

News and Notes.

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

Series VIII.

No. 11.

March, 1920.

Mar. 1st=9th day, Jumādā'l-Ukhra (8th mo.). Mar. 22nd=1st Rajab, 1338, A.H.

A "Life of Jesus" for Muhammadans.

A persuasion, a purpose, and a plea lie behind this brief note. A persuasion, intensified by recent experiences, that the average Muhammadan who purchases a Gospel or a New Testament in the vernacular, is seriously handicapped in his effort to gain a clear and intelligent view of the life and work of Christ. A purpose to indicate some of those handicaps. A plea that some effort be made to remove such of the handicaps as may yield to treatment.

Take an ordinary Bengali Gospel. What is it from the Muhammadan reader's view-point ?

1. Be it large or small, it is not a vivid oral recital but a *book*, involving a certain interweaving of varying threads which demand effort to hold and to disentangle. Fragmentary impressions may be produced, but they fail to cohere into a decisive unity.
2. It is a *Bengali* book. The reader's command of Bengali is the measure of his mastery of its contents. His range of vocabulary and ideas is limited. It is doubtful whether he is as familiar with Mussulmani-Bengali as we thought he was. True, he is improving in his knowledge of Bengali as taught in the day-schools. But apart from the help of a teacher and a "key," he must still be puzzled by much that our Gospel contains.
3. It is a *translated* book, translated, with no matter how great care or scholarship, under the control of a principle which, from a desire to safeguard the truth, rules out the help of paraphrase.
4. It is a book *without note or comment*. In many cases this is literally true and results from deliberate policy. In some cases there are notes which extend, at the most, to the headings of the paragraphs into which the Gospel narrative is divided.
5. It is a book *in prose*. There is abroad a certain association between religious writings and a rhythmical expression. Our

Gospel is too often classed with things that are "sapless"—low-quality jute, insipid fruit, or a dry oration.

6. It is a book with a *foreign touch* about it. It deals with the features of an age 2000 years away, and a country which while classed as eastern is not eastern in the sense in which India is. The setting, social and religious, of the Gospel story differs greatly from the environment in which our reader moves. All the time, too, there is the hinterland of the Old Testament, which, though supposed to be known, may be a source of confusion.
7. It is a book with an *embarrassing introduction*. Be it Matthew's genealogy, or Mark's opening challenge, or Luke's preface, or John's prologue, it causes our reader to stumble and to lose heart at the very threshold.

It will not do to plead that the present boom in education among Muhammadans will tend to obviate these difficulties. Not "this too will pass," but "this too shall pass" should be our watchword. We cannot afford to wait.

And our plea? We think of the effort being made by means of new translations to bring the Gospel story nearer home to the average English reader. We think also of the attractiveness of such a book as "Khush Khabar" in Mussalmani Bengali with its simple setting forth of incidents in the life of Jesus. We think too of "colloquial" versions of the Gospels. What we desire to see is a "Life of Jesus" specially prepared for Muhammadan readers. Let it be drafted in English first. It will then serve for use among the increasing number of English-reading Muhammadans, and will be available as the basis for translation into any of the vernaculars in India.

This 'Life' should be comprehensive without being complex. It should eliminate, or explain by means of brief and frequent footnotes, points where confusion is to be feared. It should combine liberty of paraphrase with loyalty in translation, and with homeliness of vocabulary. It should be brief enough not to weary, but long enough to leave a distinct and coherent impression on the mind. Surely such a Life of Christ, prepared under the guidance of God's Spirit, would give to the Gospel message something of the authority and graciousness and power of surprise that marked all that the Master said.

MYMENSINGH, BENGAL.

HEDLEY SUTTON.

'Orient and Occident.'

EDITED BY CANON GAIRDNER AND DR. ZWEMER, CAIRO.

THROUGH the kindness of the editors many League members in India have recently received a copy of the January number of the above magazine. It has been sent out in connection with a

restart they are making, and with the appeal for our help to assist them in increasing its foreign circulation. It is to be published monthly in Arabic with an English section, and is intended for Eastern readers, more especially Muslims. It consists of 32 Royal half 4to pages and the subscription is five shillings. A board of editors now conducts the magazine and the hope is entertained that it may become, not only in Egypt but further afield, 'an inter-mission, inter-church, and inter-national monthly.'

We have been approached in the hope that through us the Editors may be able to establish an *Indian connection* for their magazine. Whether it transpires that such a bond is practicable or not, we cannot but congratulate the promoters on the wisdom of the step they have taken in broadening the basis for the magazine. We wish for them the success they deserve. But is the proposal they make a really practical one for *India*? The paper is meant 'to reach the Arabic-reading public wherever it may be found.' But where in India is the public that knows Arabic sufficiently well to feel tempted to subscribe five shillings annually for a magazine? We fear, and the fear is shared by some prominent members of our League, that we could secure very few subscribers indeed.

The promise that there will be six or eight pages of English matter in each issue reminds us that our League, before the war, contemplated conducting an English monthly paper for educated Muslims in India, but had for the time to abandon it. References to this project will be found in N. & N. for 1914, viz., May, June, August and October. Such a paper was looked upon then as a *primary need*; surely it is not less so now.

We shall wait to see what response is forthcoming for "*Orient and Occident*," and we invite members to write to N. & N. expressing their opinion on the matter.

"Suffer the Children."

OPPORTUNITIES and difficulties, disappointments and encouragements; which of us workers among the Muslims of to-day does not find them all in abundance? Our opportunities among Muslim children to-day are unique. Parents are awake, or are awaking, to the fact that they must push on educationally if they are to gain the place and power they desire. Most of them are willing, if not eager, to have, not only their sons but their daughters, taught to read and write. Yet poor village parents cannot afford to pay school fees or *gari* hire, nor dare they allow their girls to walk far from home. Hence the need of elementary village schools for girls in the heart of the villages.

As we never attempt to enlighten the head, without attempting to enlighten the heart too, we tell those who desire our schools, plainly, at the very outset, that with the teaching of the three Rs we

must also teach of God and of Jesus Christ. Here we encounter our first difficulty, for the parents naturally wish their children to grow up good Muslims, and they are not a little afraid of Christian influence. If, after consideration, they agree to our stipulation and give proof of their good faith by providing a house in which to begin work, one of us Zenana missionaries goes regularly for some time to test the atmosphere of the place, and, by degrees, a little school may be established.

Then begins a series of ups and downs. We have to reckon with the fact that opposition is always present. When all looks bright and smiling, suddenly clouds appear and we watch anxiously to see what will happen; sometimes the clouds pass away quickly and the sun shines again; sometimes there is a slight shower which clears the air and does no harm; sometimes a storm bursts which wrecks the poor little school completely. Then we begin again somewhere else.

We have never been able to keep more than two or three of these schools running simultaneously, for we believe that the closest personal supervision is absolutely necessary. Our teachers, as a rule, are young and inexperienced and need our protection. We escort them to and from the villages and, while they are conducting the schools, we find ample scope for work in the homes around. If there is much bigotry among the older scholars, we take their Bible Lesson ourselves, and, whether we actually teach in school or not, we are never very far away; everyone knows this, and so the risk to our young teachers is reduced to a minimum.

Those of us who are engaged in this village work find great delight in it. The little Muslim girls are most quaint and lovable; our hearts yearn to lead them to the Great Shepherd. We find, too, that nothing leads us to the heart of the village life and overcomes the misconceptions and prejudices of these benighted people so surely as the approach to them through their children.

Our scholars marry all too soon and are scattered abroad, carrying at least some light and knowledge with them. Many of them have to go to lives of poverty and suffering; some few become comparatively happy little wives and mothers. One of our old pupils was the means of leading to us a forlorn Muslim girl who learned truly to love the Good Shepherd; and another, unable to bear her life of tyranny and ill-treatment any longer, ran away to us and is now the wife of a Christian pastor.

C. WILLIAMS.

Is Private Baptism Permissible ?

IT is certainly permissible; many cases are mentioned in the New Testament: Paul's baptism; the Ethiopian eunuch. The practice of the early Church seems to give countenance to it.

The trouble which "one of our members" faces is the

necessity of concealment of such secret baptism. Granted that one is baptized in secret, is it possible for the convert to be true to the Christian life and so escape a course of practical hypocrisy if not a practical denial of baptismal vows? I think not. That being the case, it is better for the secret Christian to avow *his faith* without baptism until such time as God shall choose. In the case of women with children the way seems clear that she should not permit herself to be cut off from her only chance to influence them to believe in Christ her Saviour. To insist on baptism as necessary to salvation would in her case most probably result in the loss of her children and possibly of her own soul. To all such I should say wait, and by a godly life seek to win the husband, when the way would open for the whole family to be baptized. Secret baptism is lawful, but not always expedient.

Ludhiana.

E. M. WHERRY.

NOTES.

A 'LIFE OF JESUS' FOR MUSLIMS.—Mr. Hedley Sutton's article this month is deserving of our most earnest consideration. It is written in response to a definite request, yet concerns a subject to which for some time past he has been giving serious thought. We have not done all we should be doing when we have succeeded in selling a one pice gospel portion to a Muslim who can do little more than read his vernacular in a very simple style. We may be sure that a very large proportion of Muslims returned as literates belong to this class. Have we the faintest idea how many, thus meagrely equipped and stumbling at difficulties of the kind cited by Mr. Sutton, 'give up' before they come to parts that grip the heart and stir the imagination? *It should not be!* The story of the life and work, the death and resurrection of the beloved Lord Jesus should be the most arresting and moving narrative of all, in any vernacular and in any country. Why isn't it proving so in the case of thousands we have in mind? For one thing *it isn't told simply enough!* 'Try to get behind the mind of most of them. How little they read! How hard is their existence! What very different interests fill their lives! Our one hope often seems to depend on whether we have succeeded in being simple enough. Both their desire to know, and the limitations of their learning, could frequently find no more apt expression than in the lines we all of us first learned years ago:

"Tell me the story *simply*
As to a little child."

Let it be quite clearly understood what Mr. Sutton has in mind. We need an A.B.C. life of Jesus for A.B.C. readers. We want it to be a first step; that it should create a desire for 'more.' Consider how momentous is the first step in the career of one who may learn eventually to walk 'in His steps!' Can we be too careful in the matter?

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LITERATURE FOR MUSLIMS.—Of all publications for Muslims such a 'Life of Jesus' should be the most popular and widely used by missionaries to Muslims. Why should we not, as a League, become responsible for it? We could appoint a special sub-committee to undertake the work, and draft-

copies of the English version could be submitted to representatives of every mission. When approved of we could, in the different areas, print in far larger quantities and at lower cost than if it were done by any one mission. We have come upon days when *co-operation* is the watchword of the hour. A very worthy example in this respect has been set by the "Union Council for Missionary Education," (8) Paternoster Row, London, whereby the Missionary Societies of Great Britain, having appointed literary representatives to a Standing Committee to scrutinize the work of a selected writer, combine to publish large quantities of the *same* book, with the sole variation of the separate Societies' names on the title-page. As a result you have the same text book in use in study circles throughout the various churches of Great Britain. 'The Story of Islam' by T. R. W. Lunt, a very attractive book of 200 pages for 2s. 6d., is an excellent illustration of the value of this method. That is the fruit of co-operation.

We desire that Mr. Sutton's paper should form the basis of a discussion in our paper. Do not plead that you are too busy to write. If you have some helpful suggestion or useful criticism to make, send it along. But we must mean business. Too many questions in our pages are left unanswered, and have been buried in oblivion; your secretary thinks of exhuming some of them! Seriously, though, this present topic is important and we earnestly hope it will receive the attention it deserves.

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THE PRESENT PROSPECT.—In the midst of the prevailing unrest in the Muslim world we shall do well to 'look up.' God is working His purpose out. The words of Adoniram Judson are as true to-day for us as when he wrote them: 'The prospects are as bright as the promises of God.' Here is one who shares that same confidence. 'We are going to see a great movement among Muhammadans,' writes a league member in India. 'I am not a prophet, but I cannot help being a seer!' I can see that good time coming. Last week I baptized two Muhammadans, not highly educated, but humble young men with the ring of conviction in their testimony. My chief helper is a Muhammadan convert, who knows his Koran quite as well as I know my Bible. He reads Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and knows English and Bengali. He is destined, if he shall live, to be a fine instrument for God, for he is a man of prayer, and a student of the Word."

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DRS. ZWEMER AND JOHN R. MOTT—These devoted men will value our prayers just now. The former writes: 'I am in Des Moines, Iowa, where I am attending the Student Volunteer Convention in response to urgent cablegrams received from Dr. Mott. It is a large and important gathering and the crisis on the foreign field surely calls for the consecration of life on a scale we have never before imagined. You must pray that my visit may mean hundreds of new volunteers. If it does not, I shall regret the long journey and the break in my work at Cairo.' We can pray for God's richest blessing to follow that convention.

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'THE MOSLEM WORLD.'—The January number commences the tenth volume and is full of interest for workers among Muslims. From the list of contents we quote the following items:—

A Christian at Kabul	...	Miss F. M. Davidson.
Animism in the Creed, and in the use of the Rosary,	...	Dr. Zwemer.
In Constantinople during the War	...	E. D. Huntington.
The need of Arabic Christian Literature	...	A. T. Upson.

The growth of the Mohammed Legend	...	J. Horovitz.
The Ahmadiya Movement	...	W. R. W. Gardner.
Village Evangelization in Oman	...	G. D. Van Peurseem.

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THE MOSLEM CALENDAR.—We have secured the promise of Rev. Ahmad Shah of Hamirpur, U. P., India, to furnish us, month by month, with notes of interest on the Moslem Calendar. Members will recall his monthly 'Notes on Muhammadan Observances' contributed in 1915—16. In the meantime we may notice that on the 22nd of March begins the month 'Rajab,' the 'honoured' month, so-called because of the honour in which the month was held in the 'Times of Ignorance.' inasmuch as war was not permitted during this month. The prophet is related to have said that he who fasts in this month will drink of the waters of life. It is usual for religious Muslims to spend the first Friday night (*i.e.*, our Thursday night) of this month in prayer; that will be the night of March 25th-26th.

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SAD LOSS IN CHINA.—Our friend Mr. F. H. Rhodes of Chefoo writes as follows: 'The Special Committee for work among Muslims in China (in connection with the China Continuation Committee) has suffered a heavy loss. The Rev. C. L. Ogilvie, M.A., the able and greatly-appreciated Secretary has received his call to 'Higher Service.' Our brother, just back from furlough, will be much missed in Peking, and throughout China. He gave part time to teaching in the school of Theology in the University, and part time to Muslim work. In 1917 he travelled with Dr. Zwemer as interpreter when several important centres were visited. Will members of the League join in prayer that the right man may be found for this vacant and difficult post?'

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LECTURES ON ISLAM.—The faculty at Serampore College, Bengal, India, recently decided to arrange for special lectures on Islam to be delivered annually to the theological students of the College. A three years' course has been planned and it is proposed in six sets of lectures to cover the most important branches of the subject, two sets being delivered each year. Messrs. Goldsack and Bevan Jones have been asked to deliver these lectures. A beginning was made in January. Mr. Bevan Jones lectured on 'The Life of Muhammad,' and Mr. Goldsack on 'The Quran and its sources,' each delivering four lectures. It is proposed in the second year to take up 'The Traditions' and 'The Faith of Islam,' and in the third year 'Muslim Objections to Christianity' and 'The Christian Approach to Muslims.' The theological students at Serampore come from different parts of India, a large contingent of them being of the Syrian Church in South India.

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STANDING COMMITTEE IN INDIA, 1920.—The following workers in India have been appointed to a special sub-committee for work among Muslims under the National Missionary Council:

Regular Members: PROF. R. SIRAJUDDIN (Convener), DR. J. C. R. EWING, DR. F. R. FELT, MISS ROSE GREENFIELD, CANON D. L. JOSHI, DR. E. M. WHERRY.

Associate Members: REV. G. BROWN, REV. W. GOLDSACK, REV. L. BEVAN JONES, REV. J. WAIZ LAL, MISS E. M. POTTER, REV. H. J. LANE SMITH, REV. J. TAKLE.

Topics for Prayer.

1. Pray that Almighty God will so richly bless the work done at the Des Moines Convention as to lead many to volunteer for service in the foreign field.

2. Pray that our brethren in China may be guided by God's Holy Spirit in choosing a successor to the late secretary for work among Muslims in that land.

3. Prayer is asked for Kansu Province, China, with its, approximately, three million Muslims. The claims of the other classes, who total some seven millions, leave little time for direct Muslim work in that province. Reinforcements are urgently needed to deal with the present opportunity.

NEW MEMBERS.

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|-----|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 13. | SNYDER, REV. C. F. | Hochow, Kansu, China. |
| 72. | SLIMMON, REV. J. A. | Hwaiking Fu: Honan, China. |
| 75. | GUINNESS, DR. G. W. | Kaifeng Fu: Honan, China. |

DEATH OF A MEMBER.

REV. C. L. OGILVIE, of the American Mission, Peking, secretary of the special committee for Muslim work in China.

FRENCH.—On the 2nd January, at Durban, S. Africa, Arthur French, Missionary, S. P. G., son of the late Canon French, drowned while saving another's life.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

1. It is impossible to keep pace with the fluctuations in exchange. We would therefore advise members working in India who are about to take furlough, to send their subscription in advance rather than attempt to send it from home.
2. We have decided to continue the present volume (viii) of *News and Notes*, to the end of the year. The volume will in future commence with January and all subscriptions will fall due at the New Year.

The annual subscription to the League is Rs. 2-8-0 (about 6s. English). News and requests for prayer should be sent by the tenth of each month to the Hon. Secretary:

Rev. L. Bevan Jones,
Baptist Mission,
Dacca, Bengal.

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