

Missionaries to Muslims League

News and Notes.

Series V, No. 1.

May, 1916

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LEAGUE

With this issue of *News and Notes* the Missionaries to Muslims League enters upon its fifth year. Those who have been members from the beginning will agree that the high standard set by the first editor of this paper has been fully maintained by the retiring editor, the Rev. H. Walter, M.A. The outstanding features of the paper during the year were undoubtedly the series of articles by the Rev. Ahmed Shah upon Muhammadan Observances, and the series of autobiographical sketches by prominent Muslim converts on "How Christ Won My Heart." These latter not only afforded an interesting study in psychology, but they taught us much regarding the influences which count most in bringing a Muslim to the great decision. Readers of *News and Notes* will be interested to know that some of these testimonies have been translated into Chinese, and are being much used in that language in reaching the hearts of Chinese Muslims.

The sphere of influence of the League is rapidly widening, and the membership during the year increased from 160 to 207. The members are now found not only in India proper, but also in Burmah, Ceylon, China, Fiji, Egypt, Arabia, England and America. Practically all these are, or have been, engaged in mission work amongst Muslims, and it was a splendid thought on the part of Mr. Walter which placed in the hands of each member a list of the names and addresses of all the members. Let this list ever remind us that we are banded together for a special purpose: *viz.*, to further a great spiritual crusade for the purpose of presenting the Lord Jesus Christ as the one hope for the Muslim world.

This union, to be effective, must have as one of its aims *mutual helpfulness*. Let us recognise that a victory in Lahore leaves its subtle influence upon Calcutta; that a brand plucked from the burning in Madras may not go unnoticed in Burmah. Let us learn to feel that our united prayers are needed to bring back to the fold of Christ such sheep as the young man, Abdul, about whom Mrs. Mead writes so graphically in this number of our little paper. If we have found a useful illustration, let us pass it on. If we have met a difficulty in the presentation of truth to Muslim men or women, let us seek the help of each other in finding the right solution.

The Missionaries to Muslims League was born in prayer, and one of its principal objects is to enable the members to help one another "by prayer and mutual sympathy." A reference to earlier numbers of *News and Notes* will show that the "Prayer and Praise" column was largely used by the members. Later numbers of the paper, however, show some falling off in contributions to this column. This must not be. If our League means anything at all, it surely represents an endeavour to realise our oneness in Christ, and our appreciation of the power of united prayer. "Rely not on a single prayer in matters of great concernment," said the great Jeremy Taylor, "but make it

as public as you can, by obtaining others to pray with you: this being the great blessing of the communion of saints that a prayer united is like a well-ordered army." Let us, then, who are members of this League, share with each other our hopes and fears, our joys and sorrows, so that we may offer united praise for blessings given, and together present our supplications for special needs. Let us respect the confidential nature of our paper, and then, in the fullest, freest manner discuss amongst ourselves the problems which are more or less common to us all.

News and Notes is in a special sense a worker's paper, and the series of articles on Muhammadan Observances published during the year was an attempt to impart useful information to the members. Let us see to it that *practical usefulness* be one of the features of the paper during the new year. We would welcome an enquiry column in which might be discussed the best methods of dealing with the difficulties peculiar to work amongst Muslims. The clear-cut article by Canon Hooper on the presentation of the doctrine of the atonement is a model of conciseness and lucidity, and we hope he will favour us with other articles of a similar nature during the year. If members will send on to us the difficulties raised by Muslim opponents or enquirers, we will endeavour to secure the best solutions suggested by the wisdom of those who have grown grey in the Master's service among Muslims.

THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST

Abdul and Abjel, these two, and Abjel did outrun Abdul. These youths, with several others, some months ago, we called enquirers. Abdul, top of the ninth class in the high school, seemed far and away ahead of the rest in faith and knowledge. He had read all he could lay his hands on, for and against Christianity, and had come to a clear and unflinching trust in Christ, given up his Namaj, attended our services, tried to win others, and in every way was the most promising convert we had ever had. He was under age by the school records, so we could not baptize him. He bore persecution from his people and the Muhammadan community, and still only got stronger. He met many wise men, who were called from far and near to argue with him and show him his mistakes and errors of the Christian faith. His answers floored the wisest of them. Then the devil taketh him to Calcutta to argue with Moulvies there, and he fell and great was the fall of him. He was upset by the many "proofs" in their possession of the mutilation of the Bible. He was also shown passages in the New Testament, showing that Jesus was not sinless—the chief thing he could say when he returned was, "If Jesus Christ was sinless he would never have done such an injustice to those men and destroyed all their pigs." "I *did* believe fully, now I have many doubts," he said. He has not been to church since, and he has again begun to say his Namaj regularly, and when another boy was baptized Abdul begged him to say, "I was never baptized," and he himself told all the villagers, "Oh, no, Abjel was not baptized." One of the priests in Calcutta who did him most harm is the son of the sainted John Sircar, who died a few years ago, one of the oldest Christians, and beloved, of the B.M.S., Backergunge District. Twenty-five years ago this man, Chundra Sircar, was one of our leading Christian preachers in Faridpur town. He has been a Muhammadan over fifteen years I think.

But Abjel—great, tall, smiling-faced Abjel, who stands two inches above Dr. Mead—what of Abjel! He was in a good deal of persecution in November. He came to church one Sunday well bruised, being beaten by his father for "running after those Christians." Though bruised, he was still smiling. Abdul's successful visit to the Calcutta Moulvies made Abjel's father eager to take him, and he got him as far as our steamer station, and then Abjel refused to

proceed any further. Then he felt he could wait no longer for baptism, and he was baptized just before Christmas Day, and hurried off "somewhere" for some weeks to allow his people's wrath to cool down. Mr. White had him at Baris, and he spent a happy time there. It was a matter of considerable concern to us as to whether he should go to school elsewhere, or come here again. Finally we allowed him to return to Orakandi to see his people. Immediately on his return to his home his people had him closely guarded, by day and night, and we got no news of him for some days. Then a rumour came saying he had yielded and said his Namaj. Just as Harsha Babu was starting to try and find him, and see how things were, Abjel came in as full of smiles as ever. He said he had not been allowed to leave home, but that he had been well treated. When any danger seemed near some relation, who sympathised with him, sounded a warning note, and in this way he was often saved from his foes. We tried to persuade Abjel not to return to his home that day, but he replied, "I have promised father I'd come and see you and then return, and I *must* keep my word." On Sunday he did not come to church, and we felt anxious. Next day he came along bringing a middle-aged man, one of his relations, who he said wants to come "our way." He also told us how various fakirs and holy men had tried to turn his mind from Christianity. One man read the Koran over a quart of water, and asked him to drink it. He laughed and said, "I have no objection to drink it. But it won't affect my mind," and it did not. A holier fakir was brought, who for *certain* could turn Abjel's mind. He blessed a quart of milk, and it was with great expectation that the good effect on Abjel's mind was watched. But Abjel burst out laughing and said, "My faith is not a thing of a day, but of four long years. Do you suppose blessed milk can shake it?" The last trial was some mysterious charm tied on his arm. Even that has failed. The father finally said to him: "We can't turn your mind, I see, so if your new religion is the true one stay amongst us, go on with your schooling, and tell us more of this new salvation you have found." So Abjel came to prayer meeting on Tuesday with his friend, and is now attending school. Yesterday his father paid his school fees, and as far as we can see (not far sometimes, I grant) Abjel is to go on unmolested. His father is a rich man, and high up in the village Muhammadan circle. His boy having broken away from the old faith and changed his Koran for a Bible, is a sad blow for the proud parents. Would it not be a grand victory if Abjel won them for the Christian firing line? Abjel's baptism, I feared, would empty my Sunday school, but instead of that, I had a crowded house on Saturday, with over 200 on the roll and 180 attending.

A. G. MEAD.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The letter printed below, from a member of the League who is working on the N. W. frontier of India, voices the feelings of a considerable number of our members. It has been felt for some time past that if Muslim enquirers and converts are to be freely mentioned in *News and Notes*, either in the news column or in that set apart for requests for prayer, greater privacy is essential. This matter has been receiving the earnest attention of the Executive Committee, and those members of it at present in India have unanimously resolved that, in future, all copies of our Monthly shall be posted in closed envelopes. This step will necessitate an anna postage instead of the one pice at present required for registered papers. In order to meet the extra outlay thus involved, it has been found necessary to raise the annual subscription from Rs. 2 to Rs. 2/8. We feel sure this action of the Committee will meet with the approval of the members, and we would ask them to kindly remember the increased rate when forwarding their subscriptions for the new year.

To the Editor of NEWS AND NOTES.

Dear Sir,

May I suggest that *News and Notes* should be sent in closed envelopes, and without the name on the outside of the cover.

As it now comes anyone can slip it out of the wrapper, read and replace. I would add my humble opinion that I think this important enough to warrant even a large expenditure.

Yours in our blessed Saviour and Master,

H. C. ROBERTSON,

Central Asian Mission,
Mardan, N.-W.F.P.

BOOK REVIEWS

Mohammed or Christ. By the REV. S. M. ZWEMER, D.D., F.R.G.S. Seeley, Service and Co., London.

"In *Mohammed or Christ* Dr. Zwemer produces a book full of important facts set forth in the most interesting way. It is described on the title-page as 'an account of the rapid spread of Islam in all parts of the globe, the methods employed to obtain proselytes, its immense press, its strongholds, and suggested means to be adopted to counteract the evil,' and the book fully answers to this description. Some of the chapters have inviting titles—'The tale of three cities,' 'Islam in Russia,' 'Why Arabia?' 'The Clock, the Calendar and the Quran,' 'The stumbling block of the cross'—and no one turning to them will be disappointed. Especially striking is the chapter on 'The present attitude of educated Moslems towards Jesus Christ and the Scriptures,' in which quite startling information is given of the activity of the press in the Muhammadan East. 'Nothing that happens in Europe and which seems to reflect on Christian civilisation escapes the Moslem press. The feminist movement, the suffragette extravagances, a diplomatic disclosure, or a speech of the German Emperor, American divorce scandals, the social evils of Paris or of Liverpool, all are served up to Moslem readers with the moral: Such is Christianity, and such is the programme of Christian Europe. The Edinburgh Missionary Conference was fully reported in the leading Muhammadan newspaper in Cairo.'

"The book has interesting illustrations, and the preface is contributed by Bishop Steilman, who also was for a time a missionary in Turkish Arabia, and whose episcopate in Persia has been only too soon cut short by the strain upon health never spared in the service of his Divine Master."

DR. EUGENE STOCK in *The Church Family Newspaper*

Muhammad in Islam, by the REV. W. GOLDSACK. Christian Literature Society, Madras. Paper cover, 8 annas, cloth 12 annas.

This booklet of 116 pages contains sketches of Muhammad from Islamic sources by the Rev. William Goldsack of Jessore. In the preface the author says his aim is to present a number of pen pictures of the great reformer based upon purely Islamic sources, and the final sentence of his effort runs: "The picture which the Muslim chronicles have given us is not an altogether lovely one, and we now leave the reader to judge whether, and in what respect, Muhammad may be considered as indeed the Prophet of God."

As a short polemic against Islam it is the most masterly work we have seen, the authorities quoted are all Moslem, and in most cases they are authorities that Muhammadans would themselves accept. As an appeal to Moslems themselves the author's own judgment appears to us to be stated too frequently and too incisively. For example: "From a close study of the prophet's life it would appear that, at first, he was sincere in the belief that he was the chosen messenger of God to wean his fellow-countrymen from the gross idolatry which they practised, but as time went on, ambition and the lust of power carried him away, and there can be no doubt that, later in his career, he

deliberately forged revelations in the name of the Deity, in order to further his own ends." This judgment is so early in the book (page 20) that it scarcely suggests the impartial historian stating his facts and leaving the judgment to his readers. So again, the various incidents that cast "an indelible stain upon the character of Muhammad" are set forth with unmistakable clearness and fullness, but one looks almost in vain for any reference to redeeming traits of character that non-Muslim historians, whose names carry weight, have also found in the life and character of this "great personality."

We congratulate Mr. Goldsack on a work that reveals the researches of a scholar, set forth in a fresh and interesting style. The book is published by the Christian Literature Society, and should find a place in every missionary library.

H. A.

NOTES

A Notable Baptism

The annual report of the Baptist Missionary Society for 1915 contains the following:—"The baptism of Meerza Amir Husain, a direct descendant of the renowned Mir Jafar of Clive's time, and brother-in-law of the present Nawab of Murshidabad, in May of last year, is one of those events which should be known and communicated to those who say that none of the better classes join the Christian Church; but to my mind the fact is doubly worth recording now that when his father, while living as the guest of the Viceroy in Simla, sent letter after letter to the young man, living in a humble cottage near the Mission school, asking him to come back to him, but also stipulating that he must repent of the step he had taken from motives of conscience, he absolutely refused to go on those terms. He resented deeply the words used by his father, "Come out of the well of dishonour," and finally the chuprassie with the pass for the Viceregal Lodge had to return without Meerza, and the next day the Nawab and all his entourage left for the plains. He is to be disinherited at once, and the family property is to go to his sister and nephew. The young man is now seeking a berth under Government, that he may be able to earn his own living. What denial this has involved I imagine we are hardly able to estimate. May he be kept firm and true. Yet his can hardly be an easy life for some time to come, I fear. Will not the reader of this report remember this high-born youth in prayer before he puts down this paper."

An Indispensable Book

Every missionary working among Muslims ought to have and study carefully Dr. Tisdall's *Muhammadan Objections to Christianity*. We know of no single book, after the Bible, more practically useful for the man or woman who daily comes into contact with Muslims, and has to meet the stock arguments and objections raised against Christianity. It may be obtained at the depôt of the Christian Literature Society, Madras. The C. L. S. also publishes separately an appendix containing the text of the Arabic and Persian quotations, of which only the English is given in the book itself.

The Muhammadan Year

On the 5th of May will begin the Muslim month, Rajab. This is one of the four sacred months, and according to the teaching of the Quran (Sura 9/36) it is not lawful for Muslims to fight during this month, except when they attack those "who join other gods with God, even as they attack you, one and all." The month is called "the honoured" month, because of the honour in which it was held in the "times of ignorance," i.e., before the promulgation of Islam. The Prophet is related to have said that the month Rajab, was like a snowy white fountain flowing from heaven itself, and that he who fasts on this month will drink of the waters of life. It is usual for religious Muslims to spend the first night of this month in prayer.

Dr. Zwemer's Visit to India

We have received word that Dr. Zwemer's projected visit to India has been postponed until July, 1917.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

For the year ending April 30th, 1916

RECEIPTS—

To subscriptions and donations	410	9	0
Debit Balance		18	12 0

Total Rs. 424 5 0

EXPENDITURE—

Deficit from last year	30	10	0
Printing <i>News and Notes</i> with Supplements	359	8	0
Postages and Money Orders	20	3	0
Freight on box from Lahore	5	12	0
Dr. Zwemer's Lecture	8	4	0

Total Rs. 424 5 0

Audited and found correct,

JOHN REID.

22-4-16.

(The Prayer Cycle account will be published later, after further payments have been received from members.)

PRAISE AND PRAYER

"Declare His glory among the nations, His marvellous works among all peoples."—Psalm 96: 3.

Praise

For the return to Christianity of Moulvi Syed Nasiruddin Husain, who some years ago denied his Master, and has just recently been received back into the Church.

Prayer

For the above-mentioned Moulvi, that he may be filled with the Holy Ghost, and may be much used for the salvation of Muslims.

For the youth, Abdul, referred to in the letter published this month from Mrs. Mead; also for Abjel, that he may be kept by the power of God, and may be used to win his family for Christ.

For a Muslim enquirer, named Abdul Hamid, who has expressed his desire to follow Christ. That difficulties may be removed, and that he may be given grace to bear persecution.

NEW MEMBERS

207. Miss G. COLLINS Pabna, Bengal

Annual Subscription to the League is Rs. 2-8-0 (2s. 4d.). Members are requested to send news and requests for prayer to

Jessore, Bengal.

W. GOLDSACK,
Hon. Sec., M. M. League.