



The POOL of FLAME

by LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

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Mohammedanism

By Edward A. Marshall,

Director of Missionary Course of Moody Bible Institute, Chicago

TEXT—Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.—Matt. 7:15.

The study of comparative religions is becoming more and more popular.

It is an excellent thing for Christian people to weigh the religions of the world and for the non-Christians to realize the power of Christianity. One of the systems that is being studied is Mohammedanism, and it is held by some to be a stepping stone to Christianity.

In examining the various systems of religion, great care must be exercised in searching for the points of contact less we strive to make them points for the amalgamation of Christianity with the non-Christian system.

Mohammed is considered the last of the great prophets who inaugurated these great religious systems. He was born in Mecca about 500 years after Christ. At the age of twenty-five he married a wealthy widow for whom he had carried on business, by caravan, between Mecca and Damascus.

Later he began to have religious aspirations and on various occasions while in seclusion in a cave experienced strange hallucinations that he attributed to the influence of angels. He considered himself constituted a prophet by Gabriel and took up the work of reformation. He became bitter against idolatry and opposed some of the inconsistencies of his time. However, as years went on, he became grasping, which caused him to break his own laws and do inconsistent things. To justify himself in this, he claimed he had received revelations granting him special permission to do them. He soon took up the sword and became a leader of a band of brigands. After his death, Abu Bekr took up the work and began the conquest of Palestine and Syria. It was carried on by his successors until Asia Minor and North Africa, were conquered. They then attempted to get into Europe through Constantinople on the east and Gaul on the west. They were driven back, which delivered Europe from the yoke of Mohammedanism. The conquest then went to the east toward India, and southward into the Sudan in Africa.

Mohammedanism is a mixture of Paganism and Judaism. It is strongly Monothestic; teaches absolute predestination and that only Moslems are saved. Its spirit is "rule or ruin," peacefully if there is no opposition, but with the iron heel, if necessary. Mohammed got his idea of God from Judaism. He took only the attribute of justice and made a god of law to whom he gave absolute sovereignty, but attributed to him little interest in the weal or woe of the human race. Since he considered God to be but one person, he became very bitter against Christianity on the ground that he considered it polytheistic because of the three persons in the Godhead. In order to account for Christ, the Mohammedans teach that just before Christ was crucified, the angel Gabriel arranged for some one else, who looked like Christ, to be crucified in his place. Mohammed in order to secure for himself divine authority asserted that he was the paraclete whom Jesus had promised. He considered Jesus a mere prophet and inferior to himself. He himself being the last of the prophets of God. The Mohammedan view of creation is very much similar to that found in the Bible. However, the creation of man differed in that it is said that God took a lump of clay and broke it into two pieces, creating mankind from them both. Of the one he said, "These to heaven and I care not," and of those made from the other lump he said, "These to hell and I care not."

Sin to the Mohammedan is far different from sin to the Christian. In the first place, sin has nothing to do with our nature, for man inherited none of the sinful nature of Adam. Second, sins of ignorance are not counted as wrong doing. Third, only the willful violation of known law is considered sin. Their belief in predestination and fatalism makes their future fixed so that salvation through atonement is not necessary. Neither have they any provision from the present power of sin. To match this strange teaching regarding sin, the Mohammedans have planned a heaven full of sensual indulgences where they expect to rest upon gold couches, be attended by celestial beings and be always eating and drinking.

The treatment accorded Mohammedan women is almost as severe as can be found under brutal paganism. A man may cause his wife to leave him by saying, "Thou art divorced." Her duty to him is implicit obedience and reverential silence in his presence. A Mohammedan woman's hope of heaven is to have a husband and thus to get in to be his attendant.

Are you going to permit your son to play football when he goes to college? "No, I'm going to keep him from it in the same way that I have kept him from smoking cigarettes." "Oh, have you kept him from doing that?" "Certainly—when he knows I'm looking."

SYNOPSIS.

The story opens at Monte Carlo with Col. Terence O'Rourke, a military free lance and something of a gambler, in his hotel. Leaning on the balcony he sees a beautiful girl who suddenly enters the elevator and passes from sight. At the gaming table O'Rourke notices two men watching him. One is the Hon. Bertie Glynn, while his companion is Viscount Des Trebes, a duelist. The viscount tells him the French government has directed him to O'Rourke as a man who would undertake a secret mission. At his apartment, O'Rourke, who had agreed to undertake the mission, finds a mysterious letter. The viscount arrives, hands a sealed package to O'Rourke, who is not to open it until on the ocean. A pair of dainty slippers are seen protruding from under a doorway curtain. The Irishman finds the owner of the mysterious feet to be his wife, Beatrix, from whom he had run away a year previous. They are reconciled, and opening the letter he finds that a Rangoon law firm offers him 500,000 pounds for a jewel known as the Pool of Flame and left to him by a dyed friend, but now in keeping of one named Chambret in Algeria. O'Rourke wants the nobleman in a duel. The wife bids O'Rourke farewell and he promises to soon return with the reward. He discovers both Glynn and the viscount on board the ship. As he finds Chambret there is an attack by bandits and his friend dies telling O'Rourke that he has left the Pool of Flame with the governor general, who at sight of a signet ring given the colonel will deliver over the jewel. Arriving at Algeria the Irishman finds the governor general away. Des Trebes makes a mysterious appointment, and tells O'Rourke that he has gained possession of the jewel by stealing it. In a duel O'Rourke masters the viscount, secures possession of the Pool of Flame and starts by ship for Rangoon.

CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)

He mopped his brow, simply (as be fitted one of his apparent station in life) with the back of a hand, and stood erect, exulting in the scent, the indescribable, impalpable, insistent odor of the East that is forgotten of one who had ever known it. The hot wind drove it gustily in his face, and he sniffed and drew great lungfuls and was glad.

"This good!" he said simply. And, a bit later, while on the short-line the brazen arcs were beginning to pop out silently: "There's the customs boat. I'm thinking I'll slip below."

No lamps had yet been lighted below, but O'Rourke knew the way to his room. He entered and shut the door. The afterglow of the sunset, entering through the porthole, rendered the little coop light enough for his purpose. Dropping to his knees, the Irishman pulled his kit-box from beneath the bunk.

The lid came up freely as he touched it. For a full minute he did not breathe. Then, in ominous silence, he bent and examined the lock. It became immediately evident that his memory had not tricked him; the trunk was locked, as he had left it that morning. But the clasp had yielded to a cold chisel.

It was hardly worth the trouble, still O'Rourke rummaged through the contents of the box, assuring himself that the chamouis bag was gone. So far as he could determine then, nothing else had been taken.

He shut down the lid and sat down to think it out, eyes hard, face grimly expressionless, only an intermittent nervous clenching and opening of his hands betraying his gathering rage and excitement. At length he arose, determination in his port.

One phrase alone escaped him: "And not a gun to me name!" He went on deck. Already the tropic night had closed down upon the harbor, but it was easy enough to locate the captain and first officer, still waiting at the gangway. From overhead arose the splutter of a launch—a raucous sound, yet one that barely rippled the surface of O'Rourke's consciousness. He stepped quickly to the captain's side and touched him gently on the arm.

me to be more explicit, perhaps the word 'hashlah' will refresh your memory!"

"I'll talk to you later—" "Ye'll give me back me property this minute or—" "O'Rourke was at the rail in a stride. "Shall I tell him?" he demanded.

A swift step sounded beside him. He turned an instant too late, who had reckoned without Dennison. As he moved to protect himself the first officer's fist caught the Irishman just under the ear. And one hundred and seventy-five pounds of man and malice were behind it. O'Rourke shot into the scuppers as though kicked by a mule, struck his head against a piece of iron work and lay still, half stunned, shutting his teeth savagely upon a moan.

Hole and the first mate stood over him, and the captain's voice, guarded but clear enough, came to his ear: "You'll lie there, me man, and not so much as a whimper till I give you leave. Take 'ee'd wot I say. Mr. Dennison 'ere is goin' to clean 'is revolver."

O'Rourke lay silent, save for his quick breathing. The first officer, grinning malevolently, sat down near at hand, keeping a basilisk eye upon the prostrate man while he fondled an able-bodied, hammerless Webley.

Hole moved off towards the gangway, whence his voice arose, an instant later, greeting his visitor. The latter put a hurried question, which O'Rourke did not catch, but the captain's reply was quick enough:

"Only a mutinous derg of a deck—and. Wanted shore leave and refused to go forrard when ordered. 'E ain't 'urted none. Mr. Dennison 'ere just gyve 'im a tap to keep him quiet."

The Irishman swore beneath his breath and watched the first officer. The light from the lantern at the gangway glanced dully upon the polished barrel of the revolver, and the gleaming line was steadily directed towards O'Rourke's head. Upon reconsideration he concluded to lie still, to wait and watch his opportunity; for the present, at least, he was indisposed to question Dennison's willingness to use the weapon. O'Rourke

and, eluding the rigor of Egyptian customs, as well as the vigilance of Egyptian spies, finds its way to the fellahien—among other avid consumers; speaking baldly, is smuggled into the land. Customs inspections, furthermore, are as severe as might be expected by anyone acquainted with the country and its inhabitants—as was O'Rourke.

He felt, then, no sort of surprise at the brevity of the official visitation. The inspector, accompanied by an excessively urbane and suave Captain Hole, consciously but briefly glanced into the hold, asked a few questions which would have been pertinent had they not been entirely perfunctory, and took his leave.

From the gangway the captain turned back directly to his first officer and the latter's charge. Hearing his approaching footsteps, O'Rourke gathered himself together and summoned all his faculties to his aid.

"Troublesome!" demanded Hole, pausing.

"Not a syllable," said the mate. "Th' mon's sensible. I ha'e me doubts but he's too canny altogether."

"Peaceful as a by, eh? Well," savagely, "ell learn wot for. Get up, you Irish—"

O'Rourke lay passive under the storm of Hole's profanity. He had all but closed his eyes, and was watching the pair from beneath his lashes. Failing to elicit any response, "Asn't 'e moved?" demanded the captain.

"Not a muscle—" "Shammin'! 'Ere, I'll show 'im." O'Rourke gritted his teeth and suppressed a groan as the toe of Hole's heavy boot crashed into his ribs. "Th' mon's nae shammin'." Dennison declared. "He's fair fainted." "Fainted hell!" countered the captain. "Give 'is arm a twist, Dennison."

The mate calmly disobeyed. The arm-twist desired by the captain requires the use of the twister's two hands, and stoutly as he defended his opinion, the first officer was by no means ready to put up his revolver.

He advanced and bent over the Irishman, who lay motionless, his upper lip rolled back to show his clenched teeth. "Eugh!" exclaimed the first officer, peering into his face, his tone expressive of the liveliest concern. Without further hesitation he dropped the revolver into his pocket and—received a tremendous short-arm blow in the face.

With a stifled cry he fell back, clutching at a broken nose, and sprawled at length; while O'Rourke, leaping to his feet, deliberately put a heel into the pit of Dennison's stomach, thereby effectually eliminating him as a factor in the further controversy. Simultaneously he advanced upon Captain Hole.

But in the latter he encountered no

mean antagonist. The man—it has been said—was as tall as and heavier than the adventurer, and by virtue of his position a competent and experienced rough-and-ready fighter. In a breath he had lowered his head and, bellowing like a bull, launched himself toward O'Rourke.

The Irishman met the onslaught with a stinging uppercut; which, nevertheless, failed to discourage the captain, who grappled and began to belabor O'Rourke with short, stabbing blows on the side of the head, at the same time endeavoring to trip him. The fury of his onset all but carried the Irishman off his feet. At the same time it defeated Hole's own purpose. O'Rourke watched his chance, seized the man's throat with both hands and, tightening his grip, fairly lifted him off his feet and shook him as a terrier shakes a rat. Then, with a grunt of satisfaction, he threw the captain from him and turned to face greater odds.

The noise of the conflict had brought the crew down upon the contestants. Surrounded, he was rushed to the rail. With that to his back he drew on his reserve of strength and, poisoning himself, began to give his assailants personal and individual attention. They pushed him close, snarling and cursing, hindering one another in their eagerness, and suffering variously for their temerity. O'Rourke fought with trained precision; his blows, lightning quick, were direct from the shoulder and very finely placed; and so straight did he strike that almost from the first his knuckles were torn and bleeding from their impact upon flesh and bone.

Fight as fiercely as he might, however, the pack was too heavy for him; and when presently he discerned, not in one but in half a dozen hands, gleams of light—the rays of a nearby lantern running down knife-blades—he conceded the moment imminent when he must sever his connection with the Pelican. Moreover he had a shrewd suspicion that Hole was up and only waiting for an opening to use his revolver.

Leaping to the rail, he poised an instant, then dived far out from the vessel's side, down into the Stygian blackness of the harbor water; a good clean dive, cutting the water with hardly a splash, he went down like an arrow, gradually swerving from the straight line of his flight into a long arc—so long, indeed, that he was well-nigh breathless when he came to the surface, a dozen yards or more from the Pelican.

Spitting out the foul harbor water, and with a swift glance over his shoulder that showed him the Pelican's dark freeboard like a wall, and a cluster of dark shapes hanging over the rail at the top vaguely revealed by lantern light, he struck out for the nearest vessel, employing the double overhand stroke, noisy but speedy.

That he heard no cry when he came to the surface, that Hole had not detected him by the phosphorescence, and that he had held his hand from firing, at first puzzled O'Rourke; but he reasoned that Hole probably feared to raise an alarm and thereby attract much undesirable attention to himself and his ship. In the course of the first few strokes, however, he managed to peep again over his shoulder, and from the activity on the Pelican's decks concluded that he was to be pursued by boat; which, in fact, proved to be the case.

Fortunately the Pelican rode at anchor in waters studded thick with other vessels, affording plenty of hiding places on a night as black as that. The adventurer made direct for the first vessel, swam completely around it, and by the time the Pelican's boat was afloat and its rowers bending to the oars, he was supporting himself by a hand upon the unknown ship's cable, floating on his back with only his face out of water.

Under these conditions, it was small wonder that the boat missed him so completely.

At length rested, the Irishman released his hold and struck out for land at an easy pace.

Eventually he gained the end of a quay, upon which he drew himself for a last rest and to let his dripping garments drain a bit ere venturing abroad in the streets.



The First Officer's Fist Caught O'Rourke Just Under the Ear.

was to be kept quiet at all hazards, and he knew it full well; for once he conceded discretion the better part of valor, and was patient.

CHAPTER XIV.

In the face of the fact that the importation of hashlah into Egypt has been declared illegal by Khedival legislation, the drug is always to be obtained in the lower dives of Alexandria, Cairo and Port Said—if one only knows where to go and how to ask for it. Manufactured in certain islands of the Grecian Archipelago, it is mysteriously exported under the very names of complaisant authorities

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