

Christians, Mohammed was persecuted for religious innovations. When he called on the assembled throng at Mecca to join him in his confession: "There is no God but Allah," the mob shouted against his blasphemous words; and a son of his wife, who rushed to defend him, perished, the first martyr in Islam. Mohammed's connection with an honorable family turned the torrents of persecution for a time towards his humbler followers. They were burnt with hot irons, or exposed, face upward, to the fierce midday sun of the desert.

It was very easy for Mohammed in turn to become a persecutor. At Medina, he found some plans of scheming, but feckless, Jews. He conceived a great dislike for their religion, and his base and treacherous methods of making life a purgatory for them is a shameful chapter in his life. So wretched did he make them that some left all they had and escaped with their lives; the rest were slaughtered like sheep. Give a man of Palestine or Arabia a free hand to persecute, and there is no frightfulness from which he will draw back.

THE LESSON APPLIED

In widening circles, Acts 1:8. This was the method by which the few apostles were to evangelize the world. Some one, referring to the menace of German Kaiserism, said, "The Kaiser would Kaiserize Prussia, Prussianize Germany, and Germanize the world." It is the same old principle of the pebble that can move the whole surface of the lake by starting a little wave circle that starts a larger one, and still a larger one, until it reaches the shore. To many, the world looks too big for the church to reach. It was surely a most discouraging prospect for the apostles. But it was comparatively easy for them, with the assistance of the Spirit, to witness in Jerusalem; for all the Jerusalem Christians to witness in Palestine, and for them in their turn to spread it farther afield until the whole work will ultimately be done.

Impotency, ch. 14:8. We read that this man was impotent in his feet. His real impotency, however, was in his inner nature, which Paul addressed with a loud voice. The spirit is the seat of all animation and life: when it is gone, the body is dead, when it is asleep, the body is inactive, when it is polluted and vile, the body is sluggish and semi-paralyzed. In this impotent man we have a miniature picture of the inertia of heathenism, drowsy, unprogressive, unenterprising, inefficient. In Paul's inspiring evangelism, we have a picture of the work of missions, which brings a new dynamic, and infuses the dull races with a new energy. Sometimes this new vitality is imparted in the shape of rousing messages which puts new faith in the heart; sometimes in the shape

of new knowledge that educates the mind; but whether by the preacher, the teacher, or the medical worker, one of the chief messages of the missionary to the heathen is: "Stand upright on thy feet."

Superstition, vs. 11, 12. One of the worst hindrances in mission work is superstition. Superstition, just because it is unreasoning in its nature, is very hard to deal with. It is universal in its scope. Few of us are altogether rid of it. It is an admixture of ignorance, fear, and paganism. The definition we would give of a true life is one lived in harmony with the highest principles of Christianity on the one hand, and the principles of science on the other. Superstition is contrary to both. It is contrary to Christianity, because it irreligiously attributes to other causes, what should be attributed to God alone, and it is contrary to science, because it gives fanciful explanations for what can be explained by natural laws. There is too much of it in our own country, and it gives rise to all kinds of subtle quackery. Just the same, there is always a glimmer of truth in superstition. These men of Lystra were correct in seeing something supernatural in the work of Paul, and did not God come down in the likeness of men? Thus, although superstition is a serious obstacle, it indicates that the human heart is responsive to the unseen, and it may well be made a stepping stone to higher truth.

Only witnesses, vs. 14, 15. Barnabas and Paul might have been expected to court the people's respect, rather than to disparage