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THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES AND MOHAMMEDANS.



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### THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES AND MOHAMMEDANS.

[A Sermon preached before the Armenian Mission, by Rev. CYRUS HAMLIN.]

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WHAT ADVANTAGE THEN HATH THE JEW? OR WHAT PROFIT IS THERE OF CIRCUMCISION? MUCH EVERY WAY: CHIEFLY, BECAUSE THAT UNTO THEM WERE COMMITTED THE ORACLES OF GOD.—Rom. iii. 1, 2.

THE Apostle, having shown that the Jews and Gentiles were equally under condemnation, having equally, though in different ways, incurred the wrath of God and the penalty of the law, brings forward the very natural and confident objection stated in the first verse of our text. "What advantage then hath the Jew?" What avail to him to be of the people of God, since he has forfeited the blessings of the covenant, and has retained only the external and worthless seal of circumcision? The Apostle answers with confidence and decision, "much every way"; but the greatest of all the distinctive advantages of the Jew, that in which his pre-eminence most obviously appears, is in the possession of the "oracles of God." In all his depravity and blindness, he still possesses the words of infallible truth. There is one Supreme Court, to whose tribunal he may be summoned, and by whose decision his conscience may be awakened, his heart touched, and his feet guided into the way of life. But of this authority the Gentile knows nothing. When summoned to this bar, he does not recognize its jurisdiction. Its decisions are to him matters of indifference, or he

rejects them with contempt. Thus, between the most corrupt Jew and the most moral Gentile there was still an immense difference ; to the advantage of the former, as to any probability of being visited by the saving power of divine truth.

This presents to us a principle of easy and obvious application to the fields of missionary labor, to which the American churches are called in this Empire. The various races which inhabit this land, however diverse in origin, language and religion, correspond well to the distinction of Jew and Gentile ; that is, they are composed of those who, in some form, acknowledge the Word of God and the authority of divine revelation, and of those who do not. To one class are committed the oracles of God ; the other has the oracles of Mohammed. What is the moral position in which these two classes are thus placed ? And how does that position affect our duty and the duty of the Christian church in delivering to them the messages of redemption ?

1. As a general statement, they may be said to be alike destitute of any saving, sanctifying knowledge of divine truth. Like the Jews and Gentiles, they are all under sin. It is self-evident that the Mohammedan, who abhors some of the most important and essential truths of redemption, can have no saving knowledge of God or of truth. It is also equally true of the nominally Christian races of the Empire. This most grave and painful charge can be fully sustained from the fact, that in all these Oriental churches Christ is not known as the only Mediator between God and man. The virgin Mary and the saints have usurped his place and office ; and although some dead formulas expressive of the truth, in languages unknown to the people, have come down from purer ages, yet they form no part of the present system of religion. Among the people, they are neither known, nor are they allowed to be known. To translate and publish them

without note or comment, was sufficient to expel one of our brethren\* from his residence and to endanger his life. I may safely appeal to your personal knowledge, as missionaries who have resided in the East from five to twenty-seven years, that in the Oriental Christianity of the present day there is actually no recognition of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the only Mediator between God and man, as "the way, the truth, and the life." I might pass to many other topics of proof, but this of itself is decisive. There can be no light in the heavens when the sun is annihilated, and no Christianity in that church whence Christ himself is banished.

2. Nearly all the inhabitants of this Empire are alike in performing their religious worship in an unknown tongue. Those only who understand the Arabic, Hebrew, ancient Armenian, ancient Syriac, Greek, or Latin languages, can understand any of the worship offered by Mussulman, Jew, or Christian. As it is the very essence of worship to express our emotions and desires to God, it follows that, by the mass of the people, no spiritual and acceptable worship is offered in the mosque, church, or synagogue.

3. All Oriental religions are alike in making religion itself consist in a routine of external performances. The ablutions and prostrations of the Mohammedan, his turning towards the tomb of his Prophet to make his prayer ascend to heaven, his fasting in the day-time and rioting in the night during one month of the year, are similar in spirit and meaning to all the fasts, feasts, and ritual observances of the Oriental churches. For motions of the body, not for emotions of the soul, for doing something according to a prescribed rule, and not as an expression of feeling and intention, in fine, for something material performed in the material world, and not for something

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\* Dr. King.

spiritual performed in the inner sanctuary of the heart, man becomes acceptable to God.

And moreover they all agree, whether Mussulman, Jew, or Christian, in making the charm of human merit quite sufficient to open the gates of life. As they are destitute of a divine Mediator, so their hopes are based upon no divine atonement. All is finite, nothing infinite. The saints, the angels, and sinful men, in various and contradictory ways, are to work out among them the great problem, how sinful man shall be just before God. But, in the practical working of the system, human merit is the ground of hope. You must tread the narrow bridge which spans the bottomless abyss, by the meagre power of your own meritorious faith and righteousness. Or, if your own merits are not sufficient, those who have entered heaven before you have enough and to spare.

Thus, in the religions of this Empire, there is no one infinite and only Mediator between God and man; no divine atonement, to be the ground of a righteousness received by faith; no intelligent spiritual worship, and consequently no true apprehension of the character of God, or the desert of sin. There is, therefore, no knowledge of any way of reconciliation between God and man. Whatever differences there may be in outward manifestation, there is this internal uniformity in error, constituting the strongest claims to the benevolent and compassionate regards of the Christian world.

But, with these remarkable points of similarity, there are still very great differences, in consequence of which the Mohammedan faith stands out in striking contrast to the systems of Oriental Christianity. It pays divine honors to one almighty, infinite Creator; while, in these churches, innumerable saints and angels are the immediate objects of worship. The one comes to God directly and boldly, without any Mediator; the other keeps as far

off as possible, and places between the sinner and God all the mediators and sacraments, all the obstacles and circuitous paths, which human ingenuity can devise.

Oriental Christianity had degraded the knowledge of God into a sort of demonology, between which and the ancient forms of idolatry the intervening space was fast disappearing. The Mohammedan faith reasserted the great doctrine of the divine unity, of the universal presence and infinite power of God. Instead of controlling the affairs of the universe by the agency of numberless saints and angels and demons, it made God's will supreme and all-controlling, assigning to each individual the minutest circumstances of his lot with an irrevocable decree. It abolished the idolatrous forms of worship, which had pervaded the church, and established a worship of impressive simplicity. In these respects Islamism, though often regarded as an apostasy from Christianity, was in truth a reformation of the Christianity then existing. Setting aside its sensual paradise, it presented a view of the divine character more in accordance with reason; it demanded a faith in God, a submission and resignation, more lofty, ennobling and sustaining; and it was adapted, at the time, to develop more strength and elevation of character, than the corrupt and apostate Christianity, out of which it sprung. This was the main reason of its rapid progress. It had not "Christ crucified," but saints deified, to contend with. It was a revulsion of the mind from the polytheism, into which the church was rapidly sinking, to the great and soul-inspiring truth of the divine unity, and the omnipotent and omnipresent energy of God in the affairs of the universe. We are doubtless to regard Islamism as a corrupt form of Christianity, and, as compared with the times when it arose, although it departed from the truth in one direction, it made a great approach to it in another, and arrested a portion of the

Oriental church in its downward course to polytheism and idolatry.

What advantage, then, hath the nominal Christian of the East over the Mohammedan? or what profit is there in his baptism? I answer in the words of Paul, "Much every way: chiefly, because *unto them were committed the oracles of God*"; while in the hands of the Mussulman, are only the oracles of Mohammed. Here is the key to the moral history and destiny of this Empire. To one portion of it has been committed *the Word of God*. This great fact of God's providence gives us, first, the principal reason of the success of missionary effort in this Empire; secondly, it explains the present attitude of Mohammedanism towards Christianity; and thirdly, it points out to the Christian church the path of its future efforts.

I. The fact that, amid all the corruptions and the apostasy of the Oriental churches, the Scriptures have still remained among them, and in theory have been regarded as containing the expressed will of God, is the principal cause of whatever success has accompanied our labors;—under the divine agency, of course, without which neither providential arrangements, nor revealed truth itself has any saving power.

In presenting the truths of redemption to this people, the Scriptures have been the only authority to which we have appealed. True, they were shut up in a dead language. Their very obscurity was regarded as sacred and holy. Loud and angry were the outcries of priestly craft against the sacrilegious work of drawing them forth from the silence of a thousand years, to make them speak, through modern translations, the words of life to the people. The authority of the church and of tradition were strenuously urged to counteract the authority of the divine word. Ignorance, misconception, and misrepresentation all combined to quench the light of its early dawning. But still there ever remained the admitted

fact, that *God has made a revelation of his will by his Holy Spirit, through his Prophets and Apostles, and that this revelation was committed to the Fathers.* We appealed to it in all our preaching. We drew our weightiest arguments from its positive declarations. This has given to the plain and earnest preaching of an unadulterated gospel such power to carry conviction to the mind, and awaken feeling in the heart, as no logic, learning, or eloquence could supply. The message prefaced with "*Thus saith the Lord,*" to him who admits that God has spoken to man, often arouses the conscience and guides to penitence, faith and hope, when every other means of persuasion is utterly powerless. And it is this known and admitted fact, which has often awakened the fiercest resentment against those efforts which are based upon Bible truth. It is this which has made the Bishop of Rome, the Greek Patriarch, and other Prelates, denounce the translation and distribution of the Scriptures as most dangerous to the peace and safety of the church, and all Bible Societies as irreligious, political and disorganizing social pests.

Our experience and observation as missionaries will testify to another fact, which does honor to the word of God, and which reveals the method of his grace in the bestowment of spiritual blessings. Among different Oriental nations, missionary effort has been successful just in proportion to that degree of national regard, or, if we may so term it, of public sentiment, which has existed among them in favor of the Holy Scriptures. Among the Nestorians, the Bible has always been regarded with reverence in the midst of all their ignorance, and its decisions considered as final. Its translation into the spoken languages of the people, was hailed with joy. And it has been to them a word of truth and power. It has been followed by a moral and religious reformation, rarely equalled in rapidity and power, and more allied to the

apostolic day, than any thing which has occurred under the skies of Asia for fifteen centuries. Next to the Nestorian, the Armenian church has kept itself pure from the sin of formally interdicting the Scriptures, and putting them under the ban of the Holy Synod. And in this nation there are more signs of spiritual life, more readiness to receive the truth, and to throw off the errors and superstitions which ages have accumulated, and passing by the Fathers to come back to the Apostles, than can be found in any other of the Christian communities of the Empire. The united power of the priesthood, the monied aristocracy, and the political interests involved, were unable to quell the movement. Evangelical churches, founded upon the great Protestant principle that the Bible is the only and the sufficient rule of faith and practice, have been established; native pastors settled; a Christian literature commenced, the circulation and sphere of which are constantly widening; a rational system of education introduced, and the minds of multitudes, through the length and breadth of the Empire, awakened to thought and inquiry.

Now had the Bible been a condemned and proscribed book, as in the Papal church, and all appeal to it utterly forbidden and uniformly denounced, and all readers of it anathematized and consigned to perdition, this work, in this space of time, would not have been accomplished. And in the Greek and Papal churches, comparatively little has been actually effected by missionary labor among them. The former being less implicated than the latter, will doubtless first yield to the faithful preaching of the cross; but hitherto, their intolerable prelatical pride and proud defiance of the Word of God have closed the avenues of approach to the mind and conscience. The gospel of their salvation must be hid to them, till this unclean spirit is cast out. But though among them comparatively little has been actually, or rather visibly, effect-

ed, we are called to rejoice in the accumulating signs of a great moral revolution, which shall emancipate the nations from prelatical tyranny and false teaching. We rejoice also in the fact, that individual conversions to evangelical truth are becoming more and more frequent both among Greeks and Papists, being, as we trust, the precursors of a great awakening.

And what shall we say of the emphatically lost tribes of the house of Israel? Have they not the same Scriptures, of which Paul spoke, and which for many centuries had been words of life and healing to their fathers? The blindness that has happened to Israel, continues for the same reason which applies to the Greek and Papal churches. The Prophets have been rejected, and the Talmuds enthroned in the place of God. Yet even here, there is a breaking in of light upon the long darkness which has enveloped the chosen people. In various parts of Europe, they have reached a degree of mental emancipation, of which few are aware; and in this Empire, which alone comes within the scope of our remarks, a most encouraging beginning has been made, by our own Society and by our brethren from England and Scotland. Is there no significance in the fact that, in a flourishing missionary school of this metropolis, the New Testament is taught to Jewish children with the full knowledge and tacit consent of their parents; that Jewish Rabbis themselves, not here only, but in other cities of the Empire, begin to regard the Talmuds as nothing but human inventions and conceits; that the recent translation of the Old Testament is eagerly purchased by the common people; and that the former intense hatred of Christianity is passing away? Nothing but the outpouring of the divine Spirit is needed to quicken into life the divine Word, which for some years past has been scattered among them with a liberal hand. Already, in the hearts of some at least, Messiah's throne has been erected, and 'his com-

ing shines far off' to cheer the courage and strengthen the faith of those who are waiting for the consolation of Israel.

From this view of the facts we have briefly referred to, let us refresh our minds with the great truth, that it is the Word of God, and not the word of man, which has power to accomplish the end for which we labor. There shall be *scoffers* in the last days, who shall sneer at this, and profanely compare 'the giving of God's Word to the *untaught people* to putting a razor into the hands of an idiot.' But all effort, which is not based upon the principle that the Bible is the rightful and inalienable property of every rational being to whom it is sent, and his only infallible rule of faith and practice, is destined to condemnation and defeat.

2. I pass to our second topic, the attitude of Mohammedanism with regard to Christianity. It is, as we have remarked, a corrupt form of Christianity, in some respects more corrupt, but in others much less, than Oriental Christianity. It acknowledges the Prophets, Christ as the Great Prophet of God, superior in power to Mohammed, and his Apostles as inspired to teach divine truths. It has noble and elevating truths, taken from the Old and New Testaments, in regard to God, to his attributes and his worship, and to our own moral duties. In its strong and vehement protest against all forms of idolatry, against relic, saint and picture-worship, against auricular confession, absolution, and transubstantiation, it has points of sympathy with evangelical Christianity. And this sympathy has often been expressed in the strongest and most decided manner, by an efficient protection of Protestant Christians in times of distress and danger. Yet, notwithstanding these common truths and this sympathy, and notwithstanding all the political and social changes which have taken place in this Empire, there has been no approach to a reception of the doctrines of the cross. And

the whole history of missions probably contains fewer individuals converted from Mohammedanism, than tribes converted from Paganism. We regard the subject of our discourse as giving a satisfactory explanation of this moral phenomenon. Having reared itself upon a determined rejection of the Word of God, while at the same time it borrowed from that Word those great and mighty truths which sustain and sanctify its errors, it appropriated what truths it chose, with the impious claim of having received them direct from Heaven, and with equal impiety cast the rest away. And terribly has been fulfilled that denunciation, "If any man shall take away from the words of the prophecy of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book." It has been fulfilled, not by miracle, but in accordance with God's moral government and the laws of our intellectual and moral nature. In reasoning with the Mohammedan, we have no common authority to which to appeal. Unlike the heathen, entrenched in great and solemn truths, truths which are really divine, and which command the clearest assent of his reason, he becomes blind to his errors, and defies the messages of gospel grace. He has trampled upon the doctrines of atonement and mediation, and filled his mind and system with God's infinite majesty, omnipotence and omnipresence. He has thus, with impious daring, stolen from heaven the key to shut heaven's gate against himself, and stands among the nations a monument of retributive providence against those who change the truth of God into a lie: And alas! having no common authority to appeal to for the enforcement of our message, we have also *no admitted facts of observation* to appeal to. The Christianity, which the Mussulman sees around him, and which he has always seen, he regards as a demonstration of its essential and necessary degradation. It produces no holiness of life, and no eleva-

tion of intellectual or moral character. Until, therefore, a new type of Christianity shall appear, and surround him with a new demonstration of its living power, it will be vain to hope for any access to the Mohammedan mind.

3. The relation of these different races or nations to the Bible, points out the path of future effort. It does this, first, in regard to the objects of missionary labor. It is true, that, by the standard of the gospel, we include them all in sin and condemnation, and regard them as equally destitute of saving faith. In this view, they are all equally in need of the illuminating influences of the gospel and of the renewing grace of God. But wherever amid superstition and error there has remained any reverence for the Word of God and any regard to its authority, wherever it is in any degree regarded as the ultimate appeal, there a preparation of inestimable value already exists for the reception of saving truth. It is a demonstration that that people is in a state to be recovered; a way of access is open, and it is too late for bishops, priests, or patriarchs to shut it. It is a token, too, that God's blessing will follow the gospel when preached in simplicity and godly sincerity to such a people. For it is his providence, which has so long preserved that last remnant of truth amid overwhelming errors. And it has been done with the special view of finally securing a complete triumph of the truth in its appointed time. Missionary efforts, therefore, should first of all be directed to those, who have the greatest readiness to receive the Word of God. No other rule but this should guide us. Wherever that readiness exists, there the fields will first whiten to the harvest, and thither should the reapers gather to thrust in the sickle.

Now when it is asked, by objectors to our work, Why bestow so much labor upon a single people? Why not look with equal regard upon all, and preach alike to Mussulmans, Papists, Jews, and Greeks? I answer, such a

procedure would imply a total disregard of facts and the necessities of the case. It would be as great a violation of common sense, as the alchemists were guilty of, in seeking a universal solvent to reduce every thing to gold ; with this difference, that in spiritual matters such a course would be impious, while in physical it was only foolish. The providence of God, the observed methods of his government, the principles of his word, the examples there placed before us, and our knowledge of human nature, must be our guide. From all these we have not the slightest reason to believe, that Mussulmans can now be reached by argument and persuasion. The only resistless argument, which will overcome their obstinate adherence to a false system, will be that of *a Christianity exemplified in a holy life*, purifying and elevating all the relations of man with man, producing temperance, justice, benevolence, faithfulness, and shining with a steady and constant light over all the departments of human life. If we may make a distinction, which will not be misunderstood, we shall expect the Mohammedans of this Empire to be converted by the demonstration of a holy life ; and the nominal Christians, by the demonstration of the truth, although in no case can one be separated from the other.

In directing our efforts, therefore, first of all to the revival of a pure Christianity among those who have retained the most of primitive truth and principle, we are pursuing the most direct, and indeed the only course to reach those, whose entire apostasy from the Word of God has precluded any appeal to that as authority. The facts and principles we have referred to, guide us also in regard to the nature, as well as the objects of missionary efforts. They point out to the Christian church *how* it is to labor, as well as *where*. The efforts, which are made by our own or any other Society, must be based entirely upon the Bible, to give any hope of success. No other system of

effort can secure the blessing of God ; no other accords with the nature of man, or the necessities of the case.

In regard to the heathen world, it has been readily admitted, that the missionary must go with the Bible in his hand, and proclaim the truths of salvation in their simplest, clearest form. But it was hoped by some, that among Oriental Christians a friendly alliance might be formed, which would guide them into all truth, and thus free them from all error without a struggle or a frown. This was a grave mistake. For, when you approach an erring church in this manner, you put yourself forward to be compared with those whom you would save. You present the forms of your church ; they can present more and better. You present the three orders of the clergy ; they have the same, and, in case of necessity, the more perfect number of seven. They have more sacraments, more ecclesiastical order and government, more antiquity, traditions, martyrs, etc. ; and their pride is instantly raised, to find how well they come out in the comparison. If you attempt now to reform them, they take refuge in the authority and excellence of their church, which you have already admitted, or evade you by requiring time, caution, a regard for the prejudices of the ignorant multitude, and for the fact that, after all, with some external forms of error, there may exist simplicity of faith, and a saving use of the sacraments. If you then turn, and denounce these errors as soul-destroying and anti-christian, they coolly reply, that you now reveal your hypocrisy. For if such were their state, why give them the right hand of fellowship ? Whether expressed in words, or not, this is the precise result, to which such a mode of effort must come. But when you approach your lost and erring brother with the Word of God alone, and summon him to its high tribunal, you retire yourself behind the majesty of divine truth. If his mouth is opened, it is

against the heavens. If he has a controversy, it is with his Maker. Your appeal is not to man, but to God, the judge of all. In this way alone God and his truth are honored, the attention gained, the conscience awakened, the assent of the understanding won, and the power of superstitious rites and observances broken. All successful effort to evangelize the nations must be based upon the Word of God. It must have no divided authority—partly the church, and partly its own decisions. It must be held forth as the rule, the only rule, the only infallible guide and binding authority in faith and practice. What has been so often repeated as descriptive of the distinctive character of Protestantism, applies with peculiar propriety here. The Bible, the Bible ALONE, is and must be the religion of the missionaries of the cross.

I shall close this discourse with a few remarks, having a general reference to the topic we have brought forward.

1. We must be cautious not to over-estimate the value of the accessory means to be used in the evangelization of these communities. Aside from the preaching of the Gospel, and the distribution of the Bible, there are means indispensable to the work, but to be used in due order and subordination. They must be used as auxiliaries, gathering round and converging towards the glorious centre of revealed truth. In this subordination the press must be used for the enforcement and defence of the truth, for tearing off and exposing the ever-varying disguises of error, for awakening, moulding and guiding public sentiment, forming a Christian literature, and furnishing the necessary means of a sound education. In this work its power cannot be over-estimated by us, and it should be used with energy, sleepless vigilance, and a well considered regard to the wants and condition of the people.

The same may be said of education. Mere intellectual

culture will never evangelize a people; but their evangelization being once commenced, will create both a necessity and a demand for intellectual culture. "The entrance of thy word giveth light," saith the Psalmist, "it giveth understanding to the simple." A new intellectual life is awakened by new religious affections, imperatively demanding an intelligent and effective system of education to meet its wants. This is not theory, but one of the most obvious facts of observation. As an illustration, take the progress already visible in these Protestant communities, which have just started into being around us. It will be admitted, that Oriental Christianity has degraded woman to a condition of abject ignorance. Yet, in this Protestant community, there is *not one*, who has not learned or is not learning to read. Those who had lived sixty years under the influence of Oriental Christianity, without knowing the alphabet, or understanding a chapter of the Bible, until age had dimmed the eye and made the frame totter on the verge of the grave, now read in their own language the wonderful works of God. There might well have been one exception, for no lens within her reach would restore her vision; but with *three pairs of spectacles* her aged eye was able to discern the record of her Father's love, and, before her difficulties were known, she was found reading with delight the words, "Verily I say unto you, whosoever believeth on me shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Is there not significance in such facts as these? Where such a new life exists, there must be new elements to nurture it. Education and the press have a great sphere of labor, in meeting all its wants and urging it onward. There must be an educated ministry, which can feed the people with knowledge and with understanding, and which, by its intelligence and intellectual power, shall always command the respect of the most cultivated part of the community. There must be a progressive

system of education, which shall inspire both the teacher and the taught with the conception and desire of constant advancement. In this way every degree of learning and science enters into the work of missions, and with entire harmony becomes auxiliary to Bible truth.

So with commerce and the arts. They are useful auxiliaries in the evangelization of the world; but without the Bible as their basis, they have never been able *even to civilize* the most insignificant tribe that roams the American forests, or dwells among the Pacific islands. The man who regards them as independent and effective agents of a complete civilization, even knows nothing as he ought to know, of the history of the last three centuries; nor can he explain the elevation, to which Protestant countries have risen, or to which they are pressing forward. But as auxiliaries to the propagation of the gospel, they have an important place. Industry, intelligence and enterprise naturally result from the moral and intellectual influences of the gospel, and they furnish in turn the means of extending that gospel out of which they sprung. And it falls within the sphere of the herald of divine truth, following the example of the Apostle to the Gentiles, to teach the high claims of labor, of enterprise, of progress in every department of human activity—to teach this, however, as a means to a higher and holier end. The work to be done demands the consecration of time, talents and life itself to its accomplishment. Every department of Christian society must bring in its contribution and pour in its strength, before the work will be done.

Civil liberty, in securing the rights of conscience, falls also under the same category. It enables the truth to reach multitudes of minds, from which it would otherwise long be excluded. The protection extended to evangelical Christianity in this Empire, by the most powerful government of the world, should be gratefully

acknowledged as an invaluable aid in the prosecution of our work. We question not but the securing of the rights of conscience in Turkey by British influence, will mark in future history the commencement of the most interesting era of this Empire. Without such aid, the Spirit and power of God can extend the triumphs of the truth; but when God in his providence is pleased to furnish it, who can estimate the blessings it will confer, and the sufferings it will prevent, among a people whose bigotry and priestly power would ultimately arouse the deadliest and most malignant passions to do the work of an exterminating persecution.

2. A system of evangelical missions based solely upon the Bible—as liberal, broad and free as that which the Apostles founded—is the only one that can unite, harmonize and regenerate the inhabitants of this Empire. To elevate the standard of sectarianism, be it Presbyterian, Congregational, or Episcopalian, is to insure defeat. Any such system exhibited as the only form of Christianity, and its standards made binding upon the conscience, is only the introduction of another element of discord and repulsion to those already existing. It is like to those, and has no transforming power to bring the Armenian, Greek, Jew and Mohammedan into fellowship as brethren. It can never send the pulsations of a common life from one great centre and source into all those disorganized and diseased members. Any one feature of a sect or party, exalted into a conspicuous position and made of great value and importance, would inevitably destroy the spirituality of our work, although divine truth should be faithfully preached. The awakened sinner would flee *to that*, instead of fleeing to Christ, and build his hopes on the sand, instead of the Rock of Ages. It might inspire a zeal for the truth, but it would not be the subduing, transforming and winning zeal of the love of Christ. The renovation of Oriental society can be

accomplished by Bible Christianity alone, by that same pure, spiritual, triumphant Christianity, which once subdued the fragmentary and discordant materials of the Roman Empire, and united in bonds of Christian fellowship the most savage with the most polished nations.

Such a Christianity it is the aim of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to establish. The Firman, under which we enter this Empire, is the Bible. We belong to five distinct religious denominations, but it has never been our aim to establish the peculiarities of any one of them. We extend the right hand of fellowship to all, who are on this broad basis of Scripture truth, although they follow not us. The organization of these Protestant churches and their confession of faith have been carried just so far as we were unanimously convinced after mature deliberation, that we had the clear warrant of Scripture. And this position we regard as eminently scriptural, apostolical and primitive, the only one adapted to the religious and moral renovation of this Empire, the only one which can unite its discordant materials in one regenerated and living body.

3. The history of Bible-missions has been and is the history of prayers and success. When Luther gave to Germany his translation of the Bible, the modern history of Bible-missions commenced. Great as was the power of the Reformer, mighty as was his influence, *he* ceased to be the centre of attraction when the Bible appeared. It was the Word of God which broke the power of the Emperor and of Rome, and established through so many States of Europe a pure Christianity, against the mightiest foes which Christianity has ever been called to meet. It was the Bible, persecuted and exiled from the old world, which spread the blessings of civil and religious liberty over the new. It is now returning, we doubt not to triumph on its native soil, and to subdue all things to Christ.

It is accomplishing the same work in the islands of the Pacific Ocean, in Western and Southern Africa, Madagascar, New Zealand, Australia, India and China.

*Finally*; The Holy Spirit is pledged to this scheme of Christian missions. We should always bear in mind for our encouragement, that we live in those latter days, when the residue of the Spirit is to be poured out upon all flesh. We are to labor for and expect those Pentecostal seasons, when thousands shall turn to the Lord in a day, when the Spirit shall descend, not indeed with a mighty rushing wind and with cloven flames of fire, as in the days of signs and wonders, but with the same mighty power to subdue the heart and bring all things in subjection to Christ. Every effort we make should have in view those promised refreshings from the presence of the Lord. This alone can enable us to look with cheerful confidence upon the world now lying in wickedness, as destined ere long to be enveloped with an atmosphere of holiness, love and joy. This can give strength to all our weakness. This is our joy and confidence and hope of triumph. We shall go on from strength to strength, until the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God, and his everlasting kingdom shall become universal, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

“Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,  
 Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth;  
 Thou, who alone art worthy! It was thine  
 By ancient covenant, ere nature’s birth;  
 And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,  
 And overpaid its value with thy blood.  
 Come, then, and, added to thy many crowns,  
 Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest;  
 Due to thy last and most effectual work,  
 Thy word fulfilled, the conquest of a world.”