

**'Do not pray for tasks
equal to your powers ;
Pray for powers
equal to your tasks.'**



The Moslem Menace.

By Rev. W. H. T. Gairdner, Cairo.

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The Moslem Menace.

ISLAM is the only one of the great religions to come after Christianity; the only one that definitely claims to correct, complete and supersede Christianity; the only one that categorically denies the truth of Christianity; the only one that has in the past signally defeated Christianity; the only one that seriously disputes the world with Christianity; the only one which, in several parts of the world, is to-day forestalling and gaining on Christianity.

Every one of these statements is worth earnest pondering. Every one is true. And every one constitutes a profound reason for calling Islam the most serious of all the antagonists of our Faith—one might almost say the *only* antagonist à l'outrance; a profound reason for speaking of the Moslem Menace; a profound reason for undertaking—prayerfully, hopefully, intensely—Mohammedan Missions.

It is only the last clause of the first paragraph that, in this brief paper, we can expand and exemplify. Its seriousness is, of course, tremendously intensified by those that precede it.

Islam in Two Continents.

The two great continents where Islam is most widely spread and most deeply rooted are

Asia and Africa.* That Islam is a menace in Africa is well-known, but it is usually believed that in the continent of Asia Islam has reached its limit, and is now a spent force, a stationary religion.

This, however, is not the case.

Islam in India.

In India, for example, it is credibly asserted that thousands of Mohammedan converts are made every year from the low castes of Hinduism and the followers of animistic religions. If either Hinduism or Islam gains those holding animistic faiths first, their conversion to Christianity will be very greatly retarded ; and if Islam reaches the low-caste tribes of Hinduism before Christianity, their conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ will be indefinitely postponed. Are not these unwelcome facts proof of the Moslem Menace in India and eloquent of the Moslem Appeal ?

Islam in China.

In China Islam is very quiet, and attracts very little attention. Its absence of bigotry and *apparent* absence of proselytism have led people to think that Islam's force in China is spent. The following quotation will awaken us out of our sleep !

Islam has gained ground in China because of the promptitude with which the Mohammedans have re-peopled provinces devastated by the various scourges so familiar to

* Asiatic Moslems, 170,000,000 (India, 63,000,000 ; China, 30,000,000 ; other countries, 77,000,000). African Moslems, 59,000,000.

China. In times of famine they purchase children from poor parents, and bring them up in the faith of Islam. . . . Seyyid Suleiman says that the numbers of accessions to Islam gained in this way every year is beyond counting. . . . They have no organized propaganda, yet the zealous spirit of proselytism with which the Chinese Mohammedans are animated secures for them a constant succession of new converts, and they confidently look forward to the day when Islam will be triumphant throughout the length and breadth of the Chinese Empire. (T. W. Arnold, *Preaching of Islam*, p. 257.)

Be it remembered that every Chinaman who becomes a Moslem will be ten times harder to win than a Chinese Confucianist.

Islam in Central Asia.

In Central Asia it would be a mistake to assume that Islam has reached its limit. How little is known about the Siberian tribes! How superficial and negligible their Christianity—if it exists! And, therefore, what a menace is Islam—Islam which extends north right into Russian Siberia, at least as far as Tobolsk, if not even further north. Is not this a call to the Christian Church to pray for the revival of Russian Christians that they may evangelize the Moslems of their own empire, both in Europe and Asia?

Islam in the East Indies.

And in the islands of Asia, the East Indies, Borneo, Sumatra, Java, Celebes, a stern fight is in progress between advancing Islam and tardily-awakening Christendom. The Dutch missionaries are nobly working to convert Moslems directly, but, even more important, they are seeking to forestall Islam in the con-

version of the remainder of the heathen tribes that still exist in those islands. In Java and Sumatra there are almost none but Moslems, but in Borneo and Celebes there are some Heathen left; and it is for them that the stern race is taking place between Crescent and Cross.

Islam in Africa.*

But in Africa the 'Moslem Menace' is, if possible, still more menacing. In all Western Africa, Islam is pressing in from the interior, the north, towards the coasts. Just as the Moslem Fulas forestalled Christianity with the heathen Hausas, so that to-day there are many thousands of *Moslem* Hausas to convert, instead of Heathen, so is Islam sternly competing with the Cross for all the coast tribes, specially those of Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and the French Soudan. Here we have millions of ignorant Heathen, degraded, susceptible of being lifted up to God by the power of the Gospel. Here we have, moreover, many Christian Churches, yet the race is still terribly unequal, the issue uncertain, the outlook serious. Islam exerts a peculiar pressure and has a peculiar attraction that makes even the position of the newly-founded Christian Churches (so we are told) precarious. Even earnest native Christians are uninstructed how to meet Moslems, and so fear them; weak, insincere, or tempted Christians succumb to Islam's subtle worldly attraction.

* See also Pamphlet on "The Needs of Africa," by Bishop Tugwell.

Even native pastors and preachers know not yet how to stand up to Islam.

In the Congo region there are many Moslems. What have the Congolese learned of Christ from their Christian rulers? History shows that injuries by Mohammedans are soon forgotten; injuries by 'Christians' remain a source of bitterness, an argument against the religion the teachings of which are so shamefully belied. What if the appeal of Islam comes to the Heathen of the Congo State? Is there no menace here?

In the Upper Nile Valley there is not security. Recruits from the black tribes in Egyptian regiments are circumcised and become Moslems by sheer force of circumstance, and if *they* make but indifferent Mohammedans, their children will more than possibly be bitter bigots. Again, the Upper Nile is administered largely by Mohammedan Egyptians, and history tells us that when Moslem prestige gets however slight a foothold, the extension of Islam very soon and very rapidly follows.

But it is in East and Central Africa that the menace is even more imminent. Right down to the Zambesi we now hear of it; and how is this? The *pax Britannica* has made a ring-fence, within which the slaver has had to abandon his raids, and—turn honest 'trader.' Memories in Africa are short. Old injustices are forgotten, and the trader in district after district is forestalling the missionary of the Church of Christ. Islam becomes the *mode*.

The easily-swayed tribes are being³ Islamised, and the task of their Christianisation, which before would have been as rapid and as inspiring as has been the evangelization of the Baganda, the Barotsi, the Bechuana, and the Nyassa tribes, is increasing in difficulty to an absolutely indefinite extent. For where Islam once takes hold, it keeps hold.

Islam's Menace. An Appeal.

Is not this, then, a menace indeed? Is it not just the very loudest call that it is possible to conceive to the Church of Christ? Even now, almost irreparable damage has been done by neglect. But does not this sad, this terribly sad fact, only lend a tenfold intensification to the appeal to the Church *now* to awake and take up the task of Islam's evangelization in real earnest? There is encouragement on all hands. Nearly the whole of the world of Islam is open to the Gospel. Who shall say that even Turkey—up till now practically closed to direct evangelization—may not under the new liberal *régime* open out?

There, then, is the field! But let us realize this one thing: the only asset of the Church of Christ is THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST. Only a spirit-filled Church can do anything with, or for Islam. What, then, is our answer in view of these things?