

# AMAZING SPREAD OF ISLAMISM

## INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

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LESSON FOR JANUARY 28

PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

LESSON TEXT—Luke 2:22-39.  
MEMORY VERSES—29, 30.  
GOLDEN TEXT—"For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples."—Luke 2:30-31.

This lesson concerns the matter of the presentation of the Christ child in the temple forty days after his birth. Ever since the redemption of the first-born of Israel on that dark night in Egypt, when the destroying angel passed through the land and smote all the first-born of the Egyptians, the first-born son of every Hebrew family belonged unto the service of God. As a substitute for all the first-born, the tribe of Levi was chosen to act as priests. By this, however, the Hebrew parents were not exempt from the presentation of their first-born to God. By reason of the choosing of the Levites, the first-born son of the family was released from priestly service on the payment of a certain amount of redemption money.

Joseph and Mary being righteous parents, obeyed this law and presented the Christ child in the temple. In thus presenting the child, these parents realized the great truth, which all parents should realize, that our children belong to God, and are but loaned to us. Christian parents should imitate the example of Joseph and Mary.

Mary also made a personal offering as a token of her appreciation of the goodness of God. It was a small gift, it is true, but it was the best that she in her humble circumstances life could give, and, therefore, was as acceptable to God as any offering of much higher value would have been. Would it not be a good thing to celebrate the birth of your child by making a special offering, or gift to the cause of God, to some needy work?

We have a wonderful description of the work of Christ in this lesson. He is the light of the world. Not one, but every nation is to feel the effect of his coming. On one occasion, when a Japanese convert to Christianity was summoned before the magistrates and called upon to give a reason why he had forsaken his national religion, he was told that Japan had religion enough and did not want any more; that Confucianism was good enough for scholars, and Buddhism for the masses. The Japanese convert replied, "If Confucianism is an all-sufficient religion, why is it, since the founder lived thousands of years before Christ and taught during a long life, that it has not spread beyond China and Japan? And if Buddhism is an all-sufficient religion, how is it, started by Buddha thousands of years before Christ, and taught by him through a long life, that it has not spread beyond India, China, and Japan? If Christianity is a bad religion, how is it, since its founder taught three years, and was put to death when he was thirty-three years old, that it has spread over all the world?"

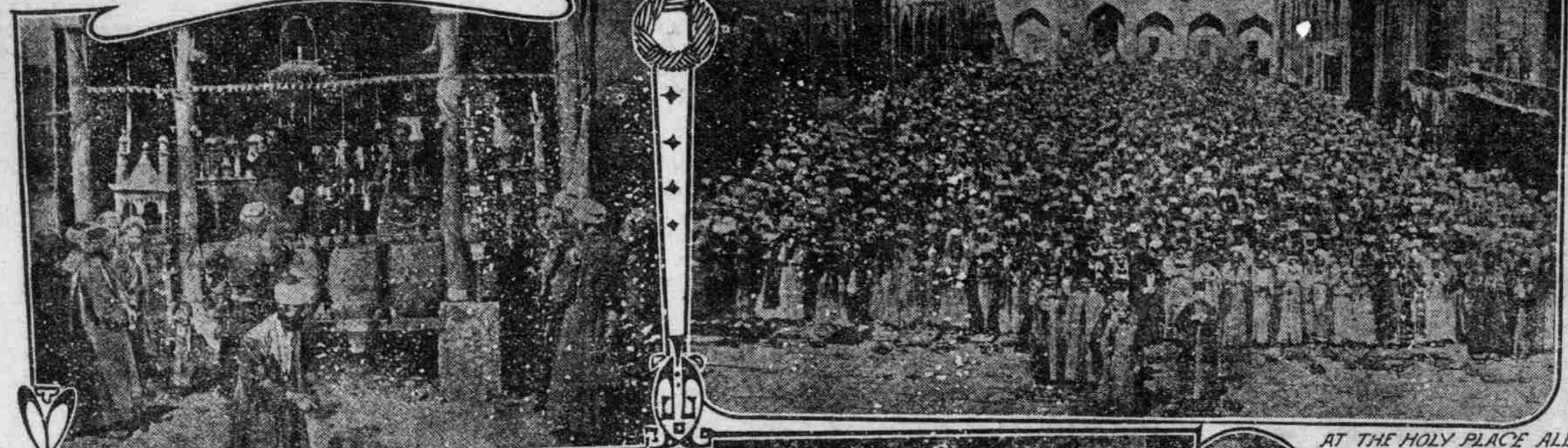
Jesus is the desire of all the nations. There is no satisfaction to be found in any religion outside of him. Even Simeon, representing the Old Testament, did not find full satisfaction until he had seen the Christ child.

The salvation of the world centers in Christ. He is the only Saviour. Christ is the only person who can save the world from its sin. The world had had reformers, scholars, philosophers, philanthropists before Christ, but it never had a Saviour. Jesus Christ is the only person born into the world with reference to the size of men.

We may learn a lesson of what it means to have faith in Christ from the words of Simeon. He had seen no mighty works wrought by Christ; no miracles had been performed in his sight; he had heard no words of king-like dignity from the lips of Jesus; Christ had pressed upon this good man's heart no claims to Messiahship—and yet with the eye of faith he saw all these things in the infant Jesus. Centuries have rolled by since Simeon lived and died, and Jesus Christ has been proven beyond all reasonable doubt to be all these things—to be, and to do all that Simeon in prophecy claimed for him, and yet we may ask, "Do we believe in Christ, the Christ of the past as he believed in the Christ of the future?"

Christ is a revealer of men's hearts. A man's character is judged by his attitude toward Christ. We see in the character of Christ absolute goodness, love, truth, honor, purity. Therefore to see Christ, to see truth, love, goodness, purity, and to love and choose him is to reveal a state of heart which, like that of Galileo, "cares for none of these things."

Simeon was satisfied when he had seen the Christ. To see him is the grandest sight in all the world. We are often asked, "Have you seen the sights in Rome, in Greece, in Italy?" And if we reply in the negative, it is hinted that we have missed a great part of life. But there is a light more important to see than any material vision, and that is, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Have you seen this sight? Have you seen the face of Jesus? Have you seen the glory of God in the person of Jesus? Have you seen in him salvation? If you have not all is lost.



WATER-SELLERS AT THE WELL OF ZEM ZEM, MECCA

**I**N this world, according to the latest estimates, there are about 200,000,000 Mohammedans. Of these, no less than 95,000,000 live under British rule—a total of 5,000,000 in excess of the Christian population of King George's dominions.

Most people, in considering these vast hordes of Moslems, never for a moment think of them as militant followers of the Prophet. They look upon the Islam world as quiescent so far as the propagation of its doctrines is concerned—as yielding more and more to the teachings of the armies of Christian missionaries spread out over it.

But, according to a number of these very missionaries, who have gained their knowledge in the battle-line formed by Christianity against Islam and other religions, this is by no means the case. From the front they bring the news that Mohammedanism, far from being quiet, is pulsing with new life; that its missionaries, filled with fanatic zeal, are making hosts of converts to their doctrine, not only among pagans, but among peoples previously converted to Christianity.

Africa is where the pitched battle for converts between Christianity and Islam is being waged most furiously. Those who have been over the ground declare that the religious fate of the Dark Continent hangs in the balance. Mohammedanism has made such progress there of late, they aver, that it is a question whether it will not soon become Africa's dominant faith. Nor is that portion of the earth the only place where Islam is striding triumphantly forward. Pan-Islamism, sedulously fostered by Abdul Hamid, deposed Sultan of Turkey, has served to stimulate the aggressiveness of the Prophet's followers in India, Malaysia, Central Asia, Siberia, Russia and other lands.

This aggressiveness is noticeable not only among those Mohammedans who seek to reconcile their time-worn religion to modernity, but also among the blind fanatics of orthodoxy, who will not give up one jot or tittle of the doctrines handed down to them by their forefathers straight from the days of Mohammed. The one great characteristic of the Moslem world today is unrest.

Like the prodigal son in the parable, Islam is coming to itself and is becoming conscious of its need. Three great movements in the Moslem world at the present time are all of them indicative of this unrest—the development of the great dervish orders, the growth of the pan-Islamic spirit and the attempt of the new Islam to rationalize the old orthodoxy—all of them due to the same cause, namely, the readjustment of Islam to the progress of modern thought and western civilization, either by way of protest and defiance, or of accommodation and compromise.

The modernist movement touches every Moslem who receives education on western lines, whether in Java, India, Persia or Egypt, and compels him to adopt a new theology and a new philosophy and new social standards or give up his religion altogether. How far the advocates of the new Islam go in throwing overboard their cargo to save the ship is illustrated in a book, "The Truth About Islam," just published at Cairo by Dr. Muhammad Badr, a graduate of Edinburgh University. No orthodox Moslem would recognize this presentation of Islam as the same religion which he professes.

The enormous increase and activity of Moslem journalism in all the chief centers of the Moslem world is also an indication of intellectual and social unrest. Some of the leading papers are already the mouthpiece of intolerance and show a sullen attitude toward Christianity.

The religious movements in Islam today are radically progressive or retrogressive. The dervish orders and the Mahdis in Somaliland, Yemen and the Sahara, all believe in a Pan-Islamism utterly opposed to modern civilization, and their cry is "Back to Mohammed."

The advocates of reform in Java and Persia, the preachers of the new Islam in India, and the nationalists in Egypt, on the contrary, are trying to get away from Mohammed and the early standards of Arabian civilization, reject most of the traditions, and make rationalism the basis of their faith.

According to them, Mohammed was neither immaculate nor infallible. Their ideas and their ideals are at the opposite pole of orthodoxy.

However, as has been stated, orthodox Islam and up-to-date Islam seem to be alike in one thing—they are both moving forward.

To turn first to Africa, the great battleground, evidences of this progress appear on every side. In central Africa a dozen sects of dervishes are at work proselytizing—foremost among them the powerful Senusi, who yearly send out large bands of missionaries. In short, as one Christian worker puts it, "Every Mohammedan is a missionary."



MOHAMMEDANS WORSHIPPING BEFORE THE KAABAH AT MECCA

One striking thing about this spread of the doctrines of Islam is that European colonial governments tend to help rather than hinder it. The pacification of heathen countries and the suppression of the slave trade, it seems, have been favorable to Mohammedanism.

One missionary explains why Islam is already in possession of great sections of north and east Africa, and is steadily advancing, in this wise:

"It has often been said that the transition from paganism to Christianity is very much more abrupt than that to Islam. But in addition to this, the Mohammedan recognizes in religion as in other matters, a variety of intermediate stages.

"He is satisfied, especially at the beginning, with a very slight degree of adhesion to Islam. It is by no means all converts, but only a few individuals here and there who pay any attention to the deeper religious requirements. No abrupt break in polygamous conditions is demanded, as is the case in Christian missions; while magical practices and other superstitions are tolerated.

"The convert thus loses nothing, but on the contrary gains in social position and consideration, so that his adhesion is almost a matter of course."

How Islam forges ahead in India is shown by these figures:

In 1871 there were, in Bengal, 17,000,000 Hindus and 16,500,000 Mohammedans. In 1901 there were 18,000,000 Hindus and more than nearly 19,500,000 Mohammedans.

Thus, in thirty years, the Mohammedans, who, at the start, numbered half a million less than the Hindus, had not only made up that deficit, but placed themselves 1,500,000 in the lead.

Basing his statement on these figures, Lieut. Col. Mukerjee, of the Indian Medical Service, in his book entitled "A Dying Race," maintains that in Bengal the future is with the Mohammedans.

In explanation of the success of Moslem methods in India, a Christian missionary who knows that land says:

"The Moslem propagandist is Asiatic; we are not. He can ingratiate himself with the people; he can make himself one of them in every detail of social life; he will give his daughter in marriage to the convert, and while we are learning to speak the language, he grows into their very life.

"The Moslem propagandist is a keen itinerant; why should not our preachers and catechists move about among the people with less show of European tent and boat?"

"Martyn Clark says that as ninety-five per cent. of the people live in villages, it was wisdom to learn from the Moslem monarchs, who propagated Islam in the villages; their power perished, but their religion remained."

He sums up admirably the difference be-



IN THE MOSQUE AT MECCA AFTER PRAYER

tween the proselytizing method of Christian and Moslem by saying that the former, in order to succeed, "must be less of a combatant and more of a wooer."

In the great islands of Malaysia Islam is likewise meeting with marked success. A Christian missionary in those remote parts declares that the population of large portions of Java, Celebes, Sumatra, and other less important islands is already quite Islamized.

In Borneo, he adds, Moslem influence is increasing steadily in the same proportion as Paganism is declining. Only at such places where there are Christian missions is this progress checked successfully. But, in the greater part of the island, the Mohammedan propaganda goes on without resistance.

"The Moslems of Malaysia," he says, "who leave their native country in order to establish themselves on the shores of other countries, whether temporarily or permanently, are generally anxious to make proselytes. It is not especially religious conviction that drives them, but rather commercial interest. Those who emigrate are always people who gain their living by trading.

"Now pagan tribes in Malaysia live in communism. The family extends itself to a clan, clans grow to tribes; and family relation is the only tie that holds together these communities. Only among one's family does one feel safe.

"It is a matter of course that the Mohammedan foreigner, as soon as he is established on the shore of the heathen land, tries to enter into family relations with the native tribe in the neighborhood of which he lives and trades. In this he succeeds by marrying a woman belonging to that tribe. He and other fellow Mohammedans create Moslem family circles; for the wives have to adopt the religion of their husbands, be it only superficially. No one will expect the wife to fulfill the duties of her new religion, but her children are sure to become better Mohammedans than their mother.

"In this way a group of Mohammedan fam-

ilies is formed which by and by grows into a Moslem community, and at last becomes a society with its own chief.

"Thus some centuries ago Islam established itself in Sumatra, afterwards in Java and the other islands of Malaysia and in this way we see it at present establishing itself in Central Celebes.

"Sometimes a good number of Mohammedan families settle at the coast, choose a chief, and so from the beginning immediately form a political unity. But whatever its origin may be, a Moslem establishment always exercises influence on the heathen tribes of the interior. Various reasons bring about this supremacy.

"The Mohammedan population does not chiefly live on agriculture. They earn their living by trade and, just as in Europe, it is considered more distinguished not to be an agriculturist. The Mohammedan coast population do grow some vegetables and fruit, but as for the principal food, which is rice, they depend on the people of the interior. On their excursions they have always money with them and they never forget to make a show of it.

"The Mohammedans also dress in a better way than the heathen, and they very cunningly array themselves in clothes which excite the covetousness and desire of their heathen neighbors, who are very fond of buying new articles. They like to perfume themselves and constantly speak with contempt about eating pork and of other customs of the people of the interior. In short, they know how to behave as people of higher rank and quality than the simple pagans.

"Through all these means the Mohammedan traders arouse the people of the interior to imitate their customs, and all these things are profitable to a propagation of Islam."

From Asiatic Russia come similar surprising tidings of Moslem encroachments in the field of pagan conversion. A Christian worker in that territory tells how, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the "Apostle of the Altai," reverend Father Macary, crossed the plains south of Tobolsk in Siberia to reach the Altai, and perceived the state of the millions of heathen Kirghis living there. He asked the Russian government to allow him to begin missionary work among the Kirghis, but he was told that these people were too savage as yet to become converts to Christianity.

Not long after that Mohammedan missionaries entered the field, worked with great zeal and perseverance, and won over all the Kirghis tribes to the faith of Islam.

As a result of this setback, the writer states, "the Christian missionary has now to fight, not the weak and beggarly elements of an animistic religion, but the seemingly inaccessible granite fortress of Islam."

Regarding the general situation in Siberia the same missionary says:

"Moslem propaganda is gaining in strength and Mohammedan influence is growing, while Christian influence, as represented by the Russian church, is weaker. The unlucky war with Japan and the proclamation of liberty of conscience have done their work. Forty thousand baptized Christians, formerly Mohammedans and heathens, have returned to paganism and Islam. Islam especially comes out of this crisis strengthened and more aggressive than ever before."

In China there are millions of Mohammedans, but, according to Christian testimony, they are not markedly aggressive in propagating the doctrines of the prophet. The same seems true of Turkey and Persia.

In conclusion, attention should be called to a phase of the Mohammedan situation, which is especially startling from the fact that it is near to home, viz.: the activity of Moslem proselytizers in this western hemisphere.

In several of the West Indian Islands and the Guiana territory of South America there are thousands of East Indian Mohammedans. In British Guiana there are 22,000; in Dutch Guiana, 5,800; in Central America and the West Indies, 20,000.

"Such a small fraction of the population might well be omitted in our survey," state the editors of "Islam and Missions," "were it not that undoubted testimony comes in regard to the activity of Islam, especially in British Guiana and the West Indies.

"If the results of a century's missionary effort in British Guiana are to be preserved the Christian church must make a more determined effort to combat the influence of the East Indian. The struggle of the future in British Guiana will be between Christ and Mohammed."