

MISSIONS IN FIVE CONTINENTS.

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THE STRUGGLE FOR AFRICA.*

Africa presents fresh instances of both the missionary experiences we have already met, contact with ancient religions, and with barbarian tribes. In the north, ancient civilizations were won for Christ in three hundred years, and lost again in a thousand; in the center and south, rude tribes are still accessible to the gospel message. It is needless to go over the story of the north so far as it means the winning of the Greeks and Romans; but the impact of the new faith on the natives they ruled is generally overlooked, and will repay attention. Their history introduces us to a problem more serious than any we have met as yet, a problem not unknown elsewhere, but acute in Africa, the problem of Islam. Here is another great missionary religion, which has supplanted Christianity all along the north coast, and today is contending with us for the pagan tribes. Its origin, its strength, its weakness and its prospects, will claim most of our attention.

We shall find it convenient to group our topics thus:

The winning of the north coast; Progress in Abyssinia and Arabia; Extinction of Christianity in the north; The Blacks and the Rival Missions.

(1) THE WINNING OF THE NORTH COAST.

In the early days of Christianity there were three strategic points to the south of the Mediterranean; Alexandria, the Greek center amid Egyptian beast-worship, Cyrene, a Græco-Jewish center amid Libyan paganism,

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Carthage a Roman center amid Phoenician idolatry with a remoter background of Berber paganism. Into Alexandria and Cyrene Jewish influence obtained a ready entrance for the faith, even in apostolic days; indeed, it is said that the Jews of Babylon, adjoining the modern Cairo, came over bodily to the new faith, and converted their synagogue into a Christian church. The story of Alexandria and its learned Greek teachers is familiar and has little of interest for missions. Not till 250 A.D. do we hear of five bishops outside the Greek city, increasing presently to twenty-four, showing some progress among the natives. The Greek bishop at Alexandria kept a tight hold over the country bishops, and the troubles under Decius reveal churches in the Fayum restive at the attempted control of the Greeks. When Diocletian renewed persecution, the Copts realized at last that the government was in earnest against Christianity, and they, therefore, embraced it almost as a body. The old beast worship was evidently outworn, and the new faith gave a national bond against the usurpers from over seas. So when we get clear vision about 340 A.D., we find Coptic churches all up the Nile, with their own versions in three dialects, successful in gaining nearly a million adherents to the practical extinction of the old rites, except at Philæ and one or two other temples. For instance, the care of the Nilometer was transferred to a Christian church, and the festival of the annual rising was celebrated by the Christian clergy. Another century saw the forcible demolition of all the little country shrines.

The form that Christianity assumed among the natives was however most extraordinary; we have had occasion to notice its later modifications in Europe, but monasticism in Egypt deserves special notice. Just as the hermits of India had been organized into communities by the Buddha, so now the Christians of Egypt became ascetics, and were gathered into labor colonies by Pachomius, a native Copt. Their development is barely credible, and travelers from other lands came to investigate. They

found at Oxyrhynchus ten thousand monks and twenty thousand nuns, with no families whatever; while in the suburbs were secluded Lauras, or minor monasteries. Three other places are mentioned, where the same extreme course was adopted. Of course in such communities all learning rapidly died out, and only survived in the great towns, especially among the pagans, as the name of Hypatia reminds us. A sharp distinction is to be drawn between these monks or nuns, all lay people and the clergy, who were necessarily married, and who took over the native custom from the pagan priests, of completely shaving the head, producing the "tonsure" to which Athanasius had objected.

Cyrene we must pass by, and look on to Carthage. The population here was in three strata, which it is important to distinguish. First was the old Berber aboriginal element, known then as Numidian and today as Kabyle; white in color, though soon tanned under the fierce sun, democratic, with a village system of government, and never possessing any literature, even at this day. But a race that could produce a Jugurtha to fight Rome on equal terms, deserves more attention than it usually receives. Second was the Semite colony from Tyre that founded Carthage, bringing its own Hebrew speech. After seven hundred years, in which a Hannibal and a Terence had appeared, this state was indeed blotted out; but the people and the language remained, though under the heel of Rome. Last came the Latins, who had ruled for at least two centuries when Christianity came hither.

The immigrant elements were lending a favorable ear by 180, when we hear of Punic martyrs winning the great Latin jurist Tertullian by their constancy. Forty years later we hear of 70 bishops gathered at Carthage, a number which shows us that the local organization of village home rule, taken over by Semites and Latins alike, had been adopted in Christian matters. Presently appeared a Latin Bible, but we never hear anything of a Hebrew New Testament for the older settlers.

The aborigines, already chiefly confined to the hills, do not seem to have been deeply influenced, although we hear of bishops among the Black Huts of the nomads, and not till the monastic movement was naturalized was much headway made among them. Then paganism was so dead that the largest old temple, two miles in circuit, was made over as a Christian cemetery, and another in the city became a cathedral. Soon afterwards entered the Vandals, and if they opposed the idolatrous State Church and the unsocial monks, be it remembered that they were Christians, with their vernacular Bible translated by Wulf. Unhappily while Christians quarreled, missions languished, and the hill tribes revived paganism. The only offset is that some of the slaves sent into the desert spread their faith, and we hear of work beginning among the Moors. As if there were not enough rival churches, Belisarius introduced the Greeks and their own quarrels, and in the year 646, before any other religion came to oppose all alike, only 110 bishops could be assembled in the distracted land.

If it be asked why Christianity never spread inland, and was confined simply to the strip on the north and to the Nile valley, the answer is that the desert was impassable, that the value of the camel was not known and that not Christianity alone, but all civilization was cramped in like fashion.

(2). PROGRESS IN ARABIA AND ABYSSINIA.

The south of Arabia had little to do with the north, population and civilization being quite distinct. Behind the barren coasts lies a fertile interior, from the eastern province of Oman and the pearl islands, always in touch with Persia, Biluchistan and India, along the Hadramaut strip, to the most important district of Yemen in the southwest. This has always been the center of Arabian life, with three great towns, Aden on the coast, Sana, the political capital, and Mecca, the religious focus, on

whose "right hand" the province lies as you face the rising sun, so obtaining its name. As long ago as the days of Solomon, settlers hence colonized Abyssinia, whose treasurer was won for Christ at an early date.

In the first century of our era occurred great changes. A new line of kings arose, the Himyarites; the old land routes of traffic were superseded by sea routes; the old capital began to decay and its huge reservoirs fell by degrees into ruin; the old worship of sun and moon faded out, though at the mouth of the Euphrates it yet lingers among 5,000 Mandeans. Some scholars attribute all these changes to a vast immigration of Jews cast out of Palestine by the wars of Vespasian and Hadrian; and they even go so far as to assert that the immigrants converted the king, or provided a king out of their own number. Harnack, however, conjectures that some of these immigrants were Jewish Christians, and that Pantaenus came and found the Aramaic gospel here in Yemen, not in Oman or Beluchistan.

Not till the fourth century do we have any clear light on the progress of Christianity here, when two missionaries of different sects arrived by sea, from Greek lands. Frumentius of Tyre, enslaved in Abyssinia as a boy, became first its chief secretary, and then its chief missionary; while Theophilus of Socotra, who found already in Yemen Christians of a type strange to his Greek customs, built three more great churches. He was bitterly opposed by the Jews, but his success was considerable, and presently four bishops were appointed, while the king himself is said to have been converted, Medina yielded a few disciples, and several tribes gave in their adhesion, notably in the center. On the other hand, the kingdom was weakened, the pagans of the center became independent, and about 400 A.D. the Quraysh clan secured the keys of the great idol temple at Mecca, the Ka'aba, among whose hundreds of statues were said to be those of Christ and of the Virgin.

Before the next century closed, a great immigration

of Egyptian monks strengthened and modified the Abyssinian Christianity. An alphabet was formed for the Ethiopic tongue, and the Scriptures were rendered into it. Despite all later changes, public worship in the highlands is still performed in this most ancient of Semitic languages, and modern travelers say this is nearly all the Christianity to be found there.

Between Abyssinia and Egypt the Negro race had pushed from the desert down to the Nile, and the great Theodora of Constantinople sent the first mission to the Blacks, by whom the Nubian king was baptized, and so the foundations of Christianity were laid, not to be obliterated for seven centuries.

There was a reaction in Yemen when a Jewish proselyte became king and entered on a furious persecution. Thousands of Christians, even boys and girls, were speared or burned alive in huge pits, while the villages were plundered. The Abyssinians met force with force, and presently new churches and new bishops arose under a Christian king. Missions were undertaken, by persuasion and force, winning both Jews and pagans, and a grand cathedral was built at Sana. The king proclaimed that pilgrimages to Mecca must cease, and that henceforth Sana would be the capital for all purposes, even for religion. That night an indignant pagan defiled the altar and the cross, whereupon the king vowed to destroy the idol temple at Mecca. But his army was entrapped in a defile and grievously defeated, and the progress of Christianity was effectually stopped.

We hear indeed that other means were adopted; that one bishop regularly attended the annual Eisteddfodau and preached constantly in the open air; that a convert from the Quraysh translated the gospels into Arabic; but the kingdom of Yemen drooped, and presently passed nominally under the power of the Persian Zoroastrians, while in practice Arabia lapsed into anarchy.

Consider now the condition of Mecca, the rival center. It was a town, whose dwellers were more cultivated

and more debased than the nomads. But as often happens at a center of pilgrimage, real faith was rare, and there was little attachment to the idols, only to the profits derivable from the pilgrims. And many earnest men had arisen in all parts who rejected polytheism and were worshiping quietly one God.

One such man was called Muhammad, a member of the Quraysh, the aristocratic clan which held the keys of the temple; being early orphaned, he grew up illiterate, and to the end of his days could not read or write, nor even speak grammatically, as the Qur'an occasionally shows. Traveling with business caravans, he saw something of Christian Arabs and Syrians on the frontiers of the Greek empire, and more of the Christian monks in the desert. Nearer at hand he saw much of the Jews, who formed little self-governing communities. Conceiving a scorn of the Polytheism and idolatry prevailing, he presently started preaching against it. For long he proved that a prophet has no honor in his own country, and many of his adherents fled to the Christian realm of Abyssinia. At length he found a friendly refuge at Medina, and his moral authority grew so rapidly that he became judge and ruler. Failing to win the submission of the Jews, or their recognition of him as a prophet, he ceased compromising with them, and subdued them perforce. Then he felt strong enough to attack the Meccans, and at length reduced them under his power. With them he did compromise, and agreed to retain that city as a religious center, preserving many of the old heathen customs, though the idols were utterly destroyed. The plunder from his victories gained many adherents to his system, which was now both religious and political; and besides the nucleus of those who heartily adopted his prophetic claims, the whole of Arabia flocked to his standard, and he felt confident enough to summon the rulers of the great empires to adopt Islam. Though at his death there was defection, yet capture of the rich towns restored allegiance. Then came a conflict between

the religious party and the political, the former won a great point in publishing a standard edition of the prophecies of Muhammad, henceforth accepted as the absolute authority for Islam; but on the whole the theocracy failed, and the worldly lust of power came to the front. So within forty years from the flight of Muhammad to Medina, the progress of Christianity in Western Asia and in Northern Africa was at an end, and the new religion was consolidated and spreading fast.

(3). THE EXTINCTION OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE NORTH.

When the armies of Islam came to Egypt, they found a ready welcome from the native Copts, who resented the tyranny of the Greeks. The conquest was complete in six years, and then came into play one of the great attractions of the new faith. The moment a subject adopted Islam, not only was he exempt from paying tribute, which indeed was balanced by an obligation to pay the poor-rate, but he found himself a member of a brotherhood, a ruling race. All signs of degradation were removed, there might be a subscription to start the new convert, if he were poor, freedom was at once granted to inter-marry with all the Muslims, and the way was open to all power and office. On the other side the Muslim yoke proved heavier than the Greek, and was frequently made weightier still, branding on the hand was introduced, and persecutions of this kind have twice produced thousands of converts.

The speed with which the Copts adopted the faith of Islam can only be compared with the speed with which they had adopted Christianity. Of course the Greek State Church practically vanished at once, while on the other hand the Persian variety of Christianity made its appearance; but all power and culture passed rapidly to the Arabs, and the Copts within a century were given the option of conversion or banishment. Though this was not steadily enforced, they were in the minority with-

in another country, and the country people began to pass over wholesale. All too late they were driven to recognize that their vanishing faith could only be conserved if they took over the tongue of their rulers, a measure adopted more promptly by the Jews. Nor are cases wanting when with this lever they actually won over Muslims to Christianity. Then came a terrific reaction, when thirty thousand churches were demolished. Even in this extremity the Christians kept up worship in their houses, and after nine years the persecution slackened; while the mad Caliph actually gave leave to rebuild the churches, and restored the endowments. But the Crusades caused a revival of hatred, and the Muslims burned the old Christian capital of Babylon, the stronghold of the old national faith. Its monastery alone remains, at the south of the new Muslim capital of Cairo, and the transfer to the Muslims of the guardianship of the Nilometer alongside is another sign that nationality and faith were broken.

Once the Nile valley was the home of thousands of Christian monks, today they have practically vanished. Were it not for the immigration of foreigners, Christianity would be almost contemptible; and despite the predominance of France and of England in recent years, Egypt is still one of the Muslim strongholds. More than 92 per cent. of the people are Muhammadan, and the few Christians represent nine varieties of ancient churches, besides adherents of modern Protestant missions. The native church of Egypt has shriveled up till there are but ten bishoprics and a few hundred thousand Copts left under a Patriarch at Cairo. And since the bishops are always drawn from the monasteries, where learning is rare, these seem great difficulties in the way of rejuvenating what was once a wonder of the Christian world.

Higher up the Nile beyond Egypt, lies Nubia. Here the Christians were isolated and withered away; by 1520 no clergy were left, and quarrels of jurisdiction prevented others being sent from Abyssinia. The churches

were closed, and the population has long been Muslim. One bishop remains, at Khartum, with only seven churches in his diocese. This district was the headquarters of the Mahadi's movement, and so strong is Muslim feeling that the British government has only allowed Christian missions with great reluctance.

The northern littoral between Egypt and Tunis fell under Muslim influence quickly and uneventfully, and Cyrene, which had furnished a Simon to bear the cross, and a Lucius to be one of the first heralds of salvation, passed out of Christian history. Then in the old Roman districts of Africa and Numidia, where four sects had quarreled and weakened one another, hatred of the Greek tyranny united all four in a welcome to the Muhammadans as deliverers. By 700 Carthage was in their power, and Christianity was doomed to stagnation. Indeed, within sixty years the governor reported to the Caliph that the tribute of infidels had ceased, as all were converted—a statement that a careful auditor of accounts might have questioned as premature.

Here first did Muslims meet Arian Christianity, which denies to Christ full godhead. Now they themselves are prepared to honor Isa bin Miriam as the last and greatest of the prophets before Muhammad, and it would seem that the transition of the Vandals and Goths was thus facilitated.

And whereas the Berbers had received little attention from Christians, it is mortifying that within eight years after the Berber state was crushed, the army of 12,000 Muslims who sailed to conquer Spain was composed of Berbers, whose general, Tariq, himself was a new convert. Great efforts were made to read and expound the Qur'an, and to teach the duties of Islam. Even into France the Muslim armies swept, "slaying and taking captive, pulling down churches and breaking up their bells". Not till they reached the Loire were they beaten back by the Catholic Franks, and Christendom breathed again.

Within the subjugated lands, the churches did not succumb utterly and at once, but there was steady decline.

With the appearance of the Turks in 1583, the last vestige of the Church of Tertullian and Augustine vanished away.

(4.) THE BLACKS AND THE RIVAL MISSIONS TO THEM.

Except for the north coast and the Nile valley, Africa is the home of three races, all low in the scale of civilization and religion. A few tribes in the south, notably the Bechuanas, have an elaborate totem system; near them are the aboriginal Hottentots. The Bantu negroids of the Zambesi and Congo basin and the east coast are addicted to ancestor worship. The Sudanese negroes whose strength is in the Niger basin affect nature worship, taking objects at random as their fetiches.

The crusades of king Louis in Tunis and Egypt fired the Muslims to propagate their faith, and the twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw them penetrate the desert, winning the Sahara for Muhammad, Timbuktu being an early and powerful center in the west. It was the fifteenth century when Christians began creeping down the west coast beyond the Canary Islands. The pioneers were the Portuguese, lately freed from Arab dominion, and now following in Arab tracks. Prince Henry the Navigator was distinctly urged in his explorations by a missionary motive. Finding that captive Moors were inaccessible to the gospel, he allowed them to ransom themselves by sending instead black slaves whom he trained as missionaries; by 1444 a slave trade was started with this motive. Before the century closed, a mission to the Congo had won the king, and established two negro bishops near Stanley Pool. But though another mission settled at the mouth of the Zambezi, the slave trade developed fast under the patronage of the bishops; and when the riches of India, China, Mexico and Peru presently distracted attention from Africa, the slave trade

continued, but the Christianizing movement died out, without any stable native church being founded. The Spaniards led the way in transporting negroes to the West Indies, but did nothing to lead them to Christ. Nor did the Dutch do more at the extreme south, and the impulse came at length as to Paul in Troas. A negro from the Danish West Indies met Zinzendorf at Copenhagen and bewailed the lot of his enslaved countrymen. Going on to Herrnhut he had the honor of awakening the Moravians to their missionary career. They soon passed on to Jamaica and South Carolina, and this overleaping of civil boundaries is to be noted, for it is the revival of the modern idea of Foreign Missions. Before the century closed, the blacks in Africa shared the blessing, and during the last hundred years all sects and nations have claimed the privilege of sending the gospel.

Within the last twenty years the situation has changed again, by a general opening up the whole continent to knowledge, by the European powers agreeing on their spheres of influence, and by the great immigration into the colonies of the south. Here is now to be found a white population not to be neglected, with Dutch and English Bibles, and with far less of the former opposition to missions, though there is some suspicion and dread of "Ethiopianism" or the formation of a purely native church.

But the interest centers in the tropics, where the whites are still casual visitors, who have frequently to return home to recruit their health, and who can never hope to live permanently except on a few plateaus. Here is the battlefield of Islam and Christianity.

Of the lower races which have no stable organized religion, far the greater number are in Africa, and they are disposed to lend a favoring ear to missionaries who can civilize or teach them. Islam is wide-awake to the situation, and Christendom is awakening. While the problems presented in Asia are vast from their importance, the problem in Africa is urgent from the critical

situation and the huge masses that may be won or lost for Christ.

Let us see what Islam really has to offer at the present time to the blacks, remembering that the African Islam of today is not the Islam of Muhammad, any more than the American Christianity of today is the Christianity of Christ; both have tacitly ignored some aspects of their founder's teaching, and have taken up much from the experience of centuries.

We may look first at the content of the message, its gospel; then at the way its message is delivered; its missionaries.

THE OFFERS OF ISLAM.

First, Islam comes with the news of one God, and teaches that all the burdensome worship of fetiches is to be abandoned. This does away with a nightmare of witchcraft, and must be a veritable gospel to all but the witch-doctors and the juju priests whose occupation is gone. And this God is not utterly aloof; however long He has winked at times of ignorance, He sent a series of messengers with revelations of His will growing ever clearer and clearer, until the message for this age was delivered now nearly 1300 years ago, while there is constant expectation nowhere more keen than in Africa that He will again break silence and speak by a Mahdi. However mysterious are His ways, He is compassionate, and He enjoins that His votaries approach Him five times a day in prayer.

Now in all these respects we can fully appreciate the attractiveness of the news, and its truth. When we look more closely, to realize the point where our message differs, we see that the character of the Muslim God is vague, and where distinct, is repulsive. Palgrave describes the doctrine as the Pantheism of force, and the Muslim God as a jealous sterile autocrat. If this is so, we see that we can add several features in our presentation that should be far more attractive. We know some-

thing of the justice of God, evinced in His hatred for sin and His desire for holiness in His creatures; something of the love of God, shown especially in one great historic event, the dispatch of a Savior. We know of the helpfulness of God, who constantly answers prayer, prayer for daily varying needs, not in stereotyped forms for mere general wants, but for definite gifts. The God of Islam is a god of the past and of the future; He did speak, He will speak and judge; our God is also a God of the present, who does love and hear and answer and help. And herein the message of Islam is radically deficient, for it can but counsel submission to the inscrutable will of God, a moral agnosticism.

Then Muhammad said that this God tolerated no intermediary between himself and the true believer. He denied the right of any priest to intervene. Herein we can see the immense value of the work he did, which largely remains. But the mind of man seems unable to rest in the thought that we may approach God absolutely direct.

Therefore, a general worship of saints has arisen all over Islam, and in practice these receive much attention and many requests for help and intercession. Whether they were real and eminent men, whether ancient gods taken over, or mere figments of imagination presiding at ancient seats of paganism, there the Muslim saints are, and constant pilgrimages are made to their shrines for aid. We are thoroughly familiar with this failing of the race,—Greek and Latin Christianity are equally tainted with it—so that the Roman Catholic missionaries dealing with Muslims find themselves constantly at a loss and have to defend themselves against a charge of idolatry rather than attack Islam. But we who take our stand on the Bible alone can announce, without fearing that our message is belied by our deeds, that no one cometh unto the Father except through Jesus Christ; that there is one Mediator between God and man, Himself Man, and that He shares this glory with none other. Herein

the deep craving of the heart for some peace-maker is frankly met, and the limits of mediation are sharply cut. And whereas the thought of sin is also present in many hearts, and the sense that punishment is merited, the message of Islam here is unsatisfying, while Christianity has something to say about the Mediator being the Sin-bearer of the world, which is able to allay the troubled conscience.

Look next at the outward observance of religion. Islam says that religion is to permeate the whole life, that prayer is a duty as well as a privilege, and that nothing is to interfere with its punctual performance. And religion is a social thing, so that once a week there is to be united prayer, with possibly preaching to follow. But this is only the beginning, so that the day of a pious Muslim is ordered throughout by a religious code, based on Judaism and developed by tradition. If Peter groaned under the yoke which he and his fathers were unable to bear, the Muslim proselyte may well be aghast, and feel that if his pagan priests chastised him with whips, he is now threatened with scorpions. In contrast with this we may boldly assert that the yoke of Christ is easy, and His burden light.

The Law of Islam is indeed elevated as contrasted with paganism. We may say of it what Paul said of its source, the Law of Moses, "the law is holy and just and good", with trifling exceptions. It condemns much that is evil, it commends much that is praiseworthy. But it has serious limitations. It can educate up to a certain point, and then leaves; it leads out of the flood of heathenism on to higher land, which proves to be only an island with narrow resources. It does not even pretend to supply motive power, only to sketch an ideal; and while the ideal is really low, it yet is too high for many to persevere towards in their own strength. Worse than that, it is outward, not inward; a Muslim is invited to conform by sheer force of will, but has to secure his driving force outside the law. Now as against all this system, the

Christian missionary can say: "Law is made for bad men, not for Christians; if it has educated you up to the pitch of wishing for salvation, pardon, help, it can do no more. Christ can blot out sin; Christ can supply the power you want; Christ reveals a higher ideal of life, which will prove more attractive the nearer you come to realizing it; the life of a Christian is indeed a servitude to Christ, but as compared to the life of a Muslim, it is perfect freedom."

If so far we feel that the message of the Christian missionary is as winsome as that of the Muslim, what about the moral demands made on the convert? The code of Muhammad is high, but inelastic; he forbade wine, but knowing nothing of spirits, did not forbid them, and many expositors permit their use. The Christian has no elaborate code, but offers three tests: "Does this harm you; does it offer a temptation to your neighbor; is your conscience quite clear as to its use?" Or consider the much-debated question of sexual relations; Muhammad introduced a reform by drawing the line at four wives, with facilities for divorce, and unlimited concubines. And quite possibly his message still finds tribes to whom that may be a restriction. But too often it comes as a degradation of an ideal already known, and absolutely lowers the tone of previous morals. And if it be claimed that at least it averts the "social evil", it must be squarely asserted that it does no such thing, as readers of Arabic literature and travelers in Asiatic Muslim lands know well. And under Muslim tolerance there has grown up an awful system of worse vice, not to be dilated on. To revert from practical working to ideal demand, the Christian standard shows no compromise for the hardness of men's hearts, but is plain and simple. And it may be declared as plainly that of sin and holiness Muhammad had no conception. He himself violated the customs of his own times without scruple, robbing pilgrims, approving the assassination of women, marrying a widow within three days, contracting an incestuous

marriage with his daughter-in-law. Two of these breaches of morality he covered by producing new revelations to justify him; but he could not obey the very laws he himself promulgated, and instead of four wives he had ten, and negotiated for thirty others. What sense of sin could there be in such a man, and what can be expected from his followers?

The lot of women is not enviable among Muslims. A pagan negress has no special disability, as compared with her negro husband. But if Islam comes to the village she finds herself at once thrust into seclusion and suspected; her husband may have opened to him a career of travel and learning; she is a prisoner and kept ignorant as a child. Here Christianity can come with great opportunity.

Examine the ecclesiastical system of Islam. Muhammad prided himself on the liberty into which he called his fellows, freeing them from the tyranny of priesthood. But he himself laid the foundations of an equally objectionable tyranny, or rather he took it over from the Jews, ready built. They had their scribes, their rabbis, who in our Lord's day were powerful enough to contest the leadership of the priests, and who saw the power of those priests disappear in a generation. Then they went on developing their traditions about the Law, till the really influential and ruling literature of the Jews is not the Law, but the Mishna and the Talmud, the sediment of traditional exposition. Exactly the same thing has happened in Muhammad's revised version of Judaism. What is the good of boasting that no priests exist, if authorized expositors of the law thrust in on every hand? Granted that a Muslim may pray alone, may marry, bury, so the enthusiasts of Islam pride themselves; but he dare not think for himself, interpret the Qur'an for himself; no Catholic can be bound by straiter bonds than is he. And wherein is the negro benefited if he exchange the tyranny of medicine man and priest for the tyranny of mullah and law-student? Now the Catholic missionary

indeed has nothing better to offer; but a Protestant at least does not fear to translate the Bible into any dialect the poor pagan can understand, and put it into his hand for himself to interpret and act upon. And more than one missionary has owned that the untutored African has instantly accepted and acted on commands that the sophisticated conscience of Europe has discarded, and so opened up anew the value of God's promises.

MISSIONARY METHODS OF ISLAM.

Quit now this whole subject, what Islam offers, and demands; and consider another important point: How the message is delivered; missionary methods. Two have been tried by Muslim and Christian alike, force and persuasion. At the present day, force is nearly obsolete in Africa. Outside Morocco hardly an acre is under purely Muslim rule, and no Christian power uses the arm of the State to propagate Christianity. We have therefore to consider only the peaceful methods employed. Islam has three principal sets of agents. Traders to leaven the towns; professional missionaries; school-masters.

Every mosque in Africa has its school attached; all education is distinctly religious, designed to confirm in the faith and to lay the foundation for a subsequent theological or missionary training in special cases. Everywhere the Qur'an is the text-book, and all learning is grafted on to it in some way, even the Qur'an offers information to the African Negro, and its arrival marks a rise in the social scale. This is markedly to be seen on the Guinea coast. Here for four centuries the natives have known Christians chiefly as slavers, only for one century as missionaries. Their state is degraded in the extreme, and Christian traders have worsened it by their offer of spirits and gunpowder. But when you pass from the coast a little inland, a civilizing influence is met, the tribes seem to be self-respecting, clothed and in their right minds. Islam has come to them.

It is, of course, to be said that Christian missionaries have been at work educationally as in other ways. But Warneck says that our subjects of instruction are too many and the aims too high, while the almost exclusive use of English perverts and denationalizes the people. In contrast with this, the Muslim, with a lower ideal, generally attains it.

It will be asked who breaks the ground for Islam at all. The answer is, the Muslim trader and settler. The European trader on the coast is seldom viewed in a missionary light, and seldom deserves to be. But the Muslim trader is of another stamp; see an ideal picture of his doings: His very profession brings him into close and immediate contact with those he would convert, and disarms any possible suspicion of sinister motives. Such a man when he enters a pagan village soon attracts attention by his frequent ablutions and regularly recurring times of prayer and prostration in which he appears to be conversing with some invisible being; and by his very assumption of intelligence and moral superiority he commands the respect and confidence of the heathen people, to whom at the same time he shows himself ready and willing to communicate his high principles and knowledge. He teaches the people new songs, in which his doctrines and practices are insinuated. He marries freely and begets perhaps even more freely, and all his children are trained in his faith. And so before long the way is paved for the amateur to call in the professional missionary. While this picture is quite probably overcolored, it strikes us as most attractive and most possible. Indeed we know that this is exactly the way in which our own faith spread throughout the Roman empire for more than a century.

But now we must observe the wholesale training of men who are to be professional missionaries, devoting their whole lives deliberately to the spread of Islam. Of these there are two sorts, the university men from Cairo, the seminary men from the desert.

At the great mosque in Cairo is a Muslim university, to which students flock from all the Muhammadan world, including Africa. An enthusiast claimed that in 1884 more than twelve thousand men were on the rolls but a cold-blooded cyclopedia says that this number includes all the affiliated training colleges and professional schools, so that only about two thousand are really in attendance. From the hundreds who graduate hence every year, instructed in the Qur'an, grammar, prosody, calligraphy, history, arithmetic, algebra, and above all, in commentary and traditions, many go back to spread their faith.

A more modern movement is outranking this plan. Seventy years ago it originated in Morocco, and after being for a while centered at Jaghub in Tripoli, it is now directed from the oasis of Kufra near Lake Chad, whence the Sahara is in reality ruled. A deliberate attempt is being made to undo all reform of Islam by internal evolution, and to resist any change from without; and the program is to extend the old original doctrine of the Prophet by every means, peaceable if necessary, but at all hazards to extend. Strange to say, the objections of the Prophet to monasticism have been toned down, and a community life is adopted. "Convents of the order are to be found not only all over the north of Africa from Egypt to Morocco, throughout the Sudan, in Senegambia and Somaliland, but members of the order are to be found also in Arabia, Mesopotamia and the islands of the Malay archipeligo." All adherents are expected to give a part of their income to the funds of the society, and many devote themselves entirely to the reform and propagation of Islam. More than 120 training colleges exist, and from the chief one of these hundreds of missionaries go forth yearly to spread the original teaching, of Muhammad, and to incite to absolute cessation of the intercourse with all Jews and Christians. Slaves are often brought from a pagan tribe, trained, and sent back to win their people. An annual chapter is

held at which progress is reported, and new plans are laid.

Their devotion may put us to shame. How few of our seminaries put Foreign Missions in the very forefront of their purpose! Yet with these Sanusis every one of their colleges is such a Foreign Missionary Seminary, and twenty years ago a German traveler declared that from Tripoli alone more than a thousand workers go annually.

Hear an English statesman of thirty years ago as to the prospects of one of these: "He can not only give them many truths regarding God and man which make their way to the heart and elevate the intellect, but he can at once communicate the Shibboleth of admission to a social and political communion which is a passport for protection and assistance from the Atlantic to the Wall of China. Wherever a Muslim house can be found, there the Negro convert who can repeat the dozen syllables of his creed is sure of shelter, sustenance and advice; and in his own country he finds himself at once a member of as influential, if not a dominant caste. This seems the real secret of the success of the Muslim mission in West Africa. It is great and rapid as regards number, for the simple reason that the Muslim missionary from the very first profession of the converts belief, acts practically on those principles regarding the equality and brotherhood of all believers before God, which Islam shares with Christianity."

With Sir Bartle Frere agrees another observer, who emphasizes that neither color nor race prejudices a Negro in any way in the eyes of his new co-religionists. Muhammad fancied from the story of Moses' hand becoming white, that he was a Negro, and he himself took a Negro as his constant personal attendant. Hear also a Negro on the difference of the two missions to his people: "While Christian missions put off indefinitely the establishment of a native pastorate, the Muslim priests penetrate into Africa, find ready access to the pagans,

and win them for Islam. The result is that the Negroes today regard Islam as the religion for blacks, and Christianity as that for whites. Christianity, say they, certainly invites the Negro to salvation, but assigns him a place so low that he is discouraged and says, I have no part nor lot in this affair. Islam calls the Negro to salvation and says to him. It depends simply on yourself to climb as high as possible. So the enthusiastic Negro gives himself, body and soul, to serve this religion.”

But we may somewhat doubt whether this charming picture of brotherhood corresponds to the reality, and whether the negative has not been retouched.

Sell avers that this brotherhood, if overrated, does yet exist, that the Muslim is always proud of his religion, proud to spread it. Even the Christian missionary may at times adopt an apologetic attitude for his faith and his calling, but the Christian trader is not habitually proud of his creed, and therein we can see one great source of weakness.

The problem of Africa thus proves to be mainly the problem of Islam. The low pagan religions have no power of resistance, and the question of their future may almost be reduced to the alternative, Shall they become Muslim or Christian? Of course here, as elsewhere, it is true that they deeply color the religion that supplants them; that African Islam is not the faith of Muhammad, and Ethiopianism is not the primitive gospel of Christ. But waiving this point, and viewing the great rival missions, we have to ask as to their relative position, the statics of the problem; and as to their relative progress, the dynamics of the problem.

The actual state of things is disconcerting in the extreme. If the total population of Africa be estimated at 164 millions, according to the Statesman's Yearbook for 1905, we find from the Cairo Conference of last spring that the Muslim share is about 59 millions, or 36 per cent. of the whole. The estimates for the African

churches in Egypt and Abyssinia vary widely; taking the most sanguine, that of Professor Schmidt, they have not ten million, while the Catholic and Protestant churches add another five, all together about 5 1-2. Muslims outnumber Christians more than six to one.

How about the advance of the two faiths? The Abyssinians and Copts may be simply ignored, for they make no effort at propagation. The progress of Catholics is not easy to state, but as Beach finds that the total constituency of Protestant missions is only 576,530 for 95 societies, we shall take a rosy view if we double this and say that 1 1-4 million is the total under Christian influence; according to the figures of the Prophet in the Dictionary of Missions, not one million can be counted. Over against this we hear from travelers that Islam is advancing constantly and rapidly in the west, and of whole nations being won over in a few years. Dr. W. R. Miller thinks that this progress is real and likely to increase, and warns us that "a peaceful Islam under British rule, free to proselytize while Christian missionaries are hampered, will be a greater power" than Islam under pagan or Muslim rule. This leads us to the political aspect. The Cairo conference complained that European governments cringe to Muslim turbulence and arrogance, withholding fair play from Christian missions.

The problem of Africa is the problem of Islam. Is the converse true, that the problem of Islam is merely the problem of Africa? Muslims are found in China and Central Asia, in the southern isles, India and Persia; are these 170 millions negligible? From the dynamical standpoint they are. They make no progress at all; nay in the islands they are absolutely yielding converts to Christianity. And this leads us to the supreme question about Islam, Whether we should resign ourselves to measuring our strength by relative results on pagans, or whether we should gird ourselves for direct attack on Muslims themselves.

Outside Morocco and the Tripoli and the Sahara under

Sanusi influence, Islam does not rule in Africa, and therefore the law that propagandism is punishable with death cannot be enforced. Islam took the sword and has been crushed politically by the sword. In response to the Berber attack on Spain, Spanish military orders were formed and regained the Peninsula for Christendom. French crusades to Egypt and Tunis taught the Muslims they were not invincible, but not till last century did political power pass from Islam in Egypt and Algeria. In so far, then, it has been lay effort that has prepared the way for the missionary. And lay effort has never been lacking, as the great names of Francis of Assisi and Ramon Lull in the Middle Ages may remind us; the one founding an enthusiastic society of laymen who within forty years penetrated not only north Africa, but to the limits of China; the other, one of the greatest missionary statesmen that the world has known; and both alike found actually preaching to Islam in Africa.

Today the work is conducted on two lines, by Catholics and Protestants. The former operate chiefly according to tradition, and the best thing that can be said is that the French have proved themselves wonderfully adaptable to the natives, winning a speedy entrance, and that their uniform plan of celibacy enables them to pioneer with great speed; on the other hand they perpetually mix up with their propaganda a double political mission, subjection to the Pope, preparation for French domination. And they prove unable to follow up what they begin so well, for the very reason that they have no home life.

Protestant work is still too often crude, and it may appear that some directing boards and some actual candidates are most imperfectly acquainted with the history of the past, and with the doctrines of Islam. But there are certain great agencies which are now being employed with success. First is the old and tried *Vernacular Bible*: if the Arabs have imposed their language throughout Islam, then the districts that once made the oldest ver-

sions of the Bible, the Septuagint and the Old Latin, can now enjoy the splendid Arabic version due to the Americans of Beirut. And this opens the way for Christian literature generally. Then if Islam has its *educational system*, Christianity has another. We have seen the antique classics of China pronounced antiquated, and dethroned by the vermilion pencil; shall we fear that Christian schools cannot win their way without such political backing? Let Egypt answer, with its 2500 Muslim pupils of one Christian mission. This leads us to the fact that *women* have a great part to play, as Misses Whatley and Holliday have shown. Muslim women are secluded in the harems and only women can reach them there. When we reflect on the influence of mothers, we shall see that a vast field lies here, and that it lies open to college girls who will study history and Islam, as diligently as they study more ordinary courses. Then see how their brothers may serve the cause, and may undermine what cannot always be attacked frontally. In Morocco preaching is forbidden but not *industrial and medical* work. Laymen can thus enter where the minister is ex-officio a criminal and doomed to death by his calling. Mackay of Uganda realized by his experience that success awaits such men, and pleaded that we be no longer scared by Islam, contenting ourselves with protecting the pagan from her, but that we boldly attack and seek to capture.

An expert declares that in Arabia itself there are about sixty towns mostly near the south coast, all accessible for missionaries, while only three are occupied. It is a fiction that the inoculation against Christianity is perfect. The Malays of Java and Sumatra are being rapidly reclaimed from Islam and won for Christ. India has yielded many converts, and Persia also. Egypt itself has seen a student at Al Azhar confess Jesus. And it is to be observed that if it seems almost as hard to win these as to win Jews, yet when won they are about as zealous in propagation. Indeed when we consider the

relation of these two faiths, we should ask what is God's purpose in thus entwining them. Can we be far wrong in seeing that the Jews, so tenacious of their ancient creed, have special affinities with Islam? When the time shall strike that God has chosen for the winning of His Covenant People, what is more likely to be their first destined work than the conversion of their brethren, the sons of Ishmael?

Meantime, we must not wait for this; that Christianity has something attractive and noble let a friend of Islam testify: "The religion of Christ contains whole fields of morality and whole realms of thought, which are all but outside the religion of Muhammad. It opens humility, purity of heart, forgiveness of injuries, sacrifice of self to man's moral nature, development, boundless progress to his mind." On the other hand, listen to a few recent estimates of Islam by those who have seen it at close quarters; the names of Palgrave, Stanley, Lane, Poole, and Colvin should carry weight:

"Islam is in its essence stationary."

"As a social system, Islam is a complete failure."

"A scheme of social life which rests for its authority on the unfruitful traditions of Doctors of Divinity . . . does not admit of sustained and continuous progress. Every step forward is barred by some ancient ordinance claiming divine origin, or the supreme authority of tradition. There are the gross evils of sanctioned concubinage and of polygamy with their baleful effect on the home life and character of the family and on the education of the children; the seclusion of women with all that it implies—both for those who are immured, and for the sex from whose social intercourse is excluded the most softening and humanizing element available to it. The divine ordinance of slavery must be reckoned with, which degrades the dignity of labor and of industry, no less than the ideal of humanity. Finally there is the reluctance of the fatalist to improve upon the position designed for him by his Creator. . . . The majority of

the other native inhabitants (of the southern Sudan) though professing Islam, are little better than their (heathen) brethren. Ignorance and superstition characterize the Sudan as a whole."

Let us, then, rally to the summons issued by a worker from the field where Muhammadans have been most aggressive and most successful: "A very significant change has perceptibly come over the Muslims in West Africa; I believe the time is ripe for a tremendous propaganda to a broken-spirited, but still proud, people."