

Turkish emp.

Sketch of the Protestant Church
Angora, Galatia

WRITTEN BY THE PASTOR

G. A. Manougyan

Translated by

REV. J. S. FOWLE

INTRODUCTION

To all the faithful, who love our Lord Jesus Christ and his Church: May grace and peace be unto you in His Name.

Thinking it will be pleasant for you to hear briefly from old Galatia where Paul and other apostles proclaimed the salvation of Christ, I have taken my pen in hand. I wanted to read this tract *personally* in your church meetings; but even after I had started, I was constrained to give up this idea. The American Board missionaries at Cesarea know our church intimately; for years they have been as fathers to our orphans; as guides to our young; and as benefactors to our church; almost literally giving their lives for us. We are very glad to present to you, through one of them, this brief account of our work.

May God's grace and peace abide with you all!

On behalf of the Angora Church,

(Signed) G. A. MANOUGYAN,

Pastor.



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF ANGORA

ANGORA

The city of Angora, in Asia Minor, is one of the most important places in the Ottoman Empire. Planted in the midst of 10,000 gardens and vineyards it has good air and an abundance of water. As to trade and commerce, after a very few seaport towns, it takes a leading position. It is about 300 miles southeast of Constantinople, and is connected with it by the Anatolian Railroad; its elevation above sea level being about 500 feet. A hill near one edge about 328 feet higher than the city, is crowned with an ancient castle that stood many a siege in the years gone by. Below the ancient wall the hill is almost perpendicular, but on the other three sides the city is spread out, about three hundred houses being included within the outer wall. Thirty years ago the old gates were in place and were closed soon after nightfall. Both within and without there are mosques and churches. A modern clock-tower just outside the wall gives a pleasing suggestion of a new order of things. On the east, from the highest castle, across a ravine that is, perhaps, one and one-

half miles long, are the ruins of an ancient tomb. In this ravine, now on one side of the stream and now on the other are very fertile garden plots and orchards; its willows give a most pleasing shade. At one place a dam, with gates, was thrown across to stop the water when they wished to flood the valley. Secret passages, some of them still visible, enabled the people to get water in case of siege. Small streams flow down other valleys, and uniting, form the Sangarius



INTERIEUR DE L'AUGUSTEIM

River. Augustus Cæsar was very fond of this city, and on the walls of the porch of one of its temples, is inscribed a copy of his will and a description of his victories and triumphs. This "Augusteum," as it is called, is one of the sights of the East. Of the eighteen conquered cities mentioned, many have been buried; others destroyed; but the list stands almost complete in Latin and in Greek. Across the valley to the northeast is a small, high, hill on whose summit is a beautiful building of white marble, called "Hadji



LIEU DE PROMENADE "BEND EUNI"

Bairam Veli," that no traveller willingly fails to visit. A few years ago, Dr. Olmstead, with his companions of the Cornell Exploration Expedition, spent nearly a month here and in the vicinity, copying inscriptions, taking photographs, and squeezes for their university.

According to tradition this city was the capital of Galatia and at varied times was subject to Greeks, Romans, Seljuks, Osmanlis; each has left its mark upon it. Near the present palace is a tall marble pillar. Once upon a time it was surmounted by a statue of Augustus Cæsar, but, thinking the statue was an idol, the early Christians threw the statue to the ground and some of its pieces are now seen near the base of the column. It is said that Haroun El Reshid once ruled the city, and certain it is that, near here, the Osmanlis Turks won, lost, and won again their kingdom.



AKENYON BRIDGE

THE EARLY PREACHING OF CHRISTIANITY

It seems quite probable that the gospel was preached here very early. In Acts 17 we read of Paul's journey "into the parts of Galatia," and it is hardly conceivable that he should not have visited Angora. Even then, as today, the city had a large Jewish population; the Epistle of Galatians implies that the church contained converts from both Jews and Gentiles. It seems that they were no freer from quarrels and divisions than is the Christian church today. It is reported that Paul tried hard to reconcile them, and when unsuccessful, he left the city in disgust, and from the bridge on the West, turning toward the city he cried out (Gal. 3:1), "O foolish Galatians! Who hath bewitched you!" The famous Clement is said to have been pastor here, but it is uncertain; there seems to have been several of that name and it seems to be difficult to trace any one of them certainly.

PRESENT CONDITION OF ANGORA

The present city is the capital of the province ("vilayet") of the same name and contains 50,000 inhabitants; one-half of them are Moslems; about 14,000 Catholic Armenians; 4800 Gregorian Armenians; 4000 Orthodox Greeks; 2000 Jews; and about 200 Protestants. There is a railroad to Constantinople through Nicomedia, with connection from Eski Schehr to Konia. (It is expected that, very soon the "Bagdad Line" will be extended to Adana and Mesopotamia.) This city is an important centre, both politically and commercially. Cesarea, one the largest cities in this province, is the centre from which the missionaries of the American Board are trying to evangelize this section. Istanoz, a large village or town twenty miles west of Angora, has a strong Protestant church, and there are many other places where it would be delightful to work if we but had the men and means.

Angora is noted both for the grain and the fruit brought in from the surrounding country. The "Angora goat" that gives us our *mohair*, seems to flourish here as nowhere else, although more or less successful attempts have been made to raise them at the Cape of Good Hope. Most beautiful shawls are made there from this mohair, and the skins of goats, cured with the hair on, are very highly prized. The city for miles out is surrounded with gardens and vineyards, and their fruit is very abundant and very famous.

EVANGELIZATION

About fifty years ago "Colporteur Garabed" began to preach a "pure gospel" in this region and while still a theological student, the present aged pastor of the Cesarea church ably seconded his efforts. It was about 1860 that Rev. Mr. Richardson of Brooza, with the aid of a pastor from Nicomedia, succeeded in gathering a small congregation. This pastor, Apkar Hailozyan, was a man of great consecration and unselfishness, as brave as he was skilful in winning men. They soon had a small church whose "charter members" are still mentioned with praise. This pastor was soon removed to Istanoz, twenty miles away, where the preaching of the gospel had won remarkable success. The people of this town are all Armenians, and it is safe to say that at least half of them became adherents to this simpler faith. But Angora was left for years without a preacher. These were troublesome times for them. A Gregorian bishop, Arisdagez by name, became disgruntled with his people and, with quite a following, declared himself a Protestant. But before long he and his followers turned back, and left the congregation no stronger than it was before. About this time (1876-1877) Angora and vicinity passed over to the Cesarea station and Marderos Vartanyan (of Banderma), a graduate of the Marsovan Theological Seminary, became their preacher. For seven or eight years they worshipped and conducted their school in a hired house. As it was difficult and expensive to rent a suitable place, after much effort they succeeded in buying a house, quite well adapted to their needs. It cost a little more than \$1400, of which the congregation gave \$309; the missionaries \$941; and the preacher himself advanced the other \$163 (\$309 plus \$941, plus \$163, equals \$1413. Although, from the necessities of the Turkish law,



MARDIROS VARTANIAN AND SON

the house was recorded as the property of the preacher, no one asked for a paper showing that it belonged to the congregation; they did not *dream* that it would be necessary. As will appear later, this was a great mistake. With some slight changes, the lower story was used for worship, school, etc., for a few years. Seats, lamps, etc., besides a communion set were provided. But there was no progress. The preacher was keen of mind and quite a dialectician, but without a trace of spiritual power. Preaching was his *trade*, and woe to the one who criticized or protested. He would recognize neither protest nor suggestion. The brethren were not quick to understand the situation and made no effort to raise the sum they really owed him on the house; they did not dream that he would *steal* it. From time to time the preacher began to make other claims and refused to pay rent for the upper part of the house. He was so rough with remonstrants that they let him do as he pleased. But when influential brethren from outside joined the congregation, matters were soon brought to a head. Then he openly refused to resign or to give up the house; the brethren refused to attend service. Still he would open the doors, and go through a form of service, whether they came or not. They offered him the money due him with interest, but he refused to take it, saying the house was his personal property. The brethren called in other brethren and preachers from other churches, and after long deliberation, they decided that for the sake of peace, the brethren should accept his offer to give up the house if they would pay him \$528. Immediately they brought the gold; but when they offered it to him he demanded \$660. This, too, they accepted, but he claimed \$880. Under the lead of the British Consul, Mr. Cumberbatch, a commission was formed and the congregation agreed to accept any decision they might make. This brought him out into the open and he declared he would *never* give them the house at *any* price. On this they de-

cided to refer the matter to the courts. Calling another pastor, they hired a new house and began to push with vigor both the work of the church and the lawsuit. His skill and unscrupulous conduct prolonged the case for three or four years; but when we sent them a letter in which, over his own signature, he had said "A house has been bought for the church; the congregation has paid \$471 and we ask that you send the \$942 promised them for the church;" and when we sent to the court our original draft *with his signature* for the money, they ordered him to deliver the house to the congregation. On his refusal they put him out by force. Once more the congregation worshipped in its own house. This gave the preacher an opportunity to show of what stuff he was made! With his aged mother, his two daughters, and his son, (the wife was dead) he *turned Moslem*; appealed to Constantinople against the decision of the local court and *won his case*. The house and all its contents — seats, lamps, communion set, *everything* — was delivered to this misguided preacher.

Besides this, the government gave both him and his son offices with good salaries as a reward for his piety! For some time he had been a member of one of the courts and, to his credit be it said that he did many a favor to the poor Protestants. Even after he became a Moslem he did *not* use his opportunity to take personal vengeance, or to hurt the brethren. The inciting cause of his misdeeds seemed to be *covetousness*. His Moslem friends at first made much of him and once invited him to preach in a mosque during Ramazan.

Our feeble congregation, after losing their chapel, was not a little discouraged. Suitable houses were hard to rent; some were *very* expensive; and others absolutely refused to rent to Protestants. For seven years they paid \$88 to \$110 rent, besides a large expense for their new preacher and school. Then they bought two adjoining houses for \$2464, and spent over \$500 in repairs and alterations. Of this

sum all but \$400 was paid at once. The interest on this \$400 was a great burden to them until Dr. Bowen (of the American Bible Society) most generously came to their rescue. Instead of paying the salary of a colporteur, he promised to advance them \$400 provided they would agree to crowd the sales of Bibles for five years. Most gladly they accepted the responsibility.

At this time the church became practically self-supporting; they were happy to be free from debt, and in every respect were prosperous and aggressive. Their influence was strong and wide. The pastor, Rev. Hairabed Odyan, and their beloved physician, Dr. Dikran Tabibyan, with the brethren who ably seconded them, are worthy of all praise, and they caused the church to be recognized as never before. After working with them for twelve or thirteen years their pastor withdrew in 1895; and with an interim of two years, the present pastor, Rev. Kevork Manougyan took up the work. His skill and zeal and consecration commended him to all, both within and without. He made great efforts to get into pleasant relations with the former preacher; and, although quite successful, was unable to secure any spiritual results. One of the daughters was a great sufferer from consumption; she went to Constantinople for treatment and died there. The other daughter married the "official" interpreter of the province, and soon moved to Constantinople; it is said that she often attends Protestant services there. Mehmed Feizi himself was in very poor health; and, finally, in 1907 he died and was buried by his Moslem friends.

(It may be of interest to note that in preparation for burial his body was washed "officially." [That means, practically, "publicly" and "ostentatiously."] One who saw it done reported that they used up ten large cakes of soap and *twenty* donkey loads of water.) Among the things put up at auction after his death was the communion set, presented to the

church by Mrs. Giles, a former missionary. Once before he had tried unsuccessfully to sell it thus; and had used it to treat his friends at social functions. As it was being hawked about in market a Protestant merchant bid it in. Then the preacher went directly to the son and asked him to give it to the church. The son replied, "My father loved and respected you, if he were living he would accede to your request. Therefore, in his name, I give it to you." Again they stand before the church in this holy service; and, as it were, say to the young man who is wasting his father's wealth, "*Come back.*"

This young man did them another favor. Years ago, when the Protestant congregation of Angora was first recognized by the government, nearly an acre of open ground, west of the city, was assigned to them as a graveyard. Through poverty they had not surrounded it with a wall. In common with all the other records and papers of the church, the deed of this graveyard also was given to their preacher. When he became a Moslem he absolutely refused to return the deed to them. In the meantime a railroad station was built southwest of the city and the main thoroughfare from the palace to the station took off quite a strip from one side of their lot. There was great danger of losing the whole but the congregation was helpless without that deed. After the father's death the son *promised* to give it to them, but delayed the giving. Finally he went to Paris, and they were in despair; the government was digging away on one side and threatening to sell the rest. "Then they cried unto the Lord." Just at that juncture a letter containing the deed came from Paris and their property was saved! The young man said he could not bring himself to give it before he left Angora.

THE PRESENT CONDITION AND NEEDS OF THE ANGORA CHURCH.

The years 1906-1908 were happy years for the Angora church; they were active and united, they had no debt, they looked forward with great hope to the future. But in February, 1909, a crack appeared in one wall of the church; as time went on it increased in size. Someone reported it to the government. After inspection they forbade the use of the building until it should be repaired. The people began to hold services in private houses, and in the meantime tried to repair the wall. The cost would be 80 to 90 pounds (nearly \$400), and there was nothing in sight. They began with courage, but God's ways are not our ways. A conflagration started near the church; shops and houses worth thousands of pounds were burned, four men were killed and five or six others were injured. The rooms in front, used as the preacher's house and the school, caught fire, and to prevent its spreading beyond the government tore down the building. The great space thus provided enabled them to stop the conflagration. But what of the church? They could not raise the \$400 needed for repairs, now a far greater expense was demanded. To make matters worse the government ordered them to repair at once, for they wanted to widen the street. The brethren and the committee bent to the task with great earnestness and generosity. A room that would seat 300 to 400, neat and tasty, was first finished. Their bell had been confiscated with the old building by the deserting preacher, and the government had refused them permission even to pound an iron or a plank to call the congregation together. But in rebuilding they put on a small bell-tower, and the

Istanos congregation generously loaned them their school bell until they could secure one of their own. The "New Regime" had granted them this privilege, and on June 20, 1911, the new Sultan, Mehmed, the Fifth, gave them a firman or permit that will forever free them from molestation as well as taxes. Hard as they were pressed they found it necessary to purchase the small house next them for 54 pounds. The repairs of the church had cost them 80 pounds (\$352), of the preacher's house and the school 173 pounds (\$761), making in all 307 pounds (\$1331). This is a heavy load for this congregation of 30 to 35 families, most of them poor. Each year they must raise 120 pounds for running expenses. In 1909 their debt had been reduced to 250 pounds, and since then each year, they have paid 28 1-2 pounds interest. Is it any wonder that they are getting discouraged? They have done all they could, yet are ashamed to ask aid. The preacher absolutely refused to come to America to beg, but I persuaded him to tell me this story of their needs. I can not make a direct appeal, but how can I refuse to let the facts be known? If any one wants to send any of the Lord's money, Mr. Wiggin of Boston or Mr. Peet of Constantinople will be glad to transmit it. It goes without saying that the writer (J. L. Fowle, of Cesarea) will not refuse a similar service.

In closing let me tell you how this eager young preacher secured a fountain in the church yard, and what an eagerness for education there is among the people of the city. Readers of the Old Testament will remember the strife between the herdsmen of Abraham and those of Lot for water and pasturage. From that day to this, to put a fountain where there was none before, is considered one of the most "meritorious" of "good works." In memory of Sultan Abdul Hamid's quarter centennial anniversary an abundant stream of water was brought to the city in pipes, and an order was passed that it should be given *without cost* to the mosques,



CHURCH AND PARSONAGE COMBINED

schools, churches, etc., that applied for it. Others were to pay 12 pounds (\$52.80) for each fountain opened, besides the cost. The pastor went to the governor to beg that portion might be given to them. The Vali refused, saying that the only place where it had been given without charge was to the Catholic cemetery. As quick as a flash the preacher smiled and said that if it had been given to the Catholic dead, who could use no more water in this world, *surely* the 50 to 60 children in their school, who were in constant need of water, might expect the same favor. The Vali was so pleased with the answer that he ordered the fountain. The brethren and sisters cheerfully raised the \$40 to \$50 needed for pipes and fountain, and today it is a great blessing to all the neighborhood. Besides this, it is a great protection in case of fire. The city is built of wood, and conflagrations are frequent and destructive. *Sometime* they hope for a large tank that will hold a good quantity of water.

Among the people of Angora there is a remarkable eagerness for education; and the brethren often dream of a good High School, but, as yet, they have no money for either building or teachers. As was mentioned above, about 24,800 of the city's inhabitants are non-Protestant Christians, but they send many pupils to Protestant schools. There are eight in Anatolia College; six in Baghchejuk Academy; eighteen in the Apostolic Institute in Konia (Iconium); and six in the Girl's School at Ada Bazar; besides about 100 in other outside schools. If they were able to take one-half of these into a suitable High School in the city what a blessing it would be! But it will come *sometime*. Are we not right in considering this a very hopeful work and can we be blamed if we want to let others in for a share in it?

Readers will please bear in mind that nine-tenths of the above is from the sketch in Turkish of my pupil and fellow laborer, Rev. Kevork A. Manougyan. He has sent me photographs of the building which I will be glad to give as

desired. If you knew how eager this preacher is to raise this money; and how reluctant he is to ask for it, I am sure many of you would lend him a helping hand.

Auburndale, September 30, 1911.

J. L. FOWLE, *Caesarea*.

