



The Conversion of Armenia to the Christian Faith

W. St. Clair-Tisdall

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W. St. Clair-Tisdall's The Conversion of Armenia to the Christian Faith looks at the process that brought about the crucial religious changes in the modern country. From the preface:

"DURING the last few years the world has witnessed a terrible spectacle. We have seen a Christian nation in Asia, of the same Âryan blood as ourselves, suffering the most cruel wrongs at the hands of the Turks and their confederates, the Kurds. We have seen members of this Christian nation, men and women and little children, massacred in tens of thousands, and our illustrated papers have presented us with photographic views of some of these terrible scenes. We have read of large numbers dying a martyr's death rather than embrace Islâm, and have heard of those who had less courage and faith being driven at the point of the sword to repeat the creed of the Arabian Antichrist. We have beheld something more strange still — the Christian nations of Europe hampered in their endeavours to put a stop to this state of things by their mutual distrust and jealousy of one another. And thus, as we draw near the end of the nineteenth century, our newspapers are quietly discussing the question whether or not Turkey will succeed in exterminating the whole Christian population of her Armenian provinces, or in forcing upon them, at the sword's point, an apostasy worse than death.

It may not be amiss, therefore, at the present juncture to inquire into the early history of the Armenian nation, and more particularly to study the conversion of Armenia to the Christian faith. The writer of the following pages began this investigation for his own information, and is impelled to offer to the public the result of his studies in this field of research, partly by the interest attaching to the subject itself, and partly by the hope of thereby doing something to enable European Christians more readily to sympathize with their Armenian brethren in their present affliction.

My residence in Julfa, the Armenian suburb (if I may so style it) of Isfahan, and the fact that I had for a time the superintendence of an Armenian congregation here in connexion with the Church Missionary Society, have not only given me an opportunity of studying the Armenian language, but have even rendered such a course of study incumbent upon me. I have thus been enabled to draw my information at first hand from Armenian historians, some of whom were contemporary with many of the most prominent actors in the great work of converting Armenia to faith in Christ. This has more than compensated for my not being able to refer to any European works whatever on the subject, except in so far as a limited classical library and a few patristic works could render me assistance. This little work is therefore based entirely upon original Armenian authorities, as far as its main argument is concerned."



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