

News and Notes.

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

Series VIII.

No. 20.

December, 1920.

Dec. 1st = 19th Rabi'ul-Awwal (3rd mo.) Dec. 12th = 1st Rabi'ul-Sani, 1339, A.H.

The Call of the Near East.

New Evangelistic Opportunity.

BY REV. S. M. ZWEMER, D.D.

TH**ERE** is only one fundamental problem in the Near East. Its solution would effect all classes, all nationalities, and all other problems. This problem is that of carrying the Gospel to each individual, and through the regeneration of the individual to society. There is nothing that the Near East needs so much as the life of Jesus Christ. They know the history of that life; Moslem, Jew and Christian vie with each other in crowding to visit the sacred places connected with that earthly life; but His Resurrection power is strangely absent, and the Near East, as one of their poets has said, is waiting for His life-giving touch. Was it not Jalalu'd Din, the Moslem mystic, who said:—

And granite man's heart is till grace intervene,
And crushing it clothe the long barren with green
When the fresh breath of Jesus shall touch the heart's core,
It will live, it will breathe, it will blossom once more.

The present opportunity for Evangelism among all classes, and especially among Moslems who form the bulk of the population, is unprecedented. The very doctrines on which Christianity and Islam are divided by an age-long, bridgeless chasm, to-day offer points of contact for our message. These are the following:—

(1) The trustworthiness of the Scriptures; (2) the Deity of Christ, His Incarnation and Resurrection; (3) The Cruciality of the Cross; (4) The Place of Mohammed in History and therefore in Life; (5) The Sanctity of the Home; (6) The Sinfulness of Sin; (7) The Freedom of Conscience.

During the War, not only before but after, the Armistice, Bible distribution has been unhindered, and on a far larger scale in Egypt, Palestine, Arabia, Syria, and Persia than ever before. Doors that once were only ajar are now wide open. New highways have been built. The colporteur can now travel by fast express from Cairo to Damascus

and Jerusalem, from Jibuti on the Somali coast to the capital of Abyssinia, from Alexandria to the Province of Darfour, and by steamship to all the ports of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.

THE FACT OF CHRIST.

THE old question of the trustworthiness of the Scriptures has been crowded into the background, because the Bible is now becoming the best-selling book. The old Oriental theological disputes regarding the Person of Jesus Christ, and his relation to Deity, have taken on a new phase. To-day we see the character of Jesus discussed in the daily Press, His sinlessness vindicated by old-fashioned Moslems against the attacks of the New Islam Rationalists. From the school children to the Sheiks of the Azhar, all classes of society are facing as never before the fact of the Christ. In a new encyclopedia published in Cairo by a Moslem scholar, the article on Jesus Christ contains a remarkable tribute to His majesty and influence on history. Officially, the Moslem creed still denies the atoning death of our Saviour. The stumbling-block of the Cross still lies in the way of the inquirer. But the doctrine of vicarious suffering is no longer strange to the Moslem mind.

We are too apt to forget that the Near East has now had its Gethsemane. The War has ploughed deep furrows in human hearts and lives. There are millions of orphans and widows. There is not a home in some parts of Turkey without its vacant place. Islam is defeated on the battlefield, disillusioned in its outlook, and distracted in its programme. *People are ripe for the ministry of friendship and the message of hope.* The War has shown Moslems that Allah is no longer fighting for Islam as He once did. The plans of rebellion and revolt, and even those more subtle endeavours, cloaked in a programme of Nationalism to crush non-Moslems, have failed.

The Jew has come to his own in Palestine. The Christian in Egypt and Syria dares to hold up his head where formerly he was scorned and despised. Moslems themselves have begun a critical study of Mohammed's life and teaching. This is evident from the new commentary on the Koran, published as a serial in the leading magazine of Cairo, *Al Manar*. The whitewash is coming off.

Educated Moslems are reading French and English books on the subject; Lammens, Castani, Muir, Margoliouth and other Western writers are being discussed, and their books on Islam studied. S. Khuda Bukhsb 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 now opportunity for the social message of Christ, the uplift 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 his fathers. Slavery has gone; the veil is going, polygamy and Moslem divorce laws are impossible under new conditions,

DEEP RELIGIOUS DISSATISFACTION.

FINALLY, the present situation is one in which tactful Gospel preaching and personal witness is not only possible everywhere but welcomed. Lord Radstock, during the War and since, has been giving Evangelistic addresses in the towns and villages of Egypt before large mixed audiences, and was everywhere welcomed. This is the more remarkable, since he wears a British uniform as Y.M.C.A. worker; and these meetings took place at the very time when the Nationalists were making disturbances, and riots were the order of the day. 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 the 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 true leadership by special training, a strong faith, self-effacement, and sympathy. Who will offer in this new day? Who will come and help to evangelise the new Near East?

FROM THE CHRISTIAN.

'A Great Move in Egypt.'

DR. SHERWOOD EDDY'S MEETINGS.

OUR prayers are sought for God's blessing to follow the good work done by the evangelistic mission in Cairo and elsewhere. Mr. Howard J. Weaver, the Manager of the Nile Mission Press, writes to say:—

'You will be glad to hear that there is a great move in Egypt as a result of the visit of Dr. Sherwood Eddy from America.

In Cairo over 1,000 men signed cards expressing their determination to follow Christ, (many of them were Moslems), and we hear from Asyut that each night the congregation has numbered 7,000.

You will remember our "Scripture Portionettes." We received from America a sum of money to enable us to distribute one million of these, on a definite plan covering the whole of Egypt. The manner in which they are being received shows clearly the breaking down of the old fanaticism, and more than that, great eagerness for the Truth. For example, in meetings at the Cairo Kursaal (theatre) 4,000 portion-

ettes were placed on the seats, and of these only 50 were left behind and only one torn up inside the building.

I know that you will rejoice with us because the door of opportunity is opening so wide, and that you will pray that, we may be enabled fully to take advantage of it.

Muslims in the Panjab.

A NOTE CONTRIBUTED BY REV. E. D. LUCAS, M.A., D.D.

Principal, Forman Christian College, Lahore.

The readers of "News and Notes" may be interested in a few observations about the situation in the Panjab so far as it bears upon Muslims. Of the 400,000 combatants supplied to the Army by the Panjab in the war, half of them were Muslims. The Muslims thought that as a reward for their loyalty, Turkey would be treated with great leniency; but they feel that this spoken or un-spoken pledge has not been kept, and that the treaty has been dictated by Christian hostility to Islam. As a rule, there is probably greater suspicion and distrust of Christians and Christianity amongst the Muslims of the Panjab than ever before. While there has been a great deal of pressure brought to bear upon Mohammadan parents to withdraw their children from mission schools and colleges, only very partial success has been obtained by these agitators. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that mission educational work has won the confidence of Muslims to an unusual degree. I know in the Forman Christian College several Mohammadan students have told me that the influence of the Scripture teaching has been (paradoxical as it may seem) such as to make them better Muslims; and one Mohammadan student told me that he regarded the Forman College Muslim graduates as much the best Mussalmans in the Panjab.

In the meantime the leaders of Islam have tended to become more and more bitter and extreme against the Government. As a result of speeches made by this set of men, we have the Hijrat movement and its tragical failure. We have the non-co-operation movement in the Islamia College here in Lahore. There are, however, signs of returning sanity. A Muslim leader, the other day said that what the Mohammadans most needed was scientific education and the ability to produce wealth.

Whether such a statement was only a voice crying in the wilderness is as yet uncertain. Out of 850 students in this College, 123 are Muslims, and my experience is that, on the whole, they are very friendly and receptive. If a nucleus of sympathy and understanding can be maintained in the midst of the Mohammadan community by the Christian forces at work here, then this crisis of hatred and distrust may blow over; but we certainly need your prayers and sympathy in dealing with every Muslim and specially with those who are educated.

Our Link with Persia.

FOR a number of years the Rev. W. A. Rice kept us in touch with the work in Persia, and though he has now retired to England, he still retains his interest and membership in the League. Others, however, have taken his place and have thus strengthened our link with that interesting land.

ISFAHAN.—We have as members in Isfahan, the Rev. J. H. Linton, Bishop in Persia (on furlough) and the Rev. W. J. Thompson. Rev. Linton as Principal did much to develop the C. M. S. Stuart Memorial College in that city, and only relinquished the work on being consecrated Bishop in Persia. Rev. W. J. Thompson after 3½ years active service in Mesopotamia has recently returned to Isfahan as Principal of the College. He will be grateful for the prayers of the members of the League as he takes up this work with its immense possibilities.

He has gone back with the aim before him of making the Stuart Memorial College contribute to the great end of missionary enterprise in that land as in all lands—the establishment of a strong indigenous Church. ‘We aim to make it a centre where teachers can be trained for future work, not only in Isfahan, but through the whole of South Persia.’ The College must develop to meet also the following needs: Training Classes for Clergy and Evangelists; Medical Training Department, Business and Commercial Training Classes. “We want to turn out men who shall leaven every side of Persian life with Christian ideals.”

While men and money from home are needed, it is clear that our friend and his staff look for the blessings to be brought through earnest prayer. This is a way in which members of the League can help the work of that College.

MESHED.—We have another member the Rev. Mc. E. Miller of the A. P. Mission in this interesting city known as ‘Mashad Muqaddas.’ An illuminating article about the strategic importance of this city appeared in *The Moslem World Magazine* for July 1919, over the signature of Mr. Dwight M. Donaldson. It is a city of pilgrimage. As far as mission work goes, it is isolated by long distances from other stations and yet because of its religious significance it is in touch with Turkistan to the North and Afghanistan on the East, both of them densely Moslem countries and almost entirely closed to mission work. There is the prospect of entrance being eventually made to these two countries from the Meshed end of Persia. In the article referred to above we read: ‘At one time, in the Meshed hospital there were four hernia cases in one room. They had all come from the city of Herat (Afghanistan), one hundred and seventy miles from Meshed.’ Again, ‘Six tall, vigorous young Afghans came to the Meshed hospital together one morning, and one of them said, “We are brothers, last year our father

came here and bought a book which he reads back home at nights. He told us to come, and get more of those books." The missionary asked, "And where do you come from?" The answer was "We are from Kabul." Kabul is as far again from Meshed as Herat! What rich possibilities are presented by Meshed

Notes on the Moslem Calendar.

BY REV. AHMAD SHAH.

Rabi-ul-Sání.

THE sanctity of this month is primarily due to the special observance of the 11th of the month, a custom prevalent in all Mohammedan countries. The day is dedicated to the honoured name of Abdul Qádir Jiláni. Though in some places in India the singing of songs on this day has become an established custom, yet generally speaking, the Mohammedans according to their means, after offering Fatiha on dinners and sweetmeats, attempt to translate the benefit of that to the soul of Abdul Qádir. Would that the Fatihas offered on the 11th were on money and clothes rather than on dinners and sweetmeats, in this way a charitable distribution of these benefits might be made to the deserving poor.

N.—There is nothing noteworthy about the fifth and sixth months, Jumáda'-l-ula and Jumáda'-l-sání.

Notes.

ALLAH IS ONE, AND CHANNING IS HIS PROPHET.—A Unitarian writes from Cairo to the organ of American Unitarianism :

"Yesterday afternoon I visited the great Azhar Mosque with Sheikh Ruhayem, one of the professors of theology at this mosque. I told him what I was and what I intended to know, and asked him whether or not the Mohammedans would favour co-operation with the Unitarians. Replying to my question he asked me *if besides denying the godship of Jesus we believed in the prophetic mission of Mohammed and in the religious value of the Koran.* On receiving an affirmative answer he was completely satisfied, and said that he knew of no obstacle why the two religious bodies could not work together with the utmost cordiality. He expressed a desire to see our literature translated into Arabic. Steps are being taken to gratify the desire of this venerable sheikh, and I hope the loyal Unitarians will not fail to help. One pamphlet which has greatly appealed to the hearts and minds of a few Moslem friends is Mr. James Harwood's 'Message to Mohammedans.' Mr. Harwood is one of our English brethren. I hope this is only the first of a series of reports on the friendship that is gradually growing between two Unitarian faiths."

* * * * *

GOOD NEWS FROM CEYLON.—One of our lady members says in a recent letter: 'The Mohammedans in C——are exceedingly friendly and anxious to be taught. One girl, to whom I was paying a farewell visit lately, asked me to remember her in my prayers whilst on furlough. They are getting more and more to value the prayers of Christians, and messages are constantly sent through the Biblewomen that we may pray for them at our weekly meetings, special requests are mentioned, and the answers which have been granted just fill us all with thankfulness.'

Special Notices.

A NEW President.—Our veteran leader, the Rev. E. M. Wherry, D.D., expects to sail for America in the early part of 1921. He has borne the heat and the burden of the day in a long and honourable career as a missionary to Moslems in the Panjab. If spared he will soon be an octogenarian. In the circumstances it is not surprising that he entertains some doubts about the possibility of his return to the work he loves. At his request we have been seeking a successor to the office he will shortly relinquish. But he will not leave the League. Have we not made him an Honorary Life Member?

The Committee have also agreed that we shall do well in future to have the help of a Vice-President. Further announcement will be made next month.

COLLECTING SUBSCRIPTIONS.—As notified in several earlier issues of N. and N. and by a circular letter sent to members concerned, subscriptions will be collected from those residing within the Indian postal area, by the V. P. P. system at the time of the despatch of the January issue. As a result of correspondence with members of the M. M. L. Committee we have decided to *reduce* the subscription to the League to Rs. 2-0-0 only (English 4s/-), in spite of the fact that cost of paper and printing charges have increased. Many members in response to the Secretary's letter have paid up their dues to the end of 1920. From them the 1921 subscription only will be collected in January. In other cases where arrears are still due, the arrears plus the 1921 subscription will be collected. A number of members have already requested us to do this and we trust that those who have not replied will not object to our collecting the subscriptions in this way.

We also considered the question of publishing a revised Prayer Cycle, but the majority of the Committee were of the opinion that there was scarcely sufficient call for a new one just now. On the other hand it was felt that if the subscription were reduced it might be an inducement to many more to join the League. We earnestly hope that this will prove to be the case.

TITLE OF PAPER.—We have decided not to change the title of our little monthly—'News and Notes.' As a former Secretary has pointed out we do not want to advertise ourselves. The paper is confidential and the title is a screen.

For Praise and Prayer.

1. Let us praise God for the day of opportunity in the Near East.
2. Let us give thanks to God for the clear tokens of blessing that are following the Sherwood Eddy mission in Egypt, and especially in Cairo. (p. 159)
3. Let us praise God for the friendly and trustful attitude of the Mohammedans of C——— in Ceylon. (p. 163)
4. Let us pray for the blessing of God Almighty on the work being done in Isfahan and Meshed and for our fellow-members there. (p. 161)
5. Let us remember in prayer all missionaries in the Punjab—that they may be given divine wisdom and Christlike love in all their dealings with Moslems. (p. 160)

NEW MEMBER.

251. MR. ALFRED TAYLOR, FRIENDS MISSION, SEHORE CANT., C. INDIA.

The annual subscription to the League will, in future, be Rs. 2-0-0 (4s-od English). News and requests for prayer are always welcome and should be sent as early as possible each month to the Hon. Secretary :

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

INDEX TO 'NEWS AND NOTES,' SERIES VIII.

| | PAGES. |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 'A Call to Truth' | 51 |
| 'A Disobedient Believer' | 41, 112 |
| 'A Great door...is opened' | 135 |
| Afghanistan | 46 |
| Africa | 36, 63 |
| Ahmadiya Movement, The | 51, 101 |
| Al Ghazali | 80 |
| Arabia | 38, 61, 99, 141 |
| Calendar, The Muslim, 91, 97, 105, 113, 120, 128, 137, 143, 154, 162 | |
| Captivity Under the Turks | 78 |
| Ceylon | 163 |
| China | 5, 24, 29, 35, 45, 62, 91, 146 |
| Convert, A Muhammadan | 109, 117 |
| Cross and Crescent | 106 |
| Deccan, The | 37, 47 |
| Denominational Differences... .. | 110, 127 |
| Egypt | 13, 24, 38, 60, 99, 159 |
| Fiji | 131 |
| Financial Statement of the League | 18 |
| Genealogy of Jesus, The | 125 |
| Girls' School | 46 |
| Gospels Inspired?, Are the | 122 |
| Government of India and Missionaries | 4, 30 |
| Hajj, The | 25, 39, 115, 131 |
| Home Churches, Visiting the | 9 |
| Id-ul-fitr, Missionaries and the | 52, 123, 131 |
| India | 61, 99, 114, 121, 122 |
| Islam, Impressions of | 142, 151 |
| " Lectures on | 91 |
| " The Christian Approach to | 44 |
| " The Reaction of World War on | 75 |
| " The Traditions in | 28 |
| Islamic Review, The | 122 |
| Lefroy, George Alfred | 106, 129 |
| Literature for Muslims | 64, 72, 89 |
| 'Looking unto Jesus' | 133 |
| Membership of the League | 123 |
| Mesopotamia | 107 |
| Muslims, A Call to Service for | 33 |

| | PAGES. |
|---|----------------------|
| Muslims A Day of Prayer for ... | 7, 9, 15, 25, 40 |
| „ A 'Life of Jesus' for ... | 85, 89, 95, 139, 149 |
| „ Education of ... | 33 |
| „ Indian Workers among ... | 3, 83 |
| „ In Malay ... | 83 |
| „ In the Punjab ... | 160 |
| „ Languages of Indian ... | 22 |
| „ Outline of Lecture to ... | 2 |
| „ What they read ... | 28 |
| Muslim World, Map of the ... | 73 |
| „ „ Our attitude to the ... | 1 |
| „ „ The printed page in the ... | 19 |
| „ Women ... | 70, 104, 130 |
| „ Children ... | 53, 82, 87, 103 |
| Mysticism in Islam ... | 40, 100 |
| National Missionary Council, The Sub-Committee of the ... | 91 |
| Near East, The Call of the ... | 157 |
| Nile Mission Press, The ... | 36, 43, 98, 155 |
| 'Notes on the Bible' ... | 155 |
| 'Orient and Occident' ... | 86 |
| Palestine ... | 7, 59, 121 |
| Paraclete, A tract on the ... | 107, 123 |
| Paradise, The Key of ... | 10, 23 |
| Persia ... | 13, 15, 52, 60, 161 |
| President's New Year Message, Our ... | 67 |
| Private Baptism, is it permissible? ... | 81, 88 |
| Quran, The Bengali ... | 147 |
| „ The Teaching of the... ... | 57, 108 |
| Ramzan ... | 123 |
| Retrogression, Muslim ... | 93 |
| Social Service for Muslims ... | 116, 128, 145, 147 |
| Students, Muslim ... | 147 |
| The Moslem World Magazine ... | 31, 65, 90, 137, 154 |
| Traditions in Islam, The ... | 28 |
| Turkey, The Future of ... | 49, 59 |
| „ Muslims in ... | 153 |
| „ The Government of India and ... | 114 |
| Uganda ... | 12 |
| Union Muslim-Christian Service ... | 119 |
| Woking Mosque, A service at the ... | 69 |