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News and Notes

A Monthly Paper printed for the private use of the
Members of the Missionaries to Muslims League.

Series XII

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A New Year and a New Day.

WE greet the New Year and our fellow workers in India and elsewhere with confidence and courage and hope. Those who look merely on the surface of things might become pessimistic when they watch the struggle between Islam and Christianity. We need to pray the prayer of Elisha—that God will open our eyes to see the invisible—chariots and horses of God! The present opportunities for evangelism are unprecedented, because the very doctrines on which Christianity and Islam are divided by an age-long and bridgeless chasm, to-day are points of approach in taking our message across.

1. The old question of the trustworthiness of the Scriptures has been crowded into the background because the Bible is becoming the best selling book. Moslems in Egypt quote it in their newspapers, and use the abbreviated titles of Bible books; a clear proof of general familiarity with its contents. The colporteur now travels by express from Cairo to Damascus and Jerusalem, from the Somali Coast to the capital of Abyssinia, and by steamship to all the ports of the Seven Seas.

2. The deity of Christ, His incarnation and sinlessness are facts which the Moslem world must face. And although the stumbling block of the Cross still lies in the way of the inquirer, the doctrine of vicarious suffering is no longer strange to the Moslem mind. Islam, too, has suffered agonies of mind and of soul. The war has ploughed deep furrows in human hearts and lives. This is especially true of Turkey.

3. The place of Mohammed in Islam is no longer as secure as it once was. The whitewash is coming off. Educated Moslems are reading French and English books on the subject; Lammens, Caetani, Muir, Margoliouth and other western writers are being discussed, and

their books on Islam studied. S. Khuda Bakhsh of Calcutta, for example, has just published an English translation of Dr. Weil's History of Islamic culture which goes even further than his celebrated essays in its fearless criticism of Islam. There is new opportunity for the social message of Christ, the up-lift of childhood, the emancipation of womanhood, and higher ideals of marriage. In this effort, the missionary has for his allies all educated Moslems whose standards and ideals are no longer those of the religion of their fathers. Slavery has gone; the veil is going; polygamy and Moslem divorce laws are impossible under new conditions.

4. There is a deep desire for freedom; not only social and political, but moral freedom, an emancipation from that past which many intelligent Moslems feel is a handicap to progress. The political unrest in the Near East is not due half so much to economic factors or a legitimate desire for more self-government as it is to deep religious dissatisfaction. One is reminded of the words in the book of Judges, when Micah said to the children of Dan, "Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me. What aileth thee?" Some of the lesser gods and priests of the Near East have had their day. Apostates from Islam have become Apostles. There is a new liberty of conscience; a new freedom of speech; a new friendliness between Christian and Moslem; a new desire to work for the common good; a new demand for spiritual leadership. Seeing these multitudes, one cannot help being moved with compassion. They are as sheep scattered having no shepherd. Now is the hour for all of us to pay the price of success by special training, a strong faith, self-effacement and sympathy.

S. M. ZWEMER

The Power of God's Word.

WE are indebted to the author of "Crusaders in the Twentieth Century" for the following New Year message:--

"I should like to invite all who read these words to a fuller realization of the power and effectiveness of God's Word. We know that Christ's religion is the only remedy for the world's ills. To accomplish this in any degree there must be more true Christians. This implies an increase of the number of reverent appreciative students of the Book. What a precious heritage they throw away who neglect it! Merely because of its vast influence, lofty standard and wide spread it deserves every one's careful attention. The older we grow the more we value and love the Sacred Book and long that others should share our treasure. If we could only induce all who come under our influence to read the Blessed Book regularly and attentively we might rest assured that our work was half done. All this and

much more was doubtless felt by the late Rev. L. F. Esselstyn, D.D., who spent much of his time during the last years of his life at Meshed in selling the Scriptures, leaving the Word of God and His Spirit to accomplish their work in the soul. The riches of true wisdom are there displayed and will be recognized and appropriated by every sincere and humble reader. More Bible-readers means more and better Christians.'

*The Vicarage,
Hertford Heath,
Herts, England.*

W. A. RICE.

Report of the League for 1923.

AS we look back over the year that has just closed we see much cause for deep gratitude to Almighty God. The strained situation of a year or more ago has largely passed away, at least in India, and we hope it is so elsewhere also. Whatever may be said in criticism of the treaty with Turkey it will not be denied that since its completion, the minds of Moslems everywhere have been less bitter and more accessible.

Meanwhile steady advance has been made by the Christian forces engaged in the campaign of winning the hosts of Islam for our God and His Christ. The publication of the Report of the Survey of Christian Literature for Moslems is in itself evidence of this, and the next few years will show how great was the value of the labour expended on that survey. Further proof of the progress we are making is afforded by the fact that Mission Boards are setting apart one here, one there, to specialize in the task of evangelizing the Moslems.

And we have been granted the joy of seeing some definite fruit from our labours. Members of the League in other lands will rejoice with those of us who reside in India in that we have witnessed conversions in all parts of the country. In the pages of our paper alone we have actually notified our readers of something like 36 baptisms, and that there must have been many more cases of which we have not heard, both in and beyond India. For this, not the least of His great mercies, we give to God our grateful praise.

The League itself has again made steady progress and its usefulness reaches out more widely than ever before. We opened the year with 300 members, and the number at its close was 352. And yet those figures do not indicate the real situation. The total number of new members noted in our pages was 65, as against 48 in the preceding year; but we have sustained further losses—2 by death, and 11 by resignation, etc.

The possibilities in the way of securing new members for the League have once more been demonstrated by the single efforts of one of our staunchest supporters. We refrained from mentioning his name in our last report but, as it must of necessity become familiar to you

this year, it will bear the double emphasis! Mr. Murray T. Titus, of Moradabad, U.P., who takes over the Secretaryship of the League in February, secured 16 new members in 1922, 22 last year, and has already sent in 9 new names for 1924!

We continue to receive notes of appreciation from friends far and near who find the monthly paper useful, but we wish to make it clear that it is not the Secretary who makes it a success, but the many people whom he pesters for 'copy,' and who, busy though they are, have been his loyal supporters through another year. He would take this opportunity to thank them for their services.

It has recently occurred to us that the pages of *News and Notes* can be put to new use. Members sometimes find it difficult to find employment for educated converts. We would suggest that the need be advertised in *News and Notes*, for other members may be requiring the services of just such a person.

Wishing you all a Glad New Year in the Master's Service.

L. B. J.

The American University, Cairo.

THAT a fine Christian tone prevails in the new University in Cairo which was opened in 1920, will be apparent from the portion of a recent report which we here reproduce:—

'At first they did not understand. Then it dawned upon them what it meant, and they seriously agreed that it was essential that we come together each day to ask for divine wisdom to render thanks and make confession. And yet they did not comprehend what it all meant. Christian prayer? Probably ninety per cent of them had never before seen or heard of it. But from that day to now each day, six days in the week, they have come together quietly, apparently reverently, and conscious that there is some new source of strength, something quite outside of their ordinary world of intellectual or physical activities, and of value to their souls. Prayer, in so far as they have known it elsewhere, with negligible exceptions, has formerly meant merely the observance of an external form, a Moslem ritual, mechanical, prescribed, void of any personal element or sense of individual need, the approach of a slave to Allah. The reading of the Scriptures, with some simple explanation, the simple, plain prayer of confession, thanksgiving and petition, the entire absence of what they have seen in Oriental churches, crucifixes, images, pictures and other things which offend the Moslem mind—all these seem to appeal deeply to the sense of reverence and the creation of new hopes and ideals in these young men.

Possibly you may ask whether they have definite and regular instruction in Christian truth. Yes, each one, Moslem, Jew, Copt, and Protestant, has regularly, twice a week, lessons in class on the Bible and religious studies.

* * * * *

It may be asked whether there has been any objection to the Christian character of the College, or any antagonism to its presentation of Christian truth. Yes, there has been, but without any serious attack, thus far, upon the institution. Some have come, made enquiries, discovered that it was decidedly a Christian college, not neutral, nor a mere centre for secular learning, and quietly left without entering. Others have been very candid in their expression of their being Moslems, now and for ever, but have said they did want the moral uplift which they felt the college and American Christian civilization was able to provide. Some, both students and parents, have asked why we insist upon the Christian elements in the college. Some have indeed left because of the Christian atmosphere of the school, the requirements of religious studies and attendance at daily chapel. Five left at one time last year. We have had to explain to many the wisdom of continuing in these studies of moral and spiritual matters. We felt that, however, the whole spirit of inquiry into Christian principles and their application to life was considered wholesome not only by us but by the student body themselves. We have felt that they are discovering whence the light does come for the highest welfare of mankind, how certain things must pass away, and under what inspiration men and peoples may become new. We make no apology; we simply state it as our conviction and that of the founders and supporters of the college, that this which we have to offer spells the best things for all, for time and eternity.'

Progress in Abyssinia.

IN the 2,500 miles of coast line between the Swedish stations of Massowa and Kismayu there is no Christian effort, and Islam reigns supreme.

In Abyssinia the people belong nominally to their own branch of the Coptic Christian Church, under the Coptic 'Abuna,' Archbishop, who is appointed and consecrated by the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria.

During recent years there has been a most encouraging religious movement in the interior of Abyssinia, especially amongst the Moslems. It is said that about 10,000 have received Christian baptism from the Abyssinia Church during the last five or six years. The Rev. J. J. Jwarson, of the Swedish Mission in Eritrea, says that the centre of the movement is at Sokota, in the Amhara country, where the Apostle of the Christian Movement—the ex-Sheikh Zaccaria, now called a Noaye Kristus, a person of great influence—is established. Two of his disciples, also ex-Sheikhs, Alaka Poulos, of Tigrai, and Alaka Petros, of Sokota, visited him recently in order to acquire copies of the Holy Scriptures, and to consolidate their acquaintance with evangelical Christians. It is noteworthy that this religious awakening is of an evangelical character. Its original cause seems to have been the study of the Holy Scriptures distributed by British and Foreign Bible Society in Abyssinia from their depot at Adis Ababa. These new Christians were very anxious to study the Bible, and they organised, amongst themselves, a numerous body of teachers, said to number 500, with the object of teaching their youth to read the Scriptures.

Abyssinia, as a kingdom, has hitherto been closed to direct missionary effort, and no society was allowed to work within its boundary; it is of special interest, therefore, to record the reception given to the representative of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Mr. Hooper, when he visited the new capital, Adis Ababa, in 1914, and obtained sanction to open a depot.

One of the most encouraging features about this movement is that so many of these new converts have come out of Islam.

For many decades this faith has been gradually penetrating Abyssinia, until now it is estimated that more than 10 per cent of its eight million people have been Islamised. Many of these were amongst the higher classes, with limited education, but able to read, and this movement has brought many of them into this new evangelical Church. If the facts were accurately known, it might be found that more Moslems have thus been won in recent years in Abyssinia to the Christian faith than along the North African countries from the Red Sea to the Atlantic. The facts are still uncertain, but all available evidence seems to indicate this. It is indeed a cause for praise and thanksgiving.

W. J. ROOMER.

BOOK REVIEW

"Christian Literature in Moslem Lands," being the Report of the recent Survey. With 14 illustrations and 13 maps. New York; George. R. Doran, 1923, pp. 306. 3.50 cents.

Here is a volume the like of which in the realm of missionary literature can hardly be paralleled, and which, in so far as it deals with the Moslem problem, is quite certainly unique. Reviewing it in the October issue of *The Moslem World*, Professor D. B. Macdonald expresses his sense of its value thus:—"More important missionary Reports may have appeared, although as to that I doubt; it would be hard to find one which gives a more vivid picture of so wide a situation or which opens more weighty possibilities and opportunities."

A perusal of these pages will impress the reader with a sense of the care with which the Survey has been conducted in every Moslem land from Morocco to the Philippines, and even in areas off the beaten track. We now know what we have (and more important still) what we have not, in the way of Christian literature for these people.

The different chapters deal with, The Moslem press, old style and new; the Christian press in the Moslem World; Christian literature in Arabic; for Turanian and Balkan Moslems; in Persian; in the languages of India; Malaysia and the Philippines; in Chinese; in the languages of Africa; in European languages. Next come chapters dealing with the problems of authorship, publication, and circulation; the possibilities of newspaper evangelism and the Committee's recommendations with regard to the next steps to be taken. Appendices supply the personnel of the Survey organisation which has given us the Report, and interesting up-to-date statistics.

Over against the perpetually amazing unity of Islam, to which the report bears fresh witness, we shall now be able to set a new sense of comradeship amongst missionaries to Moslems in all these lands—a valuable result attributable to mutual participation in this Survey.

Together we have faced the needs of the present day and together we have felt the inadequacy of the supply at our disposal. And, arising out of

the very nature of the task, conviction has been forced upon us that we can, and that we should, help each other far more than we have done, if only we *go about it in the right way*. The task is one and we must be one.

We must pool our resources—we must prevent waste—we must give a fair field to those with a gift for writing. It was therefore recommended, as an immediate step, that a central office be opened at Cairo to promote production and circulation throughout the Moslem World. Such a bureau will undertake the following tasks;

(a) To assist, wherever such assistance is required, in plans for co-ordination and co-operation between existing producers of literature.

(b) To promote production in each field and a sharing, by as many as possible, of the productive energy found in any one field.

(c) To promote plans for the better circulation of literature produced, whether in one field or between various fields.

It is impossible to do justice to so important a publication in a brief review, and we therefore confine ourselves to a few observations.

The Moslem World is learning to read and seemingly the very first requisite for masses of them is the provision of the Gospel story in simple jingling verse. It is most interesting to find a widespread consensus of opinion on this point. *If only our Colporteurs and Evangelists could sing* the Gospel narrative in the simple doggerel loved by the masses we should get nearer to the hearts of the people.

The Moslem advance in Africa receives the close attention it deserves. Missionaries in the affected area, however, are up against what is known as "the problem of 1000 tribes", with their varying dialects. Which of these dialects, destined as all of them otherwise are to a limited term of usefulness, shall be fostered and built up as vehicles of the Christian message? That is a problem which requires insight, foresight and the Divine overruling. Furthermore, those which may be selected will have to serve as "barrier languages" to help stem the advancing tide of Islam, and, for the same reason, the Christian pioneer in those parts, while sedulously cultivating the pagan dialect for purposes of instruction and publication, must set his face as a flint against the insinuating, all-pervading, but now *dangerous* Arabic.

In China a small but loyal band are steadily working to meet the needs of their Moslem neighbours, and we in other fields should bear in mind that they, in their day of small things, look expectantly and eagerly to us for all the help and guidance we can give them.

The cry of the children resounds throughout this volume; they have been almost entirely forgotten, and now that their needs are made known we simply must respond to meet them.

But, as Professor Macdonald rightly divines, the task before us is not less than that of "furnishing Christian literature to the Moslem world *in the broadest spirit*." "What the East needs is the influence upon it of all the literature of the West in all its sides.....as an element in the ordinary life of the street, the coffee-house and the home."

Most fortunately for all concerned, when it came to sorting out the mass of material sent in from the various areas with a view to compiling the Report, the Committee were able to secure the services of a literary artist. A report of this nature might easily have been rendered insipid and monotonous, but Miss Padwick has made it vivid and fascinating. To her, and to the Committee responsible for the publication, there is due from all who work for the coming of the Kingdom in the world of Islam, a deep debt of gratitude.

L. B. J.

NOTES.

MUSSALMANI-BENGALI—ENGLISH DICTIONARY.—There must still be some members of the League in Bengal who have not yet secured their copy of Mr. Goldsack's new Dictionary. We are asked to mention that a few copies are in the keeping of Rev. W. Milne, Baptist Mission, Khulna, who will be glad to forward copies on receipt of Rs. 1-8-0 plus 2 as. for postage.

INDIA'S DELEGATES TO THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE.—It has been previously notified that after a series of Divisional Conferences in the Near East in February and March, Dr. John R. Mott is expected to preside over a final Conference of representatives to be held in Jerusalem in the early days of April. India was asked to send some delegates, and the following have been invited to attend: Messrs. M. T. Titus, R. Sirajuddin, and Bevan Jones. We ask to be remembered in your prayers.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

Change of Secretary.

Your present Secretary is due to leave India on short furlough at the beginning of March, so that it has been necessary to arrange for the appointment of a successor pro. tem. The Committee are very glad to be able to announce that our good friend the Rev. Murray T. Titus, of the M. E. Mission, Moradabad, U. P. India, has consented, notwithstanding other heavy responsibilities, to take over the secretaryship. We ask for him a continuation of the loyal support you have always given us.

FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER.

PRAISE that as a league we have been permitted to complete another year of service for the Master in the endeavour to win Moslems to His cause, and prayer that we may be enabled to win more victories for Him in the New Year.

PRAY for those who are now arranging for Dr. Zwerner's visit to India in the summer, that they may receive Divine guidance in the plans to be made.

PRAY for the Divine blessing to rest upon on India's delegates to the Conference.

NEW MEMBERS.

290	Mr. J. Desai,	M. E. M.	Shorapur, Deccan.
307	Rev. B. W. Tucker,	M. E. M.	Pakaur, Bengal.
353	Rev. T. Williams,	M. E. M.	Baihar, Balaghat, C. P.
354	Rev. J. R. Perkins,	M. E. M.	Sironcha, C. P.
355	Rev. O. M. Auncr,	M. E. M.	Khandwa, C. P.
356	Rev. F. R. Felt,	M. E. M.	Jubbulpore.
357	Rev. C. F. Guse,	M. E. M.	Jubbulpore.
358	Mrs. A. H. Holland,	M. E. M.	Raipur, C. P.
359	Miss Fales,	M. E. M.	Sironcha, C. P.
360	Rev. A. Nielsen,	Dan. Miss.	Damascus.

The annual subscription to the League is only Rs. 2-0-0 (English about 3s.) The Secretary will be glad to send spare copies of this issue to addresses mentioned by members with a view to securing new subscribers. News and requests for prayer will always be welcome and should be sent early in the month to the Officiating Hon. Secretary:—

Rev. Murray T. Titus,
Methodist Mission,
Moradabad, U. P., India.