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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 XVI

No. 12

December, 1928.

1st December = 17th Jumada'I-Akhir (6th mo.), 1347, A.H.

Looking Back.

INTROSPECTION is not always the healthiest of psychological exercises. Sometimes, however, it is a necessary one. It is convenient to select the last month of the year to take stock of the achievements of the past twelve months—the degree of realization of aims, the disappointments, and the points of failure. With most of us there is much cause for thanksgiving and rejoicing in accomplishment; and goodly reason for discouragement. Seen against the “background of Eternity,” our efforts seem so small and ineffective—especially in our work with Muslims. Yet, if Browning be right, the very essence of success is a failure to have attained to an adequate aim. Ours is an admittedly difficult task, and any lowering of ideal, any less objective than the highest, any turning to an easier course, is perhaps where we have most signally failed. Herein let there be heart-searching; inquiry into method of approach being a more or less secondary corollary to the more fundamental causes of failure.

Where there has been triumph, let the formulation of aspirations for the new year absorb new light thus shed on the task. Having considered the negative aspect, let us put it resolutely at our back, and press toward the goal of the Kingdom of God, seeing naught but His will.

And may all our hearts, gladdened by the approaching Christmas time, burn to see the birth of the Christ in the hearts of our Muslim friends, and yearn to hear their voices join ours in common praise, and the ascription of “joy to the world, the Lord is come”! Let earth receive her King!

Safety.

THOSE who have read Canon Gairdner's masterful little monograph on Islam prepared for the Jerusalem Conference, will remember that he feels that one of the values in Islam which Christianity can enrich, is the veneration that has during the years gathered itself about the name and person of Muhammed. This seems to indicate the necessity of a type-man for a real religious dynamic—a necessity that has been met by the creation of such a one in the person of the Arabian prophet, in spite of all the Quran itself reveals of the actual characteristics of the man. Tradition has gradually thrown a halo about the figure of Muhammed, so that he would be unrecognizable to his contemporaries.

That Muhammed has received at the hands of his adorers some of the characteristics which Christianity has through the years attributed to Jesus, is rather shockingly betrayed in a death notice which appeared recently in one of the papers in Dacca, Bengal. After the usual situations of name, date, and pedigree of a four-year-old boy, there is the following "quotation":

"Safe in the arms of Muhammed."

This is not an isolated instance of borrowing. It seems very pathetic that the need for such ideas and ideals is creating a building of such insecure foundations. It would seem that the "safety" referred to is a bit precarious, if it is to be found in the "Arms of Muhammed." As to what may be the destiny of the little chap mentioned above, it is not our province to discuss; but it is our duty and privilege to point a more excellent and safer way to his brothers and sisters. The very need implied above is almost a reproof, and certainly a challenge to our best efforts.

A Matter of Script—Plus.

IN the present confusion of ideas as to the new Turkish script, one is inclined to recall the discussions regarding the use of Roman-Urdu. In many ways, parallels may be traced. Sentiment and economy at variance—and most of us voting on the side of sentiment. But this is a squib about Turkey—yet more than Turkey, or it wouldn't be inserted here.

There seems to be some difference of opinion regarding the aims of this reform. As expressed by the correspondent of the "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN," they are as follows:

"The whole of Turkey is mobilising to learn to read and write in the new alphabet in the shortest time possible. An immense change has

come over the official view of the matter since the *Linguistic Commission* set to work, and from fifteen years, which the reform was expected to take, the time allowed has fallen to two years. Provincial administrations, Government departments, banks and commercial institutions are all organising courses for their employees, and in many cases are offering bonuses for a rapid mastery of the new script.

"The script itself has been made as simple as possible, and the rules which govern spelling and grammar are far easier than those of the Arabic script. The alphabet consists of twenty consonants, eight vowels, and three principal signs—the apostrophe to mark a pause in the middle of a word, the hyphen, which will be very frequent and will establish the separations of the roots of verbs from their terminations and other separations, and the circumflex accent. One peculiarity is that there are two i's, one of which is spelt without a dot. Otherwise the letters are all familiar Latin European letters. As for spelling, it is to be purely phonetic, and is to follow the Constantinople pronunciation.

"The reform is regarded under a number of important aspects: Not only is it to produce a general literacy throughout the country instead of the 10 per cent of literacy which exists at present, and which Kemal Pasha has indicted as a disgrace to any modern nation, but it is to introduce the nation to a new culture. It is urged that the Turkish literary and artistic genius has always been held back from a proper self-expression by being cast in the Arabic and Persian moulds, which were really foreign to it. The national literature, it is said, has consisted of thin imitations of those Oriental models belonging to another civilisation and that a civilisation which, owing to its inherent faults of fanaticism and tyranny, soon became decadent and obsolete. So the Turkish Conservatives and Orientalists are confronted with the argument that the artistic sterility of Turkey is directly due to its unfortunate linguistic inheritance. Modern civilisation, it is pointed out, needs a new terminology, and it is useless to try to adapt the Arabic script to it. The Turkish nation must have a malleable means of expressing modern scientific needs and philosophic theories, and cannot continue to torture into new shapes the fixed and inadequate Arabic letters which were devised for quite another epoch.

"The Linguistic Commission did not rush into this change without considering the alternatives. But it found, after careful examination, that it was impossible to reform the Arabic script. In phonetics, morphology, harmony, grammar and syntax the Turkish language was so fundamentally under the influence of Arabic and Persian that its national character was quite obscured and its development would always remain derivative. In phonetics especially the Arabic letters constituted an insuperable obstacle. So the new Turkish language will, both in its phonetics and in its syntax, cease to be visibly and audibly of the Arabic family, and in a few decades will appear a new national language, having transmuted into its own forms and tones the exotic elements out of which it grew and in which it became a static medium."

Then, on the other hand, it seems quite evident to many Muslims with their fingers on the pulses of current affairs, that Russia considers the Islamic peoples as rather particularly her Province. With Soviet talons on Turkey and Afghanistan, what next? they

question. The following is a review of Joseph Castagne's "The Latinisation of the Turkish Alphabet," and the note-book of the President of the Turkish republic, found in ISLAMIC CULTURE :

"A tremendous campaign against the Arabic-Turkish alphabet is being carried on among all the Russian Muslims by the Soviet Government, through Muslim agents. The movement to the same effect in Anatolia is but an echo of this campaign, and may even be the consequence of diplomatic pressure from Moscow. Indeed, those of us who seek the explanation of astonishing developments in Turkey should look towards Moscow rather than towards Western Europe; a certain inclination towards the point of view of Soviet Russia being merely prudent since the Turks believe that they depend on the Soviet alliance for their very existence as a nation.

"There is nothing at all objectionable in the proposal to simplify the alphabet or change the alphabet with a view to simplify expression and save time and labour. It may be regarded as a logical reform, and there are no more logical people upon earth than the Turks and Tatars, whatever may be reported to the contrary. But public opinion as a whole is dead against the change. The Turks had grown used to the Arabic script, had adapted it to their needs sufficiently, and were generally of opinion that to change it would be more troublesome than to retain it. Even now, in Soviet Russia, where heaven and earth are being moved to recommend and hasten on the change, the opposition is strong in most of the Muslim republics. Azerbaijan alone had proved completely amenable up to the date when M. Castagne wrote his article. Daghistan was entirely recalcitrant. The principal object of the campaign, we gather, is not to simplify the education of the Turks and Tatars, but to spread "the Revolution" in the East. It seems that Lenin said that the Revolution could not spread properly so long as the Arabic script remained. It would seem however, to tend rather to cut off the Russian Muslims from the rest of Islam, and thus, while bringing them in closer touch with Russia and making them Communists rather than Muslims, destroy a sympathetic channel of communication with the East outside the Russian boundaries, which the Soviet leaders have used freely in the past. It would seem that the imperialist idea has conquered the world-revolutionary idea, as we always thought it would, in a short while. It is obvious that, if the Turkish Republic were to retain the Arabic alphabet now, it would support the "reactionaries" in the Soviet territories with a sense of Islamic and national solidarity, whereas if Turkey were to decree the abolition of the Arabic and adoption of the Latin script, it would help the Soviet propaganda.....

"The intellectual reactionaries are not asleep, they avail themselves of every opportune moment. The clergy seem particularly agitated. After the earthquake at Namangan the Mullahs cried: "We have rejected the alphabet with which the Holy Quran was written, which was bequeathed to us by the Prophet. We have just now reaped the consequences. The earthquake has destroyed our dwellings and exterminated our near ones,".....

"Though one dislikes the manner of awakening, it seems possible that this forced activity in undesired directions may be better and more hopeful for the Muslims of Central Asia than the intellectual stagnation which

preceded it. *The Muslim world must come to terms with modern life, and someone must make the necessary experiments, take the necessary risks and bear the odium. To ascertain the limits someone must transgress them.*" (Italics the Editor's)

Moslem World for January 1929

Advance Notice.

THE January number ushers in the nineteenth year of this Quarterly. Without change of editor or editorial policy, it is still as the first number announced in 1911: "a common platform, an open forum of thought, and an organ for the investigation and study of Islam." True to its international and interdenominational character, the writers and topics of the present issue represent Britain, America, Denmark, Belgium, Germany, India, South Arabia, Turkey and West Africa. The Bishop of Salisbury calls to Patience in Unanswered Prayer, and a Roman Catholic theologian indicates a danger line in Protestant Missions. Prof. Margoliouth of Oxford contributes a scholarly article on early South Arabian religions and the origin of Islam. Three articles by writers from Turkey and India (one by S. Khuda Baksh of Calcutta University) deal with Islam and Modernism, indicating the effect of this movement on the prayer-life, the faith and the intellectual outlook of young Islam. There is an illuminating account of Islam in West Africa by the Editorial Secretary of the Wesleyan Missions who has recently visited the West Coast. Christianity is not only holding its own, but winning in the struggle between the faiths that contend for the dark Continent.

One can read between the lines of the two articles by a Shiah and Sunni Muslim on Koran interpretation and modern thought how the situation has changed. Alfred Nielsen of Damascus tells how these changes, however, offer new "Difficulties" in presenting the Gospel. J. C. Heinrich, who wrote last year on "Shell Shocked Converts" comes back to the same theme in a thoughtful Clinical Study on Evangelistic Methods and the Welcome of Converts by the Church. The brief article on Chinese Medieval Notices of Islam is of historic value.

There are many book reviews, a score of items under Current Topics and the usual able Survey of Periodicals by Miss Hollis W. Hering of the Research Library.

Notes on Recent Anti-Missionary Incidents in the Near East.

(From "News from the Area" of the Council for Western Asia and Northern Africa.)

WITHIN the last two years there is evidence of a hostile and virulent dead-set against Christian missions in the Near East. There have been cases at Damascus, Aleppo, Palestine and Egypt when the even tenor of toleration to Christian Missions has been broken up by unreasoning bursts of opposition.

The cases in Syria and Palestine seem to be symptoms of an organised anti-Christian movement, while those in Egypt may be accounted for by personal motives or special circumstances, or it is possible that this organised movement has seized local situations to further its own objects, and that there may be one strong organisation behind all. If, as seems possible, such a movement exists, it is interesting to try and trace the reasons for its existence.

1.—There is no doubt that recent happenings in Turkey, such as the abolition of the Khalifate, and the Sharia Law have shaken to its foundations the religion of Islam amongst thinking Muslims all over the world.

2.—That this should stiffen and put on their guard the Ulama and official Islam everywhere is natural.

3.—The infiltration of Christian ideas indirectly through the impact with Western ideas after the war, and directly through Christian Literature, medical, educational and evangelistic missions is felt to be a real danger to Islam.

4.—One of the highest official Muslims in Egypt declared that the bulk of the educated youth of Egypt are agnostic.

5.—There seems to be no doubt in the minds of some who have watched closely religious life in the Near East, that there are large numbers of the young intelligentsia who would, if they dared, copy Turkey in their attitude towards Islam.

6.—There are other watchers who firmly believe that the sinister influence underlying these symptoms is the Soviet Government of Russia which, though violently anti-religious, is yet doing its utmost by means of large subsidies and other propaganda to attack the Mandatory Powers operating in Muslim countries in the Near East.

*Llewellyn Gwynne,
Bishop of Egypt and the Sudan.*

Notes.

The meeting of the Christian Literature for Muslims Committee, which was announced for the 21st of November in Lahore, took place in Lucknow on the 29th. This change was due to the meeting of the Managing Committee of the School of Islamic Studies, which met on the 30th in Lucknow. So many were members of both of the Committees, that economy of time and finance dictated the change. Report of both groups, we hope, will appear in the next issue of "NEWS AND NOTES."

* * * * *

We have been much in prayer for the Convention for Christian Converts from Islam held during the last month. Full report will be made later through Rev. H. J. Lane Smith, the instigator of this most essential time of spiritual refreshing and encouragement for those of kindred needs.

* * * * *

Many have acknowledged need for some program of education for the understanding of the non-Christian in our Mission Boarding Schools

as well as some standard works for the use of Christian workers. None, however, have offered a constructive program to meet the former need.

* * * * *

The Bangalore people are carrying on. Their NEWS AND PRAYER LETTER reports considerable progress.

* * * * *

The October number of "THE MOSLEM WORLD" is one of the most interesting we remember. It is full of information and fascinating bits of interpretation that are pathetic in the effort of the Muslim to give new reasons for old practices: the chap who thought Muhammed the originator of the "daily dozen," the cold bath theory of ablution in the early morning, and all the things Syria is teaching her young in a campaign of religious education. Report is made of the outlook from Olivet over the Muslim world. The progress of Islam in Africa is sketched and mapped. Egypt's womanhood in her awakening is described, and the activity of her press to-day. Mustafa Kemal's hat is taken as a symbol of the anti-Islamic character of many of the Turkish reforms: for the Muslim must pray with his head covered by a cap that will allow his bare forehead to touch the ground. The Turk can't pray with the hat the law demands. Q. E. D. The history of medical work, particularly among women, on the Indian frontier, is a romance of courage and consecration, admirably written by Margaret Doolittle.

* * * * *

From the report of the Council for Western Asia and Northern Africa comes the interesting statement that the Professor of Chemistry this year in the Constantinople College for Women is Mrs. Lindbergh, mother of Col. Lindbergh, the world's most popular and most unspoiled aviator. "She has come out with the desire for service and is very charming and interesting."

* * * * *

The lateness of this issue is due to the illness of the Secretary.

For Thanksgiving and Intercession.

PRAISE for a year of renewed activity and interest in behalf of the Muslim.
PRAISE for definite results that have inevitably followed upon this activity.
PRAYER for all those who are definitely devoted to the evangelization of the Muslim, especially the members of this League, that in the formulation of plans for the ensuing year, there may be divine guidance and complete consecration.

NOTICE

It is expected that we shall send out the **January** issue in the Indian Postal Area by V.P.P., to collect Subscriptions due.

Any notification of change of address, names of new members or remittance of subscription, etc., should be sent to the Superintendent, Orissa Mission Press, Cuttack, India, and *not* to the Secretary of the League. The annual subscription to the League is Rs. 2-0-0 (English 3s. od.).

Matters of interest to members of the League, items of news and requests for prayer should be sent (if possible early in the month) to the Hony. Secretary :—

Rev. M. S. Pitt,
*Methodist Theological College,
Jubbulpore, C. P., India.*



Edited and Published by Rev. M. S. Pitt, Jubbulpore, C. P. India,
and printed at the Orissa Mission Press, Cuttack, by S. F. Robinson,
Superintendent.

INDEX TO 'NEWS AND NOTES,' SERIES XVI

	PAGE.
American Christian Literature Society for Muslims, the, Grants 	65
Anti-Missionary Incidents in the Near East, Notes on	97
Bangalore United Hindustani Mission 	25, 29, 62
"Best Friend, The" 	30
Bhopal State 	78
Bohras of Bombay, the 	34
Chicago, Mosque in 	4
Christian Kalima, the 	21
Christian Literature for Muslims, India 	11
" " " " Bengali 	14
" Living 	21
Committee on Work Among Muslims, Report of ...	45
Contrast, Muslim and Christian 	75
Convert, the Muslim 	67
Faith in the Soil 	1
From Islam to Christ 	18
Gairdner, Canon W. H. T., the Home Call of ...	45, 55
Headly, Lord 	23
Islam, Studies in 	78
Islamic Studies, Circulating Library 	38
" " Department of, Bareilly 	10
" " Short Course, Bareilly 	48
Islamics, School of, Dacca 	14, 29, 49, 52
Islamic World Since the Peace Settlement 	6
Jerusalem Conference, Findings on the Christian Life and Message in Relation to Islam 	43
League Changes 	56
Madras Examinations 	79
Mecca, Holy Carpet for 	41
Mesopotamia To-day 	28

	PAGE.
Mid-India, Work Among Muslims in	87
Modern Muslim's Conception of Islam, A... ..	85
Moplas of Malabar, the	6
"Moslem World, The"	8, 70, 97, 99
Muharram in British Guiana	77
Muslem Mentality	72
Palestine, Earthquake	4
Persia	70
Psychology, Jewish and Muslim	33
Retrospect, A	2
St. Andrew, the Brotherhood of	47
Safety	94
Selected Passages from the Quran	63
Society of the Friends of Muslim in China, the	64
Survey of Central Provinces and Berar	88
Tabligh Training College	68
Turkey, A Matter of Script	95
„ Religious Reforms	69
„ State and Church	49
Women's Conference, All-India	37
Word of Farewell, A	51
Word of Greeting, A	59
Zwemer Visit, The	3, 15, 17