"For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers; our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own."

1 Chron., xxix. 15, 16.

It is one of the most joyous hours of the life of David. Yet he is only beginning a great work not ending it, beginning a work of which he shall not be permitted to see the end. The great men of Israel have come together, both soldiers and civilians at the call of their king, not for war as heretofore, but for worship. He tells them how he has had it in his heart to build a glorious house for God before he dies, but God has destined this honour for his son. It is a work which will cost much money, and require much preparation, and God has not forbidden him from taking any step to facilitate its performance by his successor. Though he may not do the greater, yet he will not refuse to do the lesser work, and so the flower of Israel’s princes and people are gathered together to contribute of their substance for the temple which another shall build. It is surely a noble gathering for a noble purpose, and right noble are the contributions of the people. Gold and silver, brass, iron, and pre-
cious stones are poured into God’s treasury in an abundance which does honour to the patriotism and piety of Israel, and rejoices the heart of the venerable king. “Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord; and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.” Yet a vein of sadness, like a minor note in music, creeps through his joy and finds expression in the words of his memorable prayer. Thus joy and sadness mingle together in our life and we are not to reckon the coming of either an intrusion, but should give to each its timely and fitting expression.

Never has his power been seen to greater advantage than in this national response to his summons. Yet this is the hour when he is humbled to the dust, and his words, “Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power, and the glory and the victory, and the majesty,” nobly express the feeling in his soul.

And First, there is here the thought of Life’s dependence. “All this store...cometh of Thine hand.” Such a thought is not willingly grasped by some men. It has to be forced upon them by loss and disaster. Some are blind and proud, and cannot see that God has ever given them anything until He has taken it away from them again. But with David this confession of life’s dependence on God is not a mournful one wrung from him in a time of grief; it is his spontaneous utterance in an hour of joy. Everything good in our life is from God. Our possessions, friendships, faculties of love and thought, all come from Him. We build our houses, we adorn them with what we call necessaries or luxuries, and we dwell in comfort amid all these appropriations from His store-house, for all these are from Him. Rich and poor, we dwell alike in God’s house, and the richest of us has only a larger room than his neighbour, and has but laid his hands on a little more. It is all His. And if such a thought be destructive of our pride, and leave us no room for boasting, let us make our boast in God. Surely “herein is love,” that He garnishes and adorns our life with His own hands, not leaving it all to our own rude effort or erring choice. Then let us guard against the spirit which would say, “Is not this great Babylon that I have built?” And let us rather say “my times are in thy hand.” “I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall be continually in my mouth.” God’s devotion to us should awaken our devotion to Him.
There is another thought which rises naturally in David’s heart and finds expression in his prayer, viz., that of Life’s Brevity. With him it is a sad thought. The lifetime of the unseen God is endless, that of man in this world is soon gone. Around him are those who have been his companions in council and conflict, now like himself grown old. The close of life cannot be far away, and as he counts up the by-gone years, how brief they all are. Compared with the unending life of God, the few years of man’s life become insignificant. They are but the short visit of a stranger who tarries for a night, of a sojourner who pitches his tent soon to take it down again and pass on. Or they are as a shadow, unsubstantial, and changing, which is gone at sunset. Yet if the thought of life’s brevity be a sad one, it is not wholly sad. Even the imagery which he uses to depict life can furnish him with some comfort. It is true that he is a stranger, that from that great assembly of his people friends are absent and well known faces gone, but he has a home somewhere to which his thoughts may turn. It is true that he is a sojourner, who may not linger, but must finish his journey, yet the sojourner folds up his tent by-and-by and enters into rest.

It may be that similar thoughts have come to us at the beginning of this New Year, that we have discovered with a shock of surprise how much of life is already gone. Be it so; we shall make no lamentation on this account. The Old Testament language about life’s brevity finds no echo in the New Testament. Life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel, and all pathetic sentimentalism about the shortness of life should be laid aside by Christian men. Jesus Christ, whose life was broken off at three-and-thirty, uttered no complaint about life’s brevity: why should we? If we die, we shall be in heaven. Death is only emigration. Instead of sighing over the brevity of this life, let us sing as we contemplate the blessedness of the life which is to come. No man should be so much concerned about the quantity as about the quality of life in this world. It was not to prolong but to purify life that Christ came and died, and He wept not over its shortness, but on account of its sins. Let us think more upon living well than living long.

We must not undervalue life because it is brief. True, it is a passing thing, fitly represented by the frail imagery of these words. Yet there is a power in passing things.
The passing sunshine cheers the sick-room, and glorifies the world. The passing shower washes the dust from leaf and flower. The passing stream smooths the pebbles and makes green the grass. The passing wind may purify the city and fill the sail of the mariner. The passing word may cheer the mourner and encourage the dispirited. And how much may be accomplished in a passing life, what an influence may be exerted on nature and in society, during even a few years. Short as life is, it is lived before God who is not the mere spectator, but the loving helper of us all. Let us live unto Him. And if in our families, and churches, and among the heathen we strive so to live, we shall not live in vain.

"Young lips may teach the wise, Christ said:
Weak feet sad wanderers home have led,
Small hands have cheered the sick one's bed
With freshest flowers:
O, teach me, Father! heed, their sighs
While many a soul in darkness lies
And waits thy message; make me wise
Lord, here am I."

There is yet another thought which we may notice, viz; Life's Purpose.

The purposes contained in every worthy life are too large to admit of completion during its limits. This is strikingly seen in the case of David. His life initiates a great work, but does not end it. It must be transmitted to Solomon for completion. So all our lives are but beginnings. God's work in this world is too large and too long to be completed by us during our life-time. Luther only began the Reformation, he did not end it. Wesley saw only the beginnings of Methodism, not its full growth. Christ only planted Christianity before He died. That work of God which we love, and in which we labour as his servants will not be all done when we come to die. We must pass it on to others. Not without some regret shall we pass it on, for we love it much and would fain continue in it, but we shall leave it hopefully, for it will go on when we shall have reached home.

And just as we have travelled over an Indian plain in the hot summer and seen but few green spots to cheer the eye, or reward the toil of weary labourers, and afterwards have climbed the mountain and beheld from afar the falling showers transforming the barrenness into verdure, so shall we look down from Mount Zion and see the moral land-
scapes, which were formerly the scenes of our work, growing beautiful with the beauty of the Lord. What matters it if our lives be fractional, others will follow us who will do God's work better than we, for God will take care to provide successors.

It is for us—for all of us who are servants of God, to strike a key-note which may be caught up and followed by sweet music when we are gone.

So let us turn joyfully in this New Year to that work which God may call us to do, and as we do so, let the language of our hearts be this:

"I ask no heaven till earth be thine,
Nor glory-crown while work of mine
Remaineth here; when earth shall shine
Among the stars.
Her sins wiped out, her captives free,
Her voice a music unto Thee,
For crown, new work give thou to me
Lord, here am I!"

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OUR DISTRICT MEETINGS AND THE NEW YEAR.

The month of January is an important one in connection with mission work. As most of our readers are aware, the Annual District Meetings are held during this month at which the whole work of the past year is reviewed and all possible arrangements made for the year on which we now enter. We do not anticipate any startling successes in the reports of our work which we hope to place before our readers, for we do not usually receive accessions in large numbers throughout our various districts—at any rate we have not done so in the past; but we expect that we shall be able to record an amount of success sufficient to show that labour has not been vain. There are some of whom it may be said that "except they see signs and wonders" they will not believe in the wisdom or success of mission work, but if the conviction of such be difficult, their enmity need cause no alarm. Though the success of the past year be far from wonderful yet we are sure that it will suffice to yield encouragement and hope to those who are engaged in missionary labour and to those also who watch it from afar.

Here and in England the prayer for greater success is unabated, but we have to learn to cultivate patience as well as prayer. We could be far more patient if we only knew
the time when Christ would visibly claim India and the East as His own; so at least we think sometimes, and sigh because we are so ignorant. Like the disciples of Christ after His resurrection who asked the question, "Lord wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" so to-day on many an Olivet in east and west men echo their prayer. But we must not forget that Christ was silent, wholly silent to their request. He might have said "No;" but he refused even that. He might have given them the certainty for which they longed; but it was not for them to know. Why should not God have His secrets as well as man?

In the silence of the Master the faith of the disciple should be able to rest, for that silence must be always wise. If Christ had told them that Jerusalem would be a ruin, that the suns of twenty centuries would shine on the desolation of their land, that men of an alien faith should worship where then stood their temple, that Jewish graves should be found in every country but Jewish glory in none, they could not have borne such a revelation. Their zeal would not have been aroused by an event so certainly distant, hope would have died, and all effort would have been paralysed. It was better to be left in possession of their own narrow Jewish hope—which widened afterwards—and to watch in the darkness for the coming of a new day. The kingdom of our Lord has to us wider boundaries than it had to them, and its restoration is more difficult. We can only say to those who ask, When is the East to be Christian?—we cannot tell, for God is silent. But while the number of avowed Christians is still but few when compared with the vast non-Christian population, the rapid growth of the Christian spirit is manifest. This is evident enough in the creed and work of the men of the New Dispensation. It is not too much to say that their inspiration comes from Christian sources, and though we may regret that they revere most deeply those western writers whose Christianity is of an imperfect type, this need not wholly destroy our thanksgiving. The growing prevalence of some Christian truths—notably those of the Fatherhood of God, and the personal greatness of man, is seen not only among the members of the New Dispensation, but among those who otherwise are formally associated with the popular creed. Those who have embraced these doctrines stand indebted to Christianity, though they may be all unconscious of or unwilling to own the debt, and truths like these are so powerful, and so completely out of
harmony with the popular faith of tradition that they cannot fail to destroy it more and more.

Can any thing be done by our district meetings either to initiate a new point of strategy in mission work, or to render more operative those already employed? We think the time has fully come for the employment of special means to transform what may be called the unconscious Christianity of many, into a conscious and intelligent faith. It seems a pity that with so many of the educated classes in our various districts, so entirely accessible and so entirely neglected, no men should yet have been set apart to labour among these. There are strong anti-Christian agencies at work amongst them, the atheism of Besant and Bradlaugh has its advocates, and its literature is sown broadcast among the intelligent. Every possible aid is now being given by the free-thinkers of England to their Hindu friends in the prosecution of their work. Leading secularists in England, regularly send literary contributions for an atheistic Journal which is published in Madras, and which is widely read; and do honour to Indian atheists in every possible way. However melancholy it may be, we believe it is unquestionably true that the most powerful missionary agency at work among the educated classes of India at this moment is anti-Christian—atheistic. And it is successful. It may be possible to console ourselves with the hope that Hindus can never become atheistic in large numbers, yet it is surely far from wise. We think it highly possible, nay even probable that they may, unless rigorous measures are adopted to prevent such a calamity. Much of the modern philosophy of Europe is singularly in accord with the genius of the Hindu mind, and may be hailed, not without some reason, by Hindus as the renaissance of an old Eastern faith. Then we must mention the growth of theism already organized into churches, and fed not from Vedic, but Christian sources, though denying the Divine authority of the Christian Scriptures. Theism would be a new creed for India, and an unspeakable advance on what has been. But believing as we do that Christianity is the only perfect form of theism, that the monotheism of the Trinity most fully meets the want of the human heart, the further spread of an imperfect theism in India would hardly give us unmingled joy. Yet we are struck with the superiority of the theism of India to that of England, here it is more eminently devotional and possesses a warmer heart.
We earnestly hope that these classes, among whom religious changes have begun, and to whom non-Christian and anti-Christian creeds are making their appeal, may receive some consideration in our District Meetings, and that they will all unite in pressing this department of work upon the Home Committee and the Methodists of England.

There is another section of work which in some districts is hardly entered upon, viz., Evangelistic work among the rural populations. To many, this field possesses a special charm. The villagers are the most down-trodden and deeply injured of India's people, masses of them are living in slavery the most abject, from which there is literally no hope of rescue. It must ever be remembered that Christ found his best loved sphere of work among the populous villages of Galilee and elsewhere, it was among them that many of His greatest miracles were wrought. It was by villagers that His ministry was hailed with the greatest enthusiasm. It was the villagers whom He twice fed in the desert, and the villagers' children whom He blessed. For many years large towns have been centres of missionary work, and much good work has been done in these; churches have been planted, and schools established there. Yet it would probably appear to a stranger, that in some towns there has been an undue crowding of missionaries to the neglect of the country. It seems strange that in the immediate neighbourhood of Madras, for instance, there should be a large strip of country at least forty miles in extent, without a single European missionary, without an agent of any kind—save one Catechist to represent and teach the religion of Christ to the people. Yet this is quite possible of explanation. In Madras, most of the European missionaries of our own and other societies have been engaged in the work of education, and have been but slightly acquainted with the vernaculars, which were not required for that work. Their own fields have been quite large enough to absorb all their energy, and if in our large towns some are employed otherwise than in schools they find their work abundant and exacting enough, and are not free to enter on "regions beyond." If work is to be of any real value it must be intensive, and cannot therefore extend over an unlimited area. The only conclusion to which we can come, is that hitherto it has been impossible to undertake this village work to any adequate extent. If early Christian history had repeated itself, and the native
Christians who compose our town churches had been scattered throughout the country and had gone everywhere preaching the word, we might have had a different story to tell. But our town churches have not yet received that fulness of spiritual life which can overflow in earnest evangelism, and we cannot wait for that overflow before something is attempted to evangelize our village populations.

What then is to be done? Very little can be done unless money can be obtained for this special object. Schools will have to be established, which, however, in many instances might be almost self-supporting through grants from Local Boards, and catechists must be allotted to circuits of sufficient magnitude. Such men, not "greedy of filthy lucre" are hard to procure, moreover they must possess an evangelistic spirit, and this needs almost to be created. But besides these, European oversight is a necessity, to give cohesion and constant stimulus to the work. Men are therefore needed for this work as well as money, and though it may be unfortunate that additional demands should be made on our home exchequer in these days of retrenchment, still there is no help for it.

We have often thought that it might be possible to obtain for work of this kind, a cheaper European agency than that of the ordinary missionary, that there might be found among that class of laymen who spend their lives as hired local preachers or town missionaries, some who would be efficient workers in a field like this. If such an experiment were tried, we think it would answer, and if found successful, it would admit of a considerable extension of our work under the care of trusty men, at a comparatively small outlay. That there are many such men in England, full of sympathy with mission work, we have not a doubt, men who would be glad to give themselves to it, and whose labours God would honour. We trust that the District Meetings may venture to try the experiment and make such a request to the Home Committee. It is by no means without precedent in the mission field, and so far as we have been able to learn it has been successful. We suggest it only for evangelistic work.

Among other important subjects bearing on the work of the future that of the native ministry is likely to receive attention. The statistics published in a former number of this Magazine, show a striking difference between the growth of a native ministry in Ceylon as compared with India. The
large increase of native ministers in Ceylon and the scarcely perceptible increase in the Indian districts are both natural results. We are not aware of any forcing process having been employed either to increase or retard the production. But the result in the Indian districts seems to indicate that in future it may be wise there to employ a cheaper agency to take the pastoral oversight of churches, an agency not possessing the highest intellectual training, yet sufficiently gifted to guide and instruct the churches now established. If this can be done, the goal of self-supporting churches—still far distant, would be more speedily reached, pastors and people would gain much by their mutual dependence on each other, and discoveries would be made of methods for the increase of church contributions which are probably now unthought of. There are in our Indian districts one or two native churches where self-support might even now be tried.

Shall our District Meetings of 1881 be associated with a baptism of the Holy Ghost? Above all things this is needed, for without it, all our work grows monotonous and mechanical. Year by year we are seeking to perfect our organizations, to extend them wherever possible, but these need to be filled with life. Without this they only resemble those barren tracts of brown sand that run across our Indian plains, the beds of vanished streams which show where the water should flow.

In our "Conversations on the state of the work of God" can we not get our own hearts filled with this life? Can we not resolve on some special measures for the revival of God's work on our stations both in English and in the vernaculars? We trust that our friends in England will join with us in praying that 1881 may be a year of revival in our work in India and Ceylon, and in that of other Missionary Societies labouring with us side by side.

G. M. C.

CHRISTIANITY AND ÍSLÁM.

Of late there has been among Christian thinkers a growing liberalism of sentiment and opinion concerning the great religions of the East, which has expressed its favourable verdicts in many ways. This liberalism has in some instances been excessive, but though it would be difficult to justify it to the full, yet it is in the main an agreeable
change from the narrowness of former days. It is a healthy reaction, which is full of good omen for the future.

Recently, much attention has been directed to Islam owing to political movements, and much also by the speeches and writings of sympathetic students of the Muslim faith. What is called the Eastern question cannot even be considered, much less settled apart from the Muslim people, and the Muslim people cannot be considered apart from their faith. In making any forecast of their political future, a knowledge of their faith is invaluable to the statesman, and that must include not merely its dogmas, but its practical operation at the present time. Though not without interest in the kingdoms and governments of the East, watching as they do the clouds that come and go on its political horizon, yet the deepest interest of missionaries is in the establishment of the kingdom of God. It is for the coming of this kingdom that they watch most intently, and all missionary labour is for its establishment.

It is to the Muslim faith therefore that we refer in this paper—we shall briefly lay before our readers a statement of what it is, and other considerations will naturally follow. The great basis of the Muslim faith is the Korân, consisting of 114 Sûras or chapters, which bear distinctive and peculiar headings. As to their arrangement, the longest are placed at the beginning and the shortest towards the end of the book, and the solemn Muhammadan Formula (Bîsnûllâh) "In the name of the most merciful God," is, with one exception, prefixed to every Sûra. The Sûras are divided into verses (Ayât) or sections, the number of which varies owing to diversity of punctuation.

Numerous other divisions are also employed to which we need not refer; even the letters and words have been counted. Two important divisions of the whole have been made for devotional purposes, the áhzâb consisting of sixty equal portions and the újzá of thirty. According to the Muslim faith the Korân has eternally existed, written in rays of light. It was sent down from heaven by the angel Gabriel on the ever-memorable night of Al-Khadr, in the sacred month of Ramadân, and was revealed to Muhammad at Medina and Mecca, during twenty-three years of his life. As to its origin through Muhammad, it was dictated by him in fragments to scribes who put them in a box, without regard to any arrangement. There they remained until after his death, when they were selected by the order
of Abu Bekr, carefully copied, and committed to the keeping of one of Muhammad's wives.

A recension of the text was afterwards made by the command of Khalif Othman, and in order that no various readings might continue to exist, all earlier copies were destroyed. The introduction of vowel points at a subsequent period has resulted in various readings, which, however, are neither numerous nor important. We need scarcely state that the Korán is written in Arabic.

The great doctrine of the Korán is that of the unity of God. The teaching of Islam concerning the Divine nature, agrees with that of Christianity, except that it affirms of God that “He begetteth not.” According to it, Jesus Christ is merely a prophet miraculously born and richly endowed. God gave “evident miracles to Jesus the Son of Mary, and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit.” Súra ii. p. 10.

“The Jews devised a stratagem against him, but God devised a stratagem against them; and God is the best deviser of stratagems.” Súra iii. p. 38.

Again, “they (the Jews) have not believed on Jesus, and have spoken against Mary a grievous calumny; and have said, verily we have slain Christ Jesus the Son of Mary, the apostle of God; yet they slew him not, neither crucified him, but he was represented by one in his likeness. . . . They did not really kill him; but God took him up unto himself.” Súra iv. pp. 70, 71.

Jesus is to descend on earth before the resurrection, and destroy anti-christ and “He shall be a sign of the last hour.” Súra, xliii. p. 365. Christ is not Divine, “they are infidels, who say, verily God is Christ the Son of Mary.” Súra v. p. 7. The Christians say, “Christ is the Son of God. . . May God resist them.” Súra ix. p. 138.

The doctrine of angels may be regarded as next in importance to that of the being and nature of God. They are created of fire, and furnished with two, and three and four pair of wings. Súra xxxv. p. 326. They are without sin, yet must not be worshipped, for they are only creatures, messengers of God. Súra xxii. p. 256. Eight of them shall support the Throne of God at the day of Judgment. Súra lxix. p. 422. Nineteen of them are placed in charge of hell. Súra lxxiv. p. 430. Two are deputed to watch over every man, and note his behaviour, one on his right hand the other on his left. Súra 1. p. 384. They assisted Muhammad in
winning the battle of Bekr. They are said to pray for the forgiveness of men. Súrá xlii. p. 359. The most celebrated of the angels is Gabriel, whose doings are frequently mentioned in the Korán.

The eschatology of the Korán is very elaborate. The doctrine of the resurrection is taught; the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall come forth from their graves. Súra l. p. 384. The sun shall be folded up, the stars shall fall, the mountains shall be made to pass away, the souls shall be joined again to their bodies, the books shall be laid open. Súra lxxxi. Men shall meet God in judgment, and those who receive their books of deeds done, in their right hands, shall go to paradise with joy, those who receive them behind their backs shall go to hell. Súra lxxxiv. There are ample descriptions of the punishments of hell as well as of the bliss of paradise, the latter glows with the most gorgeous scenery of the East.

In addition to the Korán the Muslims have as the basis of their faith the Sunna or Sunnat which may be called the supplement to the Korán, corresponding roughly to the Jewish Mishna which forms the complement to the written law of Moses. It is contained in six books collected at different times by Muslim theologians. These traditions of Muhammad are of the highest value and authority to Musalmáns. They relate both to Muslim doctrine and practice, to common as well as to religious life.

Then there are the four great "Fathers" of Islám, commonly called Imáms, viz., Abu Hanífa, Ibn Málik, As-Sháfa’í, Ibn Hanbal whose opinions are authoritative with all orthodox Muslims. They represent different schools of thought, and nothing can be added to their opinions. Their opinions are sought where the Korán or Sunnat admits of various interpretations, and they are final.

It is easy to see that circumstances must arise in modern life to which no direct reference can be found in these writings of a by-gone age and the question must be asked how far the life of a Muslim is to be controlled or limited by these ancient rules. It may be possible to obtain a judgment by inference or analogy regarding things which take place in, or belong to a different sphere from that literally referred to in these ancient authorities, but there must be limits even to such a possibility.

It follows therefore that the application of the Muslim rule of faith must be extremely difficult where life differs in any
measure from that of the early period during which it was constructed. This rule of faith sways the Muslim world, for though the non-orthodox sects of Musulmans may not accept the above in its entirety they have that which corresponds to it. It is impossible to refer now to the differences which mark the various sects of Islam; some of them are more liberal than others, but the liberalism of all is enclosed within very narrow and rigid limits. It is the undoubting faith of one and all, that "there is one God and Muhammad is His prophet" and that the creed which they have inherited forms a circle of truth and duty which is perfect and incapable of enlargement. Nothing can be added, nothing can be taken away.

The Muslim faith and people have found in Bosworth Smith, M.A., a generous apologist, whose lectures, delivered at the Royal Institution in 1874, have been widely read and have exerted considerable influence. Our readers are probably familiar with these lectures, which though erring as we think on the side of liberality are on the whole excellent in spirit and full of good suggestions for the Christian Missionary. There can be no doubt but that the attitude of Christians generally to Muhammadanism has been in past years much too stern and severe. It is impossible that Christians can ever accept or vindicate the Muslim faith; it is imperfect, it is full of error. But the millions who accept it should neither be overlooked nor despaired of by those who believe in the mission of Christianity. It is evident enough that Islam contains much which is to be found in the Christian system. The Christian system owes nothing to Islam, but Christianity in its progress does. "Muhammad proclaimed an actual God to men who were disputing concerning His nature and attributes. Muhammad affirmed that there was an actual will before which the will of men must bow down. It was a tremendous proclamation. Philosophy shrinks and shrivels before it, all ethical speculations are concluded by the one maxim, that God's commands are to be obeyed; all metaphysical speculations are silenced by the shout, first of a man, then of a host; "He is; and we are sent to establish His authority over the earth." Christian divinity appears to be still more staggered by the message, all that was peculiar in it, all that was universal in it, and had affected the life of the world, had been connected with the announcement of a Son of Man, who was also the Son of God. The new teacher tramples on that announcement,
treats it as part of the old idolatry. If philosophy and Christian divinity have not hitherto been able to unite, have they not at least found a common enemy? Has not that enemy a commission to destroy them both?

Mahomet, as we believe, had a commission to restore them both. Nothing could have raised the Byzantine Christianity out of the abyss into which it had fallen, but such a voice as that which came from the Arabian cave. That voice proclaimed the eternal truth which Greeks were disbelieving. It presented that truth in the only form in which it could have been practical, in which it could have told upon people who had talked about the divine and human nature, till they had lost all faith in God or man.” It has taken men a long time to discover and acknowledge their obligations to Muhammad. Part of these obligations are well expressed in the above quotation from one to whom the Christian world owes much. It was Maurice who first in England attempted a more just interpretation, and awoke a more liberal sentiment towards Islám and other eastern faiths and though we may not subscribe to all that he has said we must acknowledge the modern prevalence of his liberal spirit. With so much that is common alike to Islám and Christianity a vast field lies open for Christian Missions, a field on which missionary societies have been too slow to enter. It is a field which is singularly inviting and singularly difficult. Not to speak of other Indian districts, the number of Musulmáns in the Madras District alone, nearly equals that of the whole population of Ceylon. In Ceylon, there are nearly forty European and American missionaries, besides nearly a hundred native missionaries who are ordained, while among a population of Musulmáns nearly equal to the above, we find only two European Missionaries! Surely these things ought not so to be.

It should not be forgotten that there are many Muslim Missionaries in India, and these have made not a few converts from Hinduism to the faith of the Prophet.

There are in South India a few converts to Christianity from the Muhammadan population, but these are isolated and not formed into any church, and work among them may be said to have scarcely been begun. That Islám needs a revival would be admitted by many within its fold; as a system it is complete; but cold, and stiffened into rigidity. It is little else than a petrifaction. If life is to be infused into it, that life can only come through Christianity and the
influence of the Spirit of God. It must be remembered that the Christianity which Muhammad saw was degenerate, that his knowledge of Christian truth was imperfect. It seems to have come from apocryphal sources. According to Sprenger the two Christian sects in Arabia with whom he came in contact were the Rakusii and the Hanifs, both of whom were far more Judaistic than Christian. Yet though seeing little more than the caricature of Christianity he was influenced by it, he reverenced it. Who can tell what he might have been, had he seen what we see, and felt what we feel? His thoughts concerning Christ—by no means despicable, would have risen higher, his reverence for Him would have deepened, and the life and worship of the East might have been brighter now. That which he saw not may be shown to his followers, nay, must be shown. Having seen the God of Muhammad they must now see the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We venture to hope that our Missionary Society may soon be able to take a worthy part in giving the Gospel to Muhammadans both in India and elsewhere.

HEBRE AND HEREAFTER.

Jesus answered and said unto him, what I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. John xiii. 7.

Our feeble mind and narrow thought
Yet fail to grasp what faith can teach;
That love, and only love, can reach
The truth our Lord and Master taught.

'Tis better not to know when He
Withholds the sign, speaks not the word;
Their voice of old time have we heard
'We love Him whom we cannot see.'

His purposes are hidden deep
Beyond the reach of human ken,
They waken into action when
We think them locked in stony sleep.

"Not now" we say in aimless grief
When our beloved speed to Him;
"Not thus" when lights are growing dim
And darkness tempts to unbelief.
Blessed are they who learn to trust,
When blackest midnight looms between;
On no uncertain arm they lean,
Who know that He is ever just.

Who wait until before His throne,
From weary doubt and terror freed;
With purer eyes His truth they read,
And know Him even as they are known.

In spite of all the passionate years
Through which our life hath wound its way;
The dawning of a brighter day
Shall shine through mists of falling tears.

This present pain ere long shall bring
The grand achievement of His grace;
Enabling us to stoop and trace
His mighty love in everything.

Not now, of perfect knowledge, we,
Or perfect love, can grasp the whole;
But He shall fill the eager soul
With faith and hope and charity.

His great hereafter shall reveal
The mysteries of earthly woe;
The scars His children gain below
Are but the impress of His seal:

And stamped with this, transcending far
Or gleaming gold, or luminous gem,
He binds them in His diadem
For aye shall shine each glorious scar

This do we know; They shall arise
By purging flame of sevenfold heat,
By patient suffering made meet
For purer service in the skies.

WILLIAM ROBINSON.

The soul had sat by the wayside, holding out empty hands
to all the passing systems, till Christ came; then came sight
and second birth—the talents fell into the bankrupt palms.
—STIRLING.
TIRUVARUR, MADRAS DISTRICT.

THE LATE CYCLONE.

The storm that swept along the Coromandel coast on Sunday the 21st December, strewing the shore with wrecks, and then, turning landwards, devastating wide tracts of country in South India, will not soon be forgotten by the inhabitants of Tiruvarur. To Harbour masters and Meteorologists, the steady fall of the barometer, and the dark and gloomy sky of the previous day, prognosticated dirty weather; but by landsmen who had had no previous experience of cyclones, these signs were either unperceived or unheeded, and the storm came upon us "like a thief in the night." At Tiruvarur we were awoke about one o'clock on Sunday morning by a heavy gale of wind from the north-west, and the pattering of rain overhead. Windows and doors were secured and all made as tight as might be; but the splashing of water in several places in the bedroom, soon warned us that the wind which was steadily increasing in violence, had opened the 'keatas;' and the remaining hours of darkness were spent in alternately shifting about boxes and furniture, and trying to snatch a few moments of sleep. At daylight, the wind was still blowing a gale, and we found several trees down in the garden. It was with great difficulty that we could procure our "early tea;" the cook-house was partly unroofed and the servants were drenched to the skin the moment they ventured out. We managed, however, to light a fire inside the house and about eight o'clock sat down to a cup of cocoa and a biscuit. By this time the storm had become a hurricane, and the windows and doors on the north side of the house began to give way, necessitating an energetic use of hammer and nails. The chapel, standing in the north-east corner of the compound, was unroofed and the hard, dry mud floor turned into a mass of slush. The servants' houses, built of mud and covered with leaves, next subsided; and the occupants with their families took refuge in the Mission House. About 9 o'clock the wind suddenly dropped and the rain all but ceased.

The servants and myself at once turned out to clear away the fallen trees and cut down those that were threatening to fall upon the roof. Meanwhile, by the aid of 'Europe stores,' the wife contrived to prepare a breakfast; and we were sipping our coffee and congratulating ourselves on having weathered the storm, when, with an angry roar,
the wind suddenly came from the south, having veered right round, and the rain began again and came down in torrents. The question of 'storm or cyclone' was thus settled, and we began to be anxious as to the 'staying powers' of the house, which fronts due south. In a few minutes the horsekeeper ran in to tell us that the roof of the stables was slipping, and we had only just got the ponies out when it came down. Things now began to look serious. The wind came in gusts and struck the house such blows as made the walls tremble. We were just beginning to pack up some clothing with a view to a possible flight when the crash came. The roof of bamboos and keatas (cocoanut tree leaves) rested upon short pillars let in main walls. These pillars seem to have all given way together, tearing down in their fall, parts of the walls. We narrowly escaped the falling debris, and had to make a rush for it—out into the wind and rain. We took refuge first in the Catechist's house close by, which being small and partially sheltered survived the storm. Here, in one small room, were crowded together the wives and families of the servants, surrounded by their 'household gods'—cooking chatties, bundles of clothing and small boxes; and in the front verandah the ponies had found a temporary refuge. Thence we managed to force our way through the howling storm to the house of a Muhammadan gentleman living opposite, who placed a small room at our disposal and treated us with great courtesy and kindness. By two o'clock in the afternoon the storm had spent its fury; and about three o'clock, by the offer of liberal payment, we were able to hire bullocks and proceed to the Traveller's bungalow.

That day was to us a strange Sabbath, and its memories will not soon fade away. But we shall sooner forget our perils than the sympathy and kindness of our heathen neighbours; and we shall tell of the goodness of God when our losses are forgotten.

The next day showed us a sad scene of desolation. Fifteen or sixteen fallen trees were piled round a heap of ruins! The roof of the bungalow had broken its back and slid over on to the ground on the north side; and the walls, shaken to their very base, leaned and bulged so much, that the getting out of the furniture, &c., was anything but a safe and pleasant task. The chapel, which must have fallen soon after the bungalow came to grief, lay a heap of ruins.
The servant's houses were a heap of mud; and the roof of the stables protected only the back wall of the building instead of all four. Inside the bungalow we found several pieces of furniture, a lot of crockery, and two portmanteaus literally smashed; and most of the furniture a good deal battered and spoiled. I calculate that the loss to the Mission will be considerably over 2,000 rupees; and as another house of a more substantial character will have to be built, an expenditure of four or five thousand rupees is rendered absolutely necessary. The Treasurer of our District Extension Fund tells me that he is quite unable to supply the requisite amount; and as our local resources are limited, we shall have to rely on special subscriptions and donations. And we do not doubt but that, despite the hard times, this tale of disaster and loss will elicit from friends both in India and England special subscriptions

FOR THE NEW MISSION HOUSE AT TIRUVARUR.

We wait and hope.

R. S. B.

A UNITED METHODISM FOR INDIA.

We have pleasure in publishing the following Resolution received through the Rev. W. B. Osborne, which was passed at an informal session of the recent M. E. Conference at Bombay.

Resolved,

"That we tender our esteemed brother, the Rev. G. M. Cobban, our sincere thanks for his kind and fraternal letter, forwarded through brother W. B. Osborne, on the subject of an organic union of all the Methodists of India, and that we fully and heartily reciprocate his expressions of good-will, and his desire for harmony in both feeling and action.

2. That we agree with Mr. Cobban in regarding the present time as opportune for considering this subject, in view of the approaching meeting of the Ecumenical Conference in London, and that we express our readiness to accept for favorable consideration any action which that Conference may take in the premises.

3. That while we express our conviction that there ought to be, and ultimately will be, but one Methodism in India, we consider it premature to try to arrange details of union at present, and prefer to wait for those further providential developments which we believe will be given in due time, removing obstacles and opening a plain path to all parties concerned."
The Editor of the *Lucknow Witness* in his issue of Dec. 31, devotes a paragraph to the subject of a United Methodism, but his remarks, we fear, are somewhat coloured by a personal grievance. The following is an extract from the paragraph referred to: “It will be a great many years, at least, owing to property considerations, to say nothing of other matters, before any such plan comes within the reach of "practical statesmanship." And we have grave doubts whether at any time the advantages to be gained from organic union will be found sufficiently manifest and extensive to overcome the very serious difficulties and obstacles in the way.

What is practicable, however, and especially pressing and opportune it seems to us in this year of the Ecumenical Congress, is a much greater degree of *fraternal co-operation* between the two branches of Methodism. It is well known that at present such fraternity does not exist in any part of the country to the extent that is most desirable. Into the special causes of this state of things, this is not the place to enter, nor is it probable that we would be accounted a sufficiently unprejudiced judge to examine or set forth the matter impartially. But we do believe that putting aside the special sources of this friction, and letting by-gones be by-gones, there should be an earnest effort in all quarters this year to establish more amicable and cordial relations. This ought not to be beyond the reach of our Christian ability.”

The “fraternal co-operation” of which he speaks is much to be desired, and there is no disguising the fact that the two churches appear to be rivals in some places. But he will at least concede that in this rivalry if it exist, we are not aggressors. Several years ago strong inducements were held out to us to commence work in Bombay, but we then withheld from doing so because our brethren of the M. E. Church had commenced work there.

We could give other instances to show that some pains have been taken not only to avoid collision with our M. E. brethren, but to lessen rivalry where it appears to exist. Our contemporary does not appear to be very anxious about union between the churches nor very hopeful about the results which would follow it. We respect his opinion though we cannot endorse it. Neither the “property considerations” which he puts to the front, nor the other matters, are likely to be more easy of adjustment after many
years than they are now. "Practical statesmanship" would we think be quite equal to deal with all; and now, just as easily as hereafter. Our conviction is, that if a union be regarded as desirable by both churches, it cannot be sought too early; the longer it is deferred the more difficult it will become. Of course nothing is easier than to remain apart from each other, but we fear that so long as we do so, that hearty co-operation which we all long for, cannot be universal. Nor will all be accomplished that should be resolutely aimed at by the M. E. Church in South India as well as by our own; unless we see a reduction of the number of Methodist Churches where this is excessive.

The resolution of the brethren at the South India M. E. Conference is full of hope, but practically leaves the union to be initiated by the Ecumenical Congress. We earnestly hope that in our various District Meetings now being held the matter may receive attention, and that there may at least be furnished to our Home Committee, a statement of the present position and mutual relations of the two churches, complete enough to give full information and make some legislation in the direction of Union practicable.

WESLEYAN METHODIST NOTES.

—On December 30th the Bangalore St. John's Hill Sunday Scholars had a trip to Cadgoody.

—We learn that Sir Francis Lycett has left £28,000 for the building of Wesleyan Chapels, and that at the death of his widow, the greater part of his property will go to the same object.

—The Annual Watchnight Service was held in the Black Town Chapel, Madras, which was as usual, well filled. Addresses were delivered by the Revs. G. O. Newport, L. M. S., G. Fryar and G. M. Cobban.

—At the close of the Christmas Day Service in the Wesleyan Chapel, Madras, Mrs. Cobban distributed the clothing to the children of the Ragged School, and on Dec. 28th the children were entertained on the Esplanade to an excellent Christmas meal which was followed by sports and prizes both for girls and boys. A hundred and fifty were present, besides a large number of friends and spectators. The arrangements were excellent.
We notice in the *Star in the East* an interesting article on “Revival meetings in Native Churches” by Dr. J. L. Phillips. In November last, along with a native brother he conducted a series of services which resulted in 19 converts who have been baptized. We are persuaded that if a brother could be set apart in each of our districts to do work of this kind for even a portion of the year much good will follow. Can it not be tried?

On December 23rd, the native girls in the schools at Secunderabad and Chudderghaut assembled for their first prize-giving. The number present was about seventy, the meeting was opened with prayer by the Rev. B. Pratt, after which the report was read by the Rev. W. Burgess. The schools are five in number and contain in all about ninety scholars. After songs by the children and an examination by Mr. B. P. Wesley, the prizes were distributed by Lady Meade. A vote of thanks was then heartily accorded to her Ladyship for presiding. After the benediction was pronounced, a fancy sale was held in aid of the schools.

On Sunday and Monday, the 19th and 20th December, the Annual Missionary Service in connection with the Lucknow circuit of the Wesleyan Missionary were celebrated. The Rev. G. W. Jackson, who had recently arrived from England preached on the Sunday, and the annual meeting which was presided over by Colonel Davidson, R. A., was addressed by the Revs. G. W. Jackson, B. Peel, T. Carmichael, and F. Halliday. From the report read, we learn that the local contributions to the Society for the year amounted to Rs. 621-15-0. The meeting was a very interesting one. The choir sang several anthems during the evening.

On December 20th Mrs. General Payne distributed the Prizes gained by the pupils of the Girls’ Day Schools, Bangalore. The year has been one of progress in everything except numbers. Teachers and scholars alike are to be congratulated on the steady perseverance which has characterized their efforts and resulted in favourable reports from Mr. Grieveson, the Deputy Inspector of Schools, and the Rev. W. H. J. Picken who conducted the annual examination. Miss Eva Knox received the first prize for examination and Miss Nancy Farmer for the year’s marks. About 20 prizes were awarded. Miss Whitwell, the head Governess, merits our warmest gratitude for her labours and success.
The Service of Song entitled "Uncle Tom" was given in the Cantonment Chapel, Bangalore, on December 15, by a select choir and some of the Sunday scholars, under the direction of the Rev. E. R. Eslick. The large chapel, into which had been brought every seat possible, was filled, and many stood about the doors. The local papers contained most eulogistic reports of the whole entertainment, and the Spectator went so far as to suggest its repetition during Christmas week as numbers were desirous of hearing it who could not attend on the 15th. The collection, amounting to Rs. 90 was distributed chiefly among the poor, European and native; a donation was also given in aid of the children's Christmas Tree. This is the most successful service of song ever given in the Cantonment.

On Dec. 21st, the Bangalore Cantonment Sunday Scholars assembled in the Rev. E. R. Eslick's compound and mightily enjoyed a good hour's frolic in various ways. At 5 o'clock, they assembled for tea for which of course they were ready. At 6 they proceeded to the Chapel to receive prizes and rewards, before a considerable congregation. In addressing those present Mr. Eslick said he was proud of the teachers and of their year's labours. Never had there been a more thorough interest shown; the lessons taken from the Wesleyan S. S. Teachers' Magazine had been carefully prepared and well taught. The oral and written examinations were on the whole highly satisfactory, and the Rev. S. E. and Mrs. Symonds were thanked for their part in them. Among the senior boys, Llewellyn Andrews bore off the first prize and Nancy Farmer among the girls. There were about 32 prizes and 8 rewards given. Subsequently in the school-room a magnificent Christmas Tree was exhibited and finally stripped of the numerous gifts it bore to the delight of all.

—The following is the report of the Mysore Girls' Schools for the past year:

"The Wesleyan Mission in this city has three girls' schools under its care, in which there are 293 pupils on the rolls and an average daily attendance of 215. These schools are taught by nine male teachers and four female pupil teachers; each school has also two female peons to take care of the younger girls while on their way to and from the schools. The education given is chiefly Primary, but the highest classes reach the lower branch of the Middle School. In addition, the girls are instructed in religious subjects by the Missionary and Catechist, and are taught singing and sewing by the catechist's wife. The Government Inspector examined these
Wesleyan Methodist Notes.

schools last week, and 60 per cent. of those examined having passed, he considered the results very satisfactory. The total cost for working these schools, that is, not only for wages, but also for furniture, books, stationery, repairs and prizes, during the past year has been Rs. 1,698. The expense has been met thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By Government Grants</td>
<td>Rs. 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Ladies' Committee in London</td>
<td>Rs. 872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscriptions in Mysore</td>
<td>Rs. 226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rs. 1,698</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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With regard to the past we cannot say that we are satisfied with the work that has been done. The education is too elementary. So many of the girls are removed at such a tender age that they scarcely are able to get beyond this stage, and we fear they soon forget most of what they have been taught. The difficulties still in the way of these schools are great—almost enough sometimes to drive one to the borders of despair. The girls are irregular in their attendance, kept away by numberless feasts and every kind of excuse, and often with no excuse at all. It is sadly too evident that the parents take but little interest in the education of their girls. There are a few who are keenly interested in this question but we fear the feeling is neither deep nor wide-spread. Every man, who knows anything of the matter, knows that the one great stumbling-block in the way of the progress of society in this country, is the ignorance of the women. At whatever cost, they must be educated, or the children of India will lose step in the march of progress and remain in hopeless subjection. With regard to the future, we have a profound conviction that something must be done for this city and that soon. As a step in this direction we propose opening classes next year in our girls' schools, for preparing for the Government Middle School Examination. There are now a few in the schools, and we hope to get others, fit to join these classes. It will be a bright day for India when the girls catch something of the interest in examinations which now possesses their brothers, and are seen sitting for the examinations the boys are so anxious to pass. But even such a class, we know, is not enough to meet the educational necessities of this city. There are many intelligent gentlemen who wish, and wish earnestly, for a school in which Hindu ladies may not only receive a sound education, but also the polish imparted by European music and English. We have watched the rising of this desire with the greatest interest and trust that some steps towards its realization may soon be taken.”

—We have been asked why no Indian Wesleyan Methodist Newspaper has been established, as a medium of communication between the English congregations in India and Ceylon. As the question more directly concerns English Pastors, we commend it to their notice.
NOTES OF OTHER CHURCHES AND SOCIETIES.

—The Annual Meeting of the L. M. S. in the Madras district will be held this month at Cuddapah.
—A very cordial interchange of greetings has taken place between the Brahmos of the New Dispensation and the members of the Oxford Mission recently arrived in Calcutta.
—Arrangements have been made by the respective Missionary Conferences of Madras and Bangalore to observe the week of prayer, in the beginning of the present month.
—The M. E. Camp Meeting at Ennore, near Madras, during Christmas week was well attended and accompanied by good results. A number of ministers of the M. E. Church were present and Mrs. Amanda Smith also took part. She likewise conducted the Watch Night Service in the M. E. Pavilion, Madras.
—We are sorry to hear that the Baptists have refused to accept any compromise in the equivalent for words relating to "baptism" in the Telugu version of the New Testament, and that further co-operation with them is impossible. They will take advantage of the new translation and publish an edition of their own with sundry alterations.
—The M. E. Conference of South India met in Bombay in December. The total number of ministers and agents in connection with this Conference are thirty-nine and they are employed in the districts of Bombay, Madras, Allahabad, Calcutta, also in Poona, Lanoli and Agra. During the Conference the Inskip party were present in Bombay conducting services.
—We gather the following notes of the Free Church of Scotland from the Monthly Review:

The Rev. Charles Cooper, m.a., has returned from furlough to work in the Madras Christian College.

Miss Margaret Mackay of Aberdeen has been appointed by the Ladies' Society for Female Education in India, as a Zenana teacher at Nagpore.

The Free Church of Scotland is extending its work among the Santals, the opening of two new stations has been sanctioned for which school and church buildings are required. The names of the stations are Chukye and Toondee.

At Mahanad the F. C. Mission is represented by the Rev. J. Bhuttachariya, and there a church building is needed. A native church has been formed and a kirk session elected.
—From the Annual Survey of the A. B. C. F. M. which is published in the Missionary Herald, we extract the following which has reference to India and Ceylon:—

"No marked changes have occurred in these missions the past year. The work has made steady progress. The healthful condition of the native churches is seen in the fact that nearly all have had additions on profession of faith. Nineteen out of twenty-four churches in the Mahratta field, eleven out of thirteen in Ceylon, and thirty-two out of the thirty-three in the Madura mission, report such additions. A like healthful progress is observed in efforts to sustain their own institutions, till it has come to be a recognised principle in the Madura mission that every pastor is to be sustained by his own people; and in Ceylon almost the entire expense of schools, now embracing over 7,000 youth of both sexes, has ceased to be a charge upon the Board. Quite after the manner of home churches, a village church near Ahmednuggur sends off a colony to organize a new church in another village, erects a chapel for its own use, planning the work, paying the bills, while supporting its own pastor. It ought to be added that the pastor set his people the example of self-denial by selling his clock to obtain funds to build the chapel. The growth in grace and true consecration to Christ have seemed to keep pace in some measure with the sense of personal responsibility for the support of the Gospel.

At Bombay, a new interest is manifest among Muhammadans, who come in large numbers to public religious services. Brahmin youths who are being educated by the Government, attend the Sabbath schools in Ahmednuggur, conducted by native Christians under the care of Mrs. Hume. In Satara a hundred native boys of various castes, some in costumes indicative of rank and wealth and some in almost entire undress, sit down on the bare floor side by side, and listen, sabbath after sabbath, to the story of the cross. These facts show a surprising change in the popular sentiment as compared with that of former years. The awakening reported last year among the Tamil population of South India, in which the Madura mission shared, has been proved to be a genuine work of grace by the permanence of its results. A very few have gone back to heathenism, while their places have been more than filled by the accession of others to the churches and to the Christian community. In Ceylon much has been done to bring the truths of the Gospel to the hearts of the people by personal labour with individuals at their homes, in addition to the ordinary religious services. Everything seems ready for a great awakening,—waiting only the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit."

—Madras is to be favoured with a visit from the Inskip party in February. They will find a large sphere for work and are certain to meet with a hearty welcome. Mrs. Amanda Smith’s services this month will prepare the way for them.
GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

The present South African disturbances are of peculiar interest to us, raging as they do in districts where the missions of our own and other societies are successfully established. In the case of the Basutos, the Colonists are unanimous in the conviction that disarmament is the only measure that can guarantee peace and security from their cunning. They have entered on the war with energy, and have already been rewarded by successes. The English press generally condemns the action of the Colonists, but they are intelligent and at least as capable of judging of their own affairs as those at a distance are. We confess we are surprised that our English Methodist papers are so silent concerning events which so seriously affect and even imperil our Mission work in an important field, and furnish no tidings concerning a struggle in which so many Wesleyans are engaged. Such intelligence would be of special interest to us in the mission field and would be welcomed we think by our people in England. It is certain that our churches in South Africa need our warmest sympathy in the present crisis, and we earnestly hope that the reign of peace may soon again be satisfactorily established.

The month of December in the Madras Presidency is to teachers and scholars a busy month. The first three weeks of it are wholly occupied with public examinations. The Middle School Examination began on the first and lasted until the seventh. This examination serves a two-fold purpose: (1) it is intended to regulate the promotion of pupils from the Middle to the High School, i.e., in schools under Government inspection no pupil can be admitted into a High School without a certificate of having passed this examination, (2) it serves as a test of qualification for Government service, i.e., those successful candidates who pass in the first class are regarded as eligible for Government employment. This examination is open to both boys and girls. This year, the second year of its existence, the number of candidates was over 6,000, and the number of examiners engaged in valuing the answers of these candidates seventy.

From the 8th to the 15th of the month was occupied with what are called the Departmental Examinations. These were originally intended to qualify candidates for the office of teacher, but in the case of female candidates they in practice became simply tests of school work and gauges of the progress of female education, the majority of the candidates being girls who had never any intention of becoming teachers. Last year three out of five of these examinations were abolished, the High Examination of Women open only to females and the Special Upper Primary Examination open to both sexes being the only ones now. This "Higher Examination of Women" is a little above the standard of the old "First Grade Examination" which it has superseded but still a little lower than the matriculation. Fifty-nine candidates appeared for it of whom five were native girls. The Special Upper Primary Examination is the test for the lowest grade of teachers. Hundreds who can have no intention of becoming teachers have appeared for it as the number of candidates is 1,069. Evidently it is regarded by many managers of schools as a public test of their second or third classes.
From the 15th to the 21st inclusive was occupied with the Matriculation Examination. Just as the Middle School Examination tests the work done in the Middle School and a pass in it admits to the High School so the Matriculation Examination tests the work of the High School and admits the successful candidate to the College class. The numbers for this examination have gone on increasing year by year until this year they reach 3,578. Madras in this matter far outstrips the sister universities of Bombay and Calcutta, though they draw their candidates from a wider area. We doubt whether there is another university in the world that has so many aspirants for its honours as Madras. Among the 3,578 candidates there are the names of nine girls, eight of whom are all from Bangalore, and most of them if not all, students at Bishop Cotton's School.

The First Arts Examination was held on the same days as the Matriculation. For this there were only about 500 candidates a somewhat smaller number than in the last two or three years. This is accounted for by the small number who passed the Matriculation Examination in 1878 and who have consequently just finished their two years course for the F. A.

The Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts Examinations take place this month.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

The Faith of Islam, by the Rev. E. Sell, Fellow of the University of Madras. (Trübner and Co., London; Addison and Co., Madras.)

This is an attempt "to show from authentic sources and from a practical knowledge of it what the Faith of Islam is and how it influences men and nations in the present day." The author tells us in his introduction that it does not fall in with the plan of his work to enter into an account either of the life of Muhammad or of the wide and rapid spread of the system he founded or of the political growth of Muslim nations. He seeks simply to set forth the religious system which has grown out of the prophet's teaching and to point out its effect upon the individual and the community. In the first chapter he treats of the Foundations of Islam. These are four (1) The Qurán (2) The Sunnat or traditional accounts of the sayings and acts of Muhammad (3) Ijmadá' or a collection of the opinions of the Companions of the prophet and (4) Qias or the analogical reasoning of the learned with regard to the teaching of the Qurán. From the last two of these foundations it might be supposed that Islam possesses some seeds of regeneration and that it is within the range of probability for Muhammadan states to adapt themselves so as to meet the requirements of modern, social and political life. Our author dwells on this and says decisively that this is not the case. Speaking of Ijmadá' he says, "if circumstances should arise which absolutely require some decision to be arrived at it must be given in full accordance with the school of interpretation to which
the person framing the decision belongs. This effectually prevents all change and by excluding innovation whether good or bad keeps Islam stationary. Legislation is now purely deductive. Thus in any Muhammadan state legislative reforms are simply impossible. There exists no initiative. The Sultan or Khalif can claim the allegiance of his people only so long as he remains the exact executive of the prescriptions of the Law."

Again speaking of Qias he says "there are strict rules laid down which regulate Qias, of which the most important is, that in all cases it must be based on the Quran, the Sunnat, and the Ijma'. In fact, the fundamental idea of Islam is that a perfect law has been given even unto details, of social and political life. The teaching of Muhammad contains the solution of every difficulty that can arise. Every law not provided by the prophet must be deduced analogically. This produces uniformity after a fashion, but only because intellectual activity in higher pursuits ceases and moral stagnation follows. Thus all who come within the range of this system are bound down to political servitude. Whatever in feeling or conviction goes beyond the limits of an out-worn set of laws is swept away. There is a wonderful family likeness in the decay of all Musalmán States, which seems to point to a common cause. All just principles are contained in the Quran and the Sunnat; all that does not coincide with them must be wrong. They are above all criticism." The closing words of the chapter are "Islam is sterile, it gives no new birth to the spirit of a man, leads him not in search of new forms of truth, and so it can give no real life, no lasting vitality to a nation."

The second chapter is on the Exegesis of the Quran and of the Traditions. If the following be a correct description it would seem that a retentive memory is the chief qualification for a Muslim theologian. "The greatest proficient in theology is the man who can repeat the Quran by heart, who knows also and can produce at will what the early commentators have said, who can remember, and quote in the most apposite manner the Prophet's sayings preserved in the Traditions handed down by the Companions, their followers, and their followers' followers, who can point out a flaw in the Isnad (i.e., chain of narrators) of a Tradition quoted by an opponent, or maintain, by repeating the long list of names, the authority of the Isnad of the Tradition he quotes himself. The chief qualification of a Hafiz, a man who can repeat the whole Quran by heart, is not that he shall understand its meaning but that he shall be able to pronounce each word correctly." In a footnote there are given two curious pieces of casuistry by which modern Musalmans seek to reconcile their practice with their faith. "It is wrong to gain money by money as a direct agency. Suppose then for example that the charge for changing a shilling is one farthing. It is unlawful for the money-changer to give four three-penny pieces for one shilling plus one farthing, for then he will have sinned against the laws anent usury by gaining money (one farthing) by money; but if he gives three three-penny pieces plus two pence three farthings in copper the transaction will be lawful, as his profit of one farthing is then gained by selling as merchandise certain pieces of silver and copper for one shilling and not by exactly changing the shilling. Again, pictures or repro-
sentations of living creatures are unlawful; and so when British rupees were first circulated in India, good Muslims doubted whether they could use them but after a long consultation the 'Ulama declared that, as the eye of His Majesty was so small as not to be clearly visible the use of such coins was legal. This kind of casuistry is very common and very demoralizing; but it shows how rigid the law is."

The work of a Muslim commentator would seem to be very different from that of a Christian commentator. Every true Muslim believes that the Prophet communicated by word of mouth the meaning of the verses of the Qurán and the circumstances under which each revelation was made to his Companions. "This knowledge they handed down by word of mouth to their followers who in turn passed it on to their followers. The art of writing then became common and the business of the commentator henceforth was to collect together the sayings of the Companions thus handed down. Criticism of a passage in the Qurán was not his duty, criticism of a comment made on it by a Companion was beyond his province: the first was too sacred to be touched, the second must be accepted if only the chain of narrators of the statement were perfect. Thus early in the history of Islam were the principles of exegesis fixed and settled. Every word, every sentence has now its place and class. The Commentator has now only to reproduce what was written before, though he may in elucidation of the point bring forth some Tradition hitherto unnoticed, which would, however, be a difficult thing to do."

The third chapter deals with the different Musalman sects but no hope of new life for Islam does our author see in any of these. On the Shiah doctrine of the Imamát he says: "The whole of the Shiah doctrine on this point seems to show that there is in the human heart a natural desire for some Mediation—some Word of the Father who shall reveal Him to His children. At first sight it would seem as if the doctrine of the Imamát might to some extent reconcile the thoughtful Shiah to the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and mediation of Jesus Christ to His office as the perfect revealer of God's will and as our Guide in life; but alas! it is not so. The mystic lore connected with Shiah doctrine has sapped the foundation of moral life and vigour. A system of religious reservation, too, is a fundamental part of the system in its mystical developments, whilst all Shiah may lawfully practise "takfia" or religious compromise in their daily lives. It thus becomes impossible to place dependence on what a Shiah may profess, as pious frauds are legalised by his system of religion."

After an interesting sketch of the founder of the sect of the Wahhábis, of their progress and spread in India, we read: "It was and is a remarkable movement. In one sense it is a struggle against the Traditionalism of later ages, but in no sense can it be said that the Wahhábis reject Tradition. They acknowledge as the foundation of the faith, first, the Qurán, secondly, the Traditions which are recorded on the authority of the Companions, and also the Ijma' of the Companions, that is all things on which they were unanimous in opinion or in practice. Thus to the Wahhábí as to the Sunni, Muhammad is in all his acts and words a perfect guide. So far from Wahhábism being a move onward because it is a return to
first principles it rather binds the fetters of Islam more tightly. It does not originate anything new, it offers no relaxation from a system which looks upon the Qurán and the Traditions as a perfect and complete law, social and political, moral and religious.

In the chapter on the Creed of Islam are discussed (1) the attributes, the nature and names of God (2) Angels (3) The Books (4) Prophets (5) The Resurrection and the Last Day (6) The Predestination of Good and Evil. Several matters of interest to the general reader are treated of under these heads. One is the Abrogation of previous Scriptures by the Qurán. The orthodox Muslim belief is that the Taurát (Pentateuch,) the Zabúr (Psalms) and the Injil (Gospel) are entirely abrogated and the practice of Musalmans is in accordance with their belief. An Indian Muselman, Syed Ahmed Khan, c.s.i., in an English translation of a Commentary on the Bible assuming the rôle of a liberal Muselman asserts that Muhammadans hold no such doctrine. Mr. Sell points out that in his English translation the learned Syed omits a clause which exists in his Urdu original. Literally translated the original reads "Those who imagine it to be part of the creed of Muslims that the Taurát by the coming of the Zabúr and the Zabúr by the coming of the Injil and the Injil by the coming of the Qurán are abrogated " on account of the idea that there is any defect in them" are utterly mistaken, &c." This quotation alters the import of the whole passage. As our author says: "To his co-religionists the Syed says in effect, "The books are abrogated but not because they were imperfect." Now, as no Muslim would believe that a divine book was defective, the Syed is simply asserting the fact of the abrogation of the previous Scriptures and to the orthodox is orthodox. The leader of an apparently liberal section of Indian Musalmans is, in this instance at least, as conservative as the most bigoted." The remaining chapters deal with the practical duties of Islam and the Feasts and Fasts of Islam and in lengthy notes we have fuller accounts of Ijtihad and of Muslim philosophy than could be given in the text.

This book will be invaluable to Missionaries and to others who wish to understand Islam as it is. It will be seen that Mr. Sell travels over almost the same ground as his fellow-missionary, Mr. Hughes in his notes on Muhammadanism, but whilst Mr. Hughes' book is confessedly fragmentary being bona fide notes of a Dictionary of Islam in course of compilation Mr. Sell treats the same subjects at greater length. We thank Mr. Sell most heartily for having given us the benefit of his long study of Islam and for having given it in a form so compact and so interesting. It is with a feeling of sadness we close the volume. Those who have studied Islam most are unanimous that it contains no principle of life. "Islam is itself stationary, and was framed thus to remain; sterile, like its god, lifeless like its first principle in all that constitutes life—for life is love, participation and progress, and of these the Quránic deity has none. It justly repudiates all changes, all development." To borrow the forcible words of Lord Houghton, "the written book is there the dead man's hand, stiff and motionless; whatever savours of vitality is by that alone convicted of heresy and dejection."*