

that continuity of religious life which they recognize as having existed from the days of the Patriarchs to the advent of Mohammed. They admire its sweet reasonableness and comfortable adaptation to humanity as it is. They rejoice in its freedom from the so-called asceticism of Christianity and its perplexing mysteries, and it seems to them an ideal religious system which joins hands with the ordinary, commonplace humanity of the East, and with an air of assurance says to the average man: "Come, let us walk on naturally together, and all will be well; the end is Paradise." It is a religion which has its flag flying before the eyes of an enormous constituency in the Orient, its drums and bugles sounding in their ears, its armies marshalled for active service, and its officials in the seats of power. It seems also to have a decided advantage in the field of apologetics, as it presents to reverent and unquestioning minds what is regarded as the absolutely infallible revelation from Heaven, in a form supposed to be free from all error. It reaches the climax of adaptation and simplicity in both creed and practice. It requires faith in a few simple and devout doctrines, and although its practice has some severe features, notably the annual fast of Ramadan, yet it is all readily accepted by the average devotee as just what is proper for man to do and suitable for God to require.

The secret of the success of Islam may be stated in a few propositions without undertaking here to enlarge upon them.\* We mean its success not as a saving religion, but in winning and holding its devotees in the very presence of Christianity.

First, in its origin and also in its subsequent history, Mohammedanism represents the spirit of reform working under the inspiration of a great truth. The doctrine of the spirituality and unity of God was brought by Mohammed into vivid contrast with the idolatry of heathen Arabia and apostate Christianity in the seventh century, to the credit of Islam so far as idolatry was concerned.

Second, it was established and propagated by two of the most energetic and commanding forces of human history—the influence of moral conviction and the power of the sword.

Third, Islam had never known or seen Christianity except in its corrupt and semi-idolatrous forms. This was a manifest advantage to Islam, as the Christianity against which it protested was the same degenerate form from which the spirit of the Protestant Reformation revolted in the sixteenth century.

Fourth, Islam had all the advantage which there is in the magnetic power of personal leadership. The personality of Mohammed has been a marvellous factor in the ascendancy of the religion he founded.

Fifth, Islam proposes easy terms of salvation and easy dealings with

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\* Consult an article by the same author on "Islam and Christian Missions" in this Review for August, 1889.