

So far it has been our aim to establish the fact that our Lord actually gave the promise of the Spirit. We have justified our belief that it was so by an appeal, on the one hand, to the New Testament, which records the unquestioning conviction of the primitive Church, and, on the other hand, to that Messianic consciousness which contemplated an outpouring of the Spirit as an essential element of the Messianic mission. On a future occasion we shall turn our attention to the fact of Pentecost, and attempt to correlate that fact with the prophetic and Messianic consciousness that expected and predicted it.



### Saint-Worship To-day in Asia Minor.

BY THE REV. G. E. WHITE, D.D.

THE religion of Jesus was early preached among the people of Asia Minor, even some of the Apostles sharing in the service. No less than ten books of the New Testament were first addressed to its inhabitants. Constantine the Great adopted Christianity as the religion of the whole community. The faith of the Gospel has never disappeared from this important arena of its youthful triumphs, and it is represented by millions of nominal Christians—members of the Armenian or Greek branches of the Oriental Church. Mohammedanism was introduced into the fair peninsula in its gradual conquest by Seljukian and Ottoman Turks about the time of greatest Norman activity in Western Europe. And yet to-day the common Anatolian—that is, native of Asia Minor—frequently offers his most earnest prayers in the name of saints, is an unquestioning believer in their effective intercession, and in the crises of life is quite as prone to worship at a sacred grave as in a church or mosque.

The people have a strong sense of sin as before God, and of helplessness in the affairs of life. The idea of sin emphasizes misfortune quite as much as guilt, but conscience is at work,

penalty is recognized as deserved, and the judgment-bar is anticipated with dread. Human life is beset with hard experiences. Death is possible at any hour. It is not uncommon to find an average of a sick person in every house of a village. Crop failure may be followed by famine ; delayed or scanty rains mean drought ; accident, robbery, pestilence, war, disease among the cattle, may take place any day, and their prevention belongs to powers beyond those which are human. The life of an Anatolian peasant is sombre, as is seen in the fact that for one major scale in G he chants his rustic songs in more than twenty minor scales, in which G is the predominant note.

Now, though the Anatolians all believe in God, and worship Him in prescribed forms, He is to them a being far away, separated from human interests, and almost inseparable from fate. Oriental prayers are for the most part set forms of worship, do not voice the peculiar yearning and striving of the individual suppliant, and he does not know how to come boldly to a throne of grace and find help for time of need.

Men's thoughts of God and of man also must influence each other. In Oriental custom a favour is not asked directly of the person who alone has the right to grant it, but the petition is presented through some intermediary party. Requests come to the officials of Church and State through parties supposed to have such influence with the real authorities that their presentation of the petitions cannot be easily refused.

Now, whether it be a heritage from some period of polytheism, or due to other causes, the earth is peopled by the simple Anatolians with numbers of beings who once were men, each of whom is in a sacred grave, has a sphere of influence around his tomb, takes an active interest in the affairs of men, especially of his own retainers, and has a great degree of influence with the Almighty, which influence he can by proper means be brought to exercise in behalf of his suppliants. A white-turbaned mufti explained to me the intercession of a saint as like the introduction of a friend in this world. "Suppose you are acquainted with the governor and I am not. You conduct

me into the presence of the great man, and tell him that I am your friend ; that you request him to hear me *for your sake*, and, of course, your introduction will gain favourable attention to my case."

As a general rule every village has its sacred grave, the occupant of which is termed an *evliya* (plural of the Arabic *wely*). The site is frequently on a high hill and under a green tree ; many are in secluded spots, but every worshipper is welcomed. In and near a city *evliyas* are abundant. One saint has the reputation of curing headache, another stomach-ache, another toothache. Some are good for weak eyes. At one such spot it is the custom to burn pine faggots and rub the eyes with the soot, while at another one must wash his eyes in the water of a fountain close at hand. One is visited by people hard of hearing, another by one whose mouth is awry. In the latter case the suppliant pays a small fee, and the attendant slaps him on the mouth with the slipper of the deceased saint. Certain graves are especial resorts of barren women, like Hannah, who desire children ; to others, children are taken who cannot properly walk or talk, or who seem lacking in some ordinary faculty.

The ceremonies at such shrines are simple, and vary with local customs and with the worshipper's sense of the fitness of things and the urgency of his case. There is, of course, a prayer, "uttered or unexpressed," understood to be offered to the Almighty through the medium of the saint. Sacrifice is very common, an animal—preferably a young sheep or goat—being slain, with or without the services of an attending priest, the flesh being cooked and shared with the poor and with friends—at any rate, with a few persons who may chance to be at hand—including the priest, if there is one. I myself have eaten such sacrificial meat, and every participant is understood to add, at least tacitly, the weight of his personal influence to the plea of the chief suppliant. Cocks are often used for such sacrifices ; and even the chicken that is to furnish the staple of a family's Sunday dinner is sometimes killed on

Saturday at the village shrine, with the accompaniment at least of a brief prayer. Villages or companies of co-religionists often unite in the offering of an ox or buffalo, and a rich, generous, or devoted household may do the same. In such case many persons partake of the food, provided at the cost of bloodshed, and prepared in propitiation, appeal, or thanksgiving.

Earth taken from beside a sacred tomb is called "precious," and is supposed to possess great efficacy. A little of the dust is mixed with water and smeared upon the person of a child ailing or in any way deficient, or the child is made to drink the muddy water. One general panacea for the sick is to bring earth from a sacred grave, dissolve it in water, and give it to the patient to drink. It is more in keeping, however, for the patient, if possible, to walk, ride, or be carried to the sacred spot, to offer his petition there in person, and to smear the "precious" earth on his body, or swallow it moistened with water. To fertilize a field, or rid it of pests like mice, handfuls of earth are taken from beside the tomb of the saint, whose living representatives collect the farmer's religious dues, and sprinkled over the ground.

Another way of establishing connection with the being once human, but now having access to the superhuman realm, is especially employed by those who have malaria or some other kind of fever, and consists in tying a rag or a bit of rope or hair taken from the person to a fence about the grave, or to a sacred tree standing near. Horseshoes and nails also are driven into the trees, constituting a visible, tangible bond between the suppliant and the saint.

Men fear to steal or commit other depredation within or near such sacred precincts. I once climbed over the log enclosure around a grave to pick some Alpine violets, the early harbingers of spring. A friendly passer-by advised me to get out, lest the offended "lier" there should kick me out. Trees are not cut from a grove made sacred by an *evliya*, lest the wood fly back to its place in the night, or lest the wood-cutter's house burn before morning. Even sticks brought home by children are

sometimes carried back by an old granny, lest some "stroke" overtake the dwelling or its inmates. This superstition has been very useful in retaining some trees on the mountains, which are fast being deforested, to the serious damage of the plains and valleys below. In the event of death, however, an exception is made, and wood may be cut from a sacred grove without harm to make a coffin.

To their own people and to reverent worshippers these "lords many and gods many" are held to be strong protectors and kind benefactors. Immigrants from the province of Shirwan, in Russia, are loath to settle more than six hours distant from the grave of Hadji Hamza, because their great *hoja* promised his intercession with the Righteous Judge for all his people who lived within six hours' distance of his burial-place. Strange whims are attributed to them. For instance, a woman once related to us how Hadji Veli, their village patron, could not bear the colour red or the sound of a drum. So the village women have to forego the beauty of red dresses, and they never beat a drum, even at a wedding.

One day last summer, beside a clear, cold mountain spring, I met a man who talked familiarly, almost lovingly, of the *dedes*, or venerable religious characters, entombed upon the sunny mountain slopes about. The enclosure of one grave, he told me, was built by deer, who brought the material on their backs for the purpose. That recalled to my mind the story of another *evliya*, where, they say, the time was when every year at the Courban, or sacrifice festival, a deer used to stalk out of the woods and offer itself for sacrifice at the shrine, but that in these degenerate days such things take place no more. In the present instance, my informant continued, at one of the graves we saw far away across the valley a camel was formerly sacrificed every year. Then, becoming interested, as I listened he narrated how their *dedes* sometimes fire cannon; how he once heard them very plainly on the spot where we then were sitting, the echo of the great guns booming among the hills around. On going into the city he found at least ten men who

had heard the same cannonade, and they were sure that something portentous was at hand. The man was then a soldier under arms, and in just a week came news of the Greek War, with orders for the troops to march to the front ; and they went with light hearts, for they felt that God and the saints were already stirring in their behalf.

On another summer's day a party of us visited the grove and tomb of Chal Dede, Saint Chal—a spot to kindle the imagination of the most prosaic. Picture to your mind's eye a mountain peak 1,500 feet above the fertile plain unrolled like a map below ; lower peaks separated by winding valleys round about ; over yonder Bulak Mountain, crowned with the ruins of an ancient castle ; the missionary compound in sight in the city a dozen miles away, where 500 young people enjoy the opportunities of Christian schools in term-time ; the rain-clouds rolling up from the valley of the historic Halys River over there to the west ; the pine-grove below our feet, with the wind souging through the trees ; the flattened top of the grassy hill, offering accommodation for a concourse of hundreds or even thousands of people ; and in the centre of the greensward the tomb of the Shia saint, Chal Dede.

A substantial stone wall, about 40 feet square, enclosed the little low building within which was the tomb. This last was, perhaps, 1 yard high and 2 yards long, a whitened sepulchre plastered outside. A neck and head of plaster at the west indicated the head of the saint, and a string of ninety-nine beads was hanging around the neck, to be run through the fingers of a worshipper while repeating the ninety-nine "beautiful names" of God. A cloth of green was thrown over the tomb, and a turban of the same sacred colour was wrapped about the headpiece. The walls were stained with the smoke of many candles burned in reverence.

Our guide, a Sunnite Turk, at once began to pray, prostrating himself towards the south, and intoning over and over such standard phrases as, "God is great"; "There is no God but God"; and the like. He wiped his eyes with the green

cloth from upon the tomb, remarking that they were diseased, and he hoped the saint would help them. He tore a rag from his ragged clothes, and added one to the many rags tied to nails in the wall. He took dust from the floor and rubbed it on his forehead. Then, as the rain-clouds discharged their contents, our Turk explained that Chal Dede is of great mercy, and is one of the beloved of God. The region belongs to him. No man can cut a tree or carry away stones or earth without incurring his displeasure and some serious penalty. The trespasser may die, or fall sick or paralytic, or his cattle may be stricken with disease, or his crops fail. Chal Dede roams about at will, especially by night, visiting other *dedes*, his friends, and inspecting things generally. He sews—and the speaker directed our attention to a needle and thread always kept hanging on the wall—and makes presents of garments where least expected, or he repairs rents in the cloth thrown over his grave.

“So,” continued the Turk simply, “my dead father and mother revisit my house every Friday night. I cannot see them, but they are there, and inspect my dwelling to see whether there is sin there or good conduct, whether quarrelling or peace. Just so every man has a recording angel looking over his shoulder, who puts down all his acts and utterances, whether good or bad, and at the end the account is struck, and, according to the balance, one goes to heaven or hell. Yes,” he went on, in response to a question, “we pray in the name of Jesus, for we have many, many prophets, and Jesus is one. He was a good man.”

On another occasion I accompanied some hospitable Armenians on their annual midsummer excursion to celebrate the festival of Vartavar, on Cross Mountain. They relate that in the generation of our Lord one of His disciples—Andrew or Bartholomew—was on a preaching tour from Cesarea Mazaca to Sinope, when he came to the neighbourhood of this mountain. Finding most of the people heathen, he prayed that a strong tree which they worshipped might be uprooted as a sign. This was done, and many believed in the evangelist and his message.

Then he was told that a Christian hermit living on the mountain had died under persecution, and he went thither and gave him Christian burial. The hermit, named Pagham, possessed a splinter of the true cross, and, lest it should be abused in his persecution, he had cast it from him, when, lo, on the spot where it fell a spring gushed forth.

In the natural amphitheatre, just under the highest ridge of Cross Mountain, there is now this spring of clear cold water, about which on their annual excursion the people encamp, while the alleged grave of the martyr hermit, enclosed by coarse unhewn stones, is on the crest of the ridge above. On our visit we found a large tent, with red crosses wrought upon it, erected to serve as an Armenian Church, and one priest was in attendance. A busy crowd was gathering for a three days' camp-meeting, and constructing rough lodges out of stones or out of such substitutes for tents as they had brought. A flock of sheep suitable for sacrifice stood awaiting purchasers. Armenians might celebrate the festival of Vartavar, commemorative of the Transfiguration and also of the Flood, anywhere, but they assemble here because of the martyred saint and his sacred spring. Vows registered at any crisis of life all through the year are redeemed by prayer and sacrifice at the annual pilgrimage to this sanctuary, and by dipping in the waters of the sacred pool.

Each Dervish claims that the "proofs" which he offers—chewing live coals, lapping a red-hot iron, thrusting skewers through the flesh, whirling, sword-play, and all without pain to himself—are due to the power of the "Pir," or Founder of the Order, long since dead, transmitted through his living Superior.

When in the spring rains are belated and the crops endangered, or in the event of some other public calamity, almost the whole Anatolian population pour forth to offer their appeals under the open sky in the names of their various local saints. More often the worshippers come singly or in little groups under the pressure of personal need. Beside the grave there is sometimes a church, a mosque, or a Dervish *tekye*; either the



building or the tomb may account for the presence of the other. Shrines now in Mohammedan keeping may once have been Christian, and *vice versa*. Adherents of each great creed frequent shrines belonging to the other. As a counterpart to the belief in intercessory saints, there is naturally great fear of baleful *jinn*s, or evil spirits, and of "the evil eye." And it is saddening, though necessary, to add that, in spite of all these and many other efforts to win favour with God, the people have no real confidence in any, and they find rest and happiness in none.

It is surprising that these ceremonies should so prevail on soil where the Gospel was promulgated during the first Christian century. An observer seeing the actual worship of to-day would never recognize it as that prescribed by Christ, or take one part of it to be the Mohammedanism of the Koran. Human degeneracy is as real as human evolution. Can it be that there was a parallel in the centuries of the Old Testament dispensation? If the Pentateuchal codes, whenever written in their present form, had been published among the Hebrews *early*, and then remained for some centuries generally ignored by the people, would not the condition be almost exactly that which for nearly 2,000 years has been actually existent in Asia Minor?



### Notes on Hebrew Religion.—III.

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I PASS now to some of the statements as to the early religion of Israel into which Mr. Addis has been led by modern critical professors. It will be remembered that Exod. xxi. 2-6 contains a law which formerly induced him to pin the ear of a Hebrew slave to the door or doorpost of an altar. He has now abandoned that, and writes the following: "The doorposts were also under the protection of penates, or spirits of the household, and so when his master accepted the perpetual service of a Hebrew bondsman, he took him to the doorpost