

deavor to take the measure of our foe. Let us ask whence the power and prestige and influence of Islam. What is its secret of success? What makes it a force which so easily dominates the religious life of so many millions? What gives it its aggressive push and its staying power? It is comparatively easy to show the immense inferiority of Islam to Christianity in the essential points of true religion, especially those of practical morality. It is, however, for this very reason all the more difficult to give a satisfactory explanation of its successes, and show why Christianity is so slow in coping with it effectively. Islam has arisen, within the pale, so to speak, of Christianity. It has overrun and held ground which is historically Christian. Its great conflict has been largely with Christianity. It now occupies regions which were the scene of the earliest triumphs of the Christian church. Christianity, to be sure, has held its own in a marvelous way in the ancient Oriental Christian sects which have held to the Christian faith in the very centres of the Moslem domination. Their influence, however, has been simply negative. The part they have played has been that of resistance and stubborn adherence to the external symbols of Christianity. They have never succeeded, for good reasons, in impressing the Moslem with the superiority of the Christian religion. We must not fail, however, to give them the credit they deserve, and to recognize God's wonderful providence in preserving them to be the medium of introducing through Protestant missionary effort a pure and spiritual form of Christianity into the very heart of the Moslem world.

The question recurs to us—Whence the success of Islam? We mean its success, not as a saving religion, but in winning and holding its devotees in the very presence of the Christian centuries. There are some considerations which throw light upon this point, and if we give them a few moments of patient attention they may help to lift the burden of this great mystery, and at the same time will bring to our attention more clearly the full meaning of the task we have before us in conquering Islam for Christ with the spiritual weapons of the gospel. It is not my purpose, and it is, moreover, clearly impossible to attempt here any full or critical survey of Mohammedanism. This would require a volume, and the gifts and learning of the careful student of Oriental history. What I have to offer, however, towards the solution of the problem of Mohammedan success will be the result of a patient study of the subject in connection with unusual opportunities for personal observation of the intellectual, social and religious life of Moslems.

Islam is a living power—a strong and vigorous moral force among Orientals for several reasons, and with all of these Christianity must reckon if she is to win her way. We will name them in order :

I. In its origin, and also in its subsequent history, Mohammedanism represents *the spirit of reform working under the inspiration of a great truth*. Mohammed appears upon the stage of history as a