



Dr. Cobb has been a member of the Board for the last twelve years, during which time he has taken an active part in its deliberations. Through his deep interest in and earnest advocacy of the foreign missionary work of our Church he has led the West End Collegiate Church, of which he is the Minister, into generous support of the work of the Board. This Church is maintaining several missionaries laboring at home and on the foreign field and has contributed especially to the large medical work carried on by the Amoy Mission.

Furthermore, Dr. Cobb bears a name that has long been identified with the missionary interests of the Reformed Church. His grandfather, Sanford Cobb, Esq., one of New York's active business men through many years, was a member of the Board for twenty-two years until his death. His uncle, the Rev. Henry N. Cobb, D.D., as is known to all, was Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions for nearly thirty years. Dr. Cobb, therefore, worthily followed a worthy succession, and the Board of Foreign Missions anticipates continued activity and prosperity with him as its President.

Why the Holy War Failed

REV. JOHN VAN ESS, Busrah, Mesopotamia



REV. JOHN VAN ESS

With the cries of the massacred Armenians still in our ears can we say that the holy war failed? The massacre of the Armenians, however, was not the result of the holy war, but was entirely a politico-military measure conceived by the clique at Constantinople and prompted, first, by the fact that Armenians, with their recognized anti-Turkish sentiments, constituted a military menace on the Caucasus frontier, and second, by the vision of Pan Turanianism, which Enver, Talat, Jawid and others cherished. The wholesale slaughter or deportation of the leading Arabs of Damascus and in fact of all Syria

bears out the latter contention. It is not my purpose here to discuss the jihad as such, its history and the conditions which make it incumbent, but only to point out why the call failed to produce the desired result in Arabia, where all conditions favored its success. *A fortiori*, the same reasons hold for all Moslem lands. The call issued from the proper source and was couched in terms calculated to influence and inflame all minds, especially the lower types. For days and days and far into the night I could hear the shrieks of the multitude as the mullahs preached the jihad from the balcony of the Turkish barracks. One of them, more effective than the rest, wore a huge green turban, sign of sacred blood and lineage, and day after day would work himself up into a frenzy and then as a grand climax would seize his turban, spit on it and fling it far out among the seething mass of humanity, shouting "Thus will the infidels do to the religion of the holy prophet." And the maddened crowds would seize the turban and kiss it and shriek and foam at the mouth—and go home, to recuperate for the next performance. Every effort was made to produce the desired effect on the masses, every impulse was appealed to, every argument used and the result was a flash in the pan. I can conceive of no other circumstances more favourable. Leading Mohammedans, sensing our feelings of amusement at the failure, would try to explain that the conditions did not warrant a jihad, as, for example, that Islam as such was not threatened, and that Islamic territory was in no danger of violation. But with the Christian infidel at the gates of Constantinople and Islamic territory being taken mile by mile in Mesopotamia, with Islam on the defensive everywhere and the consciousness that with the coming of Christian flags would come a real danger of Christian propaganda, conditions were surely ripe. All these conditions were pointed out by the haranguing mullahs, and yet the masses simply failed to respond. The reasons were, I think, the following:

1. Islam has become too materialistic to respond to a high spiritual call. Only once in the life of Islam has she reached that height. The effort of the Wahabis in Nejd in the early nineteenth century were an abortion, except locally. The opportunism of Mohammed himself has entered into the very fibre of the Mohammedan, and the promise of high prices for grain, sheep and dates when the British should arrive filled the whole horizon of the Mesopotamia Arabs at least. Surely, if anywhere, here was sacred soil—sacred to the memory of Ali, Hassan, Hussein, Abbas and other worthies who themselves had trod this sacred soil. Here were fought battles that live in Islamic history, here Islam under the Abbasides reached its high-water mark of culture. And yet I know a Turkish colonel who, even while he stood beside the preaching mullah had in his house great quantities of rice, stolen from his soldiers' rations, and committed to a native broker for sale when the prices should rise under the stress of famine and the blockade.

2. Islam lacks the courage of the initiative. True enough, Moslems are missionaries for their faith everywhere, but it is not the activity of initiative but the momentum of habit, or rather the result of their testimony, which, be it said, is the strong point of their faith, and one by which we might do well to profit. Save in Central Africa, Islam is

on the defensive—placed so by Christian missions—and in Arabia we hear everywhere from Moslem lips, “Each according to his faith—and Allah knows.” The Germans, however, keenly discerning this lack of initiative, tried to supply the same by organizing massacres with the hope of whetting the Moslem taste for blood. I have it on direct and absolute authority that in Bushire the German Consul-General already had slated for massacre European men and women even while he dined at their table, and after his arrest, when asked how he could thus betray human confidence, said: “When my government orders, I am but a machine.”

The Englishmen who were interned at Bagdad and were sent across country and later released, told me personally of having seen German officers with “Holy War” inscribed on their military caps.

3. A third reason for the failure of Jihad was undoubtedly fear of the oncoming Christian, Shades of Mohammed! And yet I know that one whole evening a large gathering of leading Moslems in Ashar, a suburb of Busrah, discussed the advisability of enlisting in the Jihad, and the argument that dissuaded them was the severe punishment that would be meted out by the British when they should arrive.

4. Another and to my mind the most gratifying reason was the feeling of fraternity between Moslems and Christians. No missionaries openly, even in the Hamidian regime, proclaimed our love for the Moslem but our abhorrence for Islam. We were made objects of scurrilous editorials in the native press, of violent fetwas by leading ulema. Yet when the dark days came, the girls’ school was closed, not because there were no girls, but because every foot of the mile which my wife travelled daily to the school was fraught with danger from flying bullets. Three of our evangelists were excused from military service because they were “readers” in the church, which everybody knew existed to preach the Gospel to Moslems. Every day the hospital was full and the clinics were crowded. And during the reign of terror after the Turks had evacuated the city and before the British came in, Arabs even brought us loot as a present!

5. Deep down in the hearts of Moslems is the conviction that the “last days” have come and that the crescent is waning. Did not Mohammed himself say, “This (my) religion began as a strange thing and shall return and become a strange thing even as it began.” They feel, even though they do not in so many words understand, the inevitability of victory on the part of Him who said, “I have overcome the world.”

The Changing Order in Kuwait

EDWIN E. CALVERLEY



MR. CALVERLEY MOUNTED ON A CAMEL

Our return to Kuwait was marked by no delay until we reached the Persian Gulf. We had transshipped at Hongkong with only two days between boats. At Bombay we stayed three days and then left on the first boat to Busrah, believing it would be more possible to reach Kuwait from there than from Bombay. At any rate it would be better to spend the time of waiting with our other missionaries in the Gulf than in a hotel in Bombay. After arriving at Busrah for two weeks we tried to get a passage to Kuwait. It seemed that it was the one place in the Gulf that was out of communication with the other ports. Mr. Dykstra, who came to Kuwait twice to strengthen the force in the station, on both occasions had to return to Bahrein on a *boom*, or small