

News and Notes.

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

Series VIII,

No. 3.

JULY, 1919.

HOW THE PRINTED PAGE WILL HELP TO SOLVE AFTER-THE-WAR PROBLEMS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD.*

The power of the printed page as an evangelistic agency has not yet been realized: although it is obvious that it can never be a substitute for the living voice, it is often true that the message in this form is more persuasive, more permanent, and reaches a larger audience than that spoken by human lips. The printed page is the ubiquitous missionary, and the printed message has often entered closed lands and penetrated into the most secluded villages. Twenty years ago a missionary in Arabia received an order for the Bible, a Commentary, and a Concordance, from Mecca itself. In many lands the post office has become an evangelistic agency. It carries Christian literature unobtrusively into the homes of all classes, and those who have tried this method are enthusiastic regarding its effectiveness and comparative economy. Our readers know of the strength, the enterprise and the growth of the Muslim Press in recent years, especially in Egypt, Persia and Russia.

It is a remarkable testimony to the power of the printed page that nearly all the enquirers in Muslim lands have first been led to Christ by means of a book or tract. It is because of this that every missionary should try to be a colporteur and tract distributor. Neither poverty of purse nor pride of position, nor prejudice against this method because it is sometimes abused, should prevent him from having at hand in his pocket and reception room an adequate quantity and variety of Christian literature. This method of approach is open to all, and if it is followed with sympathy, it is everywhere welcomed.

* Extracts from a paper written by the Rev. S. M. Zwemer, D.D., in connection with the American Christian Literature Society for Moslems. See following article,

Because of the neglect of the printed page by so many societies and workers, we need prayer that new writers may be raised up of God, that funds and leisure may be found to make present workers more effective; that the message of the printed page may be a tongue of fire, and that all that is written may be founded on first-hand Oriental experience, not on translations of incidents and stories from the West. Above all, we need to hold before us the real aim of Christian literature: it is to quicken hearts and build up character. There has been enough literature of the controversial type, destructively critical of Islam. These books were useful in their day and still have a place, and an important place, as the ploughshare for the sowing of the Truth; but a new era calls for a new program.

WHAT AMERICANS ARE DOING TO HELP SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

The American Christian Literature Society for Muslims.

BY REV. CHARLES R. WATSON, D.D., PRESIDENT.

There are some things which Missionary Societies have found they can do better unitedly than independently. One of these is the production and distribution of Christian literature. . . . In 1915 the American Christian Literature Society for Muslims (A.C.L.S.M.) was organized and incorporated. On its Board of Managers are representatives of at least five different churches and missionary bodies. . . . For the guidance of the Board of Managers Advisory Committees are formed in the areas in which it is desired to work. . . . Prayer Circles have been formed at a number of points, and there are strong auxiliaries at other points co-operating in extending interest and support. . . . Last year the Society's activities centred in Egypt. . . . The Society is now extending its activities to two new spheres. First China. This decision followed immediately upon the visit of Dr. Zwemer, the Society's original founder, to China. The attention of the missionary forces in China has been turned to what is not so much a peril as a rare opportunity of winning Chinese Muslims to Christ. . . . The other field into which the Society wishes to enter is that of Muslim childhood. Islam has cruelly shortened

childhood days. It has thrust boys and girls all too soon into the responsibilities and realities of adult life. But, under Western and especially Christian influence, this period of childhood is being extended. It needs enriching. This calls for Christian literature especially adapted for children.

It is time that Christians were stirred deeply to engage in a marked forward movement to give the Gospel to Muslims at this time.

The power of the Turk is waning.—This is an historical fact which places a new significance upon the opportunity for freedom of thought within the Muslim world. Across the past century Muhammadan political power has been disintegrating, but Turkish rule vanished from Egypt with the beginning of this war when a British Protectorate was declared. From Mesopotamia and Persia the Turk is also withdrawing. These are great movements of God. Because the power of the Turk is waning a new day of freedom in thought-life and in religious life is dawning. This is a challenge for a forward movement in the production of Christian literature.

The horizon of Islam is broadening.—Few there are who realize how wonderfully this war is being used to broaden the thought-life of Islam. From Algeria and Tunisia, from Egypt and India thousands of Muslims have gone to France to serve either in the native battalions or in the fighting ranks. As these go back to their homes in the hinterlands of Africa, in the remote villages of India, they will tell the story of how they went over the great waters, how they saw the white man's houses rising to the very heavens, and how his great cities are spread out like the forests of Africa. And as they talk, and talk, and talk—as they undoubtedly will—the horizons of Muhammadanism that were hitherto so contracted and narrow, so hedged in by ignorance and prejudice, will be pushed back and broadened as they never have been before. With this broadening of the horizon of Islam, a new opportunity develops for Christian literature.

The influence of Christianity is penetrating.—During the war Robert College at Constantinople and the Women's College on the Bosphorus have continued in operation, and the children of leading families in Turkey have been in attendance. The influence of Christianity is penetrating into every circle of Muhammadan life. The old days of Islam have passed. A new day has dawned and it calls for Christian literature.

The alignment of Muhammadanism is changing.—The sword of Islam has been broken, but this does not mean the disappearance of the Muslim faith. It simply means a new

alignment. The old argument of force is ruled out, but a new argument has appeared, the argument of reason. The centre of influence in the Muhammadan world has shifted from the political centre at Constantinople to the intellectual centre at Cairo. Because of all this, the printed page gains a new significance. Christian literature takes on a new value.

Lastly, the promises of God are challenging.—We do not despair of the Muslim world. We believe God is going to save the Muslim world, save its peoples from all those influences that have been their sorrow and their disgrace. Our eyes are seeing the very things for which men of faith have long waited and for which women of prayer have long interceded. In the proposed advance of this campaign of love the promises of God bulk large. Because we have these promises, and because they challenge us to great expectations within the Muslim world, we must attempt great things along the lines of Christian literature for this Muslim world that it may be saved.

LANGUAGES OF INDIAN MUSLIMS.

How many different languages are in use among the various classes of Muhammadans in India? In how many of these different languages is any Christian literature to be found which is specially adapted to the needs of these Muhammadans?

We commonly say that Urdu is the language of Indian Muslims, but this statement is only partly true. There are many Muhammadans in India who do not read Urdu, but some other language. In Western India there are many whose language is a muslimized form of Gujarati, and the same thing obtains in Bengal, where many millions of the Muslims speak Musalmani-Bengali. It is very likely true also of other parts of this great land.

There is a good deal of Urdu literature written specially for Muslims, as the Book Depots of Lahore, Allahabad and other places would show. There are large quantities of copies of the writings of such men as Dr. Imad-ud-Din, Abdulla Athim, Safdar Ali, and others. Dr. Zwemer's remarks in our leading article for this month suggest that perhaps much of this literature may be in need of considerable revision to make it suitable for the needs of the present age. But the literature for Muslims in the vernaculars of Western India, namely Marathi and Gujarati, is practically nil. It is important that we should find out what is the case in other parts of India.

It is suggested as a line of investigation, that may be attended with great results, that lists should be compiled, showing what are the vernaculars spoken and read by Musalmans in different parts of India, what are approximately the numbers of those who can read, and what Christian literature exists of a character suitable for presenting the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ to them for acceptance. If any members of our League have any special knowledge of these subjects, or any special facilities for gaining such knowledge, they are asked to be good enough to communicate with the editor of *News and Notes*, so that their knowledge may be placed at the service of their fellow-members.

"THE KEY OF PARADISE."

BY REV. J. IRELAND HASLER.

(Concluded.)

A large portion of this treatise is taken up with the enunciation of the rules for the rightful performance of *namaz*, but the rules all deal with externals, e.g., the proper times, places, postures, methods of repetition, etc. There are certain times when the performance of *namaz* is incorrect, as well as certain irregularities in, or deviations from, the prescribed order, which vitiate it. Great stress too is laid upon the necessity of facing the *qibla*. The fact that 8 *rakats* in connection with *namaz* have been ordained to be performed by day, and 7 by night, and two in the early morning, is explained by stating that on account of the first the 8 doors of Paradise are opened, on account of the second the 7 doors of Hell are shut, and on account of the third the sins of day and night are forgiven. Another essential is the right pronunciation (*qiraat*) of the Quranic verses repeated in worship. Two short chapters deal with the rightful prayers on the occasion of an eclipse, or when rain is urgently needed; while others give directions as to how prayers are to be performed when on a sickbed, and when travelling in a boat or in some other manner.

Directions for other religious practices, e.g., fasting, atonement, *qaza*, etc., are included in the book, but the above account is sufficient to indicate its nature. Its perusal is very wearisome at times. One is reminded of the Pharisaism of our Lord's time, with its excessive scrupulosity, its cumbersomeness of detail, its externalism, and its utter contrast to that worship which is in spirit and in truth. One searches the book in vain for any moral teaching, or any emphasis on the need for inward purity, or rightness of character and conduct. The type of religion presented is an entirely ceremonial one, and thus the book represents the popular though erroneous ideas as to what real religion should be. Precepts take the place of principles, and have in consequence to be multiplied to a point of tediousness in order to meet all possible contingencies. Such a book is an object-lesson of the Master's saying, "The letter killeth." Only once as far as I have

noticed does it approach the spirituality of Christian teaching, and that is in a passing reference to the inwardness of true worship. "When anyone takes his stand for the performance of *namaz*, then let him betake himself to his inner self, and remove from his heart all worldly concern. Let him realize that he is seeing Almighty God, and even if he does not actually see God that God is seeing him. Such a condition of mind will lead him to bow his head in awe, reverence and shame, and to remain standing with feelings of fear, desire and love. He who realizes that God is beholding him will stand in fear and cautiousness, looking neither to the right nor to the left. As he would conduct himself in the presence of a king, even more circumspectly will he conduct himself in the presence of the King of Kings." All this is good, and Christians as well as Muhammadans need to be reminded of it, but it needs supplementing by the teaching of the divine Fatherhood. St. Paul's words regarding the Judaism of his day apply to the Islam of ours, and suggest to us a message:—"Abraham had two sons, one by the handmaid and one by the free woman.....which things contain an allegory: for these women are two covenants, one from Mt. Sinai bearing children unto bondage, which is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in *Arabia*, and answereth to the Jerusalem that now is: for she is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother. With freedom did Christ set us free."

EGYPT.

Miss J. S. Jameson (Ezbet-el-Zeitoun,) writes:—The troubles in Egypt have only seriously interfered with the work of one of our stations, where we only had ladies. The work of the A.U.P. Mission has been much more disturbed, but nowhere were missionaries as such, or mission property, attacked, which I fear is not the case in India. Otherwise the agitation seems very similar.

CHINA.

The Rev. J. Brock (C.I.M., Chowkiakow,) writes as follows:— I give away a good deal of literature to Moslems, and recently I had a quiet talk with a Mullah, who listened respectfully to the claims of Christ. He did not argue, and was pleased to get an Arabic New Testament.

HONOURS.

We congratulate two of our members, Miss H. Davies, M. B., of the American Welsh Presbyterian Mission, Habiganj, Assam, and Miss F. Allen, of the Wesleyan Mission, Hyderabad, Deccan, on being recipients of the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal, 2nd. Class. Their names appeared in the recent list of King's Birthday Honours.

THE HAJ.

The Haj season is now approaching, and it is interesting to see that special steamers are running from Bombay and Karachi during May, June, July and August, to convey the Pilgrims thence to Jiddal, the port of Mecca. The Indian Government has made special arrangements with the Mogul Line to take them at pre-war rates, in spite of the high prices at present prevailing. Let us remember these pilgrims in our prayers, asking God to open their eyes to the real character of the superstitious and idolatrous rites in which they are going to engage. Let us pray that many of them may be so ashamed of them, that this may be the last pilgrimage in which they will share, and that, on their return, some at least may be led to seek Him, Who alone can satisfy the deep longings and needs of the human soul.

THE DAY OF PRAYER FOR MUSLIMS.

The Secretary will be glad to hear from any of the members of the League as to the way in which the Day of Prayer, June 30th., was observed.

NEW MEMBER.

275 Young, Rev. J. C., M.A., M.B. U.F.C. Aden, Arabia.

*The Annual Subscription to the League is Rs. 2-8-0 (3s. 9d.)
Please send News and Requests for Prayer as early as possible to the Honorary Secretary*

Rev. H. J. Lane Smith,

(Temporary
address.)

*St. Andrew's Church,
Jacob's Circle, Bombay.*

