increasing circulation. Headlines an inch high were used to display the wicked doings of the missionaries.

It was occasioned by the steadily-increasing number of converts, both young men and women, who were openly confessing their faith in the Lord Jesus in baptism. It was also to a great extent political - a means by which the Opposition might attack and embarrass the Government. Everywhere the flame of bigotry was so fierce that for a time it seemed as if missionary work might be curtailed. In the end, the enemy overreached himself. By emptying the schools of pupils, he set the teachers free to do far more house-to-house visiting. The illiterate people welcomed them gladly to hear what all the trouble was about, and evangelism flourished.

That the Lord was intending the work to advance was made evident by the new missionaries who were arriving on the Field. Thus it became possible at this time to re-open the men's work at Suez. A Reading Room and Club was established in the town, which attracted numbers of young men in the evenings, and was used during the day for quiet talks with individuals.

During this time, also, plans had been formulated for the opening of a new school at Abu Hammad, and as soon as possible after the partial abatement of the storm this was done. This school became almost immediately the special target of the enemy, his instrument this time being the Young Men's Moslem Association. Nevertheless, quietly standing their ground, with much patience and tact, the missionaries developed the work, proving once again that God's purposes cannot be defeated by any assault of man.

The steady sowing of the Seed for years on the Shebeen Hospital compound was now chewing its fruit. It became necessary to expand the follow-up work, and to accomplish this the routine work was so arranged that all the medical staff could take part in the regular visiting. A system of ward services was evolved which ensured more consecutive teaching. Then each patient, before discharge, was interviewed and questioned, to discover to what extent he or she had responded to the Gospel message. Those who seemed to have a real heart-knowledge were marked down as "Star Cases". These were then invited back to the Hospital to attend occasional one-day conferences, when they met others like-minded and thus were encouraged and built up in the love and grace of the Lord Jesus.

In 1935 the Mission took over from the American Mission a large school for boys in the town of Zagazig. Seen from the railway this town gave the impression of being more dead than alive, with its abundance of squalid, dilapidated buildings. In point of fact it teemed with young, vigorous life, since it was the educational centre for a large, outlying district, and therefore proved an excellent piece of ground for the sowing of the Seed. Three years later the companion Girls' School also was given into our care, thus bringing over six hundred children daily under the sound of the Gospel. The hands of those working in

this area were presently to be strengthened yet again when Fakus was occupied. This is a town some twenty-three miles north-east of Zagazig, and a centre from which to reach the seventy-four needy towns and villages of the surrounding district.

Right up to the outbreak of the Second World War, God was opening up new doors of opportunity. The prayer-partners at home had increased and were obedient to our Lord's command to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth more labourers. The original seven had increased ninefold, and sixty-three missionaries were on active service in the Field. Hitherto most of the work had been amongst the peasant class, but now workers specially equipped were set apart to witness amongst the eight thousand students of Cairo University. Finally, for a short time we were given the privilege of entering the new (for us) province of Dakhalia, and making contacts with business men and officials in the busy town of Mansura, with its population of sixty thousand. When war service claimed its quota of men-missionaries, we had to retire from some of these stations. "Past all imagining" were the words used by Mr. Swan long ago, to describe what the Lord did for him personally, and they are echoed in the hearts of all who have been called by Him to co-operate in His work in this land of Egypt in the succeeding years. To us has been given the joy of being "set for the defence of the Gospel" and the Lord has wrought for His Name's sake.

## CHAPTER 7

### Facing the Future

"These things saith He that ... hath the key . . . He that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth ... Behold I have set before thee an open door . . ."  
(Rev. 3:7,8.).

This seems to be the key to future missionary work in Egypt. At the moment, owing to the general world unrest and the rising tide of nationalism in that land, it is impossible to foresee developments. We are told, however, not to look at "things seen" but to endure as seeing Him Who is invisible, and that One has not, as yet, rescinded His command to His disciples to go and preach to every creature, which includes the Moslems of Egypt. There is a glad readiness to recognise the Master's Almighty power to open, but the corollary is "and no man shutteth." We are told also that it is He Who shuts, and man is powerless to open. It is well to keep this twofold aspect of Our Lord's actions before our eyes as the key to the otherwise heart-breaking obstacles which have confronted, and still are confronting, the proclamation of the Gospel in lands under Islam's sway. Let us believe God's Word, which tells us that the hearts of kings are in His rule and governance to dispose and turn as seems best to Him. Thus we may get beyond earthly governmental actions and rest assured that, in the mystery of His inscrutable wisdom, any rebuffs we may meet are part of His ultimate purpose.

From this point it is possible to see how some shut doors have led to the Lord's opening of others undreamt of. We realise, too, that although in theory the work may be divided into medical, educational and, evangelistic sections, the Lord looks upon it as one whole, and we find closed avenues of approach in one department leading to opportunities in another. An instance of this is clear in the story of a later development which came un-sought. After the British Army evacuated from Cairo the very profitable contacts which missionaries had with service men in that area ceased. The troops moved to the Canal Zone and settled in camps in the surrounding desert. They employ large numbers of young Egyptian clerks, some of whom are Christians from quite keen, evangelical families. These, cut off from their home churches, secured tents as places of worship, but it was not always easy to find amongst themselves those who were capable of leading the services. So missionaries and evangelists were asked to help. Then it became clear that these tents, situated in the quiet, orderly atmosphere of a British Camp, could be used most profitably for holding Gospel lantern meetings, and to these many Moslems come. Here, then, is an unprecedented opportunity which the Lord Himself has made possible.

But His thought did not cease here. There was still a further outcome, for these Egyptian Christians desired to express their gratitude to the Lord for His supply of their spiritual need through these camp services, and they presented to Him a generous free-will offering. This they designated to be used to expedite the proposed building of a new Mission Hospital at Tel-el-Kebeer, in the desert between Abu Hammad and Ismailia.

Just recapitulate the chain of events. The war, and its contact with our own fellow countrymen - British Army Camps, where Egyptian Christians are helped - tents in which numbers of Moslems can hear the Gospel - and a new Hospital which will reach thousands more. At present this building is confined to a small flat for missionaries and a clinic, but it is intended to enlarge it as funds become available. When one thinks of the thousands of men and women who year by year have heard of the Saviour and learnt to believe in the efficacy of His redeeming Blood on our other Hospital compound, the prospect of a repetition of this in a new centre is encouraging. As yet, however, it functions in a very restricted way, being only staffed by two lady-missionaries. It is thought-provoking to realise that these two came to

reside here when the school at Abu Hammad was closed, owing to the passing of the Free Schools Law. "He shutteth . . . He openeth."

There is no doubt that the medical approach is effective beyond all others in reaching the maximum numbers of adult Moslems with the Gospel, and in giving the Seed a chance to root itself into the ground before it is fallen upon by the birds of the air. But as we consider today's wide-open door in the medical field, it is good to remind ourselves of the time, not so very long ago, when Government action seriously threatened its existence; and the establishment of free government health services also temporarily emptied the Mission Hospital's beds. But the Lord stepped in, and the apparently closing door swung open again.

The way in which the Lord is blessing the work done on the compound of the Hospital at Shebeen-el-Kanater has already been described, but there is one recent extension in particular which is prospering, and we hope will continue to do so. This is the Baby Welfare Clinic. Not only is medical attention given to the undernourished, ailing babies, but daily instruction is given to the mothers in the proper care of the infants. This means that those who attend regularly are given a far better opportunity also of assimilating the great truths of the Gospel. If this one clinic were to be multiplied all over the country, what evangelistic instruments they might become.

With regard to the men, once they leave hospital it is not so easy to find a way of gathering them for more consecutive teaching, as they are busy in their bread-winning occupations. But an effort to combine their material and spiritual needs led to an experiment which, though it holds immense opportunities, has hardly yet had time to prove itself. This takes the form of a Farm Colony, where it was hoped to provide a temporary means of livelihood for Gospel-enlightened peasants, while they were trained to be future lay witnesses to their neighbours. These hopes have not yet fully materialised, but the Colony has proved most useful in providing a place where small groups of sincere Moslem enquirers have been able to meet for three-day conferences and face up to the question of confessing in baptism their faith in Christ. Even where this ultimate step has not been taken, most of those who have attended have been definitely helped and their spiritual life deepened. All this stimulates our desire to insert into our existing programmes more opportunities for Bible Training, both for the Moslem enquirers and for the Christians. This could be done, not merely on all the present stations, but in weekly visitation to villages where there is a Christian nucleus. The time would be spent in definite Bible Study as distinct from spasmodic evangelistic meetings. Much of the Gospel witness to the Moslems is neutralised by the lives of the nominal Christians who follow the old Coptic religion, and the time seems to have come when, with the use of every available opportunity for teaching the Moslem, we should combine an effort to revive these 'Laodiceans' and inspire them to witness more effectively for the Master.

The partial shutting on the one hand, and increased opening on the other, is vividly illustrated in the matter of colportage work. Broadcast distribution of tracts, which was such a fruitful piece of work in the early years, was brought to an abrupt end after the wave of opposition which swept the country in 1933. During the Second World War a censorship began which still greatly restricts what may be printed. On the other hand, increased literacy has created a far greater demand for reading matter. We find that colportage sales increased elevenfold in a few years. This work has been done by a handful of courageous Egyptian men, often without the help of a European colleague to plan itineraries or obtain necessary supplies of books. One wonders just what the development would have been if there had been more labourers in this particular section of the Field? George Swan, the mainspring of the translation of the Scriptures into colloquial Arabic, has passed on. Some books of both the Old and the New Testament are finished. When will the rest be completed? By the close of the first half of the twentieth century nearly five thousand of these colloquial Scriptures were being bought annually by soul-hungry men. The rapid spread of literacy is a matter for rejoicing, but also a most disturbing challenge. For where are the books

of real spiritual help which can be put into the hands of the people? Another of our visions for the future is the establishment of a library of good booklets on Christian evidences and various aspects of Christian doctrine and belief. They would be designed to teach the Christians the fundamentals of their faith and written in such a way that they can pass them on to their Moslem neighbours as a true and simple account of the teaching of the Bible. Here is a door which could be most effectually entered on Christ's behalf in future days.

The immediate outcome of the passing of the Free Schools Law in 1948, which prohibited the teaching to scholars of any other religion than that of their parents, even with the parents' permission, was that doors were literally shut. There were, in addition, other proposed restrictions with which we could not possibly comply, and we reluctantly had to refuse to admit Moslem pupils to our schools. For a time it looked as though education as an evangelistic agency in Egypt was a thing of the past. There was, however, unanimity in the decision which the Mission took, after much prayer, and a corresponding peace of mind which pointed to the fact that this 'shutting' was of the Lord, and that in His own good time He would open again: and so it happened, for the threatened regulations were never put into effect, and presently it became possible again to admit Moslem pupils to our schools, though not to attend the Scripture lessons.

Whilst Moslems cannot be taught the Bible as an integral part of the school syllabus, much is being done out of school hours to reach the children with the Gospel. The children of Moslem converts are being re-accepted into the family life of the boarding departments, which naturally includes morn and evening prayers, and the spending of Sunday as the Lord's Day. Many of these converts are sincere believers in the Lord Jesus, but through various circumstances have not been able to make open confession of their faith in baptism, and thus they and their children are still officially Moslem. They are anxious that their little ones should be rooted and grounded in the faith, and grow in love and knowledge of the Saviour.

The summer Boys' Camps and Schoolgirls' Houseparties are still being used for the building up of the young Covenanters, who have confessed their faith in the Saviour during the school year. It was a matter for praise, that, while our schools were closed to Muslims, there was an increased opportunity to use them on behalf of the Coptic children whose need of the Saviour is just as great. The ministry amongst the later, too, has been richly blessed down the years, and the Lord has called out many who have become bright and effectual witnesses to their fellow-countrymen.

The mystery of God's will with regard to the schools which on account of the law we have had to relinquish, is still a call to faith. These are the Boys' School in Zagazig, and the Girls' Schools in Zagazig, Ismailia and Abu Hammad. The first two are being carried on by Egyptian Christians, but the other two are closed.

Meanwhile, in the educational field, there are other doors which we are free to enter, as yet unrestricted by the Government. There is still a place in the villages for the establishment of what are called Work Classes, which cater for the poorer peasant type of girl. At the other end of the scale Homecraft Clubs, where dressmaking and other domestic subjects are taught, they are a tremendous attraction to the better-class girl, who needs to fill in time after she leaves school, before her marriage, which, in the towns, is tending to take place at a later age than was the custom some years ago. But all these groups are for girls only. We long for the time when their brothers will also have opportunities of getting to know the Lord through such means as carpentry or leatherwork classes and other pursuits.

There is an avenue not yet explored which might prove a most useful door into young people's lives. This is the possibility of opening hostels for adolescents in towns and other centres. There are students attending Universities and Secondary Schools, as well as numbers of young people employed in business companies and in the British Army, who find the problem of housing a very real one. But at the moment



this vision is incapable of realisation owing to lack of missionary personnel.

In all these developments and visions for the future we are ably seconded by the company of devoted Egyptian fellow-workers which the Lord has given to us. Many of them are our children in the faith, and quite a few are those who have been brought out of the darkness of Islam. It has been a joy to watch their spiritual growth, and the very real experience of the infilling of God the Holy Spirit which some of them have claimed by faith. The loyal stedfastness of the older ones has meant much to the progress of the Mission, and their counsel and advice are valued greatly. The younger ones are beginning to catch the joy of sacrificial service. The young men are voluntarily giving time to evangelistic work in the villages, and taking a greater lead in the life of the Church, even to occupying the pulpit on occasions. The women teachers in the Girls' School also do a great deal of house-to-house visiting after school hours, and spend part of their summer holidays helping in the School-girls' Conferences. The Hospital staff take their full share of spiritual work on the compound, particularly in the Star Case Conferences, where their clear testimonies do much to strengthen weaker brethren in the Lord.

These surely must be the future missionaries in Egypt. They can accomplish so much more than the foreigner, as they have such perfect knowledge not only of the language, but of the workings of the minds of their hearers. But there are few yet who have advanced sufficiently to take the responsibility of leadership. Much has been done, but mostly at the instigation of their European colleagues. They need a more advanced instruction and a deeper understanding of the Word of God so that they may get to know His will for themselves. The Annual Workers' Conference is becoming increasingly valued as a place of vision, but it is only a yearly event. It ought to be repeated more often in regional weekend conferences, and could be, if only the missionaries capable of conducting such had enough time at their disposal.

Many of these Egyptian fellow-workers are members of the Evangelical Church of Egypt with whom we work in the closest co-operation, and to which the Christian communities on our various stations are affiliated. Many hope, and are looking for, a mighty outpouring of God the Holy Spirit in revival upon this Church, that it may become a flaming beacon of Light in the dark land of Egypt, and be greatly used of God in the evangelisation of its Moslem fellow-countrymen. But this Pentecost has not come yet, and until it does the Church in Egypt needs the help of her 'older' brothers and sisters from more favoured Christian lands.

The story has been told of the signs and wonders which God has set in the land of Egypt 'unto this day.' It remains but for us to allow Him to continue the story, by a more complete surrender of ourselves as His instruments. There is a debt which Christianity owes to Egypt in that she was the land which God chose to 'save' His Son from the wrath of Herod. Therefore it is surely right that we should now 'arise and take' that Son down into Egypt as Saviour. We need not be too anxious as to the outcome; the command is explicit and assuring, "Be thou there until I bring thee word".



## THE CHALLENGE OF EGYPT

Egypt is one of the strategic centres for world evangelization. It is the intellectual centre of Islam, and the launching of an attack here strikes at the very heart of the Moslem world, which now numbers 300 million, or one-seventh of the population of the world.

Today the Enemy is as active as ever. So-called civilization, with its materialistic outlook, is making great strides, while Western education and "culture" are encouraging the youth of Egypt to feel their independence. From the great University of El Azhar in Cairo pour out hundreds of students every year, steeped in all the lore of Islam, and with a strong antagonism in their hearts for the religion of Jesus Christ.

## THE EGYPT GENERAL MISSION

Is interdenominational and is supported by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people, no more being expended than is thus received.

**On the Field** *work is carried on by over forty missionaries, and about seventy Egyptian workers, in the Delta of Egypt.*

**At Home** *the work is shared by:*

**Prayer Circle Members** *scattered all over the world.*

**Intercessory Missionaries for Egypt**, *an inner circle, who undertake special prayer responsibilities for that land.*

**Partners**, *who are not yet old enough to go to the Mission Field, but who help by prayer, self-denying gifts, and working for Egypt.*

### WHAT IS YOUR PART TO BE?

**The Magazine**, "E.C.M. News", gives information regarding the progress of the work and prayer needs (price 2/- per annum, post free).

**A Prayer Circle Booklet and Prayer Letters** (price 1/- per annum, post free)- are issued to Prayer Circle Members and give further details of the work.

**Further Information** may be obtained from Headquarters or from any address listed opposite.

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