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BY  
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SYRIA.

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THE GREEK CHURCH AND PROTESTANT MISSIONS ; OR, MISSIONS TO THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES.

BY REV. HENRY H. JESSUP, D.D., BEIRUT, SYRIA.

THE Oriental churches may be divided into six great classes, comprising fourteen different sects :

I. The Monophysite, Eutychian, or anti-Chalcedonian sects, who reject the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon held in 451. These are four : the Armenians, Jacobites (or Syrians), Copts, and Abyssinians. They all have their own distinct ritual and calendar, are hostile to each other and to all other Christian sects, have a married parish clergy, and reject the primacy of the Pope.

II. The anti-Ephesian, who reject the Council of Ephesus in 431. These are the Nestorians or Chaldeans. They have a married clergy, a high reverence for the Scriptures, and but little picture worship.

III. The Orthodox Greek, who accept the seven General Councils. The Greek Church is Rome decapitated—a priestly system without a pontifex, an exclusive traditional Church, which yet allows the Bible

to the people. In the Turkish Empire its patriarchs and the most of its bishops are foreigners, speaking only Greek and ignorant of the customs and wants of the people, though of late the Syrians of the Greek Church demand bishops of the Arab race. The parish clergy are married and generally most illiterate. The present Anglican bishop of Jerusalem remarked to a traveller recently that "no one but those who lived in the East could be aware of the gross ignorance and immorality of the Greek priests." Ordinarily the practice in appointing priests is that of Jeroboam, who "made priests of the lowest of the people."

IV. The Maronite, a papal sect, the ancient Monothelites, who accepted the papacy in 1182 A.D. They are chiefly peasants in Northern Lebanon, an ignorant people, and an educated priesthood sworn to allegiance to Rome, and yet like all the above in having a married parish clergy. The Maronite patriarch is regarded by his people as hardly inferior to the Pope.

V. The six Oriental papal sects, who are converts from six of the above sects to the Church of Rome. They are the Papal Greek, Papal Armenian, Papal Syrian, Papal Nestorian, Papal Coptic, and Papal Abyssinian. They maintain their own calendars and saint days, the marriage of the clergy, and various ancient prerogatives

which the papal legates are now striving most assiduously to abolish.

VI. The Latins, a small community composed chiefly of attachés of the French and Italian monasteries, who have conformed in all respects to the Church of Rome.

These sects all agree sufficiently both in the common truth and the common error which they hold, to be classed as one—one in their need of reformation, one in being an obstacle to the Christianization of the Mohammedan world.

They all hold the doctrine of transubstantiation, of baptismal regeneration, priestly absolution, Mariolatry and saint worship, image and picture worship, auricular confession, and prayers for the dead. Their patriarchs and bishops are celibate, but the parish clergy are generally allowed to marry once. Instruction in the Scriptures is virtually unknown.

The numbers of these sects, not including Russia and Greece, are as follows : Greeks, 1,000,000 ; Maronites, 230,000 ; Nestorian Catholics, 20,000 ; Greek Catholics, 50,000 ; Jacobite Syrians, 30,000 ; other papal sects, 300,000 ; Nestorians, 140,000 ; Nestorians in India, 116,000 ; Armenians, 3,000,000 ; Copts, 200,000 ; Abyssinians, 4,500,000 ; total, 9,586,000.

Thus we have about ten millions of nominal Christians scattered throughout the

great centres and seats of Mohammedan population and power.

These Christian sects have never felt the impulse of such an awakening as shook all Europe in the days of the Reformation. About thirty years after the death of Luther the German Protestant divines opened correspondence with the Patriarch of Constantinople, but he rejected their overtures with contempt. The Greek Church "knew not the day of its visitation." For three hundred years after that time, with the exception of the sending of papal legates, hardly a movement was made in Europe toward modifying the state of the Eastern churches.

In the year 1819 the first American missionaries came to Western Asia, bringing the Gospel of Christ to the Mohammedans, but in their explorations they came in contact with these various Oriental Christian sects. They found them to be ignorant, illiterate, superstitious, idolatrous, despised, and hated by the Mohammedans.

Yet they were instructed "not to interfere with the Oriental churches, but to visit the ecclesiastics and persuade them, if possible, to abandon their errors, which are repugnant to the Word of God."

They gave themselves, therefore, to the work of education, Bible distribution, and the press. But in 1832 the Greek bishops in Latakiah, Tripoli, Damascus, and other

places gathered the Arabic Bibles (printed in London from the version of the Roman propaganda) and burned them in the courtyards of the churches. In 1830 the Maronite patriarch put to death Asaad-esh-Shidiak, the martyr of Lebanon, for reading the Bible and rejecting the errors of Rome.

In September, 1835, Rev. Drs. Eli Smith and W. M. Thomson and other missionaries, in reply to the request of a papal Greek priest from Acre to profess the Protestant faith, adopted the following minutes: 1. It is not an object with us to draw individuals from other native Christian sects and thereby increase our own denomination. 2. Yet according to the principles of the churches who have sent us hither, when a member of any native sect, giving satisfactory evidence of piety, desires the sacraments of us, we cannot refuse his request, however it may interfere with his previous ecclesiastical relations." On this basis individuals of the various Oriental churches, including bishops, priests, and others, were received to the Lord's table, together with baptized converts from the Druzes.

But the number of enlightened men and women increased in various parts of the land, and they demanded the right to be organized into a distinct Protestant Church of their own.

This request was finally acceded to, and

the first Protestant native Syrian church was organized in 1848. Since that time twenty-five other churches have been organized in this mission, with about 1700 communicants from among Moslems, Jews, Druzes, Greeks, Maronites, Nusairiyeh, and Bedawin Arabs.

The whole number of Protestant churches in the empire is now about 175, with 20,000 communicants and nearly 100,000 adherents. The majority of these communities are undoubtedly from the Oriental churches, and we are now met by the high ecclesiastical party in the Anglican Church with the protest that this whole movement is a mistake. It is denounced as proselytism, as an attempt to build up one Christian Church at the expense of another. It is said that these Greeks and Maronites and others have the creeds of Christendom, and we have no right to receive their followers into our churches. We do not propose to reply to this charge by the "*et tu Brute*" countercharge that these same high sacerdotalists do not hesitate in England and America to receive scores of Methodists and Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Friends to their own church, without feeling that they have committed the heinous sin of proselytism. The work of missions in the East can be justified without such a personal *argumentum ad hominem*.

Let us consider the whole question calmly, in the light of God's Word and Providence.

The chief and ultimate object of missionary work in Western Asia is the conversion of the Mohammedans to the Christian faith. They number 180,000,000 in Asia and Africa, and constitute one of the great influential factors in the future religious history of the race. The Gospel is to be given to them. All the Christian churches which have any missionary zeal admit this. Thus far they are almost unaffected by the great missionary movements of the nineteenth century.

They believe in one God and in the divine origin of the Old and New Testaments ; but regard the Scriptures as corrupted, deny the divinity of Christ, ignore the spirituality of religion, and look upon Christians as their hereditary enemies. Having seen only the Oriental type of Christianity, they despise its immorality and idolatry, and protest against the creature worship and image worship of both the Greek and Latin churches. Images, pictures, and saints are the abomination of the Mohammedan world.

The pagans of the second century objected to Christianity that it had neither altars nor images ; the Moslem of the nineteenth century objects to Christianity that it has only images and altars.

The Christian missionary to-day urges a Mohammedan to accept Christianity. He is met with the derisive reply, "Thank God we are not idol worshippers as are you Christians, and God willing, we never will be. We have lived among Christians twelve hundred years, and we want none of your creature worship. There is no God but God." The missionary may protest and explain, but until he can show the Moslem a pure Christianity in life and doctrine, and illustrate by living examples the Bible ideal of a Christian church, his appeals and arguments will be in vain.

This state of things confronted all Christian missionaries in Oriental lands fifty years ago, and it confronts them to-day.

These Oriental churches are among the greatest obstacles to the conversion of their Mohammedan neighbors. Protestants generally will admit this with regard to the Church of Rome, and at the same time there are those who contend that the Greek Church is purer, and hence should be intrusted with the work of evangelizing the Moslems and Jews in Western Asia. As this question is now a "burning" one in the Anglican Church, let us ask what is the teaching and practice of the Greek Church in Western Asia to-day? Our reply will be taken chiefly from their own ecclesiastical books. The XIXth Article of faith of

the Church of England declares that "as the churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith." And in Article XXII., "The Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration as well of Images as of Reliques, and also Invocation of Saints is repugnant to the Word of God."

I. In the Greek Catechism, Jerusalem ed., page 82, we read, "It is one of the presumptuous sins against the Holy Spirit, to hope for salvation without works to merit it." It is plainly taught that justification can only be obtained as a reward of meritorious actions. In this the Greeks and Latins agree, only that in the Latin theology "the merit of good works is acquired only through the atonement of Christ, while the Greek Church puts into a motley confusion Christ, the sacraments, the priest, and good works." \* Rejecting the scriptural doctrine of justification by faith, the door is thrown open for endless error and confusion.

II. A sacrament is defined to be "a sacred performance whereby grace acts in a mysterious manner upon man. In other

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\* "Researches into the Religions of Syria," by Rev. John Wortabet, M.D., London, 1860, an admirable book which should be reprinted and widely read.

words, it is the power of God unto salvation." \* "The sacraments are divided into two classes : first, such as are absolutely necessary in themselves—namely, baptism, holy chrism, and communion. These are indispensably necessary for procuring salvation and eternal life ; for it is impossible to be saved without them. The second division embraces those sacraments, the necessity for which proceeds from something else."

III. "The benefits conferred by baptism are the remission of original sin, the remission of all past actual sins, and grace to sustain the believer in his conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil."

In baptism the first step is exorcising the evil spirit by an elaborate prayer of conjuration. Then the priest breathes into the mouth of the candidate, on his forehead, and on his bosom, each time saying, "Dispel from him every evil and polluted spirit which may lurk in his heart," etc.

Then the candidate or his godfather renounces the devil, his works, his angels, his service, and his pomp.

The water and oil are then consecrated. In the prayer of consecration for the water is the petition, "Make it a fountain of immortality, granting sanctification, forgiving

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\* Universal Catechism, Part I., sec. 10.

sins, dispelling diseases, destroying devils," etc. Similar language is used in consecrating the oil.

The person is then immersed three times, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This trine immersion is regarded as essential, and all converts to the Greek Church must be rebaptized. In this respect the Greek Church is far more exclusive than the Church of Rome. It does not admit that the Pope or the Archbishop of Canterbury has ever been baptized. Rome admits lay baptism, and baptism by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. The Greek Church insists on trine immersion by a Greek priest. An Anglian clergyman once asked permission to "assist" a Greek priest in his service in Nazareth. The priest politely informed him that as he had never been either baptized or ordained his request must be declined.

IV. After baptism the priest administers holy chrism. The oil for this purpose is a mixture of olive oil and aromatic substances made in a decoction by the bishop. The fuel used is the half-rotten and worn-out wood of the holy pictures (eikons), which have been worn off by the constant kissing of devout worshippers or so worm-eaten by age as to be useless.

The priest anoints the candidate's forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth, ears, breast,

hands, and feet in the form of a cross, saying, "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen." The communion is then administered equally to adults and infants. *Eucologion*, Jerusalem, 1856, (under inspection of Cyril, Patriarch of Jerusalem.)

V. As all sin, original and actual, committed before baptism is washed away by it, subsequent sins are pardoned by the sacrament of "repentance," "whereby he who confesses his sins is pardoned by Jesus Christ himself, through the absolution pronounced by the priest." After confession the priest says, "As to the sins which thou hast confessed, go in peace without the least anxiety."

VI. Penances, such as fasting over and above the appointed times, are imposed on the penitent, to "cleanse the conscience and give peace of mind." \*

VII. The Communion is a sacrificial mass, both a eucharistical and propitiatory sacrifice. In the liturgy of the mass hardly a vestige of the original institution of the Lord's Supper has been preserved. The priest takes a cake of bread in his left hand and the sacred spear in his right, touches the bread with the spear four times in the form of a cross, repeating words from Scripture. Deacon: "Lift up, O Lord." The

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\* Universal Catechism, Part I., sec. 10.

priest takes up the sacred bread, saying, "He was ent off out of the land of the living." He then inverts the bread in the silver plate. Deacon: "Slay, O Lord." The priest then slays the bread in the form of a cross, etc. Deacon: "Pierce, O Lord." The priest then pierces the right side of the cake.

The priest then takes another eake, and cutting off a part, takes it up on the point of the spear, saying, "In honor and commemoration of our most blessed lady Mary, the mother of God, whose virginity is perpetual, by whose intercessions accept, O God, this sacrifice upon thy heavenly altar." He then puts it on the right side of the sacred bread, saying, "Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir." He then cuts nine pieces from the cake, in commemoration of prophets; apostles, fathers, bishops, martyrs, saints, the bishop of the diocese, all the priests and deacons, "For those who built the temple, even for the forgiveness of their sins, . . . for those who die in hope of the resurrection, for those who present the bread;" and for all the quick and the dead whom the priest chooses to mention. Then, after various other prayers and ceremonies, the priest says, "Let both the bread and the mingled wine and water be transmuted and transformed by thy Holy Spirit."

The deacon then takes a fan and fans the holy substances and the priest says, " We present unto thee this reasonable sacrifice for the believers who are dead, for the primitive parents, for the fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, preachers, martyrs, confessors, hermits, and teachers, and for the soul of every just man who died in the faith."

At this juncture persons may be seen entering the inner temple where the priest is " sacrificing," and laying down pieces of money, at the same time repeating to him the names they wish to have mentioned and to receive a part of the benefit from the sacrifice. For a dead person masses are always performed specially.

An ex-Greek priest, now for twenty years a Protestant native preacher in Syria, has informed me that he could never hear the ringing sound of the money brought to him while reading the communion service, as a Greek priest, without a shudder, and this was one of the offensive rites of the Greek Church which drove him into Protestantism.

VIII. The Greek Church believes in the existence of a limbus wherein the souls of departed men are received and kept until the Day of Judgment. The Catechism teaches that " prayers offered in behalf of such as die in the faith without having yielded fruits meet for repentance are effica-

cious in helping them to obtain a blessed resurrection ; especially if such prayers are accompanied by the offering of the bloodless sacrifice, the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, and by alms offered in faith in behalf of them.”

IX. We now come to one of the most repulsive and unchristian features of the Greek Church, the worship of images. The Council of Constantinople (A.D. 754), composed of 338 bishops, enacted laws repressing the growing idolatry of the Eastern Church, but their triumph was brief. The infamous Irene, having first poisoned her husband in order to obtain the regency of the kingdom during the minority of her son, and then having deposed Paul, one of the iconoclasti, from the patriarchal chair of Constantinople and put Tarasius, her secretary, in his place, assembled in concert with Hadrian, the Roman pontiff, a council (A.D. 786), and through it established the worship of images. In spite of the opposition of Charlemagne and the decrees of the Council of Frankfort (A.D. 894), composed of 300 bishops, forbidding image worship, the Roman pontiff maintained it, and the Greek Church to this day defends it on account of the Seventh General Council at Nice in 786. The only difference between the Greek and Latin image worship is that the Greeks repudiate carved images and

statues, and use pictures painted on wood and canvas, the Greek word *eikon* meaning both pictures and images.

In the Synnaxar for the first Sunday in Lent is the gracious expression, "As to the impious infidels who are not willing to honor the holy images, we excommunicate and curse them, saying Anathema." And in the Horologion, Beirut ed., 1849, page 696, the crime of idolatry seems to reach its climax. In the prayers to the Virgin offered during Holy Week the curses of the Church are poured upon the heads of all those who do not worship images. "May the lips of the impious (hypocrites — *el-mu-nafikeen*) become dumb, who worship not thy revered likeness, O Mary, which was painted by Luke, the most holy evangelist, and by which we have been led to the faith."

It is a painful and sickening spectacle to enter a Greek church and see the crowds of worshippers burning incense, lighting tapers, and bowing before the filthy, painted boards and then devoutly kissing them and crossing themselves. Bishops, priests, deacons, and people vie with each other in honoring these creatures of the infamous Irene. In Bishop Blyth's Second Annual Report, July, 1890, page 23, he speaks of "the iconostasis in the Greek church in Damascus—a marble screen on which, some twelve feet from the ground (to avoid dangers of

iconolatry), are pictures of our Lord and his saints." Had the bishop looked farther in the church he would have seen a lower picture-stand, on which pictures are daily placed low enough down to be kissed by the people; and this is true in every Greek church.

In the Synnaxar for the first Sunday in Lent it is stated that Theophilus, the iconoclastic king (A.D. 830-40), "was smitten with an evil disease on account of his hostility to image worship; his mouth was rent open from ear to ear, and his abdominal viscera appeared; but on repenting and worshipping an image, his mouth was restored to its original state, and soon after he died." The restoration of image worship by his widow Theodora (A.D. 842) on the first Sunday of Lent has ever since been celebrated in the Greek Church as the feast of Orthodoxy, *πανήγυρις τῆς ὀρθοδοξίας*.

In the consecration of a newly painted picture the following words are used: "Send the grace of thy Holy Spirit and thy angel upon this holy image, in order that if any one pray by means of it, his request may be granted."

In a picture of the Trinity in a book published in Jerusalem, the Triune God is pictured in a group consisting of an old man, a young man, and a dove, and Anthimus, Patriarch of Jerusalem at the time, at-

tempts to justify the shocking sacrilege in labored argument.

No wonder that Mohammedans and Jews look with horror and loathing upon such a travesty of Christianity. No wonder that multitudes of Greek Christians in Russia and Turkey, with the open Bible before them, have made haste to "come out and be separate and touch not the unclean thing." Can an orthodox creed and historic antiquity justify such a glaring crime against God as this shameless idolatry ?

X. The Mariolatry of the Greek Church is also a grievous error and a stumbling-block in the way of Mohammedans.

The Greek Church believes that saints have not yet entered heaven, being in the limbus until the day of resurrection, and yet addresses prayers to them as mediators and intercessors with God. The sole intercession of Jesus Christ is repudiated, and Mary and the saints exalted into his place. The following petitions are culled from the Greek Prayer - Book (Horologion) : Page 678 : " We are lost through our many sins, turn us not away disappointed, for thou alone art our only hope." Page 680 : " Deliver us from all our distresses, for we take refuge in thee. We offer our souls and minds to thee." Page 704 : " Oh, thou who didst bear Jesus Christ, purge me with hyssop by thine intercession, for I am very vile."

“ Oh, thou who alone art the hope of Christians.” “ O Lady, most holy mother of God, grant that I may praise, bless, and glorify thee all the days of my life.” “ Oh, thou who art worthy of all praise, save from future punishment those who cry unto thee, Alleluia.”

The use of this word Alleluia (praise ye Jehovah) shows that the Greek Church in plain terms deifies the Virgin Mary, thus justifying the charge of gross polytheism brought by Mohammed against the Christianity of his day, and, as Sir William Muir justly says, “ By the cry, ‘ There is no God but God alone,’ to trample under foot the superstitions, picture worship, and Mariolatry that prevailed. For example, see in the Koran, Sura V., v. 125, ‘ And when the Lord shall say, O Jesus, son of Mary, didst thou say unto men, Take me and my mother for two Gods beside God? He shall answer, God forbid; it is not for me to say that which is not the truth.’ ”

The Mohammedans everywhere believe that the Trinity is a blasphemous elevation of a woman to a place in the Godhead. Is it strange that the Mariolatry of the Greek and Latin churches has become a “ rock of offence” to the whole Mohammedan world?

Space will not allow our giving details as to the worship of relics, and the prayers offered to the wood of the cross, and the

brutal deception of the holy fire, annually sanctioned and promoted by the patriarch, bishops, and priests of Jerusalem as a proof of the orthodoxy of the Greek Church. The patriarch admits it to be a fraud and an imposture, and yet sanctions it because the revenues need it and the people will have it.

The Greek Church stands condemned from its own authorized symbols as polytheistic, idolatrous, and unscriptural. It deserves all the denunciations hurled by Huss and Luther, Wickliffe and Knox upon the abominations of Rome.

What, then, is Reformed Protestant Christendom to do in view of these two great facts, the duty of Christianizing the Mohammedan world and the obstacles interposed by the idolatries of nominal Christians living among them?

The Oriental churches need the Gospel in its purity. How shall it be given to them?

I. One view has been to effect an outward ecclesiastical union between these sects and Protestant Christianity, on the basis of admitting the truth they hold, without agitating the question of their errors. The fatal objection to this is its absolute impracticability.

Union of Protestants with the Greek Church on the basis of intercommunion can never be effected, the Greek Church remaining as it is, until all Protestants have

submitted to trine immersion by a Greek priest. The concession must be all on one side. Let this be borne in mind, and the advocates of union with the Greek Church may be saved much needless mortification.

The modern attempts at fraternization with the Greek Church by Protestant bishops, canons, and clergy have only increased the contempt of the Greek clergy for Protestantism and their attachment to the traditions and superstitions of their fathers. After an address by a zealous Anglican in the Greek school in Beirut, full of laudation of the Greek Church, the young people were heard saying, Why should we not worship the Virgin and the saints and the holy pictures, for the Church of England approves it? As the venerable translator of the Bible into Arabic, the Rev. Dr. Van Dyck, recently wrote to an Anglican clergyman: "Union with the Greek Church is easy enough. Let the archbishops, bishops, and other clergy of the Church of England accept rebaptism and reordination at the hands of a Greek priest, together with the holy chrism; let the higher clergy put away their wives and live a celibate life, and let the rank and file of the English Church be rebaptized, adopt Mariolatry and picture worship, and all the idolatries of the Greek Church, and union will be easy enough, but on no other terms."

II. Another plan proposed is to reform the higher ecclesiastics and through them the people. The twelve labors of Hercules were slight compared with such a task. The patriarchs and bishops of the East are, as a class, wealthy, avaricious, masters of political intrigue, unscrupulous, and trained to hierarchical tyranny over the consciences of men, and will probably be the last class in the East to accept the Gospel in its simplicity. There are a few noble exceptions, men who would gladly hail a reformation, but find their hands tied and their efforts thwarted by the iron fetters of ecclesiastical despotism. The Greek Church is bound hand and foot to the Church of Greece and Russia, with whom tradition is supreme. No change in liturgies, prayers, doctrines, and usages would be possible without a council of the four patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria and the holy Synod of Russia, and such a council, for such an object, is about as likely as a council at Rome to abolish the papacy, or a council at Mecca to abolish Islam.

There is no evidence that the clergy desire a reform, and the laity have no voice. Archæolatry, avarice, and political power form a threefold cord which will not be easily broken. The mass of the clergy are ignorant and immoral, utterly indifferent to

spiritual reform, and the ignorant laity, whose war-cry in their contests with the Latins is the infallibility of the first Seven Councils, would mob their clergy if they proposed to cast out the pictures from the churches.

Simony and moral dishonesty are notorious among the higher clergy. In August, 1891, an intrigue was carried on by a high Greek ecclesiastic in Jerusalem to purchase the patriarchal chair of Antioch (in Damascus and Beirut) by the payment of £10,000, and the endowment of the chair with nearly £90,000 on his death.

It is humiliating to see godly men in the Protestant Church of England proposing to fraternize with such Oriental ecclesiastics.

III. A third scheme has been suggested and faithfully tried. It proposes to preach the Gospel and give the Bible to the people, leaving them in their own ecclesiastical relations, in the hope of reforming the Church from within.

This plan has been patiently tried in Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor without success. It is still on trial among the Nestorians. It has been found in the countries first named that no sooner do men read the Bible and know Christ experimentally, no sooner do they compare the New Testament Church with the rites, ceremonies, and priestly systems of the Oriental churches,

than they make haste to "come out and be separate." Enlightened New Testament students will not pray to a creature or worship a painted board. Nor, if they wished it, would their priests allow them to remain in a church whose laws they disobey.

The result has been that the people themselves have demanded and compelled the organization of a new Oriental Evangelical Church. This has been done in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor. It has vindicated the claims of Christianity to be a pure non-idolatrous religion. Mohammedans can see the Bible acted out in life in the teaching and practice of the Protestant churches. They are now beginning to believe that the Bible does not sanction idolatry, and that the Oriental churches have gone astray from the truth.

In the agreement in 1850 between Baron Bunsen and Archbishop Sumner with regard to the Jerusalem bishopric it is said :

"Duty requires a calm exposition of scriptural truth and a quiet exhibition of scriptural discipline; and where it has pleased God to give his blessing to it and the mind has become emancipated from the fetters of a corrupt faith, there we have no right to turn our backs upon the liberated captive and bid him return to his slavery or seek aid elsewhere."

This is a clear, calm, and Christian state-

ment of the case. The 20,000 communicants in the Protestant churches of the Turkish Empire are simply "liberated captives."

These Protestant churches are the "Sierra Leone" and the "Frere Town" in this dark Africa of Oriental sacerdotalism. An open Bible and a free salvation through faith in Christ are the right and the refuge of all these enslaved populations.

On the basis of Archbishop Sumner's noble utterance, the Church Missionary Society has pursued its admirable course of evangelization in Palestine for the last fifty years. It has opened schools, organized churches, and sowed the good seed of the Gospel. The sainted Bishops Gobat and Barclay followed the instructions of their archbishop, and welcomed many a liberated captive to the fold of Christ. A self-denying and conscientious band of missionaries, amid difficulties and obstacles found perhaps nowhere else on earth, amid a population demoralized and pauperized and perverted by the wholesale almshouse system of Greeks, Latins, Armenians, Moslems, and Jews who feed and house their adherents and thus well-nigh extinguish every spark of manliness and self-respect, have, in spite of such an environment, ennobled the name of Protestant Christianity, testified boldly to Moslems, Greeks, and Jews of a higher and

purser faith than any they have known, and, by the assiduous labors of the preacher, the teacher, the physician, the Biblewoman, the faithful nurse, and the colporteur, not a few of whom labor at their own charges, laid the foundations of a spiritual reformation, for which all God's people should offer hearty thanksgiving.

And now these good men and women, some of whom have grown gray in the missionary work, are taken to task for "prose-lytizing" among the adherents of the Holy Orthodox Church. The public press and missionary periodicals are full of the conflict raging between opposing policies of missionary work in Palestine. The Church Missionary Society, whose object is to "seek and to save that which was lost," advocates the principles of Archbishop Sumner, the same which have been acted on by all the American missions in Turkey since 1820.

The extreme Sacerdotal party, headed by Archdeacon Denison, advocate a policy so extraordinary that one can only explain it on the ground of ignorance of history, ancient and modern, or a blind infatuation. They sent a memorial, July 5th, 1891, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, representing :

"I. That English clergymen cannot legitimately labor for the conversion of Jews and Mohammedans in Syria and Palestine

without due mission and jurisdiction, to be given by the Orthodox Territorial Episcopate.

“ II. We observe with grave apprehension the prevalence of an opinion that English clergymen engaged in this work (whether with or without mission, as aforesaid) may lawfully, so long as they abstain from active proselytizing, receive into their congregations members of the Orthodox Church who are discontented with the ministrations of their lawful pastors. This proceeding seems to us to be a direct encouragement of a schismatical temper. They therefore anxiously hope

“ III. That no English clergyman will be allowed in the future so to receive any Orthodox Christian, whether child or adult, without the express permission of his lawful pastor.

“ IV. That all who have been so received in the past will be urged to obtain such permission, or, failing this, to return to their allegiance.

“ V. That no English clergyman will be allowed to undertake any spiritual work in Palestine without express commission from the Orthodox patriarch or bishop, granted to him either immediately or mediately through the Anglian bishop resident at Jerusalem.

“ VI. That in order to obviate all appear-

ance of the exercise of independent jurisdiction by any English bishop in Syria or Palestine, the use of such terms as diocese, or commissary or archdeacon, and the creation of anything approaching to diocesan organization be avoided."

One needs documentary evidence to prove that Protestant clergymen in the nineteenth century would sign such a document as the above ; yet it is signed by 4 archdeacons, 17 canons, and 68 clergymen—89 in all.

A question arises in the outset, Why should such devotees of legitimatism and Episcopal prerogatives ignore, in such an insulting manner, the ancient and historic Armenian and Latin patriarchs of Jerusalem ?

And why, if the Greek clergy have historic right to the territory, and are qualified to do all diocesan, parochial, and missionary work in Western Asia, should an Anglican bishop invade the sacred precincts even as a resident ?

And why, if Bishop Blyth must obtain "due mission and jurisdiction" to labor for Jews and Moslems, should he not carry the matter to its logical conclusion, and ask for "legitimate" baptism and "legitimate" ordination at the hands of the Greek bishop ? This would simplify the whole matter and at least secure the existence of one godly bishop among the Oriental clergy ; and

then, on his next visit to England, the new Græco-Anglican bishop could rebaptize and reordain the whole 89 memorialists, and relieve their minds of any doubt as to their orthodoxy.

But seriously, this memorial is a logical and consistent view from the sacerdotal standpoint.

The Orthodox Episcopate is everything. Simony, immorality, unscriptural teaching, idolatry, and Mariolatry are nothing—mere trifles. The fact that for twelve hundred years this haughty hierarchy has done nothing for the conversion of Moslems and Jews, and has cared to do nothing, and that its gross idolatries have made Mohammedans hate and spit upon the name of Christianity—all this is of no account.

These hierarchs have the only legitimate right to preach the Gospel to perishing Jews, Moslems, and pagans in all Western Asia and Northern Africa. If they do not preach, no matter. If their preaching would be a scandal and a shame, no matter. If they preached and prayed, asking that “the lips” of every Anglican clergyman and layman “be struck dumb” as impious hypocrites, because they will “not worship St. Luke’s picture of the Virgin Mary,” no matter. They are legitimate. If they keep Moslems and Jews—yes, and their own deluded followers—out of eternal life, it is well,

for the great object of a legitimate ecclesiastical system "is not the saving of immortal souls, for whom Christ died, but the maintenance of a machine for its own sake." \*

This narrow sacerdotal spirit would have kept Peter and Paul and James out of the "legitimate" synagogues where they preached Christ and denounced Judaism, and handed over the salvation of the world, or what would be more important, the conservation of Orthodox Judaism, to the "legitimate" chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees. It would denounce Huss and Luther and Wickliffe as pestilent proselytizers.

Let us thank God that this spirit is not the dominant spirit of the Church of Christ, and that this memorial represents only an insignificant fraction of the clergy of the Church of England.

The spread of light and Bible knowledge among the youth of the Greek community in Syria is rapidly bringing them into a critical position. Two tendencies are manifest: The first is toward infidelity. They say the Orthodox Greek Church claims to be the only true church, but it is corrupt beyond hope of reform, so we will have done with all religion. Family ties and tradi-

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\* *The Record*, July 10, 1891.

tions, pride of name and pecuniary interests keep them in outward connection with the Church, while they laugh at its superstitions and despise its hierarchy. This class are rapidly lapsing into French infidelity.

The second is among the more thoughtful and conscientious, who, in despair of reforming the errors of the old Church, break away from all connection with it and embrace Protestantism.

Here they find freedom from hierarchical domination, liberty of conscience, an open Bible, and a pure, non-idolatrous doctrinal system. No more priestly absolution, transubstantiation, picture worship, cross worship, adoration of the Virgin, and invocation of the saints. They accept the doctrine of justification by faith and are at rest.

To receive such men into the Protestant communion, however it may be stigmatized by Archdeacon Denison as "proselytism," is dignified by a greater than the archdeacon, even Archbishop Sumner, as receiving "liberated captives."

It is the delightful privilege of the Christian missionary to give such men a hearty and fraternal welcome.

Bishop Blyth, in a conversation with Rev. H. E. Fox, of Durham, England, defined "proselytism to be unfair pressure to persuade a man to leave one church for another." Where the bishop has met with

that type of proselytizing I am at a loss to conjecture. During a residence of thirty-five years in the East, I have not met it among either English or American missionaries.

The Jesuits notoriously practise it, and are making rapid inroads upon the Oriental churches. I have known an Anglican clergyman of sacerdotal tendencies to labor for two hours to persuade a staunch Protestant in Beirut, who was born and baptized a Protestant, to enter the Greek Church, but I do not believe that either the Presbyterian or Church of England missionaries in Western Asia use "unfair" means to draw men into the Protestant churches. I was recently riding in the French omnibus from Beirut to Aaleih in Mount Lebanon. My fellow-passengers were Greek, Maronite, and Greek Catholic gentlemen from Beirut. A young Greek Effendi of well-known ability entered into a discussion of the comparative systems of instruction in the Protestant and Jesuit schools. Said he, "Our Greek boys go to the Jesuit College. They are taught daily the Romish doctrines, the Pope, the Church of Rome, and the errors of the Greek schism. It is drilled and beaten into them, and yet, as a fact, hardly one of the Greek boys ever becomes a Jesuit. We also send boys to the American College and seminaries. Nothing is said about Protestantism or the Greek Church. There is no

attack on picture worship or the worship of the Virgin. Only the Bible is taught and Bible truth is preached, and the result is that the great part of our young men become Protestants." I believe that the testimony of Nejeeb Effendi will be corroborated by that of every intelligent man in the country.

The vast accessions to Protestantism from among the Oriental churches have been occasioned by the working of the Gospel leaven in the hearts and minds of men.

To bid these men "return to their slavery" (to use the language of Archbishop Sumner) would be an outrage upon Christian charity, and treachery to the principles of the Gospel.

In the time of St. Paul the Jews had the Old Testament Scriptures—"Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises: whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came" (Rom. ix. 4, 5)—but they had rejected the Messiah through the traditions of the oral law, and the Gospel was to be preached to them. They were bidden to "come out and be separate."

The Greeks have the Old and New Testaments, but they have buried the living Christ under a mass of traditions and super-

stitutions and the idolatrous decrees of that anti-Christian Seventh General Council, caricaturing the divine glories of our Lord's miraculous resurrection by the lying fraud and imposture of the blasphemous Greek fire, which makes the Moslem and Jewish enemies of Christ to blaspheme ; and it is the duty of every branch of the Reformed Church to lift up its voice in protest, preach to them the pure Gospel, and when they come out and are separate and refuse to touch the unclean thing, to bid them hearty welcome to a purer church and a more orthodox doctrine.

The persecution of the Stundists in Russia, who are being exiled to Siberia with barbarous cruelty for the sole crime of studying the Bible and then refusing to attend the Greek Church, shows the underlying animus of the Greek Church everywhere.

To place ourselves on a vantage ground with the Mohammedans, we must let it be thoroughly understood that we are distinct and separate from the idolatrous Oriental churches. The Moslems look on these "Christians" as creature worshippers. They are now beginning to understand that the Protestants hold to a purer faith. Sheikh Mohammed Smair, of the Anazy Arabs, on entering our simple church in Beirut stood by my side in the pulpit,

and placing his hand on the open Arabic Bible, said, "Truly, this is the house of God. There is no image or idol here, only the house of God and the Book of God."

A convert from Mohammedanism to Christianity now living in Aden, Arabia, wrote me, July, 1891, "The Romish Church here is called by Moslems, Persians, and Hindoos 'the house of the idol,' from its having in it two large marble statues. We are deeply grieved at this stumbling-block to our work among the Moslems. We ask of the Lord to remove it from our way. May his will be done!"

Any attempt at "affiliation" with an image-worshipping church will neutralize our influence with the followers of Islam. Their hostility to the worship of images and pictures is intense, and in this they find Protestant Christianity an ally.

Chinese Mohammedans have asked Protestant missionaries to speak in their mosques, as being one with them in opposition to idols and idol worship.

The Greek Church in the last twelve hundred years has written its own condemnation. Where is the list of its converts from Islam during this long period? If it be replied in apology that the Greeks have during this time been politically subject to Islam and could do no proselyting work, we

reply by pointing to the Ottoman Tartar conquest of the Arabs, when the conquerors embraced the religion of the conquered.

Alas ! it is too true that the Greek Church in Syria and Palestine has lost all missionary zeal and has ceased to honor the Holy Spirit, while nominally holding to his divinity. Salvation is through outward rites and the works of the law.

Does Archdeacon Denison know what the Greek Church is and has been since that idolatrous edict of the Seventh General Council ?

Does he suppose that the Patriarch of Jerusalem, standing with his brilliant retinue of bishops and priests in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the Greek Easter, and secretly lighting with a lucifer match the flame which he knows is regarded by the surging thousands of ignorant pilgrims as a veritable miraculous self-lighted flame, issuing from the tomb of Christ as a proof of the divine sanction to the Greek Church—that this patriarch, whom the archdeacon says should be entrusted with the sole responsibility of converting the Moslems and the Jews, could have the face to turn to the Moslem military officers, stationed to prevent the mob of crazed fanatics from trampling each other to death, and ask them to accept the Christianity of the Greek Church as the only true faith ? Would not the Mos-

lem turn upon him with scorn and say, "Cast out your idol abominations, your burning of incense, and bowing before the 'eikons,' your invocation of saints and angels, your prayers to Mary as your 'only saviour and deliverer,' your paying of money for the deliverance of your dead, your priestly absolution, your confession to a man—abolish forever this shameful fraud of the Holy Fire, go back to the precepts of your own Tourat and Enjeel, and then come and preach to us, but not till then."

Is not a period of twelve hundred years' probation enough for the so-styled Orthodox Apostolic Church to prove its fitness for evangelizing the Mohammedans?

Does any one suppose that the Greek hierarchy of to-day, with its spirit of arrogance and persecution, its worldliness and unspirituality, is prepared or disposed to lead Moslems to Christ, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world?

And are English missionaries, full of the spirit of Christ, of Stephen and Paul, and longing for the salvation of the perishing, holding to the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and to the Word of God as the only rule of faith and practice, to refrain from preaching the Gospel to Moslems and Jews until sanction is given them by this modern Sanhedrim? Truly this is sacerdotalism run mad.

The time has come when the Church of Jesus Christ must break loose from the tyranny of churehism, and preach the Gospel as Luther did, in spite of the councils and hierarchs. Our sectarian names and differences are of trifling, yea, contemptible consequence compared with the momentous character of the great work before us all in bringing the Mohammedan world to Christ.

Let us present the Gospel to Islam in its pristine purity and simplicity. Let us repudiate all alliances with human traditions and anti-Christian idolatries.

Let Protestant Christianity keep its white robes unspotted by the contamination of the unhallowed practices of these lapsed and unspiritual systems of the East.

Mohammedans believe in the Bible, and believe that Jesus, the son of Mary, and judge the world. Let us give them the Bible and exalt the name and the redemptive work of Jesus, their "Prophet, Priest, and King."

The Oriental churches have lost the spirit which might enable them to evangelize Islam. They care not to do it. They cannot do it. They will not do it. This "kingdom" of privilege and service "shall be taken from them and given to another," even to the churches of the Reformation. Let us see to it that we are faithful to this sacred responsibility and trust.