

istence is only known to a few by name, and many of them ask if America is a city in London or Paris or Moscow. A superintendent of public instruction of one of the large states of Asia Minor while on a visit to a U. S. consulate looked for Washington, D. C., in Africa.

In order to more fully understand the Turk of today, it will be necessary to ask the reader to consider the history of heathen nations as recorded in the Old Testament and also the acts of the children of Israel, both in times of obedience and disobedience to the Lord. Then we have a counterpart of just what has happened today. I do not wish to be understood to hold that the acts of the children of Israel when following strictly the word of God is a comparison, yet it was the law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and without the shedding of blood there was no forgiveness, no mercy. Now it should not be forgotten that from the remotest ages there has been a disposition on the part of wicked men to imitate and counterfeit the true Priesthood and power of God and His laws in order to satisfy their subjects that they were chosen of God. For instance, read the history of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, of how he at once sought to imitate the ceremonies at Jerusalem and to institute an order of things that should harmonize with the law of the Lord and the wish of the people concerning other gods all at the same time that he might peradventure establish his throne. This was wisdom according to the worldly reckoning, but with the Lord it was not acceptable. Still we have many examples where kings in and out of Christendom have done exactly the same thing and they have succeeded apparently for a time, and they have thus perpetuated many old customs and traditions which had come down to us with all the force of time as though they in reality were the very commands of Deity.

When Mohammed felt himself inspired to found a new faith he found himself in the midst of great confusion. The Arabs were a very ununited idolatrous conglomeration of tribes. They had partaken of the false notions rampant among the nations of Arabia and Syria. About that time renegade Christian priests who failed to harmonize with the different councils held here and there by the eastern and western churches; or who were exiled for heresy; or perchance others who felt called upon to do something special for Christ's sake, or to expiate some sin which they had committed, all found a field for operation in ancient Syria, Arabia and Persia. This brought about a fearful condition of things. The old time-honored customs of the Arabs were in danger of being superceded by something far worse and more uncertain in its nature than that which they already had. There seemed no end to Christian contentions and pretensions. In the midst of all this the Lord called a halt. Of that there is no doubt. Mohammed felt the influence of some great power. He saw a new light by which a new order might be introduced which would satisfy the Arabs and put a stop to all division upon religious questions. He had visions and felt that this law was the last given by God, which it probably also was at that time. He forbade idolatry which the reformation then going on required. He also followed the law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, the Jewish conception of government which appealed to the natural man. Then he showed how no man should be compelled to accept their religion but that all people

who pretended any belief whatsoever should have a constitutional foundation, viz: they should have some book or record as a guide so as to prevent religious frauds and riots. No one would be allowed to depart from their established creeds be it what it may, without an orderly following which could show that their intention was only to worship and not to rebel or create confusion. And then he held to old shrines for pilgrimages thus making Mecca an ancient Arabian shrine and the Caaba the Kubla or center of worship.

History tells how surprisingly soon this new and easy faith came into power and became a preserver of faiths or denominations in the place of a destroyer of them. True it entered in upon the domain of freedom of worship as we understand it, but it also gave privileges to those who seemed entitled to recognition to such an extent that Europe has never enjoyed such liberties. And in my conversation with consuls and men of experience here they have admitted that even America affords no such complete freedom to worship as can be found here in Turkey.

It is not the intent of this article to show how unlimited this freedom of worship is, but suffice it to say that the Turks make no laws especially to incriminate one class of people or to regulate the consciences or practices of any community, but they have often affirmed to me, that "we are satisfied with our own and we wish others to be the same, and their worship and their practices are absolutely nothing to us so long as they obey the laws of the country, laid down for the general regulation of life, and pay their taxes." And to this they have strictly adhered. When they have interfered with the Greek and Armenian churches in the appointment of officers it is because of the internal contentions and bloodsheds of these people which have compelled the government to stop factional feuds. On the same principle the churches, the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the churches of the nativity in Bethlehem are under police control, but the police never interfere with any rite or ceremony, be it ever so ridiculous or ever so much contrary to the belief in God.

I said that Islam is a preserver of faiths and so it is, many of the existing denominations owe their very existence to Mohammedanism. It even strengthened the old mother churches. It presented a solid front and forbade renegades and cranky priests from entering its territory; hence they stayed at home and submitted, thus giving power to the old Roman and Greek churches. It compelled all other factions to organize into large respectable bodies which could be recognized by the government. Thus we have the Jews who have lived in perfect peace all these hundreds of years because they had given up all hope of a national existence. We have yet a remnant of the old Samaritan people. We have the Armenians, the Syrians, the Masonites, the Greeks and the Jesids, and still a few others who are a mixture of everything but who have acknowledged the Prophet Mohammed in some form. They are therefore called Mohammedans, and enjoy privileges as such. All these have dwindled in numbers except the Jews. They have all more or less rebelled and yielded over to the rulers from time to time until they are often but few in about—the Samaritans being only about fifty in number. But be they few or many they are never urged to join Islam except in a friendly way un-

less in the heat of battle, when fanaticism runs high. It is always a cause for pardon to cry out, "There is no God except God, and Mohammed is His prophet." This system is a wonderful preventive from expressed scepticism. Men must belong to some recognized society. Any acknowledged organization thus receives power and control over its adherents. Hence the better the organization and rules of the church the more successful they may be in their operations as the government only requires its taxes as per agreement or enactment.

I think this sufficient to give a fair understanding of the internal arrangement of religious bodies within the empire of the Osmanlies, and I also think that it does not differ materially to those which existed two thousand years ago. We do not read of the Jews imposing any conditions of peace upon those nations whom they conquered, looking to the acceptance of the law of Moses. Neither were the Jews, as a rule, when conquered, compelled to worship other gods. Each seemed to have their own God, and it appears that they did not usually wish to insult their God by forcing unbelievers to worship outwardly, while in their hearts they despised them. Instances may be cited, such as the great golden image of King Nebuchadnezzar, but it seldom worked. It is contrary to all good policy and can only be done when the whole people is ripe for a change.

As Islam has been a preserver of religions, it has also been a preserver of old customs and traditions adopted at its commencement. Many old practices in vogue in the days of Abraham are still as realistic as then. One of the strong points for Mohammedanism was its universal war upon all books. This kept the people in ignorance of everything except what was adopted by the imams. I call it strong because the nature of the religion was not to be progressive, but to be a defender of existing conditions, to be a defender against introducing religions for inferior to Islam, wherefore it could admit of no modifications or changes which would destroy at once its whole system. The nature of the cause and its life seem to have been and is today the acknowledgment of God as the Creator of all things and the giver of all good and as such the Mohammedans of whatever nation he may be, he can be heard he can be heard all times of the day thanking God for life, for bread, for water, and for his care, generally extended to the faithful. In these days of trouble I have heard them say, we have no friends on earth; we have only one friend above, and pointing upwards to God.

But in their preservation of so much ancient, they have also brought along with them the viciousness and tyranny of ancient warfare. When they therefore go to war, there is great danger of their using excesses, as they are not awake to the nobler feeling spoken of in the first part of the article. If they see a beautiful maiden among the conquered, it is no crime to take her and make her a wife, for so they have learned from their fathers. And when they war they smite all, old and young, innocent or guilty, almost without difference, as all are supposed to be enemies, hence dangerous. Now when these difficulties arise within the domain of the Turks, viz., when a people rebels, there is considerable tolerance shown for a while, until the people, or some of them, take license, thereby committing excesses, so that when the remedy is applied it is as a rule out of all proportions to the disease. This they call civilizing. And just such a condition arose here over the Armenian question. Now this article is no defense