

ARTICLE VI.

DR. JONAS KING'S EXPOSITION OF AN APOSTOLICAL CHURCH.

THIS brief but lucid and, to us, satisfactory exposition of an Apostolical Church, is designed for such Greeks as are more or less convinced that the religion of their church is not the religion of the Bible, the source, and the only source, of all true religion. The following summary will give the reader a good idea of its contents.

The true Disciples of Jesus Christ — Their Religious Guide — Nature of the Christian Church — Its Government — Bond of Union — The Pastor — His Support — His Principal Duties — His Titles — His Dress — Equality of Pastors — Deacons — The Lord's Supper — Nature of the Bread and Wine — Baptism — Sponsors — Mode of Baptism — Church Discipline — Anathemas, Curses, Excommunication — Prayer — Fasts — Divorce — Recreations — The Lord's Day — Worship of Saints and Angels — Offerings — Pictures and Images — Theatrical Representations of the Sufferings and Death of Christ — Holy Relics — Crosses — Amulets — Prayers for the Dead — The Seven Sacraments — Confession of Faith — Of God — The Fall of Man and his Moral Corruption — The Incarnation of Christ — Salvation through Him — Faith and Works — Regeneration — Mediation of Christ — The Holy Scriptures — State of the Soul after Death — The Resurrection and Judgment of the Dead — Everlasting Life and Punishment — Canonical Books of the Bible.

It is now more than twenty years since Dr. Jonas King settled as a missionary at Athens, the capital of that small and unhappy portion of Greece, usually known as Greece Independent. Like a servant faithful to his Master, he has labored hard for the spiritual welfare of the people among whom he lives, and his rewards have been, constant disappointment, anathemas, and curses fulminated against him by the heads of the church, insults, persecution, and many other vexations which bigotry, superstition, unprincipledness, envy and malice could devise. A Protestant missionary in Greece is, by the bigoted, hated and shunned as an accursed heretic, the enemy of the Mother of God; by the infidels, that is, by the majority of those who are

¹ *Ἐκθεσις Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Ἐπιτομὴ Ἰωνᾶ Κίγγ. Ἐν Κωνσταντινῶν τῆς Νέας Ἀγγλίας, ἈΩΜΑ.* [An Exposition of an Apostolical Church. By Jonas King. Cambridge, New England, 1851.]

more or less educated, he must be prepared to be regarded as a hypocrite or fanatic. Protestantism in that country is, by a singular confusion of ideas, confounded with Freemasonry, which, in its turn, is imagined to be systematic atheism. And because the Protestant missionaries who first settled there, were Americans, the term *American* is now synonymous with *Freemason* (*Φαρμασόνος*,) or *Atheist*. We should not be surprised, therefore, if this publication subjected its author to new trials. Still, we cannot but hope that the successors of Annas and Caiaphas will profit by his advice, "not to employ against him their usual weapons, namely, anathemas, curses and insults, but to refute his errors by the Word of God," if they can.

It has often been asserted that the Greeks are very violent in their opposition to the Bible, and numerous facts have been adduced in support of this position. We would suggest, however, to those who make this statement, that hostility to the Word of God, is not peculiar to the Greeks as a nation. In Greece, the blind lead the blind; the masses are like *πρόβατα ποιμένα μὴ ἔχοντα*, and the individual is like *κάλαιμος ὑπὸ ἀνέμου σαλευόμενος*, too ignorant to oppose anything. The head-quarters of the opposition are at Constantinople, *τὸ κατοικητήριον τῶν δαιμόνων, ὅπου ὁ θρόνος τοῦ Σατανᾶ*, the residence of the most influential High Priests and other sons of those who crucified the GREAT MISSIONARY. The causes of this apparently obstinate resistance to divine truth are numerous. We submit the following:

First. The natural depravity of the human heart, *διότι τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς ἐχθρὰ εἰς Θεὸν· τῷ γὰρ νόμῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ὑποτάσσεται, οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναται*. This indeed would be enough of itself to account for all hostility to revealed truth; but we must add,

Secondly. The religion of the Bible requires natural honesty, reflection, and sobriety, qualities of rare occurrence in Greece, where unfortunately, thoughtlessness passes for genius, sincerity for hypocrisy, honesty for stupidity, and where adulation, lying, and meanness are believed to be necessary to success. How can religious knowledge make much progress in a country where lying and speaking the truth are regarded by most of the instructors of youth as in themselves indifferent things, good when they benefit, bad when they injure? The fountain-head of lying, however, is the church, in other words, the higher clergy, who, in fact, constitute the church, the common people having no voice in its government. Among other kinds of deception, it almost daily causes pictures of saints, and especially of the virgin, to perform extraordinary cures, which are adduced as

irrefragable proofs in favor of the orthodox faith. The most remarkable of these pictures, are those painted by Luke the Evangelist, who, according to Paul's testimony, was a physician, and if so, he might have been also a painter, and therefore he was a painter. Besides, say the hierarchs, if Luke did not paint these miracle-working pictures, who did paint them? As to their number, he might have painted seventy, for the Bible speaks of three score and ten palm trees, and of seventy disciples; therefore, he did paint seventy, three or four of which have already been discovered, and are doing wonders. Such arguments are very conclusive in the East, although to some of our readers they may appear nonsensical. The church, moreover, has sanctioned many of the popular errors, such as the effects of the evil eye (*βασκανία*), for which she has provided appropriate prayers.

Thirdly. We have already intimated that the chief opposition to the spread of Biblical knowledge, comes from the higher clergy, whom the ignorant masses believe to be the lineal successors of the Apostles. And although they may despise their character, yet they dread their anathemas, and consequently they dare not disobey their impious mandates. They are early taught to distinguish between the character of the man, and that mysterious power supposed to reside in him; the result of which illusion is, that the clergy in general, and the higher clergy in particular, are looked upon as a superior order of beings, having the power of binding and loosing (*τοῦ δεσμεῖν καὶ λύειν*), by which the ignorant understand, that when a man has been anathematized or otherwise cursed by a Bishop or Priest, his body remains unchanged after death, which shows that his soul is, in an inexplicable manner, bound to its tabernacle, and is consequently miserable, until the same, or any other ecclesiastic causes the body to be loosed, that is, decomposed, by reading over it the prayers entitled, *Εὐχαὶ συγχωρητικαὶ εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρὰν καὶ ἀφορισμὸν εἰς τεθνεῶτα ἀναγιγνώσκονται παρὰ ἀρχιερέως ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης παρὰ πνευματικῶν πατρὸς; εἰ οὐ πάρεστιν ἀρχιερέως*, for which he charges a pretty round sum of money. And here the classical scholar will naturally be reminded of the Homeric verses, (Il. 28, 71-74):

Θάπτε με ὅτι τάχιστα, πύλας Ἴδαο περήσω,
 Τῆλέ με εἴργουσι ψυχαί, εἶδωλα καμόντων,
 Οὐδέ μέ πω μίσησθαι ὑπὲρ ποταμοῖο ἐῶσι·
 Ἄλλ' αὐτῶς ἀλάλημαι ἀν' εὐρυπυλῆς Ἴδαο δῶ.

Let my pale corse the rites of burial know,
 And give me entrance in the realms below:

Till then, the spirit finds no resting place,
 But here and there the unbodied spectres chase
 The vagrant dead around the dark abode,
 Forbid to cross the irremeable flood.

Pope's Translation.

Fourthly. In Greece and Turkey, religion is, with the individual, a point of *honor*. If the missionary intimates to a Greek, directly or indirectly, that his church is in error, especially if he attempts to confirm his position by a quotation from the Bible or the early Fathers, the person thus addressed is apt to take it for a personal as well as national insult. When a Moslem intends to offer the highest insult to a Greek, he aims at his cross; the Greek, under similar circumstances, abuses his Mohammed. The technical terms used in theological disputes of this nature, are too gross to be mentioned here; besides, they are fortunately untranslatable.

Fifthly. The illusion of the restoration of the Byzantine empire, has been one of the most serious obstacles to the progress of Scriptural religion among the Greeks. And as the church in its present form is the only thing that can bind them together as a nation — for, as soon as a Greek changes his religion, he loses his nationality — all their politicians are systematically opposed to religious controversies of any kind whatsoever. In view of the realization of this dream, even the disciple of Voltaire is heard to talk loudly about his holy religion.

Sixthly. The Greek church virtually, if not formally, regards the Canons of the Seven Ecumenical Councils, as the highest court of appeal in all religious matters. The bare text of the Scriptures is looked upon as an obscure oracular response, having no meaning without the explanations of the divinely instructed (*θεόσοφοι*) Fathers, the only legitimate expounders of the Word of God. This is one of the most formidable enemies the Evangelical missionary has to contend with. He must convince the Greeks, that the rules of the Bible alone are binding upon Christians, before he can make the least progress in his work. And the book before us, we hope, will do considerable towards accomplishing this object.

For the benefit of those who wish to know something about the leading peculiarities of the Greek church in its present state, we add the following remarks. In its external form, it is a compound of Heathenism and Judaism, the former being the basis of it. Its religion consists of little else than a series of bodily motions, including the motion of the tongue, and abstinence from certain kinds of food on certain stated days. The chief object of worship, in a practical

point of view, is MARY, the mother of Jesus, who although a historical personage, is the latest phase of Rhea, Athene, and Artemis united into one being. The progress of *Mariolatry* in this church seems to be this: "The blessed among women" was a virgin when she became the mother of the Son of man. About the early part of the third century, some persons, confounding her probably with Athene, imagined that she remained a virgin after the birth of the Anointed. About the latter part of the fourth century, the second Œcumenical Council contrived to have her name inserted in the creed, usually but incorrectly styled the *Nicene Creed*. This, however, does her but little honor, since in the same creed, Pontius Pilate also figures. By the third Œcumenical Council, held about fifty years after the second, she was most solemnly declared to be *The Mother of God* (*Θεοτόκος*). After that, she continued to gain glory very rapidly, until finally she has virtually supplanted the worship of God in Christ. The God of the Bible is indeed still regarded theoretically as superior to Mary, but for all human purposes the latter is all-sufficient. Is a Greek in distress? he usually cries, *Παραγία Θεοτόκε, βοήθει μοι*. God, in fact, belongs to a religious system now become obsolete. He is to Mary what, with the ancients, Kronos was to Zeus. She is now *Ἰπεραγία Θεοτόκος, Αειπαρθένος, Νύμφη ἀνύμφευτος, Μητέρα τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ Ἰψίστου, Τιμιωτέρα τῶν Χερουβὶμ, Ἐδοξοτέρα τῶν Σεραφίμ, Ἡ μόνη ἐλπίς καὶ προστασία τῶν πιστῶν*, and an endless variety of similar absurd and blasphemous titles. Protestants are commonly shocked at the heathenish expression, "The Mother of God;" but what will they do when they are informed that the Greek church has provided also a *Grandmother* and *Grandfather* for him? We are aware that very few will be disposed to credit our statement, and therefore refer those who doubt its accuracy to the Greek Calendar (*Ἐρολόγιον*), where they will find under September 9th, *Τῶν ἁγίων καὶ δικαίων Θεοπατέρων Ἰωακείμ καὶ Ἄννης*, The feast of the holy and just parents of God Joakeim and Anna, they being the traditional parents of Mary. Under July 25th, *Ἡ κοίμησις τῆς ἁγίας Ἄννης, μητρὸς τῆς Θεοτόκου*, The feast of the sleep (death) of Saint Anna, the mother of the Mother of God. Anna is called also *Θεοπρομήτωρ, The Grandmother of God!*

The language of the "Exposition" is now spoken, or rather written, by such Greeks as are more or less acquainted with the authors of ancient Greece. This language resembles the ancient in most of its forms, but the meaning of many of its words is not to be found in the classical authors, and its syntax and versification are entirely modern;

and the more it approaches the ancient as to its exterior, the more it departs from its spirit. It is in fact little else than modern ideas, chiefly French, in Greek dress. As a specimen take the following extract from one of the leading Journals published at Athens :

Ἡ κυβέρνησις μας σήμερον φέρει ὅλα τὰ σημεῖα καὶ ὅλας τὰς ἀθλιότητας τῆς παρακμῆς. Ἡ παρατήρησις αὐτῆ ἤρκει, νομίζομεν, νὰ πείσῃ τοὺς διευθύνοντας τὰ πράγματά μας ὅτι τὸ σύστημα τοῦ Κωλέττου εἶναι ὀλέθριον καὶ δι' αὐτοὺς καὶ διὰ τὸν τόπον. Ὁ μηχανισμὸς τοῦ Συντάγματος δὲν ἐκπληροῖ πλέον τὰς λειτουργίας του. Ἡ Βασιλεία ἐταπεινώθη, ὁ λαὸς ἔπεσεν εἰς χαμέρπειαν, ὁ μηχανισμὸς τοῦ Συντάγματος ἐκπληροῖ ἐργασίαν δυσώδη, καὶ ρυπαρὰν, ἀνακινεῖ καὶ σηκῶνει βόρβορον, μ' ἄλλους λόγους, τὸ Σύνταγμα κατήτησε ἀληθῆς βορβοροφάγος.

To the uneducated, that is, to the mass of the nation, this dialect is almost unintelligible, partly because its words are often different from those in common use, but much because the vocabulary of the illiterate is as meagre in Greece as in any other country. For philological purposes, however, the language of the common people is infinitely more important than that of the educated. Add to this the fact that the most valuable portion of Romain literature has appeared in this dialect.

We observe here that the inhabitants of Boeotia, Attica, Megaris, Argolis, Poros, Hydra, and Spetsais are mostly Albanians, and speak a language as different from the Romain, as the Slavonic is from the Greek. Further, in Tsakonia, a small district of Lakonia, a curious jargon is spoken by the common people. Some learned Germans regard it as a branch of the Doric; we have no doubt it is a barbarous Romain. Take this specimen :

Τὸν τσερὲ ποῦ μᾶ ἔχοντε τὸν πόλεμο μὲ τὰ κοτσονὶ καβαλάριδε, τὰ μούτσοννά σου δὲ σ' ὀράκαμε. Γκιὰ ἔσα τότε, τσε ἔδαρι ἐκάτε ρεογὶ τσε μᾶς ταρασούμενε; Οὐ! νὰ χαθῆρε, ὄνε! That is, in common Romain: Τὸν καιρὸ ὁποῦ ἡμεῖς εἶχαμε τὸν πόλεμο μὲ τοὺς Τούρκους, τὰ μούτσοννά σου δὲν τὰ εἶδαμε. Ποῦ ἦσον τότε, καὶ τώρα μᾶς ἤλθες καὶ μᾶς κουνίεσαι; Οὐ! νὰ χαθῆς, γάδαρε!

It is more than probable that in a few generations both jargons will disappear from Greece.