

# *The Cross Above the Crescent*

THE VALIDITY, NECESSITY AND URGENCY  
OF MISSIONS TO MOSLEMS

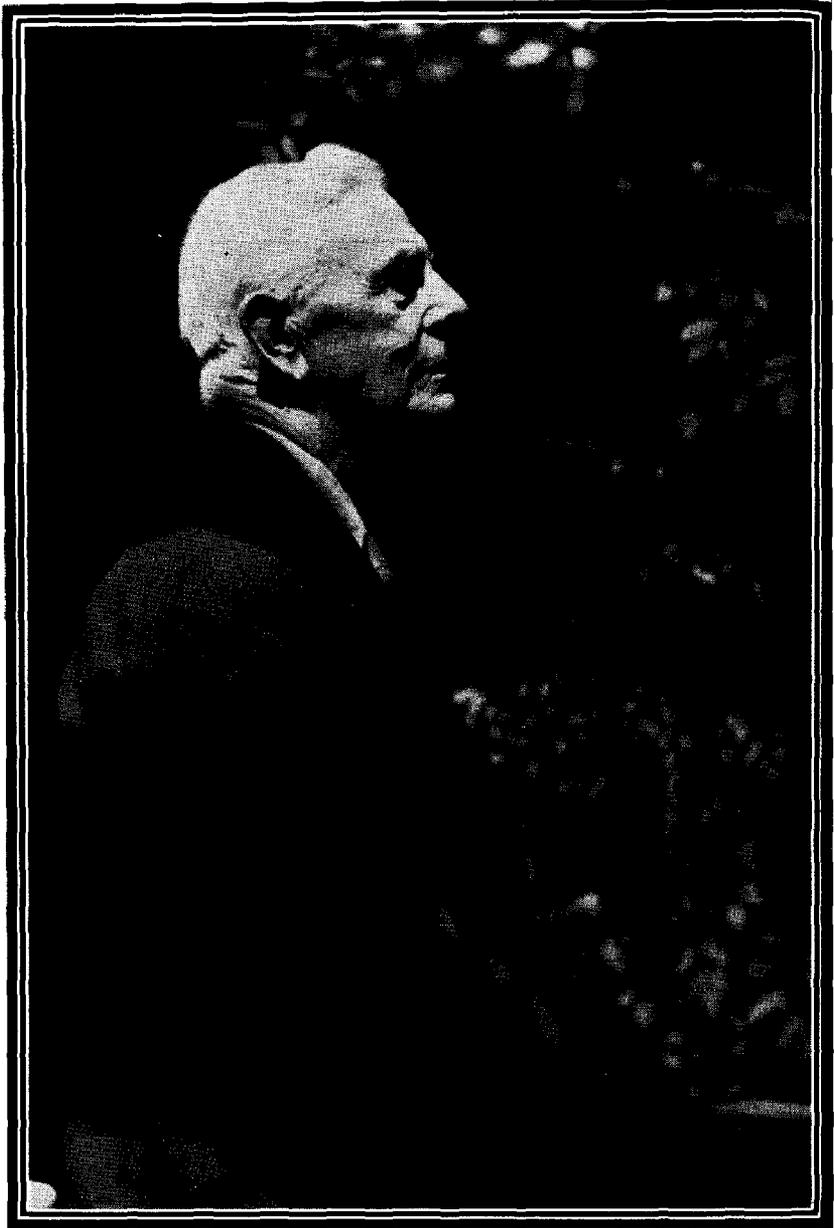


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JAMES CANTINE  
*Pioneer Missionary to Arabia*

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- n. b. The Vignette on title page is a portion of the old coat-of-arms of the city of Tiflis. It is taken from the *Book of Public Arms* by Arthur Charles Fox-Davies, London, 1915, p. 777. See description in chapter I, p. 19.

EIGHT-FIFTEEN FRANKLIN STREET  
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**DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF  
JAMES CANTINE  
AND  
OUR FRIENDSHIP FOR FIFTY YEARS**

## INTRODUCTION

**I**T was in 1913 at the Kansas City Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement that I first met the author of "The Cross Above the Crescent." The impression made upon me at that time by his Apostolic figure and burning missionary message has remained with me to this day. Not since the days of Raymond Lull, the great Spaniard about whom our author wrote his first book, has any Christian missionary taken more truly to his heart the whole Moslem world, in the complexity of its spiritual problem and the range of its geographical dispersion, than Samuel M. Zwemer. In this new book he distills for his readers the rich quintessence of fifty years' reflection upon Islam and the Christian approach to the Moslem heart.

The present volume might indeed be described as the will and testament—though not, we trust, the last will and testament—of the veteran missionary. It enshrines his undying faith that the love of the Cross shall one day overcome the hate inspired by the Crescent, and the prayer of Abraham for the great prodigal of the Hebrew-Christian tradition shall one day be fulfilled: "O that Ishmael might live before Thee."

For the last ten years our author has resided in the land of his birth, an exile from the true fatherland of his spirit, the great world of Islam. The exile has compensated, however, for geographical isolation from the scenes of his forty years' work and missionary de-

## *Introduction*

votion by continuing to edit "The Moslem World," a review whose name is a parable of its editor's lifelong passion.

The imposing list of books and articles on Islam and Missions written by Dr. Zwemer, or in collaboration with others, which is printed as an appendix to this book, is an impressive testimony to the literary productivity of their author across the years. Even more impressive is the number of foreign languages in which many of these publications have appeared. In these the reader of "The Cross Above the Crescent" will find other avenues of approach to a great theme and a great heart.

JOHN A. MACKAY

*Princeton, N. J.*

## P R E F A C E

**T**HIS book discusses an old missionary problem and deals once more with some of its dimensions and difficulties. The implications of that problem concern the future of large areas and populations, in a world which challenges the Church of Jesus Christ today as never before. The last World War produced astonishing changes in the world of Islam and the present conflict in Europe, Asia and Africa will doubtless deeply influence conditions in the Near East and the Far East among Moslems.

We do not pretend to offer a solution to the problem of preaching the gospel to Moslems, much less to propose an easy way by which to win their friendship, by leaving out our message. To carry the heart of that message to the heart of any Moslem still baffles those who try to do it in their own strength.

The chapters that follow, concern first, the character of Islam and some of its teachings; then we have chapters on the present situation in the Moslem world with special attention to particular areas which, because of their importance or neglect, have escaped attention. The last five chapters describe methods of evangelism and the nearest way to the Moslem heart. Some of the material is based on articles that have appeared in our quarterly, "The Moslem World." Because this book is intended for the general public and not for Orientalists, we have followed the conventional spelling of words such as *Moslem*, *Mohammed* and *Koran*. This usage of the words conforms to that of The London Times, The New York Times, The Encyclopedia

## *Preface*

Britannica and the Columbia University Encyclopedia (1940).

There are two ways of studying Islam: that of the scholar in his library and that of the practicing missionary. Both are necessary and missions can never repay their debt to, nor dispense with the work of, western scholars and Orientalists. Nevertheless, the man on the road or in the arena has advantages over the man on the balcony. "Truth is found upon the Road. It might even be said that only when a man descends from the Balcony to the Road, whether of his own free will, or because he has been pitched from it by providential circumstances, does he begin to know what reality is. The deepened insight that men in our time are acquiring into things human and divine is due to the fact that adverse circumstances have driven them from the Balcony where they lived in times of prosperity on to the Road which is the everlasting home of the real."\*

These chapters gather fragments of experience and convictions of forty long years spent in Arabia and Egypt and on many journeys across the world of Islam. In one sense they are only a supplement to my earlier books and papers on the subject. In another sense they may be considered a mature and concluding word of one who realizes how little he knows about it all.

SAMUEL MARINUS ZWEMER

*New York City*

\* John A. Mackay—A Preface to Christian Theology, p. 39. New York. 1941.

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I  
**SYMBOLS AND REALITIES**

“A symbol certainly means something, presented to the senses or the imagination, which stands for something else. . . . There are visible objects or sounds which stand for something of which we already have direct knowledge. Such symbols are not intended to give us any information about the nature of the thing or things symbolized but to remind us of them or tell us something about their action. . . . The Union Jack does not give a patriotic Briton any information about his country or the part it has played in the world but it reminds him of a whole world of things which he knows otherwise.”

—EDWYN BEVAN in  
*Symbolism and Belief*

## CHAPTER I

### SYMBOLS AND REALITIES

**F**OR nearly twenty centuries the Cross has been the symbol of ecumenic Christianity. For nearly a thousand years the Crescent has been in use as a symbol of a rival faith. We all know that symbols are only symbols, not realities. Yet as Edwyn Bevan points out in his Gifford Lectures, on *Symbolism and Belief*, the value of symbols in the history of human thought is undeniable and "if symbolism thus runs through life as a whole, it is a factor of the first importance in religion." In fact, all of the living religions today as well as those that have passed away are distinguished by symbols. The Star of Judaism, the Lotus-blossom of Buddhism, the Swastika of Hinduism, the Yin-Yang symbol of Taoism, these all have come to represent belief, emotions and usages peculiar to these faiths. The symbol stands for realities.

The Cross is the most ancient, the supreme, the universal and eternal symbol of Christianity. It is found everywhere in art and architecture. Christ's messengers are messengers of the Cross and all it signifies. The Cross is at once our glory and our hope. Before Jesus Christ took up His cross, He summoned His disciples to take up theirs if they would follow Him. The Cross which was once a symbol of ignominy and disgrace, through Him who hung upon it, became

the symbol of sacrificial love, redemption, mercy and world-wide compassion. According to the New Testament, "the word of the Cross" is the Gospel and there can be no other. Before that Cross all human wisdom and power and righteousness is bankrupt. All is Christ's. Everything we have is His free gift. All superiority complexes of race or birth or position disappear. The Cross pours contempt on all our pride. That is why the message of the Cross is the only message, and the chief of sinners becomes the best ambassador of the grace of God. Those to whom most is forgiven always love most. The love of Christ constrains them; not only the missionary message, but the missionary method and the missionary passion are found in the Cross.

This fact has not escaped the notice of educated Moslems who have made a sympathetic study of the Christian religion. They find in the Cross the very center of their opposition to Christianity, but also the attraction to its mystery and power. A Moslem friend, Ikbal Ali Shah of Afghan parentage, with whom I had correspondence, writes in his book "Lights of Asia" on four Asiatic faiths. He describes Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism and in his second chapter finds in the Cross the power of the Gospel. Here are his remarkable words (p. 76):

"The Cross is the centre of all revelation. Have you ever thought what the Bible would be like without the Cross? Take the Cross out of this book and you won't be able to recognize it. If there be no promise of the Cross in the Old Testament then its Laws distress me, it is a book of fatalism. If there be no Cross in the New Testament, then it blazes with pitiless splendor. But put the Cross back, and

at once the book becomes a Gospel. Its Law becomes Love, its shadows flee away, its destiny is the Father's House. No wonder that Redeemed souls put the Cross at the centre of their experience. On *that* they rest their confidence. When they go into the conflict they sing: 'Onward, Christian Soldiers.' When in sorrow they sing: 'Simply to Thy Cross I Cling'; and when the chilly waters beat about them passing 'through the valley of the shadow of death' (Ps. 23) they sing 'Hold Thou Thy Cross before my Closing Eyes.' At the Cross my sin is conquered. At the Cross I can say 'My Lord and my God' (John 20:28). To reveal my sin merely would load me with despair; to forgive my sin merely would make me afraid of tomorrow. I want my sin conquered: I want to get it beneath my feet. The Cross is the place of victory: Christ did it upon the Cross. I say it reverently, He could not do it but for the Cross. It was expedient for one man to die for the people (John 11:50). He hath put away sin—all sin—original sin and actual sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9:26). 'There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin. He only could unlock the gate of Heaven and let us in.' Education could not do it. Social reform cannot do it. Our beautiful essays and ethical sermons cannot do it. It is Christ upon the Cross who discovers sin, who forgives sin, who conquers sin."

All this from a Moslem!

Yes, the Cross stands as the symbol and cynosure of Christianity.

But is the Crescent in any true sense the symbol of Islam? Unlike the Cross which is replete with signifi-

cance to the Christian, the crescent has no deep religious significance for the Moslem. It was probably adopted first as a standard by the Ottoman Turks about the time of the capture of Constantinople in 1453. Some trace the symbol much earlier to the moon-goddess of Arabia. Others relate that when Philip of Macedon besieged Byzantium in 339 B. C. the symbol of the blazing crescent was adopted by the city and struck on coins.<sup>1</sup> But, whatever its origin, the symbol was carried by Turkish conquests, the influence of their culture and the propaganda of the press from Constantinople and Cairo to every part of the world of Islam. Today we find the crescent on mosque minarets everywhere—at Khartoum, Capetown, Singapore, Bombay, in China, North Africa and Central Asia. The symbol is also found on Moslem battle-flags, coins, catechisms, carpets, in art, in architecture and on grave-stones.

Characteristically both in Egypt and in Turkey, about the time of the World War, the symbol of the Red Crescent took the place of the Red Cross for humane ministry. Moslem writers and journalists today use the symbol and the word Crescent, as do Christian writers, to represent Islam. Witness a dozen newspapers with that title, *Al Hillal*, *The Crescent*, in the Near East, India and China.

I was present at the dedication of a new mosque at Detroit, Michigan, in 1921. Its two small minarets bore the crescent and star, emblem of the old Turkish Islam. At a dinner I attended in London in honor of Mohammed's birthday, in 1938, the invitation cards also had the same symbol. So today even the modern-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Crescent as Symbol of Islam* by H. E. E. Hayes, "The Moslem World" Vol. IX, pp. 149-155.

ists of Islam are proud of the crescent. Whatever its historic origin, it stands for the ecumenic faith of the Arabian Prophet almost as definitely as the Cross is the symbol of ecumenic Christianity.

In literature we find at least a dozen books in English and a score in other European languages, from 1854 until our own day, in which the title of Cross and Crescent refers to the two great rival faiths and cultures. A fascinating account of the relations of Great Britain with the Moslem world during the Renaissance by Professor Samuel C. Chew of Bryn Mawr is entitled, *The Crescent and the Rose*.<sup>2</sup>

The story opens with Venice, "the vestibule of Islam" and the port of departure for Oriental pilgrims, and closes with an account of "Moslems on the London Stage" from Tamerlane to Suleiman the Magnificent. The picture of Islam built up in the Elizabethan imagination and perpetuated in Spenser, Shakespeare and books of travel is at once "splendidly luxurious, admirable in its serenity, sombre in its cruelty and sensuality, and terrible in its strength." The travelers were often over-credulous and carried with them a store of superstition and fable in regard to "Mawmet" and his book. Nevertheless we can read between the lines that those who wrote had often suffered untold indignities and hardships at the hands of the Turks and the Moors. The violent cruelties and dark sensualities of the harem, the hairbreadth escapes of galley-slaves and prisoners of war, the compulsory conversions to Islam and the horrible punishments of impalement and burial alive—these were not invention, but reality, and took place under the Crescent.

The unity of Islam is emphasized by the travelers

<sup>2</sup> Oxford University Press. 1938.

and dramatists of this period in painful contrast to the divisions and seditions of Christendom. Othello, remonstrating with his brawling followers, asks:

Are we turned Turk, and to ourselves do that  
Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?

And the symbol of this united and powerful Islam at that period was the Crescent. This is reflected in the English literature of the Renaissance. Sir Philip Sydney speaks of "the Turkish new-moon which as it waxes will fill his hornes on Christian coast." Dekker's imagination pictures how

The Turkish Halfe-Moone on her silver Hornes  
Tosses the Christian Diadem, and adornes  
The Sphaere of Ottoman with Starry light  
Stolne even from Those under the Crosse who fight.

while Fletcher likens a Turkish defeat to falling stars:

All their silver crescents then I saw  
Like falling meteors spent, and set forever  
Under the Cross of Malta.

The most memorable use of the Crescent occurs in Milton's description of the retreat of the Persians from the horns of a mighty army that clutches them like pincers. (*Paradise Lost* X: 432 f.)

Karl Aspern in his *Geschichte der Turken* throws a curious light on what took place in Vienna in 1683 at the defeat of the Turks. The bakeries he tells us, furnished a new form of bread and Europe, since then, takes its café-au-lait with crescent rolls to commemorate the defeat of their conquerors! So both in victory and in defeat it was ever the Crescent that stood as symbol for Islam.

The old coat-of-arms of Tiflis, the great Moslem

center in the Caucasus, was a staff of wood held by two hands. The Cross is on the upper end, while below is the half-moon. One hand holds the Cross upright and the other is endeavoring to uplift the half-moon. Is this not symbolic of the present situation in the Near East and Africa?

Historically and doctrinally the Cross and Crescent are not symbols of mutual unity but of contrast and conflict. In recent years, however, especially in Egypt, a passion for national unity has led Copts and Moslems to put the two symbols side by side. The wish was father to the thought that by syncretism both faiths would gain and result in a common brotherhood. A government engineer at Alexandria prepared a curious chart some twenty-four years ago which we reproduce here. It is a study in numerology and the vagaries of the Moslem mind. In the center of the sheet is a balance, on one scale of which is a cross and its Arabic name, *Salib*; and on the other, a crescent and the Arabic word *Islam*; while above the fulcrum of the balance is the word Allah, or God, and below it the word *qalb* or heart.

By adding the value of the letters of the word Allah (every letter of the Arabic alphabet has a value, as those acquainted with Arabic know), this engineer finds that they make 132, which divided by two is sixty-six, which is equivalent to the value of the letters of the word *qalb* or heart. Again, by adding together the value of the letters of the word *Islam*, he finds that they make 132, which is exactly the same as that of the word *salib* or cross! According to the ingenious scheme, all this proves the concord that ought to exist between those who profess both re-

ligions. There are also quotations from the Koran to show that there is to be no compulsion in religion, and that Islam teaches a universal brotherhood.

Would that this spirit of tolerance and mutual understanding was characteristic of Islam. It is not. The Cross since the days of Paul has been a stumbling block and foolishness to Jew and Greek, *and Moslem*. Unless we know something of this historical antipathy to the sign of the cross and what it symbolizes, we can never appreciate the extreme difficulty of preaching the word of the Cross to Moslems.

The word Cross does not occur in the Koran, but the Crucifixion of Christ is categorically denied and Mohammed the Prophet had such a repugnance to the very form of the cross that he broke everything brought into his house with that figure upon it. (Muir's Life of Mohammed III:61). "I swear by heaven," he exclaims in a well-known tradition, "when Jesus the Son of Mary descends from heaven, a just king, he will break the cross and kill the swine." (Mishkat 23:6). On doomsday all religious communities will appear before Allah with their symbols. The Christians will follow the cross, and on their confession that they did worship Jesus the son of Mary be thrown into hell (Al-Bukhari. *Tawhid* 24). Lexicographers call the cross the *qibla* of the Christians, apparently because they were aware of its central place on the church altars.

In the battle of Hattin, in 1187, the Moslems captured the *Salib-al-Salabut* "the cross of the crucifixion" in which a piece of the true cross was incorporated (Encyc. of Islam). Saladin sent it to the Caliph Nasir. It was brought to Baghdad in 1189, says the chronicle,

and the Caliph ordered it to be buried under the threshold of the Bab-an-Nubi (the Nubian Gate) "with a small part thereof projecting forth, this same being of brass, which the people passing over would tread under foot, spitting thereon; and thus it was done on the 16th of the month Rabia II of that year."<sup>3</sup>

One might lay this incident to the Crusades and similar Christian intolerance of the middle ages. But the antipathy to the Cross persisted and persists until our own day. Arabia alone can furnish many illustrations. Let this from Doughty's *Arabia Deserta* suffice: "In an evening I had wandered to the oasis side; there a flock of the village children soon assembling with swords and bats followed my heels, hooting, 'O Nasrâny! O Nasrâny!' and braving about the *kafir* and cutting crosses in the sand before me, they spitefully defiled them, shouting such a villainous carol, 'We have eaten rice with *halîb* (milk) and have made water upon the *salîb* (cross).' The knavish boys followed ever with hue and cry, as it were in driving some uncouth beast before them, until I came again to the town's end, where they began to stone me."<sup>4</sup>

The Crescent triumphed over the Cross in all the lands of the Near East for many centuries. From the days of the early Caliphs until the fourteenth century history records the eclipse of Christianity in Asia through the Turks and the Mongols.<sup>5</sup>

"The thing that turned Christians to Islam was the

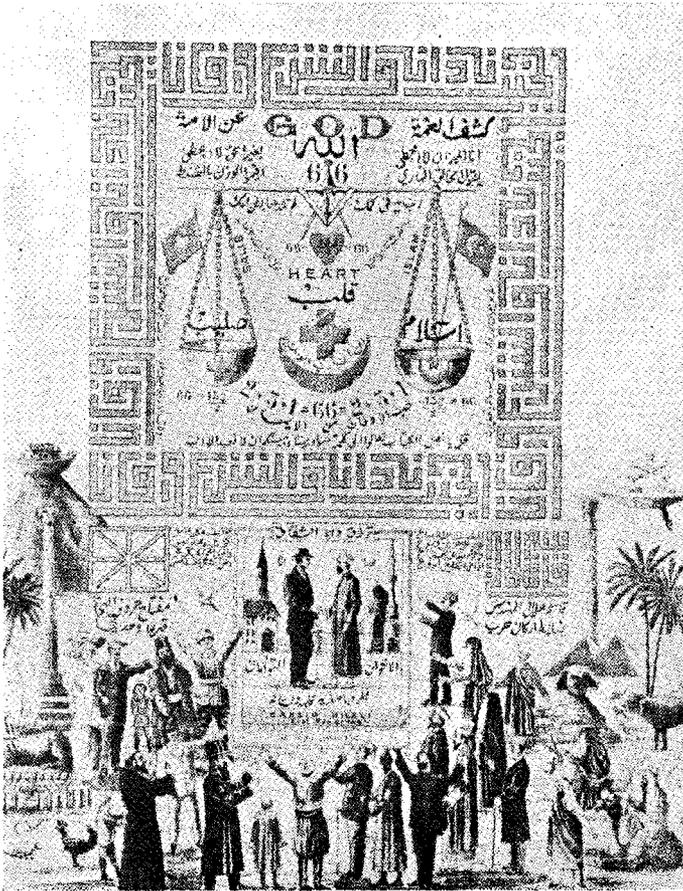
<sup>3</sup> G. Le Strange—*Baghdad under the Abbasid Caliphate*, p. 274, 275.

<sup>4</sup> C. M. Doughty—*Arabia Deserta*, Vol. I, p. 156.

<sup>5</sup> L. E. Browne—*The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia*, London, 1934.

common acceptance of the error that the favor of God is shown by worldly success. The vision of the might of the Moslem Empire had the same overawing effect as the colossal golden image set up on the plain of Dura. They fell down and worshipped." In Central and Western Asia churches were converted into mosques. For a variety of causes, including civil disabilities, persecution and fear, there was a general defection from Christianity and a new allegiance to Islam. The story of this obliteration is a tragedy, but the triumph was after all an empty triumph, as Dr. Browne points out in his last chapter. The Lesser Eastern Churches persisted as remnants and resisted unto blood in the midst of Islamic dominance and arrogance.

In North Africa, "the land of the vanished church," noble structures, whose arches once rang with the voices of Tertullian and Chrysostom, Cyprian and Augustine, shared the common fate. The ruins of these churches served as quarries for subsequent Arab builders. At Kairwan in the Grand Mosque there are hundreds of Roman columns. On one of the capitals there are the Cross and the Roman eagles — while on the minarets and cupolas of a hundred mosques in this city the gilded Crescent tells of Moslem conquest. Mr. E. J. Long of the North African Mission describing these monuments, adds: "The Cross as a device may suffer destruction, but the Cross as a dynamic must prevail at last. In the very nature of things the Crescent is destined to suffer eclipse. For what is the Crescent? Physically, it is a curving rim of pale light — light reflected from a cold, dead world, the



Moslem Diagram of the Relation of Cross and Crescent

moon. As a symbol, the Crescent represents a religion which is also earth-born, lifeless, chill as death. The moon has no physical, Islam no spiritual atmosphere. At the bottom of Islam is the great denial of the Divine Sonship and the vicarious sufferings and death of Christ; but one day, just as the pale new moon is eclipsed in a moment by the glory of the rising sun, even so will Islam be revealed by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.”<sup>6</sup>

“The Cross cannot be defeated,” Louis Massignon, the French Orientalist, once said to me, when he spoke of conditions in the Near East; of hope deferred, and plans thwarted, of the famine-stricken, exiled, martyred Armenian Christians; of political intrigues due to selfish ambition and un-Christian policies on the part of nations called Christian. “*The Cross cannot be defeated, because it itself was defeat.*” Long have I pondered on this mystical utterance, which sums up the history of missions in a sentence and sets forth the deepest distinction between Islam and Christianity historically considered. The Cross was apparently vanquished by the sword of Islam in its wide and rapid spread throughout the Near East. Churches became mosques, Christians apostates to Islam, literature and architecture bowed to the genius of Moham-med and his successors, the Crescent displaced the Cross. But was it defeated, or does faith triumph over hope deferred? Christ is a conqueror whose victories have always been won through loss and humiliation and suffering. He invites His followers to take up their cross and follow Him. The way of the

<sup>6</sup> The Moslem World, Vol. XIX, p. 203.

Cross is the path of wisdom and of life. There can be no victory without it. Christ's battle flag, like that of Sigurd the Norseman, while it insures victory to those who follow it, often brings death to those who carry it.

## II

### THE SEVENFOLD PROBLEM OF ISLAM

“Through all the ages Islam has been, in relation to the missionary efforts of the Christian Church, the teacher of patience. Its great function has been, and will probably continue to be for the present and for the immediate future to remind the Christian Church that Christian missions, if they will be really Christian, that is to say if they spring from the apostolic obligation toward a divine commission, are not primarily driven by motives of spiritual conquest or success but by the urge towards faithful and grateful witness to Christ. The confrontation of the Christian Church with the difficult problem that Islam embodies, means in the first place for the Christian Church to remind itself what obedient faith is.”

—H. KRAEMER, *The Christian  
Message in a Non-Christian World*

## CHAPTER II

### THE SEVENFOLD PROBLEM OF ISLAM

**T**HE word problem is not found in the English Bible. There we have the word "mystery" used twenty-seven times to indicate some great fact or truth known only to the initiated. "To you it is given," said Jesus, "to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God." One of the great mysteries or problems of history is the rise and growth and power of Islam.

The year 622 A. D. is a landmark in the history of Asia, Europe and Africa. For Asia it marks the rise of a new religion; for Europe, the beginning of a new conflict culminating in the Crusades; and for Africa, the conquest of a continent by the religion of Arabia.

In the study of comparative religion, we must recognize the fact that among the many religions of mankind, Islam stands forth as one of three great missionary faiths that have crossed oceans and continents, the other two being Buddhism and Christianity. Second, we must add that Islam is the only religion that has for a long time displaced Christianity in North Africa and Western Asia, and is today the most baffling of all missionary problems. A third reason for the importance of understanding this religion is that it vitally concerns present-day politics. The front

page of the daily press tells from time to time of Islamic unrest in North Africa, Palestine, India and North-west China. And there is not a single European government which does not consider Islam a major problem in its diplomacy — as witness the recent assertion of Benito Mussolini in regard to Italy as protector of Moslem peoples.

This religion is the only non-Christian faith that has a periodical literature in the languages of Europe, and this is not surprising when we remember that Islam itself is polyglot and that Indian Moslems carry on a propaganda in several European languages. Not only are there scientific magazines on Islam, published by Oriental scholars in German, Italian, French and English, but the Moslems themselves are using these languages increasingly, especially in Europe and America.

By a unique fortune in history (as Bosworth Smith reminds us) Mohammed became the founder of a nation, of an empire, of a religion and of a social system. He was one of the greatest creative spirits in the history of human culture. The impress of his mind and life has been colossal.

Long ago, Doctor Becker pointed out the unity of Islam and its wide implications. But the longer we study it, the more complex and difficult it appears. One is reminded of the story of a Scotch professor of Philosophy who drew two concentric circles on the blackboard, and then stated to his class: "Gentlemen, the smaller the diameter of your knowledge, the smaller the circumference of your ignorance; the larger the diameter of your knowledge, the larger the circumference of your ignorance." The fact is that often the

more some think they know about Islam, the less they really know. The problem in all its present day aspects has a sevenfold character. We give these factors in outline here. Some are treated at greater length in the chapters that follow.

1. *A Historical Problem—Why Islam?* This question includes the more difficult problem of Mohammed's place in history, and the providential reasons for the rise and growth of this great non-Christian system. There have been various replies, as we all know. Some, with Dr. Koelle, a great missionary to India and Turkey, boldly and baldly assert that Mohammed is the Antichrist, that his system is a direct antithesis of Christianity, and therefore Mohammed himself was not a prophet of God, but a tool of the evil One. On the other hand, Sir William Muir and many other scholars believe that Mohammed was at the outset a sincere seeker after truth and a messenger of monotheism to the pagan Arabs. Afterwards, when he gained power and influence, he succumbed to temptation and invented revelations to justify his own conduct. Lammens, however, wrote a book assailing the so-called sincerity of Mohammed on evidence from the Koran itself and Dr. Wherry of India held the same opinion.

Again, there are those who say that Mohammed always was what he revealed himself to be afterward in his life. Because, they say, he was the victim of a psychopathic derangement—he was sex-mad.<sup>1</sup> This theory has been held also by disciples of the Freudian school. At the other extreme, there are writers who

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Worrall, *The Case of Mohammed* in J.A.O.S. June, 1928.

say, with Carlyle, that he was a true prophet of God from the outset—that his faults were the faults of his age. The grotesque ignorance or the inaccurate statements of earlier writers need no longer lead astray even the casual reader on this subject. The life of Mohammed, for example, now appears in the daylight of history and not in the moonshine of tradition, thanks to the labors of Grimme, Nöldeke, Buhl, Lammen, Margoliouth, Tor Andrae, and, more especially, Goldziher and Leone Caetani. Their labors have abrogated much of the learning and lore enshrined in our earlier popular histories and encyclopedias,—Weil, Sprenger, Carlyle and Muir no longer hold the keys to the problem of the Great Arabian. But whatever may be the conclusion to which one comes, the question of the rise of Islam remains a historical problem, because *this religion was in no sense a preparation for Christianity*, but was a retrogression. Of other non-Christian religions we may hold that they were in God's sovereign providence some sort of preparation for the coming of the world's Redeemer. They all arose before Christ. This religion and its Prophet claimed not to prepare the way for Christ but to supersede or supplement His divine mission. Why Islam? That is not an easy question to answer.

2. *A Statistical Problem.* One hundred years after Mohammed's death, his followers were masters of an empire greater than Rome at the zenith of her power. They were building mosques in Spain, in China, in Central Asia and southern India. The extent and rapidity of the spread of Islam and its continuance century after century is astonishing. How many Moslems are there,



Old Mosque in Pécs, Hungary  
Now used as a Roman Catholic Church

and what is their present-day distribution? There is no doubt but that their numbers are still increasing, and that the total number is perhaps one-seventh of the human race, or about 250,000,000. It is their distribution in so many lands and among all races that constitutes a real problem. We call attention later on to the fact that in Madagascar, for example, the large Moslem population was a blind spot—a half million Mohammedans were ignored and forgotten. It is easier to name the lands where Moslems are *not* to be found than to give a complete list of where they are!

To begin with, note the Western Hemisphere. There are some 25,000 immigrant Moslems in the United States and Mexico. They have periodicals published in Chicago and New York, with small mosques in a number of centers. In South America there are nearly 250,000 chiefly in British and Dutch Guiana, Trinidad, and Brazil. But these are mere fractions on the outskirts of the world of Islam. In Europe there are large numbers of Moslems in London, Paris and Berlin, and a total of more than 3,800,000 in Southeastern Europe. As for Africa, one third of the total population is probably Moslem. This includes the entire north coast, the east coast as far as Zanzibar, together with large groups in South Africa and on the west coast—a total of over 50,000,000.

But Asia, where Islam had its rise, naturally has the largest Moslem population. The two chief centers are India, with nearly 80,000,000 Mohammedans, and the Dutch East Indies, with 50,000,000 more. Generally speaking, all of Western Asia and Central Asia are solidly Mohammedan. In China there are

perhaps 10,000,000, in the Philippine Islands over 500,000. In every part of Asia, in fact, there is a considerable Moslem population, except in Chosen and perhaps Bhutan and Nepal. Even Tibet, the great closed land, has over 100,000 Moslems of recent origin by immigration and conversion.

This world of Islam is divided into many sects and parties. The oldest division was that of Shiah and Sunni which still persists. But there are numerous minor sects everywhere and the acid of modernity has cut deep across the old beliefs so that we have several forms of New Islam. Then there are political, national and linguistic divisions as well as the leaven of mysticism which penetrated to all lands and created the many Sufi dervish orders. Notwithstanding all these divisions and opinions the unity and solidarity of Islam is a great reality. Moslem brotherhood knows neither race nor color. From its very inception Islam has been a missionary religion both in theory and practice. When we study the history of the spread of Islam we face a world-problem. What was the missionary motive and message that had such results?

3. *A Political Problem.*—As Lord Curzon remarked, “Islam is not a state church; it is far worse, it is a church state.” In this statement one can read something of the enormous difficulty which European governments face in the administration of areas and countries where Islam is dominant. Although the caliphate has disappeared, and the old Pan-Islamic movement is dead, the system of Moslem civil and criminal law, the rights of Moslem or of Christian and Jewish minorities, and the whole outlook of Moslem communities present constant difficulties to those who seek to

govern. It is the political problem that causes unrest in Northern India, Palestine, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and other lands today. A Moslem writer expressed it in an Indian daily:

“To my mind, the Pan-Islamic ideal is still the mainspring of our present activities, but with this essential difference that if in the past it was based upon the mythical and ignorant notion of large sections of Mussalmans who, irrespective of the consideration of their material equipment, believed that they could cope with the rising ascendancy of the West merely because they were Mussalmans, the present-day manifestations of the Pan-Islam on the other hand is of the character of an intelligent and well-informed interest in the well-being of the Moslem communities, based largely on their willingness to acquire knowledge of modern arts and sciences, their eagerness to study progressive institutions of the West, and their anxiety to convince the non-Moslem world, of the vast potentialities of Islam as a great reformative force.”

According to the Koran, it is contrary to the will of Allah that Moslems should be under foreign rule. The solidarity of the Moslem world is never more evident than when Moslem minorities appeal to the world of Islam against some foreign government, which is supposed to infringe on the religious liberty of their fellow-believers. Since the great majority of Moslems live in lands directly or indirectly ruled by Great Britain, France, the Netherlands and other governments, such questions as the validity of Moslem civil and criminal law, the regulation of the annual

pilgrimage to Mecca, the right of eminent domain in the case of mosque-property, (*waqf*) etc. often arise. Each colonial power has its own policy in regard to such questions but all of them constantly face difficulties and have to meet them.

The late Dr. Snouck Hurgronje, who cannot be suspected either of ignorance or of prejudice in what he writes on this subject, says:

“The whole set of laws which, according to Islam, should regulate the relations between believers and unbelievers, is the most consequent elaboration imaginable of a mixture of religion and of politics in their medieval form. That he who possesses material power should also dominate the mind, is accepted as a matter of course; the possibility that adherents of different religions could live together as citizens of the same state, and with equal rights, is excluded. Such was the situation in the Middle Ages, not only with Mohammedans; before and even long after the Reformation our ancestors did not think very differently on the matter. The difference is chiefly this, Islam has fixed all these medieval regulations in the form of eternal laws, so that later generations, even if their views have changed, find it hard to emancipate themselves from them.”

There lies the crux.

4. *A Social Problem.*—Islam is primarily a religion, but it is also a social system based upon the life and teaching of Mohammed back in the seventh century. Islam was originally conceived as a totalitarian state, and therefore its legislation includes every detail of

personal and family life. Words such as polygamy, concubinage, slavery, the rights of womanhood, illiteracy and superstition, enfold whole chapters, as it were, regarding social evils and social problems which have the same character in every part of the Moslem world, but which have reached different degrees of solution. The Moslem theory of education, of the place of the child, is in itself a problem for all who are trying to uplift society. There is a vast literature on this single aspect of Islam; namely, Moslem womanhood and childhood. And some of the best books on the subject have been written by educated Moslem leaders of the new era, who advocate the abolition of the veil and the emancipation of womanhood. The result of their efforts, especially in Turkey and Iran, have been new legislation and the opening of doors to every walk in life for emancipated girlhood and womanhood. The startling example given by the Turks and Persians is finding imitation as well as opposition in the more conservative lands of the Near East and India.

The greatest changes in the world of Islam have been in social and economic life due to the impact of western culture and not least to the education of Moslem womanhood which was in nearly every case initiated by the early missionaries.

5. *A Religious Problem.*—This is the primary and fundamental issue. It is back of all other problems. The social conditions and the political views of Moslems are due to the fact that they are based on “God’s revelation”—the Koran. Islam is undoubtedly the greatest of the non-Christian religions in its affirmations. The Moslem creed, when carefully analyzed, includes many of the statements of the Apostles’ Creed.

And this religion is the only non-Christian faith that gives a high and historical place to Jesus Christ as a prophet. The eschatology of Islam deals with the future life, the resurrection, the day of judgment, the reward of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked, in phraseology somewhat similar to that of the Bible. On the other hand, next to its lofty theism, we find a fundamentally defective Christology and a degraded system of ethics. One has only to read the Koran carefully, and the Moslem traditions, to see how wide apart is the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ from that of the Arabian prophet. We shall see later in what this strength and weakness of Islam as a creed consists. Islamic theology, philosophy and ethics are all subjects of great importance. The history of dogma is as full of contrasts and conflict as in the case of Christianity. Here we can only summarize.

At first glance, the two religions may seem to have much in common, but upon closer examination, they differ in every detail. Even the unity of God, as asserted by Mohammed, is not the unity of God as we find it in the Old and New Testaments. Koran teaching regarding Jesus Christ denies every cardinal truth of the gospel. Although it asserts His virgin birth, the belief is carnal. Although it states that He could work miracles, those miracles are mostly puerile. And it flatly denies the Crucifixion, the Atonement for sin, the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, and His finality as Savior and Lord. This must never be forgotten.

The mind of Islam is averse to the Gospel. The message of the Cross is a stumbling-block and foolish-

ness. Through grievous misunderstanding of the Holy Trinity the editor of the *Review of Religions* wrote:

“The manner is very amusing in which the three Persons of Trinity (*sic*) shifted the responsibility of the reformation of mankind from one to the other. There was the Father who, having a certain superiority, in name if not in reality, thought of restoring man to his original state—one should (*sic*) think it means the savage state, for human progress has been gradual from a lower to a higher stage,—but he found his hands tied by the manacles of justice. Out of filial reverence the Son offered himself, but when he came into the world, he went away with the empty consolation that the third partner shall come and teach them all truths and guide them into all truth. The third Person, *being only a pigeon* [the italics are ours], found himself unable to undertake the teaching of truths, but thought he had done his duty by teaching the apostles a few dialects, which they were thus able to speak stammeringly.”

How can one answer such Moslem travesty and yet do it in the spirit of the Master?

6. It is for all of these reasons, but especially the last, that Islam is a missionary problem. In fact it has been the chief and most difficult missionary problem for the past century of missions. At the first General Conference on work for Moslems held at Cairo in 1906 and at the one held at Lucknow, India in 1911, the delegates from every important Moslem area discussed the various aspects of the problem. It is manifold and perplexing. Prayer and patience and love

hold the keys. One could make a strong case for missions to Moslems solely on the social conditions in Moslem lands, and the crying needs of its childhood and womanhood. But Islam is a missionary problem in the same sense as Judaism. Mohammedans have a zeal toward God, but not according to knowledge. If the Jew needs the gospel, even more does the Moslem. And the question of missionary need is indisputable to those who have lived under the shadow of Islam,—and the shadow of the Cross.

Three words characterize the missionary problem in its historic aspects: neglect, difficulty, paucity of definite results. First, there has been an unaccountable *neglect* in carrying the gospel to Moslem lands since the rise of Islam. In fact, this religion itself is proof that missions were neglected in Arabia. Except for a few individuals, there were no missions to Moslems until the days of Henry Martyn. He may be called "The Modern Pioneer," having before his death translated the gospel into three Moslem languages. Today, there are whole sections of the Christian church that have never attempted missions in Moslem lands. A second outstanding feature of the problem is its alleged *difficulty*. This includes difficulty of approach and inaccessibility because of Moslem intolerance; also the difficulty of proclaiming the gospel message, because of the character of the Moslem, and of the message. The good in this case is the enemy of the best. The Moslem has so much theistic faith that he feels no need of any further good news. A final difficulty is the difficulty of those who are almost persuaded, as they face the law of apostasy with its cruel provisions

against converts. It is our conviction that among the many reasons for the small number of converts to the Christian faith in Moslem lands there is, perhaps, none so important, and yet concerning which so little is accurately known, as the Moslem law regarding apostates. Every convert to Christianity is an apostate from Islam, and although there have been apostates throughout all the centuries (and we know of cases even during the lifetime of Mohammed the Prophet), the law of apostasy has become fixed in Islam, and for thirteen centuries has exercised its dread, if not its power, under all conditions and in every land.

This brings us to the third factor in the missionary problem; namely, the *paucity of definite results*. There have been converts from Islam all down the centuries and outstanding martyrs from the days of Raymund Lull, but there are still countries where missions have been carried on for forty years without resulting in any organized churches composed of Moslem converts. The total number of converts from Islam in all North Africa is scarcely five hundred. Dare we face such facts and not lose faith? On the other hand, in Java, there are over 72,000 Moslem converts, and in Iran there is today an indigenus church. The missionary problem of Islam is the problem of patience — the patience of prayer, the patience and love that will not let them go. In later chapters we shall see that such love and patience bring reward to toil and that God's blessing has rested on those who ventured with Him, to attempt the impossible, and succeeded.

7. *A Personal Problem.* It can be nothing else to those who realize their missionary obligation as they face Islam in all its manifold aspects. Then intelligent

interest will turn into conviction and passion regarding the necessity, validity and urgency of carrying the Gospel to the world of Islam. The very difficulties and intricacies of such a problem will drive Christians to prevailing prayer. And, as we shall see in the sequel, Christ is the only solution. That which is impossible with men is possible with God.

### **III**

## **ISLAM: ITS WORTH AND ITS FAILURE**

“The religion of Islam is a sanctity apart; the unbroken unity of Islam is the sacred treasure of the Moslem community and the Moslem individual. We children of the present time, who behold the enormous forces of fanaticism and devotion that are inherent in the creed of group solidarity, are probably in a more favorable condition to understand Islam than ever before has been the case. A very pertinent way to define Islam would be to call it a medieval and radically religious form of that national socialism which we know at present in Europe in its pseudo-religious form.”

—H. KRAEMER, in *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*

## CHAPTER III

### ISLAM: ITS WORTH AND ITS FAILURE

**I**T is not easy to give a balanced and sober judgment regarding the strength and the weakness, the worth or the failure of any great intellectual or spiritual movement in human history. For example, what was the worth of the Crusades or their failure in the history of humanity? No wonder that opinion is still divided regarding the significance of the Saracen movement, which began when Mohammed proclaimed God's unity at Mecca. The worth of all the non-Christian religions is their measure of truth and their strength. The failure of all the non-Christian religions is because of inner weakness and falsehood. The two great Christian apologists for the Mohammedan religion, Bosworth Smith and Thomas Carlyle, have themselves felt the supreme difficulty of expressing a fair and sober judgment of Mohammed and his religion. Bosworth Smith retracts in the Appendix of his *Life of Mohammed* many of the great assertions of value which he makes in his great biography. Carlyle, in his lecture on the Hero as a Prophet, said that "Mohammedanism is a kind of Christianity." "Call it not false, look not at the falsehood of it; look at the truth of it. To the Arab nation it was as a birth from darkness into light. Arabia first became alive by means

of it." This great lecture on the Hero as Prophet is eagerly read and quoted by Moslems as a testimony to the glory of their prophet and of his faith. Carlyle himself, however, two days later, in his lecture on the Hero as Poet, spoke of Mohammed and Islam in far other terms: "Alas, poor Mohammed, all that he was conscious of was a mere error and futility and triviality. . . . His Koran has become a stupid piece of prolix absurdity. We do not believe, like him, that God wrote that. It was intrinsically an error that notion of Mohammed's, of his supreme prophethood; and has come down to us inextricably involved in error to this day; dragging along with it such a coil of fables, impurities, intolerances, as makes it a questionable step for me here and now to say, as I have done, that Mohammed was a true speaker at all, and not rather an ambitious charlatan, pervert and simulacrum; no speaker, but a babbler! Even in Arabia, as I compute, Mohammed will have exhausted himself and become obsolete while this Shakespeare, this Dante may still be young."

To those who carry the Gospel message to the world of Islam, Carlyle's paradox is ever present.

I. No one can deny the elements of strength, of vitality and of truth in the religion of Islam. They are many and deeply significant. They lead one to love the Moslems with a great love, to run out to meet them although they are yet a great way off, and to welcome them back to the Father's house.

(1) First of all, this religion has, as already noted, the strength of strategic and numerical distribution. For thirteen centuries it has laid its grip on three continents and by its very worth and vitality held the hearts of one-seventh of the human race. A religion

that counts over two hundred million adherents is a religion of strength. It appeals to human hearts and lives and has won allegiance. Moreover, its distribution is strategic. All the great highways of modern trade and ancient caravan routes were once held by the Mohammedans. They crossed Africa centuries before Livingstone and Stanley did. They knew all about the rivers of Africa before Krapf told us the story. They discovered and rediscovered the routes of the East and the far East, and are still advancing in the continent of Africa.

(2) It is a rich religion and a strong religion that bursts its barriers and pours out whatever God has given it, to humanity as a whole. Mohammedanism, whether by the sword or by preaching, by fair or foul means, has always communicated itself. The impact and the impulse of this religion is the story of many centuries and many lands. Unless we understand something of its victories in the past we shall never appreciate its hold on hearts today.

Islam has ever had the power of propagandism and from the beginning was imbued with the genius of conquest. Its missionary spirit is not always other-worldly and sacrificial in the Christian sense, but it is real and vital.

A careful study of these early Moslem conquests impresses one with the fact that a great measure of their success was due to their enthusiasm and strong faith, and not solely to the character of their creed or the power of their sword. The preaching of Moslems was earnest, and demanded as unconditional a surrender as did their weapons. The thunder of their cavalry was not more terrible to the enemy than the clamor of their short, sharp creed in the ears of an idolatrous

and divided Christendom, or the ears of ignorant pagans: "*La-ilaha illa Allah! Allahu Akbar!*" There is no god but Allah! God is great! These men of the desert carried everything before them, because they had the backbone of conviction, knew no compromise, and were thirsting for world-conquest. Not Khalid alone, but every Moslem warrior felt himself to be the sword of God.

Nor did they shrink from hardship, danger or death itself, in this holy war for their faith. Had not Mohammed said: "The fire of hell shall not touch the legs of him who is covered with the dust of battle on the road of God"? And was not Paradise itself under the shadow of the spears in the thickest fight?

To the modern Christian world, missions imply organizations, societies, paid agents, subscriptions, reports, etc. All this is practically absent from the present Moslem idea of propagandism, and yet the spread of Islam goes on. With loss of political power, its zeal sometimes seems to increase; for Egypt and India are more active in propagating the faith than were Turkey or Morocco. The speed and the impact of this religion in its spread have astonished the world.

(3) Another element of truth and worth is the Moslem belief in the supernatural, omnipresent, omnipotent power of God. One man with God has often proved a majority even in Islam. They have always set Allah before them. The vitality of their theism (however inadequate) has laid hold of the human mind and heart and will in such a fashion that beside their stern belief in the supernatural, our popular Western dilution of faith and creed seems luke-warm and timid.

(4) Mohammedanism not only asserts the unity of



Village Street and Mosque in Egypt

God and the power of His will with the stern theism of the Semitic mind, but since the earliest centuries it has developed a religion for the heart also, in its mysticism. This has laid hold of the affections and the emotions in all Moslem lands. Men have become drunk with the love of God and with devotion to His prophet. Poetry and passion have joined to yield their highest and utmost at the shrine of devotion. No one who has witnessed the performance of a real *zikr*, a religious procession of the Shias in Moharram, or the celebration of the birth of the Prophet, can ever forget the scenes. The lives of Moslem saints such as Jalal-ud-din, Al Hallaj, or Al Ghazali afford varieties of religious experience which were undoubtedly genuine and led to transformation of character in the forsaking of the world and its allurements.

For example, what pathos there is, and what a plea for missions, in the song sung by a Turkish woman in a hospital at Konia:

Trample upon me, yea tread on my head,  
Consume me with terror Thou Judge of the dead,  
If only, O God, I thus Thee may know,  
And Thee once behold while I tarry below.

Throw me like Abraham into the fire,  
Like Moses withheld from the land I desire,  
If only, O God, I thus Thee may know,  
And Thee once behold while I tarry below.

Hang me, like Jesus, upon the rood tree,  
Or poor, like Mansour, thro' life I be,  
If only, O God, I thus Thee may know,  
And Thee once behold while I tarry below.

(5) Islam is a religion which has kindled an unceasing hope for a coming deliverer, the Mahdi, who would restore faith and bring in the golden age. This

undying hope has knit together Moslems in all lands for many centuries.

Pan-Islamism in its twofold form of nationalism as seen in Turkey and Egypt, or in the attitude of the Dervish orders toward Christian rule and civilization, is fundamentally based upon such a hope in the final triumph of Mohammedanism. Although, because often deferred, it has made their hearts sick; although dark days have come upon Islam, in the hearts of the pious it lives on. What this hope and belief includes is shown in our chapter on the eschatology of Islam.

II. But this very hope is doomed to disappointment because it ignores Jesus Christ, His incarnation, His passion and death, His resurrection and His ascension. The failure of Islam is the failure to give Christ His rightful place in history and theology, in the heart and the home, in the social program, in the idea of the state, but most of all as a personal Savior from sin and as the only, the final ideal of character and its Re-Creator.

In spite of all its elements of worth and strength and vitality, Islam has failed conspicuously and proved itself hopelessly inadequate to meet the social, the intellectual, the moral and the spiritual needs of humanity. Its inward weakness, its denials and falsehoods have corrupted the best that is in it, and proved the truth of the Latin proverb: "The corruption of the best is the worst." This failure of Islam is the justification and the plea for missions to Mohammedans.

(1) Islam has failed to meet the needs of childhood. Of such is not the kingdom of Mohammed. No religion, it is true, pays such early attention to the religious training of the child, but at the same time this very training corrupts the morals of childhood by

its teaching and example. No indictment of Islam could be stronger than the present condition of eighty million Moslem children, physically, intellectually and morally. Not to speak of the astonishing illiteracy that prevails and of the incredible percentage of infant mortality due to the ignorance of their mothers; these children are born into a world of superstition and ignorance, robbed of their childhood by sex-education in its worst form, burdened with the responsibilities of marriage when still in their teens, until their cry is a plea which none can resist. From Tangiers to Teheran, from Zanzibar to Samarkand it rises to heaven to the ears of Him who said: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me."

(2) Its ethical standards are low. T. J. De Boer<sup>1</sup> shows that, although the Koran urges faith and good intentions, "unpremeditated lapses from virtue are leniently judged. In short, Allah makes it no onerous task for His faithful to serve Him." Some have stated, and not entirely without reason, that early Islam was absolutely destitute of ethical spirit, although Goldziher refuted this. The fact, however, remains that the mass of the people paid less attention to Koran precepts than to the actual life lived by Mohammed in his Medina period, "when his love was given mainly to women, and the objects of his hate and greed were the unbeliever and his possessions." Those who have carefully investigated Moslem ethics agree that the great bulk of its moral precepts bear an external and a commercial character. The believer has an account with Allah of debits and credits, rather than a record of sins committed and forgiven.

It is because of these low ideals that Islam has never

<sup>1</sup> "History of Philosophy in Islam."

developed strong moral natures. The fight for character, the attainment of high ideals, the crucifixion of self—all this is absent to a degree which is almost inconceivable. As the Koran itself states, "God desires to make things easy for man." The tendency of Islam is to develop a flabby moral nature and this tendency is the inheritance of Moslem childhood.

A startling revelation of the contrast between Moslem and Christian ideals in ethics can also be gained from a comparative study of popular literature; the (unexpurgated) "Arabian Nights," for example, a medieval picture of Moslem life and morals, in contrast with the medieval romance of the "Knights of the Round Table." Both books present unconsciously a picture of ideas and ideals in ethics. Womanhood in the one case is suspected, dishonored, untrustworthy, and chiefly celebrated for her lower passions; in the other case her purity and strength of character stand out as examples of moral greatness.

The same contrast can be seen between Shakespeare and Al Hariri, the great Arabian poet. The one, the poet of conscience, ever preaches the truth that the wages of sin is death and the reward of righteousness, life. In the "*Makamat*" of Al Hariri, as Stanley Lane-Poole says, we see "a Bohemian of brilliant parts and absolutely no conscience, who constantly extracts alms from assemblies of people in various cities by preaching eloquent discourses of the highest piety and morality, and then goes off with his spoils to indulge secretly in triumphant and unhallowed revels." Yet this collection of poems is the greatest literary treasure of the Arabs, next to the Koran.

(3) This religion, through the example of Mohammed himself, his companions and many saints in the

Moslem calendar has corrupted home life at its very source and undermined human happiness by its well-known teaching regarding polygamy, divorce, slavery, concubinage and the inferiority of womanhood. The religious and civilizing influence of Islam upon backward races has never purified nor elevated the home. The testimony of missionaries in the pagan districts of Africa and Malaysia where Islam has entered is unanimous on this subject. Gottfried Simon says: "The position of the Moslem woman in the East Indies is lower than that of her heathen sisters. Divorce and polygamy are rare among the heathen; among Moslems, especially of the coast, both are common. The Moslem family life is below the level of that of the heathen. Islam has completely failed." Kasim Amin Bey, an educated Egyptian, wrote regarding the Moslem home of Egypt: "Man is the absolute master and woman is the slave. She is the object of his sensual pleasures, a toy, as it were, with which he plays and then tosses away when he pleases. The firmament and the light are his. Darkness and the dungeon are hers. His to command, hers to blindly obey. His is everything that exists and she is an insignificant part of that everything."

(4) Mohammedanism has failed because it has dwarfed the intellect. The deadweight of tradition and the iron bondage of Moslem law makes intellectual progress impossible. The Koran has proved the Procrustean bed for the human mind. Thought must be confined to its limitations. Wherever Islam has spread, superstition has not disappeared but flourished anew and popular education has been neglected. Even the higher education of the small per cent of literates has remained medieval until the recent revival, through

the West. The illiteracy of the Moslem world still ranges from eighty to ninety-five per cent. Even in the most favored lands such as India and Egypt, ninety per cent of the women are unable to read and write. Too much Moslem literature is of such a character that it cannot be translated until it is expurgated. This is true not only of story books and poetry, but of its history and theology. Who would publish today, as Captain Matthews did a century ago, the verbatim translation of a standard work on Moslem tradition? Or of the standard biography of Mohammed *Insan-ul-Ayun*?

(5) Islam has been the age-long foe of democracy. It cannot exist and confer as equal gifts, religious liberty, equality or fraternity *to those who are not Moslems*. The Mohammedan theory of the State is based upon the eternal law of the Koran and cannot therefore be modified.

No wonder that so good a student of Islam as Prof. Hartmann, of Berlin, expressed himself (before the World War) in these terms: "Islam is a religion of hate and of war. It must not be suffered to be the ruling principle in any nation of the civilized world. It has destroyed cultural possessions and has created nothing, absolutely nothing in the way of cultural values." While Viscount Bryce in a magazine article asserted that the "social institutions of the Moslems are almost as great a hindrance to progress as the comparative stagnation of their intellectual life; Islam has its good points, and has done much to raise some of the races that have embraced it. But, in the Near East at least, it deserves to decline and nothing forbids the hope that the decline already discernible may ere long become more rapid." One could, if necessary,

give abundant additional proof from Moslem canon law, or more pointedly from newspaper articles during the nationalist uprising in Egypt, to show that their theory of nationalism and their present attitude toward non-Moslem races is incompatible with the foundation principles of democracy. Egypt for the Egyptians, under that theory of government, means Egypt for Moslems. Two decades ago, the young Turks and the old Turks had the same theory of government as regards the Armenian population. It was government by assassination and massacre. Schlegel's verdict on Islam given at the close of his chapter on the Saracens in his "Philosophy of History" is very severe, but still has historic value. "A prophet without miracles, a religion without mysteries and a morality without love, which has always encouraged a thirst for blood and which began and ended in the most unbounded sensuality."

(6) The great failure of Islam, however, has been its spiritual failure. It stands out among all the non-Christian religions as the religion which has blindfolded Christ and for thirteen centuries has raised the cry: "Not this man, but Barabbas." As in a total eclipse of the sun the glory and the beauty of the heavenly orb are hidden, and only the corona appears on the edge, so in the life and thought of Mohammedans their own Prophet has almost eclipsed Jesus Christ. The full moon of Mohammed eclipsed the Sun. Whatever place Jesus may occupy in the Koran, and the portrait there given is a sad caricature: whatever favorable critics may say about Christ's honorable place among the Moslem prophets, it is nevertheless true that the large bulk of Mohammedans know extremely little, and think still less, about Jesus Christ.

He has no place in their hearts nor in their lives. All the prophets have not only been succeeded, but supplanted by Mohammed; he is at once the sealer and concealer of all former revelations. Mohammed is always in the foreground, and Jesus Christ, in spite of His lofty titles and the honor given him in the Koran, is in the background. There is not a single biography of Jesus Christ alone and unique, as a great prophet of God, to be found in the literature of Islam. Christ is grouped with the other prophets; with Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Moses, David, Solomon. We must not forget that by its very teaching Islam as a world faith joins issue in its attitude toward the Christ. By this it must stand or fall. In this respect all schools of Moslem thought are practically the same. They differ in ritual and tradition; in interpretations, broad and narrow; in going back to the old Koran or in advocating the new Islam; but whether Shiah or Sunnis, Wahhabis or followers of the New Islam, their position as regards the Christ is practically the same.

Christianity gladly admits the strength of Islamic theism, as a basis of unity between Islam and Christianity. We assert as strongly as do all Moslems that there is only one God, *but because there is only one God there can be only one Gospel and one Christ.* "It pleased the Father" that in *Jesus Christ* "all fullness should dwell"; *not* in Mohammed. "In *Him* are hid all treasures of wisdom and knowledge"; *not* in Mohammed. "*He* is the Way, the Truth and the Life"; *not* Mohammed. This is the issue which cannot be avoided.

In Moslem literature today, the Incarnation, which we celebrate at Christmas, is denied; the Atonement is caricatured; and the Cross is a stumbling block.

Moslems, instead of expecting the living Christ in His resurrection glory expect Jesus to return from an inferior heaven, live as a Moslem prince in the Hejaz, fight the battles for Moslems, and finally be buried next to the early caliphs at Medina in a grave awaiting Him.

In its origin, its theology, its conquests, its ideals and its history of persecution, Mohammedanism is frankly anti-Christian. Some years ago one of the leading Moslems of Bagdad wrote an article for a French journal, entitled, "The Final Word of Islam to Europe": "For us in the world there are only believers and unbelievers; love, charity, fraternity toward believers; contempt, disgust, hatred, and war against unbelievers. Amongst unbelievers, the most hateful and criminal are those who, while recognizing God, attribute to Him earthly relationship, give Him a son, a mother. Learn then, European observers, that a Christian, of no matter what position, from the simple fact that he is a Christian is, in our eyes, a blind man fallen from all human dignity . . ." Can a religion which inculcates such principles make the world safe for democracy?

The fact that Moslems themselves are becoming conscious of the failure of their religion, its political collapse, its intellectual disintegration, its spiritual defects, is an appeal that cannot be resisted. Their real heart-hunger and their undying hope for a deliverer can only be met by Jesus Christ. Nay, the very glory of all that is best in their creed finds in Jesus Christ alone sufficient fulfilment and crown. Some Moslem leaders have already caught the vision of the risen Christ. I myself met in Eastern Arabia a Christian Turk who persecuted Christians in Armenia and, by

study of the Gospel saw a light “stronger than that of the noonday sun”—the light of the glory of God in the face of Armenian martyrs. Many are beginning to hear from the lips of the only Savior and Redeemer the same message that turned Saul, the persecutor, into Paul, the Apostle—“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” These are God’s chosen ones in Moslem lands and will receive appointment to know His will, to hear His voice, and to be His witnesses throughout the non-Christian world. The missionary spirit of Islam, its splendid devotion, its consciousness of the supernatural, its mystic longing for union with God will then find their fulfilment. A new day has dawned.

IV

WHAT THINK YE OF MOHAMMED?

“For all Moslems, Mohammed is the Messenger of Allah, the Last, the especially Chosen, with a halo of centuries of reverence around his head. For very many of them he was the first made of all creatures; for his sake Allah created the worlds; as nearly as could be we have here the Arian doctrine of the Person of Christ. Besides that, for all Arabs he is the great Arabian; no other like to him has sprung from their race. For all Arabic speakers he is the greatest artist in the Arabic language; the Koran for all whose native tongue is Arabic, even for Christians, is the greatest work in Arabic literature.”

—DUNCAN B. MACDONALD

## CHAPTER IV

### WHAT THINK YE OF MOHAMMED?

**I**N the days of His flesh the Son of Man put the question to the Pharisees, "What think ye of Christ, whose son is he?" At Caesarea Philippi He asked His disciples saying, "Whom say ye that I am?" This is still the crucial question for all who face the facts of the Gospel. Every intelligent Moslem faces it when he reads these earliest records. It is no wonder, therefore, that the question is often put to the missionary, what think ye of Mohammed? How shall we answer it intelligently and sympathetically? I well remember how that very question was asked of an experienced missionary in Iran and of me as visitor by a group of Mullahs in a friendly gathering in the village of *Simnan*. *The astonishing thing was that after an hour of kindly discussion the unanimous opinion regarding Mohammed's mission and character was far from orthodox. Iran had even then traveled a long way from the conventional Islam of Arabia.*

No more difficult question could be asked, because the Mohammed of tradition occupies the very highest place in their system of dogma and ethics. He has been for thirteen centuries the cynosure of Islam, the last of Allah's messengers, the final and complete channel of divine revelation. His sinlessness has be-

come an article of orthodox belief and his power of intercession is a ray of hope for the day of doom.

If Christianity could give him a place among the true prophets, as some suggest, then Moslems might accept Christ as their *example*, if not as their Savior. But can we consistently do this? Or would such compromise be only a vivid illustration of the Arab proverb, "No man can hold two watermelons in one hand"? The human heart is too small for a divided loyalty. Christ is too great to share his solitary throne with any other. He is the *only* Savior.

But where Moslems feel so deeply we must move with caution and speak with sympathy. Would that all Christians had the passionate loyalty to Christ that they feel for Mohammed.

To the Moslems, everywhere, Mohammed is still the viceregent of God, the being who existed before Adam and descended to this earthly sphere as the Light which illumines all the prophets and even Jesus Himself! For them the Arabian Prophet is the perfect man, the ideal of conduct, the paragon of character, the hope of salvation. They address him in prayers and poems with language such as this from a poem of the 12th century by Al Buri of Yemen:

O my Lord, O Apostle of God, O my hope on the  
day when I shall stand before the Judge!

I beseech thee, by thy glory, to forgive the sins which  
I have committed, and let thy merit weigh down my  
scales!

Hearken to my prayer and deliver me from the troubles  
which have befallen me; comfort me in all my  
afflictions!

Thou art the nearest in whom we may have hope, al-  
beit thou art far from my house and home.

With thee, O son of Abraham, I seek refuge from my sins and trespasses.

I am bound fast in my sins. I who have been conquered and made captive by my sins call unto thee.

Wilt thou not of thy grace set me free? My back is laden with heavy sins, for I have walked in perilous ways in company with sinners.

I have broken my covenant with God. O thou who has kept thy covenant, turn in compassion and loving kindness toward "Abdu 'l-Rahim."<sup>1</sup>

S. Khuda Bukhsh of the University of Calcutta wrote in the "Islamic World," (Oct. 1926):

"After centuries of perversion of facts and suppression of truth, the figure of Muhammad, may peace and blessings of God be upon him, stands aloft today, extorting admiration from and commanding the reverence of the non-Muslim world. He is no longer a neurotic 'patient suffering from epilepsy,' but a man of tremendous character and unyielding will. He is no longer a self-seeking despot ministering to his own selfish ends but a beneficent ruler shedding light and love around him. He is no longer an opportunist, but a Prophet with a fixed purpose, undeviating in his constancy. All this Europe has now acknowledged freely.

To a people steeped in the grossest form of fetishism he brought a pure and uncompromising monotheism, belief in one God, the Creator of the universe. And, indeed, this gift was meant for the whole of mankind. It is an error to suppose, as it has been supposed by some European writers, that

<sup>1</sup> Tor Andrae's *Mohammed*, p. 389.

originally Islam was meant for Arabia and the Prophet's own people alone.

Glory be to Muhammad for the light and illumination, for the joy and comfort and consolation which he brought to sad, suffering humanity."

These two quotations (divided by seven hundred years and by men of different race and culture) agree in idealizing the Prophet. But to answer the question, Who was Mohammed? we need to go back to the sober historic sources, namely, the Koran itself and the earliest tradition as found in Ibn Hisham, Al Tabari and Ibn Saad. The bibliography of the lives of the Prophet in Oriental and in European languages is very extensive. Passing over medieval and early writers, we have e.g. Muir (1858), Sprenger (1860), Nöldeke (1863), Grimme (1892), Hurgronje (1894), Koelle (1890), Marcus Dods, Boswell Smith, Amir Ali, Buhl, Margoliouth, Canon Sell, Lammens, Caetani (1905-1911 in several quarto volumes) and Tor Andrae (1917). The biography by Dibble (1926) was popular and sarcastic but so unfair that it properly was prohibited in India. All of these writers differ in their estimate of Mohammed's character.

The fact is that the character of Mohammed, his mission and the question of his sincerity have been a perennial stumbling-block to Western students of Islam and a perplexity to those who have approached the problem and the facts objectively without any religious bias. In the *Moslem World Quarterly*, Professor Joseph Horowitz traced the growth of the Mohammed legend (Vol. 10:49 ff), G. W. Broomfield made a study of his psychology (Vol. 16:37 ff), the late W. Temple Gairdner revealed what orthodox tradition

tells of his life and practice (Vol. 9:25 ff), Henri Lammens raised the question of his sincerity (Vol. 5:262 ff) and Arthur Jeffery gave an excellent resume of the Arabian Prophet before the bar of his detractors and laudators in the *Quest of the Historical Mohammed* (Vol. 16:327 ff). In a later issue, Dr. Foster of Oberlin attempted an autobiography of the Prophet based solely upon Koran references. But, as an Indian writer more recently expressed it, "Unless the traditions are scrapped, it is absolutely impossible to rehabilitate Mohammed in the eyes of those whose moral sense has been developed and influenced by Christian truth."

An ideal Mohammed such as we find in the poems of praise recited on his birthday has no historic existence. A careful perusal of the articles mentioned in the previous paragraph would give a fairly accurate portrait of the great Arabian. Where these writers agree we may be sure of certainty; where they disagree the problem remains unsolved.

No one today desires to recall that Dante consigned Mohammed to one of the lower spheres of his Inferno, with his body split from the head down to the waist because he was chief of those who brought schism into religion; or that Voltaire, acknowledging his greatness and his abilities, severely censured his cruelty and brutality. Carlyle's opinion in his famous lecture on the Hero as a Prophet was that Mohammed was not only sincere but a true prophet of God and a great reformer. This opinion, however, was radically modified as we have already noted in an earlier chapter, where he speaks in far different terms concerning Mohammed and his revelation.

The latest important biographical study of the great Arabian is by Professor Tor Andrae of the University of Upsala. His first work on Mohammed appeared in 1918 and he also published a book on the origins of Islam and of Christianity. A new Life of Mohammed appeared in 1932. It was important enough to be translated into Spanish and Italian, and also appeared in an unabridged English translation by Theophil Menzel. The work is primarily not a biography; rather we have here an appraisal of Mohammed's religious personality, his character and his sincerity as a Prophet. It is for this very reason that we give a summary of this book and its conclusions. No orientalist can doubt the scholarship of the author and many will be convinced that he has found new light on an old problem.

In six chapters he recalls the old story of Arabia at the time of Mohammed, his early life, his religious message, his doctrine of revelation, the Meccan and the Medinan periods of his career, and a final chapter gives the author's views of Mohammed's personality. This is all familiar ground, but it is the theory that underlies this new life which is startling as an interpretation and may be summarized in Tor Andrae's own words (pp. 124-126):

“In my opinion this, along with other reasons, proves that Mohammed received from the Nestorians of Persia the impressions which decisively influenced his personal religious message. The Christian Arabs in Hira, on the border of Mesopotamia, with whom the Meccans were in especially vital contact, belonged to the Nestorian Church . . .

“The Prophet was not only acquainted with the main outlines of the Christian doctrines of judgment, retribution, and good works, but he reproduced in detail the interpretation of these doctrines which were prevalent in the churches of the Orient, and at times he even employs a style and expressions which must have had a Christian origin. This riddle can be solved only in one way. At some time Mohammed must have heard a Christian missionary sermon. As I have tried to prove in an earlier work on the origin of Islam, one often notices in Mohammed’s revelations a fixed rhetorical scheme with approximately the following outline: (1) A description of the blessings of God as revealed in His providence, especially in the wonderful creation of man, and the life-giving rain which brings about productive growth for the nourishment of man. (2) The duty of man, therefore, to serve God alone in faith and good works. (3) The judgment and retribution which shall come upon all who do not fulfil this duty. Ever since the days of the Christian apostles this has been the prevailing style of Christian missionary preaching. We know that none of the Oriental churches carried on so active a missionary programme as did the Nestorians, who established important Christian churches in Central Asia, India, and China. It is not overbold to assume that Nestorian monks from the Arabian churches in Mesopotamia, or from Nejran in Yemen after the Persians had conquered this country in 597 A.D. in the course of their preaching tours among their pagan countrymen, visited Hejalz, with whose capital city the Christian Arabs maintained a lively contact. As a

matter of fact, tradition tells of a Christian preacher named Kuss Ibn Sa'id, who is said to have been Bishop of Nejran, but who belonged to a tribe living at Hira in Mesopotamia, whom Mohammed is supposed to have heard preaching in the market at Okatz."

If this be true, then perhaps the earlier judgment of Koelle will bear investigation: "Not want of opportunity but want of sympathy and compatibility kept him aloof from the religion of Christ. Having no adequate conception of the nature of sin and man's fallen state, he also lacked the faculty of truly appreciating the remedy for it which was offered in the Gospel."<sup>2</sup>

In any case we must not underestimate the influence of Christianity on Islam, even in the Meccan period of Mohammed's life. Tor Andrae tells of the Christian poet 'Adi Ibn Zaid who swears by "Mecca's Lord and the Crucified together" (p. 31). And so far from monotheism being the invention of the Great Arabian, our author agrees with the result of the investigations of Schmidt, Preuss, Brockelman and Pettazoni that it is "actually possible that the belief in Allah, the creator of the world . . . and the Mighty One who watches over the sacredness of oaths, is part of the autochthonous religion of Arabia" (p. 33).<sup>3</sup>

Mohammed's conception of Christian doctrine betrays a relationship to the Ebionitic-Manichaeic teaching which can not be accidental. The same is true

<sup>2</sup> S. W. Koelle, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, p. 471. Cf. the entire argument in Book III, pp. 447-485.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. D. C. Brockelmann, *Allah und die Götzen, der Ursprung des vor-islamischen Monotheismus*, in *Archiv für Religions-Swissenschaft*, Vol. XXI, pp. 99-121.

regarding the Koran denial (4:156) of Jesus' death on the Cross.

In regard to Mohammed's attitude toward the Arabian cult which found its palladium in the Kaaba and the Black Stone, Tor Andrae says, "He never spoke a word against it, although he denounced idolatry. According to his opinion, and that of others also, the Ka'ba was consecrate to Allah, and from the very beginning to the end of the Prophet's career it was the sanctuary of his heart, the holy House of Allah." For Mohammed was a nationalist in his theism.

With real sympathy and due allowance for the times and the environment in which Mohammed lived, Tor Andrae traces the growing self-consciousness and arrogance of the prophet at Medina as his power increased. "The actions which seem to cast a shadow upon Mohammed's character are often difficult to interpret, and we are always uncertain whether we have understood and evaluated them correctly. Omar's character reveals no dark areas. He stands before us clear, upright and without blemish. That such a friend became and remained Mohammed's most loyal helper, in spite of occasional differences of opinion, that the faith and conduct of the Prophet became his *Sunna*, his holy custom, which he maintained and guarded with unalterable consistency, is the most important and conclusive proof of Mohammed's religious and personal integrity." Later in his career at Medina, says Tor Andrae, "What offends us is the calculating slyness with which he cleverly provokes Abdallah's action without assuming any responsibility for what occurred. This event reveals a trait of his character

which is particularly uncongenial to the ideals of manliness of the Nordic races. He lacks the courage to defend an opinion openly, revealing a certain tendency to dodge and take advantage of subterfuges, to avoid an open espousal of his position." Not only at Bedr, to which this refers, but later the Prophet revealed sinister motives. In the episode of Zainab (Surah 33:37) it is difficult to reconcile his conduct with his sense of an apostolic mission. The same is true in the case of the war against the Bni Koraiza. "On this occasion he again revealed that lack of honesty and moral courage which was an unattractive trait in his character." Nevertheless, the final conclusion of Tor Andrae is that Mohammed "had an overwhelming and convincing faith in his own message and guarded his call with the utmost sincerity." But "unfortunately it can not be said that righteousness and straightforwardness are the most prominent traits of his character as a whole." Some of the cases recorded "show a very repulsive leaning toward craftiness and trickery. However, an analysis of Mohammed's character proves that certain things can and should be said in his defense." We have no right to judge the Prophet of Islam according to Christian moral standards (so Tor Andrae says), but only according to those of his own revelation. In one sense this is true, and yet the final judgment of all character is by the law of God in the Scriptures and by the perfect example of Jesus of Nazareth.

The issue is not Mohammed and Jesus Christ; not even Mohammed or Jesus Christ. The missionary enterprise rests on Christ alone. The real issue is expressed in the words: "Father the hour has come, glorify Thy Son." In these words are joined the high-

est motive and the most potent plea for missions to the Moslems. The awful sin and guilt of the Mohammedan world is that they give Christ's glory to another. Whatever place Jesus Christ may occupy in the Koran—and the portrait there given is a sad caricature, whatever favorable critics may say about Christ's honorable place among the Moslem prophets—it is nevertheless true that the large bulk of Mohammedans know extremely little and think still less of the Son of Mary. He has no place in their hearts or in their lives. All the prophets have not only been succeeded but also supplanted by Mohammed. He is at once the sealer and concealer of former revelations.

Mohammed is called Light of God, Peace of the World, Glory of Ages, First of all Creatures, and other names of yet greater import. His apotheosis was completed by tradition. In the Koran he is human; in tradition he becomes sinless and almost divine. No Moslem prays *to* Mohammed, but every Moslem prays for his aid in endless repetition daily. He is the only powerful intercessor on the day of judgment. His name is never uttered or written without the addition of a prayer. *Ya Mohammed*, is the open sesame to every door of difficulty, temporal or spiritual. One hears that name in the bazaar and in the street, in the mosque and from the minaret. Sailors sing it while raising their sails; hammals groan it to raise a burden; the beggar howls it to obtain alms; it is the Bedouin's cry when making an attack on a caravan; it hushes dusky babies to sleep as a cradle song; and it is the best name to swear by in a close bargain.

The exceeding honor given to Mohammed's name by his followers is only *one* indication of the place

their prophet occupies in their system and holds in their hearts. From the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh. Mohammed holds the keys of heaven and hell. No Moslem, however bad his character, will perish finally; no unbeliever, however good his life, can be saved except through Mohammed. One has only to question the Moslem masses or read a single volume of the traditions to prove these statements. In short, Christ's name and place and office and glory have been usurped by another.

The prophet Mohammed himself would be astonished at the place and glory he finally attained in Islam. And there is no doubt he holds that place today. If Tor Andrae is correct in his statements regarding Mohammed's early contact with Nestorian Christians, what shall we say of his attitude toward Christ? Is Dr. S. W. Koelle (a missionary for thirty years among Moslems in West Africa and in Turkey) right when he says:

“Mohammed, from his low, earthly standing-point, could neither apprehend the unique excellence of the character of Christ, nor the real nature of His all-sufficient and all-comprehending salvation.”

And he goes on to prove that Mohammed had many and early opportunities to know Christianity.

“His first wife introduced him to her Christian cousin; one of his later wives had embraced Christianity in Abyssinia; and the most favored of his concubines was a Christian damsel from the Copts of Egypt. He was acquainted with ascetic monks, and had dealings with learned Bishops of the Orthodox Church. In those days the reading of the

Holy Scriptures in the public services of the Catholic Church was already authoritatively enjoined and universally practiced; if he had wished thoroughly to acquaint himself with them he could easily have done so. But having no adequate conception of the nature of sin and man's fallen state, he also lacked the faculty of truly appreciating the remedy, which was offered in the Gospel."<sup>4</sup>

We may not be able to prove this to ourselves, much less to Moslems, nevertheless the ambassador of Christ may not forget nor forsake his loyalty to the one and only Savior.

"The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand,"—*not into the hands of Mohammed*. "God hath exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name," . . . "far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come"; that at the name of Jesus every Mohammedan "knee should bow," and every Arab "tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

If we believe this promise we must answer the question-title of this chapter according to the testimony of the Scriptures (Deut. 13:1-6; Matt. 7:15-20; 24:24; I John 4:1-4).

In conclusion we quote the words of W. Temple Gairdner in reply to those who, regardless of historic facts, are today idealizing the Arabian Prophet.

"When and if admirers of Mohammed are content to regard him historically as a great Arabian, who had a real and strange sense of prophetic call, and

<sup>4</sup> Mohammed and Mohammedanism, critically considered, p. 471. London, 1889.

through this and his immense natural genius, singular gifts, and many virtues, accomplished a stupendous life-work, then we join with the admirers. Who with a grain of historic sense and appreciation would not? The worst enemies of Mohammed are not his opponents, but his friends, who will have it that the character of this Arabian giant is the very type of perfected humanity; that all his actions apart from trifles were perfect; that his moral splendour throws that of Jesus completely in the shade; and that his example and precept make the best foundation not only for codes of conduct but for national and international law! Worst offenders of all are the Neo-Moslems who have assumed the task of dishing up the Biography to suit the taste of the Christian West; omitting here, explaining away there; challenging this (against sources) and glozing that. It is not our business to estimate the sincerity of these men, nor of their Christian supporters. All we know is that these men one and all, are doing a disservice both to truth and to their idol. For they as little give the world the whole truth as did the old-time wholesale obloquist; and they simply force those who see in these assertions a gross offence against fact, and a definite attack on the perfection and universality of the Man Christ Jesus, to rise up and show *from the sources* that the real Mohammed, the Mohammed of thirteen dead centuries and three hundred million living Moslems, will not fit the role in virtue of which the human race is invited to travel from Bethlehem to Mekka, from the Mount of the Beatitudes to the Mount of 'Arafāt.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Mohammed without Camouflage in *The Moslem World*, Vol. IX, pp. 25-57.

V

ISLAM AND THE LIFE BEYOND

Heaven shall say to Hell that morning,  
“Art thou full?” Hell shall inquire,  
“Hast thou others?” blackly yawning  
With choked gullet. But believing  
Souls will see, brought nigh and nigher.  
Paradise’s gates receiving  
Those to whom we promised Heaven.  
“Patient ones! forever striving  
Toward the Merciful! forgiven  
Are your falterings; enter ye  
Into peace; now is arriving  
The great Day of eternity.”

—Poetical version of Surah L in  
EDWIN ARNOLD’S *Pearls of the Faith*

## CHAPTER V

### ISLAM AND THE LIFE BEYOND

**N**O religion lays larger stress on what happens after death than Islam. It has always emphasized the other-worldliness of Mohammed's message. He preached not only the unity of God but the dreadful day of doom and judgment to come. The Koran is eloquent on the subject and its most poetic and powerful chapters deal with the future life of heaven or hell.

"Nowhere but in Islam," says Ikbāl Ali Shah, "has the most significant truth with regard to the next life been brought to life as in Islam. The idea of a life after death was so obscure as late as the appearance of the Jewish religion that not only is not much of it found in the Old Testament, but an important Jewish sect actually denied any such state of existence. This fact was, however, due to much light not having been thrown upon it in earlier revelations. The belief in transmigration was also due to the undeveloped mind of man mistaking spiritual realities for physical facts. The Moslems consider that belief in a future life implies the accountability of man in another life for actions done in this life."<sup>1</sup>

He does not fail to note, however, in his chapter on Christianity that "Jesus Christ abolished death and

<sup>1</sup> Lights of Asia, pp. 12, 13.

brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel.”

The world of Islam like the pagan world in Paul's day is always subject to bondage for fear of death. The King of Terrors has a terrible reality in Moslem literature. No one who has listened to the funeral dirge of Islam or attended a funeral can doubt the reality of this dread of the future. One has only to compare the chapter called *Ya Sin* read at Moslem graves with the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians read at Christian funerals to realize the awful difference. No stronger plea for missions to Moslems can be found than Islamic eschatology.

This chapter gives, in brief outline, orthodox belief on the subject of death and judgment, heaven and hell, the signs of the day of doom. The Moslem creed consists of six articles: belief in Allah, His angels, His books, His apostles, the Day of Judgment and Predestination. It is the fifth article with which we are now concerned.

From the earliest surahs of the Koran delivered by Mohammed at Mecca to the latest Mahdi uprisings in the Sudan and Somaliland, Islam has been apocalyptic. The Day of Judgment has had a large place in Moslem thought. The eschatological note is found in all the preaching of Islam and has often given rise in its history to earnest revival or violent revolution.

As Dr. Macdonald states: “In the overwhelmingly theocentric theology of Mohammed, the doctrine of the Resurrection and Judgment was only second to that of Allah's creation of the world.” Mohammed was primarily a preacher of this wrath to come and of the need of repentance and self-surrender to Allah before it should come.

I. THE ORDER OF EVENTS ACCORDING TO ISLAMIC ESCHATOLOGY. All Moslems affirm the reality of a

future life, of paradise and hell, of the resurrection of the body and of a general judgment preceded by signs of the last day. It will suffice to quote from two of the Mecca Surahs, LXXV and LXXXII:

In the name of the merciful and compassionate God.

I need not swear by the resurrection day!

Nor need I swear by the self-accusing soul!

Does man think we shall not collect his bones?

Able are we to arrange his finger tips!

Nay, but man wishes to be wicked henceforward!

He asks, When is the resurrection day?

But when the sight shall be dazed, and the moon be eclipsed, and the sun and the moon be together and man shall say upon that day 'Where is a place to flee to?'—nay, no refuge! and to thy Lord that day is the sure settlement! He will inform man on that day of what He has sent forward or delayed!

In the name of the merciful and compassionate God.

When the heaven is cleft asunder,

And when the stars are scattered,

And when the seas gush together,

And when the tombs are turned upside down,

The soul shall know what it has sent on or kept back!

O man! what has seduced thee concerning thy generous Lord, who created thee, and fashioned thee, and gave thee symmetry, and in what form He pleased composed thee?

Nay, but ye call the judgment a lie! but over you are guardians set—noble, writing down! they know what ye do!

Verily, the righteous are in pleasure, and, verily, the wicked are in hell; they shall broil therein upon the judgment day; nor shall they be absent therefrom!

And what shall make thee know what is the judgment day? Again, what shall make thee know what is the judgment day? A day when no soul shall control aught for another; and the bidding on that day belongs to God!

Death takes place according to the decree of God. No one can hasten or delay the hour. When that hour comes Isra'il, the angel of death, appears to draw out the soul from the body (Surah 32:11). Immediately after the burial ceremony two large, black, livid angels, Munkir and Nakîr, visit the grave and interrogate the dead. Their voices are like thunder and they wield enormous iron hammers. They ask the dead regarding faith in Allah and in Mohammed. If the answers are satisfactory, his soul has rest and peace until the Resurrection. If not, the dead endure what is called the torture of the tomb (*azab-al-qabr*). This and other punishment is his portion until the day of resurrection.

Mohammed taught that man's body is consumed in the earth, except the *os sacrum*, which remains uncorrupted, and is the germ of the resurrection body. The souls of believers remain alive in *Barzakh* (Hades), the place or the state of the dead between death and the last day. But there is disagreement as to the souls of infidels.

"The Hour" of the Day of Judgment is known only to Allah but its near approach is indicated by *lesser and greater signs*. Some say the former are very numerous but most agree that they are seven: (1) The decay of faith among men and the increase of wickedness and infidelity. (2) The advancing of the meanest persons to the highest dignity. (3) Increase of sensuality. (4) Tumults and seditions. (5) War with Greeks and Romans. (6) Great distress in all the world. (7) The provinces of Iraq and Syria will refuse to pay any tribute.

The greater "signs of the Hour" are the following. First, the appearance of the Mahdi, the rightly directed one, whom Mohammed foretold would come before



Tomb of Sidi Yakoob, a Moslem Saint  
at Tlemcen, Algeria

the end of the world. He will be a great conqueror and increase the might of Islam. According to Shiah sect this Mahdi has already appeared in the person of the twelfth Imam (255 A.H.) who is alive now but concealed in some secret place till the day of his manifestation.

Secondly, the appearance of the Antichrist (*Al Dajjal*) who is to be one-eyed and marked on his forehead with the Arabic letters K F R. that indicate infidel. He will ride on an ass and be followed by seventy thousand Jews of Ispahan. He will tarry only forty days and lay waste all the world except the cities of Mecca and Medina. At last he will be slain by Jesus at the gate of Lydda, Jerusalem.

The third "sign of the Hour" is the descent of Jesus, the son of Mary, from Heaven. The return of Jesus will be "near the white minaret to the east of the Mosque of Damascus at the time of the afternoon prayer." While he reigns as a Moslem prince there will be great security and plenty; lions and camels, bears and sheep, shall live in peace and a child shall play with serpents unhurt.

Another sign of the Last Day is the appearance of the Beast, *Al-Dābah*, fifty cubits high, "with the head of a bull, the eyes of a hog and the ears of an elephant, the legs of a camel and the voice of an ass." It will arise out of the earth near Mecca and mark the faces of believers and infidels so that all will know them as they are. (See the Koran text, Surah 27:84. "We will bring forth a beast out of the earth that shall speak to them and say, men of our signs would not be sure.")

Another sign is that the sun will rise in the West. This is interpreted by the modern school not literally, as do the orthodox, but figuratively to signify the rise of light and learning in the Western hemisphere.

The appearance of Gog and Magog is also a sign of the Last Day. These two barbarous tribes of Central Asia are supposed to have invaded all the West at the time of Alexander the Great (Surah 18:93-97) but he built a rampart to hold them back. This may refer to the Great Wall of China, "and Gog and Magog were not to scale it neither were they able to dig through it." Before the day of doom, however, they will return again "until a way is opened for Gog and Magog and they shall hasten from every high land" (Surah 21:96).

After all these signs of the day of doom are completed there will be the first blast of the trumpet which will shake the earth. The heavens will melt away, the sun be darkened and the stars fall from heaven. Women who give suck will abandon their infants and even the she-camels great with young will be neglected (Surah 81). The first blast will be followed by the second blast, which nothing will survive save Allah alone. The last who will die is the Angel of Death. The third blast is that of the Resurrection. During the interval of the second and third blasts of the trumpet, Allah will cause a rain to fall upon the earth, called "the water of life," which will penetrate the earth to the depth of twelve feet. By its efficacy the *os sacrum* of each individual of all humanity will be fructified, as corn sprouts from the rain and grows to perfection. When these resuscitated bodies hear the sound of the trumpet, they will sit down, each one on his own tomb anxiously awaiting what is to come.

The first to arise will be the archangels and then Mohammed who will mount his steed, *Buraq*, on which he once, during his earthly life, ascended to heaven. This animal, frequently depicted in Moslem art, re-

sembles a mule with wings and has the speed of lightning. All the dead will arise as they were when the angel of death took their souls away, each of the same age and appearance, and be gathered together.

The Judgment of the great Day will then take place. God will appear in the clouds surrounded by his angels to judge mankind. This judgment has five stages: the presentation, the opening of the books, the questioning, the account and the weighing in the balance. In fright of this terror men will flee for refuge to seek an intercessor. They will go to Adam, Abraham, Moses and Jesus without obtaining help. At last they will turn to Mohammed, who is "the only intercessor on the Day of Judgment."

There will then, according to Ghazali, be three classes: those who have done no good works and who will go to hell fire at once; those who have committed no evil action (prophets) and those who have performed many excellent works, who will go to Paradise at once; those who have done both good and bad works. These constitute the majority. For this class chiefly are the balances set up.

After the account has been rendered and sentence pronounced a bridge, *Sirat*, will be spread over the midst of hell and all believers and unbelievers will have to pass over it. The modern Moslems attempt to explain away this crass idea borrowed by Mohammed from Persian eschatology and accepted by the masses literally. In the first chapter of the Koran we have the *Sirat* used in a metaphorical sense, "Lead us in the *Way* that is straight," and yet most pious Moslems see a distinct reference here to the final passage across the dangerous bridge across the abyss of hell. Some even assert that the perilous passage will

be safe for those who have made the animal sacrifice of a sheep at the time of the Pilgrimage; for they will mount this animal and it will carry them safely over! The idea of a bridge comes from Zoroaster but has its parallel also in Talmudic Judaism. The Jews believed in "the bridge of hell, which is no broader than a thread" over which idolaters must pass (Midrash Yalkut, section Gehinnom).

After having passed over the bridge, *Sirat*, Mohammed and his faithful followers will come to the *Hawdh* or Pond full of sweet water from the river *Kauthar* that flows from the throne of God (Surah 108:1). Mohammed and his people will drink from it on their way to paradise.

Heaven and hell take a large place in Islamic thought as they do in the Koran. There are many popular books of devotion in the chief languages of the Moslem world devoted to this subject. One of them is entitled "*Daqa'q-ul-akhbar fi'l Jinnati'wa'l Nar*," (Exact Information on Paradise and Hell). This manual has had enormous circulation in Arabic and is translated into a score of other languages.

The places of eternal bliss and torment are depicted in the Koran and the language used by the commentators is as crass and sensuous as are the orthodox traditions on the subject. Modern Islam has tried to spiritualize the text and speaks of the highest bliss in heaven as the vision of God. But Lammens rightly remarks: "Nowhere is the beatific vision clearly mentioned: Allah remains inaccessible to human eyes (6: 102). If on the day of resurrection their looks are turned towards the Lord (7: 22-23) orthodox commentators interpret this passage as referring to fleshly vision; while the Mutazilites only see it as a figura-

tive and symbolic phrase. Otherwise Allah would be in one place and would be limited" (*Islam, Beliefs and Institutions*, p. 55).

The Moslem paradise, in the words of the Koran, is "a garden of delight . . . with couches and ewers, and a cup of flowing wine; their brows ache not from it, nor fails the sense; theirs shall be the *Houris* . . . ever virgins." What commentators say on these texts is often unfit for translation. The orthodox interpretation is literal, and so was that of Mohammed, because the traditions give minute particulars of the sanitary laws of heaven, as well as of its sexual delights.

According to Al Ghazali (*Ihya* IV: 337), Mohammed said: "The believer in Paradise will marry five hundred *houris*, four thousand virgins and eight thousand divorced women." Al Ghazali is one of the greatest theologians of Islam, and no orthodox Moslem would dispute his statement. In this very connection Ghazali quotes the words, "things which eye saw not and which did not enter into the heart of man!"

The Moslem hell is sevenfold, and "each portal has its party." All the wealth of Arabic vocabulary is exhausted in describing the terrors of the lost, and Dante's "Inferno" is a summer garden compared with the Jehannom of Islam. It is terribly hot, its fuel are men and stones, its drink liquid pus, the clothes of its inhabitants burning pitch, while serpents and scorpions sting their victims.

We turn from this disagreeable picture to ask what the effect of such teaching has been.

## II. THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAMIC ESCHATOLOGY.

What has been the result of the history of this Moslem dogma on the life of the common people and through

Islam and its literature outside of its pale on other faiths? No doubt it was the emphasis on the life beyond death and the day of doom that first arrested the Arab mind. The Arabs of that day were pagans but many did believe in a future life although their faith was dim and their outlook materialistic (Surah 6:29). The startling message of Mohammed was to repent and prepare for the Day of Judgment. Otto Pautz goes so far as to say: "That in no other religion do we find the point of emphasis so clearly placed on the life-beyond as in Islam. So that we may truly speak of this religion as a Religion of the world to come."<sup>2</sup> No other part of the Moslem creed is so closely associated with the proclamation of God's unity as the fact of the day of doom. At Mecca, Mohammed preached only monotheism, resurrection and retribution; and he was a fiery preacher. As R. A. Nicholson remarks, "These pages of the Koran abound in weird oaths and terrible imprecations mingled with strains of sublime poetry. One sees the preacher has lost control of himself and is speaking like a man possessed."<sup>3</sup>

In the long history of dogma theologians continued to emphasize this part of Mohammed's message. There is no doubt that whenever or wherever there was a revival in Islam it was based on a new emphasis of eschatology. This was the significance of Al Ghazali's place as the restorer of the faith (1100 A.D.) and of the constant appearances of Mahdis in the more recent history of Islam.

The word *Mahdi* means literally the rightly-guided

<sup>2</sup> Mohammed's Lehre von der Offenbarung, p. 202. Leipzig, 1898.

<sup>3</sup> Introduction to Palmer's Quran, p. XV. London, 1928.

one. It is used of certain individuals in the past history of Islam and also of an individual who is expected in the future. More especially it refers to the latter. For as Dr. Macdonald remarks, "the general honorific title became a special designation and even a proper name for a restorer of the Faith in the last days." The Shiah sect has always had a Mahdi. Some Sunnis say "there is no Mahdi save 'Isa," (i.e., Jesus) who will restore faith on his return from heaven. But the masses always expect a Mahdi in flesh and blood with a sword to reëstablish religion and introduce a short millennium before the end of the world.

The Mahdi is further described as one who is to be of the offspring of Mohammed and bear his name. He will fill the world with equity and justice. The earth will bring forth superabundantly and money will be so common as to be trampled under foot. (Compare Revelation 21:21).

Mohammed Ahmad, the Mahdi, (who ruled the Egyptian Sudan with fire and sword and whose successor killed Charles G. Gordon at Khartum), is only one example of the fanatic power latent in this dogma. During the World War there was a Mahdi in Somaliland who gave much trouble to all western governments. One may expect from time to time fresh ebullitions of this sort as a result of faith in the Mahdi.

We must also note the astonishing influence of Islamic eschatology, through Dante, on Roman Catholic ideas of heaven, hell and purgatory. One of the greatest Moslem mystics, Ibn 'Arabi of Spain, died twenty-five years before Dante was born. He wrote numerous works on theology and especially on the world-to-come. The Spanish orientalist Miguel Asin, a Roman Catholic and professor at the University of Madrid, wrote a

book on Moslem eschatology and the *Divine Comedy*. This work was translated into English, *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, and made a sensation.

The conclusion of Miguel Asin is that Dante was indebted to Ibn 'Arabi, the Spanish Moslem mystic who died twenty-five years before Dante was born, for his conception of the *Divine Comedy*. He says, "Thus the two works agree in subject matter, action and allegorical purpose, in their principal and secondary persons; in the architecture of the astronomical heavens; and in the didactic trend of ideas and the use of literary devices to produce in abstract a national cyclopaedia. To these features of resemblance must be added the similarity in style; both works are so abstruse and involved at times as to suggest to the reader the mysteriousness of an oracle."

As a good Catholic, Miguel Asin is jealous for Christ and His Church. His conclusion, therefore, is characteristic, both as a defense of Dante and an indictment of Islam: "In the end we find that it is that perennial source of poetry and spirituality, the Divine religion of Christ, that furnishes the real key to the genesis of Dante's poem and its precursors, both Christian and Moslem. For Islam, be it once more said, is but the bastard offspring of the Gospel and the Mosaic Law, part of whose doctrines on the after life it adopted.

Such is the character, the origin and the influence of Mohammed's teaching on the life after death and the world beyond. Is it not a conclusive argument to preach Jesus Christ and the Resurrection to our Moslem brethren so that they may have a living hope as an anchor for their souls?

VI

ALMS TO WIN CONVERTS

“The idea of enforcing alms as a yearly tribute appears to belong to the period when the necessity for organization of the state on some sort of financial basis had arisen; when money was wanted, and the expedient which had till now been employed, robbery of the Jews, was no longer available, owing to the Jews having all been either massacred or despoiled. Experience had shown the Prophet that the new converts were much more anxious to receive than to give: lavish presents had been deemed advisable in the case of the Meccans to induce them to remain faithful to Islam.”

—DAVID S. MARGOLIOUTH in  
*Mohammed and the Rise of Islam*

## CHAPTER VI

### ALMS TO WIN CONVERTS

SINCE the days of the East India Company, missionaries have been accused of winning converts by offering gifts or worldly advantages. The phrase "rice-Christians" has a bad odor. Whatever may have been the case in other environments, the convert from Islam to Christianity faces the loss of all things dear in his former social community and (because of the old and not yet wholly abrogated law of apostasy) often faces persecution and death.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter, however, deals with the story of early Islam and the methods then used by Mohammed to win over the half-convinced to full allegiance. It is a sorry story but has its lessons for the Christian missionary today. It also explains the attitude of some Moslems today to the Gospel message.

It is of deep interest to study the motives that led some of the earliest converts to Islam to accept Mohammed's divine mission. The material is abundant and one has only to trace the steps in each individual case to reach a general conclusion. Nöldeke gives the list of earliest converts as Khadijah, Zaid, 'Ali, certain slaves, Sa'ad and Abu Bekr. These were followed by Othman and others of the Quraish. It was not the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Law of Apostasy in Islam*—Zwemer (London, 1923).

Prophet's sword but his astute beneficence that was chiefly instrumental in the days when Islam was weak. Othman, for example, loved Mohammed's fair daughter, Rukayyah, and when he learned she had been betrothed to another, complained to Abu Bekr. "Abu Bekr in reply asked him whether he did not think the Meccan gods stocks and stones?—a question of doubtful appropriateness, it might seem, unless their services had been called in by the lover; but a conversation followed, when Othman inferred that if he chose to declare the Meccan gods worthy of contempt and acknowledge that Mohammed had a mission to suppress them, Mohammed's daughter might still be his. Mohammed presently passed by. Abu Bekr whispered something into his ear and the affair was arranged. Othman became a believer and Rukayyah became his wife."<sup>2</sup>

The history of other cases is given by Muir, Margoliouth and Caetani and is based on reliable Arabic sources. Margoliouth generalizes perhaps too bluntly: "The skill of both Abu Bekr and the Prophet was displayed in retaining their hold on this slowly growing company. *In the case of the poor it was done by subsidies*; presently, when Islam was penalized, the Prophet found he had whole families on his hands; but we need not doubt that from the first the wealth which he controlled proved useful."<sup>3</sup>

"Like most of those who have known mankind thoroughly, Mohammed held, and at times all but openly avowed, the doctrine that every man has his price, and indeed a price to be estimated in camels."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Margoliouth's Mohammed, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> Idem., p. 113.

<sup>4</sup> Idem., p. 113.

In the Koran itself we have a striking passage that witnesses to this method of conversion during the early centuries and which has proved therefore a *crux* to Modernists in Islam. It occurs in the chapter on Repentance (Surah 9:60). Palmer translates it as follows: "Alms are only for the poor and needy, and those who work for them, *and those whose hearts are reconciled*, and those in captivity, and those in debt, and those who are on God's path, and for the wayfarer; — an ordinance this from God, for God is knowing, wise."

The translation given of the Arabic words *al-muallafah-qulubuhum*, (indicated in the passage underscored) is not altogether accurate.

In the standard Arabic dictionary by Fairozabadi he gives a definition of the two words in question and adds a list of thirty-two chiefs who received presents from Mohammed "in order that they might become Moslems and so gain over their tribes" (Vol. III, page 118).

Such a definition lands us in the center of two questions we would consider: namely, the circumstances that led to this special revelation and its result in Moslem law and practice as regards the use of religious taxes and benevolences, the *zakat* and the *sadaqa*.

The standard commentaries Beidhawi (Vol. I, page 106), Al Khazin (Vol. II, page 253) and Tabari give a brief account of what occurred to justify this revelation. Further details are found in Ibn Hisham, the *Musnad*, the *Isabah*, in Al Jahiz, etc. We summarize the facts as given by Sir Wm. Muir (Mahomet, Vol. IV, p. 149-153) and by Professor Margoliouth (Mohammed, p. 407 ff.). There can be no question that every

statement is well documented. The full references can be found also in Caetani (*Annali dell' Islam*, Vol. II, p. 183, 184 and 427; under 8 A. H. paragraph 164 and 10 A. H. paragraph 113).

It was after the siege of Taif when Mohammed's army was returning to Jirrana toward the end of February 630 A.D., that the Prophet was mobbed on account of a quarrel regarding the distribution of the booty. He had already mounted his camel and was proceeding to his tent, when the people, fearing lest the spoil, as well as the prisoners, should slip from their grasp, crowded round him with loud cries: "Distribute to us the booty, the camels and the flocks!" The crowd thronged him so closely and so rudely, that he was driven to seek refuge under a tree. While thus pressed on every side, his mantle was torn from his shoulders. "Return to me my mantle, O man!" cried Mohammed, who had now secured a more free position. "Return my mantle: for I swear by the Lord that if the sheep and the camels were as many as the trees of the Tihama in number, I would divide them all amongst you. Ye have not heretofore found me niggardly or false." Then he plucked a hair from his camel's hump, and holding it aloft said: "Even to a hair like this, I shall not keep back aught but the fifth, and that, too, I give up unto you." The people were quieted and Mohammed went his way.

Shortly afterwards he made good his promise and by princely liberality gained over the hearts of some of the leading chiefs of Mecca and of neighboring tribes. To those of the greatest influence, he presented each, one hundred camels. Among them we find Abu Sofian, with his two sons, Yazid and Muawia; Hakim Ibn Hizam, Safwan, Suheil, Huweitab, Uyeina, and

several others, who but a few weeks before were the Prophet's deadly enemies. To the lesser chiefs he gave fifty camels each (Caetani gives the names of thirty recipients). So liberal was he that, in some instances where discontent was expressed with the amount, the gift was without hesitation doubled.

Muir states that Abu Sofian and each of his sons received forty ounces of silver, and Hakim, with five others, a hundred camels each; six others received fifty camels each. This was wealth indeed for nomads! But such favors lavished on doubtful adherents gave offense to the older converts. "Thus one complained that such Bedouin chieftains as Acra and Uyeina received each one hundred camels, while a faithful believer like Jueil got nothing at all. 'And what of that?' replied the Prophet. 'I swear that Jueil is the best man that ever stepped on earth, were it filled never so full with Acras and Uyeinas; but I wished to gain over the hearts of these men to Islam, while Jueil hath no need of any such inducement.'"

When the discontent became general and the citizens of Medina joined in it, Mohammed called the murmurers together and addressed them: "Ye men of Medina, it hath been reported to me that you are discontented, because I have given unto these chiefs largesses, and have given nothing to you. Now speak unto me. Did I not come unto ye whilst you were wandering, and the Lord gave you the right direction?—needy, and He enriched you?—at enmity amongst yourselves, and He had filled your hearts with love and unity? Why are ye disturbed in mind because of the things of this life, wherewith I have sought to incline the hearts of those men unto Islam, whereas ye are already steadfast in your faith? Are ye not

satisfied that others should obtain the flocks and the camels, while ye carry back the Prophet of the Lord unto your homes? No, I will not leave you ever. If all mankind went one way, and the men of Medina another way, verily I would go the way of the men of Medina. The Lord be favorable unto them, and bless them, and their sons and their sons' sons for ever!" At these words all wept, till the tears ran down their beards; and they called out with one voice,—“Yea, we are well satisfied, O Prophet, with our lot!”

So Mohammed himself made no attempt apparently to hide the motive which impelled these munificent gifts. The chiefs who received them are referred to in the Koran as *those whose hearts have been gained over*; and they retained the appellation ever after.

We have the following additional information regarding the division of the spoils in Margoliouth's "Mohammed" (p. 407): "With regard to the property of the Hawazin, about the division of which there was to be no question, the Prophet took a hint from the willingness of the Medinese to sacrifice their worldly advantages. To them he gave nothing; instead he bestowed enormous gratuities on his former enemies, the chieftains of the Kuraish, such as Abu Sufyan and his sons, and the Banu Sulaim who had won the battle for him. While persons who had no faith were given one hundred camels apiece, others who were acknowledged to be the salt of the earth were told to find in faith its own reward (*Isabah*, i., 688). Nay, even the leader of the Hawazin, Malik, son of 'Auf, was offered one hundred camels if he would turn Moslem; and the brave warrior was persuaded and joined the fold. The Prophet confessed with naive frankness that these presents were meant to confirm the new converts

in their faith; as we have often seen, he never troubled himself about the motives which produced conviction. The motives which dictated this strange policy are hard to fathom: ill-gotten gains are consumed too quickly for us to suppose that he hoped to win the permanent gratitude of his former enemies by such bribes; perhaps the sour faces with which the Quriashites met the members of the Prophet's family made him devise a plan for saving his relatives from annoyance (*Musnad*, i., 207); perhaps he thought it all important to impress the Meccans with the magnificence of his gifts, as he had impressed them before with his regal state: and this, he knew, could safely be done at the expense of the Medinese—as indeed some professed to be convinced of his divine mission by his lavish munificence, which exceeded all human performance (*Jahiz*, *Misers*, 170); and casual visitors to Medinah were treated so handsomely that they could promise their tribesmen independence for life if they became Moslems (*Musnad*, iii., 108).”

It is on the verse in the Koran that was revealed under *such* circumstances that the law of *zakat* and *sadaqa* is based. Arabic authors use the latter word in two senses; sometimes as synonymous with *zakat*, i.e., the legal poor-rate which is compulsory and fixed, sometimes, and more properly, in the sense of voluntary alms-giving. In Bukhari the two words are used indiscriminately (Cf. article *Sadaqa*, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, T. H. Weir). If there were any doubt as to the identity of the two terms it would be removed by the fact that in *fiqh* the six or seven classes of persons (some say eight) who are entitled to benefit by them are the same in each case. These classes are given as follows: the poor and needy, those engaged in the

work of collecting and distributing the *zakat*, Moslem captives in enemies' hands, debtors, those engaged in holy war (jihad), travelers and, the class now under consideration, *muallafah qulubuhum*.

Al Ghazali (Ihya, Vol. I, p. 160) enumerates eight classes who may receive the legal-alms and describes his class four, *muallafah qulubuhum* as follows: "Those whose hearts are inclined towards Islam, that is the noble families who became Moslems from among their people and by the gift of *zakat* were firmly established in Islam (*taqrirahum*) and also to inspire others like them, or their followers with a desire for Islam (*targhib*)." Beidhawi plainly states that the portion given to a *muallaf* at that time, and later, was in order to increase the Moslem community. "When God had strengthened Islam and its numbers were increased there was no need for this provision and it was abrogated" (Vol. I, p. 106).

In Charles Hamilton's translation of *El Hedaya* (London, 1791, Vol. I, p. 53) it is stated that the law of giving money to those whose hearts incline to Islam "has ceased to operate, since the time of the Prophet, because he used to bestow *zakat* upon them as a bribe or gratuity to prevent them from molesting *Mussulmans*, and also to secure their occasional assistance; but when God gave strength to the faith, and to its followers, and rendered the *Mussulmans* independent of such assistance, the occasion of bestowing this gratuity upon them no longer remained; and all the doctors of law unite in this opinion."

On the contrary, it is evident that this custom of winning over converts to Islam by gift of money or property continued for many centuries. In the standard work of *fiqh* by Ibn Rushd Al Qartabi, who died

595 A. H., we read: "Finally the question arises whether those whose hearts are to be won over retained this right to our day or not, namely, that of receiving presents. Malik says this class no longer exists, but Al Shafi'i and Abu Hanifa, on the contrary, assert that the right of this class remains until now, if the Imam so advises and they are such men as the Imam is to try to win over to Islam."

"The reason for disagreement was on the question whether this custom was peculiar to the Prophet or a universal custom, both for him and for his people; and if it is a universal custom, whether it is permitted for the Imam to do this under all circumstances or in some circumstances only; that is, in case Islam is weak and not when Islam is strong. It is for this reason that Malik said: 'There is no need to win them over now because Islam has grown strong.' And this opinion as we have stated, was given for the general good" (*Bidayet-al-Mujtahid* Vol. I, p. 251).

The New Islam, especially as represented by the Ahmadiya Movement, has its own rationalistic interpretation of the passage. Mohammed Ali, in his commentary on the Koran, published at Woking, England, (page 411) gives this note in explanation of the text: "*Muallafah qulubuhum* literally means those whose hearts are made to incline or be conciliated. With respect to the preaching of religion, there is always a class which is ready to listen. Expenses in connection with the arrangements to convey the truth to them are recognized here as a part of the necessary expenditure of the poor-rate. Ibn Abbas' suggestion that some Arab chiefs are meant is rejected by Razi."

The Shiah teaching on the subject is practically the same as that of the Sunnis. A. Querry (*Droit Musul-*

man, *Recueil de lois concernant les musulmans schyites*, Vol. I, p. 157, l'Imprimerie Nationale, Paris, 1871), in speaking of *zakat*, and after enumerating the various classes says: "Les auxiliaires infidèles qui, en cas de guerre, combattent pour la cause musulmane, *el molefèt*, composent la troisième catégorie d'ayants droit au produit de la taxe des pauvres. Tous les autres auxiliaires sont exclus de toute participation à ce produit."

Juynboll (*Handbuch des Islamischen Gesetzes*, p. 106) gives the eight classes of people to whom *zakat* may be paid according to the Shafi'i school and describes the fourth class as follows: "Those whose heart is inclined or whose hearts may be inclined; the Koran intends by them, as we have indicated, the important people of Mecca. In law, the words are understood to mean people who have already been converted to Islam, but whose zeal for this religion is still weak; further important people whose conversion would have great influence upon others toward Islam and who must therefore be won over by gifts."

In a foot-note, Juynboll adds that owing to the use of the word in this passage (Surah 9:60), *muallaf* in Islam has become the common word for convert!

It is so used in Egypt of Copts or Jews who have turned Moslem. Their number is considerable every year. The practice of winning over converts by presents (from the *zakat*) did not cease with Mohammed but continued in the later history of Islam.

The status of the tolerated cults was such in Egypt and all the Near East that "any member of the tolerated cults could at any moment join the dominant community by pronouncing the Moslem Creed" (Margoliouth's "Early Development of Islam" p. 99).

In other words, they could pass from the *tribute-paying* to the *zakat-receiving* class—at least until their faith was firm. “The Chronicles of Islam record numerous cases of men who had obtained some promotion in the service of the state by their talents, yielding to persuasion on the part of the sovereign to accept Islam in order to win their way to get higher honors” (Margoliouth’s “Early Development of Islam” p. 132).

We can understand the present-day Moslem mentality better when we bear such facts in mind. Nor will we judge too harshly an enquirer who expects similar favors from Christians since he now belongs to the class of *muallafah qulubuhum* toward Christianity.

In conclusion we call attention to the context of this passage. From verse 58-64 the Prophet justifies his conduct by a direct appeal to God. Nowhere else in the Koran does Mohammed put himself on so high a level as the channel of inspiration. “They who injure the Apostle of God shall suffer grievous punishment . . . do they not know that he who opposeth *God and His Apostle* shall without doubt be punished with fire of hell and shall remain therein forever” (vv. 62-64). The eternal torment of hell for those who found fault with such a use of the public alms as we have pointed out!

As Dr. E. M. Wherry in his commentary (Vol. II, p. 298) remarks: “A Moslem sees nothing in this passage derogatory to Mohammed’s character, because he believes that he was truly a prophet of God, and therefore judges that to oppose the Prophet is to oppose God. How our Christian apologists for Mohammed can exonerate their hero here we cannot imagine. Was

he a prophet? Did he originate the language of this passage in his own mind, or did he receive it, as he pretended, directly from God, so that he was merely the mouth-piece of God? We are not aware that any of these admirers of Mohammed hold opinions consistent with such a claim. But if he be the author of the Koran, and if he be not a prophet, how can he be exonerated from blasphemy and imposture in the use of such language as this?"

## VII

### PRESENT DAY MOVEMENTS IN ISLAM

“The post-War period has seen Islam as a self-conscious organism which has awakened and risen to take its destiny in its own hands. Throughout the world of Islam there is to be seen a conscious and passionate effort to realize and assert nationhood. A great change was brought about in consequence of the World War and some of its collateral developments. On the ruins of the Ottoman Empire and in other quarters a network of fully independent Islamic States came into being, while those Islamic countries which are still under foreign subjection are on the alert and feel that the hour of their emancipation has struck. . . . There is no part of the Islamic world where these changes are following one upon the other in so rapid a succession as in the Near East, and it is here that the observer can see at its best this transformation in progress. He cannot fail to be sharply impressed by the abounding vitality and the tremendous force which is driving the peoples of the Near East onwards in their awakening.”

—ZAKI ALI, M.D., in  
*Islam in the World*

## CHAPTER VII

### PRESENT DAY MOVEMENTS IN ISLAM

**I**N the three preceding chapters we have seen something of Islam of yesterday, its dogma and practice as based upon the life and teaching of the Prophet. Thirteen centuries have passed and Islam of today, (still true to its ancient loyalties to Allah and Mohammed,) seems very different in its character and outlook. What was for twelve hundred years development and expansion has within the past century changed into reformation, reaction or revolt. Terrific forces from without and from within have surged against the old orthodoxy and the old economic and social life which characterized the whole world of Islam. To describe these forces and their effect is the purpose of this chapter. One can only sketch it in outline. The canvas is too small for the panorama.

One cannot but view with astonishment the stupendous changes among Moslems everywhere since the opening of the present century. Perhaps New Turkey is the outstanding example. Here is the testimony of one long resident in Istanbul:

“The former Turkish Empire, heir since nearly five centuries to the prestige and power of the Eastern Roman Empire, has crumbled and disappeared. The caliphate has passed into abeyance. New states have

risen with leaders from among the people, inaugurating political and social changes without parallel in the history of Islam. Turkey at the head, deliberately separating religion from government, has organized a secular state, banned religious orders, adopted Western codes of law, and invited Western advice in the development of its educational systems and of its economic life.

“Cinema and radio have brought Moslems all over the world into intimate contact with the life of non-Moslems, bridging the diversity of language by appeal to the eye, and the chasm of illiteracy by the spoken word, and thereby there has been set in motion a process of cultural assimilation that is automatic and universal.

“The customs of the past no longer satisfy. There is a turning from authority to fact. In contrast to the old apathy, there is a desire for a fuller, better life, and for freedom and power to attain it. Secular motives rather than religious have become controlling, widely, both in public affairs and in private life. Racial consciousness and national consciousness have sprung into life and are working powerfully to shape new orders, new literatures. Moslem peoples who are not Arabs by race are even beginning to sense Arab elements in Islam as alien to themselves.

“Within Islam religious reform and social reform are active. Translation of the Koran into the vernacular is now approved, and in Turkey the language of prayer is no longer Arabic, but Turkish. The Koran has been reinterpreted in the light of modern life, and is understood today to favor monogamy rather than polygamy, and democracy rather

than autocracy, and to condemn slavery. A beginning has been made by Moslems in critical study of the Traditions and of Moslem history. A new type of Moslem apologetic has appeared, cast in the molds of Western thought and using its results and processes. Islam is declared to be not unchanging and unfriendly to progress, as has often been said, but able to adjust itself to a changing world and itself the patron of investigation and learning."

These radical changes in Turkey are due to many causes but are chiefly due to the impact of the Western World, its ideas and ideals by trade, commerce, politics and missions. The last factor includes all that the early missionaries did through education, medicine and relief, in Moslem lands.

The missionary enterprise in the modern Church began when there were no steamship lines and no railways, and when Islam with its center at Constantinople so dominated the Near East that it formed a barrier, and the early missionaries were compelled to go around the Cape to reach the Far East. Today, steamship lines form a network across the seven seas. They not only belt the globe in all directions, but are increasingly commodious and luxurious in their appointments.

In regard to railways, it was only during the last decade of the nineteenth century and in the present century that the iron rails began to cross the great Moslem areas of North and South Africa, Central Asia, India and China.

The introduction of the motor car also in every part of the Moslem world has ushered in the building of highways and opened avenues for trade and commerce in regions that were once almost inaccessible. For

example, in the province of Hadramaut, in South Arabia, which was wholly out of touch with the western world, there are now five hundred miles of motor roads and two hundred cars are in use. We read that eighteen months ago there were only half a dozen motor cars on the coast and seventy in the interior, which had been carried up in pieces by camel caravan. Now, in the same district, passenger lorries ply daily between Tarim and Shihr. There is regular motor transport across the deserts of Arabia and in every part of Iran. In China, until the outbreak of the recent hostilities, they were building motor roads in every province, even as far as the borders of Tibet. North Africa has motor roads equal to the best in Europe, and one can buy a tourist ticket by motor to Timbuctu. It is no exaggeration to state that the Ford car has increased the area and efficiency of the work of the itinerating missionaries in nearly every part of the world one hundredfold.

Another force which is binding the world of Islam together for better or for worse is the electric telegraph and cable, the telephone and wireless stations. More marvelous than the magic carpet of the Arabian Nights is the fact that radio-receiving sets are found in Bedouin encampments with an old Ford car to give motor power! Sinbad the sailor now drives a motor-launch and the caravan is envious of the automobile.

Two other modern inventions have revolutionized life, namely, the daily press and the cinema. The present-day ubiquity, activity and enterprise of journalism has created a new situation and a new mentality among the masses. Provincialism is on the wane even in the remote corners of the world. A Malay weekly, published in Borneo, for example, has on a single

page an article on Islam in America, on the new mosque in Berlin, on nationalism in Bengal, and an advertisement of a Javanese steamship company that accommodates Borneo pilgrims for Mecca if they will embark at Padang, Sumatra! The press is at once a proof of the unity and solidarity of the world and of its hopeless divisions and misunderstandings. It is a daily, infallible index to the surging currents of thought in a sea of unrest. It is also a thermometer on which the wise may read the rising or falling temperature of nationalism and a barometer that records approaching storms of suspicion and war.

The last sheaf of "news-service" from Iran—which has gone through a revolution as startling as that of Turkey—tells of the construction of forty-nine hospitals, twenty-six hospitals for the insane and many public buildings; of splendid tombs for famous poets and scholars; of enormous dams and irrigation works, railways and grain elevators; of lighthouses and naval bases on the coast of the Persian Gulf. Our chapter on Arabia tells of economic changes in that vast peninsula due to the discovery of oil and the introduction of motor cars. Fifty years ago I was "the only white man" living on the islands of Bahrein. Now there are hospitals, schools, a church, many missionaries and a large European community. Bahrein is the midway station between London and Bombay. "Land planes and sea planes are heard overhead so often that the Arabs have come to take them for granted and do not even stop to look up when they hear them. A European visitor may arrive at the airport, be whisked away in a car and be entertained in an air-conditioned house at the oil camp and leave the island without so much as a glimpse of Arab life."

Greater than these economic changes throughout the Near East, and the World of Islam generally, we note far deeper social and religious changes. Dr. John R. Mott called attention to them in pleading for the urgency of the missionary enterprise today:

“The social and religious system of Islam, for centuries the most rigid, exclusive, resistant, and, as some would say, the most intolerant of all, has during the decades of the present century been undergoing stupendous and well-nigh unbelievable changes. Almost every Moslem land—in Africa, in Western, Central, and Southern Asia, and in the East Indies—is ablaze with new national and social aspirations and ambitions. One finds an earnest struggle to achieve a political organization of a more democratic and constitutional form. This is often coupled, however, with pronounced hostility to Western governments.

“The renaissance of Arabic culture, the rapid multiplication of periodicals and of book and pamphlet literature, the great increase in the numbers of Moslem youth in schools and colleges of Western learning, and the surging tide of new thought, all bear witness to a notable intellectual awakening. The new search for truth and the ferment of dynamic and even of revolutionary ideas are exerting a great emancipating, liberalizing and transforming influence. The larger political and intellectual freedom leads inevitably to greater religious freedom.”<sup>1</sup>

But, alas, this last statement has notable exceptions. Were it not for an exaggerated nationalism, it would be true. But in the case of Islam the majority identi-

<sup>1</sup> *Methodists United for Action*. Nashville, 1939.

fies state and religion, with the result that the minorities of non-Moslems have *their* religious freedom curtailed. This principle militated against American mission schools in Iran. And the latest news from Egypt is that a decree has been passed by the Cabinet "that forbids proselytizing, the distribution of religious literature in schools, hospitals and charitable institutions, and the presence of pupils at public prayers other than those of their own faith." Such is the reaction of totalitarian Islam when nationalism rides in the saddle. It may, however, be only a passing phase of national progress. There are currents and counter-currents.

The Nizam of Hyderabad India is an enlightened Moslem ruler—one of the ablest and wealthiest of India's princes. He gives religious freedom to Hindu and Christian in his domain and last year expressed his admiration for the Prince of Peace in a Persian Christmas poem from which we quote three stanzas:

Now is heard the joyous tidings  
Of the coming of the Spring.  
Now, behold! The cage is opened  
And each bird is on the wing.

Turns unto the height of heaven,  
Rapt with wonder, every flower  
When the Mother greets the Prophet,  
Hails Messiah's natal hour!

What was Jesus' mission, Osman?  
Ask them whom he came to guide.  
Gave his life for their redemption,  
For his flock he gladly died! <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>The *Star of India* quoting the poem said: "H. E. H. the Nizam delights his many loyal Christian subjects by paying tribute to Jesus Christ."

The last line recalls a meeting in Hyderabad in 1928 when I spoke on the Death of Jesus Christ to a large Moslem audience and a number of the Nizam's court were present and gave cordial response.

In the chapter on India which follows this, the reader will note the changes that have come to Islam through the rise of Modernism and also new sects and movements.

The New Islam in every part of the world is a reality but it takes different forms and different attitudes toward Christ and the Gospel message. Away from Mohammed does not always mean back to Christ. In a thoughtful paper by Mr. S. A. Morrison he distinguished four tendencies: "Islam rejected, Islam restricted, Islam reformed, and finally Islam revived." Turkey is an example of the first; Iran of the second; India of the third; Arabia and Egypt of the fourth. But the subject is too complex for generalization and all missionaries should read the entire article carefully.<sup>3</sup>

One thing is certain and full of deep significance; Islam faces a crisis in the lands where once it was dominant. Its efforts at propagandism in India and Africa "remind one of those sparse green twigs sometimes still appearing at the extreme ends of half-dried-up boughs in trees whose core has for long been decaying from old age." Islam suffers because it feels itself under the tutelage of the West. In Turkey it suffers by being violated in its own bosom; in Russia from Soviet persecution; and in Iran from a revolt against the Arabic language and tradition. Mustapha Kemal Atatürk of Turkey raised great ex-

<sup>3</sup> *New Tendencies in Islamic Religious Thought*. *International Review of Missions*. April, 1927.

pectations, but he has turned out a bitter disappointment for all Moslems. The disenchantment was cruel but complete. The high hopes fixed on Ibn Saoud of Arabia to revive the caliphate were blasted. The Moslem World Conference held at Mecca, and afterwards in Europe, proved a failure; none of the resolutions carried out.

The Dutch Orientalist, Dr. Van der Meulen, who spent many years in the diplomatic service at Jiddah, asks, "Are we standing at the eve of a revival, a renaissance of Islam? No, the phenomena do not point this way. Except for the Wahhabi movement in Central Arabia, it has all been a question of self-defense and resistance" (*Moslem World*, October, 1936).

Regarding the enormous area and population of Indonesia, Professor C. C. Berg speaks of "destructive forces that are at work against Islam all over the world." Of the favorable factors he says that they "might possibly result only in the long run in a decrease in the rate of decay" ("Whither Islam?" pp. 306-311).

The geographical expansion of Islam in Africa has often been exaggerated. The latest statistical survey shows a smaller proportion of Moslems in nearly every area in North-central Africa than that formerly estimated (*Moslem World*, April, 1936). Dr. Deaville Walker wrote a few years ago: "Within a comparatively short time, we pictured great pagan populations being rapidly Islamized. I am convinced that the position is wholly different today. Careful personal investigation in Sierra Leone and Mendeland, the Gold Coast and Ashanti, Nigeria, and in the French colonies and protectorates of Dahomey, Togo, and the Ivory Coast, have made it clear to

me that the advance of Islam is being definitely checked, and that today we are winning far more Africans to the faith of Christ than the Moslems are winning for their Prophet. Startling as this may sound, I believe it to be absolutely true."

What elements in Islam are today resurgent? Does the old Mohammedan law or jurisprudence any longer prevail under the new nationalism and the new state? Or has the purely Islamic-governed state disappeared even in Arabia and Afghanistan?

Has the social structure of Islam withstood the feminist movement and female education anywhere? Can we seriously speak of "resurgent forces" as regards polygamy, slavery, concubinage, and the seclusion of womanhood? Was the suppression of the age-old Moharram celebration in Iran a sign of vitality in Islam? Is the religion of Islam showing a new vitality when three of its "five pillars" are crumbling? The daily prayers are no longer observed as they were ten years ago. The number of pilgrims to Mecca, in spite of new facilities by motorbus and steamships, has dwindled. Mecca is losing its importance. Are the uniting forces that remain, the Arabic language and culture, the sense of brotherhood, the press and Al Azhar of Egypt—are these forces strong enough to counteract the disintegrating factors? Or will the progressive secularization of Moslem life rob *all* life from the religion of Islam? Will the waning of the Dervish orders or their suppression, as in Turkey, continue?

The fact is that Islam has been severely wounded in the house of its friends. The younger Egyptian modernists, instead of building carefully on the foundations of reform laid by Jamal-al-Dinal-Afghani

and the great Mohammed 'Abdu, have ruthlessly undermined what remained intact. Mansur Fahmi of Cairo, in his doctor's thesis, proved that Islam was progressively responsible for the degradation of womanhood. Dr. Taha Husain raised a storm of hostility by a book proving that much of early Islamic literature was a forgery, fabricated to prop up the Koran and tradition. "The story of Abraham and Ishmael building the Kaaba is all fiction." Ali Abd al Razik went even further, and in his book, "Islam and the Fundamentals of Authority," advocated the abolition of the caliphate, "which has always been a misfortune." Moreover, he proposed the complete separation of Church and State, and the abandonment of the vast body of canon law (Adams, "Islam and Modernism in Egypt," pp. 254-265).

When the best thinkers in Islam accept an honest historical research of all her spiritual property, it will mean a revelation of bankruptcy. When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? Only the real gold, the theistic spiritual values of Islam, will be able to withstand the heat of this inevitable furnace. A careful study of the whole question leads to the conclusion that Islam faces a grave crisis and the Church of Christ a great opportunity.

The present day is a passing day. It may be now or never. Dr. John R. Mott speaks of "Islam as the test of the validity and vitality of the Christian Faith." Missions to Moslems are the acid test of the power of the gospel. Paul said it was the power of God unto salvation to the Jews and Gentiles of his day although they considered its message a stumbling-block and foolishness. Paul's faith was vindicated by the establishment of Jewish-Gentile churches across the

Roman Empire. His dauntless faith was rewarded. Today Dr. Mott writes: "The essential victory or ultimate triumph of our Christian faith is involved as well as its validity and vitality in our attitude toward Moslems. A gospel which cannot, after being adequately brought to bear upon Moslems, win their minds and hearts, and command the allegiance of their wills, must fail to satisfy the deepest longings and the highest expectations of the followers of other religions and of those without any religious faith. Ultimately, therefore, the triumph of the Christian cause in other foreign fields and at the home base is involved in what takes place in the Mohammedan world."

**VIII**  
**MOSLEM INDIA**

“India, so commonly described as the land of the Vedas, and the home of the Hindus, is also the Motherland of the largest Moslem population found in any single country. Of the total of two hundred and forty million Moslems in the world, nearly seventy millions, or every fourth one, belongs to India. Only by comparison with other nations can these enormous figures be appreciated. In Bengal for example there are more Moslems than in all Arabia, Turkey and Persia combined. The Punjab has almost as many Moslems as the land of Egypt.”

—MURRAY T. TITUS in  
*Indian Islam*

## CHAPTER VIII

### MOSLEM INDIA

**M**Y last visit to India was thirteen years ago. My first extended visit was at the time of the Missionary Conference on work for Moslems held at Lucknow in 1911. For all these many years my conviction has deepened that India is the greatest Moslem mission field in the whole world, because of its population, its neglect and its opportunity. In 1928 we traveled eight thousand nine hundred miles in India, by rail and motor-car, for nearly five months, holding nineteen conferences with over seven hundred missionaries, from Rawalpindi to Colombo and from Bombay to Calcutta. The challenge of Indian Islam is as strong now as it was then. The new census returns have only emphasized the need and revealed a great unfinished task. The dearth of trained leaders is as evident now as it was in 1928 and, as more than one conference resolution expressed it, "the Indian Church needs missions to Moslems to help clarify and crystallize her own theological thinking." The background of Hinduism is pantheistic. The background of Islam, as of Christianity, is theistic. Moslem converts reinforce the structure of the indigenous church as steel strengthens concrete. Their strong faith in God, in prayer, in personal responsibility and in a day of judgment are in vivid contrast to Hindu beliefs.

No part of the world offers a greater, a more urgent, a more neglected, or a more hopeful field for evangelizing Mohammedans than India. The latest Indian census available shows a Moslem population of 77,677,545. This is a larger number of Mohammedans than are found in all Arabia, Persia, Turkey, Egypt, Syria and Palestine put together. Moreover it shows an increase of two and a half million in a decade — larger numerically but less proportionately than that of Christians. A writer in *The Muslim Review* (October, 1933) spoke of “Vanishing Islam in India,” in a discouraging mood:

“The facts, figures, events and the attitude of non-Moslems shows that the Moslems as a nation are being downtrodden. Once the dominant factor of the world population, now becoming unimportant; once ruling nation, now becoming slave; once progressing and advancing community, now vanishing. According to the author of *Khunke-Ansu*, if the Moslem does not struggle to save himself before 1999, the whole nation will be swept out.”

But this note of discouragement and Moslem pessimism is not warranted by the facts. There are “fourteen points” that offer corroborative proof of the present day importance and strength of Indian Islam and each is an urgent reason for evangelization.

1. *Islam is today the chief obstacle to Indian unity and therefore to her independence within the British Empire.* Those who seek to make India one nation know that no Mohammedan can marry a Hindu, and vice versa; that the attachment of Indian Moslems to Islam as an institution transcends all boundaries of

race, of language and of country. This devotion to Islam has had a profound influence in recent years on the economic, social and educational condition of every Moslem family from Kashmir to Madras. Hindu and Moslem are divided by a deeper chasm than that which separates the castes of Hinduism. No strict Moslem will eat from the same table with his Hindu neighbor and vice versa.

As Dr. Hendrik Kraemer wrote: "Hindus and Moslems are poles asunder. Their *religion* is entirely different. Hinduism is a wide, pervasive and elusive mass of mystical religion, intellectually indefinable and allowing all possible definitions through the range of unqualified and intransigent monism, emotional theism, exuberant polytheism and symbolism and frank superstition. The only things in which it is rigid and 'touchy' are religiously-sanctioned institutions and the veneration of the cow. Islam is a rather narrow and rigid theism, not distinguished (as the *bhakti*-theism of the Hindus) by the longing for grace and salvation, but by a jealous defiance of all competitors of God's unique and sovereign majesty and a genuine feeling of the fundamental difference between God, the omnipotent Creator, and His creatures. Doctrinally, Hinduism is all-inclusive, at least in tendency and intentions, if not in reality; Islam, on the contrary on the doctrinal side, is all-exclusive."

It is no wonder, therefore, that the Hindu Moslem conflict is not merely on the surface. It has deep roots. It is the gravest national problem of India. Gandhi himself has found no solution. The All-India Congress tried its hand and failed. The Muslim League in 1940 denounced its proposals. The dream of a

purely Moslem India composed of the Northwestern regions and Bengal has not faded.

2. *Indian Islam is largely an unoccupied mission field.* This was the opinion of leading missionaries at the Conferences held, and a study of present-day occupation shows that this judgment was correct. Take, for example, large areas of Bengal with its twenty-seven and a half million Moslems, or the neglected Mappillas of the southwest coast, not to speak of the Afghanistan border-marches and of Baluchistan. A study of the following statistical tables will reveal the facts as to the Moslem population of India.

They are a summary from the last available census figures; today all the totals are still larger:

#### A. PROVINCES

	<i>Moslems</i>
Ajmer-Merwara . . . . .	97,133
Andaman and Nicobar Islands . . . . .	6,719
Assam . . . . .	2,755,914
Baluchistan (Districts and Administrated Territories) . . . . .	405,309
Bengal . . . . .	27,497,624
Bihar and Orissa . . . . .	4,264,790
Bombay . . . . .	4,456,897
Burma . . . . .	584,839
Central Provinces and Berar . . . . .	682,854
Coorg . . . . .	13,777
Delhi . . . . .	206,960
Madras . . . . .	3,305,937
North West Frontier Province (Districts and Administrated Territories) . . . . .	2,227,303
Punjab . . . . .	13,332,460
United Provinces . . . . .	7,181,927
	67,020,443

B. STATES AND AGENCIES

	<i>Moslems</i>
Assam States . . . . .	24,600
Baluchistan States . . . . .	392,784
Baroda State . . . . .	182,630
Bengal States . . . . .	312,476
Bihar and Orissa States . . . . .	19,516
Bombay States . . . . .	414,931
Central India Agency . . . . .	376,637
Central Provinces States . . . . .	23,254
Gwalior State . . . . .	204,297
Hyderabad State . . . . .	1,534,666
Jammu and Kashmir State . . . . .	2,817,636
Madras States Agency . . . . .	467,396
Mysore State . . . . .	398,628
North-West Frontier Province (Agencies and Tribal Areas) . . . . .	23,086
Punjab States . . . . .	40,845
Punjab States Agency . . . . .	1,556,591
Rajputana Agency . . . . .	1,069,325
Sikkim State . . . . .	104
United Provinces States . . . . .	252,131
West India States Agency . . . . .	545,569
	<hr/>
	10,657,102
	<hr/>
Grand Total . . . . .	77,677,545

3. *Whole districts are without one Christian missionary to Moslems.* Such areas, wholly or predominantly Mohammedan, include Jalpaiguri, Cooch, Bihar, Dinajpur Malda, Birbhum, Burdwan and the Naokli Districts of Bengal Provinces. In the Naokli district alone there are 1,423,000 Moslems. No Christian work is carried on among the million and a half of Malayalam-speaking Moslems of Malabar. In such large metropolitan centers as Bombay, Calcutta,

Madras and Kerachi the present staff qualified and available for work among Moslems is pitifully inadequate.

One could write more fully on each of these neglected areas but we limit our remarks to what we have personally witnessed among the Mappillas of Malabar on the west coast. Even as the missionaries in Madagascar have had "a blind spot" regarding the Moslems of that great island (see Chapter X) so Malabar stands out as a unique unoccupied area of Islam in India.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Basel Mission has been at work for many years in Malabar, little has been done for these Malayalam speaking Moslems. They form thirty per cent of the total population and are steadily increasing.

Malabar proper is the strip of coast below the Western Ghats inhabited by a people speaking the Malayalam language, a branch of the Dravidian stock, who form a peculiar race with castes, customs and traditions of their own. The administrative center and railway gateway is Calicut. It is a land of dense forests, tangled jungle and cultivated valleys with palms of cocoanut and rice fields. One of the most characteristic features of Malabar are the lagoons or back-waters that stretch in a line down the coast. They are connected by artificial canals and the whole scene has features that remind one of Java in its beauty and verdure.

There is disagreement regarding the name of the people and their origin, but all are agreed that the Mappillas are among the most virile and also the most

<sup>1</sup>S. M. Zwemer, *The Mappillas of Malabar*, The Indian Standard Lahore, May, 1928.

troublesome of the Moslems of India. Malabar is the zone of fanaticism in the South even as the Afghan frontier is that of the North. This is perhaps due to the Arab contact with this coast for many centuries.

The mixed nature of the race may be traced today in its varied physiognomy; those of high family and social position are often extremely fair with fine features, sometimes of a distinctly Semitic type; while those at the other end of the scale are indistinguishable from the low castes from which they are constantly reinforced.

Saint worship is common and around the tombs of these Moslem heroes battle-songs are sung to inflame the zeal of converts. With such a repertoire of song we are not surprised that the Mappillas are notorious for their fanaticism. From time to time they have been guilty of *jihad* or holy war against their Hindu neighbors with such dreadful cruelty as reminds one of the Turkish atrocities against Armenians.

The various Mappilla outbreaks may be attributed to three main causes, poverty, agrarian discontent, and fanaticism, of which the last is probably the chief. Poverty is still extreme in the fanatical zone, and is no doubt to some extent accentuated by the Mappilla practice in the south of dividing up the property of the father among his wives, sons and daughters. British law and order have done much for land-tenure improvement and education. But strong measures were also needed in the past and the repressive policy initiated in 1854 has had a salutary effect.

The fining of whole villages has brought home to the community a sense of its responsibility for its

unruly members, as was proved in 1896 and again in 1898; the most enlightened Mappillas enlisted on the side of law and order; and the Pukkoya Tangal, who as a descendant of the Prophet is almost worshipped by the Mappillas of Ernad and Walavanad, issued a pamphlet sternly denouncing outbreaks as opposed to true religion. The fanatical zone was opened up by good roads; and during the Ramazan fast, when religious enthusiasm is easily roused, the Special Police Force were distributed over the zone, and signallers kept the various detachments in touch with one another and with the troops at Malappuram.

All these precautions, however, did not prevent the dreadful rebellion in 1921. Over a wide tract of country in an incredibly short space of time, communications of all kinds were wrecked or obstructed; public offices and courts were attacked and records destroyed, police stations were plundered of arms and ammunition and civil government brought to a standstill. Over one hundred Hindu temples were sacked and many houses burned. Murders, dacoities, forced conversions and outrages on Hindu women became the order of the day. Hindu refugees in thousands poured into Calicut, Palghat, the Cochin State, and other places, wending their weary way over hills and through jungles for safety from the lust and savagery of their Moslem neighbors.

It was a rude shock to the promoters of Hindu-Moslem unity and the Khilafat agitators. Once more the real character of Islam was revealed. The British government suppressed the rebellion by rigorous military operations and restored order after severe meas-

ures, including the deportation of some thousands of rebels.

Today Islam is still increasing and the pen is proving mightier than the sword. Moslem schools are being opened for recent converts from Hinduism. Bookshops at Calicut, which we visited, had Arabic and Persian as well as Urdu and Malayalam literature on sale. Within the Malabar area there are no less than twenty-three Moslem presses, which use the Arabic and Malayalam character for all kinds of tracts and books. At Calicut there are two presses; at Ponnani where there is also a theological school there are six; at Tillichery nine, and others at Tirurangadi and Ottopalam. We secured a catalogue of one firm, "M. P. Aboo Backer Aboo, cap-merchants and Arabic book-sellers" which tells the whole story. They offer, in Malayalam, Koran portions, grammars, commentaries, manuals of devotion, lives of the Prophet and of their saints and the usual controversial tracts against Christianity and Hinduism—*over six hundred items in one catalogue*. Magic and astrology play a large part in the life of the people. Here as elsewhere in South India the Naqshabandi and Shathali Darwish orders are strong.

But we did not notice during our short visit any special signs of fanaticism at Calicut. On the contrary we learned from Bahrein and Kuwait Arabs, whom we met in the streets and who recognized us as old friends, that the Mappillas learned their severe lesson in the last outbreak and are now unwilling to be deceived again by nationalist agitators into disloyalty to Britain. In one mosque there was some hesitation in their wel-

come to a stranger but this was an exception. At a special out-door meeting in the shaded courtyard of the Y.M.C.A. I was privileged to speak to a large gathering of young men. A German missionary presided and after hearing a message on "The Christ of History," one hundred and thirty-six men came forward to receive a copy of the Gospel in their own tongue and promised to read it.

The brethren of the Basel Mission stationed at Calicut showed us much kindness. Their work, established many decades ago, has however, been almost exclusively among the Hindu population. The Mohammedans were neglected to such an extent that the only literature for Moslems we could find was a Malayalam Gospel of Luke in Arabic character. And this group of Moslems is only typical of the situation in many parts of India. The nearly eighty million Moslems are the most neglected section of India's vast population.

4. *Indian Moslems have for over three decades exercised a growing influence outside of India through their press and propaganda and diaspora.* In this respect, India is unique among all Mohammedan lands. Indian Moslem magazines and periodicals are numbered by hundreds; at least a score are published in English, some in German and French, by followers of the Ahmadiya sect, in its two branches of Qadian and of Lahore. India is the only country that has sent missionaries of Islam to Europe, America and Africa, and has enrolled converts of international note such as Lord Headley, St. John Philby, Pickthall, Sheldrake and others. Indian Moslems are responsible for mosques



Chinese Mosque-Tower at Sian  
with ancient Arabic Tablet

in Berlin, in London, in Perth (Australia), and in Brazil and Trinidad, the United States and Canada. The recent new translations of the Koran, with commentary, into English, German, Dutch, Afrikaans, Chinese and Japanese are due to the same wave of propaganda from Indian Islam. Indian Moslems are in the world of Islam conspicuous by their interest in international Islam. They are conscious of belonging to a world-wide community and they also constitute themselves (a minority in their own native land) critics of the British Empire in its conduct toward their fellow-Moslems in other lands.

5. *The millions of Moslems in India are more accessible and have greater religious and social liberty than those of any other land.* This is primarily due to easy communication by great national highways, railroads, coast steamers, and the cheapness and safety of travel across continental areas at all seasons of the year. Add to this a remarkable freedom of speech and of the press under British rule. The printed page can go everywhere by a postal system which has no rival in all Asia. What has been done in Japan by newspaper evangelism might be accomplished in India in several great languages for a much larger area and on an even larger scale. Nor can we forget that in India converts have protection, freedom of speech and of worship and that the dreadful law of apostasy can no longer be applied under the Indian Government. God has set before us an open door which no man can shut. Once and again this door was thrown open but the Church was not ready or eager to enter. When Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan in 1877 opened the Oriental

College, now the University of Aligarh, he described its purpose, "that this college may expand into a university whose sons shall go forth throughout the length and breadth of the land to preach the gospel of free inquiry, of large-hearted tolerance and of pure morality."

Dr. Kraemer writes: "He devoted himself to the educational and social uplift of the Moslem community of India with astounding courage, great singleness of purpose, and an openmindedness that is very rare in a Moslem. In my opinion, this man deserves unre-served and enthusiastic admiration. His strength and equilibrium of mind, his self-restraint and capacity for taking the long view, must have been amazing. He accepted the irrevocable passing of the old structure as an established fact, however, and (this is important) not reluctantly but creatively. He saw visions of a new future. His synthetic and constructive mind had a genuine admiration for the freedom of spirit and widening of knowledge that was to him the gift of Europe."

He advocated loyalty to the British Government, published a magazine "Moral Reform" and began to publish his large "Commentary on the Holy Bible." He gathered around him a group of kindred liberal spirits and was far in advance of his day. But the missions were not in touch with the movement, his great commentary was never completed, and his grave has become a shrine to genius but also to a lost opportunity (see illustration).

6. *The work of preparation for widespread evangelism is already accomplished.* The Bible has been

translated into every Mohammedan language of India—Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Pushtu, Kashmiri, Gujrati, Sindhi, Malayalam, etc. Others have labored in this field and those who go to India now, have entered into their labors. The same is true of special Christian literature for Moslem readers. In most of the languages named there is a growing library of books and tracts suited to the mind of Moslems and with the right approach to their hearts and consciences. In our chapter on Evangelism and the Printed Page, we speak of the work of the late Canon Sell. Dr. E. M. Wherry of the Presbyterian Mission, Dr. Rouse of the Baptists and others have also made large contribution to this literature.

7. *The Indian Church is becoming conscious of its duty to Islam.* That church in all its branches now counts adherents to the number of nearly six millions. "The Christian Church has more than doubled itself in thirty years," says the editor of *Dnyanodaya*. While only *one* among eighty-one Moslem females is literate, according to the last census, one in six is literate among the Christians of India. Among males the proportion is one to eleven for Moslems and one to four for Christians. Such knowledge is a sacred trust. *Noblesse oblige* applies also to the nobility of reading the Word of God to one's illiterate neighbors.

Although no accurate statistics are yet available regarding the number of converts from Islam in the Indian Church, that number is large and steadily increasing. Dr. E. M. Wherry wrote regarding this shortly before his death:

"The accessions from Islam, especially in Northern India, have been continuous during all the years

since Henry Martyn. As one looks over the rolls of church membership, he is surprised to find so many converts from Islam. In the North, especially the Punjab, and the Northwest Frontier Province, every congregation has a representation from the Moslem ranks. Some of the churches have a majority of their membership gathered from amongst the Mussulmans. In a few cases there has been something like a movement among Moslems towards Christianity, and a considerable number have come out at one time. But perhaps the fact which tells most clearly the story of the advance of Christianity among Moslems in India is this, that among the native pastors and Christian preachers, and teachers in North India, there *are at least two hundred* who were once followers of Islam."

In the Punjab alone the converts now number several thousand and among them are some of the outstanding leaders of the Indian Church. The missionaries at the Bogra Conference in 1928 estimated the number of baptized Moslems in Bengal at sixteen thousand.

There are literally thousands of converts from Islam in the Indian Church, especially in Bengal and the Punjab, many of them outstanding leaders and courageous apostles. Sporadic conversions are more frequent all over India and today educated Moslems throng to hear the outspoken messages of evangelists like E. Stanley Jones and others. The old spirit of fanatic intolerance is fast disappearing. A report received this year from Mysore City, where in 1933 and in 1939 the efforts to reach Moslems were met by a rigid boycott, indicate that there is now a different spirit and hearts are responsive to the message.

8. *These thousands of living converts from Islam are becoming aware of their spiritual solidarity and await mobilization in the forces of organized evangelism.* There is the League of Missionaries to Moslems, which is a voluntary organization with nearly six hundred members who are banded together in a fellowship of prayer. These widely scattered members are kept in touch with each other through a monthly bulletin. The value of the league may also be measured by the fact that it has been in existence for twenty-three years.

Another organization of great value is the Committee for all India on Literature for Moslems under the leadership of the Rev. M. T. Titus, Ph.D. A recent report told of sixty-two new books and tracts issued in ten different languages, totaling 588,500 copies and 4,298,000 pages. There is also the Brotherhood of Andrew in Lahore, composed largely of Moslem converts, which carries on an effective evangelism and runs a convert's home. In this connection the Henry Martyn School of Islamics founded in 1930 at Lahore provides a center of research and for the special training of workers and the preparation of literature.

At the conclusion of ten years the School may be proud of its record. In addition to the special training of students from South Arcot to Orissa, there has been extension work at summer conferences where fully a thousand missionaries received special instruction in Islam.

This Henry Martyn School has now been transferred to Aligarh, one of the most famous centers of Moslem life and culture in India. A new statement of the aims and needs of the school was published by its governing

board in India. In this statement emphasis is laid upon research in Moslem literature and thought and in modern Indian Islamic movements; upon the training, both in elementary and advanced courses, of workers for Moslems; upon extension schools to be held in connection with existing theological institutions; and upon practical help in evangelistic work.

9. *Indian Islam is not tribal or national but continental.* All races have yielded to Islam. The Moslem population in the census includes Sheikhs, Seyyids, Moghuls, Pathans, Sindhis, Bohras, Baluchis, Arabs, Farsis, Labbais, Moplals, Khojas, Memens and other racial groups with special names of origin used by themselves and which in some cases approach in definite cleavage that of Hindu caste.

It is estimated that six millions today are of Afghan or Pathan blood, three hundred thousand of Persian and many of Arab origin. Because of this fact and because Islam has penetrated to every corner of India we must add another reason to the plea for evangelism.

10. *Islam in India is polyglot.* In Arabia or Iran or Egypt all Moslems speak the same language. Not so in India where they speak a score of languages. This emphasizes the importance of the press to an extent that few realize. The Arabic alphabet and the Koran are found everywhere, but Arabic has not displaced any Indian language, although it has influenced all Moslem speech and introduced in large areas a peculiar *patois* which is designated as Mussulman-Bengali, Mussulman-Gujrati, etc., and is not fully intelligible to non-Moslems.

My experience at the small town of Bogra in Bengal was typical of experiences elsewhere among Tamil,

Telugu and other groups. I quote from my diary:

“Arabic is a living language here. I spoke to the teachers and pupils of a school at Mahasthan seven miles out from here, and they were pleased to hear an Arabic ‘khutba.’

“Bogra town has a population of 15,000 and has four bookshops where Mohammedan books are sold. In addition to a large collection of Mohammedan books on all subjects we found eight books on Arabic grammar in Bengali and English, also a Triglot Koran in Arabic, Urdu and Bengali.”

11. *Moslems nevertheless are more illiterate than Christians or Hindus.* This fact, to which we have already alluded, shows the urgent need of evangelists who can preach the Word of God *to the illiterate*, even as Christ and the Apostles did. The backward provinces are Northwest India and Eastern Bengal; in the ancient centers of Moslem civilization the level of education is as high or in some cases even higher than among the Hindus. Here again there is a great diversity as we might expect. But this very diversity calls for every kind of missionary effort.

12. *The activity of Islam in its propaganda, its organizations, enterprise, and the liberality of Moslems in its support are a challenge to Christians.* The chief propaganda organizations at the time of my last visit were *Jamiat-i-Tabligh* (headquarters at Amballa), the *Tanzim* movement in Bengal and the United Provinces, the *Khuddam-i-Ka'aba* (Lucknow), a Shiah organization, the Ahmadiyas at Qadian and Lahore, and the Khojas of Bombay, backed by the wealth of the Aga Khan. The objects of all these organized movements

are well expressed in the printed circular of the *Tanzim* of Bengal, from which we quote:

“To establish unity and solidarity among Moslems of all classes and views by propagating the general principles and ideals of Islam and insisting upon religious observances, congregational daily and Friday prayers and encouraging *tabligh* (i.e., preaching or propaganda).

“To reorganize the mosques as units of economic and educational as well as moral and religious reform, and to reform and regularize the sermons and the spiritual and moral instruction of the masses.

“To establish primary schools and *maktabs* for the boys and girls and night schools for adults, as well as centers for physical training, wherever possible in connection with the mosques.”

13. *There is a new attitude toward the Gospel message.* The bold testimony of converts is having its effect. We hear of a member of the royal family from Afghanistan banished from his native land and now a professor of Arabic in a Christian college; of another Afghan, a graduate of an English university, who in his recent book on comparative religion, *Lights of Asia*, gives remarkable testimony to Jesus as Savior and Lord (quoted in Chapter I). Public confession and baptism are becoming possible nearly everywhere. The Bible is eagerly read and the questions Moslems now raise regarding its contents prove that they are earnest students of the Word. As Dr. M. T. Titus wrote:

“The spirit of Henry Martyn is not dead. There are more missionaries than ever before in India who are linked together for effective work among

Moslems. The same may be said of Indian workers. There is more literature produced in more languages, and there are better facilities for distribution than ever before. From all over the land come reports which indicate that there are more inquirers, and more conversions among Moslems than ever before."

And yet the same writer is well aware of the dearth of *qualified* missionaries in many great centers and of the general lack of enthusiasm for evangelizing Moslems. It is for this reason that we add a fourteenth point.

14. *Finally, there is great need for apostolic successors, i.e., for specially trained leadership.* What a glorious heritage India has had in Henry Martyn, Karl Pfander, Bishop Lefroy, Bishop French, Dr. E. M. Wherry, Dr. Rouse, Goldsack, Takle, Canon Sell, Imad-ud-Din and others! How they would have rejoiced to see the present opportunity. Who follows in their train? Who will take up their unfinished task? Only those who give themselves wholly to it will succeed.

Special preparation for this work should include a knowledge of Islam and of Urdu, the *lingua franca* all over India. In Northern India this is fully realized, but in Southern India some are still unconvinced of its necessity. The other side is presented in a letter written a few years ago by the Rev. A. Hickling, of the London Missionary Society, in Madras Presidency:

"Work among Mussulmans involves, in my opinion, special preparation both of missionaries and Indian Christians who undertake it. The attitude of mind needed for effective presentation of the

Gospel to Hindus can only be gained by careful preparation, and those who have had this preparation can only very rarely reäadapt themselves to the absolutely different presuppositions of the Mussulman.”

With even a score of qualified workers it would be possible to reach the neglected Moslem masses with the Gospel by tongue and pen in a way that would fulfil the highest hopes of the lonely workers who now face an almost impossible task with patience and courage. For Jesus Christ and not Mohammed will finally wear the crown of all India. For this we pray and hope and toil.

## **IX**

# **THE FOURTH RELIGION OF CHINA**

“The Mohammedans came into China simply as traders and not as proselytisers—as suppliants for imperial protection and kindness, and not as conquerors demanding the right to introduce amongst the people drugs and dogmas equally objectionable. They did not make it a practice to despise and inveigh against the form of religious belief which they found around them, although they have criticised severely and argued against the irrational conduct of Buddhists and Taoists who worshipped and served the created, not the creator.

“Then again Mohammedanism is not afflicted with the malady of restless aiming at progress, but rather favors material stagnation, and so it does not run counter to the conservative tendencies of Confucianism.”

—T. WATERS in  
*China Weekly Review* in 1872

## CHAPTER IX

### THE FOURTH RELIGION OF CHINA

ONE hundred and ten years ago Isaac Taylor tried to defend missionary enthusiasm and used the following words regarding China:<sup>1</sup>

“The brazen gate of China—sculptured with inscrutable characters and bolted and barred, as it seemed, against western ingenuity—the gate of its anomalous language has actually been set wide open: and although the ribbon of despotic interdiction is still stretched across the highway that leads to the popular mind, access to some extent has been obtained: and who shall affirm that this frail barrier insurmountable as it may now seem, shall at all times, during another fifty years exist and be respected? Within even a much shorter time is it not probable that revolutions of dynasty or popular commotions may suspend or divert for a moment the vigilance of jealous ignorance?—the dam bursting or falling into decay and the healing flood of Christian truth diffuse itself in all directions over the vast surface.”

His forecast was prophetic. Every one of the provinces of China has been occupied by missionaries and “Christian truth has diffused itself in all directions

<sup>1</sup> *The Natural History of Enthusiasm*. London, 1830.

over its vast surface." Today all of Christendom is interested in missions to China, the land of three great religions, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. The mass of the people profess all three faiths and find no difficulty in this syncretism.

There are proverbs current such as "the three religions are one," "the three religions have a common basis," which lead to the conclusion that the religious ideas of China have blended and that the three old religions "should be considered as three aspects of the established religion of the country." The three teachings are not separate sects, in the sense that Christians, Jews and Moslems are separate in Western Asia. They may better be regarded as moods of the Chinese mind which may be manifested in the same individual at different times or on different occasions. This is expressed in another Chinese proverb: "The red flower, the white lotus-root and its green leaves, like the three religions, were originally the same."

But in the land where images of Buddha, Confucius and Lao Tzu are placed in idolatrous proximity there are more than seven million people who have never bowed their knees or offered incense to idols — they testify that there is no god but Allah, and that Mohammed is his apostle. *Islam is the fourth religion of China and has penetrated to all its provinces.*

Ever since the tragic death of William Borden at Cairo, as he was on his way to take up work among the Moslems of China, I had a desire to visit China for the sake of the Moslem problem and to see at close range what is being done and what should be done to reach these millions with the Gospel. Op-

portunity came in 1917 for a brief visit, also in 1918 and again in 1933 for a much longer journey in company with my son-in-law Canon Claude L. Pickens. On the first occasion my guide and companion was the Rev. Charles L. Ogilvie of the Presbyterian Mission, Peking. We visited Moslems at Shanghai, Kaifung, Hankow, Tientsin, Peking, Chefoo and a number of centers in Honan province. We studied the daily life of Moslems, visited their mosques and schools, held conferences with missionaries and gave public addresses in Arabic or in English to large groups of Moslems. At one theater meeting eight hundred were present. Among the results of that first visit were a deeper interest in China among missionaries, the organization of a Committee on Literature for Moslems and an invitation to return.

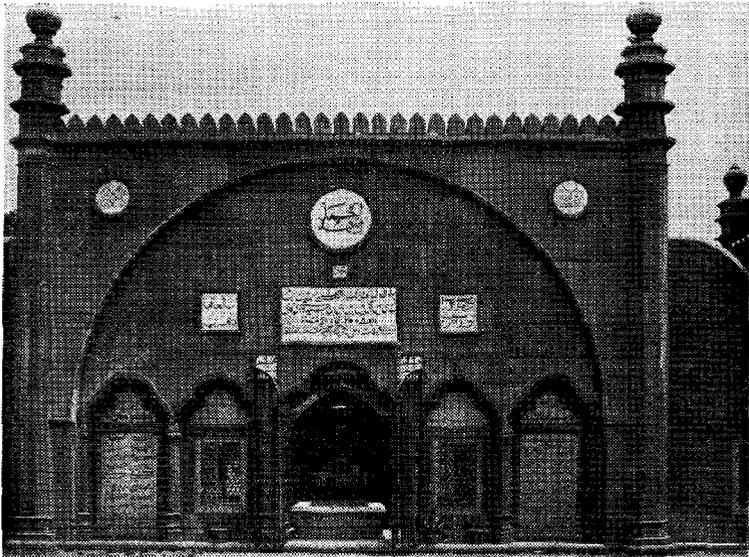
On June 19, 1933, I arrived at Shanghai for my second visit. We reached Sian, the ancient capital, by June 25. After three days with the missions there, my son-in-law (who is stationed at Hankow) and I traveled by airplane to Lanchow. Four hundred miles in three and a half hours! We read the 91st Psalm as our "angel-wings" transport carried us 3,000 feet above the villages and mountain slopes and rivers—a journey that formerly took twenty days by jolting cart along impractical roads.

At Lanchow we only tarried a few hours (to have a longer period on our return), and then went by mule-litter or on horseback 450 miles through Kansu and the old province of Kokonor to the borders of Tibet. Sining, Shunhwa and Hochow were our places for conference with missionaries. On the Fourth of July at

Sining we had three meetings with all the missionaries, visited mosques and Moslem schools, but also celebrated the day with ice cream and song! When we left for Shunhwa, Mr. Mann and Mr. Streeter of the China Inland Mission accompanied us. Everywhere in crossing the high mountain ranges we found many Moslem villages and in one counted six mosques; while in the towns we stayed in, and still farther on, we found groups of these folk, all energetic, industrious, keen, and in some ways as true to Moslem type as the Arabian followers of the Prophet. The same fatalistic beliefs, the same certain hope of paradise if slain in fighting the infidels, and the same keenness in the five calls to prayer which are given from every mosque every day. It is generally the old men who are most religious, and who obey every call to prayer, for the younger men do the work and earn the money. We recognized the "Call to Prayer." The high, loud note, prolonged for at least two minutes, can never be mistaken, even in Chinese Arabic accent. Often we did not know of the presence of a mosque till the call to early prayer, which is given at dawn and leaves no room for doubt. The Chinese seem poor everywhere, but the Moslems have waxed rich, evidently since the recent rebellions, for they are rebuilding their own waste places, and seem to have plenty of money.

Everywhere the best inns were Moslem, and everywhere new mosques were being built and schools for children where Arabic is taught.

Moslems from Chinese Turkestan have gone into all this territory in the last five years and bought out the Tibetans and many Chinese. It was mostly Moslems



Famous Tomb of Sayyid Ahmad Khan  
Aligarh, India

we saw. Payenjung, which three hundred years ago was a Chinese camp to subdue the Tibetans and later became a Tibetan city, is now entirely Moslem in the suburbs, and many also live in the city. We did see a few Tibetans. We left Payenjung at 5:00 a.m. and took twelve hours to reach the mission. It was ninety long *li*, beside a ferry ride across the Yellow River. Mr. Holton and his daughter, Myrtle, met us at the river and rode the ten *li* into the city. We had tiffin and a rest at La Tsa San Ken, 7,500 feet. We passed through Kan Tu without stopping and spent more than an hour crossing the waste land in a blistering sun. The La Tsa Pass is 10,700 feet above sea level.

We shall never forget the gracious hospitality we received and the impressions gained of a great door opened here for work among Moslems. Mr. Holton speaks Chinese and Tibetan like a native and knows his large field. Although he does not profess to read Arabic, he had a large collection of Arabic books received from the Ahungs, clear evidence that *they* were Arabic students. It was a busy Sabbath. We had a meeting with the small company in a "lower room," and Mr. Mann also preached to the Chinese congregation in the city. On the tenth of July we left for Hochow. Mr. Holton, who is a fast rider, caught up with us when we were thirty *li* out. The roads were in sorry condition, but the weather was glorious—clear sunshine on the 9,000 feet high mountains and bracing air. We passed groups of Moslem villages. The women of the Salars wear a sort of veil covering the back of the head and neck, green for girls, black for married women, and white for old age. The after-

noon brought us into Tibetan territory, and at night we stayed in a delightful two-story Chinese inn. Some of our party visited the first Salar settlement in this part of the world. Two hundred came out of the mosque after evening prayer. Everywhere they showed a friendly spirit and Arabic Christian books and Gospels were eagerly accepted. On July 12th we set out for Hochow, the Mecca of Northwest China. Here was the center of rebellion when "blood flowed like water" in the clash of religious and social hatred. Now Hochow has its martyr-graves of "holy men" and its school of learning.

On our last stage a storm of rain beat in our faces; it was cold and misty. Near the top of the pass a new road had recently been built but without a solid foundation. At 11,600 feet we began to descend, but the mule-litter in which I was riding came to grief. One mule went over the soft ledge of the road, tumbling fifty feet; the other stuck fast in the mud fortunately, but our litter was ruined, our stores largely smashed, and I escaped with a few bruises and a big scare. Mr. Holton and I rode ahead on horses while the rest brought up the damaged litter. Landslides again and again impeded our descent; we waded through water ice cold and swift as a torrent—but cheered each other by singing hymns, and the rain ceased when we came to the lower valley at Han Chia Chi. Here we had a night of it, all crowded together in a filthy inn with other occupants. The next day we reached Hochow.

We found welcome in the lovely Chinese home of the Rev. C. F. and Mrs. Snyder of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. I can still see the beautiful

little garden with dragon lilies and hollyhocks. All the mission and those who came with us gathered for prayer and conference. The city lies at a turn in the valley in a lovely setting of cultivated fields surrounded by the majesty of towering mountains that rise to over 10,000 feet. One of the mosques can accommodate 4,000 worshipers. We visited the Ahung (priest) who at first was surly but afterwards became quite friendly. Mr. Snyder read a valuable paper at our conference on Islam in Hochow. He told of a large Moslem school with twelve teachers and 400 pupils, who study Chinese and Arabic.

I will not describe the remainder of our journey—how we crossed the Tao River in a rickety ferry boat; how we had to wade through flooded roadbeds; and how the last fifty miles to Lanchow were the hardest because of the heat and dust. Enough that we came to the China Inland Mission headquarters, saw the Borden Memorial Hospital, had counsel with the Mission, a never-to-be-forgotten Communion Service, and left by airplane for Sian. Then followed various conferences with missionaries especially at Kuling and our return journey to the United States.

As a result of these two visits to China and further study we reached certain conclusions which are here given in order.

1. Islam has been in China for more than a thousand years and penetrated into each of the nineteen provinces. There is obscurity, however, in regard to its earliest history and the reasons for its later, rather remarkable and sudden, increase, followed by its arrest and gradual decline. The Nestorian missions in China

preceded the entrance of Islam by more than a century, and the Jews had important settlements at Kaifung and elsewhere before the second century A.D. The importance of these facts in relation to the early spread of Islam is noted by Professor P. Y. Saeki. He believes that the former of these theistic groups, the Nestorians, under the persecutions of Timur (1369-1405), became amalgamated with Chinese Moham-medans; while Bishop William C. White and others think that the Jews of Central China "through very gradual and prolonged attrition" also disappeared in this way.

There is an ancient inscription on the chief mosque in Sian, Shensi (see illustration) which professes to have been erected 742 A.D., but the inscription is a palpable forgery. Hartmann gives the evidence in full. The Arab geographers, however, tell of very early intercourse between Western Asia and China by Persian and Arabian traders. China and Japan were regarded by them as the last inhabited areas in the East.

"The two routes by which Islam came to China," says Professor Hartmann, "were quite different in character and object: the land route, which led into Northern China, brought Islam into the western parts of the northern kingdom only and did not send out colonies to the coast; the route by sea along the coast of China as far as Kansu (i.e., Hang-chou-fu) founding colonies everywhere, which carefully avoided any attempt to advance into the interior. This is one of the features of the advance of Islam; when it came by water, it remained on the coast, and when it came by land, it remained in the interior. Islam has as a rule been

afraid of the sea; from the very beginning it was impressed with a sense of the supremacy of the unbelievers on the ocean and made practically no efforts to dispute their dominion. When we do find Mohammedans undertaking naval expeditions, they were almost always disastrous: all attacks on Byzantium, for example, from the sea failed. It was not till the Mongol period that Islam began to advance through the interior of China, indeed one might almost say that but for the Yuan dynasty the conversion to Islam of large tracts of the interior of China would have been impossible, for this dynasty was the first to break away from the policy of splendid isolation.”<sup>2</sup>

The advance of Islam by sea was due to the seafaring tradition of Arabs and Persians, which goes back to pre-Islamic times, when they already had commerce with the Far East.<sup>3</sup> The advance of Islam by land was due to other motives than trade. The spirit of conquest led Kutaiba ibn Muslim in 713 A.D. to conquer Ferghana, and send an embassy to China. Afterward the new faith made headway in Central Asia and penetrated to Northwestern China.

The first body of Arab settlers in China was a contingent of four thousand soldiers dispatched by the Caliph Abu Ja'afar, in 755 (or, according to others, by the Caliph Al Mansur in 758), to the assistance of the Emperor Hsuan-Tsung, who was assailed by his commander, A Lo Shan, a Tatar, appointed to lead an army against the northwest frontier.<sup>4</sup> These soldiers, in reward for their services and bravery, were allowed

<sup>2</sup> Encyclopedia of Islam, p. 834.

<sup>3</sup> Niemann: "Inleiding tot de Kennis van den Islam," p. 337.

<sup>4</sup> T. W. Arnold, "Preaching of Islam," p. 251.

to settle in China, where, by intermarriage and preaching, they won over many to the faith. In the following century we read that many thousands of Moslems were massacred in China, while Marco Polo speaks of the large Moslem population of Yunnan.

Following upon the great wars of Ghengis Khan, a vast number of Moslem traders and adventurers poured into Western China. "Some came as merchants, artisans, soldiers and colonists; others were brought in as prisoners-of-war. A great number of them settled in the country and developed into a populous and flourishing community, gradually losing their racial peculiarities by their marriage with Chinese women."<sup>5</sup>

In Yunnan the entrance of Islam is ascribed to a prince of Bukhara, Saiyad-i-Adjall, who became governor (1273-79). His tomb is now a center of pilgrimage. Three distinct racial groups of Moslems (Hwei-hwei) are found in Northwest China at the present day, indicative of their different origin. The Arab Hwei-hwei known in Chinese history as the Ta-Shih Hwei-hwei; the Turkish group known as Salars; and the Mongol Hwei-hwei including a Tatar aboriginal tribe.<sup>6</sup> These three racial groups are easily distinguished by their physique, their dress, and, in the case of the Salars, by their language.

2. The total Moslem population of China is still a matter of conjecture. No official religious census has ever been taken. There have been extravagant estimates, such as that of the Statesmen's Year Book (based on A. H. Keane) a decade ago, namely,

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247.

<sup>6</sup> G. Findlay Andrew, "The Crescent in Northwest China," pp. 10-11.

30,000,000! In 1894 a Cairo newspaper, after an interview with a Moslem official of Yunnan, placed the Moslem population of China at 70,000,000! Two Chinese-Moslems of Peiping, on their way to Al-Azhar in Cairo issued a message to the *Islamic World*: "Since the introduction of Islam into China in the days of our Prophet (peace be upon him), there is no part in China where the Muslims and their mosques cannot be found. At present, the number of Muslims in China is said to be *fifty millions*. The influence of Islam has spread far and wide and extended into more than twenty provinces in which mosques can be found in towns and villages. Their number (villages) is no less than several tens of thousands."<sup>7</sup>

In a survey made in 1922 by the China Continuation Committee the maximum figure is given as 8,336,000.<sup>8</sup> Louis Massignon in his *Annuaire du Monde Musulman* (1926) suggests as a total 7,300,000, but states that the estimates for the various provinces are still conjectural, while Hartmann concludes that, exclusive of Chinese Turkestan, the Chinese-Moslem population is not over 7,400,000. They are found chiefly in the far northwest,—in Szechuan, Kansu, and Tsinghai provinces; also in Yunnan, Shensi, Chihli and Honan; in the remaining provinces their numbers are smaller, but there are important cities with a large Moslem population, such as Peiping, Nanking, Tientsin, Tsinan, Kaifung, Sian, Chengtu, Yunnan-fu, Kweilin, Hankow and Canton. In Peiping there are thirty-six mosques and in one of these, the Chiaotze Hutung

<sup>7</sup> The Star, Lahore, India, May 1, 1933, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> "The Christian Occupation of China": Shanghai, p. 353.

mosque, is the headquarters of the Moslem Forward Educational Movement. The above provinces and cities are the important places in the missionary program for evangelism. But most of them are inadequately occupied as there are very few workers especially trained or qualified for the task.

3. Our intercourse with the Ahungs on the occasion of an earlier visit to China in 1917 and especially during the summer spent in Honan, Kansu and Tsinghai led to the same conviction, expressed later by an experienced missionary in Kansu: "Those who desire to devote themselves to evangelistic effort among them will have to be specially prepared and fitted for the work. Besides a good working knowledge of the Chinese language, they will have to learn Arabic, with a certain amount of Persian, and if they desire to labor among the Salar3 and the Mongol Hwei-hwei, their two peculiar languages will also have to be studied. Some of the special manners and customs will have to be observed in order not to give unnecessary offense."<sup>9</sup>

No one who has witnessed the eagerness of the Moslems for Arabic literature everywhere, the considerable libraries of Arabic and Persian books in every mosque, the smile of brotherhood when Arabic is spoken by a foreigner, and the children studying Arabic in the great centers of population—can doubt the need of special training for this task. The Ahungs carry on Arabic correspondence with both Cairo and Beirut, and there are several centers for lithographing Arabic-Chinese publications. There is a steady de-

<sup>9</sup> G. Findlay Andrew, "The Crescent in Northwest China," p. 109.

mand for large Arabic dictionaries and the standard works of orthodox Islam.

4. The activity of the Moslem press is evident, not only in four translations of parts of the Koran into Chinese, bilingual manuals on the ritual of prayer, and controversial tracts, but also in a flood of new (sometimes ephemeral) Moslem periodicals. One could easily give a score of examples. The Arabic, English and Chinese titles of these magazines and weeklies are significant: *Mohammed is our Helper*; *Muhammad's Sound*, "published at every Islamitic Sunday, Peking"; *The China Muslim* (Shanghai); *The Crescent*, "*Nazarat-ul Hillal*" (Peiping); *The Islamitic Review of China*; *The Chen Tsung Pan*; *Al Mu'min* (Canton) with an article on Marriage and Burial; *Nur-al-Islam*, etc.

An association for the progress of Islam in China was started in Peking in 1912. Since its inauguration, in spite of all sorts of difficulties and recurrences of dead-lock in its work, it has been able to establish many branches all over China. Those in the provinces of Yunnan and Szechuan are taking vigorous steps in the extension of their activities and work. It is, generally speaking, true that in every mosque there is a primary school. Besides, there are secondary schools in many towns and districts where Moslems are found in larger numbers. Among the important schools are the following: The Chen Ta Normal School of Peiping, Ming Teh middle school of Yunnan, Hsieh Chin Secondary School of Hunan, Islamia Normal School of Shanghai and the Islamia Normal School of Szechuan.

Hartmann is mistaken when he says, "Art has no

place in the life of Chinese Moslems." Not only have they made a special study of decorative calligraphy in Arabic, Persian and Chinese character, but they have, since the Ming dynasty, produced beautiful bronze and brass incense bowls, wood-carving, and screen-painting for decorating their mosques and homes with the symbolism of their faith and its credal statements. The Italian Consul at Shanghai in 1917 had a large collection of Chinese-Moslem art; and on our recent visit we secured some beautiful incense bowls and rosaries in Sining, together with samples of color-printing and pictures from the Peiping press. The architectural beauty of some of their minarets and pulpits, for example, of the Imperial Mosque at Sian, Shensi, is also evidence of Chinese-Moslem art.

Regarding their trades and occupations, it is still true after the revolution that "the stronger physique and greater energy of many Moslems explain their fondness for entering the Chinese army." There are, moreover, certain trades which are almost entirely followed by Mohammedans, such as horse-transport (ma-fu), inn-keeping, that of butchers, express-agents, and (on the borders of Tibet) the tea-trade and cattle-raising. Whatever their trade or profession, the Moslems in China form a great, closed, friendly society in which every one helps the other. The clan-idea of their community life, emphasized by certain sanitary customs, and the abstinence from pork, alcohol, opium and ancestor-worship, offers so many advantages that to break away from the group would be a social loss even apart from their faith in Islam. They are a "peculiar" people to their Chinese neighbors.

5. Wherever we inquired regarding Moslem sects or parties, the answer was always the same: the great mass of Chinese Moslems are orthodox Sunnis of the Hanafi school. In the Northwest there has been some Shiah influence through Persian literature. Yet, nearly everywhere and especially in the chief Moslem provinces they themselves speak of only two parties, which are often in strong opposition, viz.: "the Old Religion," *Lao chiao* and "the New Religion," *Hsin chiao*. Since d'Ollone, there have been attempts to define the difference of these parties but observers are not agreed. The "new religion" was founded by Ma Hua-lung, who was slain during an uprising in Kansu. He is regarded as an Imam, or saint, by his followers. Whether he was regarded as a Mahdi is uncertain, but his teaching and the practice of his followers is tinged with a strong element of Sufism. He insisted on prayer in a loud voice and with a special attitude of the hands of the worshiper. Saint-worship seems to be more common with the new sect. We found Hochow, the center of the new teaching, rich in tombs; whence the other name given it Kumbé-chiao (= *Qubba*) tomb-religion. The followers of the new doctrine are also said to be more hostile to foreigners, although this was not our experience on the long journey from Lanchow to Sining and Hochow and back to Sian through the three provinces.

In mosques, schools and Christian hospitals, or in private conversation, whether in Arabic or through an interpreter, we met with courtesy and kindness everywhere. This was also the usual experience of the missionaries whom we met. Islam in China has lost much of its rigid fanaticism, through the mellowing influence

of Confucian ethics and etiquette. Moreover, a minority is not easily tempted to arrogance or the domineering spirit. The Moslem women generally appeared unveiled, except in the Hochow district. All the Moslem inns and tea-houses have the usual sign-board in Arabic and Chinese, with an ablution vessel as a sign of purity. As in the Near East the use of the *miswak* or tooth-brush made of vegetable fibre is considered a mark of piety. At Sining we made inquiries regarding the 'aqiqa sacrifice on the seventh day after a child is born, and the two orthodox forms of circumcision. Both are well-known, although not generally observed. Circumcision of boys takes place between the sixth and thirteenth year. In the *mimbar* of the mosques a staff is used by the preacher instead of a wooden sword. Each mosque has one or two funeral-biers shaped more or less like a Chinese coffin, but the dead are buried without coffins, as in most Moslem lands. *The crescent adorns the minarets of some mosques and is used elsewhere as symbol of the faith.* Incense is used on Fridays and other occasions in their public worship; this seems one of the peculiar features of Chinese Islam. The pilgrims to Mecca are few, but on their return they exercise a great influence on the community and stir up the faithful to greater devotion. Formerly the pilgrims left by sea from Shanghai or Hongkong; now they take the shorter route to Yunnanfu and then by rail to Hanoi in Indo-China for the sea voyage to Jiddah.

6. What of the future of Islam in China? Is it negligible in the missionary program or are we leaving out a most important factor when we fail to reckon with it? Those who are in closest touch with the situa-

tion believe that Islam, although growing stronger in numbers, education and in self-conscious activity, never offered a greater opportunity than in China for tactful evangelism. And there is response to the message, as we witnessed at Sining and in the Borden Memorial Hospital at Lanchow. To face Islam on these border-marches leaves a deep impression. My son-in-law, Mr. Pickens of Hankow, who accompanied us on our journey into the far north-west, gave his impression of Islam in Sian, the old capital:

“Sian! We saw it first in the gray light of a dull afternoon. Its walls stood out in the soft light, a contrast to the loess plain upon which the city stood. Perfectly preserved, the walls stretched to right and left, a perpendicular barrier except the two east gates. Soon we were passing through the ‘Western Peace’ as its name signifies, or ‘Long Peace,’ as its ancient name ‘Tsang An’ implies. We found ourselves on the great East and West Street, with the old Manchu city on our right. At the crossing of this high road with the North and South Street we passed under the massive Bell Tower, the top of which was modernized to hold a movie. A street or so further on we passed on our right the even more impressive Drum Tower. From the Bell Tower to the west gate, five *li*, we passed the Moslem headquarters on our right, by far the most densely populated quarter of the city.

“Mohammedanism is twelve centuries old in Sian! I visited the ‘Imperial Mosque.’ It was Chinese in architecture and yet in the prayer hall the lines of *mihrab* (prayer niche) and the Arabic script gilded

on walls and ceiling spoke of the heritage of western Asia. My second visit was at the evening prayer hour. On the spacious platform before the mosque groups gathered, waiting. Then an elderly person, robed in white, a white turban about his head, strode across to the porch door of the mosque, turned, and with great solemnity gave the call to prayer. One expects this sort of thing in Cairo. It was startling in Sian. From the far end of the extensive courtyard, groups of tall straight figures, all in white, with massive white turbans, made their way toward the mosque. The procession of ahungs was more like that of royalty. Islam of no consequence in China? At that hour I could see for China, no temples, no idols, no more shrines, but could hear '*La ilaha ill'-allahu*' (There is no god but God) upon the lips of every subject in the Republic!"

T. W. Arnold closes the tenth chapter of his book, "The Preaching of Islam" with these words: "The zealous spirit of proselytism with which the Chinese Musalmans 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." A later, more considered and more sober judgment is that at the close of the article on China in the Encyclopedia of Islam by M. Hartmann:

"Although the future of Islam in China cannot be precisely defined at present, it is abundantly clear that its victory over the other religions of the country and ultimate supremacy of the Muslims over the other peoples of the Empire is a mere

dream, to follow which will bring only misfortune and destruction upon the Muslims. Even if, through some unforeseen chain of circumstances, their hope should be realized even for a brief period, this would be a grave disaster to the whole Chinese Empire. Islam is not a religion compatible with civilization; it is emphatically the bitter enemy of Frankish culture and it is this which China is about to adopt. If the Muslims should attach themselves to some extent to the party of reform, two results are possible: they will either adopt entirely the new ideas and work in unity with the Han for a strong regenerated China on an ethnic basis, in which case they will do no harm; or they will secretly cherish schemes for the supremacy of Islam, in which case they will be crushed without mercy as soon as they are discovered, for Muslims will always form an infinitely small proportion of the leaders of the reform movement. Nevertheless the Chinese nation will be well advised to keep a watch on the Islamic elements in their midst, and particularly to prevent their increase by the purchase of Chinese children."

Regarding the present situation we may quote the words of the late Isaac Mason:

"The China Inland Mission has done splendid pioneer work for many years in inland places, and by individual workers among Moslems. This Mission is still leading the field in this particular service, and the numbers of those actively engaged in it has increased most encouragingly in quite recent years. Some other Missions have also undertaken similar work and are nobly sharing in both quest and conquest in this hard field.

Many more workers are needed, and in the large centers where several missions are at work, more attention should be given to the Moslems, perhaps by united efforts. Too often they are left out of the range of everyone's activities.

“The Society of Friends of the Moslems in China has proved to be a valuable means of drawing together those who are specially interested in the evangelization of Moslems.”

**X**

**ISLAM IN MADAGASCAR**

“Indigenous Islam is scarcely more than a question of clothes, white or red head-dress. They do indeed read what is called the Koran. But the book is in reality nothing but a selection of traditions on the Prophet mixed with cabalistic signs, and there are not many who can read Arabic, even among the descendants of the first colonists. One must not conclude from this that Islam is not to be feared, on the contrary the very facility it offers to nominal conversion pushes it forward.”

—HENRI RUSILLON of Madagascar  
in *The Moslem World*

## CHAPTER X

### ISLAM IN MADAGASCAR

**W**HENEVER I think of this island I am reminded of an experience at the Foreign Mission Club, London, some twelve years ago. Two missionaries on furlough from central Madagascar were surprised when I asked regarding the Moslem tribes, and stoutly affirmed there were none. They were astounded to hear of over a half-million Moslems, and that the very days of the week in Malagasy all bear Arabic names. This blind-spot regarding Islam in Madagascar is not wholly limited to furloughed missionaries nor to this great island. The most recent account of the progress of Christianity in Madagascar is found in the Report of the Fifth Inter-Missionary Conference held there in 1939. Progress is noted nearly everywhere. The number of Protestant Christians is given as 620,000 and Roman Catholic Christians 310,000. But "three-quarters of the population, 2,800,000, are still non-Christians. The French Mission was asked to consider the possibility of evangelizing the people of the Comoro Islands." There is no other reference to the large Moslem population, which is greater than the total number of Protestant Christians, and the distribution of the Missions on Madagascar still leaves out of its

immediate program the areas and tribes that are predominantly Mohammedan.

Two excellent books, entitled "Madagascar and Its People" and "Fifty Years in Madagascar" by James Sibree (1923) show a general inadvertence regarding the Moslem origin of many Malagasy superstitions and practices and make no mention of Islam. A letter from the secretary of an American Society, dated 1939, says, "At the present time there are very few Mohammedans living on the island of Madagascar." Another writes: "There are no Moslems living in the part of Madagascar where the L. M. S. is at work." A third testifies "So far as I know, we have no contacts with the Moslem population unless there have been a few isolated personal contacts" (Letters dated November, 1939).

The Rev. T. T. Matthews' "Thirty Years in Madagascar" (1904) devoted six lines to the Arab invasion of the Comoro Islands but for the rest is silent. In the Report of the Deputation to Madagascar (1913) on which all Protestant Societies were represented, there is no clear distinction made between pagan and Moslem tribes and no special plea made for the evangelization of the latter.

Our purpose now is to set forth somewhat more fully and accurately the whole problem of Islam in Madagascar and the Comoro Islands. It has proved a fascinating study, carrying us back to the voyages of Sinbad the Sailor, Marco Polo, the Arab geographers, and the strange people and products of the islands of Wāk-Wāk, identified by Gabriel Ferrand with Madagascar. "The ruler of the islands of Wāk-Wāk is a woman." So the Arab geographers tell us. "She sits

nude on a throne, a crown of gold on her head, surrounded by four thousand young slaves also nude (al-Kazwīni, p. 300; Ibn al-Wardi, p. 415). This queen is called Damhara, wears a robe woven of gold and shoes of gold (Ibn al-Wardi, p. 415; cf. Idrīsi, p. 177). Some inhabitants of Wāk-Wāk are black (al-Biruni, p. 164). They resemble the Turks; they are numerous, very industrious, active and intelligent, but treacherous, lying and cunning (*Merveilles de l'Inde*, p. 587). They weave tunics with sleeves in a single piece; they build large ships and floating houses (Ibn al-Wardi, p. 415)."

"The Wāk-Wāk are beings closely resembling the human species. They are the fruit of great trees from which they hang by the hair. They have breasts and sexual organs like those of women. They are colored and never cease crying 'wāk-wāk.' When one of these creatures is captured, it becomes silent and falls dead. The Wāk-Wāk are like palm and cocoanut trees, intermediate between the animal and vegetable kingdoms (Dimashki, p. 367)."<sup>1</sup> Such are the Arabic fables!

Our present knowledge of these fabulous islands is far more accurate but there are still historical and ethnological gaps awaiting research.

Madagascar is nearly as large as the state of Texas and lies two hundred and forty miles off the east coast of Africa. It is about nine hundred and eighty miles long and three hundred and fifty miles wide. For government administration the Comoro Islands are united with Madagascar. Both became French colonies

<sup>1</sup> "Wākwāk is represented in Malagasy by *vahwak*, a vowel which corresponds phonetically to the old *wākwāk* and means 'the people, the subjects, a nation, tribe or clan as a whole.' Madagascar might, therefore, be the island *Wakwak* of *Yakubi*."

in 1896. The total population (census of 1932) is 3,772,569, of which 22,923 were French and 13,535 foreigners. The capital is Antananarivo, with a population of 98,577, and the chief ports are: Tamatave, Diego-Suarez, Majunga and Tulear.<sup>2</sup>

The natives of Madagascar, collectively known as Malagasy, are divided into a considerable number of tribes, each having its distinct customs. The majority of the inhabitants are probably derived, the lighter portion of them, from the Malayo-Polynesian stock, and the darker races from the Melanesian, who reached the island with the aid of the equatorial winds and currents. The population shares a number of characteristics with the people of the Indian and Pacific archipelagoes, physical appearance, mental habits, customs, and, above all, language. Their traditions also point in the same direction. There is an Arab element, introduced especially in the ninth century, on both the northwest and southeast coasts; and it appears that most of the families of the ruling classes in those parts of the island are descended from Arabs, who married native women.

The connection of the Arabs with the island dates from a remote epoch; and in very early times settlements were formed both on the northwest and southeast coasts. In the southeast the Arabs have become merged in the general mass of the people. It is different, however, in the northwestern and western parts of the island. Here are several large Arab colonies, occupying the ports of Anorontsanga, Mojanga, Marovoay and Morondava, and retaining their distinct nationality. There is also in these districts a Hindu element in the population, for intercourse has also been maintained

<sup>2</sup> The New York World Almanac, 1939.

for some centuries between India and northern Madagascar. In the early days the Arabs had a very powerful influence upon the Malagasy. This is seen in the number of words derived from the Arabic in the native language. Among these are the names of the months and the days of the week, the words used in astrology and divination, some forms of salutation, words for dress and bedding, money, musical instruments, books and writings, together with a number of miscellaneous terms.<sup>3</sup>

The Moslems of Madagascar can be divided into three groups:

In the north the Comoro-islanders (109,605) with the coast-tribes, Tankarana (18,578) and Tsimihety (78,913); in the northwest and west the Sakalava (209,000 of these are Moslem); and in the extreme southeast the Taimoro (52,000), the Tambahoaka (24,000), the Taifasy (46,000) and the Taisaka (131,000). This would give a total of about 670,000 Moslems according to the statistics of Louis Massignon in the *Annuaire du Monde Musulman* (1929). Arthur Pellegrin (*L'Islam dans le Monde*, Paris, 1937) gives a higher figure, 740,000; and Zaki Ali in his recent book, *Islam in the World* (Lahore, 1938) puts the total Moslem population of Madagascar at 805,000.<sup>4</sup>

Missionary correspondents are still *much* in disagreement with these statistics, for example:

“Besides the pagan population there are about 100,000 Muslims in Madagascar, chiefly near the west coast, where Islam has been introduced by Indian traders. These have constituted up till now

<sup>3</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica.

<sup>4</sup> A. Beaulieu (*The Moslem World*, Vol. XIX, p. 208) lists the Indian Moslems of Madagascar at 12,000. These would be additional.

a community untouched by Christianity, but concern for their evangelism is now aroused" (*International Review of Missions*, January, 1940, p. 84).

A letter comes, dated December 22, 1939, from the Rev. Daniel Couve, Secretary of the Société des Missions Évangéliques de Paris, in which he writes: "On the special question of Islam in Madagascar, I put the question before several of our missionaries who are just now on furlough, or in the Army of France. All of them tell me that it would be wiser not to speak of more than 500,000 Moslems in the Island, although it is very difficult to get accurate figures." While a Norwegian mission secretary writes (January 5, 1940):

"We have no accurate information about the number of Moslems in Madagascar, but 650,000 is certainly much too high. I should say that 65,000 also is too much. Our missionaries are in touch with the Moslems on the West-Coast of Madagascar and on the East-Coast and also in some of the larger towns and villages in the Interior of the Island. Almost every one of them is a merchant immigrated from India or born in Madagascar by Indian parents. We know a few cases of marriage between Moslem men and Malagasy women. The children are educated Moslems.

"A few Moslems on our fields do not show any interest in the Christian message and our missionary approaches to them have up to the present had no success except in two or three cases."

Our chief and most voluminous authority on Islam in Madagascar is still Gabriel Ferrand, for many years Governor-General of the islands. His book, *Les Musulmans à Madagascar et aux Iles Comores* was published

in three parts (Paris 1891). The first part (163 pp.) deals with the Antaimorona Moslems; the second part (129 pp.) with seven other tribes and deals more particularly with their customs and habits; the third part (204 pp.) is linguistic and deals with the influence of the Arabic language and Arab superstitions on the Malagasy. In addition to this work M. Ferrand has written on the same subject in a number of French periodicals and contributed two articles to the Encyclopaedia of Islam (Madagascar and Wāk-Wāk) which contain all at present known on the early history and character of Islam in this part of the world. Strange to say, I can find no distinct reference in Arnold's *Preaching of Islam* to the penetration of the Arabs into the Comoro Islands and Madagascar. The history of these early contacts and migrations must be gathered from references in the older Arabian geographers, who called this group of islands *Jazirat-al-Kamr*, Islands of the Moon, a name which still survives in the Comoro Islands. Still earlier, as we have seen, they bore the legendary name of Wak-Wak.

The name Kamr appears for the first time in the geography of Al-Khwarizmi, who died 835 A.D. He mentions the famous Mountain of the Moon in which the Nile was reputed to rise.

Marco Polo, in his voyages, speaks of Madagascar "where the Saracens live, who worship Mohammed. They have four sheikhs, that is, four old men, in whose hands is the government."

But it is now known that Marco Polo referred to the Zanzibar coast and not to the island opposite.

"Malagasy undoubtedly belongs to the western or Indonesian group of the Malayo-Polynesian family. Down to the adoption of the Arabic alphabet, the lan-

guage was only oral and, so far as we know, never written down in any alphabet. The lack of epigraphic material on the one hand and of ancient monuments on the other deprives us of any chance of regaining the past history of this vast island. Before the sixteenth century, a few Arabic and Chinese texts would constitute our only documents, if the linguistic substrata did not yield us some valuable information. These substrata are of two kinds, Bantu and Sanskrit.”<sup>5</sup>

Ferrand, after giving all the evidence from comparative philology, sums up the four waves of Arab migration (after the earlier period in which Hindus and Africans came to Madagascar) as follows:

The Arabs came in the sixth and ninth centuries and converted some of the people to Islam. They probably made the voyage from the Persian Gulf and belonged to the Sunni rite. Another migration came from Sumatra at the end of the tenth century. These immigrants spoke of the island as Wāk-Wāk, or perhaps they themselves were so termed. Certain Persians came about the year 800. Finally, in the middle of the thirteenth century, other Arabs entered Madagascar.

Ferrand quotes evidence in his article, for these four migrations, chiefly from the words used in Malagasy but also from the very rare and rude manuscripts collected among these Moslem groups, in Arabic character, and now preserved in the National Library at Paris.

In the second and third volume of Ferrand's monograph he gives some of these documents in Arabic, their transliteration and translation. Naturally, as is the case among Chinese Moslems and among the

<sup>5</sup> Encyc. of Islam.

Moros, the alphabet is somewhat modified and the grammar corrupted. *The striking fact is that here we have evidence of an Arabic alphabet in use centuries before the Hovas, the ruling tribe of Central Madagascar, had any written language whatever.* At present there is practically but one language, Hova (Malagasy), spoken throughout the whole Island, but the only script used is Latin which was introduced by the early Protestant missionaries about 1830.<sup>6</sup>

Omitting the influence of Sanskrit and Bantu on the present language of Madagascar, we note that of Arabic and the Arabs on the language, the culture and the superstitions of the Malagasy peoples. This is a remarkable example of the spread of Islamic ideas where the religion of Islam failed to take root.

Islam has left numerous traces on the speech of all Madagascar. The first and most important is the Arabic alphabet, which is still used on the southeast coast and was once more generally used through a considerable area. In the Comoro islands the Arabic-Swahili alphabet is used, which is an accommodation to certain sounds not found in Arabic. Until recently an Arabic-Malagasy paper *Qamr-ud-Din* (The Moon of Religion) was published by Moslems at Tananarive;<sup>7</sup> and of course copies of the Koran, books of prayer and especially books of magic are in circulation. Fer-  
rand collected some of these manuscripts:

“Malagasy manuscripts in the Arabic character bear the generic name of *shura-be*, ‘great writing,’

<sup>6</sup> Eric M. North, *The Book of a Thousand Tongues*, p. 567, gives facsimile pages from the present Malagasy Bible and of the earliest version both in Latin characters.

<sup>7</sup> The crescent-moon is also used for Moslem symbol in Southwestern Madagascar.

i.e., 'sacred writing.' They used to be difficult to obtain; the owners gave them an esoteric character which did not allow their contents to be communicated to a stranger. I was able to get some copies and to acquire a few others between 1890 and 1894. The subject matter of the manuscripts is very varied. There does not seem to have been a *shura-be* prototype out of which all the others proceeded. In an apparent disorder, the result of the fancy of the author or the copyist, we find collected *suras* of the Koran, interminable lists of the names of Allah, and of names of angels, also Arabic religious texts with interlinear Malagasy translations; Arabic-Malagasy glossaries, magic texts, and invocations in large numbers, magic squares and formulae, texts showing the magic influence, good or bad, of the planets, signs of the zodiac, lunar mansions, months, and days of the week. The *suras* of the Koran are not reproduced in the order which was settled at the revision ordered by the Caliph Othman. MS. 6 gives them in the following order: *fatiha*, cxix., cxii. and so on to xciv., verse 256 of ii., verse 16 and beginning of verse 17 of iii. The same MS. also contains Sura xxxi. (f. 136b) and f. 136b-138b, verses 158-159, 137, 256-259, 284-286 of Sura ii. and verses 25-26 of Sura iii."<sup>8</sup>

In addition to this existing Arabic literature, the Malagasies have borrowed from the Arabs the names of the days of the week, retaining the Arabic article, also the names of the twelve signs of the zodiac and the twenty-eight names for the days of the month. Rusillon in his book, *Un Petit Continent* (pp. 180-181)

<sup>8</sup> Encyc. of Islam.

lists other words in Malagasy derived from Arabic: *Harijy*=*harir*, silk; *mizama*=*mizan*, balance; *sora-tra*=*surah*, chapter; *aba*=*ab*, father; *abily*=*abid*, servants; *jamoka*=*jamus*, water-buffalo; *karama*=*kurama*, favor (salary); *arahaba*=*marhaba*, welcome; *maty*=*mat*, dead; *salama*=*salam*, peace, (greeting); *ariary*=*alriāl*, (Spanish) dollar; etc., etc. It is very strange that in this recent extensive and scholarly study of the island of Madagascar there is no reference to the work of Gabriel Ferrand, nor are his books listed in the select bibliography.

More important is the fact that the whole art of divination or sorcery at present current among the heathen tribes of Madagascar indicates a strong Arab influence.

Robert Griffith points out that circumcision is almost a universal practice throughout the Island and one may well ask whether this also is not due to the influence of early Islam.

He asks why so many curious ceremonies are connected with the practice, such as a special feast, rejoicing, etc. In the same connection he relates the following example of a Malagasy superstition. (Everyone who has lived in Egypt, Arabia or North India will recognize in it the *Zar* ceremony, prevalent to this day among Moslems in the Sudan and Egypt): "On one occasion the writer was overtaken by a gale. The boat being a small Arab dhow and unable to weather the storm, the skipper made for the shore and landed at a small out-of-the-way village which was rarely visited by Europeans. A meal was improvised under some tamarind-trees, some shouting and dancing and clapping of hands was heard which proved to be the

ceremony for casting out of spirits responsible for the Ramanenjana. Two women were the victims, men seem to be immune. The meeting was held in a large reed hut. An elegantly dressed woman sat on a stool; in front of her was a box on which were two plates half full of wild honey; between the two plates there was a jar in which incense was burning; the two women victims seemed quite oblivious of the strangers or the onlookers, and danced most vigorously whilst money was being poured on the plate by the relatives and friends.

“At last the woman who sat motionless on the stool turned her head, and the two women fell down utterly exhausted and apparently unconscious. Then there was a great commotion; pails of water were poured over the poor victims, and various other extreme measures were adopted.”<sup>9</sup>

The most common superstition, however, prevalent throughout Madagascar, is called *Shikili* (from Arabic *Shikl*), which is geomancy and is based in every particular on certain old books of magic written by Mohammed al-Zanati of Cairo, *Ilm-al-Raml*.

There is a great annual festival observed in Madagascar called *Fandruana* or the bath, which Ferrand believes is only a survival of the Mohammedan feast *al-fitr*.

When one reads of the superstitions prevalent among the pagans of Madagascar, one is reminded at every turn of Moslem influence. To quote once more from Griffith: “It is said that the natives seldom complete anything. Their houses and buildings are never absolutely finished. When the church at Ambatonakanga,

<sup>9</sup> Robert Griffith, *Madagascar*, p. 25. Cf. also Rusillon, *Un Petit Continent*, pp. 258-260. He calls this ceremony *le bilo*.

which is one of the best buildings in the Island, was erected, there were a few planks left out in the gallery. This is due to superstition, but it is a characteristic trait."<sup>10</sup> He does not realize that this is based upon a tradition of Mohammed, who said that only Allah is perfect and therefore one should never entirely complete human handiwork.

Destiny or fate (Malagasy *vintana*) plays an important part in the belief of all the tribes and is also referred back by Burgess and others to Arab influence. "The destiny or *vintana* of a person depends on what day he was born, or rather in what constellation of the zodiac. This and the names of the lucky and unlucky days are Arabic. The diviner is the witch doctor who pretends that there is nothing he can not find out by means of his divination chart.

"There is no custom which is so persistent as this working of the oracle, even in the most enlightened parts of the island. The Malagasy is more or less a fatalist and divination and destiny find fertile ground in his thoughts and will not be rooted out for a long time. The worship of idols and ancestor worship lost ground before civilization, but not so the practice of divination. It was rather given a greater prominence in the new order of things.

"The practice of *vintana* is based upon astrology, which teaches that the stars have an evil or a good influence on a person's life. The foundation of this astrology is the series of stellar constellations called the animal groups, or signs of the zodiac, as they appear in the almanacs. This series contains twelve signs, such as the lion, the crab, the ram, the scorpion, and

<sup>10</sup> Robert Griffith, *Madagascar*, p. 26.

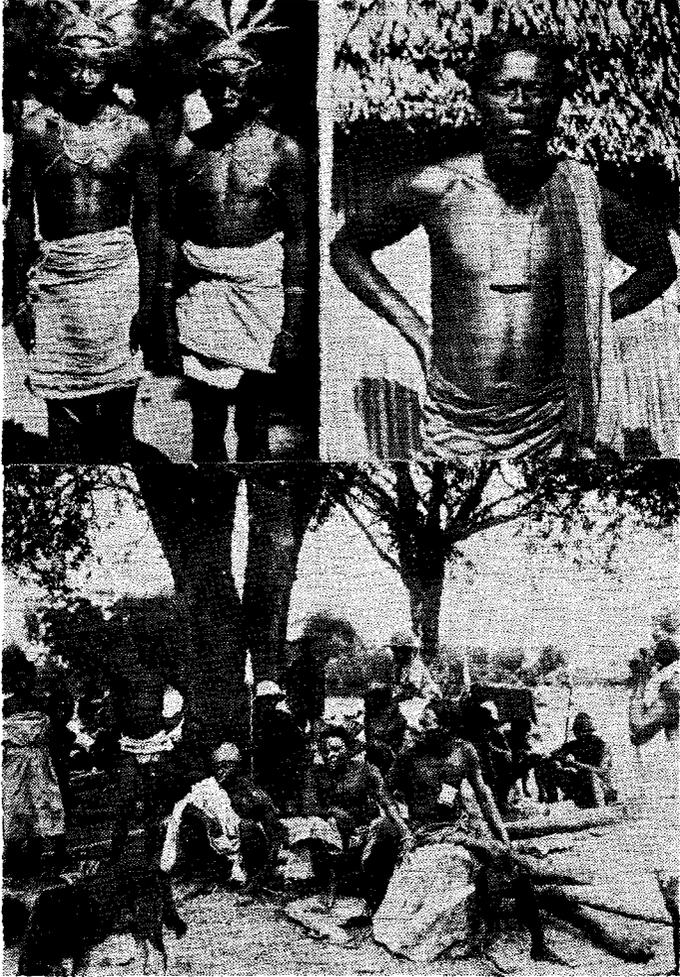
others, corresponding to the twelve months of the year and forms a circle in the sky which lies in the paths of the sun, the moon, and the planets. The Arabian names of these animal signs have become the names of the months and form the outline of the Malagasy astrology.”<sup>11</sup>

The Taimoro tribe in Southeast Madagascar are only nominally Moslem but they retain many customs that point to old Mohammedan tradition. The description given by George A. Shaw, *especially the chant for the dead*, is deeply interesting.

“When a Taimoro is approaching death, a number of old women are appointed to perform the last offices, and this they are said to do by hurrying the dying into death, and at once preparing the corpse for burial, and cutting off all the hair over the forehead. Then the scribes of the village assemble in the house, and each of them writes four passages from the sacred books upon separate pieces of bark paper. One of these slips from each scribe is taken and attached to the forehead of the corpse, and one from each on the breast and on each leg. These are then bound on with proper wrappings, that there may be no danger of displacement when the corpse is conveyed for burial.

“The body is carried to its last resting-place, and one of the young men, who has been trained to read and remember some of the words in the books of sacred writings, repeats some passages which are considered suitable for the occasion, although, as with very much of the erudition of the tribe at

<sup>11</sup> Burgess, *Zanahary in South Madagascar*.



*Types of Moslems in Madagascar*

present as regards their sacred writings, he may not have the remotest idea what the words mean. But they are supposed to contain a prayer to God and his prophet Mohammed for the dead.

“At the entrance to the *kibory*’ (Arabic *Kabr*) grave a halt is made, and the women and children return home, with the exception of the old women already referred to as performing the last sad rites. These carry fat from the kidney of an ox and fire, and as they enter the gateway a chant is repeated seven times by a few of the attendants and followers, after which they all advance into the burial-house and deposit the corpse in its appointed place. This chant sounds like: *Kibarala, kibarala, kilia, lalano-lalo, kibarala, kibarala, kibarala, voalalamondo.*”<sup>12</sup>

These words doubtless could be more correctly transliterated by one who knew Arabic! They are the funeral-dirge of Islam.

So far we have sketched the influence of a somewhat decadent Islam on the *whole* population of Madagascar since its arrival and until the advent of Protestant Missions and the French domination. It remains to state briefly the present extent and character of Islam today.

The Comoro Island Moslems belong to the Shafi’i rite and their language is Swahili. There are three so-called sultanates under French control. The sultans of Angazija reside at Moroni where there is a center of Shadhiliya darwishes. The sultans of Anjoyan are a Persian-Shirazi group dating from 1506. They have a rather large mosque built of white coral rock at Mossamoudou. The sultans of Mayotte claim descent

<sup>12</sup> Journal, Victoria Institute, Vol. XXXIII, 1901.

from 'Isa-ibn-Mohammed (1544), a son of a former sultan of Anjoan and have an ancient mosque and saint's tomb of some architectural beauty. Lastly, the sultans of Moheli (also Shirazis) are descended from an exile Hova converted to Islam about 1830.

The Sakalava Moslems on the west Coast are less strict in observance of Islamic laws. They observe Ramadhan but without fasting. They use rum and do not always abstain from pork. Nevertheless this group are the chief diviners and adepts in geomancy.

The Moslems on the southeast, according to their recorded tradition, came originally from Mecca. Their descendants have always retained the Arabic alphabet for their "sacred" writings (*Sorabe*) and even manufactured their own paper (*Kartas*) from native tree-bark. They possess books on medicine and astrology and their sorcerers (*Ombiasy*) travel all over Madagascar to supply *odys* (fetishes) and exercise the art of geomancy.<sup>13</sup>

Since 1924 many attempts have been made by the Indian Moslems, the Ahmadiyahs from Mauritius and Zanzibar, to gain new proselytes for Islam, with some success. The missionary deputation in 1913 reported:

"For many years Arab influence has been felt to some extent in the east of the Island, and many Mohammedan Indians have settled there. Recently, the influence of Islam has been further extended in the northwest by the influx of Comorians and Swahili, many of whom marry two or three Sakalava wives. Often villages may be seen where one half is Mohammedan and the other half Christian. If the experience in other fields is to be repeated, the

<sup>13</sup> *Annuaire du Monde Musulman*, pp. 263-266.

Church will certainly find it much harder to bring Christ into the lives of these people after they have come under the influence of Islam, and it is, therefore, an urgent necessity that we occupy these regions by Christian forces."<sup>14</sup>

In 1919 Robert Griffith stated: "Islam is making headway by leaps and bounds in Northwest Madagascar. Mohammedan missionaries from Zanzibar and Arabia go about from village to village and port to port preaching their religion, and *let it be clearly understood that Islam is not a stepping-stone to Christianity; it is its greatest and most bitter rival*. There is one thing to be said, the form of Islam prevalent in this district is extremely superficial. It is a little Mohammedanism added to the regular Sakalava heathen worship. A few genuflections, and a few incantations, more or less regularly recited, the carrying of some scraps of paper on the arm and forehead on which something in Arabic is written, attendance at the mosque, with great care in washing the feet before entering is all that is required. Drinking and immorality go on as before, but one is obliged to admit that this superficial form of religion is gripping the masses of Sakalava, and there are already 80,000 Mohammedans on the West Coast of Madagascar."<sup>15</sup>

Henri Rusillon, a missionary of the Société des Missions Évangéliques (Paris) who labored long in the Boina Avaratva district, mentions the Gujerati Moslems of India as active in winning others to "Silamo." By commercial dealings they are the medium between the black and the white population. Although the type

<sup>14</sup> *Madagascar for Christ*, Joint Report, etc., p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Griffith, *Madagascar*, pp. 54-55.

of Islam is superficial "one must not conclude that it is not to be feared. On the contrary, the very facility it offers to nominal conversions pushes it forward." He suggests that one could reach the Indian Moslems by suitable literature in Gujerati and that the Comorians would be able to read Swahili tracts and books. "The true Indian and Moslem center is today at Majemga. Formerly it was at Nosibe where, nevertheless, a small Indian village still exists. Nothing has been done up to the present to reach these people."

**XI**

**THE NEW MAP OF ARABIA**

“Ibn Saoud is Lord of Arabia by the force of his personality and the strength of his own right arm. An immense man, tremendous, vital, dominant. A giant thrown up out of the chaos and agony of the Desert—to rule. The Desert, vast and brutal, demands extreme severity. Royal, majestic and unperturbed Ibn Saoud rules Arabia with justice and exemplary punishment. He has branded his will on the unruly people of his vast empire.”

—H. C. ARMSTRONG  
in *Lord of Arabia*

## CHAPTER XI

### THE NEW MAP OF ARABIA

WHEN in 1890 I prepared to go out to Arabia as a missionary and tried to purchase a large scale map of the great peninsula, even at Brentano's I was told that there were far better maps available of the North Polar regions or of the moon than of Arabia. In a fascinating volume entitled *The Penetration of Arabia* the British geographer, Hogarth, traces the long story of exploration and the hardships endured to discover the various provinces. But it was really during and after the World War, 1914-1924, that Arabia yielded up its last secrets.

Of all the lands comparable to Arabia in size, and of all the peoples who in any way approach the Arabs in historical interest and influence, no country and no nationality (as Professor Hitti remarks) has received "so little consideration and study in modern times as have Arabia and the Arabs." Arabia is one of the great Bible lands, has an area of a million square miles and is the probable cradle of that Semitic race which has given the world its three great theistic faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

It is from Arabia as cradle that Islam arose and spread its power across the seven seas. The Arabs ex-

plored Africa by their slave-trade and visited China and Malaysia in their sailing ships centuries before Columbus discovered America. Yet their own land remained undiscovered.

Arabia is not all desert. It has fertility and beauty. H. St. John Philby has recently made an extensive journey to the Land of Sheba (*Geographical Journal*, July, 1938) through the great Wady of Nejran, where Christians died martyrs before the days of Mohammed. Here is his picture of one unoccupied province of Arabia. Does it not come as a challenge? He writes: "The backward state of the 'Asir highlands, intended by nature to be a paradise, is the inevitable result of man's inability to live at peace with his neighbors. Yet here nature and man have certainly combined to create a scene of astonishing beauty, and it seemed to me that man had actually outdone nature in their friendly rivalry. Imagine a great tableland thrust up to a height of 9000-9500 feet, towering above the tumbled mountains and valleys of the Tihama on one side and the endless expanse of mountains and desert on the other. The surface of the plateau, plunging steeply down on one side in a series of splendid buttresses, slopes gently on the other in the curves of graceful valleys, forming huge theaters, for which man has provided the seats in terrace after terrace of corn-fields. In the middle of June the corn was ripe, and I shall never forget that scene of golden ears souging and bowing under the gentle breeze, terrace after terrace, down the mighty flanks of those mountains, whose steeper slopes nature had reserved for her own plant-

ing—a dense forest of junipers and other trees extending down to the 7500-foot level. And in the fields and forest the birds rejoiced.” From these oases and highlands the Arabs came down to their coasts. From the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf bold Sinbads sailed to Madagascar, Zanzibar, Singapore and the Philippine Islands.

The Arabs have been world-conquerors and explorers. They traveled from the Pillars of Hercules (Gibraltar) to the coasts of China and in the period of their greatest expansion “assimilated to their creed, speech and even physical type more aliens than any stock before or since, not excepting the Hellenic, the Roman, the Anglo-Saxon or the Russian.” Israel’s tradition in the Old Testament reveals most intimate relations with Arabia and Arab life, both on their eastern frontier and on the south, even to distant Hadramaut. The Hebrew literary genius, as Dr. Macdonald has indicated, also shows kinship with Arabia. “Their literature throughout all their history, and to this day, in its method of production and in its recorded forms is of Arab scheme and type.” An index of all the Scriptural references to Arabia and Arabian Bedouin life includes twenty-five books of the Old and five of the New Testaments.

There is no land in the world and no people (with the exception of Palestine and the Jews) which bear such close relation to the Theocratic covenants and Old Testament promises as do Arabia and the Arabs. The divine promises for the final victory of the Kingdom of God in Arabia are many, definite and glorious. These promises group themselves around seven names which have from time immemorial been identified with

the peninsula of Arabia: *Ishmael, Kedar, Nebaioth, Sheba, Seba, Midian and Ephah*. The oldest description of Arabia and the Arabs is found in the Psalms and Prophets of the Old Testament. One can still locate many of the sons of Ishmael as Arab tribes of the great northern desert.

The natural boundaries of Arabia are not in degrees of latitude or longitude. The great "Island of the Arabs," as they themselves call it, has its geographical and historical area accurately expressed in the thrice repeated promise of the Old Testament "from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth." Iraq and Transjordan are of Arab speech, race and tradition; the great northern desert has been the tenting ground of the Arab since the dawn of history.

Dr. Storm's survey is the first complete survey of Arabia today as a mission field. Until the year 1889, this vast area was considered a closed land. Dr. Eugene Stock, then Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, in an address at the Ecumenical Missionary Conference held in New York in 1900, said: "The greatest of all these unentered countries, which is very rarely mentioned in missionary accounts, is Arabia. There is that great Arab race, the children of Abraham as much as are the Jews, waiting for the Gospel; but we cannot get in to preach it. The Lord will open that door when we have entered the doors already open."

The exploration and mapping of the Arabian peninsula has made vast strides during and since the World War. When Hogarth wrote the book referred to above, there were still large areas unexplored and unmapped.

Since the time of Doughty, the work of Lawrence, Shakespeare, Cheeseman, Rutter, Philby, Freya Stark, Vander Meulen, and last but not least, Bertram Thomas, have given us a picture of Arabia and its inhabitants with very few gaps remaining. The latest survey by Dr. Harold Storm, and published under the title *Whither Arabia* is a missionary survey of the field. It covers the entire peninsula across which he made his remarkable journeys.

The new forces that have at last stirred it may now arouse patriarchal and nomad Arabia from its stagnation. The tide of Western trade and culture came after the earliest missionary occupation fifty years ago, and has made the task of evangelization at once easier and yet more difficult. All Arabia faces a new future and this volume may well ask "whither?"

A recent British writer weighs the question: "The desert is undoubtedly the clue to the history of the Arabs. Relentless yet free, it has made the Arab what he is, essentially virile, essentially chivalrous, essentially spendthrift, essentially fatalistic. Critics have said that the Arab is so lazy that he has largely made his own deserts rather than that the deserts have made him. Such critics are unkind and superficial." He goes on to say that today the Arab has changed. He has a broader horizon and new sense of nationalism. The Arab is potentially a traveler and has made history outside of Arabia.

As Dr. Storm points out, every year the motor car is penetrating further into neglected Arabia. Communications between every part of the Peninsula were never so rapid and universal. The Arabic papers and books from Cairo, Beirut, Damascus and Bagdad reach

every part of the Peninsula. Surely all this is a challenge to hasten the work of Christian evangelization. Thirteen centuries of history prove that there is little hope for Arabia in Islam.

What Islam has done and has *not* done for the land of its birth can be read in the fascinating books of unprejudiced explorers who, from the days of Burckhardt and Niebuhr until those of Philby and Freya Stark, penetrated the vast peninsula and have portrayed not only the land but the people. Doughty's two volumes are an encyclopedia on the effect of Islam in molding the character of the desert Arab. There could be no stronger indictment of Islam than the fruit of that faith in the character and lives of the Arabs as Doughty portrays them.

Dr. Storm shows that the Arabs are a great race in origin and destiny, and are capable of great achievement. Physically they are undoubtedly one of the strongest races of the world, a survival of the fittest in an environment that kills off the weaklings. The character, influence and literature of the Arabic language witness to the genius of the people and of their prophet Mohammed, through his Book. A certain degree of similarity in human character, and an even greater similarity of language and custom and religion, prevails over the entire area where Arab migration brought Islam in its early conquest.

Who can say whether what happened in the seventh century may not occur again in the twentieth, if Christ should capture the Arab heart and Arabs become messengers of the Gospel as they once were of the Koran?

The new map of Arabia, the best maps of every

one of its provinces show no new *geographical* features. The deserts and oases, the mountain peaks and the wadys, the four thousand miles of coast with their numerous islands—all these are exactly what they were for centuries and millenniums. What has so remarkably changed is the political and economic map of Arabia, most of all the map of missionary occupation. These new maps answer the question, whither Arabia?

Politically Arabia, in the words of Ladislav Farago, “faces a brave future”; and he gives the reasons for his faith. (*Asia*, September 1940.) The Arabs themselves believe that they are destined to play once more a great role on the stage of history. He writes: “Heirs to a legacy of heroism, chivalry and a brilliant culture, they assert their claim in a dynamic refusal to believe that the role of the Arabs in history ended with the withdrawal from Spain long centuries ago. Somehow they sense that, if only they succeed in an intellectual resuscitation, the resurrection of their arms will follow. Today, in the face of an aggressive European imperialism which claims the whole world for its living space, one is inclined to question the reality and sobriety of such Arab hopes. With Italy knocking on the door of Arabia, with Germany and the Soviet Union bent on expansion, can Arabia prepare at all for an independent future? This is by no means an academic question of remote significance. Even from the purely imperialistic point of view, Arabia represents more than merely an expanse of fiery sand in the Rab’ al Khali, more than the barren homeland of a few millions of romantic nomads cherishing tra-

ditions of a once-great civilization. Arabia is a geographical as well as spiritual core whose spiritual importance serves to expand its geographical borders.”

The rise of Ibn Sa'ud and his lightning victories, the *blitzkrieg* of the desert, made a new political map of Arabia. In 1913 he drove the Turks from the Nejd; in 1921 he conquered the Shammar tribes of the north; in 1925 he annexed the Hejaz and became lord of the two holy cities, Mecca and Medina; in 1926 he conquered the Asir highlands. So that except for Yemen, Hadramaut and Oman he is today master of all Arabia. In the words of Ladislav Farago (to quote from this unprejudiced observer), “If there are still independent and semi-independent areas in the Arabian peninsula it is merely due to Ibn Sa'ud's desire to consolidate his gains rather than risk everything in perpetual campaigns.” He is feared and loved everywhere. The only question that arises is whether this realm of five million subjects in an area larger than all France—this unification and rebirth of the Arab people will last when the present ruler rests with his fathers. He is approaching his seventieth year. What he accomplished was the amazing effort of his second youth. He has lived long and hard even for an Arab of the desert; and his numerous marriages since he came to power may have strengthened his alliances but sapped his vigor. What will happen when his numerous sons dispute the succession? There are persistent rumors that Italian agents are sowing discord in this situation and there are always reactionary groups ready for revolt against the program of modern progress.

The Imam Yahya, who rules Yemen, has thirteen sons (*absit omen*) and is said to be at constant loggerheads with them. Two of them aspire for the succession, and the future map of this part of Arabia also has British and Italian draughtsmen at work through the channels of diplomacy and the issue of the present war.

Altogether, the world of Islam is anxiously watching events in Arabia but their admiration for the work accomplished by Ibn Sa'ud is genuine. An Egyptian Moslem, Dr. Zaki Ali, writes from Geneva in a book printed at Lahore (1938):

“When King Ibn Sa'ud seized Mecca and was proclaimed King of the Hejaz, the majority of the Muslims outside Arabia thought that he would be intolerant and unprogressive. But they have been agreeably surprised to find that they were mistaken. He is most tolerant to the non-Wahhabis and allows them to drink coffee and smoke tobacco. Nor are any more religious buildings destroyed or desecrated at Mecca as they were at the time when he captured the city in 1926. He has set up Committees of Good Morals at Mecca and Medina to suppress vices and also to prevent the custodians of the saints' tombs from fleecing people by selling them charms and talismans. These committees also encourage the inhabitants to keep the streets of their city clean, pave broken roadways and repair drainage.

“Great as all the above reforms may be, they are as nothing compared with the law, order and security which King Ibn Sa'ud has established

throughout the length and breadth of his vast dominions. Indeed, the King's wisdom lies in the fact that he was alive from the very beginning to the very fundamental truth that until law and order were established no reforms would be possible."

It is not an exaggeration, therefore, to state that the liberal views and policies of this ruler have changed not only the political but the economic map of Arabia within two decades. Arabia has no railways but motor-cars are superseding the ship-of-the-desert.

Together with these political changes, partly because of them, a new economic era came to Arabia. The discovery of oil, the extensive use of the motor car displacing camels, the introduction of the radio and the air-plane and the construction of highways have destroyed the patriarchal isolation and seclusion of all Arabia. It is a fascinating story and it has all happened in two or three decades.

The spectacular success of an American oil company at Bahrein in Eastern Arabia was the first phase in the scramble for Arabian petroleum. In 1938, 1,117,000 long tons of oil were produced at Bahrein alone. Now there are borings and wells on the mainland near Kuwait and in Qatar. Important discoveries have been made in other parts of Southern Arabia. Already Bahrein holds fourteenth place among all lands in oil-production.<sup>1</sup> It is a story full of romance and rivals the Arabian Nights.

Here is one item from the news of yesterday. "The

<sup>1</sup> G. M. Lees, *The Search for Oil*, *Geographical Journal*, January, 1940.



Tombs of Moslem Saints. (Mu'alla) Mecca  
Destroyed by Wahhabi Reformers after the World War

officials of the producing company welcomed the King's party at Abu Hadriya with 300 men and 100 cars. The King's party and guests numbered 2,500. This almost unique assembly then proceeded to journey as one caravan over the 100 miles to the company's headquarters at Dammam. Ibn Sa'ud was entertained in a company house in Dammam, and a city of tents was erected for his followers at Al Khobar."

"The purpose is to make Al Tanura the first deep-water port on the eastern mainland of Sa'udi Arabia. To it oil flows through a 10-inch pipe-line, 40 miles in length. But it is not only for oil that the port may be used. In co-operation with the Government of Sa'udi Arabia Ras Tanura has been constructed so as to be available for commercial shipping; it is calculated thus to confer on the land of Ibn Sa'ud a double boon."

From northwestern Arabia there are reports that the old "Gold Mines of Midian" of which Richard Burton wrote are being re-discovered and so the gold of Sheba may once more lure mankind.

Bread, however, is better than gold. Artesian wells are being dug in many parts of the vast interior; wind-mills irrigate gardens and replace the old leather bucket. The plains of ancient Mesopotamia are being reclaimed by modern river-dams for cultivation. The late Sir William Wilcox estimated that "in the southern delta of the Euphrates-Tigris alone, over ten millions of acres could be cultivated as the result of a vast scheme of land drainage. Here, water, soil and sun produced the wealth of ancient Nineveh and Babylon and the opulence of Haroun-al-Rashid's *Arabian Nights*'

capital at Bagdad. Herodotus, the Greek historian, relates that such was the fertility of the soil that sown grain commonly yielded a two-hundredfold increase."

One is reminded of the promises for Arabia and its people in the seventy-second psalm, "a handful of corn that shall shake like Lebanon."

When we turn to the province of Hadramaut we also witness signs of new economic and social life that startle the traveller. "Shibam, in southern Arabia, with 33,000 inhabitants, is a town of modern sky-scrapers seven stories high. Koranic schools, bustling merchants, turbulent tribes, chief of them the Sei'ar (the 'wolves' of South Arabia) give an entirely Oriental setting to these massive and imposing structures. Tarim, a few miles north-east, is a town of sumptuous residences copied from palaces in Malaya. The interiors of these and of the sky-scrapers of Shibam are furnished in European luxury with running water, baths, electric light and fans. The country is passing through a transition period: Western ideas modifying the almost theocratic control hitherto exercised by the Moslem Seiyids. India, the Netherlands Indies, Malaya and East Africa, all have contributed a stimulus to progress."

The political and economic map of Arabia today differs enormously from that of thirty years ago. What of missionary occupation? Has that kept pace with these providential revolutions in the life of the Arab? Dr. W. H. Storm sums it all up in one of his recent reports. No one could add to the eloquence of these facts:

"Scattered along the coast of Arabia are five mission stations. All the rest of the peninsula is un-

occupied. The length of the entire coastline is approximately 3,550 miles; the total area is 1,000,000 square miles; the population is about 10,000,000. Can five small, scattered stations (Kuwait, Bahrain, and Muscat of the Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church in America, Aden of the Danish Mission, and Sheikh Othman of the South Arabia Mission of the Church of Scotland) with 38 active missionaries adequately cover such a field?

“Let us be more practical—Arabia is the same size as the United States east of the Mississippi. Now place religious centers at Bangor, Maine; Boston, Mass.; New York City; and two others at Miami and Key West, Fla. How could these five centers reach the entire eastern United States?

“There is not a mission station nor a resident missionary on the entire Red Sea Coast of Arabia. In Asir and Yemen we visited several towns where probably no missionary had ever set foot for over 1,000 years and yet here one day Christian Churches had flourished and the name of Jesus was called upon by thousands of worshippers. In those days the country was lost to Christianity through strife and schism within the Church. Now, today, this section of Arabia stands as a challenge for occupation. Will the Church, through neglect and indifference, again lose this country for Christ?

“Out in the open sea between Makalla and Dhufar, during a 34 day sailing-boat journey, I talked to a seasoned veteran of the sea. During our conversations I discovered that nearly 50 years ago he had carried Dr. Zwemer along this same coast. He told me how Zwemer would talk to him over a map

and plan and dream of mission work here and there along the coast. Fifty years have passed and still that coast has seen no missionaries except Zwemer and myself.

“‘Why don’t you stay?’ ‘When are you coming back?’ ‘When can we have a hospital like the one in Bahrain?’ These and similar questions I heard everywhere. What answer could I give? What answer do you give?”

**XII**

**THE WALLS OF JERICH0**

“The missionary enterprise is one of faith, and it must be recognized as such; faith in God and faith in the Gospel. There is always a touch of madness about faith for faith leads people to do what cold reason alone would say is foolish or impossible. But repeatedly history has proved that the impossible has taken the liberty of coming to pass. How foolish to attempt to evangelize Arabia, some will say. . . . To feel that there are places where God’s message of salvation in Christ is too weak to be victorious is to deny its divine character.”

—DR. W. HAROLD STORM  
in *Whither Arabia*

## CHAPTER XII

### THE WALLS OF JERICHO

**T**HE climax of faith in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews relates to corporate not individual faith, and to a great miracle of conquest. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days." This statement is not a bit of Hebrew folk-lore or fiction from the book of Joshua. It is a fact. Modern archaeology has corroborated the Bible story. Professor Garstang, who spent years in the Jericho excavations, says: "Set side by side with the Biblical narrative the material evidence is seen to bear out in every essential detail the record of the capture and destruction of Jericho by the Israelites under Joshua."

Now there is a strange appropriateness in these words when we think of Arabia fifty years ago and today. Then the great Peninsula "was straitly shut up on every side," even as the city of Jericho. Arabia was largely unexplored and even unknown.

The German geographer, Carl Ritter, called Arabia "the anti-industrial center of the world." No European or American resided in any part of the interior. No traveler had yet crossed the northern boundary of Hadramaut or explored the great southeastern desert.

There were great blanks on the maps, in spite of the work of the early explorers. There was no commercial interest in Arabia. Along the entire four thousand miles of coast there were only six post-offices in 1890.

The very idea of opening a Christian mission in an area of proverbial fanaticism and among a people engaged in constant tribal warfare was considered quixotic.

The proposal was spoken of as a wild-goose chase, a Utopian effort and a tempting of Providence. I recall the articles that appeared in church papers blaming the pioneers for attempting an impossible and a wholly unprofitable enterprise.

And the facts *were* all against us. The Keith Falconer Mission lost its pioneer the year before Cantine sailed and the open door of Aden proved a blind alley for many, many years. Arabia was "straitly shut up on every side," from Sinai to Bab-el-Mandeb a thousand miles of coast so inhospitable that after fifty years there is no mission station there; from Aden to Muscat a thousand miles of fanaticism; and the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf was called the Pirate Coast, not without reason.

But by faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days. What were those walls that defied our Joshua (Jesus) from entering Arabia the Cradle of Islam?

Fivefold and strong were the walls that shut in the peninsula.

I. There were walls of ignorance and unbelief at home. As Dr. Lansing put it in his address before the Synod fifty years ago: "The doctrine of fatalism

commonly accredited to Islam is not one-half so fatalistic in its spirit and operation, as that which for thirteen centuries has been practically held by the Christian Church as to the hope of bringing the hosts of Islam into the following of Jesus Christ."

Arabia was a challenge to faith because it was the cradle of Islam. The fanaticism of centuries had closed the mind and heart of the church. The penetration of Arabia was accomplished not by missionaries but by travelers and explorers.

*Doughty and Burton, Niebuhr and Pelly were not in the class of David Livingstone. Of all the lands comparable to Arabia in size, and of all the peoples who in any way approach the Arabs in historical interest and influence, no country received so little consideration and study in modern times as Arabia. This was true in general but especially so of the Church of Christ. Arabia was neglected and, in this strange neglect, was ignored in the prayers and program of all Christendom.*

Today those walls of ignorance and unbelief have fallen flat. Lawrence and Philby and Freya Stark have drawn the imagination of youth to the fascinating geography of Arabia and to its people. The story of pioneer missionary effort at Aden and along the Persian Gulf coast has been a challenge to youth in our colleges.

Islamics has secured a place in university curriculums and Missions to Moslems became a study-subject for all the churches. The Arab awakening has proved the virile and dauntless character of this race to the whole Near East.

The Arabs are a great race in origin and destiny,

and are capable of great achievement. Physically they are undoubtedly one of the strongest races in the world, a survival of the fittest in an environment that kills off the weaklings. The World War called attention to the heroism and daring of Arab warriors under the leadership of Lawrence of Arabia.

II. Walls of prejudice and fanaticism have fallen in Arabia itself. The World War drove the Arabs from isolation to world-citizenship. The fall of the caliphate and the revolutionary rise of a new Turkey has been felt across the whole peninsula.

The steady pressure of the British Government patrol along the coasts of the Gulf, the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea to eradicate the slave-trade and promote peace among the tribes has had its effect on Arab life and thought.

Most of all the establishment of the throne of Ibn Sa'ud, the greatest king of Arabia, has profoundly affected the lives of his four million subjects.

His watchword was "back to the Koran and on to the land." The former produced a Puritan revival of Islam with primary education. The latter sounded the doom of nomadism and free-booting warfare. More than two hundred agricultural settlements have been established. The motor-car and radio have been Ibn Sa'ud's allies in transforming and uniting Arabia. Twenty wireless stations have been established with powerful central stations at Mecca and Riyadh.

Today there are over five thousand motor cars in use by the Arabs. The camel is out of date and under a grove of palms in the oasis the Arab chiefs rig up a receiving-set and listen in to Rome, Berlin, Cairo and London.

We have already spoken of the discovery of oil in Arabia. The King of Arabia himself came from his capital to open the new oil port at Tanura, forty miles from Bahrein, arriving on the scene with an escort of 100 motor cars. When he turned the valves for the flow of oil through a ten-inch pipe 40 miles in length, the Arabs shouted *Mashallah*. What hath God wrought! They have recently also located gold deposits near the holy city of Medina. These enterprises employ some 500-600 Europeans and several thousand Arabs, who find such employment more profitable than raiding their neighbors for camels.

Twenty-five years ago a Christian was not tolerated in inland Arabia, and ran the risk of insult and violence from the Wahabis; today American missionary doctors are welcomed in Riyadh, the capital, and in the chief inland cities.

In the coastal cities religious toleration was never so marked as now. The Arab is in contact with the modern world, he is reading newspapers from Egypt, Iraq and Syria, and is concerned with fluctuating exchange rates and prices in neighboring countries.

Oil, and the prosperity it is bringing, is raising the standard of living and lowering the temperature of religious intolerance.

Even the green-turbaned theologian began to doubt whether all knowledge is found within the covers of the Koran when the new era of the telephone, radio and cinema suddenly dawned in Arabia. Western science and western medicine deal the death-blow to suspicion and superstition. The walls have fallen flat. Does the Church realize her new opportunity?

III. The political barriers which formerly kept back the missionary enterprise have also largely fallen down. In Afghanistan and Central Asia the doors are still barred and bolted. But in Arabia we have seen them swing open of their own accord (as Peter did the iron gate). And we missionaries say with him, "Now we know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel and hath delivered us."

The story of the relations of the Arabian Mission, for four decades, first with the old Turkish government, then with British Consuls and Residents and lastly with Arab sheikhs and King Ibn Sa'ud, has never been told. It is a tale of gradual building up of warm friendships by tact and loving fellowship.

It is found in the private diaries of your missionaries, in their prayer-life and in the determination of our Mission to have Paul's attitude to those in authority. And what has been the result? They gained not the cynical tolerance but the friendship and admiration of Turkish Pashas, Arab Sheikhs, King Ibn Sa'ud, the Sultans of Muscat, of men like Sir Percy Cox and Sir Arnold Wilson.

Let the last be our spokesman. No higher tribute was ever paid to any mission among Moslems than the article by the late Sir Arnold Wilson in *The Nineteenth Century and After* (Oct. 1939) on "An American Mission in Arabia." After telling of its early days and the work of establishing schools and hospitals in the various stations, he concludes:

"Such, very briefly, with many omissions, is the history of a mission which for fifty years has sought to make good Moslems better citizens in the hope that some among them, and they the best, will make

the sacrifice, to them second only to that of life itself, and profess Christ.

“Its work is not to be measured in terms of converts made, in bodies cured, or children taught, still less in gallant lives spent, and sometimes prematurely ended, in regions which to outsiders seem, in Lord Curzon’s words when he toured the Persian Gulf in 1902, ‘so intrinsically abominable and vile.’

“This I can testify—as I draw upon rich stores of memory of those regions—that the last thirty years have witnessed a complete change in the attitude of Arabs to other religions than their own.

“The three short years of the life and teaching of Jesus, says Lecky in his *History of European Morals*, did more to soften and to moralize mankind than all the disquisitions of the philosophers.

“Fifty years of Christian witness in Arabia, the Persian Gulf and Persia have profoundly modified the ethical outlook of Moslems.”

Such a passport of confidence and good will is worth tons of diplomacy. The only flag under which our mission takes shelter and should take shelter in the years ahead is the banner of the Cross.

“By *faith* the walls of Jericho fell down”. . . and they will keep falling down at the sound of the trumpet, until Christian hospitals care for sick pilgrims even at Mecca and Medina.

IV. The walls that shut in womanhood have largely disappeared. The old laws of seclusion, of the veil, and of degradation and neglect are becoming obsolete in the coastal towns. In Turkey and Turkestan and Persia they have fallen flat. In Egypt and India and even in Arabia they are tottering, bending, breaking in the inevitable crash of old ideas and ideals.

In Turkey and Iran and in Soviet Turkestan womanhood crushed for centuries under Islamic law is now free. The veil and the harem are things of the past. A recent writer puts it this way:

“Girls have emerged from the stultifying and purely animal existence, and become doctors, engineers, aviators, agronomists; the woman who is now Public Prosecutor in a Central Asian Republic was sold as a child for seventeen camels; women who were cradled in *bishiks*, wooden receptacles ‘that are mockery to every notion of hygiene,’ now organize children’s welfare centers on the most modern Western lines, and teach others how to read or to use sewing machines.” And this revolution has also come to Arabia.

The first girls’ school at Bahrein, started by Mrs. Amy E. Zwemer, was an opening wedge. Now there are girls’ schools in every large center. Today we have female education on the government program of Iraq and Nejd and Yemen. Schools for girls at Mecca and Hadramaut. More marvelous still is the training of women nurses and teachers.

The opportunity and the facility of work among women and girls and the new standards of marriage and home life are a miracle. By faith these walls fell down—the dauntless faith of the pioneer women who have fallen asleep. They labored and others have entered into their labors.

Are there today no volunteers, teachers, nurses, doctors, evangelists, to go over the top of the walls that are crumbling?

V. The most remarkable fact, however, is the spiritual change that has come to Arabia. The walls of “man-soul” have fallen down after they were com-

passed about seven days. Do you recall John Bunyan's allegory, the Holy War? It is a perfect picture of the hard, proud Moslem heart in rebellion against King Immanuel.

Here, line for line, you may trace the real spiritual conflict that is waging in Arabia. Mohammed or Christ, the Koran or the Gospel, salvation by self-righteousness or by the Cross.

And in this terrific inward struggle the missionaries have seen the walls of Jericho fall. From eye-gate and ear-gate they have for all these years laid siege to Man-Soul.

Hospitals and schools and preaching, tracts and gospels and deeds of mercy; the patience of unanswered prayer, the love that would not let them go; the undiscourageable hope and the faith that laid hold of God—all these have conquered and Arabs have opened the doors of their hearts to Jesus Christ our Lord.

No miracle is greater than the surrender of a Moslem-soul to Christ. It is like Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. If any man be in Christ he is a new creation. And such have we seen in Eastern Arabia. Men and women whose hearts yielded to the love of Christ our Savior.

Dr. Paul W. Harrison described the baptism of such converts under the caption, "Christ sets up His Church in Muscat":

"Last Sunday was such a day. We came home from church and listened to the Choir of Heaven, the one that sings in the presence of the angels of God when a sinner repents. 'He shall reign forever and ever,' the choir sang. It was through the gramophone that the music came. When something very

special happens we put on the Hallelujah Chorus. Last Sunday as we listened to the Choir that stands before the throne of God and of the Lamb, their tremendous symphony of triumph shook our souls in unison with theirs. We saw them too, a multitude that no man could number. Faces that we knew were there, Peter Zwemer, and George Stone, and Sharon Thoms, who opened Muscat and died; Rena Harrison and Henry Bilkert, Vickie Storm and Ray De Young. Many were there that we knew: Mrs. Olcott, and M. B. Harrison, for Arabia is not redeemed with corruptible things, not even that tiny part of its redemption that has been entrusted to us. And the omnipotent triumph of the Eternal Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ shone from their faces as it rang out in their voices.

“I baptize thee Rubeyah, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.’ Whom does God choose as pillars in His Church, in this city of Muscat, where Satan’s seat is? The weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty. Who is Rubeyah? A motor driver, but not any longer, for competition was severe, and the cheerfully happy spirit of the African does not always travel with lots of Dutch business ability. A cook who can excel in faithfulness, if not in brilliance. An honest and sincere believer in Christ who has walked in the paths of sin, and repented, and brings to the feet of Christ real humility and genuine faith.

“Three days later he was married to Miriam who, previous to this, was the only Christian in this city, and Christ’s lone witness to the fact that men and

women can be saved in Arabia. And now with the shy radiance of real love shining from their eyes, they give to the tiny Muscat Church the solid nucleus of a Christian family, and for that we thank God and take courage exceedingly.”

And then, after describing two other converts who for Christ's sake suffered the loss of all things, he concludes: “‘For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth; King of kings, and Lord of lords, forever’... and as Mr. Pennings baptized those three men whom God had translated from the power of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son of His love, the Church of Muscat emerged into view before our eyes. To that little group more are to be added and soon, if the favor of God continues. Every hard and lonesome trip, and every shaking malarial chill; every lonesome child thousands of miles away from his mother in school, yes, every one of the graves that mark our path like milestones, stood justified and worth while in that moment.”

Whose are these graves that mark the march around Jericho like milestones? The list of those who laid down their lives for or in Arabia and had faith in its evangelization is longer than most people imagine. HENRY MARTYN will always be remembered for his vision of the Moslem world, his early translation of the Gospel and his visit to Muscat on his last journey through Persia. In a letter dated Cawnpore, October 10th, 1809, he wrote:

“Thus we are baffled—yet it is the Lord's will—and therefore I feel willing to try again and again, till the work is approved. It seems now to be the wish that Sabat should leave the Persian for awhile and commence an Arabic version; to this plan I cor-

dially consent, because it is the most important version of all, Arabic being understood not only in Syria, Tartary, Persia, India, and many parts of China, but through a large part of Africa, and all along the south coast of the Mediterranean."

IAN KEITH FALCONER, who established the Scotch Mission at Aden, stirred his generation of students on both sides of the Atlantic, when in his farewell address at Glasgow he cried:

"We have a great and imposing war-office, but a very small army . . . while vast continents are shrouded in almost utter darkness, and hundreds of millions suffer the horrors of heathenism or of Islam, the burden of proof lies upon you to show that the circumstances in which God has placed you were meant by Him to keep you out of the foreign mission field."

The pioneer missionary to Muscat was BISHOP THOMAS VALPY FRENCH, who, when he had completed forty years of service in India, resigned his bishopric and started for Arabia. Shortly before his death, May 14, 1891, he wrote:

"If I can get no faithful servant and guide for the journey into the interior, well versed in dealing with Arabs and getting needful common supplies (I want but little), I may try Bahrein . . . But I shall not give up, please God, even temporarily, my plans for the interior, unless, all avenues being closed, it would be sheer madness to attempt to carry them out . . . In memory of Henry Martyn's pleadings for Arabia, Arabs and the Arabic, I seem almost trying at least to follow more directly in his footsteps and under his guidance, than even in Persia or India,

however incalculable the distance at which the guided one follows the leader.”

And who can forget that stalwart medical missionary, JOHN C. YOUNG, who endured, as seeing the Invisible for over thirty years, the heat and burden of Sheikh Othman, who twice saw his hospital destroyed by hostile Arabs and kept on loving them, and at whose funeral all Aden was in mourning.

PETER J. ZWEMER was the first of the Arabian Mission to pass to his reward. He died at the age of thirty, like a soldier not thinking of his wounds but of victory on the field. Two weeks before he died in the Presbyterian Hospital in New York City in 1898, he wrote: “I am slowly but surely improving and may be home soon. Now the Board has authorized me to complete the building fund. I have just secured \$100 for a Muscat touring boat. Dr. and Mrs. Thoms sailed this morning for Arabia, *laus Deo!* I felt sorry I could not divide myself and go with them . . . patiently longing I wait His time.” It was not long.

One year later, June 26th, GEORGE E. STONE died of heat apoplexy at Birka near Muscat. To his friends in Auburn Theological Seminary he wrote a few months earlier: “I am glad I came to Arabia, and that to me has been given a part in this struggle. I do firmly believe that the strength of Islam has been overestimated, and that if ever the Church can be induced to throw her full weight against it, it will be found an easier conquest than we imagine—*not but what it will cost lives*, it has always been so, but I do believe that Islam is doomed.”

It *did* cost lives and will cost more lives laid on the altar of missionary service. But how great is our heritage. How sure we are that God will reap a

rich harvest where He sows such costly seed. None of us thought at that time who would be next on the roll of martyrs. It would not be difficult to glean from the letters and reports of the Arabian Mission burning words that came from the lips or the pen of those who hazarded their lives for Arabia and laid foundations on which those who follow after must build. Here is the list of the others in the order of their entrance into rest and glory.

- HARRY J. WIERSUM — August 3, 1901.  
 MARION WELLS THOMS — April 25, 1905.  
 JESSIE VAIL BENNETT — January 21, 1906.  
 SHARON J. THOMS — January 15, 1913.  
 CHRISTINE IVERSON BENNETT — March 29, 1916.  
 H. R. L. WORRALL — resigned 1917, died in Africa a few years later.  
 ELIZABETH DEPREE CANTINE — August 30, 1927.  
 HENRY A. BILKERT — January 21, 1929.  
 RAYMOND DE YOUNG — December 31, 1930.  
 REGINA RABBE HARRISON — May 4, 1930.  
 VICTORIA FOSTER STORM — May 22, 1931.  
 AMY E. WILKES ZWEMER — January 25, 1937.  
 ROGER C. CUMBERLAND — June 12, 1938.  
 JAMES CANTINE — July 1, 1940.

It is fitting that one word of those “who being dead yet speak” should be from the lips of Roger Cumberland. In June, 1938, two fanatical Kurds from outside of Dohuk, his station in Iraq, shot him as he was giving them Christian literature in his home. A servant tried to help him but was also shot. British government friends in Mosul sent an airplane to bring

them to the hospital there. But the care was in vain, and both victims of the attack died within a few hours. Conscious of danger, in a letter written less than a month before his death, we read: "The promises of God are to those who endure; and I'd like to try it. I do not think there is much danger, but if there were, that would be no reason for leaving. Ever since the world began, people have been called cowards if they did not risk everything for tribe and nation, and today there are many thousands in daily danger, just as a simple matter of duty, without any heroics about it. The church might make more progress if it would get the same attitude."

He had a short missionary career. Dr. James Cantine was the first to go to Arabia from America and is the last on the list of those who laid down their lives.\* His work abides; his memory is an inspiration.

Reviewing Missions in Arabia, Dr. Alexander McLeish of the World Dominion Movement says:

"Christian missions need to take a long view of the situation, working toward the time when an indigenous Church can exist among the people because they themselves desire it. This may one day be secured if the present medical, evangelistic, school work and social education are steadily developed. A real attempt to abolish illiteracy should be made, concurrently with a wide sowing of the Word of God over the length and breadth of the peninsula.

"That such a forward movement is now possible is due to half-a-century of missionary work of a peculiarly difficult character. Those who know Ara-

(\*) See *The Golden Milestone* and tributes paid to his memory in *Neglected Arabia*, October 1940.

bia and have knowledge of Islam, will magnify the grace of God in His servants whereby they have signally triumphed over difficulties which could not have been surmounted by unaided human strength. They have laid a good foundation which can be built upon. If the Church will arise in her strength, she can build again upon the pre-Islamic martyr Church of Arabia.”

That martyr church in Nejran and Yemen, with our own holy dead who sleep at Aden, Muscat, Bahrein, Busrah and in America call upon us to finish the task. To win back all Arabia to Christ.

Uplifted are the gates of brass  
The bars of iron yield  
To let the King of Glory pass  
The Cross hath won the field.

**XIII**

**THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS**

“It is one of the tragedies of history that, unlike her neighbors Syria, Armenia, Egypt and Abyssinia, Arabia was late in possessing the Scriptures in her own tongue. Arabians were present at Pentecost. The Evangel was preached in the country, but those who accepted the new faith seem to have been content with the Word of God in Syriac or Coptic or some other foreign language. It was not until a century after Mohammed that Arabic versions of part of the Bible were written. Had these existed in his time, affording him a true vision of the Lord Jesus, instead of a distorted picture revealed in the Koran how different might have been his reaction to the Christian message.”

—R. KILGOUR in  
*The Bible Throughout the World*

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

**W**E read in the Book of Acts of those who brought pagan books and burned them when they learned the Gospel message from the Apostles. Jeremiah tells us that God's Word is like fire (Jer. 23:29). Some books are for *fuel*, and some are *fire*. But whether for fuel or for the fire, every book enshrines a soul of man or demon or angel, and the *Book of books* enshrines the soul of God.

The whole history of civilization goes back to the day when man began to write records. Everything before that is prehistoric and shrouded in mist. It is the *book* which stands pre-eminent, invincible, overwhelming in the affairs of the human race.

The Vedas gave us Indian social life and thought. The Book of the Dead tells the story of ancient Egypt. The Koran has put its trade-mark on the foreheads of two hundred and fifty million people. "*At the beginning,*" as someone has said, "Sinai—God and a tablet of stone; and *at the end* of all things earthly—God and an opened Book."

But between that earliest Revelation and God's last word is the Battle of the Books—the Word of God against the word of man. For there are many voices on religion, but only one Revelation. There have been

many prophets, but only one Savior. *That* is the eternal issue. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of God abideth forever."

In the last analysis all the sacred books of the non-Christian religions are a challenge to the supremacy, the finality and the sufficiency of God's Word. We can meet that challenge and vindicate the finality and sufficiency of the Bible on the threefold ground of its historicity, its contents, and its dynamic. This is the justification of the Bible Societies. For in respect to each of these three categories the Christian Scriptures stand in a class aloof and alone. And this is true in a special sense when compared with the Koran, the sacred scriptures of Islam.

I. The Bible, as we have it, may not contain all the oldest records of humanity, but without the shadow of doubt its oldest and its most recent pages have full historic value. By history we understand the opposite of myth and fable and legend.

History is anchored in geography and chronology. Not "once upon a time," but on this day and in this month and this year. The Bible deals not with the land of Utopia or the beautiful valley of somewhere, but speaks of this mountain, of yonder city, of this village. History deals with definite facts and definite dates. As Peter says: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables." Or, as Luke puts it, the Gospel record is based on the testimony of "those who were eye-witnesses."

The geography and the chronology of the Old and New Testaments are woven into the entire narrative to a most astonishing degree. The Bible is the only sacred book that has chronological dates and geography. Take, for example, the opening paragraph of the third

chapter of Luke. "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness." Or take the tenth chapter of Genesis and its long list of nations. In sharp contrast, the whole Koran, or all the Analects of Confucius, contain far less geography and chronology than one chapter of the Acts or of the Synoptic Gospels.

It is remarkable that there is no definite date given to any event in the Koran. And there is also a marked absence of place-names. Only from tradition do we know anything of when or where the various chapters were revealed.

II. The contents of the Bible when compared with other sacred books are equally remarkable. The latter are often puerile—only of local interest without chronological order. "Cunningly devised fables." The *Bhagavad Gita* of the Hindus is an example.

The great Sanscrit scholar, Jarl Charpentier, noting this book in the *Oriental Review* of Uppsala University (January, 1936), gives his opinion of the Gandhi-craze and, incidentally, of the sacred book which Gandhi prefers to the Scriptures:

"Although the present writer has only read a rather microscopic part of the enormous bulk of books and pamphlets turned out by the admirers and devotees of the Mahatma, he still feels an ever-increasing astonishment at the way in which this extremely tedious literature seems to appeal to an increasing multitude of people. It is, perhaps, not

at all curious that any religious or quasi-religious preaching should appeal to a generation that has lost nearly all the previous ideals of mankind. Now they read the Bhagavad Gita, this queer jumble of misunderstood sublimities and admired quasi-philosophical tomfooleries, which is his Gospel."

Another example is *The Kojiki of Shintoism*. Aside from its strange cosmogony, in Dr. Hume's opinion: "The obscenity in the Kojiki exceeds anything to be found in the sacred Scriptures of any other religion in the world." It cannot be wholly translated into English, but only into Latin footnotes. Its contents are puerile, fantastic and nationalistic to the degree of being parochial.

*The Koran*, in Goethe's opinion, is "an impossible book." Carlyle termed it "a piece of prolix absurdity." From the Arab's literary standpoint it is indeed a remarkable book. Its musical jingle and cadence are charming and it contains some high poetical passages in sublime language. But the book has no logical order nor sequence. It throws together fact and fancy, laws and legends, prayers and imprecation. The defects of its teachings are many and its historical errors evident even to the casual reader.

*The Bible is a library of literature without parallel in the history of humanity*. It is a revelation of the Will of God—His eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ, of the Love of God—"For God so loved the world"; of the Commands of God—"Go ye into all the world"; the Promises of God—"Come unto me"; the Program of God—Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth, and of the Presence and Love of God—"Lo, I am with you always..." There is nothing of all this in any other

sacred book that I know. Only fragments of truth, pearls hidden in rubbish, jewels of common grace, but not the Pearl of Great Price, the Message of Salvation from sin.

III. The dynamic of the Bible is proof of its Divine origin. "Is not my word as a hammer and as a fire that breaketh the rock in pieces?" This Book alone produces "broken and contrite hearts" and makes "hearts aflame for God." Dr. Cohen Stuart writes in a report to the Bible Society: "I had to add a very remarkable order for Bibles in quite a number of languages handed me by a Javanese Moslem prince during the recent Bible Exhibition at Jogjakarta — which, by the way, was a marked success, especially among the Javanese. He bought some Scriptures in various languages on behalf of his brother, who is rather a linguist and is said to know some twenty languages, even Hebrew and Anglo-Saxon: they are brothers or step-brothers to the Sultan. He requested me to send him other Scriptures that were not at the Exhibition but in my depot: Russian, Italian, Armenian, Baba-Malay, etc., and to order the Scriptures enumerated in my indent. Finally, to send him a list of the prices of all the other languages contained in the *Gospel in Many Tongues*." How near the heart of Java is to the heart of God through the Book of books!

And think of its power on the individual. In Cairo, a blind teacher keeps in touch with his pupils, and at the time he gave the last report he was in correspondence with over a thousand sheikhs in the villages of Egypt. He runs a sort of circulating library of Scripture volumes in Arabic Braille for these men, and has worn out 1,900 volumes in the process. He

had 2,506 volumes out on loan in the villages, and 1,225 volumes in the hands of Cairo sheikhs, in the last report given.

The advance which has been possible in the great Mohammedan world within the last three decades has been prepared for by the work of the Bible Society. In fact, most of the revolutionary changes, social, moral and spiritual, which we are now witnessing in the world of Islam are due directly or indirectly to the influence of this great Book. The translators, the publishers and the colporteurs of the Bible have been the pioneers for all missionary work among the Mohammedans. Where missionaries have never been, the agents of the Bible Society have already prepared many a heart among Mohammedans to receive with sympathy the message of Jesus Christ.

Let me give some examples from my own experience. In 1914, Mr. Hooper, the agent of the British and Foreign Society, and I sailed down the Red Sea. We tried to land at Yenbo but the people said: "This is holy ground, and no Christian is allowed to land at Yenbo." One man stepped out from the crowd and said: "Yes, they shall land, because I am their friend." "Who are you?" I asked. "My name is Mohammed," he replied. We followed him to his house, and, after he had showed us hospitality in true Arabian fashion, he said, "Do not call me Mohammed, but by my new name, Gurgis (George)." "How can your name be George? You were born here in Yenbo," we said. "Yes, and my father's name was Mohammed." Then he took down from a shelf a copy of the New Testament and turned to the last chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel and read: "Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." He said,

“I baptized myself Gurgis.” Thus a Mohammedan inquirer proved his faith by his works and announced his own baptismal name in that lonely port on the west Arabian coast.

The circulation of the Scriptures has done three things in the great Mohammedan world. In the first place, it has created a new mental attitude in an Arabic-steeped Mohammedan world. All their prayers, all their sacred ritual have been in the Arabic tongue, but the circulation of the Bible has produced a new mental attitude and the Mohammedans are now translating their Koran into vernaculars, following the example of the Bible Societies. That world is no longer speaking the one language and reading one book, but is polyglot, and in every great Mohammedan language you can now purchase the Bible, the whole Word of God, in the language understood by the people.

An Arab who came to see a missionary in Baghdad was discussing the difference between the Koran and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Finally he said: “Will you express the difference that you have found between the two books?” Hesitating a moment, the Arab replied: “The Koran resembles one of those costly flasks that come to us from Persia filled with rose-water and carefully sealed, for which you pay a high price in the market. The Bible resembles the Euphrates and the Tigris coming down from Aleppo and pouring out life for the whole of Mesopotamia.”

Not only has the Bible created a new mental attitude, but it has created a new moral sense among Mohammedans. The old ideas no longer satisfy when you circulate the Scriptures. This book produces moral bankruptcy in the heart of every man who reads it and sees himself in its light. When Moslems see them-

selves in the mirror of the Bible they can no longer accept the ideals of the Koran.

*El Iraq*, a Mohammedan paper published in Baghdad, some years ago at Christmas, contained this editorial:

“On the morning of December 25th, nineteen hundred and twenty-three years ago, the ray that leads to the right path appeared in Bethlehem as a bright star and his light spread over East and West. On this day was born the Image of love and the Great Child. . . . neither the greatness of the Caesars nor the sophistry of the priests could turn Him from His holy purpose, for how can perishable greatness and apostate priesthood wrestle with immortal glory?”

From every Moslem land there is evidence that Moslems are reading and studying the Bible. This is true most of all in the great intellectual centers. No missionary can avoid the questions put to him by eager controversialists or by genuine seekers after truth. In this clash of opinions the arena once was the Koran and Tradition. They have now chosen as their arena the New Testament itself. We are glad to accept this ground because the Word of God is sharper than any Damascus blade and defends itself.

Here are some questions asked me by young Mohammedans in crowded meetings in Madras, Hyderabad, Bombay and Lahore.

“One of the principal claims which Christians advance as to the personality of Jesus is that He was the Son of God. Can these claims be sustained from Mark 10:18; Luke 18:6; Matthew 19:17; John 14:12, and John 20:17?”

“Did Jesus ever dream of making Himself pass for



Group of Moslem Converts at Cairo  
taken at a farewell meeting, December, 1929

an incarnation of God? Please give me evidence from the three Synoptic Gospels.”

“What inference would you draw from verses expressing that Jesus was God and His dying ejaculation? See Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34.”

“Do Mark and John together give a record of the birth and early life of Jesus? If not, why not?”

“How is it that Matthew’s Gospel does not record anything regarding the activities of Jesus after His return from Egypt?”

This whole series of questions proves that they were not only familiar with the Scriptures, but that they were studying them.

Some fourteen years ago I visited Constantinople (now Istanbul). Reverently I paid a visit to the ancient Church of Santa Sophia, then a mosque. It has now been changed, I believe, into a museum of antiquities. The magnificent dome has an Arabic inscription of the famous Koran verse: “Allah is the light of heaven and earth etc.”

When I entered and sat I saw the inscription and, with my pockets full of literature, mostly the gospels, in Arabic, I paused to read it. As I expected, one of the Mohammedan worshippers said: “Can you read Arabic?” “Yes,” I said: “to read that is comparatively easy, but to understand it is not so easy. “Can you explain it?” he asked. “I should like to try,” I answered. “Let us be seated.” We sat down in the court of the mosque of Santa Sophia and a small company gathered round. Then I opened my pocket Testament, gave away copies of the Gospels and read from the eighth chapter of John: “Jesus said: I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of

life." In that Mosque those Moslems gladly accepted the gospels and listened to the interpretation of God as the Light, and the Light Incarnate and the Light through His Holy Spirit, and there was nothing to hinder or make afraid.

On another occasion during a visit to Palestine I met an old sheikh in charge of the mosque of Omar in Jerusalem. After we had seen the tomb we sat in his study, and I asked him: "Have you a Bible?" From a niche he brought forth a Bible with the imprint of the British and Foreign Bible Society on it, and there we sat and studied that book. He, the man who guards the mosque of Omar, was seeking the light that never shone on sea or land, but that floods the face of Jesus Christ.

It was my great privilege for a number of years to venture to carry the Gospel into the Azhar University of Cairo. In the early years I often met with great difficulties, but during more recent years it was my privilege personally to give to more than 150 students at El Azhar University a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel, inscribing it as a gift, and to be taken by them to their homes. We had prayer with some of the professors in their library, and on one occasion they requested that the agent of the American Bible Society, who accompanied me, should send twelve copies of the whole Bible in Arabic to be used by them personally. After the Jerusalem Conference in 1928 there was sudden opposition and rebuff. But we may believe the Word of God is still doing its quiet work in this great university.

In the Battle of the Books we note also that the teaching of the Scriptures has had a transforming power on Moslem social life. The revolt against poly-

gamy, against child-marriage and slavery in the Moslem press today can not be explained apart from the direct and indirect influence of the New Testament. The Bible has always had and has today its innate power to produce a pure and dynamic literature. Who can describe what literature owes to the Bible!

The Book of Mohammed has been the source of inspiration for a vast Moslem literature in many languages and for thirteen centuries. But this literature can be best judged by its results on the home, on childhood and on womanhood. Even so, the Bible has produced Christian literature in every tongue and for all nations where its influence has been felt. The best parts of the Koran itself bear clear testimony to the Bible. Other sacred books have no references to the Gospel or to Jesus Christ. Here we have evidence of Christian influence. In this book He is referred to again and again, in spite of the fact that the Koran and all Moslem literature present, not a portrait, but a caricature of our Savior. The very corona witnesses to the totality of the eclipse. Nevertheless, the Bible, directly and indirectly, has exerted its power and has changed Islam in many respects down the ages.

Today in every Moslem land the Battle of the Books is on. Every Christian colporteur is a captain in the fight. Every bookshop is a battlefield; every tract a missile of truth against error. Christian literature is the hammer of God, more powerful than that of Charles Martel at Tours.

The Bible Society is a polyglot and has captured new Moslem languages again this past year for the old Gospel message, printed in attractive dress for both young and old.

Think of the ever-increasing circulation in Iran,

Arabia, Moslem India and Egypt. Holy places which less than twenty years ago could be visited only by stealth by Christian workers now receive the Word openly—among them Kabul, Kerbela, Nejf, Qum, Riadh, Hail and even Taif, the nearest neighbour of Mecca.

The more literacy takes the place of illiteracy, as is the case in Turkey, Egypt and India, the more important is the production and circulation of clean, Christian literature for all classes.

If the government schools create a reading public, Christian missions must produce books for them to read. We have witnessed large personal gifts for education and for medicine. Who will make a large gift for literature and the Bible Society. One envies people of wealth this extraordinary opportunity. One drop of ink can make a million think. Mohammed said, "The ink of the scholar is more sacred than the blood of the martyr."

The Apostles began the Battle of the Books. It will not end until the Word of God rides triumphant at Armageddon, and the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ. Then all the other sacred books will be "wood, hay, stubble," but "the word of God abideth forever," for "is not my word as a hammer and as fire, saith the Lord, that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

**XIV**

**EVANGELISM AND THE PRINTED PAGE**

I saw the battering rams, and how they played  
To beat ope Ear-gate, and I was afraid,  
Not only Ear-gate, but the very town  
Would by those battering rams be beaten down.  
I saw the fights, and heard the captain's shout,  
And in each battle saw who faced about:  
I saw who wounded were, and who were slain,  
And who when dead would come to life again.

—JOHN BUNYAN

The Pope may launch his Interdict,  
The Union its decree:  
But the bubble is blown and the bubble is pricked  
By Us and such as We;  
Remember the battle and stand aside  
While thrones and powers confess  
That King over all the children of Pride  
Is the Press—the Press—the Press!

—RUDYARD KIPLING.

## CHAPTER XIV

### EVANGELISM AND THE PRINTED PAGE

**A**T A time when war-clouds darken the horizons of three continents, when the radio and the press blazon reports of bombing and invasion, one wonders whether there is any school in Christendom where children are still tracing with eager hand the copy-book legend, the Pen is mightier than the Sword. The fact is, however, that even today in a totalitarian war the power of the press is utilized for propaganda as never before and in that sense the Sword finds its chief ally in the Pen and the press.

Our previous chapter dealt with the Battle of the Books, here we speak of the importance of the printed page in general in evangelism, especially for Moslem lands. The power of the spoken word has not exceeded that of the written word since the world began. Our Lord makes a statement regarding Moses in John 5:46 which is very significant. "*He wrote of me.*" The eternal gospel, therefore, began to be broadcast when Moses wrote of the coming Prophet and Messiah. Isaiah, too, saw His glory and wrote of Him. In the first century the four gospels were four chariots in which the lowly Nazarene rode in triumph across the lands of the Near East. The apostles not only preached but used their pens. Paul's

thirteen missionary tracts revolutionized the Roman Empire. In the last book of the Bible we have the reiterated command in a voice from heaven saying "write." These earlier writings were "sealed with the King's ring, written in the King's name, and no man has been able to destroy the writing."

The history of the expansion of Christendom has always included the figure of the writer with his ink-horn by his side. Barnabas and Clement wrote epistles. Justin wrote two apologies and a dialogue with a Jew. Tatian prepared a harmony of the gospels. Commodianus used poetical ridicule against the gods of the heathen. Tertullian brought all his abilities into the service of the gospel by his pen, and Cyprian wrote on the Vanity of Idols. The Imitation of Christ by Thomas à Kempis has been translated into hundreds of languages for Asia and Africa. At the time of the Reformation Calvin and Luther, to mention no others, did more by their pens than in any other way.

The fact is that in all ages and in all lands the written page has been the ubiquitous missionary. We are told that Luther threw an ink-pot at the devil in the Wartburg while preparing his version of the German Bible. The legend is prophetic. The best thing to throw at the devils of ignorance and error is an ink-pot—in modern terms, a printing-press!

The printed page is indeed the ubiquitous missionary. It can go everywhere at a minimum cost. It can be mechanically multiplied so that every distributor of gospel tracts receives the answer to Wesley's prayer "O for a thousand tongues to sing my dear Redeemer's praise." The printed page enters closed doors, especially in Moslem lands. I myself while at Cairo have

received orders for books and tracts from Mecca and Kerbela. The book reaches all classes who can read and they, in turn, read to the illiterates. It preaches unweariedly. It needs no furlough. It lives longer than any missionary. It is never laid aside by illness. It penetrates through the mind to heart and conscience. It has produced results everywhere. I have known of cases where such seed of the Gospel has long lain in fallow or hard soil and yet retained its life to blossom and bloom.

Above all this method of evangelism is (when rightly pursued) often less offensive than direct preaching. One can witness more effectively, more daringly and more persuasively by the book or tract than in any other way.

In the days of Erasmus there was little love lost on the Turks. But this wise humanist and Christian scholar wrote in 1530: "The best way and most effectual to overcome and win the Turks would be if they shall perceive that thing which Christ taught and expressed in His life to shine in us . . . in my mind it were best before we should try with them in battle to attack them with epistles and some little books."

But attack is the wrong word and the wrong way in dealing with our Moslem brethren. Once there was a considerable supply of controversial literature in dealing with the issues often raised by Moslems themselves. Karl Pfander, Henry Martyn and St. Clair Tisdall did not write their tracts and books in a spirit of combat but of Christian love and as faithful witnesses to the truth. One has only to read the diaries of Henry Martyn or the preface of Pfander's

great book to realize that these pioneers wet their pages with their tears and agonized in love for souls.

Nevertheless, we heartily endorse the resolution passed by the Literature for Moslems Committee at Lahore, India, in 1935: "In view of the undesirability of circulating literature which contains attacks on the Muslim prophet, Muhammad, it was voted to . . . consider the immediate suspension of the sale of such literature; also the C. L. M. C. adopts as a guiding principal for the future, that it will not recommend grants for the publication of any book or tract which falls in this category." The report further states that "the delightful positiveness of the Gospel and the attractiveness of the Lord Jesus Christ provide ample material upon which to work, without unduly pursuing lines of negative criticism."

The leaves of the Tree of Life are "for the healing of the nations"—they are not caustic irritants but sedatives and anodyne. Was there ever a time when the world needed healing more than in our day? The clash of color, the lure of greed, the lust of power, the love of war, international jealousies and suspicions—only the leaves of the Tree of Life can heal these.

The influence of the earliest Bible translations on the life of a people is a story that never grows old. What Jerome, Wycliffe, Ulfilas, Luther and others did for Europe, Martyn, Bruce, Van Dyck, Goodsell and Riggs did for the Moslem Near East.

Beginning with the Bible, other leaves of healing—in fact a whole Christian literature—has blossomed forth and scattered its benign fragrance in every land. In a single recent year the American press at Beirut

printed 143,075 volumes, aggregating over twenty-five million pages, mostly in the Arabic language.

Literature always finds a new career of beauty and power as the fructifying minds of great races are stimulated by God's eternal Truth. Christian Literature Societies stand today on the threshold of a new era. The Near East is giving birth to new writers, especially in Egypt and Syria. "When once illiteracy becomes the exception instead of the rule," says William Archer, "how marvelous will be the change! . . . If you create a reading public it is but reason to provide it with something good to read. Well-edited, interesting, well-illustrated papers to circulate through each of the great regions of the country would be only a logical corollary to the whole theory of popular education."

The Rev. J. Kingsley Birge of Turkey believes that "at this time the Christian story presented in fiction form is altogether the most helpful presentation that we can make of the message of Jesus, of course, personal influence through personal contacts excepted, for that is undoubtedly the most important of all influences."

In line with this changed viewpoint, we learn that hundreds of copies of "The Sky Pilot," "Pilgrim's Progress," "Titus," "Little Men," "Little Women," "Les Miserables," and "Ben Hur" have been sold in Turkey; and this is indeed a real achievement.

We must not, however, merely broadcast a message (though it be in fiction form) but be sure that it is the *right* message. Paul did not preach Jesus, nor Jesus Christ; he preached Jesus Christ *Crucified*. It is so easy in dealing with Mohammedans to omit the essentially Christian message, and simply to glorify Jesus

as a great Prophet. The Cross is the center—the pivot, the goal—of all true preaching.

In the use of books and tracts the missionaries in India and the Near East have much to learn from the missions in China. There, even for a minority of Moslems, the program and the output seem to be on a somewhat adequate scale. From the last report of the Religious Tract Society (Hankow) we learn that in 1940 the total circulation of this one society was over four million at a value of nearly \$75,000, and this during a period of war and unrest, with poor postal facilities.

We need in every Moslem language area (and that includes a score of languages) an adequate program for production and distribution. At present the missionary forces are far behind the Moslem press both in books and in periodicals. At the Madras Conference it was stated that one Arabic firm in Cairo alone issues a biography of a Moslem leader every month. Newspapers pour faster than ever from the presses in the great cities, and find their way further than ever into the countryside. The world is striding on towards literacy. In the great battle of the books to claim man's attention for every sort of idea and belief, it is our concern to ask what place books are taking that carry the message of our Lord. No Christian teacher, no Christian pastor, no Christian parent of a child that can read, no witnessing Christian but must be concerned with this question.

On the other hand, there are vast areas where there is little or no literature of any kind; there are native churches whose whole Christian literature can be tied up in a pocket handkerchief. In some lands opportunities of publication open to us today may be closed

tomorrow. And we need to reckon with the fact that illiteracy now so common in all Moslem lands is fast decreasing. The Rev. Frank C. Laubach (whose new method of successfully teaching illiterates began among the Moros and is now famous everywhere) writes:

“Few people realize that one thousand million people now illiterate will probably become literate this century. How Christ must yearn for the leadership to be with His church, as education of children has largely been throughout nearly all the world . . . As millions become literate there looms up the staggering task of providing them with enough good literature. These literacy campaigns are going to double the world’s readers! In India, where eleven out of twelve are illiterate, a mighty tide has begun to rise. Millions will be literate soon—before we are ready. In China ten out of twelve are illiterate. But a mighty tide has begun to rise. Millions will soon be reading . . . Are we going to give them that reading, or who? Will it be clean or rot? Will they be flooded with the message of Christ or with atheism? Will they read love or hate? Whatsoever is sown in their minds the world will reap.”

In every Moslem land literates are increasing rapidly. By government schools and even, as in Egypt, by compulsory education the number of readers is multiplied daily. In this new hunger for books we must supply them with the Bread of Life in the printed page. Nothing can take the place of a good book.

In his recent volume entitled “In Defense of Letters,” George Duhamel, the brilliant Frenchman, points out that books are the very foundation of civilization. He expresses a fear that “the two great windmills

of communication," the radio and the cinema, will crowd out the book. These mechanical contrivances have their place, but they cannot take the place of the printed word. His cleverest point is that reflection is impossible and incompatible with the cinema and the radio but that it belongs to the reading of the book. Here you can turn back the pages and turn back your thoughts. A book is a live thing and enshrines the soul of the writer. It is because we believe this, that the American Christian Literature Society for Moslems has so large and important a mission.

This society was organized in 1910 and incorporated a few years later. It has a strong evangelical aim and from the outset has had coöperation from Christians of many denominations. There are coöperative and advisory committees in several language areas because the Society itself prints nothing but provides funds for production to mission presses. A total of over \$225,000 was given for this purpose since 1911 and grants-in-aid sent to the following countries: North and South Africa, Egypt, Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Albania, China, Turkestan, India, Malaysia, Dutch East Indies, Cyprus and Bulgaria.

In the words of Clarence Day: "The world of books is the most remarkable creation of man. Nothing else that he builds ever lasts. Monuments fall, nations perish, civilizations grow old and die out; and after an era of darkness, new races build others. But in the world of books there are volumes that have seen all this happen again and again and yet live on still young, still as fresh as the day they were written and still telling men's hearts of the hearts of men centuries dead."

Recently we had a striking illustration of this great truth in our experience with Thomas à Kempis for the Turkish press. His great book on *The Imitation of Christ* was translated into modern Turkish at the expense of our Society, and had already attained a good circulation when the police found some objection and seized the remainder of the edition! Turkey is not the only land of books where the battle is on, and *we must pray daily for the production, the distribution, and the free circulation of Christian literature.*

Here is a beautiful collect we may all use:

O THOU, THE CREATOR of all truth and beauty, we would bring our thanksgiving for every book that in all the ages, the world over, has held something of Thy creation.

Grant that our debt to the Bible and many other books shall weigh upon us so heavily that we shall not be content until that debt has been turned into a purpose, and men, women and children shall share our experience, and in turn say, "blessed be books."

We ask Thee to bless all writers of creative books; all workers who put a book into hands that have never before held and possessed one.

These thanksgiving and desires we bring in the name of One whose life and teaching has been the inspiration of countless books, Jesus Christ, the manifestation of truth and beauty. For Christ's sake. Amen.

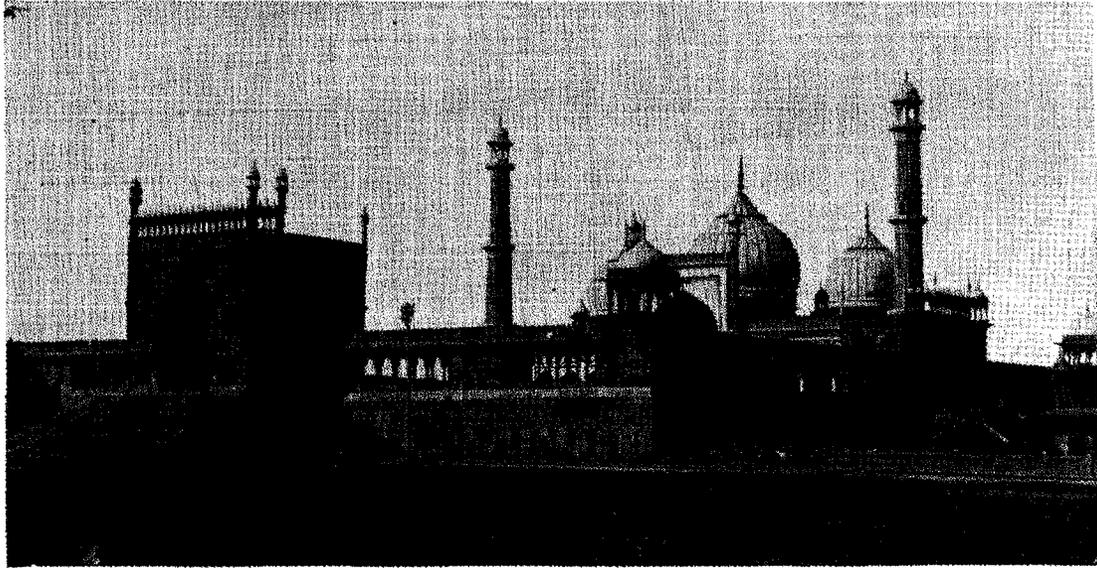
Paul was a Roman citizen and he prayed that the Word of God might have free course and be glorified. His epistles testify by their very language that he lived in the atmosphere of Roman civilization. In his epistle to the Galatians he recalls the fact that proclamations and edicts were posted on the hoardings under the significant heading S.P.Q.R.—the Senate and

the Roman people. "O senseless Galatians," he writes, "who has bewitched you—you who had Jesus Christ the crucified *placarded* before your very eyes."

If Paul had possessed a printing press, instead of an amanuensis, how he would have exulted in thus broadcasting his gospel! In our day missionaries are using eye-gate as never before. The newspaper, the bill-board and the radio are declaring the message. Books and tracts are supremely needed, but reach only small circles and the cost of production and distribution is a considerable handicap. We need Gospel-posters such as are used by the missionaries to Moslems in China. On our visit in 1933 we saw such colored posters in Arabic and Chinese on city walls in post-offices and in railway stations.

The world of Islam is polyglot, and year by year the preparation of literature for Moslems in some new language is required. Take India, for example. Few authorities have known more of the situation as it exists than the Rev. A. C. Clayton, who has done so much for this aspect of national development. He says: "It is literally true to say that in Tamil, which has the largest Christian literature, a set of all the books available could be bought for less than five pounds; that in some of the other languages a sovereign, or even less, would purchase a complete set of all that is to be had; and that the price of one good typewriter would buy a set of all the Christian books in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Bengali put together." And yet Tamil and Bengali and Hindustani are spoken by millions of Moslems.

That the situation is critical everyone knows. An experienced worker tells us that although the majority



The Great Mosque at Delhi, India  
which accommodates thousands of worshipers

of the people are still Mohammedans in their beliefs and practices "the young people in Turkey are being weaned away from Mohammedanism. No opportunity whatever is given for formal instruction in religion other than sermons in the mosques. There is no religious instruction in the schools. No Moslem teacher can gather children for religious instruction. The school books definitely say that there is nothing in the universe over and above nature . . . . The full force of official instruction is more subtly hostile to religion than if it were openly atheistic. Its attitude is one of condescending acceptance of religion as one of the vagaries of the human mind which society in the past has found useful, but which can be discarded when people become mature and educated.

"In view of these facts it seems to me there are only two ways in which we can hope to be religiously helpful to this land. One is by disseminating broadcast ideas that will be touching the hearts of the people with something of Christian idealism, making them long for the things of Christ; the other thing that can be done is to publish something that will make its contribution to the thinking leaders of the land in an effort to show to them that religion is still something valid for the educated man of today . . . . Some of the younger professors are now open-minded . . . . If we can help them to believe, and strengthen them in the purpose to teach that there is a God behind this universe and the kind of God whom Jesus revealed, we will be starting forces that will reach out into all the land."

A young Mohammedan doctor in Lahore, India, wrote of the way he was led to Christ.

“In 1920 I began to study the Bible, with the intention of getting in a stronger position to refute the claims of Christ and the tenets of Christianity, with the result that my objections began to disappear automatically. . . . I am glad to say that (certain) books helped me out of the darkness of unbelief, and led me to see the light of the great truths. I further believe that every inquirer should read them. If I am asked how I became a Christian I shall say it was from reading Christian literature.”

Islam has nothing to offer that can equal the New Testament message and its ethics. The Rev. W. N. Wysham of Iran says:

“Our Moslem friends have materially assisted the cause of Christian literature this last year by finally publishing a popular Persian translation of the Koran at a reasonable price. For a long time we have been urged by Moslem converts to print the Koran in Persian as a telling *pro-Christian* document in its contrast to the Bible, but the expense alone has made this impracticable. Now at last the Koran is available for the millions of Iranians who know no Arabic, and we can urge its comparison with the Bible, copies of which the colporteurs of the Bible Society have spread so widely over Iran. One of our oldest converts from Islam has just been reading this new Koran in Persian and pronounces it far and away the most tiresome and footless book he has ever tackled.”

More than human wisdom and strength is needed for the task of producing and distributing Christian literature. We must pray especially that it may not be altogether or chiefly a work of translation. The situa-

tion calls for indigenous effort and the convert from Islam, if he has literary talent, is by far the best writer for his own people.

Again, we must not forget the quaint saying of Andrew Fuller, "*Learning hath gained most by those books by which the printers have lost.*" The preparation and distribution of Christian books is a very costly enterprise. It can never be self-supporting. By sacrificial giving, however, we can broadcast these leaves of healing. Free distribution of even the best books and tracts is bad policy. Colporteurs and bookshops are the ideal methods although they are costly. From the days of George Borrow in Spain until now the peril and the romance of colportage are fascinating. A missionary in the extreme southwest of China, near the famous Burma Road, writes:

"I am enclosing two or three copies of a tract which was produced in India, for use among Moslems. I have had this tract translated into Burmese, and 1,000 copies printed, which I am arranging to have distributed among Burmese Moslems, of whom there are said to be 400,000, with Burmese as their mother tongue. Yet, so far as I know, nothing had ever previously been published in Burmese, intended especially for Moslems. I am also arranging to have this tract translated into Chinese, for use primarily among the Panthays, or Chinese Moslems of Yunnan, many of whom come down into Burma, although perhaps only for a temporary sojourn. . . Could the A.C.L.S.M. help me about making a trip up into or near Yunnan, as a small beginning for Gospel work among the Panthays? There would be some, but not so very much, opportunity for preaching. My plan would be principally to distribute

scripture portions and tracts among these people. I would follow a trade route from here, up through the deep jungle, to the Chinese frontier, and beyond, if funds and other conditions permitted. It would be a trip of about three months, tramping, or riding one of these little scrub ponies, sleeping under a small tent or in the open air. These Chinese Moslems along the border of Yunnan are untouched—unevangelized as much as if they lived in Tibet... I am writing to Shanghai about tracts for Moslems... I hope you will get many friends at home to pray for us in our work up here in this rather lonely frontier post. Just think! If we could actually make a beginning of getting the gospel message among the Panthays!"

Here is a challenge to youth to venture in the untrodden paths and across new frontiers; but old age too may do its part in production, if no longer in distribution. Who would not envy the heroism and dogged perseverance of the late Canon Edward Sell? After mastering Indian languages and a long and fruitful life as missionary among Moslems, at the age of sixty-two he *began* a new career as active manager of the Christian Literature Press in Madras. Thirty years later, at the age of ninety-two he had to his credit the publication of twenty-nine different books and many tracts. He had increased the value of the Press from forty-five thousand to four hundred and fifty thousand Rupees. That was a record to put to shame the ambitions and efforts of many younger men! Such a life and its wide influence is like the river of Ezekiel's vision.

**XV**

**THE NEAREST WAY TO THE MOSLEM HEART**

“Like attracts like. The nearest way to the Moslem heart is to use what appeals to the heart, rather than to the intellect. Our individual attainments, or the attainments of the Christian Church and Christian nations, in knowledge, in riches, or in power, are not in themselves persuasive. These things, held up as the fruit of Christianity, will not lead many Moslems to desire to be engrafted into the True Vine. Neither, I think, has our superior theology been the way by which Christ has approached the hearts of most converts from Islam. The Moslem heart is not different from yours or mine. What would appeal to us will appeal to him. It must be the heart that touches the heart.”

—JAMES CANTINE, in *The Moslem World*, January, 1912.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE NEAREST WAY TO THE MOSLEM HEART

**T**HE only approach to the citadel of the will is through the mind or the heart. The way to convince a man against his will is to win that will by way of the intellect or the emotions to a new attitude and a new resolve. Dr. Fred F. Goodsell for long years a missionary at Constantinople (Istanbul) points out this more excellent way. It is the language of love on human lips and in human lives. He writes from his own experience:

“As we seek to confront Moslems with Jesus Christ, we must rely upon the dynamic fascination of radiant, Christlike living. This is the one single invincible thing about our Christian faith. It is more subtle than reasoned argument, more persuasive than an educational enterprise, and more effective than any amount of formal religious instruction. Circumstances prevent one from telling of a number of cases where individuals have recently come to share Christ’s life, not because of any word spoken to them about Him but because He has been lived day in and day out in the community.

“Fundamentally there are three reasons why hitherto so few Moslems have come to share our experience of Christ.

“First, throughout their history they have been rigid and aggressive religionists, the most aggressive and militaristic of all religious people.

“Second, from the very beginning the examples of Christ’s way of life which they had before them were so repellent as to widen the breach rather than to bridge it. In a real sense it may be said that Islam is a Christian heresy which has based its appeal to religious minds on its protest against paganism in the Christian life and worship of its day.

“Third, the Christian Churches of the world have never seriously undertaken the task of evangelizing Moslem peoples.

“Christ’s way of life in Moslem lands has never won multitudes because it has never been lived among them on a noble scale over a considerable period of time. Christ’s word stands ‘And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.’”

After forty years’ experience—sometimes heart-breaking experience, of sowing on rocks and of watching the birds pick away the seed to the last grain—I am convinced that the nearest way to the Moslem heart is the way of God’s love, the way of the Cross. Paul in his great chapter on this Christian love, as the true and excellent way, uses the Greek word *Agapè*. What that New Testament word connotes, in contrast with Plato’s *Eros*, is the subject of a monograph by the Swedish theologian, Anders Nygren.<sup>1</sup> He comes to the conclusion that both in the New Testament and in the history of the Church the idea of love is unique. Luther in his teaching brought out its full significance.

<sup>1</sup> *Agape and Eros: A study of the Christian Idea of Love*. S.P.C.K. London. Three volumes. 1938.

Love in the Christian sense is primarily God's own love. "God is nothing but an abyss of eternal love." Christian love is spontaneous, overflowing. It is not like the world's love, evoked by the desire for its object. It is without respect of persons. It is love even for our enemies. "It is prepared freely to find its kindness thrown away and lost, as also Christ has found. For how could Christian love fare better in this world than the love of God and of Christ."

It is this unique Pauline love, not a cold Platonic interest that the missionary needs. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Where *this* is the attitude and character of the missionary, he will doubtless hear again from Moslem lips the words of the Koran:

"And thou wilt find the nearest in love to those who believe to be those who say, We are Christians."

When we think of the spiritual unrest, the disappointed hopes, and disillusionments following the present chaos of political and social revolutions, we conclude that the hour is ripe for a ministry of love and reconciliation.

A passion for Moslem souls, however, does not mean that we are to compromise or to conciliate at any price. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." There is a real sense in which he who loves Moslems most must often, like a skilful surgeon,

Go his way, and preach  
On the old Gospel's heart-assailing plan,  
And cut the gangrene, like a practiced leech,  
With firm, sure hand, and fear no face of man;  
Call vile things vile; wash the fair paint from sin,  
And give to glare of day the foul-faced sore within.

Yet this is only a small part of the cure of souls. The surgeon hurts to heal. The Great Physician is tender. In these days when Moslems are justly irritated by the political aggressions of Christian powers, or the un-Christian conduct of the so-called representatives of Christianity, we may well emphasize the ministry of friendship, and enter a plea for less of the spirit of controversy and more of the spirit of the Cross.

Real Christians are the best and truest friends of Moslems everywhere and always. That is why travelers like Doughty met with kindness in the midst of fanaticism. It is only when travelers or politicians or missionaries do Christian things in an un-Christian way or when un-Christian things have been done by Christians that Christianity has appeared as a bitter foe to our Moslem friends. Not the Crusades but Raymund Lull represented real Christianity in the thirteenth century. Not the British bombardment of Jiddah in 1858 but the founding of Robert College in 1864 expressed the real desire of Christians toward the Near East.

In the Koran chapter, *The Tablet*, occurs a remarkable verse, the eighty-fifth, which expresses this same truth, only half comprehended by the Prophet himself, and one that has never needed emphasis so much as it does today. "Thou wilt surely find the nearest in love to those who believe to be those who say, We are Christians; that is because there are among

them priests and monks, and because they are not proud." Baidhawi, the great Moslem writer, comments on this text as follows: "Because of their gentleness and the tenderness of their hearts and their little desire for the present world, their much care for knowledge and labor; and to this the text has reference, that is because there are among them priests and monks and because they are not proud: *i.e.*, to receive the truth when they understand it; or they are humble and not arrogant like the Jews. So this passage teaches that humility, a teachable spirit, and the fleeing from evil desires are praiseworthy even in the case of the infidel." In spite of the sting at the end of this comment, Baidhawi and other commentators with him have here shown us the surest line of approach if we would win our Moslem brethren to Christ. Humility, docility and love speak a language that is everywhere understood and that cannot be gainsaid. It was understood by Mohammed in the earlier part of his career when he met Christian monks and teachers, and is understood today by his followers.

And this aspect of Christianity, and of our Savior himself, was well understood by the Mystics in Islam. Again and again they call attention to the love of Jesus and the power of his spirit. Jallal-al-Din Al-Rumi wrote:

Thyself reckon dead, and then thou shalt fly  
Free, free, from the prison of earth to the sky!  
Spring may come, but on granite will grow no green  
thing;  
It was barren in winter, 'tis barren in spring;  
And granite man's heart is, till grace intervene,  
And, crushing it, clothe the long barren with green.

When the fresh breath of Jesus shall touch the heart's  
 core,  
 It will live, it will breathe, it will blossom once  
 more.<sup>2</sup>

If we remember, as we should, that Islam historically may be considered the Prodigal Son among the non-Christian religions, we will avoid the spirit of the elder brother and like the father in the matchless parable see him when he is yet a great way off, run out to meet him and fall on his neck and kiss him (Luke 15:20).

God loves the world of Islam, we may believe because of their vast numbers. There are over eighty million little children in that multitude! He knows how long the Church has neglected the task of evangelism. Our faithlessness has not changed his love. He knows better than anyone of those who try to win Moslems that they are "a great way off." Love is blind to faults and errors but compassion has a hundred eyes, all open to human need. "They that are whole need no physician but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

It was my privilege recently to worship with the brethren of the Moravian Church in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Their missionary history is well known, but perhaps it is not so well known that in the Litany used every Sunday morning there is a special prayer for the Kingdom of God which includes the oldest missionary collect in the world. It goes back to Abraham, the Father of the faithful and the friend of God, and sums up in one sentence His love for Ishmael, the prodigal son of the Old Testament.

<sup>2</sup> Whinfield's Translation, p. 116.

The Litany reads as follows:

O Lord, the hope of Israel, and the desire of all nations:

Have mercy on Thy ancient covenant people, deliver them from their blindness:

*O that Ishmael might live before Thee;*

Prosper the endeavors of all Thy servants to spread Thy Gospel;

Bless us and all other Christian congregations gathered from among the heathen;

Keep them as the apple of Thine eye:

Hear us, gracious Lord and God.

O praise the Lord, all ye nations:

Praise Him, all ye people.

To hear a large congregation use this Litany reminded me of the organization of our Arabian Mission in 1889. Professor J. G. Lansing chose this prayer of Abraham as the motto text for the new mission. It was his favorite text in preaching on missions to Mohammedans.

Face to face with the tragedy of Islam, the problem of its origin, the extent of its influence, the areas overshadowed by its darkness, saintly souls have again and again come back to that pathetic story of Ishmael, the exile. In a real sense, Islam is the prodigal son among the non-Christian religions. This faith arose six centuries after Christ and presents a problem essentially different from that of Hinduism and Buddhism, and other ethnic faiths. When Mohammed, the prophet, turned his back on Jerusalem, *toward which he first worshipped*, and prayed toward Mecca, he went away to the far country of the prodigal.\*

In a sense that Abraham never imagined, Ishmael has become a great nation. Arabia, next to Palestine,

\*Compare the Koran text on the subject.

has become the mother of a spiritual world dominion.

Conscious of the destiny of this land and people on God's program for world redemption, Dr. J. G. Lansing in 1889 wrote the Arabian Mission Hymn. This out-burst of poetic love for Arabia has been the inspiration of the little band of pioneers for fifty years:

There's a land long since neglected,  
 There's a people still rejected,  
 But of truth and grace elected,  
 In His love for them.

Softer than their night winds, fleeting,  
 Richer than their starry tenting,  
 Stronger than their sands protecting,  
 Is His love for them.

To the host of Islam's leading,  
 To the slave in bondage bleeding,  
 To the desert dweller pleading,  
 Bring His love to them.

Through the promise on God's pages,  
 Through His work in history's stages,  
 Through the cross that crowns the ages,  
 Show His love to them.

With the prayer that still availeth,  
 With the power that prevaieth,  
 With the love that never faileth,  
 Tell His love to them.

Till the desert's sons now aliens,  
 Till its tribes and their dominions,  
 Till Arabia's raptured millions,  
 Praise His love of them.

That time is not yet, but the spirit of such love is the one great need in Moslem evangelism. Here is a brief passage from a letter written to me by

an Armenian pastor at Aleppo. It breathes the same spirit of love.

“During the Great War I was deported with my family from Adana to Aleppo. They were seeking out any Armenian to deport and separating men from women. They sought me by name. I hid myself in a dark and cold attic for six and a half months. In these terrible days my wife and I took our only son and dedicated him as a future worker among the Moslems. We thought that this was the shortest way of having our revenge from the fanatic and ferocious enemies. At present we are not allowed to show them what we think and feel, but we are expected to work in an attitude of prayer, and one day we shall find a good chance to show that we have kept warm the feeling of brotherhood towards them in spite of what they have been to us in the past.”

If this spirit should take possession of the Oriental churches there would be a revival and an ingathering comparable to that of early Christianity when Saul of Tarsus witnessed the martyrdom of Stephen. Or when the disciples that were scattered by his persecution went everywhere preaching the word.

In one of his earliest epistles St. Paul defines the missionary activities of the Thessalonian Church among their Gentile neighbors as “work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope.” How accurately these three short phrases depict the real task of carrying the Good News to Moslems.

For thirteen long centuries, whether by neglect or by the pioneer adventure of loyal hearts, this part of the non-Christian world has tested the faith of Christendom as by fire; it has demanded a measure

of love utterly impossible except to those who had learned from Christ to love their enemies and His; and again and again Islam has deferred the fruition of hope and left for those who waited on and on, as their only anchor, the patience of unanswered prayer.

Yet it is not the measure of *our* faith, the strength of *our* love, the steadfastness of *our* hope that are the determining factors in the evangelization of the world of Islam. The Author and Finisher of our faith and of all faith, the Source of all love, the patience of Christ incarnate waiting to see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied—all these challenge not us only but the Moslem world.

“We can many of us remember,” wrote Bishop King, “in the days when we read ‘Ivanhoe,’ the thrill which we felt when the doughty Saxon knight rode slowly on his war-horse up the lists and struck with sharpened lance the shield of Brian de Bois Guilbert ‘till it rang again.’ Such is the conception we formed of what is meant by a challenge. How different from this is the spiritual counterpart of which we speak! It is no steel-clad knight who comes before us, but Jesus in the tender majesty of His manhood. His crest is the cross of ignominy and pain; if He bears a spear, it is that which pierced His own side. The power which is His to set our hearts aflame for sacrifice is love tested to the uttermost by a sacrificial death. Christ Himself is the Great Challenger. Shall we sit at ease, considering if we shall take the challenge or not?”

**XVI**

**DYNAMIC EVANGELISM**

Oft when the Word is on me to deliver  
Lifts the illusion and the truth lies bare;  
Desert or throng, the city or the river,  
Melts in a lucid Paradise of air,—

Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,  
Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be  
kings,  
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,  
Sadly contented in a show of things:

Then with a rush the intolerable craving  
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-call.  
Oh to save these! to perish for their saving  
Die for their life, be offered for them all.

—FREDERIC W. H. MYERS'  
*Saint Paul*

## CHAPTER XVI

### DYNAMIC EVANGELISM

**A** WRITER in *The Christian Century* a few years ago gave a rather correct diagnosis of what he called "the Slump in Foreign Missions" and said it was due to three causes: "We have lost the sense of Christ's supremacy, of Christ's sufficiency and of the urgency of our message." Today some voices declare that the Gospel message of the apostles and of the early missionaries who laid the foundations of the national churches in Asia and Africa needs modification by way of addition, subtraction or re-conception. Professor Hocking of Harvard, for example, advocates a new World Faith with elements of value taken from all the living religions of humanity. In his learned lectures whose conclusion, as he states, "will stand or fall with its metaphysics or more strictly with its theology," he expresses regret for the plurality of religions. Religion is really a unity. "God is in His world, but Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed are in their private closets, and we shall thank them, but never return to them. Such is the spirit of world-citizenship at this moment."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hocking does not say this is *his* view; but he does not clearly repudiate it.

<sup>1</sup> *Living Religions and a World Faith*, 1940.

Later on he asserts there are three ways of dealing with other religions: "the way of Radical Displacement, the way of Synthesis and the way of Re-conception." The first is the old orthodox conception, but it presupposes a theology no longer accepted or acceptable. We know, he says, the spirit of this method, and its Biblical authorization. We recall the language of the "Great Commission"; the phrase of John's Gospel, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," and that more specific phrase, "none other name."

As for the theology responsible for these out-moded missionary principles and practices we read: "The idea of a divine plan, considered as a dated product of God's wisdom and goodness wholly unimaginable to man, is, I fear, an ingenious invention of St. Paul. To take it up again today is to place a halter around the neck of Christianity for those to tug at who are disposed to work upon the more craven fears of the human heart. It is time for robust and honest Christianity to have done with all this rattling of ancient moral chains."

But it is these so-called out-moded missionary principles and this out-moded theology of St. Paul that lie at the very basis of ecumenic Christianity. In regard to the theology of Professor Hocking, a Roman Catholic theologian, Alfons Văth, wrote in *Katholischen Missionen* (1933): "These laymen have before their eyes a future Christianity without Christ's Cross or His Resurrection, without the Holy Spirit and His grace, without Church and Sacrament. Moreover, it is not Christianity, but faith in an obscure divine entity and a religion of humanitarianism."

Others, again, plead for an entire change of missionary method and program. This newer form of "evangelism" wishes to spare the convert any violent break from his old environment. It speaks of "Christianizing Hinduism" and of "evangelizing Islam." A Professor in an American University in the Near East puts it this way:

"This approach would not require the Moslem inquirer to forsake his Moslem communal relations, but would rather urge that, continuing to live in the Moslem community, the young convert follow the Jesus-way in that world. Some things, of course, he could not do. Persecution and criticism would be his lot, but not until he was cast out in spite of his endeavors to remain a loyal member of the Moslem community, would he sever his relations with his past environment. Thus the leaven would be kept in the lump; the lamp would be kept in the dark place; the spread of Christianity would be spiritual, not organizational; vital, not theological, ethical and dynamic and not formalistic . . . . This approach has much to commend it for it proposes not so much to make individual converts separated in small groups from the Moslem community; it proposes rather to inject into the Moslem community and into Moslem life and thought the spirit and teachings of Jesus, so that like leaven operating in the entire mass, these teachings and spirit may work out their own revolution and change. Thus, it is argued, we will have a truly indigenous Moslem Christian, a truly indigenous Moslem Christian

theology, and a truly indigenous form of organized Moslem Christianity.”

No. Such a theory of evangelism would prove even less efficient than a merely social-gospel. Christ calls us to be fishers of men. We will not progress far by forsaking the use of all hooks and nets in order to feed the hungry fish in their own environment. Peter on Lake Galilee and Isaak Walton in his *Compleat Angler* would laugh such fishermen to scorn.

In the Madras Conference Findings (Vol. 3, pp. 407-410 and pp. 211-214) this very question came up for discussion and a representative group of missionaries among Moslems, for many lands, meeting at Delhi, December 6-7, 1938, adopted a resolution expressing their views:

“After hearing the report of the findings of the inquiry on Muslim evangelism conducted by the Near East Christian Council, the conference discussed at length the following suggestion from that report. ‘That the ultimate hope of bringing Christ to the Muslims is to be attained by the development of groups of followers of Jesus who are active in making Him known to others while remaining loyally a part of the social and political groups to which they belong in Islam. The ideal is that there should thus come into being a church whose only head is Christ, and which does not carry the stigma of being an alien institution, drawing men away from their natural, social and political connections.’

“On this subject the following resolution was adopted:

“This conference of Christian workers among Muslims wishes to place on record that while we

recognize with gratitude the wide interest in our Lord Jesus Christ evident throughout the Muslim world today, and that many real believers in Christ may never reach the point of identifying themselves with the Christian fellowship, yet we maintain that it is our aim and purpose as Christian missionaries to encourage and teach all to realize the vital necessity of open witness to Christ within the fellowship of the Christian Church.”

Unless we ask the Moslem enquirer to make a clear-cut decision, to break with his past to accept a new way of life in Christ, we are really doing him an injustice. The easy way is not the way of the Gospel. A friendlier attitude toward Christ and Christianity is not enough. The way of the Cross means crucifixion, not inoculation. As an experienced Indian missionary wrote:

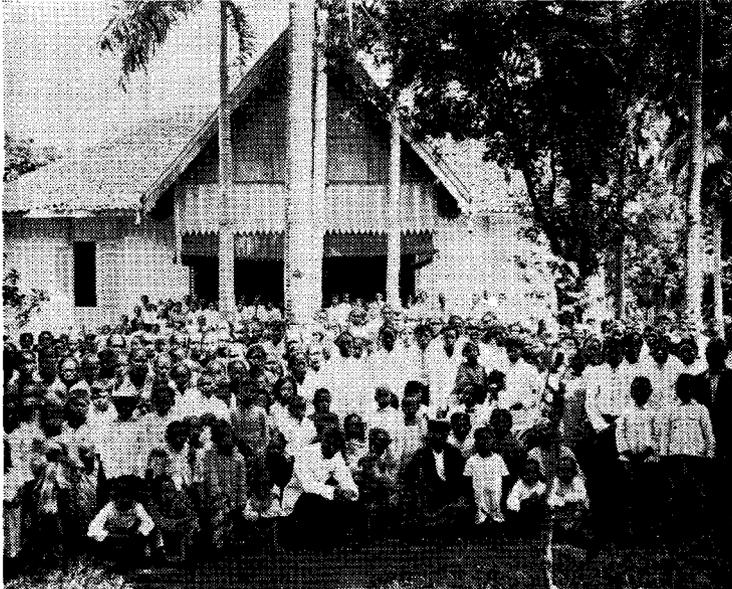
“Inoculation confers immunity. Through its long history Islam has had frequent inoculations of Christianity and its organism has developed a resistance to the contagion of Christianity. Call that resistance ‘fanaticism’ or ‘conservatism’ it makes no difference. Until there comes some deep and drastic disturbance of the whole organism by piercing deep to the heart of the personal units of which it is composed or, to leave our metaphor, until personal conviction is awakened and the dynamic of the Gospel re-energizes the soul of the Muslim, we see little hope of any marked change in Islam of the nature of a re-orientation of its thought and ethic towards Christianity.

“It is our experience that however much we may be able to exhibit the Christian morale, the Muslim

will not suffer theological questions to be shelved and it is because they are so frequently shelved by Christians that the Muslim tends to become more and more confirmed in his views of the superiority of Islam. Often the theological enthusiasm of the Muslim is in strange contrast to a certain rationalizing laicism in reluctant advocates of an attenuated Christianity. If the Christian is content to be silent about the Trinity or to relegate it to oblivion, this will not propitiate the Muslim and make him ready to accept Christian truth. He will continue his triumphant way till he has silenced the Christian on the matter of the authenticity of the New Testament and then invite him to accept Islam. In his dealings with Muhammedans, what the Christian needs is not less theology but more and better theology. One of the complaints we have frequently to make is that Christian theology has hardly any time to express itself in relation to the thought world of Islam and some of us are bending our energies to this task. But to impose on ourselves a silence with respect to our theology is not honest and does not do justice to the intellectual travail of Christianity. It will result in our becoming more inarticulate than we already are and place us in an invidious position when confronted with Islam's dogmatic assurance."

No one has made a deeper and more sympathetic study of Islam than Dr. Duncan B. Macdonald, and none ever put the present-day issue more clearly:

"Are the missionaries of the future to be missionaries of Christ or missionaries of the Christian civilization of the West? This is the alternative



A Christian Church in Java  
composed of Moslem converts. There are at least  
60,000 in Java and Sumatra

which we face at present, although it is often disguised behind forms of words which conceal its real nature and essential importance. Do the missionaries of our Christian churches go out to proclaim to the world the unique and divine fact of the Incarnation or to carry to the non-Christian world the benefits—educational, medical, generally humanitarian—which have grown up in our civilization under the stimulus and guidance of the Christian faith?”

What does this unique fact of the Incarnation imply? Why did the Word become flesh? What is the message of the Evangel? It could not be stated more forcibly than by a writer in the latest edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Vol. XIX, p. 240): “*Evangelism stands for a certain interpretation of Christianity emphasizing the objective atonement of Christ, the necessity of new birth or conversion and salvation through faith.*” This is a fair statement of the essentials of the old evangel, the evangel that has not yet lost its power.

Paul made this very message central and primary. “Now, brothers, I would have you know the gospel I once preached to you, the gospel you received, the gospel in which you have your footing, the gospel by which you are saved—provided you adhere to my statement of it—unless indeed your faith was all haphazard” (I Cor. 15:1-2, Moffatt’s translation). And what is this message of good news, this gospel, so emphatically introduced by a five-fold repetition? “*That Christ died for our sins as the scripture had said, that he was buried and that he rose on the third day.*” There is no other evangel than these historic

facts and their tremendous implications for humanity. Any kind of evangelism that is silent in this respect is no evangelism at all. If Christ died for our sins His death was a reality and His resurrection confirms its necessity and validity as the only atonement for sin. The Cross is the one central message and method and power of Christianity. This evangel is startling news and good news to Moslems. The Koran denies the historicity of the Crucifixion and misunderstands its significance. But that is the very reason we should always present the heart of the Christian Gospel. The word of the Cross is the Gospel and there can be no other. Before that Cross all human wisdom and power and righteousness are bankrupt. We have nothing of our own to share; all is Christ's. Everything we have is His free gift. All superiority complexes of race or birth or position disappear. The Cross pours contempt on all *our* pride, as well as on the pride of the Moslem. This is why the message of the Cross makes missionaries, and "the chief of sinners" becomes the best ambassador of the grace of God. Those to whom most is forgiven always love most. The love of Christ constrains them; not only the missionary message, but the missionary passion are found in Calvary. There would have been no apostolic missions, no medieval missions, no modern missions without the experience of redemption and the call to be ambassadors of the Cross. Among missionaries to Moslems, Raymund Lull, Henry Martyn, Gottlieb Pfander, Bishop Le Froy and Temple Gairdner to name only five, had essentially the same experience, the same message, the same passion and (we may add) the same love for Moslems. The Gospel for

them was a joyful message of redemption. This message does not offer a philosophical theory, not a mere program for material betterment, but victory over sin and death. Such a message the human heart needs and of such a message who would be ashamed?

“We are sent,” in the pregnant words of Hugh Thomson Kerr, “not to preach sociology but salvation; not economics but evangelism; not reform but redemption; not culture but conversion; not progress but pardon; not the new social order but the new birth; not revolution but regeneration; not renovation but revival; not resuscitation but resurrection; not a new organization but a new creation; not democracy but the Gospel; not civilization but Christ. We are ambassadors, not diplomats.”

It is time that a protest be made against the misuse of the word evangelism: It has only one etymological, New Testament, historical and theological connotation, namely, to tell the good news of One who came to earth to die on the Cross for us; Who rose again and Who ever lives to intercede for those who repent and believe the Gospel. To evangelize is to win disciples, to become fishers of men, to preach the Gospel message.

But such a task demands moral courage of a high order and even the spirit of martyrdom. In face of the world of Islam with its denials of the cardinal truths of Christianity, its history of intolerance and its present-day emphasis on the totalitarian demands of a Moslem state, there is strong temptation to compromise and moral cowardice. We are reminded that tact and boldness are not twin virtues in the Acts of the Apostles. It was hardly tactful of Peter, on

the occasion of his first sermon, to tell the Jews that *their* wicked hands had killed the Prince of Life and *their* voices had cried for the release of a murderer. But he spake by the power of the Spirit. When the multitude, a few days later, "saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." When the early Church assembled for prayer, their request was not for more tact but for greater courage: "Now Lord, behold their threatenings and grant unto Thy servants that with all boldness they may speak Thy word." Paul preached boldly at Damascus (Acts 9:27) and again in Jerusalem, although even then they sought to kill him (Acts 9:29). With Barnabas, he abode a long time at Iconium "speaking boldly in the Lord" (Acts 14:3). Apollos even began to speak the gospel boldly in the synagogue (Acts 18:26)—as Esselstyn did in the mosques of Persia. Paul, at Ephesus, did it for three long months (Acts 19:8). It was not an incident nor an experiment; it was spontaneous and daily practice until all they that dwelt in Asia Minor heard the word. It is interesting to mark the frequent use of the term, "boldness," in the Epistles and its moral implications to the dauntless Apostle of the Gentiles. Etymologically, it means freedom in speech, without camouflage and utter frankness of approach. From this is derived the meaning of fearless confidence, cheerful courage and bold assurance in approaching God and men. It is the perfect love that casts out fear—the fear that has torment. It is to proclaim our message without regarding the face of any foe, without ambiguity or circumlocution. Such

moral courage, however, is not natural; it is a divine gift. "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost *and they spake the Word of God with boldness.*"

The present situation in the world of Islam is a challenge for every missionary to put first things first. The day of preparation is past. God's ploughshare has cut deep. All over the Near East old Islamic institutions and habits are dying while new ideas are working like leaven to leaven the whole mass of society. For example, we need no new arguments nor useless controversy regarding the veil and polygamy and the rights of womanhood. Turkey and Persia have led the way which Morocco, Egypt and Afghanistan will at long last have to follow. The Koran and Tradition are severely wounded in the house of their friends, and both may yet go the way of the Caliphate. Do we realize that our only changeless message and living message is the Word of the Cross?

Boldness is the power to speak or do what we intend before others without fear or dismay. How often there is the subtle temptation of tactful silence where the occasion demands open testimony. How often

Our speech at best is half alive and cold  
And, save that tender moments make us bold,  
Our whitening lips would close,  
Their truest truth untold.

The missionary to Moslems needs the moral courage of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Gospels and of His disciples as shown in the Acts of the Apostles. There is no finer example of apostolic courage in the annals of missions than the life and writings of Ray-

mund Lull. Dr. Eugene Stock calls him "the first and perhaps the greatest missionary" to the followers of the Arabian Prophet. Born in 1235 at Palma, Majorca, in an age of persecution and crusades he was the example of self-sacrificing love. "He saw the futility of authority in matters of religion at the time that other men were busy with the most devilish expression of belief in authority ever conceived—the Inquisition." He loved Christ with a passionate love and longed for martyrdom rather than any honor. In his plans for a world-wide mission he anticipated William Carey by exactly seven centuries. He travelled everywhere in Europe and North Africa pleading the cause of missions to Moslems. He preached incessantly, wrote hundreds of books, was imprisoned and beaten, reviled and cast out of cities. Finally on June 30th, 1315 he was stoned to death by an angry mob outside of the city-gate of Bugia, in North Africa, while preaching the love of Christ. For nearly a whole year he had labored secretly among a little circle of converts whom he had won to Christ. The story of his life is an inspiration today. As Dr. Robert E. Speer wrote: "It is six centuries since Lull fell at Bugia. Is that martyrdom never to have its fruitage? Shall we now at last awake from the sleep of the generations and give the Savior His place above the Prophet, and the Crescent its place beneath the Cross."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Introduction to Zwemer's *Raymund Lull*, p. xix.

**XVII**

**THE CROSS TRIUMPHANT**

“The simple truth is that the old Islam drew its strength from some of the good basic elements in the human material it worked on, from some partial truths about God, and from the acceptance or even the consecration of human forces which were sure sooner or later to work out social ruin. There is only one remedy. The Moslem peoples need to know and love and obey God as revealed in Christ. The issue is not Mohammed and Christ. It is not Mohammed or Christ. It is Christ. It is Christ or decay and death. The only true Islam is surrender to Christ. Then life and freedom.”

—ROBERT E. SPEER in

*The Moslem World of Today.*

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE CROSS TRIUMPHANT

**I**F THE Cross is to triumph over the Crescent it will be not by might nor by power but by God's Spirit. The Crusades were a colossal error on the part of Christendom. They showed zeal but without knowledge, passion without the love of Christ. Our hope for missions is based on our faith in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver-of-Life. It is also strengthened by the promises of God in the Old Testament regarding Arabia and the Arabs—a sure word of prophecy, to which we do well to take heed as to a light shining in a dark place. It is to these two that we turn our attention in this final chapter.

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND ISLAM. But why speak of the Holy Spirit and Islam? Is there not an incongruity in this juxtaposition of two words? Did the Holy Spirit also speak through him whom our Moslem brethren designate as the last and greatest of the Prophets? Can there be relation between the Dove of Peace and the Sword of Islam? Historically, ethically and spiritually the Upper Room in Jerusalem and the Prophet's Chamber in Medina seem as far apart as the East is from West, Averroes from Newton, Harun from Alfred, 'Aisha from Mary Magdalene, 'Ali from St. Paul, Bethlehem's manger from the Ka'ba at Mecca.

And yet our very confession that the Holy Spirit is "the Lord and Giver of Life"—of all life and the only source of life—compels us to think more deeply and with truer judgment on this relationship.

The rigid monotheism of Islam has no true place for the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The words "holy spirit" occur only four times in the Koran and are of very doubtful significance. Some say that the Holy Spirit is Gabriel, the angel of revelation; others identify the term with breath, light, prophecy, the Koran or God's great name. Yet we gather from orthodox Moslem interpretation that although shrouded in mystery, "the Spirit" proceeds from God, is limitless and can be infused into countless personalities. It was breathed into Adam and into the Virgin Mary at the birth of Jesus. But all this is still removed from the Christian idea of the Holy Spirit.

The late Temple Gairdner loved to speculate on the Moslem doctrine of the Spirit as a possible point of contact with Moslems in preaching to them the unsearchable riches of Christ. He saw how near Mohammed came to the Mystery and yet how far off he remained. In his paper for the Jerusalem Council Meeting he wrote:

"If Mohammed's awful Visitant was not other than The Spirit, then It was a being altogether higher than the angels, for he describes It as 'endued power, having influence with the Lord of the Throne, obeyed' (by celestials, surely). There results the noblest and most convincing interpretation attempted by Islamic thinkers, namely: the Spirit is a unique Being, above all creatures, related uniquely, intimately and actively to the Lord of the Throne."

“This teaching, though rare, to the multitude unknown, and even for adepts full of awesome and dangerous mystery, is a part of what Christ came not to destroy but to fulfill. It seems clear that Moslem theologians, though following the way to truth, wavered when within a step of their goal out of respect for their commendable belief in the Unity of the Deity. They saw the transcendental character of the Spirit, even admitted (some of them) that It is uncreated, but hesitated to admit Its Eternity. In many of his attributes, the Spirit of the Koran is the Holy Spirit of the Bible, or at least of the Old Testament, in all but name.”

Some would hesitate to endorse all of this statement. For in this connection we must not forget that among the titles given to Mohammed is that of Paraclete! Moslem writers assert that Christ in His last discourse foretold the coming of the Prophet and that the Greek word, translated Paraclete, (originally they say Pariclite) signified Mohammed. This error arose early and is commonly believed among all classes of Mohammedans. It has been answered again and again by Christian apologetes but persists in many popular Islamic tracts and books to this day.

On the other hand, no one can read the writings of the Mohammedan mystics without being convinced that God's Spirit led them toward and not away from the light and the truth.

Ghazali's testimony to the character and sinlessness of Jesus Christ, Al-Sha'rani's ingenious and reverent speculation on *why* Jesus is called the Spirit of God, and the words of the Masnàvi are instances in point:

For granite man's heart is, till grace intervene  
And, crushing it, clothe the long barren with green;

When the fresh breath (Spirit) of Jesus shall touch  
 the heart's core  
 It will live, it will breathe, it will blossom once more.

Whatever may be the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Islam, we know that for those in contact with Islam, as missionaries, every virtue these witnesses (theologians, Sufis and pious-folk) possess, every victory won, every thought of holiness, every deed of kindness, every ministry of love, is His alone. It is God's common grace that enabled them, as even Calvin taught. Moreover, whatever values lie hidden in the non-Christian religions come directly or indirectly through the witness and work of the Spirit. For the Reformed theology has always spoken of common as well as of special grace. By the former, Calvin meant those gracious influences or restraints of the Holy Spirit exercised in the natural heart of fallen man and throughout the history of the race, by which the soil was prepared for the seed of the Word and by which human hearts were made to yearn for God. God's creative image was disfigured by the Fall, but not wholly lost.

Here is an illustration from my own experience. One morning, many years ago, sailing on the Indian Ocean, we read, with a Moslem, a little manual of daily devotion published at Colombo, in Tamil and Arabic. It was a book of prayers of the Naqshbandi dervishes, and is typical of this kind of literature, which is everywhere in the hands and on the lips of the people. Here is a translation of one beautiful page:

"I am truly bankrupt. O God. I stand before the door of Thy riches. Truly I have great sins—forgive me for Thine own sake. Truly I am a

stranger, a sinner, a humble slave who has nothing but forgetfulness and disobedience to present to Thee. My sins are as the sands, without number. Forgive me and pardon me. Remove my transgressions and undertake my cause. Truly my heart is sick, but Thou art able to heal it. My condition, O God, is such that I have no good work. My evil deeds are many, and my provision of obedience is small. Speak to the fire of my heart, as Thou didst in the case of Abraham, 'be cool for my servant.'” The reference here is to a story in the Koran of Abraham's trial by fire. What do you make of such prayers for pardon?

The witness to Christ in the Koran, the spiritual poetry and prayers of the mystics, the present-day admiration for the character of Jesus, the desire to search the Holy Scriptures, the friendliness and sympathy where formerly there was hostility and fanaticism—all these surely are the work of God's Spirit. Yet this is only preparatory to His work of conversion and should urge us to prayer for an outpouring of God's Spirit. Apart from Him we can do nothing. If our stupendous spiritual task meets with success anywhere and in any way, it is not by might nor by power, but by the Holy Spirit alone. The Holy Spirit is the one and only source of all true power for evangelism.

II. THE PROMISES OF GOD. The Holy Spirit spake by the prophets. In the Old Testament scriptures the promises of God to Ishmael and his descendants and the spread of the Messiah's kingdom across the Arabian peninsula have been too long neglected. Professor J. A. Montgomery calls attention in his book, *Arabia and the Bible*, to the prominence of the Arab in the

Old Testament. An index of all the scriptural references to Arabia and the Arabian Bedouin life includes twenty-five books of the Old Testament and five of the New. The Messianic promises in the Psalms and in Isaiah group themselves around seven names which have from of old been identified with Arabia—Ishmael, Kedar, Nebaioth, Sheba, Seba, Midian and Ephah.

Hagar is not referred to in the Koran by name, although Ishmael her son is mentioned several times. In iv:161 it is said of him that he received revelations; in xix:55 he is called a messenger and a prophet; and in ii:119 he along with Abraham is commanded to purify the holy house at Mecca.

The traditions are more explicit. According to the strange Moslem story, Ishmael helped his father Abraham build the temple at Mecca. When the work was completed, Abraham abandoned the boy with his mother in a barren country. Afflicted by thirst, Hagar ran to and fro between the hills al-Safā and al-Marwa looking for water. Gabriel called to her, and the result was the spring of Zamzam. The sacred waters of this miraculous spring are now used by all the pilgrims at Mecca.

According to genealogies, Ishmael is considered the ancestor of the North Arabian tribes. Moslem tradition also notes the story related in Genesis 22; but here Ishmael, and not Isaac, is offered on the altar and delivered by God's providing a ram. With knowledge of these Arab traditions, Isaac Da Costa, the Dutch poet, wrote one of the finest missionary poems in the world of literature. Soon after his conversion to Christianity this cultured Jew became the uncrowned poet-laureate of the Netherlands. Of all his poems,

perhaps Hagar is the most oriental, and that is saying much in the case of the poet who said of himself:

Ik ben geen zoon der lauwe westerlanden,  
Mijn vaderland is daar de zon ontwaakt;  
En als de gloed der Libyaansche zanden  
Zoo is de dorst naar dichtkunst die mij blaakt.

The poem, Hagar, appears in the third volume of his complete works, pp. 137-148, and consists of 340 lines. It was first published in 1855 in a small collection entitled *Hesperiden: Bijbelsche Vrouwen* (Women of the Bible).

Not only is the poem oriental, but, strictly speaking, Arabian from beginning to end. The scene opens in the desert, with a vision of Hagar at the well. It tells the tale of her desert son and his descendants, and closes with a last vision of the mother-of-sorrow—Sarah's bondmaid.

Into one hundred and sixty-eight rhymed couplets the genius of Da Costa has condensed the story of Ishmael and Islam in their origin and development. He has woven together the woof of Bible promise and the warp of Arabian history into one beautiful seamless garment of poetry. To give a worthy rendering of the whole, or even of some lofty stanzas, would be hopeless. Parts of the poem yield to a sort of rendering in English, which may, perhaps, be called a translation. At least, they are as literal as I could make them while adhering to the measure, form and stanzas of the original. Addressing Arabia, the poem opens:

What marvels met thine eye, thou Orient desert Queen!  
Eternal land of drought, of crags and rocks between  
A shifty sea of sand, vast, limitless . . .  
A sea of solitude, oppressive, comfortless . . . .

Whose waves of sand and rock refresh no aching eye,  
 But leave earth barren 'neath a burning sky.  
 How oft beneath those skies the storm-winds thou hast  
 seen.

Fiercer than oven-blast, hotter than mid-day beam,  
 Chainlike unfolding in their onward path,  
 Whilst knelt the caravan obedient to their wrath;  
 Until, storm-built and driven by the blast,  
 The simoon's awful chariot had rolled past.

But in the solemn hour, recalled by poet's muse,  
 Silent the desert wastes. The rushing storm winds lose  
 Their faintest whisper. Solitude. Save one!  
 With bold, yet downcast eye, a woman walks alone.  
 Sorrow hath filled her soul.

Then follows the vision of Hagar and the promise  
 of Jehovah. The second part tells of Ishmael's mock-  
 ing, the exile, Hagar's prayer, and the renewed promise  
 of God to her seed:

"Ishmael, thou shalt not die; The desert waste,  
 Which dared to boast itself thy grave, shall taste  
 And tell thy glory." . . . . .

Here the Bedouin life is sketched in a few match-  
 less stanzas portraying the ship of the desert and the  
 Arabian steed—the peculiar twofold treasure of the  
 peninsula from time immemorial.

Passing by the centuries of silence, the poet sud-  
 denly places before us the Saracen invasion and its  
 onward sweep into North Africa and Spain:

. . . . "They leap upon the lance, but lances wound them  
 not;

A hemisphere at once falls to the Arab's lot.

And, as a new plowed field sown thick with summer hail  
 Pressed from the thunder cloud, so swift their nomad  
 trail

Sweeps everywhere along . . . . .

The day of vengeance falls! The Koran and its sword!  
 Those half-truths, wrapped in fascinating lore  
 Your idols can confound, but not your God restore.  
 Yet conquer must that Christendom which sold  
 Her substance for a form; for glitter lost her gold,  
 And thus waxed weak. Egypt, once more obey  
 The nomad's law, like Hyksos rule in earlier day!  
 Proud Alexandria, bow! Yield, yield thy costly store.  
 Thy libraries of learning and their treasured lore,  
 With all thy boasted schools? The latest blood  
 Of old Numidia now lies reeking on the sod,  
 Nor Carthager, nor Vandal, can ward off the blow . . . .  
 All Africa's at stake, and Europe shares her woe.  
 They've mounted high Gibraltar, lovely Spain  
 Lies just beyond . . . 'tis Christian but in name;  
 The fierce West-Goth sees all his temples sacked  
 Till turns the tide of time by greater Power backed.  
 Alas! Still ebbs the flood. No Pyrenees can bar  
 The eagle's lofty flight nor stay the scimitar.  
 Awake, ye north winds, and drive back the horde  
 Barbarian; Karel, rise, thou Martel, break their sword!  
 God's hand makes true Thy name. Regain our loss  
 And save from Crescent rule the lands that love the  
 Cross. . . . .

Next, we have in the poem a full-length portrait  
 of the genius prophet, Mohammed, the greatest of the  
 sons of Hagar. These stanzas defy translation because  
 of their beauty and idiom and marvelous condensation.  
 There is often a volume of thought in a single line,  
 and nowhere do I know of a more just, generous,  
 and yet critically truthful delineation of Mohammed's  
 character.

The seventh division of the poem opens, as do all  
 the others, by addressing Hagar. But this time as the  
*bondmaid*; Ishmael in subjection to Isaac; the Cross  
 rising triumphant above the Crescent:

Mother of Ishmael! The word that God hath spoken  
 Never hath failed the least, nor was His promise broken.  
 Whether in judgment threatened or as blessing given;  
 Whether for time and earth or for eternal heaven,  
 To Esau or to Jacob . . . .

The patriarch prayed to God, while bowing in the dust:  
 "Oh that before thee Ishmael might live!"—His prayer,  
 his trust.

Nor was that prayer despised, *that* promise left alone  
 Without fulfillment. For the days shall come  
 When Ishmael shall bow his haughty, chieftain head  
 Before that Greatest Chief of Isaac's royal seed.  
 Thou, favored Solomon, hast first fulfillment seen  
 Of Hagar's promise, when came suppliant Sheba's queen.  
 Next Araby the blest brought Bethlehem's newborn King,  
 Her myrrh and spices, gold and offering.

Again at Pentecost they came, first-fruits of harvest vast;  
 When, to adore the name of Jesus, at the last  
 To Zion's glorious hill the nation's joy to share  
 The scattered flocks of Kedar all are gathered there,  
 Nebajoth, Hefa, Midian . . . .

Then Israel shall know Whose heart their hardness broke,  
 Whose side they pierced, Whose curse they dared invoke.  
 And then, while at His feet they mourn His bitter death,  
 Receive His pardon . . . .

Before Whose same white throne Gentile and Jew shall  
 meet

With Parthian, Roman, Greek, the far North and the South,  
 From Mississippi's source to Ganges' giant mouth,  
 And every tongue and tribe shall join in one new song,  
 Redemption! Peace on earth, and good-will unto men;  
 The purpose of all ages unto all ages sure. Amen.  
 Glory unto the Father! Glory the Lamb, once slain,  
 Spotless for human guilt, exalted now to reign!  
 And to the Holy Ghost, life-giver, whose refreshing  
 Makes all earth's deserts bloom with living showers of  
 blessing!

. . . . .  
 Mother of Ishmael! I see thee yet once more,  
 Thee, under burning skies and on a waveless shore!

Thou comfortless, soul storm-tossed, tempest-shaken,  
Heart full of anguish and of hope forsaken,  
Thou, too, didst find at last God's glory all thy stay!  
He came. He spake to thee. He made thy night His day.  
As then, so now. Return to Sarah's tent  
And Abraham's God, and better covenant,  
And sing with Mary, through her Savior free,  
"God of my life, Thou hast looked down on me."

## A PRAYER FOR MOHAMMEDANS

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, Who hast made of one blood all nations, and hast promised that many shall come from the East and sit down with Abraham in Thy Kingdom: We pray for the millions of men, women and children in Moslem lands who are still afar off, that they may be brought nigh by the blood of Christ. Look upon them in pity because they are ignorant of Thy truth.

Take away their pride of intellect and blindness of heart, and reveal to them the surpassing beauty and power of Thy Son Jesus Christ. Convince them of their sin in rejecting the atonement of the only Saviour.

Give moral courage to those who love Thee, that they may boldly confess Thy name. Hasten the day of religious freedom in those lands still closed to Thy messengers. May Thy Word have free course and be glorified.

Make Thy people willing in this new day of opportunity. Send forth reapers where the harvest is ripe, and faithful plowmen to break furrows in lands still neglected. May the pagan tribes of Africa and Malaysia not fall a prey to Islam, but be won for Christ. Bless the ministry of healing in every hospital, and the ministry of love at every mission station. May all Moslem children in mission schools be led to accept Jesus as their personal Savior.

Strengthen converts, restore backsliders, and give all those who labor among Mohammedans the tenderness of Christ, so that bruised reeds may become pillars of His Church, and smoking flaxwicks burning and shining lights. Make bare Thine arm, O God, and show Thy power. All our expectation is from Thee.

Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son in the Mohammedan world, and fulfill through Him the prayer of Abraham Thy friend, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before Thee." For Jesus' sake.

*Amen.*

# APPENDIX



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