

HOW MOHAMMEDANS VIEW CHRISTIANITY.

THE murder of Christian Armenians by the Moslem Turks is in our day such an anomaly that the why and wherefore of this butchery still seem a mystery. However, scholars who have made the teachings of Mohammedanism a special study declare, that this policy of propoganda by the sword is the natural and necessary outcome of consistent Moslem faith. An article of special interest in this line we find in the new and scholarly journal *Der Christliche Orient*, the only magazine in existence devoted to the study of the historic Christianity of the East. In No. 22 of this periodical, Pastor von Bergmann, of Baku, in the Caucasus, discusses the relation of Mohammedanism to Christian missions. The data of this article are taken directly from Moslem sources. Among other things Pastor von Bergmann writes in substance as follows.

Mohammed designates himself as the messenger from God, as Moses and Jesus, the Son of Mirjam, also had been; but Mohammed, according to his own words, had been sent to reveal a better way to salvation than the one taught by Jesus, whose way indeed could never lead men to God.

This is an exhibition of the great grace of God, which He had revealed through Mohammed, and to despise this mercy is a heinous crime; for it is impossible to live according to the teachings of Christ, and those who attempt it are inevitably lost. The revelation of Mohammed is something immeasurably superior to that of the Son of Mirjam. If, however, Christians and Jews determine to adhere to their imperfect revelation, they can do so to their own harm and destruction; but just so soon as they begin to try to persuade a Mohammedan to give up his faith and accept theirs, they must be destroyed. If circumstances are such that this method can not be applied, it is forbidden to listen to their discourse. If, notwithstanding all this, a Moslem should throw aside his faith, he must be killed. The prophet himself says: "Wherever you find him, you must slay him."

But, by the rejection of the great grace of God through Mohammed, Christians and all other unbelievers have become such gross criminals that their lives have no worth or value whatever. If, then, a Mohammedan, either purposely or not, kills a Christian, the Lord will be merciful to him. It is a terrible sin to regard the Christians as equal to a Mohammedan or to consider them as entitled to any rights over against the latter. Whoever regards them in this light despises the great mercy of God which through Mohammed has shown an easy way to reach heaven, and all those who despise and reject this must receive their pay, *i. e.*, must be killed.

The conclusions to be drawn from this teaching of the Koran, especially if the application is left to the judgment of the rabble, is readily seen. The position which Mohammedans must take against Christian missions in general and against Christians as

such is clear. A Mohammedan government can permit the activity and even the presence of Christians only where it is too weak to forbid them. That the command to slay a convert from Mohammedanism to Christianity is carried out if possible was seen in the recent murder, on a Russian railroad train, of the converted Mohammedan, Stephar Askjar, on the very day he was baptized.

The author of this article is of the conviction, based upon the personal observations of a residence of many years in Moslem neighborhoods, that Christian missions there can be carried on only if whole villages are converted. A leading object of mission societies must be the protection of the individual convert.

The same journal in No. 3 begins a series of learned articles, by Professor Zeller, on the relation of Islam to Christianity, in which similar data and conclusions are given :

The Koran gives a strange picture of Christ. It recognizes in Jesus a superior being, admits that He could perform miracles, and was in a sense a messenger from God. Mohammed denies that Christ died on the cross. Before the crucifixion he was removed to heaven, and a certain Jew, who looked a good deal like Christ, by the name of Jeshua, was nailed to the cross in His place. The doctrines, however, of Jesus were thoroughly corrupted by His disciples and followers, so that the church does not possess the original teachings of the Son of Mirjam. Mohammed's teachings are really the confirmation of what Jesus originally taught, and the relation of the two systems was that the latter was superior to the earlier. Mohammed has purified Christian doctrine, and he is accordingly the watchman of the true revelation of God. In fact his religion is the original belief of Adam and Abraham and Moses and Jesus. Whatever in the Old and the New Testament does not agree with the Koran is a later addition and falsification of divine truth. Among these things are to be counted also such cardinal teachings as that Christ was the Son of God. The Koran never tires of repeating the statement that God had no children and that it is blasphemy to claim that Jesus was the Son of God. But these facts put into their proper relations both the Christian and the Moslem revelations, as also their heads, Jesus and Mohammed. To reject the latter is accordingly the same as to reject genuine Christianity and to adhere to later additions of a spurious kind and character. The establishment of Mohammedanism is accordingly the highest and greatest task of mankind, and the restoration of the primitive truth of revelation.

The author shows that according to these tenets of the Koran Mohammedanism can but be hostile to Christianity, can acknowledge nothing good in its peculiar teachings, but only something corrupt, and that the removal of Christianity is a high duty in the interests of pure and unadulterated religion.