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# GOSPEL IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.

A PAPER

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BY

REV. N. G. CLARK, D. D.,  
FOREIGN SECRETARY OF THE BOARD.



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## THE GOSPEL IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.

BY REV. N. G. CLARK, D. D., FOREIGN SECRETARY, A. B. C. F. M.

No apology is needed for asking the special attention of the Board at this time to the condition and prospects of the missionary enterprise in the Ottoman Empire. The changes that have resulted from the late war with Russia, the action of the Berlin Congress, and the establishment of the English Protectorate over Asia Minor, stand in the closest relations to the efforts of American Christians for the evangelization of this portion of the world.

No one interested in the progress of the kingdom of Christ, whatever his nationality, can have been an indifferent spectator to the remarkable events of the past year; certainly not those who, during the last sixty years, have contributed nearly five millions of dollars, and given up four hundred of their sons and daughters, to republish the gospel in Bible lands. The thoughtful Christian, noting how all the great political movements of modern times are overruled to the furtherance of the gospel, has calmly waited the issue, — not anxious to forecast the divine method of securing the end, but confident that a higher wisdom than is given to Mission Boards, and a profounder interest than is possible to the most devoted and self-sacrificing missionary, were shaping events, and ruling in the counsels of the Great Powers of the world.

### FIRST PERIOD, 1818-1839.

I. When the attention of American Christians was first turned to the Ottoman Empire as a field for missionary effort, it included, with its tributary provinces, portions of three continents, with an area larger than that of the United States east of the Rocky Mountains. It combined the greatest variety of soil and climate; it stretched across the highways of the world's commerce, and embraced in its wide domain the earliest seats of civilization, and the scenes of greatest interest recorded in secular and sacred history. It presented to the world a most remarkable conglomerate of races, languages, and religions, without sympathy one with another, all subject to an unenlightened and often barbarous despotism. It had a population, in all, estimated at 35,000,000 of souls, of whom about 12,000,000 were known as Christians, descendants for the most part of those who, in the early days of the church, had accepted the gospel. Degenerate, degraded, sunk in ignorance and superstition, they were yet holding fast to the Christian name, to which, though with little sense of its spiritual import, they had clung through centuries of oppression.

It was to this Empire, the head and front of the Mohammedan world, long the deadly and unrelenting foe of the gospel of Christ, that the American Board planned a mission sixty years ago. Hall and Newell had begun their labors in Bombay; Meigs and Winslow in Ceylon; Kingsbury and Byington among the Cherokees and Choctaws; Bingham and Thurston were looking toward the Sandwich Islands; when, with a grateful sense of obligation to the land whence had come the message of salvation to our fathers, and not without the hope that the time had come for the Jews to obtain mercy, Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons were formally set apart to begin a mission at Jerusalem. It was hoped, too, that among the so-called Christians there might be some who would gladly receive the Bible, be aroused to a genuine Christian life, and be ready to aid in the evangelization of other classes of the



population. After a year spent among our churches, in awakening an interest in the proposed effort, the missionaries received their instructions from the Prudential Committee. With a breadth of view characteristic of the founders of this Board, but in terms that revealed how little was really known of the opportunities for successful effort, they were charged, "from the heights of the Holy Land and from Zion to survey with earnest attention the various tribes and classes who dwell in that land and in the surrounding countries." The two grand inquiries ever present to their minds were to be: "What good can be done, and by what means? What can be done for Jews? What for the people in Palestine? What for Pagans? What for Mohammedans? What for Christians? What for those in Egypt, in Syria, in Persia, in Armenia, in other countries to which your inquiries may extend?"

The charge was certainly ample enough, and the results, though different in many respects from what was anticipated, have shown its wisdom. Jerusalem, with all its hallowed associations, was not to be the great center of effort; Palestine, sacred as the home of the chosen people, consecrated by the presence, the life and death of our Lord, and by the memories of the early church, was not yet to receive the gospel anew. The little burying ground, with its precious dust, on a central part of Mount Zion, near the so-called Tomb of David, since reserved as a burying place for all sects of Protestant Christians, is almost the only memorial of the work of the American Board in Palestine. Parsons was to find an early grave in Alexandria; Fisk in Beirut; and Jonas King, who three times went up to Jerusalem in the hope of planting the banner of the cross on its walls, was to spend his days in Athens. William Goodell, who left his native land in 1822, in the joyous expectation of living and laboring, dying and rising in the resurrection of the just from the Holy City, was never there. The time for the ingathering of the Jews had not yet come. The fullness of the Gentiles had not come in. The intrigues of Rome, political distractions, war, and pestilence were prayerfully and wisely interpreted to mean that the efforts of the Board should be turned to other portions of the Empire. The missionary forces fell back upon Malta. Rufus Anderson, then Assistant Secretary, goes out to confer with them. The situation is carefully surveyed and new plans are formed. Work is renewed in Beirut, and the foundations are laid of the Syria Mission, whose influence was to reach the millions that use the Arabic language, from the west coast of Africa to the great wall of the Celestial Empire. Smith and Dwight were sent on an exploring expedition through Asia Minor, and may almost be said to have discovered the Oriental Christian churches, so little were they known to the world prior to their observations. Goodell — with an eye upon the Turks by and by — busies himself for a time in translating the New Testament into the Armeno-Turkish, then follows up the acquaintance he had made with Armenians in Syria, and removes to Constantinople, — a city that was henceforth to be the chosen field of his labors.

On that 9th of June, 1831, when the first missionary of this Board entered the harbor of the city of Constantine, the Turkish government, as a political power, was in its decline. Russia, faithful to the lessons of Peter and Catherine, was steadily nearing Constantinople. The Turkish fleet had just been destroyed at Navarino; Greece had gained her independence. The necessity of internal reforms was recognized by the Sultan, and attempted, with little success, against the usages of Islam.

Constantinople, with its suburbs, contained a population estimated at 1,000,000, of whom one half were Moslems, one third Greeks and Armenians, and the rest a motley crowd from all parts of the world. There was a similar mixture of races in all the large towns and cities of the Empire. Only here and there were to be found villages of a single class, — Greek, Turkish, or Armenian. Each race was proud of its nationality and of its religion, which was largely a symbol of nationality. Nominal Christians were met with everywhere. Unhappily for the cause of Christ, the



Christianity of this portion of the world had become thoroughly corrupted and paganized before the fall of the Byzantine Empire, and was justly an object of contempt to the followers of Mohammed. It had become a religion of charms, of relics, of miraculous pictures, of superstitions, not to say of idolatrous rites and worship in an unknown tongue, manipulated by an ignorant, degraded, selfish priesthood. Smith and Dwight found no pulpit in any of their churches, and nothing that deserved the name of religious instruction. The establishment of the Ottoman Empire, by placing Christianity on the defensive, had indeed saved it from utter ruin, and that was all. Humiliated, oppressed, but not destroyed, it remained an ecclesiastical system with its rites and ceremonies, but a religion without morality and without life. So far as related to honesty, integrity, and honor among men, the Moslems compared favorably with the so-called Christians.

It soon became evident that there was no hope of reaching the Moslems so long as the actual Christianity which they saw around them failed to command their respect. The first thing to be done was to attempt a reform of these old churches; and Divine Providence had prepared the way.

In one of the last papers from the hand of the late Secretary Treat, he described, in his happiest style, how Mohammed II., in 1453, opened the door for William Goodell to enter Constantinople. "Had the Greeks remained in possession of their ancient capital, or had the Russian army advanced from Adrianople in 1829, and seized the chief city of the Empire, American missionaries would have had no place in those parts. He who saw the end from the beginning made the Turkish government a covered way, under which the American missionaries could freely and safely enter at the appointed hour and preach all 'the words of this life.'"<sup>1</sup>

At this time the Armenians were the most intelligent and influential class at the capital. A letter of Dr. King on leaving Syria, four years before, in which he gave his reasons for not being a Papist, and thus indirectly set forth the prevalent errors of the Armenian church, excited great interest at Constantinople, and led the Patriarch and other high ecclesiastics to attempt some important reforms. Mr. Goodell, therefore, received a hearty welcome, — the Patriarch assuring him that he loved him so much, and his country so much, that had not Mr. Goodell come to visit him he must needs have gone to America to see Mr. Goodell. For a time the missionary was listened to with much interest. But it was not long before the hierarchy discovered that the gospel in its purity was utterly inconsistent with the rites to which they were accustomed, and with the prerogatives they had asserted. A sharp and bitter persecution followed. Men who had embraced the truth were subjected to the severest trials, and an order was secured from the Sultan for the expulsion of the missionaries. Armenian, Greek, and Moslem combined to crush out the new religion.

But it was not in the divine plan that the missionaries should be driven from their posts. Their enemies were scattered. The Empire was brought to the brink of ruin in its conflict with Mohammed Ali, and saved only by the intervention of the allied powers. The Sultan was stricken down by the hand of death. Personal calamities fell on the leading persecutors among the Armenians, till it was a common remark that God was taking the side of the persecuted; and the new Sultan, on the 3d of November, 1839, issues the first formal Bill of Rights, the Magna Charta of Turkey, — the first in a series of concessions that has ended with the guarantee of religious liberty throughout the Empire to a degree hardly known even in Europe, outside of the British Isles. The darkest hour was just before the dawn.

Twenty-one years have passed since the inauguration of missions to the Levant. Goodell, Dwight, and Schaffler have become identified with the capital; Schneider has preached the first sermon in Turkish at Broosa, and is preparing to hold the

<sup>1</sup> *Missionary Herald*, vol. lxxiii., p. 36.



great audiences of Aintab in rapt and tearful attention, as he tells the story of a Saviour's love and sacrifice; and Powers has written the first hymn, and begun a work in Turkish hymnology which he is to continue at Antioch, when the infirmities of age forbid other service for the Master. Legh Richmond's "*Dairyman's Daughter*," translated into Armenian, has been blessed to a rich work of grace in Nicomedia. Trebizond has been occupied as a station; Erzroom is soon to follow. Jonas King is striking heavy blows for religious liberty, which he is to continue through much persecution and trial till the end of a long and honored life. Justin Perkins and Dr. Grant have begun work among the Nestorians, and laid the foundations of those seminaries which are to witness wonders of grace, and embalm forever the names of Stoddard, Wright, Rhea, Fidelia Fiske, and others, their loved co-laborers unto the kingdom of God. In Syria the press has been busy; flourishing schools have been begun; and, best of all, the gospel has had one of its choicest illustrations in the singular devotion and lofty faith of Asaad Shidiak, the martyr of Lebanon.

#### SECOND PERIOD, 1839-1860.

II. Thus broadly has the work of the Board opened out in all directions. It has been a period of experiment and of laying foundations. The gospel has now come to be understood in its true character as a renovating power, and the lines of opposition have been sharply drawn. Another twenty-one years are to pass of steady and persistent conflict and of steady and persistent advance, till nearly all the great centres of influence, from the Bosphorus to the Euphrates, are becoming centres of gospel light and of educational forces, and the Hatti Humayoun, the formal charter of religious liberty and of equal rights to all classes, is wrung from the Porte by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. Formally given in 1856, it was not duly proclaimed and made the law of the land till 1860.

This remarkable concession to the Protestants, granted in view of obligations to the English government for aid in the Crimean war, was almost as unexpected a sequel to that war as were the recent terms secured in the Berlin Congress.

Only the briefest reference can here be made to some of the more prominent events of this second period, and to such as stand in immediate relations to the present condition of the work of evangelization.

An important reformation had been begun. Hundreds of the more intelligent classes were looking with favor on the movement. Hitherto those who had embraced evangelical views had remained connected with the old community, and the missionaries preferred to have them do so. It was no part of their plan to set up a new organization, but to revive a spiritual life in the old. The higher ecclesiastics, however, some of whom had for a time shown much interest in the truth, saw the drift too plainly, and, after some years of vain effort by argument and the milder forms of persecution, resumed more active measures, and deliberately cut off from their communion all who would not accept the superstitions and errors of the old church, re-affirmed in the most offensive form. There was now no alternative. To secure protection of life and property under the Turkish government, a separate organization was necessary, and the first evangelical church in Turkey was duly instituted in Constantinople on the 1st of July, 1846, followed immediately by others at Nicomedia, Adabazar, and Trebizond. Protestantism now first flung its banners to the breeze; henceforth a power in the Empire. The next year Protestants were recognized as an independent community; and in 1850 a charter was signed by the Sultan, placing them on the same basis as other Christian communities within his domain.

But decrees of sultans, extorted by outside pressure, are not easily enforced. The priesthood could excite the ignorant prejudices of the people; Turkish governors and local officials could be bribed; the central government was far off; the long delays



of justice made men ready to risk penalties, provided their ends were gained. Hence, though victory was sure in the end, a battle was to be fought in almost every new place that was entered. In such circumstances men hesitated to leave their old associations, much as Hindoos shrink from leaving their caste. Some lacked the moral courage to do so; others hoped for a reform in the old church, and imitated the Protestants in the establishment of schools, and in the introduction of religious services better suited to the wants of the people. Yet against all odds the work of evangelization went on, till, by the year 1860, the field of operations had nearly reached its present limits. Byington and Clarke had begun their labors among the Bulgarians; Farnsworth and Leonard were sending back words of cheer from Cesarea; Allen, Wheeler, and Barnum were laying foundations at Harpoot; Walker was rejoicing in the special blessing of God on his labors at Diarbekir; Williams was assigned to Mardin; Marsh was writing from Mosul that there was a work in that city which the native brethren believed would go on, even though no missionary ever set foot again within its walls. The missionaries in Central Turkey reported still more remarkable progress of the truth at Marash, Aintab, and Kessab, — a thousand persons out of a population of eighteen hundred at the latter place in attendance at the dedication of the Protestant church. The names of Schneider, Powers, Morgan, Pratt, White, and others are cherished still in grateful remembrance of those days of grace and blessing from on high. Smith and Thompson of the Syria mission had made the Christian world their debtors by their valuable contributions to Biblical literature; Druze and Maronite stayed their deeds of blood as they neared the presence of Calhoun; and Henry Jessup was already holding crowds of Arabs in rapt attention, as he told how the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.

This second period, despite all opposition, closes with hope for the future. The political horizon is clearer; the gospel has proved itself the power of God unto salvation to hundreds of souls, and is widely recognized as connected with the progress and best culture of the age.

#### THIRD PERIOD, 1860-1878.

III. The third period in the history of the Turkish missions is marked by the completed preparation for the work of evangelization. The more important things to be considered are the native churches attaining to independence; the development of a native ministry by higher institutions of learning; the social and moral enfranchisement of woman; the translation of the Scriptures into the principal languages of the empire, and the creation of a Christian literature; the respect and confidence earned by missionaries and by the native churches, thus illustrating and commending the gospel to all classes; and, last of all, the results of the war and of the Berlin Congress.

1. In consequence of the persecution of the early converts, and the great distress to which they were often reduced, they came to depend on outside assistance altogether too much for their best spiritual welfare. Both the churches and their ministers felt that they were to be supported in large measure by foreign funds. The results were favorable neither to their best Christian life, nor to their best moral influence over those still remaining in the old communions. The most successful efforts towards bringing the native churches to just views and the best practice in supporting their own institutions were made in the Central and in the Eastern Turkey missions. The labors of Dr. Azariah Smith at Aintab, of Dr. Pratt and others at Marash, and especially of Messrs. Wheeler, Barnum, and Allen at Harpoot, were of the utmost value in this regard. It was a long and difficult struggle. Men who had long been dependent were quite unwilling to strike out for themselves. But proof was soon given of the possibility of success in such efforts, and the volume published by Mr. Wheeler, entitled "*Ten Years on the Euphrates*," had very great influence not only



in the Turkish Empire, but throughout all the missions of the Board, and of other boards, in effecting a radical reform in missionary methods.

2. Essential, however, to the plan of developing independent native churches was an educated ministry to care for these churches, and educated men to be leaders in all departments of thought and effort. Bebek Seminary, established by Dr. Hamlin, had accomplished a great work. Some of the young men educated in that institution were already competent preachers and able pastors in some of the largest churches. The possible character that might be developed in the native ministry was happily illustrated in their success. After a time it became necessary to supply thorough instruction in theological schools. These were, however, hardly to be called theological schools. They embraced the character, in some degree, both of the college and of the seminary, and might rather be termed collegiate theological institutions, as expressing more precisely their true office and character. On this plan were founded seminaries at Marsovan, Harpoot, Marash, and Mardin; but ere long it was found necessary to carry the work of education still farther, and Dr. Hamlin led the way in establishing Robert College at Constantinople. The Syrian Protestant College followed at Beirut; then Central Turkey College at Aintab; and more recently Armenia College at Harpoot. The four institutions have had an attendance of over five hundred students preparing themselves to be the leaders of reform, in whatever measures are needful for the social and moral elevation of their countrymen. Through these institutions a body of men is being prepared to take up the work of the American missionaries, and leave them to go to the regions beyond.

3. Of quite as vital moment to the success of the missionary enterprise in the Turkish Empire is the social and moral enfranchisement of woman. The great offense of Islam against the highest civilization of mankind, and constituting a bar to all true progress, is the treatment of woman. Woman, the drudge and slave of man in this life, is denied the hope of immortality, because denied even the possession of a soul. More wisely than we thought have we been preparing for her restoration to her true place in the social economy. Is it not more than an accident that from the heights of Scutari an institution, reared by the generous offerings of the Christian women of these United States, and devoted to the social and spiritual elevation of their sex in the very center of Mohammedan power, looks down on the mosque of St. Sophia, and on the palaces and seraglios of sultans? Little, comparatively, had been done for woman in Turkey prior to the beginning of this period. The influence of Mohammedanism had been felt hitherto throughout the Christian communities, and woman had shared most deeply in the prevailing degradation, ignorance, and superstition. Smith and Dwight, in their tour in 1829, did not hear of a single school anywhere for the education of girls. For many years the attention of the missionaries was turned primarily and mainly to the general work of preaching the gospel, and little special effort was made in behalf of women. The wives of the missionaries improved such opportunities as were presented to them, and three or four unmarried ladies had been employed in girls' schools, with special reference to educating the wives of native pastors and preachers. But during the last few years, a large number of thoroughly educated Christian women have been sent out, to engage in labors more immediately in behalf of their sex. Working at first through the seminaries, in a little time they begin to labor in the homes of the people; go out on tours with missionaries; visit their former pupils; and establish girls' schools at various points away from the main centers. Their influence has been felt widely outside of their immediate sphere of labor. At Eski Zagra, some years since, a Bulgarian woman, loyal to her old church, pointed out to a missionary lady a fine, large stone building, that had been erected for a girls' school in that city, saying, "We owe this to you missionaries. Had you not come, nothing of the kind would have been provided." In no one respect has a greater change been wrought in the



popular mind throughout the Turkish Empire than in regard to the position of woman; and had nothing else been accomplished by our missionary work, that were enough to justify all the expenditure incurred. The Home at Constantinople, the seminaries at Samokov, Broosa, Manisa, Marsovan, Aintab, Marash, Harpoot, and Mardin, are the central lights irradiating the darkness around.

4. The Scriptures are now for the first time offered to the people in their own native languages. The last line of the last translation — that into the Osmanli Turkish — was written on the 25th of May, three weeks before the Congress convened that was to give it free course in the Empire; and we are now prepared to circulate the Scriptures among all its principal nationalities, and in a form that commands the respect and confidence of their best scholars. When we reflect that the early churches of Asia Minor were led into the errors and superstitions which have since degraded them and broken down their influence largely for want of the Scriptures in the language of the people, to be their stay and guide and moral support, we may the better appreciate the importance of this work of translation, on which so much time, labor, and scholarship have been expended.

Next to the Scriptures, and a most important auxiliary, is a Christian literature, already reckoned by hundreds of millions of pages, embracing a wide range of works for educational objects and religious culture. Not the least important part of this is the religious periodical in five different languages, sending its messages week by week into all parts of the Empire. Who shall estimate the value of the labors of such men as Goodell, Riggs, Schauffler, and later of Pratt and Herrick, of Smith and Van Dyck, in their offering to the populations of the Empire the Word of God in their native tongues? or the hardly less important service to the cause of Christ and civilization, of those who have developed so varied and so extensive a literature?

5. Another fact to be considered in this connection, and which seemed necessary to complete the preparation of the public mind of all classes to receive the gospel, is the respect and esteem won for the Christian name by missionaries, especially during the last two or three years, by their labors in behalf of sufferers from the famine and the war. All the prejudice excited through the devices of ecclesiastics, and the gross misrepresentations of the character and motives of missionaries, have given way to love and admiration, and they are now welcome in thousands of homes before closed against them. The story of Eski Zagra, of Erzroom, of the men and women who during the past two years have given their time and strength, and life even, to the relief of the multitudes about them, constitutes one of the brightest pages in the annals of mankind.

Next to the regard for missionaries, and quite as influential on all classes, — Moslem as well as nominally Christian, — is the esteem in which evangelical Christians are held by the people, indicated by such remarks as these: "Protestants will not lie." "Protestants can be trusted." So when Protestants have been brought before Turkish courts, the very fact that they are Protestants has often led to an instant discharge without a hearing. And even in the wild mountains of Koordistan, during the last year, a savage Koord accepted the word of a Protestant when on the point of robbing and plundering his household, on this simple ground: "I can believe you. You are a Protestant." There has thus been gained the great vantage-ground for laboring with all classes of the people. Till this was won, it was hopeless to attempt labor among Moslems. They pointed to Christians as no better than themselves, and the argument could not be refuted. It was necessary that a purer Christianity, and one worthy of the name, should be presented to them. That work has been accomplished, and now, as never before, are we prepared to push the work of evangelization, not among nominal Christians only, but among the Moslems also.

6. Nor ought we to omit other indirect results of the missionary enterprise from the presence and labors, at so many different centres, of so large a number of



educated Christian men and women from this country. Other causes have had a share which we would not overlook; but if the superiority of western civilization is now recognized by a postal and telegraph system, by the beginnings of railways, by the use of iron-clads and Martini-Henry rifles; if Mohammedan doctors are skillful in expounding the Koran so as to admit of the Code Napoleon in courts of justice, and other innovations in keeping with the spirit of the age; if men of worthier character are sought to fill official stations; if less and less regard is shown for idols and images, and more and more for religious instruction in the old churches of the Christian name; if a higher standard of morals exists, and honest dealing commands respect; if a wide-spread interest in education has been awakened among all classes, represented by hundreds of schools, in which our text-books are used and our methods of instruction imitated, — it is largely due to American missionaries. A higher civilization has followed the introduction of the gospel, compelling the conviction that the truth is with us.

And now, at last, when in these various lines the work of preparation seemed complete, Divine Providence interposes to clear away the last hindrances to the free and full promulgation of the gospel. The power of Islam is broken; her military prestige destroyed; one third of the population delivered from their bondage; and religious liberty secured to a large portion of the remainder, under the protection of England. The selfish aims of the Great Powers of the world are overruled in the interest of the Kingdom of Christ. It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. The object set forth by Russia as her motive for engaging in the war is realized; the Christian races of the Turkish Empire are delivered from their bondage; the compensation justly anticipated by Russia as her due for the service is magnanimously given up; and that portion of the Empire where the great work of Protestant missions has been carried on is placed under the Protectorate of Protestant England.<sup>1</sup>

All through this late terrible war, — terrible in its miseries to all classes of an oppressed people, terrible in its scenes of suffering and outrage, — the Board and its missionaries have stood with their loins girt about and their lamps burning: knowing no distinction of race or religion; knowing no political interest, whether Turkish or Russian, but only men in suffering and wretchedness, and Christ and his cause; confident always that in some way and at some time the wrath of man would be made to praise God, that religious freedom would be secured, and that the work begun by American missionaries, the fruit of the consecration and toil and prayers of American Christians, would go forward to a yet greater success.

The action of the Berlin Congress, in opening the way for the free development of the work of evangelization in the Ottoman Empire, constitutes an era in the history of modern missions. It was the recognition of the missionary enterprise on the part of the Great Powers of the world. Freedom of religious opinion for all men, whatever their nationality or religion, finds acknowledgment in elaborate phrase five times over in the language of the treaty, — not altogether unlike, in solemn import for the destinies of an Empire, to the refrain that comes in again and again in the 107th Psalm: "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

<sup>1</sup> England is to complete what Russia began. In assuming this grave responsibility England has given bonds to the Christian world that she will worthily fulfill the trust. It is a political necessity, at home and abroad, from which there is no escape. The Official Journal of St. Petersburg of August 7, referring to the Congress and indirectly to the Protectorate, remarks: "Russia has secured the right of watching over its work, and she will not let it be reduced to a nullity."

Whatever may be the result, whether all or less than is anticipated, there can be no doubt that in Turkey, as in India, "all great human interests — peace, order, education, morality, and Christian progress" — are to be furthered by the Protectorate. Such is the conviction and the glad hope of every missionary.



The United States of America had no formal representative in the political discussions of that Congress, — no great name in the list of diplomats; but in the larger interests of mankind, in those interests that in this country have had their fullest development, and which give her a right to be among the nations of the earth, she was represented. It was fitting that an American, an American scholar, an American Christian scholar, a corporate member of the American Board,<sup>1</sup> should have been called by a special Providence of God to this high service; a man, too, who represented the higher forms of the Christian faith, the traditions of the Puritan Commonwealth, the spirit of the fathers of New England, — a spirit that finds new expression in mission stations, churches, and schools on which the sun never sets. It was time, also, that the Great Powers of the world should recognize missions as an important factor in the social and moral elevation of the human race. It was fitting that this recognition should be rendered to the American Board, as the oldest great missionary organization of the United States. It was a worthy tribute also to that venerable man, so long identified with the history of this Board, that his volumes on the Oriental churches should be laid on the table before the Congress, as a record of what American Christians had done to settle once and forever this vexed Eastern Question!

Shall we not recognize this repeated interposition of the Head of the Church in behalf of the cause of missions in the Ottoman Empire with humble gratitude, and with new and earnest endeavor follow his leading to the final triumph of his kingdom? The moral forces involved in the conflict, and now immediately connected with this Board, are represented by 132 devoted men and women from our churches and our best institutions of learning; by over 500 native preachers and teachers in active service; by 92 churches, with a membership of over 5,000; by 20 higher institutions of learning, — colleges, seminaries, and boarding-schools, — with an attendance of over 800 youth of both sexes; by 300 common schools, with an attendance of over 11,000; by 285 places of worship, scattered as so many light centers through the land, from the Balkans to the Bosphorus, and from the Bosphorus to the Tigris, where Sabbath after Sabbath over 25,000 men and women are gathered to listen to the gospel message; by the Scriptures in the various languages of the people, now distributed by tens of thousands of copies, and a Christian literature, from Sabbath-school lesson papers up to elaborate volumes on the evidences of religion and the history of the church; all now confirmed by the living examples of the power of the gospel, compelling the respect and enlisting the confidence of all, and reinforced by the wonderful events of the past year, when the vision of the prophet seemed realized, — “and kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers.” These are the moral forces now brought into the field, the fruitage of the patient labors and prayers of American Christians of the past sixty years; of the sainted dead, who lived and labored for this cause at home and abroad, some of whose names are precious in the memory of the church, and all safe in the Master’s record; and of the living co-laborers unto this same blessed enterprise, whether at home or abroad.

The convergence of these forces, moving on different lines, — their concentration at this particular juncture, — marks the presence of the Leader of the sacramental hosts, and may well fire our hearts and nerve our arms for the final struggle. Now, as never before, does it become us to push forward, and to turn to account the vantage-ground now gained and the preparation now so complete. Many of the followers of the false prophet recognize the doom of Islam and the speedy triumph of Christianity. It is only a question of time, and whether sooner or later depends, under the blessing of God, on the expectant faith and efforts of American Christians, to whom, preëminently, has been accorded this great privilege of republishing the unsearchable riches of Christ in Bible lands.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Joseph P. Thompson, LL. D.



We enter now on a new period. Shall the future record be of a finished work, of a new era of Christian civilization in a region of the world so rich in all the elements of material progress, so precious in its memories of the past, and of such vast possibilities of influence on the destinies of mankind?