

Confidential.

News and Notes.

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

Series IX.

No. 2.

February, 1921.

Feb. 1st = 22nd Jumada'l-Ula (5th mo.) Feb. 10th = 1st Jumada'l-Ukhra, 1339, A.H.

Report of the League

For the period May 1st 1919 to December 31st 1920.

AS we look back over the period of the last twenty months and recall the unrest that has from time to time prevailed in the Moslem world, more especially in India and in Egypt, our hearts overflow with deep gratitude to Almighty God for lives spared through dangers seen and unseen, for the mercies of His Grace and the treasure of His never-failing Love. Many of us in this period have been obliged to keep on with our task in stations where the staff has been sadly depleted, nevertheless we have experienced in new measure how the Lord sustains. And in spite of the gathering storm in some quarters, many have had the joy of dealing with enquirers, and a few the rare privilege of baptizing some quickened and enlightened souls who have left all for the sake of Jesus. Truly we have had abundant cause, after all, to make us devoutly thankful.

The League has again been a help to many. Letters have come in at intervals, throughout the year, testifying to the benefits derived from our monthly paper, and from the consciousness that we are linked together to work more and pray more for the Muslims around us.

We would take this opportunity to thank members who have responded to our requests for help and so made 'News and Notes' of value and interest. The notes on 'The Muslim Calendar' have, we are told, been found very useful. We are indebted to others for calling our attention to recent publications on Christ and the Scriptures, by Muslims. Our congratulations are due to those of our number who have published pamphlets and books on subjects of interest to missionaries to Muslims, and thus added to the Christian literature on Islamic faith and practice.

A number of interesting questions have been raised for discussion by different members, and to some of these prompt and helpful

replies were sent in. We would, however, plead with members to take a fuller share in this most necessary aspect of the work of the League. Some very important subjects were brought forward—one being the question of a simpler 'Life of Jesus' for Muslim readers—but they have not been taken up and discussed as widely as we feel they deserve to have been. Members who put such questions have confessed to being not a little disappointed at what is, we believe, only the apparent indifference of the majority.

With the relief that comes with the return of more workers to the field from the homelands we ought to set ourselves to make the League a greater success during 1921. There is first the question of increasing our membership. On May 1st 1919 the number stood at 243; to-day it is 240. In the interval we have lost no less than 19 members by resignation and 8 by death, and we have so lost touch with 13 others that in view of somewhat heavy arrears in the matter of their subscriptions, we have deleted their names from the list. Against these losses we have enrolled 37 new members, and when we remember that these have sent in their names from Turkey, Persia, Mesopotamia, India, China and Fiji we realize, in some measure, the possibilities for usefulness in a League such as this.

Of recent years the subscription to the League, with its monthly paper, has been Rs. 2-8 or about 5s. English money. We have decided for the future to reduce it to Rs. 2 only. We hope this will encourage each member to aim at securing one new member during the year. Our position financially is very satisfactory. We closed the year with a cash balance of Rs. 199-3-6, though about Rs. 30 of this will be required to meet the printer's bill for December. Owing to the fact that many members have not remembered when their subscriptions fell due, we have the prospect of a still further balance when arrears are paid up. It will be the business of the committee to consider what should be done with this balance, and we hope before long to place some proposals before our members.

Gratefully recognizing that the Good Hand of God has been with us in the past, let us go forward into 1921 with new courage and renewed consecration to the great enterprise of more prayer and more work for Muslims.

'A Moslem Seeker after God.'

The Life and Teaching of Al-Ghazali, Mystic and Theologian of the Eleventh Century. By Samuel M. Zwemer, D.D; Introduction by Dr. J. Rendel Harris: 302 pages. Fleming H. Revell. \$2-25.

Dr. Zwemer has laid all students of Islam, especially missionaries, under a deep obligation by adding to his other labours the compilation of this much-needed biography of Al Ghazali, the reformer whose influence in the Moslem world ranks only second to that of the great Muhammad himself,

It is a study both fresh and fascinating. The claim is made that in this mystic we see Islam at its best, and certainly, as we follow him in his sincere search after truth, marking his spiritual experiences and reading with wonder his quotations from the sayings of Jesus, we gladly recognize that here was a noble soul who, seeking, came so near and yet missed so much.

The materials for this biography are admittedly meagre, but the author has very skilfully drawn on the available facts of contemporary history, and in this way done much to supply the deficiency. The book opens with a sketch of the century in which Al Ghazali was born, and we are reminded thereby that Anselm was a contemporary. A comparative table of events in Europe, North Africa, the Near East and India forms a valuable accessory to the study.

Dr. Zwemer has gone far afield, as the bibliography shows, to gather facts and opinions about this man, and he has been very happy indeed in some of the selections from other writers with which he prefaces his chapters.

Al Ghazali was a Persian by birth, an Aryan in his modes of thought, a Semite in his religion, and he became a Cosmopolitan by travel and education. It is essential to a proper appreciation of the man that we bear in mind that he was educated in the atmosphere of mysticism, and it was in this that he ultimately found rest after battling with doubts and wandering from place to place in search of peace of soul.

In his day Al Ghazali was a great teacher, gathering crowds around him in Baghdad; but the time came when he readily left fame and fortune to think out his religious position. It is intensely interesting to read that he had a deep sense of sin. Yet, as we proceed, his limitations become marked, and they are not all due to the fact that he belonged to the Middle Ages. One chapter, for instance, is entitled, "His creed and credulity"; once his early scepticism was overcome he was the orthodox Muhammadan again, and swallowed the traditions and the Koran apparently without any philosophic doubt. A perusal of his ethical teaching is another case in point. The measure of the moral stature of Muhammad is the source and foundation of all moral ideals as well in Al Ghazali as in Islam, and yet there are times when he rises high above the Koran and the prophet. But it is the omissions in his ethical teaching that surprise one even more than his nobler utterances delight.

Nevertheless there is a great deal here to give one new hope in approaching Muslims with the Christian evangel. The book makes much clearer the possibilities along one way of access to the heart of a Muslim—the mystic way. If only the followers of the prophet of Arabia to-day can be led to appreciate Al Ghazali as the author does in this study, the eleventh century mystic and reformer may yet be the means of showing them the way to the Christ he himself just missed.

L. B. J.

Literature for Muslims.

To

The Editor of News and Notes.

Dear Mr. Bevan Jones,

Recently one of our Bengali workers wrote a tract in Musalmani Bengali. I sent the MS. to Mr. Goldsack of Jessore, who reckoned the tract ought to be printed. Acting on his advice I forwarded the MS. with Mr. Goldsack's recommendation to the Tract Society for publication, but received a reply that owing to lack of funds the tract could not be printed.

The need for suitable literature for circulation at the present time is a real one.

The work done by the above Society has been admirable, but through lack of funds the above statement shows that it is necessary to strike out along some other line. Hence I write to ask:—

Can we of the M. M. League take up this matter? The above tract was written in Bengali, and perhaps our League, which includes workers in many languages, will not be able to do anything to help in this particular case, should that be so, since the need for suitable tracts is great, I would further ask,

Can a Literature Committee be formed which will attempt to do something to meet the present need?

Yours sincerely,

H. W. MASTERS.

Mymensingh, Bengal.

China.

Mr. Mark Botham sends us the following notes in the hope that they will be of interest to our readers.

I SUPPOSE that everyone interested in Mohammedanism in China knows that it is divided into two sects, Old and New. There are also other divisions, and lately one has run across evidence of new movements among the sects. A new sect was started a number of years ago, that is generally known as the "New New Sect," and spoken of by other Moslems as the "Heretical Sect." The founder was killed, but a new leader has taken his place. This is the man known as "Ersa" (Jesus) who was mentioned in News and Notes some time ago. Both this man and the founder seem to have had a "familiar spirit," and to fall into trances on occasion. The sect is ostracised by orthodox Moslems, but is making headway as a trading concern in parts of North Western Tibet and the province of Szechuan. As a spiritual and religious force it is by no means inactive. Its adherents are to be found in various parts of Kansu. One hears strange things of its doctrinal development, such as talk of a "Mu Khuda" "Mother (or female) God"! This is one new force that has come into being within the last decade or so.

And there are various influences at work from outside of China, entering from Central Asia, and from the sea ports. One has seen evidences

in various directions. There are anti-Christian tracts abroad now in Chinese and in Arabic, the latter coming into Kansu province from both East and West. Even the Moslem style of dress shows the influence of more distinctly Mohammedan countries, whereas formerly the only distinction from an ordinary Chinese, was the cap. Now round skull caps are worn like those one remembers seeing in Egypt. Orders have gone out in some places that all Moslem women must wear the veil. I have met young men wearing a long garment like a night shirt, open at the neck and buttoned down the centre of the chest with broad buttons. These are small indications of external influences.

Then there is a secret society among Moslems that has been started within the last three years, known as the "Wolf's Head Society." It is exceedingly difficult to find out any particulars. But it seems pretty certain that there is Japanese influence behind it, and it is known that, for political reasons, that dear "friend of China" has been trying hard to stir up trouble among Chinese Moslems. The society tries to get hold of the young hot-heads and has little use for the "old obstinates."

One could enumerate other things that are ripples on the surface proving the presence of something underneath. They show that Islam in China is becoming conscious of the rest of the world and is moving towards a change. Now is the time when all the forces of prayer and evangelism should be brought to bear upon it. In the future interior China will doubtless become more accessible, but one cannot but feel exceedingly doubtful whether the heart of the Chinese Moslem will do the same.

Yours sincerely,

MARK E. BOTHAM.

Persia.

WE have just had an experience in our work at Meshed that I am sure will interest all the members of the League.

One of the members of our little group of Christians was a Haji, and a convert from Bahaism. He was so zealous in propagating his Christian faith that it seemed best for him to go off to a field of his own, so he was rigged up with an old dental outfit and a box of Scriptures and went off to Nishapur, a city 80 miles away, to sell Scriptures and pull teeth for a living.

Before long urgent letters began coming to us from this city from a man with whom the dentist had become acquainted, begging one of us to come to his city and instruct him.

After a half dozen letters had been received our Persian evangelist associate and I started off on donkeys on the three days' journey over the mountains to answer the call. Our enquirer met us 12 miles out of the city and took us to his home. When we were alone with our host, like Peter in the house of Cornelius, my companion turned to our host and said, "Now we would like to know for what purpose you have sent for us."

Our host replied, "My ancestors have been leaders in the Ismailian sect of Mohammedans, and I have charge of the material and spiritual interests of 5000 households in various parts of Persia. When I was a boy of 15, I met a missionary doctor in Bombay, who said a few words to me about Christianity, and it made an impression on me. Six years ago a man came here selling books (it was the late Dr. Esselstyn of Meshed), and I bought a

big Bible, I had tried many wells if by chance I might find in them the Water of Life, but all were empty. But I had not read much in the Bible before I realized this was what I was searching for. Three and a half years ago I put my faith in Jesus Christ, and since that time I have been looking for some one to baptize me. When I heard the dentist talking in the bazar, I eagerly asked him if he could baptize me. He said that he had not yet been baptized himself, but he told me of you in Meshed, and I have sent for you that you may baptize me."

After being in his house for several days I was convinced of his readiness for baptism. I consulted my Meshed colleague and on Sunday afternoon baptized him and his 12 year-old son and the dentist. It was a time of apostolic joy for all of us that I will never forget!

A few days later, one of our doctors joined me in Nishapur and for 5 weeks we carried on an aggressive medical-evangelistic campaign. There was a very evident hunger on the part of many people to hear the Gospel. Many mullahs came for conversation and for Bible reading, and though there was some talk of opposition on the part of the authorities, nothing whatever was done to interfere with our Bible selling or our meetings.

I am sure that there were a number of men who became secret believers, but before we left the city two more men, two women, and several children were baptized—the first fruits of this city of Omar Khayyam,

American Presbyterian Mission,
Meshed, Persia.

W. M. MILLER.

The Moslem World Magazine,

EDITOR'S NOTICE.

For the January Number, 1921.

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THE PAST DECADE IN THE WORLD OF ISLAM.

A PESSIMIST has been defined as one who puts out his candle to see how dark it is. There are many in the church at home and on the mission field abroad who are pessimists regarding the evangelization of Moslems. An easy cure for their malady would be to read carefully the January number of the **MOSLEM WORLD**. This review has now for ten years given its quarterly surveys of current events in the Near East. It reviews the literature produced by Moslems and for Moslems and interprets Moslem thought and life from the Christian standpoint.

In the January number the leading article is by Professor J. du Plessis, of Africa, and deals most effectively with the question of European governments in relation to Islam in Africa. His facts are startling and his conclusions give occasion for serious thought and are a call for earnest prayer. Other valuable articles deal with Africa, Persia, Morocco, the Philippine Islands and Western China. Rev. H. C. Schuler, of Persia, writes on methods of evangelism in a very suggestive and helpful way. Professor O. Garfield Jones contributes an important article on the American Mandate over Moroland in the Philippines, and a Morocco resident lifts the veil of Moslem women's life in a Moorish Harem.

The usual notes on Current Events, and Book Reviews are very valuable in keeping the reader up to date in the knowledge of events and publications relating to Mohammedans. One of the book reviews by

Dr. C. T. Paul deals at length with a German work on Islam published just before the War.

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LEAGUE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

For the period from May 1st 1919 to December 31st 1920.

RECEIPTS.			EXPENDITURE.		
	Rs.	A. P.		Rs.	A. P.
Balance in hand	180	12 0	Printers' bills	659	1 6
Subscriptions and Donations	860	7 6	Postages, office expences	83	3 6
			Prayer Cycle, 1919	60	12 0
			List of members, Index	38	15 0
				842	0 0
			Balance	199	3 6
	Rs. 1,041	3 6		Rs. 1,041	3 6

Examined and found Correct.

P. NOBLE.

I. BEVAN JONES.

Hon. Sec. and Treas.

Notes.

MR. F. H. Rhodes of China, writes from Canada to say that interest in Moslems suffers there from lack of knowledge. "All workers when on furlough should frequently mention the literature available on the subject. Remarks with which we are frequently met such as, 'Quite a new subject to us'; 'the first time we have had an address on these lines,' indicate a serious want of knowledge."

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INDEX TO NEWS AND NOTES, SERIES VIII.—With the issue of the February number we are sending out to each member a copy of an Index which has been prepared to facilitate reference to the contents of Series VIII. No extra charge is made for this. It is hoped that it will be found useful.

New members desiring to do so, may secure the complete set of Series VIII for the sum of two Rupees for the 20 numbers. We shall also be glad to supply back numbers of the earlier series, so far as possible, to members who wish to replace lost copies. A charge of one anna only will be made for each of these:

For Praise and Prayer.

Let us unite with our brethren in Persia in praising God for the joy they have experienced in baptizing several converts and let us pray that all needed grace and strength may be afforded the latter in their daily witness for Christ. (p. 14.)

Special prayer is asked 'that the son of a leading Muslim modernist, who is seeking the truth, may find and confess it.'

Our prayers are needed by fellow members in China. God can do for Chinese Muslims what He has done and is doing for those in Persia. Let us pray that our friends there may be led by God to attempt great things for the Muslims.

Let us plead earnestly with the Lord to bless our daily conversation with Muslims; remembering that men have been brought to Christ through the abiding influence of some word in season spoken in earlier days.

(V. p. 13.)

NEW MEMBERS.

46. Miss Ethel Putney, Amer. Miss. Constantinople.
69. Miss B. S. Fowler, C.M.S. Agra, India.

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The annual subscription to the League is Rs. 2-0-0. News and requests for prayer will always be welcome and should be sent early in the month to the Hon. Secretary :

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

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