

ARTICLE VI.

PROPHECY AS RELATED TO THE "EASTERN QUESTION."

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THE Turkish capital is one of the great centres of the world's political and religious strife. And although now, for more than a decade of centuries, the interest of the historic drama—national, philosophical, and religious—has been moving westward from the old world centres; yet one looking out from this point of observation cannot fail to see that the near future is sure to startle the apathetic Oriental in all these lands with most important events in both church and state. To a Christian mind the interest in all these passing and prospective movements concerns their relation and significance with reference to the coming of the kingdom of Christ, the establishment of the *civitas Dei* on the earth.

It is generally acknowledged that this generation is witnessing the fulfilment of some of the more remarkable and interesting prophecies of the book of Revelation. The states of Southern and Southeastern Europe are undergoing marvellous changes. The day of papal supremacy in national affairs is long since past; its influence even is well-nigh gone. What a contrast is Pius IX. in 1869, in respect of European influence, to Hildebrand in the latter part of the eleventh century, or to Innocent III. in the beginning of the thirteenth!

Believing the positions and arguments and historical interpretations of Mr. Barnes, in his "Notes on the Book of Revelation," as related to the Papacy, to be well established in general, and in most of the important particulars also, some suggestions are here ventured in explanation of the purport of prophecies less elucidated and less discussed, which relate to nations of the East and the spread and

triumph of the gospel among them, "That the way of the kings of the East may be prepared."¹

It is proper that the reasons for dissent from the common opinion, held also by Mr. Barnes — that Mohammed himself and the religion he founded are referred to in the term "false prophet" in the Revelation — should be given here. While there is no question that the Mohammedan power is, under different forms, Saracenic and Turkish, separately and distinctly referred to, there are strong, and to us decisive, reasons for believing that the faith of Islam as a religion, or its founder, is nowhere mentioned or distinctly referred to in our scriptures.

1. The *presumption* is against the popular view. What we may term the *usage* of scripture is opposed to the interpretation which applies the term "false prophet" in the Revelation to Mohammed.

The religious systems of Zoroaster, of the ancient Egyptians, of Confucius, of Brahma, and of Buddha, have had immense influence in the world; but they are nowhere specifically mentioned in scripture, except generally as idolatry. But the Persian and Egyptian secular power, as well as the Moslem secular power, are distinctly and often referred to. And, as there are but three very brief passages where a reference to the faith of Islam can possibly be understood, and those passages are in the last half of the last book of the Bible, and as they can easily and naturally be understood without referring them to Mohammed, certainly the antecedent presumption is against the popular understanding of those passages. The Book of Revelation is taken up with a prophetic narrative of those spiritual events and spiritual conflicts which, commencing from near the time of the Apostle John, should take place within the Christian church in its then future history, till its final victory. Events and revolutionary changes in the kingdoms and powers of the world are subjects of prophecy, in so far as, and because, such changes were to have an intimate relation, either of

¹ Rev. xvi. 12.

friendliness or hostility, to the growth and purity of the church of Christ. Thus many of the principal events in the history of the old Roman empire and of the fragments into which that empire was broken up, and also of the earlier and later Moslem empires, form subject-matter for prophecy; for all these had to do with the "growth and limitation" of the church. But there is no especial reference to the empires of Eastern Asia, or to the tribes of South Africa or America.

It is true that Christianity had an influence upon the religion of Islam in the formation of that system of faith; but the influence of Mohammedanism upon Christianity has not been at all in the line of faith or doctrine; it has been the influence of a hostile and conquering secular power.

2. The term "false prophet" (or prophets) occurs eleven times in the New Testament, and in all the instances except the three in the Revelation, it is universally conceded that the term "prophet" is used for "teacher," and that the reference is to false and dangerous teachers and doctrines which should arise within or find entrance into the Christian church. These passages are: "Beware of false prophets. . . . By their fruits ye shall know them."¹ "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you; for so did their fathers unto the false prophets."² The prophecy of Christ concerning the coming of deceiving religious teachers in connection with his general prophecy relative to the destruction of Jerusalem and the winding up of the Jewish economy.³ The mention of the "false prophet" Bar-jesus, a Jewish sorcerer.⁴ "There were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you."⁵ "Many false prophets are gone out into the world."⁶ Let us now examine the three texts from the Book of Revelation. Two of the texts are sufficiently clear for our purpose standing alone. In the other instance, it seems desirable to quote the preceding and following verses: "And the sixth angel

¹ Matt. vii. 15.² Luke vi. 26.³ Matt. xxiv. 11, 24; Mark xiii. 22.⁴ Acts xiii. 5.⁵ 2 Pet. ii. 1.⁶ 1 John iv. 1.

poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates: and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."¹ "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet *that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image.*"² "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever."³ There certainly appears here to be some close relation, not only in evil spirit and tendency, but a mutually acknowledged connection between "the beast" and the "false prophet." In the second of the three passages just quoted, it is exceedingly difficult to refer "false prophet" to Mohammed or Islam; for there never has been aught but sharp hostility between Islam and every form of Christianity since the religion of Mohammed gained worldly power. Auberlen identifies—unwarrantably, it seems to us—the "false prophet" with the "second beast" of xiii. 11, and following.⁴ But, with this exception, his remarks upon this point are suggestive and worthy of attention.⁵

¹ Rev. xvi. 12-14.² Rev. xix. 20.³ Rev. xx. 10.⁴ See Auberlen on Daniel and Revelation (Andover ed.), p. 305 seq.⁵ In reference to the principal points in explanation of the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, the following seems to us more clear and consistent than the views of Barnes, Auberlen, and others.

1. The whole chapter refers to papal Rome. The prophecies concerning the pagan Roman empire have already been given, in detail, in the preceding chapters, and it is a violation of the chronology to include here the old empire. Moreover, the specific expressions used are not applicable to the old Roman secular power. The "worship," the prophetic time, "forty and two months," i.e., 1260 years, etc., all and each are applicable only to papal Rome.

2. The "first beast" is the Romish hierarchy, not the temporal power.

We understand, then, the term "false prophet" as referring to those deceiving religious teachers and false doctrines which, after the full establishment of the Papacy in its spiritual hierarchy and its temporal supremacy, should enter into and gain authority in the church. It is worldly philosophy, "science falsely so called;" science assuming to speak authoritatively on all questions, material and spiritual, proudly asserting that the human mind needs no special divine revelation; human science domineering over faith, and then despising it, and developing first in certain forms of scholasticism, and afterwards into materialism, rationalism, and pantheism. Under the specious pretext that the forms and specific doctrines of Christianity and even the words of revelation are unessential and unimportant, an unbelieving "science," an "intellectual" apprehension of truth, has eliminated from Christianity whatever is from above and opposed to this world; has denied the supernatural facts

Chronologically this is correct. The view of Mr. Barnes is involved in difficulties. Every word to the tenth verse is easily and naturally applicable to the spiritual power, beginning from the commencement of the seventh century. See the whole long analysis of the chapter by Mr. Barnes, in his Commentary, and read *that* on the hypothesis that the "first beast" is the hierarchy, and the "second beast" the temporal supremacy, and excepting one point, which we will presently explain, it all reads intelligibly and consistently; more so, we submit, on our hypothesis, than on that of Mr. Barnes. We understand the "deadly wound" to refer to the confessed fact, that previous to Hildebrand, the hierarchy was losing power, was sinking by the very weight of its own corruption, and would have perished had it not been vitalized and strengthened by the accession of that immense temporal authority gained for it by such men as Gregory VII. (Hildebrand), and Innocent III. This terrible power of a worldly and world-governing church-state compelled the "worship" of the spiritual power and authority. And while it was the Romish church that wrought the pretended miracles, it was the universal *authority* claimed and maintained by the secular arm which gave to these miracles their character, as such, in the sight of the people. It was the power to say, "You *must* believe," which erected a "lying wonder" into a miracle in the popular credence. Verse 11 of chapter xvii. — "And the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition," — seems to confirm this view. The Romish hierarchy was the eighth in order of the forms of government ruling at Rome, preceded by kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military tribunes, emperors and exarch of Ravenna. Though an eighth, i.e., a hierarchy and not a civil government strictly, it was "of the seven," had a similar status and authority.

of redemption, in a word, has rejected the living and true Christ.

Do not such men as Strauss, Renan, Parker, Spencer, *et id omne genus*, in our own day, suggest a fulfilment of the prophecy in question in a way remarkably in accordance with the words and the spirit of the prophecy? Superstition and a worldly philosophy have at once opposed and fostered each other, in conditions of human society not moulded by evangelical influence, ever since the days of the waning of the old Greek and Roman cultus.

But if Mohammed and the faith he founded are not the subject of scripture prophecy, the empires founded by his followers have stood in such relation to the church, have so occupied, and do still occupy, ground over which Christ is yet — and we believe soon — to rule, that it is most natural and to be expected that those prophecies which foretell events to transpire previous to the millennium should concern existing Mohammedan empires, and should, moreover, be hastening on to their fulfilment. As Mr. Barnes clearly shows in his voluminous notes on Rev. ix. 14–19, the Turkish Moslems — dating from the accession of Togrul, after the conquest of Bagdad, to the dignity of temporal vicegerent of Mohammed by a solemn investiture in A.D. 1055 — began those conquests and encroachments upon the Greek empire which terminated in the conquest of Constantinople, after a period representing the prophetic "hour and a day and a month and a year."¹ Their countless hordes of cavalry, their variegated and highly-colored dress, their early use of firearms, their merciless cruelty, their terrible ravages — all point for the fulfilment of the prediction of the slaying of the "third part of men," to that period of devastating war, of massacre of Christian prisoners by the hundred thousand, — that period of terror, blood, and fire, which began by the overthrow of the effeminate Arabic and Mussulman dynasty at Bagdad by later and more vigorous converts to the faith of Islam;

¹ Rev. ix. 14.

which witnessed the rise and conquest in Central and Western Asia of some of the most powerful and barbarous and bloody empires our earth has ever known, viz. those of Zenghis-Khan, Timour the Lame, and the Ottoman; a period which ended in that last great victory of the Turkish Moslem over the Christian in the middle of the fifteenth century, since which time has not the prestige of the surviving Mohammedan empires been steadily dying out, the light of the "crescent" waning and paling, and the Mohammedan races generally losing their ancient prowess and enterprise, and sinking with unmanly supineness under the gathering and threatening difficulties of their "situation"? The text already quoted (Rev. xvi. 12), which presents a vision of the waters of the Euphrates being dried up, "that the way of the kings of the East may be prepared," compared with Rev. ix. 14, where we have reason to believe the "loosening of the angels" refers to the providential permission to those powers whose seat was on or near the Euphrates to go forth conquering and ravaging in the earth, naturally refers to the overthrow, or radical reconstruction in the interest of Christianity, of the Mohammedan kingdoms of Western Asia.

Here, then, is the main question to which we have undertaken to contribute something in the direction of an answer: viz. Have we seen in recent years, do we now see, or, from present indications, are we about to see, such events as would naturally be a fulfilment of a prophecy that Mohammedan powers, which have hitherto proved a barrier to the gospel, are to give way, and that the princes and people and tribes of Central Asia are to be brought under the power and influence of the gospel; "the way of the kings of the East" being prepared for the coming and reign of Christ?

And here it should be remarked that all our interest in this subject, our examination of it, and our reflections upon it will be shaped and colored by our view of what is meant by the "*millennium*." A man's wakefulness and vigilance

in the "morning watch" will be very much affected by the nature of his expectation of the dawn, as a sudden and unheralded appearing of the sun in full-orbed splendor upon the astonished darkness of night; or as a very gradual and mellow diffusion of light from below the eastern horizon, steadily and almost imperceptibly increasing, spreading, rising, reddening, till the day "is born." If we regard the millennium as a new dispensation, differing *in kind* from the present, to commence by an abrupt retiring of the moral and spiritual forces now underlying and shaping human life and the movements of human society, and by the appearing of Christ himself in visible presence, and with a relation to human will of which we now know nothing; if we interpret literally the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, when the rest of the book is filled with the boldest figurative language, — then passing events have no great significance or interest. We cannot base any calculations upon, or form any anticipations from, them; the law of cause and effect does not apply; the history of mankind, whether in church or state, even when read in the light of God's word and providence, has no relevance.

But if we accept the interpretation which Mr. Barnes has so well presented in his Notes on the chapter referred to, then all the events of recent years, the indications of the present, all efforts of the church of Christ in spreading the gospel and discipling the nations, are crowded and glowing with significance and with interest to the Christian mind and heart, as under the conduct of God's providence, and working out his plan; as ushering in the day when Christ shall manifestly "take the kingdom." What is necessary to say further on the question how the "millennium" is to be understood can be condensed into the following extracts from Mr. Barnes's Notes on the twentieth chapter of the Book of Revelation.

"The millennium — the long period, perhaps three hundred and fifty thousand years, a day standing prophetically for a year — when the principles of true religion will have

the ascendancy on the earth, *as if* the martyrs and confessors, the most devoted and eminent Christians of other times, should appear again upon the earth, and as if their spirit should become the reigning and pervading spirit of all who professed the Christian name." "It will be a condition of the world *as if* Satan were bound, that is, where his influence will be suspended, and the principles of virtue and religion prevail. According to the interpretation of the previous chapters, it will be a state in which all that has existed, and all that now exists, in the Papacy to corrupt mankind, to maintain error, and to prevent the prevalence of free and liberal principles will cease; in which all that there now is in the Mohammedan system to fetter and enslave mankind, now controlling more than one hundred and twenty millions of the race, shall have come to an end; and in which, in a great measure, all that occurs under the direct influence of Satan in causing or perpetuating slavery, war, intemperance, lust, avarice, disorder, scepticism, atheism, will be checked and stayed.

"It is proper to say, however, that this passage does not require us to suppose that there will be a total cessation of satanic influence in the earth during that period. Satan will indeed be bound and restrained as to his former influence and power. But there will be no change in the character of man as he comes into the world. There will still be corrupt passions in the human heart. Though greatly restrained, and though there will be a general prevalence of righteousness on the earth, yet we are to remember that the race is fallen, and that even then, if restraint should be taken away, man would act out his fallen nature. This fact, if remembered, will make it appear less strange that, after this period of prevalent righteousness, Satan should be represented as loosed again, and as able once more, for a time, to deceive the nations."¹

We propose to review briefly,

¹ Barnes's Notes on the Book of Revelation, pp. 457-461.

I. *The Commercial, Civil, and Political Condition of Mohammedan Turkey.*

It is claimed by friends of Turkey that her commercial interests have been largely advanced and her political situation greatly improved within the quarter of a century past. And it is, of course, conceded that, if the simple increase of trade in her seaport towns is evidence of her progress, she has improved. If coming into direct relations with Europe and European civilization by steam and by telegraph, or if the establishment of very intimate and complex political relations with European states is a certain sign of real improvement, then Turkey is manifestly on the high road of progress. The Turkish capital and her chief seaport cities resemble European cities more and more every year. Her laws and her system of general education are daily manifesting more clearly the influence of western neighbors. Her ships of war are iron-clad, her cannon rifled, her small arms breech-loaders of the modern style. She is Europeanized in her diplomacy. Her newspapers are numerous and rapidly increasing. And not only so, but the editors of these newspapers — some of them, at least — are straining every nerve to arouse their comrades and co-religionists to earnest efforts in the general march of progress. In one of them, called "The Progress," are very frequent, and, as we should suppose, most *telling* and stimulative exhortations to the Osmanlies to prove themselves worthy of their history, and equal to their opportunity and their destiny.

But there are other considerations in this same direction, parallel and closely related to facts we have just mentioned, to which, whether as a friend to Turkey or as a thoughtful interpreter of prophecy, a Christian man should not, and indeed cannot, shut his eyes.

The telegraph lines of Turkey have been, to a great extent, constructed and worked by the capital and the skill of foreign Christian nations. The steamers plying in Turkish waters carry, for the most part, the flag of one or another

of the Christian nations of Europe. The Turkish navy was mainly built in English navy-yards. Her war material is largely from abroad. Her internal trade is nearly all in Christian hands. Diplomacy, too, although in the control of Osmanlies, has well nigh passed out of the hands of Mohammedans of the old school, that is, of "the faithful," properly speaking, and is managed by Turks of European education and Frank habits — men who, the most of them, though professing the state religion, are just as really infidels as the majority of the literary and diplomatic circles of Paris. The Turkish government has recently opened a Lycee for a thousand pupils, with a full corps of French teachers, and a French infidel *animus* as the inspiration of the whole.

The prejudices of the faithful old Moslem are rudely set aside by the exigencies of the modern state, and by the Europeanized and "progressive" ideas of "Young Turkey." Many venerable and sacred associations, even the very precepts of his faith, are trampled on in the march of modern improvements. The new system of Turkish law known as the "Tanzimat," inaugurated through European influence in 1260 of the Mohammedan era, was a mortal blow at his system of faith.

Moreover, the change, within the memory of men still living, in the actual relations of the Christian Rayah to the ruling Turk, is an immense change. Coupled with the stirring appeals of the Turkish newspaper, "The Progress," already referred to, are found mournful confessions of the real backwardness and stolid indifference of the Osmanly, as compared with his Christian neighbors, abroad and at home. Would such confessions have been tolerated a few years ago? We ourselves lived for several months last year in a house in a city of Asia Minor which, when built, at the beginning of this century, witnessed many a foul murder of helpless, subject Christians by the lordly owner, — of men who were guilty of no crime against any law. They had simply offended the Bey, and were put to death by his will, with no pretence of trial, with no appeal and no redress. Where

is the man, high or low, who would dare commit such an act now? It is scarcely a fourth of a century since the eyes of this generation witnessed, in broad day, in the most public place of this capital, a public execution for apostasy from Mohammedanism. Would such a thing be possible now? And if not, is it that Mohammedanism itself has changed? Not at all. The death of the apostate is still demanded by the only law recognized by the "faithful" Turk. But there are other influences dominant stronger than that law. In fact, the old Koranic law is violated every day by the very government of the caliph ("successor" of Mohammed) in the execution of new laws and treaties. And the government does this neither blindly nor willingly. This suicidal course is pursued by professed Mohammedans with their eyes open, and in the face of the angry protest of great masses of faithful Moslems, simply because the relation of Turkey to European states makes it impossible to do otherwise. Intelligent Turks know perfectly well, and they are naturally more keenly alive to this than others, that the Mohammedan civilization is effete and decaying, that the prestige of Islam is worn out, is a thing of the buried past.

And not only is the *influence* of the Christian population in Turkey, as compared with that of the Osmanly, in the administration of government, in commerce and material improvements, greatly on the increase; it is also true that, while the *condition* of the Christian subjects of the Porte has been growing better under the fostering influence of Christian powers, aided by their own zeal and enterprise and their immunity from military service, the actual condition of the Mohammedan portion of the population has been and is a condition of deterioration and retrogression. A great deal has been said about the inequality of the Christian to the Mohammedan subjects of the Porte, in regard to the injustice and oppression practised upon the Christians. It is true that, to any great extent, Christians cannot hold high offices under government, and that the Christian sub-

jects of the empire are denied the "privilege" of serving in the army, and that they are required to pay an exemption tax in consequence, and it is acknowledged that this tax often presses hard upon the very poor. But, on the other hand, it is also true that one man of principle and integrity, of conscientious fidelity in the discharge of official duty, is not found "among a thousand" officers of government. Such a man, if there be one, will certainly be poor. He will, with equal certainty, have many and bitter enemies. If he is high enough and powerful enough to expose powerful knaves, he will, not unlikely, be secretly poisoned. Is office greatly to be desired by a good man in such a state? And how any Christian subject of the Porte can feel otherwise than profoundly grateful for the immunity from military service which he enjoys, although obtained by the payment of an extra tax, — and it is not a large tax, — it is difficult to see. For, even in the time of peace, the army is eating up the best blood of the Osmanly population with frightful rapidity. Diseases resulting from *Oriental immorality* are fearfully prevalent in the army. Villages and regions in the interior are becoming depopulated by the conscription for the army and by the rush of the young men, as in the decay of the old Roman empire, to the corrupt and corrupting capital. The hatred, on the part of the Osmanly population, against what they regard as a semi-infidel government, the bitterness of feeling in the generation now passing off the stage, as they see their youth consumed by the army and their inherited domain passing, by purchase, out of their own weakening and impoverished hands into those of their more prosperous Christian neighbors, — things which have come under our own eyes in the interior of the country, — are indeed pitiable to see.

It is the incapacity and corruption of this Mohammedan government which leave the richness of the mineral and agricultural resources of the country undeveloped and waste. These characteristics of the administration are illustrated in a way scarcely credible to those who have not actually

seen the facts, in the abortive efforts of the government to build roads in the interior. Money has been appropriated and expended sufficient to complete a road, of which perhaps not a hundredth part, and that the easiest, has been actually built; and that because of the unscrupulous rapacity of officials, high and low.

The enormous expenditures of the Sultan, capricious and utterly useless to the people, with the three thousand inhabitants of his imperial palaces, — a new one, great or small, being built almost every year, — is something hardly conceivable by an American. Meantime, the peasantry of the country — the Mohammedan more than the Christian portion of it, — groan and curse under the intolerable and increasing oppression.

In view of these and similar facts, we do not hesitate to affirm that all the seeming power of Mohammedan Turkey is a grand delusion. Amid, and by means of, passing events, the end is hastening on. *Disintegration, internal revolution, or violent overthrow* is the certain and near future of the Moslem state. Turkey may fall to pieces. She may fall by foreign conquest — an issue which, possibly, is only postponed by the interests of European states, whose "balance of power" is a thing not particularly easy to preserve. Or Turkey may, by internal revolution and reconstruction, become a nominally Christian state. As has been said, Christian influence is growing, and the faith of Islam has but a very feeble hold upon a large fraction of the Mohammedan population. In case of such a revolution as has been indicated, interest would undoubtedly lead thousands to decide upon a profession of Christianity.

Now, confining ourselves to the point of view which we have thus far taken — that is, in view of the civil, commercial, and political situation and changes of the Mohammedan Turkish empire; it is plain that, whatever worldly men may or may not purpose in multiplying and facilitating the means of communication, of travel, and of traffic between Europe and America, on the one hand. and Southern,

Eastern, and even Central Asia, on the other; and particularly between the Protestant nations of Great Britain and the United States, on the one hand, and India and China, on the other; the downfall, whether by gradual disintegration, internal revolution, or foreign conquest, of the Mohammedan empire of Turkey — an event which, in the course of the reflow eastward of western civilization, cannot be distant, — will be a fulfilment of prophecy.

That empire, founded in merciless cruelty, and continued, while the power remained, in injustice and oppression on the great highway of the nations, — in lands where early and for a long period the standard of the cross was raised, — while it exists *as a Mohammedan empire*, will be an obstacle to the spread eastward of the light and saving influence of the gospel of Christ and of a Christian civilization. When this empire falls, it will largely contribute to *the preparing of the way of the kings (or peoples) of the East for the gospel*.

The strong support given by England to this existing Mohammedan administration is, on any high principles of moral action or of far-sighted Christian statesmanship, an anomaly and an absurdity. Present interest, and that narrow, selfish, and material, governs the policy of Protestant England to Mohammedan Turkey to-day.

What has been said of Turkey above will, nearly all of it, apply to the smaller and less important empire of Persia also. Persia bears the same relation as Turkey to the fulfilment of the prophecy that we are considering. It is a Mohammedan power, more bigoted, more corrupt, more cruel than Turkey, but weaker and less formidable as well. The Persian empire, between Russia on the north, British India on the southeast, and revolutionized Turkey on the west, certainly will not, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, prove any serious barrier to the progress and triumph of a Christian civilization in Asia.

Now, it may be said, and it is true, that, as far as we have yet advanced, that is, in the review of the commercial, civil,

and political situation, we have discovered nothing which is more at best than indirectly and mediately promising with reference to the progress of the gospel and the ushering in of the millennium. Thus far the influences at work are, as we have seen, rather destructive than restoring. There is nothing in the influence of commerce and in the political influence of the incoming civilization of nominally Christian, but really semi-infidel Europe, which can truly vitalize what remains in the wake of the outgoing Moslem civilization. Material reform, even if successful, cannot stay spiritual decay. The preparation of "the way of the kings of the East" for the gospel is therefore, thus far, but negative. It is a removing of obstacles, not a constructing of highways.

Having now glanced at the internal civil condition of Turkey, having considered the influence of commerce and intimate political relations with the Christian states of the West upon the Moslem state and the faith of Islam, and having found that these influences are in their natural and final result disintegrating and destructive, we come now to consider

II. *The Influence of Western or Protestant Christian Doctrine and Life in Turkey.*

As preliminary, and for the proper understanding of what is to be offered below, we must give a moment's attention to the relation which the religion of Islam bears to Oriental Christianity, and the influence exerted upon the Mussulman by his Christian fellow-countrymen. The religion of Mohammed was founded, and has made its way in the world, in the face of and over Oriental Christianity. This has been so because that Christianity had, when Islam arose, become so choked and overloaded with vain forms and injurious doctrines, so denuded of its true glory, so false to its mission in the world, that it could not satisfy the cravings of an awakened religious mind.¹

¹ See Article on Christianity and Islamism in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, No. 91 (July, 1866).

From the first, Islam has been hostile to that Christianity with which it has come in contact, and has been the superior power, both religiously and politically, in those lands where the two religions have existed. It may be true that the result of the famous controversies, extending through nearly two centuries, which preceded the rise of Islam, was to fix accurately and scientifically in the terminology and in the faith of the church catholic the true doctrine concerning the Trinity and the Person of Christ; but a practical evil and injury resulting from so much intellectual discussion and disputing over so recondite and mysterious a subject was a certain baldness and frigidness in the form of expression and explanation used by the church Fathers, and great grossness of conception and freedom of utterance among heretical sects, so numerous all through the East, and especially in North Africa and Arabia. All this was, and is, a great offence and stumbling-block to the Moslem. "Mother of God" became the title for Mary in the Eastern church before Islam arose. This false term has for twelve hundred years borne a terrible harvest of false impression in the Mohammedan mind. The gross notions which the Mohammedan generally has about the Christian conception of the Trinity and the person of Christ are directly traceable to the bald and rigid form of the Christian dogmas on this subject, and the coarse and careless manner in which those dogmas have been explained. Mysteries above human reason have been so boldly and fearlessly and irreverently handled as to appear absurdities and blasphemies to those who, in the midst of great doctrinal and practical errors, have ever steadfastly held to the truth of *one God*.

Then, also, on the subject of the inspiration and permanent authority of the scriptures of the Old and New Testament,—had not the Bible remained in the ancient tongues, and had not the respect shown among Christians to the decisions of councils and the dicta of patriarchs, as compared with that shown to the word of God itself, become sadly out of proportion, even before Islam arose, the Moslem

would never have had the reason which has actually been afforded him for treating slightly, as no longer necessary, and as interpolated and mutilated, those Christian scriptures which even he acknowledges, in their original form, to be the word of God.

Now, as a matter of fact, the doctrines of the Christian system requiring to be cleared up with patient and reverent care to the apprehension of the Moslem—the doctrines on which, even when most clearly and considerately explained, he is naturally most ready to stumble—are, and have always been, just these of the Trinity of the Godhead, the Person of Christ as very God and very man, the atoning work of the God-man, and the inspiration and permanent and paramount authority of the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

But practically a far worse corrupting effect has been produced upon generation after generation of Mohammedans, in common with other Oriental minds, by the defective anthropology and moral teaching of the Eastern church.

The teachings of all the Eastern or Greek church, almost from the beginning, that our connection with our parents, and so with Adam, the parent of the race, relates only to the mortal body, and not also to the immortal soul; that we are born only with a fleshly corruption or depravity, which is our misfortune, and furnishes an excuse for our actual sins, and not with a will, guilt-stained from the first; these and such like teachings had their legitimate influence in debauching the conscience and moral sense, so that, to this day, the clear sense of personal moral responsibility, the crystalline conscience which shows a man his own sin as his guilt, and not merely as a fault, or as something evil, is hardly found in any sect of Christians in all the East. These teachings, so accordant with a fallen human nature, so opposite to the teachings of God's word and Spirit, have been almost universally received, and have proved so powerful an opiate to the Oriental conscience that the searching revelations of personal sin and guilt made to the unperverted

and quickened conscience by the word of God are taken as Oriental hyperbole, and so but soothe the senses like pleasant and distant music. Almost without exception an Oriental is guided in moral action by interest or by feeling, and not by moral principle. The influence of this sort of "Christian" morality has been very marked upon, and been reflected in the faith of Islam and in the life of Mohammedans. In fact, it accords precisely with their notions and teachings on the same subjects. It is manifest, therefore, that there is nothing in Oriental Christianity — its idolatrous respect paid to pictures and images has ever been an unendurable offence to the Moslem, — which can meet the real wants of enlightened Mohammedans for a truer and purer faith than their own falling and decaying hereditary religion. No intelligent Mussulman, with his spiritual wants consciously awakened, and in honest search for the truth, will ever turn to Oriental Christianity; and it is as obvious that all we have said above applies equally to Romish Christianity.

Therefore the influences we meet with here also, as well as those in the line of civil and political changes, are only destructive, not restoring.

We have now seen that the decay of the effete Moslem civilization, accompanied by the crumbling of the Mohammedan faith, is hastened, and to be hastened, by commercial, civil, and political "progress" of the people; that there is no form of Oriental Christianity which affords any promise to the enlightened and inquiring Turk; and that many educated Osmanlies are taking refuge in infidelity.

At the same time, as we read prophecy, we should expect the incoming of a living and vitalizing Christianity, which shall either revolutionize or remove the powers that hinder the spread and triumph of the kingdom of Christ in Asia. We should expect, not only the removal of obstacles, but the actual preparing of a highway for the gospel to enter Central Asia.

It is scarcely more than a generation since evangelical Christian doctrine, with the Bible itself as the source and

substance of it, began to exert an influence, to develop evangelical Christian life and example in this empire. A few foreigners, from a land far away, were God's instrumentality for hiding a little leaven in this great mass of the population of Turkey. Through their learning, zeal, and piety, seconded, as their labors have borne the expected fruit, by the practical knowledge, zeal, and piety of native evangelical Christians, the word of God has been carefully translated into all the principal languages of this empire—languages spoken by Christian and by Moslem,—and has been circulated and read, to the extent of hundreds of thousands of copies, east and west, north and south, in city, town, and village, all through the land; the word of life has been preached "publicly, and from house to house," by the wayside, in market-places, almost everywhere that the Bible itself has gone. Congregations have been gathered, communities organized, schools established, and that in the face of bitter and long-continued persecution. From regenerate souls in the congregations are formed churches, small and feeble at first, but, with very few exceptions, they are proving living, growing, laboring, shining churches, and there are more than sixty of them scattered all over the land. They are like cities set on a hill, and, what is most significant, almost all of them are in the midst of great centres of the Turkish—the Moslem—population. And, although these churches are composed mainly, as yet, of those who have been converted from a nominal and dead Christianity to a true and living faith in Christ, yet some from the ranks of the Mohammedan population have embraced the gospel, and these young and earnest churches, with their growing native ministry, are girding themselves, not only to the work of caring for their own religious institutions, and going forth as missionaries to their own nation, but they are beginning to feel their responsibility, to hear their call, and learn their mission to the Mohammedans—work which will not be "foreign," but "home missionary," work to them. The few thousand members of evangelical Christian churches in Turkey may seem, on any principle of

worldly calculation, a small force for the moral and religious revolutionizing of such a mass of population — a “little leaven,” indeed, for so “great a lump”; but, regarded in the light of Church history and especially of the history of the rise and progress of evangelical influence in this land, regarded in the light of prophecy, regarded with the eye of faith, though it may *seem* “small and despised,” yet, supported by the sympathies and prayers of the church of Christ in western lands, under the conduct of God’s providence, with the power of his word and the fire of his Spirit, the evangelical churches of Turkey will not fail in the work, to which they alone can prove equal, of restoring, rebuilding, vitalizing, where all other influences can only pull down and destroy. Christian truth will prove an antidote to old superstition and falsehood, and to new forms of infidelity. Christian life and example will prove a salt and a leaven in the midst of a decaying and vanishing civilization. Evangelical Protestant Christianity developing in a way native to her soil, is the hope of Turkey.

Evangelical Christian doctrine and evangelical Christian life and example are undeniably the most revolutionary, and to whatever opposes the gospel and the kingdom of Christ, the most destructive, forces possible; but they are so incidentally, and because whatever opposes them is opposed to God and to Christ and to his truth and kingdom in the world. They are, in their own nature, positively vital and restoring forces when brought into contact with human life and human wants; for the gospel alone is adapted to satisfy the deepest spiritual wants of men universally — those of the Moslem, as well as those of the pagan.

The evangelical Christian doctrine of the Trinity and of the person of Christ, set forth and applied to the conscious want of an awakened soul, not merely argued to the intellect; the God-man held up to the sinner, as only the pure teaching of the gospel does it, in a lucid explanation of his work of atonement for human sin, is the true antidote against the poison of a false construction and presentation

of Christian doctrine, and against the cold scepticism and unbelief of the system of Islam. The blankness of the Mohammedan system on the subject of atonement is felt and acknowledged often by intelligent Turks.

Such Christian lyrics as "Just as I am," "My faith looks up to thee," "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds," "All hail the power of Jesus' name" — all translated into Turkish, and sung in the hearing of Mohammedans by loving Christian hearts — will do more to convince them of the truth of the evangelical doctrine of the God-man than the Nicene Creed, and all that has ever been written on it, could possibly do.

In like manner, the Moslem's prejudice against the Bible, as we receive and circulate it, will give way under the light of that word itself in his sacred and also in his common language; especially as the fundamental Protestant doctrine of the right and duty of every man to read the word of God is becoming more and more generally recognized and respected all through this land, and that far beyond the number of those who are called Protestants. Thus God is preparing for himself in these lands, what has not truly existed here since the days of Primitive Christianity, a *witnessing Church*.

How mighty will be the change in the whole current of business and of social life in these Oriental communities, when evangelical views of human character, — of the human *will*, with its responsibility and its guilt, coupled with right views of the holiness and justice of God, have leavened the mass of society in which they are already powerfully working. The teachings of an evangelical morality — right doctrines concerning man — wrought into the consciousness of society would alone upheave and revolutionize it, especially when this power is applied, as it is and will be, by the fire of the Spirit. Reproduce the best forms of Christian life and character in this empire; and such moral forces can no more be shut up and kept inactive in general society than could Luther and his associates be silenced in Germany, or

the Puritans be intimidated and their influence circumscribed in intolerant England two and a half centuries ago.

On the very banks of the Euphrates to-day the "way of the kings of the East" is preparing; and the labor put forth there, and the prayers and offerings made in Christian lands, should all be with the firm conviction, the feeling, the confident expectation, that these efforts of ours to-day are, in fulfilment of prophecy, in accordance with the purpose of Christ, and in obedience to his explicit command, directly preparing for the ushering in of the millennium.

What a stimulus is here to Christian endeavor in the line of missionary labor! Let Christian men look, in the line of New Testament prophecy and of God's providence, so conspicuous in human history, at the present state and prospects of the Mohammedan empires of Western Asia, and feel a profounder interest in the work now doing,—on a small scale as it appears, perhaps, to human vision, compared with the great work to be done, but a work which is day by day making rapid advances. These advances are not, indeed, toward the establishment of any earthly kingdom or other form of civil government, but toward the setting up of the spiritual kingdom of Christ in this land—a kingdom which is at once a monarchy, an aristocracy, and a republic.

Looking forward in the line of vision of the apocalyptic seer, and contemplating events now near at hand, the Christian can regard without anxiety, nay, rather with exultation, those processes and changes which are rapidly dissolving and removing an empire; for he knows the existing administration is but *in the way* of the setting up of the spiritual kingdom of Immanuel. We should rejoice in, and desire and pray for, the removal of disorganizing matter—a decaying state—that the living humanity remaining may, without hinderance, be reconstructed under Christian rule, when evangelical influence shall be an *acknowledged power* in society.

It is not for the servant of the King of kings to be disturbed by whatsoever overturnings there may be of human society

and governments. With him it is not doubtful that every movement of society, all commercial and civil changes, all the plans and diplomacy of princes, are but parts, often blindly played by the human agents, of a grander plan which Divine Providence is unfolding for the reign of Christ all through the Orient. God has appointed his word, now doing its work in all the principal languages of the world's inhabitants, and his servants, who "have gone everywhere preaching the word," adding to these the power of the Spirit, and superintending all by his omniscient and omnipresent providence, as the means and agents for the accomplishment of his "grand designs."

"His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour."

And, whether the path we are individually treading, or that particular corner of the great vineyard in which the Master has bidden us individually to labor for him, be in light or in shadow, be cheering or for the moment saddening, we may look up and see the day-dawn of the millennium. But let no one think that we can *long* stand thus "gazing up into heaven." "Up, and be doing," is the motto and watchword of the hour. It is so in all the world of business, in commerce, in politics, in all the material interests of human society. And we may rejoice that, beyond all comparison, it is so in the church of Christ to a greater extent than in any former period of her history. But if we look at the work yet to be done, at the "land yet to be possessed," at the strength and malice and cunning of the "Anakims" yet to be overcome, we might well be appalled. But this is not our duty either. Sluggish inactivity, timid shrinking, and premature shouts of victory are alike unbecoming the Christian soldier. Labor, patience, courage, fidelity, in trustful reliance on our Captain and King is what is still appointed for us. But it *may* be, *ought* to be, in the confident assurance that all is working directly toward the glad day of our Redeemer's triumph; all in the line of the fulfilment of prophecy, "that the way of the kings of the East may be prepared."