

ment which bid fair at one time to revolutionize the Islamic system, by striking directly at the orthodox views of inspiration, the nature of the Divine attributes, and the questions connected with free-will and fate. It was, undoubtedly, a great intellectual movement, a revolt against a system already become hard and fast; but it lacked the moral and spiritual element, and so utterly failed. Ibn Khaldun, the greatest of the Arab historians, says 'it was a pernicious dogma which has worked great evils.' In due course orthodoxy reasserted its power, and the Mutazila movement failed. The final blow was given by Al Ashari. 'The Mutazilas,' it is said, 'held up their heads till such time as God produced Al Ashari to the world.' As a young man, this famous theologian had been a follower of the Mutazilas; but one day, standing on the steps of the pulpit in the great mosque at Basra, he threw away his *kaftan*, and said, 'O ye, who are met together! Like as I cast away this garment, so do I renounce all that I formerly believed.' He soon became a person of much influence. He overthrew the liberal school, and his principles and methods have ruled the greater part of the world of Islam ever since. This is to be regretted, for it intensified in Islam its unprogressive nature and led to its present stagnation, thus rendering all hope of social, moral, and political reform vain. The deeper reason for the failure of the Mutazilas, a reason which equally applies to modern movements toward reform now, is well put by Dr. Kumén:

"The caprice of a tyrant may have been the occasion of the overthrow of the Mutazilas, but its real cause lay deeper, in the essence of Islam, which the popular instinct had apprehended justly. The masses were not competent to follow the discussions of the scholars, but they felt that the defenders of the uncreated Quran were upholding the absolute claims of their religion, and must therefore be right. The law of Islam contains admirable moral pre-

cepts, and, what is more, succeeds in bringing them into practice. But this is not enough to make it an *ethical* religion. It was the glory of the Mutazilas that they endeavored to raise it to this character; but their effort struck at once upon the rock that must ultimately wreck it, *the fixed character of Islam, fixed even then; nay, fixed even from the outset*. Hence, too, the fact that their fall was followed by no resurrection.'—EDWARD SELL, in *Church Missionary Intelligencer*.

English Notes.

BY JAMES DOUGLAS.

May Missionary Meetings.—The annual meetings of the Baptist Missionary Society were marked by a tone of encouragement amounting at times to jubilation. Having regard to the spiritual side of the work, the ground for satisfaction was considerable. Large additions to the native churches in India, China, and on the Congo were reported: the elementary day schools show an increased attendance, while the Sunday-schools manifest a still more marked advance in numbers. Fourteen new missionaries have been sent out during the past twelve months; and as, in various quarters, native churches have become, in supervision and support, independent of English aid, the society has been able to turn its energies to fresh fields.

A pleasing feature in the treasurer's statement was the welcome announcement that the heavy debt, amounting, roughly speaking, to \$120,000, had been extinguished. The secretary, A. H. Baynes, Esq., appealed for more mission laborers, and announced that no suitable candidate who had offered himself as a missionary had been refused during the past year. The Rev. Dr. George S. Barrett, ex-President of the English Congregational Union, having just returned from Jamaica, bore a splendid testimony to mission work from the results that have accrued in