Pioneering in Chinese Turkestan.

Mr. H. F. Ridley last winter took a most interesting journey from his station in Urumtsi or Sinkiang to Kashgar and back, making the circuit of the Takla-Makan Desert—a feat performed by only two other Europeans, Sir Aurel Stein and Sven Hedin. The purpose of Mr. Ridley's trip was to visit the cities on the edge of this desert and to proclaim to them by word of mouth and through the printed page the "glad tidings of great joy". The journey was made in 111 stages, and Mr. Ridley was received with kindness everywhere. The tracts and Gospel portions were bought and read with keen interest. What a tremendous task lies before us in the occupation of those cities for Christ—what an opportunity! Who will go out to these cities and strengthen the hands of those who have for many years borne the burden and are even now pioneering in this new world? Who will hear this Call, take up this challenge and go out to this unoccupied field—Spend and be spent in His Service?

Excerpts from "A Journey Through Chinese Turkestan"*

About ten years ago many of the larger Districts in this Province were subdivided, thus vastly increasing their number and giving openings for many of the waiting officials. Charchien is one of the subdivisions. Formerly it was in the Keria District, now has its own magistrate and Yamen. There are some one hundred eighty families in the town itself; probably four or five hundred more families in the District. A new Yamen was built when the District was formed, also several shops. The merchants

*Copied from a letter sent to Dr. Zwemer.
get their goods from Keria and Khotan; otherwise there is very little intercourse between the two places. Flour was being sent to Chaklik for the soldiers. Apart from this there is very little traffic between the two places. Here, also, we met two agents representing a Tihua Russian firm buying furs. They had been among the Mongols in the Altyne Mountains (mountains of gold). I also met two young men whom I knew in this secluded spot; one a young Chanteo who had visited our Guest Room the year before, and the other was the Chinese secretary in the Yamen. A number of people visited me in the inn, and there was quite a demand for books.

December 18th, 7:30. This morning I bade farewell to Charchien. I had seen the place with my own eyes. For thirty odd years I had wondered what sort of a place it could be, as I pondered over the map from time to time. I changed my donkey man and secured a pleasant, willing fellow who brought his nephew with him—a lad of twelve. We laid in provisions to last us thirteen days. Being cold weather, meat and vegetables were easily carried. In a tin box I packed a few grapes. Carrying grain for the animals was our heaviest burden. Out of Charchien we were right into the desert once more with a very heavy sandy road to encounter, with many sand dunes, and the whole eighty li not a house to be seen; half way we passed a well which must be a joy to many a pedestrian in the hot weather. Caravans, as a rule, stop at these wells, rather than at the Langars (rest houses). Ketmas is the name on the maps—possesses one miserable little low hut, with peep holes all around, yet we were glad to have a roof over us as snow was falling. The man in charge of the hut is all alone. He was on his way to Charchien when he met us, and returned to look after us. Days pass without a traveller passing that way. The man might suddenly be taken ill, and no one to help him. These men in charge of the Langars are paid by the Governor to look after travellers, and they also add a little to their meager wage from passing travellers. The next day the road was easier—the sand dunes smaller—wells at forty-five or sixty li places. Aqba, like Ketmas, possessed one small hut. On our arrival the donkey man drove the donkeys to a place where there was a little wild grass and at dusk, instead of going to fetch them, he called them and they all came running home, or rather to the hut. Shakespeare speaks of trying to see "good in everything," finds tongues in trees, in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything. I wonder what he would have found in these barren deserts, no trees, no
songsters, all insects in their winter sleep. We start out in the morning fresh and full of life; gradually talking ceases, and the procession moves along like a funeral. Yet in the night when under the vault of the heavens, with the stars shining all around, when a deep stillness pervades the atmosphere, and save for the contracting sounds of the sand dunes, you hear the sound of the little bells, of human voices,—music is in the air and about such the poet might produce sonnets. The morning of the twentieth we made an early start as we had a long heavy day before us, 100 li over heavy roads and sand dunes, but they proved to be easier than those we crossed before reaching Charchien. I sent my men ahead to have a place ready for me. Two parties of travellers had reached the Langar before my men, in one of which was a young lassie about eleven. When I arrived I found this party had taken up their abode in the hut, but my men turned them out to a shed with only a roof, exposing them to the cold. I told my men that they should not have done it, as we were better prepared to bear the cold than that little mite. To atone for their action I gave her some sweets and a big chunk of mutton. This Langar and those at Aqbai and Ketmas are in the hands of a father and two sons, one person in each place. The fourth day our path lay along the foot of the sand hills, and was very heavy traveling; snow the night before covering the sand dunes. In the evening we reached Shundak. There were many huts untenanted, the only family living in a decent sized house. Fifteen years ago there were thirty families in residence, now reduced to one, owing to the salinity of the land, as well as shortness of water. The head of the household had two wives and according to his own story, he apparently was a rich man, possessing twenty-five hundred sheep, eighteen donkeys, eighteen cows and thirty-six camels. His home was very comfortable, but what we saw ourselves did not convince us that happiness reigned there. While we were having our food, suddenly we heard a woman screaming and yelling; the men rushed into the room where the row was and found the husband belabouring the first wife with a big stick. They pulled him away; he looked like a man half crazy, being in a terrible passion. The next morning he prepared a feast for us, when her ladyship was in attendance. The feast delayed our start, so that it was dark when we arrived at the Langer at Endere. A change in scenery, from the barren desert was very pleasant. We had jungle nearly all the way, and a rare place for wild animals. The people say there are wild sheep, cattle and horses in the jungle, and we saw wild horses in the distance. At the sixty li place it was refreshing to come across a little
farm stead. A lovely spring of water was near by; as we drew near to the well Rebekah came along with her bucket, and kindly watered our animals for us. Over twenty of the farm donkeys were waiting for their mistress to give them water.

Travellers die on the way. In the jungle we say a tall pole with a cow’s tail hanging upon it, indicating a grave; some poor traveller had laid down to die there, far away home. Often we saw those lonely graves in the desert. My men stopped for a moment and in an attitude of prayer, prayed for the repose of the departed one. Ninety li was the stage. The shades of night crept o’er us, ere we reached the Langar. One or two of our companions went ahead of our horses, and arrived to find the place full of guests, and many squatted in the courtyard. The place is in charge of two old women, who by a little shifting of the travellers found a room for us. We were glad to get a place, for outside the ground was covered with snow.

Buried cities in the Desert. Endere was as far as Sir Aurel Stein travelled in his first journey. Fifteen miles further down the river, among the many interesting relics found was a roll of paper, —in Central-Asian Brahmi, which he prized very much. His work was to unearth these old buried towns, and bring to light relics of early years which are counted treasures in the eyes of archaeologists of Europe and America, and find a place in the large museums, though they would not find a place on a second hand stall in the towns and villages near to where they are found. On the other, hand I am carrying ‘the richest treasure that this world can afford’ to these people who have been deprived of it hitherto, that they may carefully examine and peruse it, find out its intrinsic value, its richness and beauty, hide it in their hearts till it transforms them into God’s peculiar treasure to adorn the palaces of heaven for evermore. Called to such a high privilege, the difficulties and loneliness of the way are only little thorns to keep ever fresh before my mind the importance of my task. This being so I had no time to spend in the cities of the dead, but must hasten on to the towns and villages of the living; nevertheless in order to give our animals a rest, we decided to stay a day in Endere. The ground being covered with snow it was not possible to have a long walk, so I wandered among the trees taking a snapshot here and there, as there was little comfort inside.

It was Christmas Eve in the Desert. December 24th was a very long day, 110 li. With horses the traveller can get along quick, but with a donkey caravan, at the rate of 10 li an hour, it is slow work. There were many sand dunes the latter part of the
way, and when we reached the Langar it was nearly dark. There was only one room in the hut and it was packed full, and there was no room for us in the inn. Two of our companions had gone ahead of us, and finding the room full, went on further where there were a lot of stumps of Tamarisks, also plenty of prairie grass for the animals. We went in search of them, and after going 10 li we saw a camp fire about one-half mile off the road. It was difficult to find our way among the bushes, as well as to avoid holes hidden by the snow. I kept to my horse. We shouted but got no answer and thought they might be shepherds. At last we got to the camp-fire, to find our friends sitting under the roots of a huge Tamarisk, the broken trunk being on the top of a mound above. They invited me to sit down and have tea and warm myself, while my men were unloading, fetching fuel, clearing the snow for our camp and boiling water for tea. When all was ready I joined them, before a roaring log fire. Water was gotten by melting the snow. This is the only place on the road from Charchien to Keria where the water is very bitter, and travellers carry water from the stage which they leave that morning. We were all tired and hungry, so when the mutton broth in the cauldron was ready, we all did justice to it. Supper over, the thoughts flew in other directions. Away back 1900 years ago was the first Christmas Eve, the shepherds watching o'er their flocks by night out on the hills of Bethlehem. Was the ground covered with snow? Was it a starless night, with heavy clouds covering the sky; if so, the sudden appearance of the angel would have been all the more startling. Then was heard that wonderful message which has thrilled the world ever since. "'For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."' Now here was I, camping out in the desert, "because there was no room for them (us) in the inn;" a messenger of that glad news to the people in this desert region, who had never heard it before, though 1900 years had elapsed since that message cheered the hearts of those shepherds.

I was a long while in falling asleep, a memorable night, not to be forgotten,—Yako-tograkis, the name of the place.

December 25th, CHRISTMAS DAY. Today we arrived at Yer-tungus (place of pigs). It was not a long day, but heavy dunes all the way. We had to cross the river to reach the Langar which stands on the bank on the opposite side. It was very difficult to cross, as it was partly covered with ice. The camel caravan crossed in that evening after much trouble. A man on horseback led one camel and the others were driven into the
water to follow, but he had to cross several times ere the whole caravan was gotten over. The Langar is a hut of two rooms built under the shadow of the bank. In 1906 there was a population of fifty, now only the family that is in charge of the Langar. As there seemed to be plenty of water, it must be the salinity of the land that drives the people elsewhere.

My CHRISTMAS DINNER,—Indian corn, meal porridge with mutton boiled in it, bread brought from Charchien, butter and strawberry jam from the Tihua Mountains, sultanas, grapes from Charchien, and chocolate. It was not a bad spread for a desert. I did not see any good haunts for pigs near the road. The Chinese would soon get rid of a great source of trouble to the Chanteos. As it is an unclean animal, the Chanteo dare not touch it; their only way of getting rid of them is to drive them into a pit, and kill them with clubs or stones. The next morning climbing up the bank from the river, from the top we beheld the Chekil Peak in the Kuen-lun Range. It was a lovely sight; the morning was bright and clear. We had been seeing little but desert for many a day. There was prairie grass nearly the whole stage, and in the evening we found the Langar on the outskirt of a small jungle, with a small stream hard by. The Langar is called Ying-dai-ya. Stage 60 li.

The following morning I enjoyed the 10 li walk through the jungle, then the road began to be heavy and we had dunes nearly all the way. When still 30 li away we saw the little oasis of Niya, 60 to 70 li in length, and 15 to 20 li in width, with a population of 1,225 families. Ellsworth Huntingdon says there were about four thousand inhabitants, so there has been little change since 1906. Just before entering the oasis there is a grave of a holy man by the side of the road, who receives the prayers of the Chanteos when passing that his rest may be one of peace. Several high poles are stuck in the ground, upon which are fastened two rams horns, a sheep's head, chicken's skin, and hosts of little flags. It seems to be a relic of a Tibetan custom. We rested a day in this pretty little village as our animals needed fresh shoes, there being stony roads ahead. Such is the dilatoriness of the people that at the end of the second day only two sets of four shoes were ready, so had to put them on the animals that needed them most. On the second day the village elder, a Yarkand man, and a few friends came to see me. He had been to the Swedish Mission in Yarkand, and was acquainted with Christianity. They expressed surprise that a man my age should undertake such a long journey. I said it was the will of God; "the
will of God must be done,' he replied. I presented them with some books. In the evening several Chanteos who could speak Chinese came in to see me. They had been as far as Kansuh with their merchandise travelling by the southern route, via Lob Nor and Tunghuang which can only be done in winter time when there is snow and ice.

One hundred twenty li south of Niya is the famous shrine of Oman Jafir Sadik, supposed to be the most famous shrine in Central Asia. He and many of his faithful followers fell at this spot when fighting against the Khotan infidels. It would have taken me five days to go there and back, so could not afford the time. The first twenty li beyond Niya, the road is stony. At the 40 li place is a small Langar, from the distance it looks no bigger than a dog house. It lies in a hollow and is in charge of two old women. It is a miserable little hole, but no doubt welcomed by many a traveller who finds he is unable to reach Niya. But for these Langars many a man would miss his way, or die of thirst. Niya to Awras, 80 li, is sheer desert. At Awras there are two Langars and much grassland near at hand. When there is no snow the water has to be carried 15 li.

The next stage was a long one. We were told it was 70 li, and it was 105 li. It was just getting dark when we arrived at Oytograck (House of White Poplars). We could find no inn, so the donkey man took us to the house of a friend. We got a very warm homely reception, as if we were old friends; even the wee laddie of five summers came to me at once and took hold of my hand. Until the room was ready for us, I was taken to the women's quarters. The mother and two daughters-in-law came and sat round the fire with me. They had no veils on. They admired my long woolen scarf. It was a very homely home and apparently a very happy one. When my room was ready I retired, and after supper the granny, two sons, their wives and the wee laddie came and sat around my fire. One of the sons is a mullah. I told them my errand, speaking mostly through my interpreter, and they listened very attentively. My watch, pocket compass, etc. were all of interest. My teeth were of course the chief object of interest. We spent a very enjoyable evening together. The oasis is about the same size as Niya, and the same number of families.

NEW YEAR'S DAY. A journey of 90 li brought us to Keria (U-TiEN) where we came in touch with a little of Western Civilization, there being a post-office also. Through the kindness of the Postal Commissioner of Tihua, I was able to
replenish my little purse. Some letters and books were waiting my arrival. Finding there was no telegraph office, there nor at Khotan, I sent off a letter to Kashgar enclosing a telegram, telling of my safe arrival, to be transmitted to Tihua and Shanghai to be cabled home.

The Mohammedans of China: When, and How They First Came.*

Isaac Mason, F.R.G.S.

(Part V.)

Of the stone monuments relating to Moslems in China there is only one which needs be dealt with in the limits of this paper, and that is the Sianfu tablet, which claims to be the oldest, and which is probably responsible for perpetuating the legend about the very early advent of Islam to China. This remarkable monument is dated A.D. 742, thus claiming to be older than the famous Nestorian monument. I translate the inscription as follows:

A Monument (To Record) The First Building of a Mosque.17

"Inscription of the Monument recording the first building of a mosque, written by Wang Hung, Graduate of the Third Degree, Secretary of the Board of Revenue and Censor.

"I have heard that what remains undoubted after a hundred generations is Truth (the Path); and that by which men are mutually influenced though distant a hundred generations is mind (heart). Now Sages have one mind and their principles are the same, so they influence one another and remain undoubted through a hundred generations.

"In all parts of the world sages have arisen, and their being called sages was because they had this similarity of mind and principles. The Western Sage Mohammed was born later than Confucius, and lived in the country of Arabia (天方)18. I do not

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*This paper was read before the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Jan. 1929, and is printed by kind permission of the Author.—Editor.

17 For further consideration of the genuineness or otherwise of this Tablet, see Broomhall's "Islam in China," pp. 84-90, and Mason's, "The Arabian Prophet", pp. 277-280.

18 The term here used for Arabia is not the one used at the T'ang Period, which was 大食. 
know how far removed in time and place he was from the Sage of China. Their language differed, yet their principles agreed. Why was this so? Their minds were as one, therefore principles were the same. The ancients had a saying, "A thousand sages have one mind; a myriad ages have one governing principle." This may be believed as truth.

"But though the times and generations are distant and the men have passed away, their sacred books have survived. From what has been handed down we know that the Western Sage was born with supernatural intelligence; he understood the laws by which heaven and earth produce all things; he also understood what was said about the obscure and the apparent, about life and death. Among his teachings were such things as the purification of oneself by bathing; to nourish the mind by having few passions; to inure to endurance by means of fasting; to depart from evil and turn to the good as the essential of self-cultivation; to regard absolute honesty and no cheating as the radical thing in influencing people. At weddings all should mutually assist, and at funerals they should be in attendance. From the great matters of the moral obligations and the laws of natural relationships, down to the small things such as rising or resting, eating and drinking, and so forth, there are none which have not their proper principles, none for which there is not proper instruction, and nothing in which Heaven should not be feared.

"Although the articles of the teaching of the Sage were multifarious, yet they may be brought together into one whole, which is to acknowledge the Heaven (God) which created and sustains all things, as Lord; and the way of serving God may be comprehended in one word, which is no other than the "reverence" of our hearts.

"(Emperor) Yao said, "Reverence accords with Heaven." T'ang said, "Saintly reverence daily advances." Wen said, "Intelligently serve God." Confucius said, "He who offends against Heaven has none to whom he can pray." These, in a general way, are points of resemblance, and are sufficient to prove what has been said about sages mutually influencing one another and remaining undoubted through a hundred generations.

"Although the teaching of the Sage (Mohammed) was the same as that of the others, it prevailed only in the West, and China had not heard of it until the time of the Emperor K'ai Hwang of the Sui dynasty (A.D. 581-601), when it entered China, and gradually spread throughout the empire.
“His Imperial Majesty T’ien Pao, of our present dynasty, considering that the doctrines of the Sage of the West are consistent with the doctrines of the Sages of China, and that the religion is established with its roots in what is correct, therefore commanded the Superintendent of Public Works, Lo T’ien-chio, to take charge of workmen and build this mosque for the accommodation of the followers of this religion. Their leader is Pai-tu-er-ti, who is well-versed in their Canon; he will be able to lead them in all the exercises of their holy religion, reverencing Heaven wherever they worship, and praying for the long life of the Emperor in this place.

“This work was begun on a lucky day of the third month of the first year (of T’ien Pao), and was completed on the twentieth day of the eighth month of the same year.

“Lest, as times goes on, this incident might be forgotten, and no evidences of it remain, this tablet is set up as a remembrance, and the circumstances inscribed thereon; the tablet being erected on a lucky day of the second month of Autumn (eighth month) of the first year of the Emperor T’ien Pao (A.D. 742).

“Engraved by Shih Jung, at Wan-nien-hsien, Kwan Chung.”

The inscription on this stone makes an impossible claim when it states that Islam entered China in the Sui dynasty, prior to A.D. 601. The date of the inscription is given as A.D. 742, yet terms are used which are not found in history until much later. Tie’n Fang (天方) is used for Arabia, though this name is not found in histories earlier than A.D. 1258; the term in use during the T’ang dynasty being Ta Shih. At that period Sianfu was known as Ch’ang-an, but the stone bears the name Wan-nien-hsien, which, according to Playfair’s Cities and Towns of China, belongs to the posterior Chou dynasty, A.D. 951-960.

Wang Hung was an officer at the Court of T’ang, and his record is given in the T’ang history. But there is no mention in that history of this mosque, or of Wang Hung in connection with his inscription.

The evidences against the genuineness of this monument are so strong that its claim cannot be accepted. It must be regarded as a forgery, and it is certainly misleading in its statement that Mohammedanism entered China in the Sui dynasty, which has been seen to be an impossibility. It is quite possible that a mosque was built at Sianfu in the year mentioned, as there had been visits of Moslems earlier than that. But an Arab traveller, in A.D. 878, more than 130 years later than the date of this
monument, says nothing about either mosque or monument, nor of meeting co-religionists there.

Presuming that the monument is a forgery, it is still a question of interest how the forgers made such an anachronism as to state that Islam entered China before A.D. 601. I cannot do better than follow Mr. Broomhall's lucid summing up of the investigations of himself and others, showing that there has been an error in calculation between Chinese and Arabian years.

"The calendar in China is based upon a luni-solar year, the interjection of an extra month every two or three years rectifying the lunar with solar time. A similar arrangement had prevailed in Arabia for some two centuries before Mohammed, but the prophet, for some reason or other, altogether prohibited intercalation; so a simple lunar month was reintroduced in Arabia. As the Mohammedan calendar stands to-day, it consists of twelve lunar months of 29 or 30 days alternately, with an intercalary day added to the twelfth month at intervals of two and three years, making eleven intercalary days every thirty years. This gives a difference of almost exactly eleven days a year between the Arab lunar and the Chinese luni-solar year, or roughly three years a century.

"M. Deveria has suggested that at some date, perhaps A.D. 1351, when the mosque at Canton was restored, the Chinese Moslems transmuted their Arabic chronology into Chinese, and being ignorant of the variations between the lunar and solar years of the two systems, simply counted back the Arab years since the Hegira as so many Chinese years, thus antedating by twenty-three to twenty-four years the date they had in mind. That some such process was adopted is proved by the fact that Liu Chih, has, in his standard life of Mohammed, placed Mohammed's birth at A.D. 564, the beginning of his prophetic mission at A.D. 586, and the Hegira at A.D. 599. Only by such a conjecture is it possible also to explain the extraordinary claim that Islam entered China prior to A.D. 601. The same conjecture leads us to believe that the monument, though dated A.D. 742 was not erected before A.D. 1300; otherwise there would not be sufficient lapse of time to allow for the necessary variations in chronology.

"Now we know from Chinese writings that this Sianfu mosque was repaired on not a few occasions. The following are some of the dates: under the Sung dynasty in A.D. 1127; twice under the Yuan dynasty, one of those times being in A.D. 1315; again under the Ming dynasty, in the reigns of Hung Wu, A.D. 1368-
1388; and under Yung Lo, a.d. 1403-1424. We are tempted to believe that this monument was erected upon one of these occasions.

"If M. de Thiersant is correct in what he says concerning the various names borne by this mosque, we are on the line of an important clue as to the age of the monument though not as to the origin of the mosque itself. He tells us that according to Chinese writings the mosque was first called the Ch'ing Chiao-ssū, which name later changed to T'ang Ming-ssū, but that Sai Tien-ch'i, who had it repaired in a.D. 1315 by permission of the Emperor, had the name changed to Ch'ing Chên-ssū. Now this last is the name which appears on the monument, and not the other names mentioned above. Assuming then, that M. de Thiersant was correctly informed as to this name having been given by Sai Tien-ch'i in a.D. 1315, we are disposed to attribute the erection of this monument to this date when the mosque was repaired. This date agrees with the name, and allows sufficient time to account for the errors in chronology. When the mosque was first built we do not yet know."

I venture to differ from Broomhall when he says that the character 創 (Ch‘uang,) used on the tablet, is meant to indicate that this was the first mosque in China. Whether the tablet is spurious or not, there can be no doubt that Moslems had to do with its erection, and according to their traditions, believers had been in China for over 100 years before a.D. 742, and it can hardly be supposed that during all that time no place of worship was built for them. Liu Chih claims that a mosque was built at Canton over 100 years earlier; and the tradition in the Hsi Lai Tsung P'u translated above, mentions a mosque which was ordered to be built by the Emperor T’ai Tsung, one hundred years before the date of the monument. We have no proofs that such mosques did exist, but as the Moslems themselves made the claim, they could not consistently have meant to imply that the mosque built in a.D. 742 was the first one in China.

— To be continued.

August Executive Committee Meeting.

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Society of Friends of the Moslems in China was held on August 27th, 1930, at the office of Dr. Darroch. Those present were Mr. Isaae Mason.
the Rev. M. H. Throop, the Rev. Zia Sung-kao, and the Rev. C. L. Pickens. Mr. Mason was elected temporary chairman, in the absence of Dr. Darroch, and Mr. Throop secretary of the meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

It was thought advisable at this time not to prepare the tract to accompany the poster, "The Messiah is the Lamb of God." It was reported that the bilingual "Sermon on the Mount" had been reprinted and that there were still two thousand copies on hand, and that the illustrated tract "The Light of the World" had been reprinted although the large poster was still out of print. Mr. Mason reported the translation of the tract "Abdullah" and that 2000 copies would be printed shortly by the Christian Literature Society. The stock of the following tracts was reported practically exhausted; "Life of Mohammed", "Ghulam's Renunciation", "Sweet First Fruits", "Riches that fail not", "How the death of Jesus differs from that of the other prophets", "Catechism for Moslem Women." The last three named need to be revised before reprinting. A new literature committee was elected, consisting of Mr. Mason, Mr. Zia and Mr. Throop.

The treasurer reported the receipt of $500.00 gold from the American Christian Literature Society for Moslems. He was also authorized while in America on furlough to raise money for the work.

Mr. Mason was requested to give on the average six hours a week to the work of translating and revising and carrying on the work of the secretary and treasurer who is in America on furlough. For this he is given a small honorarium. We feel it is indeed a privilege to have him give to the Society his valuable experience of Chinese Islamic life and literature.

In dealing with all systems of religion, and especially those to which we are opposed, it will be our highest wisdom carefully to distinguish the truths which may exist in them from the falsehoods with which they are commingled or overlaid, and strive to cleanse the jewel from the mire into which it has fallen. If instead of doing this we vainly endeavour to overthrow the whole structure because the Enemy of Souls has entrenched himself therein, we are measuring our puny strength against the adamantine bases of the world, and our efforts can avail only to strengthen that which we would assail."—Rev. W. St. C. Tisdall, in The Religion of the Crescent.
Moslem Months.

Sha’ban Ramadan, Shawwal.

Sha’ban (舍即邦) is the eighth month of the Moslem year. It is called “the month of separation” because during the pre-Islamic days the ancient Arabs used to separate or disperse themselves in search of water at that time. When the months were regulated by the solar year, this month corresponded partly to June and partly to July. January 1st, 1931, is the 11th of Sha’ban, 1349.

Leilet Nust Sha’ben, “the night of the middle of Sha’ban,” falls on January 5th. On this night, Mohammed said that God registers annually all the actions of mankind which they are to perform during the year; and that all the children of men, who are to be born and to die in the year, are recorded. Mohammed instructed his followers to keep awake the whole night, to repeat the one hundred rak‘ah prayers and to fast the next day; but there is generally great rejoicing instead of a fast.

Ramadan (勒麓藏) is the ninth month and commences on the 20th of January 1931. It is the month of strict fasting. The word is derived from the Arabic word “to burn.” It is said that this month’s fast is supposed to burn away the sins of men. The observance of this month is one of the five pillars of practice in the Moslem religion. Mohammed extolled the excellence of the month by saying, “The gates of Paradise are open, and the gates of hell are shut.” His express injunctions regarding the observance of this month are given in the Koran, Sura 2:179-184.

Leilet El Qadr (格德而夜頭) is the “night of Power” at which time Mohammed said, “Verily we have caused It (the Koran) to descend on the night of Power” (Sura 97:1). This night is the 27th of Ramadan and this year falls on the 15th of February. The excellences of this night are said to be innumerable, and it is believed that during its solemn hours the whole animal and vegetable creation bows down in humble adoration to the Almighty.

Shawwal, (少哇立), the tenth month, begins on the 19th of February. The first of this month, called Ibu I-Fitr, “the Feast of Breaking the Fast,” is a festive occasion in the Mohammedan year.
The Mohammedan day begins at sunset. All the proceeding nights in the Mohammedan reckoning have the same date as the following day.

Refer to Hughes, "Dictionary of Islam"

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A Summary of the contents of the Moslem world.

January 1951.

Professor D. S. Margoliouth, D.D., at Oxford, has an editorial note in this number addressed to the British reader, showing the importance of the Quarterly to the man on the street, who is interested in the why and wherefore of political movements in the Near East and the World of Islam.

For twenty-one years the Moslem world has been an open forum and a common platform for the investigation and study of Islam from the Christian standpoint. Its aim to represent no faction or fraction of the church has been fulfilled. It does not seek controversy, nor give itself to compromise; and while interpreting Islam in its varied aspects always points out and brings home the true solution of the problem, namely, evangelism.

In this number the Reverend Cady H. Allen of Persia tells of the Conditions for Baptism; and Gertrud Von Massenbach describes the difficulties of evangelism among the Nubian woman in the land of shadows. Mrs. Marjorie Ward Alter tells of the striking conversation of an Indian Fakir, who seems to have been led to Christ through the innocence and beauty of a missionary babe. A window into daily life of modern Egypt is opened by Mr. John Walker in his description of Folk-Medicine.

There is an open letter from an Indian-Moslem, H. G. Sarwar, with a brief reply. The scholarly element in this number is found in articles that deal with the Panthans of Yunnan, an interview of the Patriarch Timothy and the Caliph Al Mahdi, Sufi Mysticism in Islam, and the question whether Mohammed borrowed from the Apocryphal book, called the Slavonic Enoch.

The current topics are of unusual interest, while the book reviews and the survey of periodicals alike indicate an increased interest in the study of Islam that is astonishing.

The following index of material which has appeared from time to time in the "Moslem World" gives an excellent idea of the contribution this magazine has made to our work in China.
| Accessibility of Moslems in South Shensi—Burgess, O. | VIII 36 |
| Allah in China | VI 421 |
| An Ancient Account of India and China—Mylrea, C. S. G. | XII 170 |
| Asia, Islam in Central—Hunter, G. W. | XX 20 |
| Baptisms in Western China | IX 189 |
| Bible Readers in China | V 309 |
| Borden Memorial Hospital in China, The—King, G. E. | VIII 282 |
| China, How Islam Entered—Mason, Isaac | XIX 249 |
| China, The Moslems of China | XIX 77 |
| China, The Moslem Mind and the Gospel in—Harris, G. K. | XIX 403 |
| China Today, Islam in—Twing, E. W. | VII 75 |
| Chinese Apologetic, A.—Upson, A. T. | III 67 |
| Chinese Islam as an Organism—Botham, M. E. | XIV 261 |
| Chinese Mediaeval Notices of Islam—Bretscheider, E. | XIX 52 |
| Chinese Moslems, Literature for—Harris, G. K. | XVII 190 |
| Chinese Mohammedans, Modern Movements among | XIII 291 |
| Chinese Moslem Magazines, Two—Mason, Isaac | XV 385 |
| Chinese Moslems, Methods of Evangelism among—Botham, M. E. | XI 169 |
| Chinese Moslem Primer—Zwemer, S. M. | VIII 71 |
| Chinese, The Quran in | XVII 295 |
| Chinese Readers, Arabian Stories for—Mason, Isaac | XI 69 |
| Chinese Translations of the Quran, Recent... | XVII 290 |
| Chinese Turkestan, The Turkic People of | XI 186 |
| Chinese View of Mohammed’s Marriage, A. | XI 189 |
| Christian Literature for Chinese—Mason, Isaac | X 164 |
| Classified Bibliography of books on Islam in Chinese and Chinese-Arabic—Oglivie, C. L. | VIII 74 |
| Correct Foundation of Religion—Mason, Isaac | IX 268 |
| Flag, Islam and the Chinese | II 411 |
| Islam in China | III 85 |
| Islam in Hainan Island | VIII 428 |
| Islam in Kaifeng | IX 426 |
| Islam in Kansu—Botham, M. E. | X 377 |
| Islam in North-West—Hunter, G. W. | XIII 203 |
| Kansu, Touring in | IX 94 |
| Mark Botham in China—Broomhall, Marshall | XIV 269 |
| Medical Mission Work in Kansu—Parrly, R. C. | XIII 206 |
| Missionary Progress among Moslems in China | IV 87 |
| Modern Movements in Moslem World—Gairdner, W. H. T. | I 78 |
| Mohammedans of China, The... | XIV 187 |
| Mohammedan Population of China, The—Broomhall, M. | I 32 |
| Mohammedan Women of China—Soderstrom, Mrs. L. V. | IV 79 |
| Moslems, Chinese | VIII 199 |
| Moslem Controversy in China | VIII 306 |
| Moslems in China | VI 205 |
| Moslems in Manchuria | II 441 |
| Moslems in Turkestan, Chinese—George Hunter | X 168 |
| Moslems’ Judgment on Christ, Chinese | I 342 |
| Moslem Missionaries to China | XV 191 |
ISLAM IN CHINA

Moslems, Need of Special Literature for ............ IX 90
Moslems, New Books for Chinese ................. VIII 427
Moslems of China and the Republic—Ridley, H. F. III 386
Moslem’s Perplexity, A Chinese—Twing, E. W. VII 283
Moslem Tract, a Chinese—Chai Yu Shao ........ VIII 404
Mosques, Visit to Chinese ......................... VI 419
Moslem Women in China—Botham, P. M. .......... XVI 172
Moslem Women of Sianfu—Thor, J. E ............... VIII 33
Opening of a Moslem Hospital in China—King, G. E. XV 367
Peking, The Present Status of Mohammedanism in—Ogilvie, C. L. IV 165
Present Condition of Islam in China—Mateer, A. H. IX 77
Rebellion in Kansu, The—Harris, G. K. ............. XIX 291
A Saint’s Tomb in China ......................... XIV 185
Society of Friends of Moslems in China ........ XVIII 85
Special Committee for Moslem Work ........ IX 422
A Survey of Islam in China—Rhodes .......... XI 53
Szechuan Moslem, The—Hudson, J. .............. XVI 251
Through Indian Eyes, The Moslems of China .......... XVIII 307
Through the Gobi Desert—Ridley, H. F. ........ XVII 233
Tract Distribution in China ....................... VI 419
Turkestan, Twenty Years’ Work in Chinese ........ V 77
Turkish Intrigue in China ......................... XV 90
Use of Arabic in China ......................... I 343

BOOK REVIEWS

China, Islam in—Broomhall, M. ............... I 84
China’s Great North-West, Kansu & Beyond, The Call of—Mrs. Howard Taylor .......... XV 212
China, Voyage du Marchand Arabe Suleyman en Inde et au Colonel—Eric Teichman XII 419
China, Zur Geschichte des Islam in—M. Hartman .......... XI 325
Chinese Mohammedan Literature, Notes on—Mason, I........ XI 201
Chinese-Moslem Terms, List of—Mason, I .......... IX 90
Chinese Turkestan and Kansu: Memoir on Maps of Sir Arthur Stein .......... XIX 210
Recherches sur les Musulmans Chinois .......... VIII 89

MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

China, Distribution of Moslems in .............. XI January
A Chinese Moslem Primer ....................... VIII 71
Facsimile reproduction, one-half reduced, A Chinese-Moslem Amulet ........ IX 221
A Specimen page of a Chinese Koran Commentary .... V 254

“Not our ignorance, but our accurate knowledge of the Moslem Christ, will enable us to show forth the glory and the beauty of the Christ revealed in the New Testament to those who ignorantly honour Him as a mere prophet.”

—Dr. S. M. ZWEMER in “The Moslem Christ”.
NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Sining, Chinhai (Koko Nor.)

You may recall that early in 1929, we had just arrived here with our two younger children. We were glad to join in fellowship again with Rev. and Mrs. F. D. Learner, the missionaries in charge. During the past months, while we have taken services occasionally and helped in the work of the Native Church, our special responsibility has been that of furthering the work among the Moslem peoples in all parts of the district, in any possible way. The Moslems form more than a third of the population, and are on the increase.

Coincident with our return, a change of government occurred. Ma-Chee, the Moslem Governor who had ruled so ably, tho with a strong hand, for several years, was compelled to relinquish his control. A new Governor appointed by Feng-Yu-Hsiang with a large army organization assumed control. In spite of all these political changes, during January I was able to begin street preaching in the Moslem Suburb, sometimes large crowds gathering. Fridays—the Moslem day of worship—were fixed on as days for free distribution of tracts and Gospel portions with the object of gaining the friendship of a larger number of Moslems.

FEBRUARY—Besides helping in the church evangelistic meetings, a number of visits were paid to the Suburb. Suddenly, however, the entire district was tied up and 50,000 Chinese troops were rushed to Sining to fight the tens of thousands of Moslem bandits who were making a sweep through this part of Kansu. Our city was threatened, the gates were closed, and we had no access to the Suburb. There was terrific fighting south and west of the city. One large city to the west, by offering opposition, was sacked, several thousand local people were butchered, and while the bandits lost many, more than 3000 Chinese soldiers were killed.

MARCH—Troubles continued, many local Moslem soldiers rebelled, joining the bandits. Country Moslem districts were on the qui-vive and a general uprising was feared. Consequently very little work was possible among the Moslems.

APRIL—The city gates were open at last, the bandit hordes had swept on north to carry on their devastations. Daily street preaching was continued with many opportunities. Some hearing the Gospel were local Moslems who remembered me from several years back; a great many were people who had fled from Hochow and other Moslem districts. Some were friends who had known...
us in the Ba-Fang (famous Moslem Suburb at Hochow, now vast ruins). The great majority, however, were new faces.

JUNE—Every trip to the suburb added many new faces and definite subjects for intercession. Often a man for whom we were led to pray, was brought within hearing of the Gospel many times afterwards, and numbers of those reached on the street came later for personal talks.

JULY—Conditions having become sufficiently peaceful, with a very steady, dependable, Chinese Christian for a companion, I made a visit to one of the dozen distinctly Moslem districts one and two days journey from Sining. Moslems are a great trial to the flesh so one must take a worker who does not get easily angered under many provocations. The district visited is in the foothills of a mountain range and is called the “Upper Five Villages.” The nucleus of each village was a remnant of the Moslems of a certain part of Kansu who were settled there by government order after the Rebellion of 1895. Each village thus continues its individual customs and characteristics. We spoke to large crowds of rough villagers, men and children with occasionally women. Before gathering a crowd I made it a point to go first and call on the leaders of the village Mosque. In every case I was well received. Many of the fiery young fellows in our audiences, a few months before, had been a part of the horde of bandits, who now having reached their homes, had become good citizens again. After our return to Sining I had many visitors from that district. Famine relief work had begun on a large scale in the city, so I did my share in helping to manage the feeding of more than a thousand people a day. About a fifth of those helped were Moslems who were thus brought within hearing of the Gospel.

AUGUST—This month one of the trying, tho necessary duties, filled a large part of each day. That is, the superintending of building and repairs on our premises, carpenters, brick-layers and a host of unskilled labor had to be overseen. However, by having a trustworthy man to keep an eye on the workmen, I was able to preach in the Suburb quite a few times.

SEPTEMBER—We have aimed from the first to have Moslems look on the regular Sunday services of the Sining church as for them as well as Chinese. Also we desire that the Christians, among whose number is only one Moslem at present, look on that Moslem as their responsibility to be won for Christ. During this month quite a number of Moslems attended the church services. This is such a far away place, that visits from fellow missionaries are few and far between. This month, however, Mr. and Mrs.
Geo. Bell with their children, passed through here enroute for their station, Kweiteh, three days journey south of Sining on the Yellow River. Also Mr. Keeble a young worker from Liangchow in pursuing a survey for famine relief work found himself not far from Sining and paid a visit here. As he enjoys street preaching he was a great help to me in several meetings in the Suburb.

OCTOBER—On our return from 10 days of rest which we spent near the mountains south of Sining we had an additional helper in our special work. A Mr. Hsien, a Chinese evangelist who was a great help to us several times in Hochow, came to Sining. He has had many years experience in preaching to Moslems and his messages have been greatly used of the Lord. He preached with that assurance that Moslems can and must be saved, which is so little evidenced by many who speak to Moslems.

NOVEMBER—This worker stayed most of this month, then just when we were making arrangements for him to reside in the Moslem Suburb, family matters called him away and he had to leave for S. E. Kansu. As there is also a vast settlement of Moslems in those parts what was our loss will be their gain. Along with this loss came another step in advance here; a guest room was opened at the south side of our new premises, especially for Moslems. It has an entrance from a very quiet side street. Thus Moslems can come in quietly with very little fear of being spied on by their Ahungs. The day after our opening prayer service our first visitor came in—an old Moslem in the 70's disgusted with the hollow formalism of Islam and seemingly heart hungry for genuine truth came in and continued coming every few days. One man comes and brings others and they in turn extend the influence. Individual work with these guests who came, not for medicine or any reason other than to hear the Word, along with the preaching in the Suburb and occasional trips further afield fills one's time. This month marked another great change politically. Ma Chee was suddenly reappointed Governor. Feng's armies immediately were withdrawn, and Moslems everywhere came back into power. This tended to increase our opportunities as Sining became more than ever a haven for Moslems who had lost all standing elsewhere.

DECEMBER—Several Moslems who had been interested in the Gospel in Hochow moved to this district and came in often to see me. The list of people brought into touch with the Gospel, in the Suburb, in outside districts, at Sunday services, in our Moslem guest room, and other ways had grown to quite a long list, so that more time had to be set aside for intercession for these
in prayer. That this intercession was not without failure on my part many times, I dare not say, for Satan knows the power of prayer and has many devices to hinder. About Christmas time besides many encouragements of God's working in some hearts, one Moslem who secretly has accepted Christ as his Savior came with another man to put down his name as an enquirer.

JANUARY—1930—Space will not permit of my giving a month by month report of matters during the first five months of this year; I will but touch on a few facts in the order of their occurrence.

Early this year I found that my set of scrolls for street preaching were exceedingly battered by use and that I needed a fresh series. The old set had consisted of "Sacrifices of Cain and Abel," "Origin and entrance of Sin through Adam," "Moses and the Brazen Serpent with John 3," "Gathering the Manna," "The Messiah—the Lamb of God," "Summary of the Ten Commandments." The new set consisted among others of the following subjects: "Poster of the Black and Red hearts," "The way of Life and the Sin-bearing way of Death," "Sin as a serpent binding man," "The Sacrifice of the Messiah." The preparation of these in Arabic and Chinese necessitated extra time.

During the Moslem month of Fasting, Ramazen, we had a number of special opportunities with individuals. My wife and I, with our children, made a couple of trips to visit Moslems in their homes in the Suburb.

One trip was made to a district two days journey North of here. The entire section overflows with Moslems. We were only able to visit a third of it. A large number of Bible portions were purchased. We were well received even in out-of-the-way villages. We cannot always expect such receptions, but we are rejoiced that the first visit was marked with good feelings. The main themes were the death, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, all of which Islam denies, so we did not tone down the Gospel to curry favor. A new hymn strip in Arabic proved an added help. It consisted of the words: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

The motto of Mr. Arthur T. Upson's Arabic course, "Little by Little" might well describe work among Moslems. From day to day there are encouragements, yet there is a certain sameness month in and month out so that we must ever have the upward look and the look into God's Word.
not return unto Him void. If the difficulties are great here, how much greater are the difficulties with you, our friends at home, in your busy lives to pray year in and year out for the Moslems.

Mr. Edwards, a new worker who was to have come forward to join us in the work, is still indefinitely delayed in Shansi. We are still unable to find a Chinese Christian who can give his full time to this work among Moslems. Yet even with these needs unmet, the promise holds: God is ‘able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.’ ‘Before they call I will answer and while they are yet speaking I will hear.’

A recent book by Dr. Zwemer which should be procured by all who can do so is entitled “Call to Prayer.” I would like to quote a few sentences from its early pages. “Come to Prayer, Come to Victory! God is greater than all, greater than all difficulties in the Moslem world. Greater than all its dire needs. Greater than our hearts if our hearts condemn us for lukewarmness or neglect in the Ministry of Intercession. We do not test God’s resources until we pray for the impossible.” And again: “We must not forget that the supreme ministry is the ministry of prayer. It is possible for all everywhere and at all times; it is an omnipotent ministry. . . . Prayer has proved mighty through God to the pulling down of nearly every opposing stronghold and barrier; shall it prove impotent to burst the barriers of the proudest soul and set free the captives of sin and darkness?”

In closing I would also like to commend to all our friends, “The Moslem World,” a quarterly Magazine edited by Dr. Zwemer and several associates, experts on Mohammedan questions. Recent numbers have contained several articles concerning Moslems in China and adjacent Central Asia.

— GEORGE K. HARRIS.

TSINCHOW, KANSU.

“I don’t know how much news of Tsinchow has got out. When I wrote from Hweihsien we had only heard rumors of brigands, but I came here nearly a month ago to find that the missionaries here had had to take refuge in the city and their houses had been looted meanwhile. No foreigners were hurt, but two of the Christians were killed and several wounded. Many
have had their houses or shops burnt down. One who was killed was a doctor who graduated some years ago from our hospital in Lanchow. He had been a great help to us during the typhus epidemic last year as well as in other times of sickness. He was trying to help some of the wounded when he was attacked.

"We have been delayed here all this time because our house in Tsingshui was and still is occupied by "Soldiers." Judging by the condition of the "Ladies' house" here, which was occupied for one night, our house must be in a pretty filthy state. It is doubtful whether we shall be able to salvage any of our possessions. This should make us free to move about, should it not? It seems now that we may be able to get to Chang-hia-ch'uan direct. We thought before that we needed to go through Tsingshui to collect some things to take with us, but if there is nothing left that saves us from the need! I hope we shall be able to keep free from belongings now.

I have been thinking that if more bilingual Scripture portions were printed, it would be nice to have the Psalms or a selection from them. I had two Moslem boys learning the first Psalm when we had to leave Tsingshui. Psalm 121 is loved by both Chinese and Moslems in these unpeaceful times. I am getting it written on a scroll to take to Chang-hia-ch'uan. A Moslem servant was interested when we read about Ezra's journey to Jerusalem at morning prayers one day, and said that they always pray for protection when they have to go a journey carrying money and valuables, as Ezra did. Psalm 121 seemed just the right thing to read after that.

"We have also compiled another tract like the two we sent before and I enclose it for your criticism. The expression on the first page was used by an educated Moslem when we tried to explain our object in bringing them the Gospel. Later we used it and found it was recognized by women too. It seemed a pity not to make use of so good an introduction to a presentation of Christ's claim as the only One who can make God known. Finishing up with "God is love", was partly suggested by a conversation with a Chinese boy who had a Moslem friend. I had remarked that Moslems know that there is only one God. He replied at once, "Yes—but you say that He loves us."

Olive Botham

July 9th, 1930,
How often when the tent is warm at night—
And Sarah's eyes are gay—
When Isaac, child of Laughter and delight,
Shouts in his play,
Dancing in glee about the sandy floor—
My heart goes to the door
And follows—oh, the long and weary trail:—
My other son, Ishmael.
When the well-digger found a new deep well
My heart said instantly: "How can I tell,
He may be thirsty?"—When they brought new bread
Before I tasted it my spirit said:
"Is Ishmael hungry?" On my bed at night
I wonder: "Is he sleeping?" When delight
In any guise comes near me, then I say:
"How fares Ishmael to-day?"
Isaac's a friendly lad!
Shepherds and herdmen press
To do his bidding, glad
To share his friendliness,
Isaac is loved and petted by the clan,
And Ishmael was at war with every man—
We have great peace without him—peace, and yet—
I never once forget.
Lord God, Whose covenant has made me blest;
Lord God, Who made my fold both safe and wide,
Father of Mercies, would'st Thou have me rest
While Ishmael's outside?

For Prayer.

"In answer to the prayer of faith the Holy Spirit can speak to the hearts of Moslems. In answer to our united prayer of faith, Christ can break the chain that holds them in bondage to the teaching and traditions of the past, and bring them into 'the glorious liberty of the children of God.'

"Let us enter into fellowship with the Lord Jesus, and with each other, that His desire may be accomplished and that the
power of the enemy may be broken for ever. If we, through His enabling, conquer by faith in His Name, we shall find that out there in the Mission field, those who speak, speak to open ears; those who persuade, persuade willing hearts; and that the old fear of man gives place to bold confession of Christ.''

Let us pray for all those who bought literature or who heard Mr. Ridley preach the Gospel of Christ on his long journey around the Takla-Makan Desert, that in their souls there may have been a great sowing of seed which shall produce a great harvest.

Let us pray for all those who hear the Word in the "guest-rooms", that their hearts may be opened to receive Him.

Let us pray for the Secretary and his wife on furlough that they may be led to study the right courses, that they may be built up physically and that their faith may be renewed and strengthened for their work; and that they may lead others to work, give and pray for the Moslems in China.

At the last meeting of the Committee of the Society of Friends of the Moslems in China, Mr. I. Mason was appointed to revise many of the tracts which have been prepared at various times specially for Moslems. In preparing his "Notes on Christian Literature for Chinese Moslems" Mr. Mason became acquainted with the contents of all available tracts and booklets, and knows where improvements might be made. It is hoped to gradually revise these special tracts and have them reprinted and more widely used. Our friends can help us by purchasing supplies in larger or smaller quantities, and getting them into the hands of those for whom they are intended. Liberal discounts are made on quantities.

Grants of Literature.

A considerable amount of literature in Chinese has been prepared specially for Chinese Moslems. The problem is, how to get this into the hands of those for whom it is intended. In this our friends can help us. Sample copies of literature will be sent on request to anyone sending ten cents. We have also a small supply of tracts available for free grants, and packets of these will be sent, as long as they last, to anyone sending fifteen cents for postage, to the R. T. S. Hankow. First come, first served!
ABDULLAH, (SERVANT OF GOD.)

Abdullah, (Servant of God).

A new booklet by Rev. L. E. Browne, B.D.

This delightful story was recently published in "The Moslem World", and is being widely used in translations in various languages. It is an imaginary dialogue between a Moslem and a Jew, about a friend of estimable character. The conversation leads up to what is meant by being a good servant of God, as understood by followers of these two religions. A Christian friend joins in the discussion and shows Jesus as the supreme Servant of the Lord. It is a most suitable tract to give to a Moslem friend. It has been translated into Chinese by I. Mason, and is just published by the Christian Literature Society, at Shanghai, at the price of 5 cents per copy. Liberal discount on quantities.

New Members.

Miss Ruth Benson C. I. M. Tsinchow, Kansu.
Rev. G. W. Gibb C. I. M. Shanghai.
Rev. Frank Argelander M. E. M. Kiukiang.
Mr. Armas Korhonen F. M. S. Tayung, Hunan.
Rev. Horace S. Williams Methodist Kalgan, Chahar
Mrs. H. S. Williams ,
Kalgan, Chahar

Membership.

The Society is now entering its fifth year of existence, and is looking forward to increased service. It is realized that there is a great deal of work to be done for the Moslems of China; we are only at the beginning of things as yet. One very real way of helping the Society to extend its operations and attain its object is by increasing the membership, and adding to the number of those who think of and pray for the Moslems. It would be a source of strength to the Committee to know that it had behind it a large number of men and women, whose hearts God has touched with a desire to bring Moslems to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

We have many readers of these Notes who are not yet members, and we extend a hearty invitation to all to join in active membership. You may not be able to do direct work for Moslems, you may never even know any Moslems in China. But by
joining this Society, and sharing in prayer and other efforts, you can take a real part in the work. Will you not send in your name for membership at once, and become a partner in this special branch of service for the neglected Moslems of China?

The Membership fee of the Society is $1.00 a year or $10.00 for Life Membership. Outside of China it is $1.00 (4 shillings) a year or $10.00 (£2) for Life Membership. Remittances should be sent to Mr. I. Mason, Treasurer, 54 West End Gardens, Shanghai. In America send to the Rev. C. L. Pickens, 48 Mercer Street, Princeton, N. J. In England send to Mrs. Oswald Chambers, 40 Church Crescent, Muswell Hill, London, N. 10.

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