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Turkey and the War

A SERMON

BY THE

REV. CHARLES WOOD, D.D.



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TURKEY AND THE WAR

"For thou mayest be no longer steward." Luke 16:2.

The fatal error in religion, that has made the Turkish Empire and all other Mohammedan lands faithless to their God-given stewardship, is putting Resignation in the place of Responsibility. This has honeycombed all ambition and robbed man of every motive that makes for progress. The Moslem stands, looking back to Mohammed and his successors for precedents or commands, but he never looks around to discover possibilities of improving either his own condition or the condition of anyone else.

A sluggish South American, when he is asked to exert himself, may respond with extreme politeness: "Mañana,"—tomorrow. But a Mohammedan, while less plausible and promising, has a more effective escape from the disagreeable duty of exerting himself in personal or public reforms and betterments in the single word Kismet—fate—that word lifts him into an altitude so lofty that emotion is chilled, desire is frozen, and obligation is put in cold storage.

“Whatever is, is right.” This is the philosophy that governs the Moslem’s entire life in the minutest detail. Is it a fire? Is it a flood? If it be a fire, he waits, completely resigned, till it has burned his house down or itself out. “It is the will of Allah.” Is it a flood? He will watch it with the same resignation till the waters pass out to sea and the river returns to its old channel. “It is the will of Allah.”

Therefore, the Turk does nothing willingly for himself or humanity. He does not build bridges. He takes the ford that Allah prepared for him. He does not make roads. He follows a cattle path or the bed of a river. He does not erect hospitals in his cities, but he says of himself—he is extremely consistent—as he says of his wife and of his children: “If it be the will of Allah we shall get well; if it be the will of Allah we shall die.” He does not pave the streets of his cities—the city itself is an inconsistency in his creed which he does not stop to explain—but he is consistent in leaving streets in the natural state which is doubtless most pleasing to Allah.

However kindly sympathetic and benevolent such a man may be by nature when he is convinced—and he is always open to such a conviction—that it is the will of Allah his Christian neighbor, with whom he is on the best of terms, should be removed, his only question is will Allah be most pleased to have him removed with a knife or a gun? Put such a man in the ranks with 50,000 other men of the same sort and creed and you have the kind of an army before which Europe has trembled more than once.

Mohammed, the founder of this religion that controls one-tenth of the world's inhabitants more autocratically than any other religion except Christian Science, was, in the broadest meaning of the word, a seer. Carlyle went so far in his extreme generosity as to give him a place not only among his heroes, but among his prophets. Carlyle thinks that in a world made by God and not the devil it is impossible that quackery and fatuity can be permanently successful. "A false man found a religion?" he cries. "Why, a false man cannot even build a brick house." "If he does not know and know truly the properties of mortar, burnt clay and what else he works in, it is no house that he makes, but a rubbish heap"—as, alas, the builders of the first tower of this church found to their cost.

Carlyle will not for a moment consent to say that Mohammed was a conscious imposter. He was a seer, That is, he saw deeply into certain phases of truth. He looked at the great, wide ocean of sand around him and from it came the conception to him of the illimitable, the infinite. He looked at the stars in their countless numbers and felt, as Napoleon felt, when he waved his hand across the sky and said to his infidel marshals: "Who made all this?" Mohammed did not believe that "all this" had been made by men or by demigods. "God is God;" and the great words thrilled his soul and swayed his whole being. "God is God!" But, alas, he went still further and said: "Mohammed is his prophet." He took a monopoly and claimed the copyright on the interpretation of God forever.

The symbol of Mohammedanism, the crescent and the star, is scientifically and psychologically pathetically per-

fect. For Mohammed believed that the half is better than the whole. A semi-circle with a single star, rather than a circle in the center of countless constellations in a system of which it was but a part, was naturally his chosen sign.

To Mohammed not only was half a loaf better than no bread, but it was better than all the bread of the whole loaf. To him the Old Testament was better than the Old and New Testaments together. He thought a Moslem not only of more value than all the rest of the world, but of more value alone than he would be with the rest of the world added to him. He believed that the Will is of more importance, not only than any other single faculty of man, but of more importance than all the faculties and powers of man—reason, affection and will—under the harmonious sway of a predominant passion like love.

He built, therefore, his great structure on a single virtue, Resignation, and on two vices, Slavery and Polygamy. He promised Paradise to every soldier fighting either to slay or to enslave. He promised his soldiers that if they fell with the sword in their hands they should be caught up by angels and carried into a paradise where they should be served by innumerable slaves and wives. He permitted only four wives here on earth, but there were to be no restrictions in Paradise. Wine was forbidden the faithful here, but there they should drink until they had satisfied an unquenchable thirst. With a faith like that, a faith so admirably adapted to a limited spirituality, and to an unlimited sensuality, was it any wonder that his soldiers went conquering and to conquer?

Before these Moslem hordes, equipped with the best implements of destruction known to the time, European soldiers offered a feeble resistance. Moslem armies swept around the shores of the Mediterranean, taking all Arabia and Northern Africa, Constantinople, and Greece, overwhelming and extinguishing the finest culture the world had ever seen. Conquering at last Spain itself, they held it for 700 years. In these Moslem wars, and such as these, it is said that more than 10,000,000 non-Moslems were slaughtered. But every error—for Carlyle was right no false religion can permanently endure—every error carries its doom in its own bosom. A religion emphasizing but one virtue, Resignation, could make conquests but no converts. Wherever Mohammedanism went it was a marauder and a despoiler. The Janisaries, you say, were the sons of Christian mothers and fathers, but they were torn from the bosoms of their mothers when they were babes and were inoculated with the virus of hate for all Christians, most of all for their own relatives.

A religion founded on one virtue and two vices could not permanently endure. Mohammedanism reached its high water mark when it swept through Spain into France, to the very walls of Tours, where Charles Martel, the Frankish king, struck it a stinging, staggering blow with his Thor-like hammer. Nine hundred years later, beneath the walls of Vienna, John Sobieski, King of Poland, inflicted a still more decisive defeat.

The destroying flood that so long threatened European and Christian civilization slowly receded leaving a detritus of mud and ruins which will not wholly disappear for many centuries.

Spain was the first of all the flooded lands to reappear. Then came Greece and the Balkans. In 1912 it seemed as if there was to be nothing left of Turkey in Europe, yet, thanks to the hot temper and shortsighted selfishness of her enemies, she still holds a little strip around Constantinople. But Asia Minor with her seven churches, some of which were founded by Paul and to all of which John wrote: Tarsus, the birthplace of Paul; Antioch, the place where the disciples were first called Christians; Damascus, where Paul had the heavenly vision to which he was always obedient; Bethlehem, the town of the cradle; Jerusalem, with its sepulchre, and its cross—over all these today the crescent floats.

Even in Shelley's time, when the wave was receding much less swiftly than in our own, Shelley, who loved to call himself a skeptic, sang, and a note of faith and hope sounds in his song:

“The moon of Mohammed
Arose and it shall set
While blazoned as on Heaven's immortal noon
The cross leads generations on.”

Looking out over the Golden Horn the night Germany declared war against Russia we saw a crescent with one star of glittering silver blazing close to it. Together they seemed to dominate heaven and earth. As we looked we wondered, like Franklin in Independence Hall, in Philadelphia, where the Continental Congress was assembled to form, if possible, a Constitution for the United States. “Seeing a sun carved on the back of the chair in which the speaker sat, I wondered.” Franklin said, “as I looked, whether it was a setting or rising sun, but as I gazed long I felt sure that it was

a rising sun, and that it foreboded prosperity for the new union which had just been consummated." So we wondered if the crescent, gleaming threateningly in the sky, was waxing or waning. Convinced that it was waning, we saw in it, not a prophecy, but a symbol of Mohammedanism—the half moon waning to wax no more.

The Turks of the better class in Constantinople have shared this to their bitter conviction since Turkey began the war with Russia. One of the wisest of the Turkish statesmen said, when told the first shot had been fired, "This is the end, our fate is sealed." The voice of the Sheikh-UI-Islam, though it carries much further than that of any Sultan, has not been effective in calling the Mohammedans to a holy war. In vain the prophet's banner has been unfurled. In vain the sacred carpet has been exhibited. In vain the sword of Mohammed II, the Conqueror, with which every Sultan is invested in the great mosque of Eyoub, has been pointed at the infidel's breast. The Mohammedan world is unresponsive. Her one virtue, Resignation, calls to her soul with a louder voice than the blended tones of the Sheikh-UI-Islam and the Sultan. "The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places," the Turk says. "I love Constantinople, Egypt, and India too. We Moslems are very much at home wherever the British flag flies. We feel even more secure under the cross of St. George than under the crescent of our Prophet."

There are more Moslems in India than there are in Persia and the whole Turkish Empire, including Tripoli, Tunis, Algiers and Morocco, and their Resignation is complete. The Moslem says: "Did not our great Mohammed teach us we should always know whether our caliph

had been selected in Heaven or on earth?" The caliph who reigns over the largest number of the faithful, whatever his name or title, is the God-chosen caliph." King George reigns over more Mohammedans than all the sultans, khedives and padishahs. May it not be, without changing his religion, George V shall soon be able to call himself, "King of Great Britain, Emperor of India, and Caliph of the Mohammedan world?"

When the Turk recrosses the Bosphorus into Asia, what will he leave behind him in Europe? It is to be hoped he will leave Sancta Sophia—that glorious temple of Christendom—uninjured. He will leave, it is true, a few beautiful palaces which he built in Spain, a large number of exquisite mosques throughout Turkey—but no discoveries, no inventions, no improvements. Constantinople has been greatly improved in the last two years. There are, in some of the streets, excellent pavements, lines of trolleys and electric lights. In a few houses there are telephones. With these innovations the Turk had nothing to do. Foreign capital, foreign energy and foreign initiative have done it all. The Turk will leave behind him no structures consecrated to science or art, to philanthropy or humanity.

After recrossing the Bosphorus he will mount his horse on the Asiatic side just as his ancestors 500 years ago mounted their horses—horses of the same blood; and there are no better in the world. But his family will follow him in a covered cart, the counterpart of the cart his ancestors used when they came up out of Asia into Europe. The wheels will groan and shriek like the wheels of his forefather's carts. He will cross lines of railway, some running from Scutari, a short

distance into the country, or it may be he will strike the line which is already being built to connect London, Paris and Berlin with Bagdad and Calcutta. But he had nothing to do with it or any of these lines he would scornfully confess, and if he could have his way he would shed no tears if they were all wiped out.

He will leave behind him in Constantinople a number of schools which were intended primarily for teaching the Will of Allah—as contained in the Koran—nothing else. It is an open question whether even these schools would ever have been established if it had not been that seventy years ago Cyrus Hamlin and men like him came from America to Constantinople. At that time there was no school in the Turkish Empire, and not one school book.

The Turk will leave behind him, up the Bosphorus, a great college in which there are over 600 students. A college to which an American, Mr. Robert, gave \$200,000, and to which another American, Mr. John S. Kennedy, gave \$1,500,000. In that college many Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians and some Turks have been educated. The light that has come from that college has been like the discharge of an electric battery upon vegetation which, it is said, so stimulates growth that the fruitage is a hundred-fold what it was before. Greece has felt it, Roumania has felt it, and Bulgaria has been transformed by it.

When the Bulgarians, a little while ago, thought of sending a representative for the first time to the United States they perforce selected a graduate of Robert College, and then, in order that they might be quite sure that they would be adequately and satisfactorily repre-

sented, they took not only a graduate but a professor for forty-two years in that college. But the Turk does not love Robert College. He would dynamite it tonight if he could. He does not want anything so disturbing as an educational institution in his philosophy.

Behind him too, near Robert College, he will leave another and still more offensive centre of western science and learning—a woman's college with 250 students. This is revolutionary and subversive of all his Koran teaches. "Educate a man and you educate an individual. Educate a woman and you educate a family," it has been said. What is to become of the religion of the Prophet when families are educated? The retreating Turk will find forty-four American schools, and 25,000 students in Asia Minor. He will find American colleges at Marsovan, Kharpuz, Aintab, Tarsus, Marash and Smyrna. On the Syrian coast at Beyrout he will see another American college with 900 students and thirty-five American teachers and forty native teachers.

As the Turk journeys, wherever he finds a house in which there are either the decencies or the conveniences of civilization, he will know that such a house exists in the Turkish Empire only because either the father or the mother of the family living there was educated in an American or European school.

As he passes through the fields—for there are no roads made by the Turk—he will see his brethren using the agricultural implements of Abraham's time, tickling the soil with a sharp stick as a plow. There are few tools anywhere in the Orient that have not come from the United States. He may cross slopes of mountains in which there are inexhaustible veins of coal and copper, of iron and oil,

but if he should travel that country for the next 500 years—the people remaining Moslems supposedly, all those resources would be left, as they have been left for the last 700 years, untouched and undeveloped.

When the Turk is once more and forever across the Bosphorus it will be easier to help him than it is now. As an individual he has many attractive qualities. His one virtue, Resignation, has blossomed out into many kinds of beautiful fruit, such as courtesy, geniality, cleanliness, truthfulness, and self respect, alas, carried to the very verge of superciliousness—an extravagant and abnormal sense of his personal superiority. But he has been “cribbed, cabined and confined” in the most constricting creed known to man. He is like a palm—call it a royal palm if you like—planted in a pot. Break the pot, he will be more ready to have it done when he crosses the Bosphorus than he is now, and he may grow to an unrecognizable stature. The hour of his retreat from Europe may thus become the hour of his advance into civilization.

He may be taught then that while Resignation is fundamental, it is only preparatory, like the removing of the stones and roots by which the soil has been encumbered, in order that the good seed may be planted. He may be taught then that Evolution, of which he has heard something and which he believes is the European panacea, does not evolve unless it begins with reformation and is carried on by education, and that men and women alike are to receive this education.

The first convert that Mohammed made was his wife, Khadija. Alas that he should have been so ungrateful! He made no place in his paradise for a woman. He

teaches, at least by inference, that a woman needs no paradise. Here in our country our women are troubled because they have no vote. In Turkish lands their only trouble is that they have no souls.

Poor Khadija, his first convert, without a soul! A highly educated French woman, a few years or so ago, went to Constantinople and talked to a Turkish woman of high rank about religion, but the Turkish woman said: "Why, I thought religion was a matter only for men." Here in this country there are thousands of men who think that religion is a matter only for women. There is no hope, no possibility of radical reformation for Turkey, so Sir Edwin Pease, who has spent his whole life in Constantinople in most sympathetic contact with the Turk, says, till these two vices upon which Mohammedanism is built—polygamy and slavery—are eradicated. The Moslem women must have schools in which they shall all be taught they have souls, and that the soul withers in polygamy and slavery. When the Turk finds himself in Asia Minor he will be willing, perhaps, to listen to what the 20th century has to say to him about the advantages of education.

He will be ready also to listen when he is told that Resignation is but a half circle, a half hinge; that man must advance from Resignation to Realization if he is to attain to the highest and best possible to him; that "Through love, through hope, through faith's transcendent dower, we feel that we are greater than we know." Only as man has that hope of being something greater than he knows, "only as he apprehends that for which also he is apprehended—the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ—can he come to "the perfect

man." He shall be taught, and he will be ready to listen then, that God is God, but He is the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom even Mohammed called a prophet.

The retreat of Turkey—that hour of her necessity—will be the hour of America's opportunity, not for spoliation, dismemberment or partition, but for redemption and reconstruction. Already we have our representatives in the Turkish Empire. Our "lighthouses," as our schools and colleges have been called, are sending out their rays on that dark and dead coast. Our soldiers are there not to kill and wound, but to give first aid to the wounded. Our cannon are loaded, not with shrapnel, but like most of our cannon along our coasts, with life-lines. It may not be possible even with all our life-saving stations and our lifeboats to keep the waterlogged ship flying the crescent flag from sinking, but surely we shall be able to save thousands of our brothers and sisters who stand calling for help upon the storm-swept decks.

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