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| **Rev. David Benjamin Keldani (1867-19xx)** |

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| Rev. David Benjamin Keldani |

**Court of Pustaka A.** | "My conversion to Islam cannot be attributed to any cause other than the gracious direction of the Almighty Allah. Without this Divine guidance all learning, search and other efforts to find the Truth may even lead one astray. The moment I believed in the Absolute Unity of God, His holy Apostle Muhammad became the pattern of my conduct and behavior."  |

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| Prof. Keldani, a former Catholic bishop, accepted Islam in 1904 and adopted a Muslim name 'Abdul-Ahad Dawud'. The above quote is taken from his scholarly work Muhammad in the Bible. An expert in Biblical scripts and languages, Prof. Keldani published many scholarly papers on the Bible and Christianity prior to his becoming a Muslim. His Muhammad in the Bible is rich with deep analysis and although published originally many decades ago, has remained today without a parallel on this topic in both originality and scholarship. |

**Rev. David Benjamin Keldani, B.D. (b. 1867)**

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| http://www.welcome-back.org/image/d_keldani.gif |
| Rev. David Keldani |

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| **"I**must remind the Christians that unless they believe in the absolute unity of God, and renounce the belief in the three persons, they are certainly unbelievers in the true God ... The Old Testament and the Qur'an condemn the doctrine of three persons in God; the New Testament does not expressly hold or defend it, but even if it contains hints and traces concerning the Trinity, it is no authority at all, because it was neither seen nor written by Christ himself, nor in the language he spoke, nor did it exist in its present form and contents for - at least - the first two centuries after him."  |

Before he became a Muslim and changed his name to Abdul-Ahad Dawud, Rev. David Benjamin Keldani, B.D. was a Roman Catholic priest of the Uniate-Chaldean sect. He was born in 1867 at **Urmia** in Persia; educated from his early infancy in that town. From 1886-89 (three years) he was on the teaching staff of the **Archbishop of Canterbury’s** Mission to the Assyrian (Nestorian) Christians at Urmia. In 1892 he was sent by **Cardinal Vaughan** to **Rome**, where he underwent a course of philosophical and theological studies at the **Propaganda Fide College**, and in 1895 was ordained Priest. In 1892 Professor Dawud contributed a series of articles to *The Tablet* on “*Assyria, Rome and Canterbury*”; and also to the *Irish Record* on the “*Authenticity of the Pentateuch*.” He has several translations of the *Ave Maria* in different languages, published in the *Illustrated Catholic Missions.* While in **Constantinople** on his way to Persia in 1895, he contributed a long series of articles in English and French to the daily paper, published there under the name of *The Levant Herald,* on “*Eastern Churches*.” In 1895 he joined the **French Lazarist Mission** at Urmia, and published for the first time in the history of that Mission a periodical in the vernacular Syriac called *Qala-La-Shara, i.e.* “*The Voice of Truth*.” In 1897 he was delegated by two Uniate-Chaldean Arch­bishops of Urmia and of Salinas to represent the Eastern Catholics at the Eucharistic Congress held at Paray-le-Monial in France under the presidency of **Cardinal Perraud**. This was, of course, an official invitation. The paper read at the Congress by “Father Benjamin” was published in the *Annals* of the **Eucharistic Congress**, called “*Le Pellerin*” of that year. In this paper, the Chaldean Arch-Priest (that being his official title) deplored the Catholic system of education among the Nestorians, and foretold the imminent appearance of the Russian priests in Urmia.

In 1888 Father Benjamin was back again in Persia. In his native village, Digala, about a mile from the town, he opened a school *gratis.* The next year he was sent by the Ecclesiastical authorities to take charge of the diocese of Salinas, where a sharp and scandalous conflict between the Uniate Archbishop, Khudabash, and the Lazarist Fathers for a long time had been menacing a schism. On the day of New Year 1900, Father Benjamin preached his last and memorable sermon to a large congregation, including many non-Catholic Armenians and others in the Cathedral of St. George’s Khorovabad, Salinas. The preacher’s subject was “*New Century and New Men*.” He recalled the fact that the Nestorian Missionaries, before the appearance of Islam, had preached the Gospel in all Asia; that they had numerous establishments in India (especially at the Malabar Coast), in Tartary, China and Mongolia; and that they translated the Gospel to the Turkish Uighurs and in other languages; that the Catholic, American and Anglican Mis­sions, in spite of the little good they had done to the Assyro­-Chaldean nation in the way of preliminary education, had split the nation — already a handful — in Persia, Kurdistan and Mesopotamia into numerous hostile sects; and that their efforts were destined to bring about the final collapse. Con­sequently he advised the natives to make some sacrifices in order to stand upon their own legs like *men,* and not to depend upon the foreign missions, etc.

The preacher was perfectly right in principle; but his remarks were unfavourable to the interests of the Lord’s Missionaries. This sermon hastily brought the Apostolique Delegate, Mgr. Lese, from Urmia to Salinas. He remained to the last a friend of Father Benjamin. They both returned to Urmia. A new Russian Mission had already been estab­lished in Urmia since 1899. The Nestorians were enthu­siastically embracing the religion of the “holy” Tsar of All Russia!

Five big and ostentatious missions - Americans, Angli­cans, French, Germans and Russians - with their colleges, Press backed up by rich religious societies, Consuls and Ambassadors, were endeavouring to convert about one hundred thousand Assyro-Chaldeans from Nestorian heresy unto one or another of the five heresies. But the Russian Mission soon outstripped the others, and it was this mission which in 1915 pushed or forced the Assyrians of Persia, as well as the mountaineer tribes of Kurdistan, who had then immigrated into the plains of Salinas and Urmia, to take up arms against their respective Governments. The result was that half of his people perished in the war and the rest expelled from their native lands.

The great question which for a long time had been working its solution in the mind of this priest was now approaching its climax. Was Christianity, with all its multi­tudinous shapes and colours, and with its unauthentic, spurious and corrupted Scriptures, the *true* Religion of God? In the summer of 1900 he retired to his small villa in the middle of vineyards near the celebrated fountain of Chali­Boulaghi in Digala, and there for a month spent his time in prayer and meditation, reading over and over the Scriptures in their original texts. The crisis ended in a formal resigna­non sent in to the Uniate Archbishop of Urmia, in which he frankly explained to Mar (Mgr.) Touma Audu the reasons for abandoning his sacerdotal functions. All attempts made by the ecclesiastical authorities to withdraw his decision were of no avail. There was no personal quarrel or dispute between Father Benjamin and his superiors; it was all ques­tion of conscience.

For several months he was employed in Tabriz as Inspector in the Persian Service of Posts and Customs under the Belgian experts. It was in 1903 that he again visited England and there joined the Unitarian Community. And in 1904 he was sent by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association to carry on an educational and enlightening work among his country people. On his way to Persia he visited Constantinople; and after several interviews with **Jemaluddin Effendi** and other Muslim scholars, he embraced Islam and adopted the name ‘Abdul-Ahad Dawud’.