

**EASTERN CHRISTIANITY AND THE
WAR: THE IDOLATRY,
SUPERSTITION AND CORRUPTION
OF THE CHRISTIANS OF TURKEY,
GREECE, AND, RUSSIA**

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Eastern Christianity and the War: The Idolatry, Superstition and Corruption of the Christians of Turkey, Greece, and, Russia by Joseph Brown

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JOSEPH BROWN

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EASTERN CHRISTIANITY AND THE WAR.

**THE IDOLATRY,
SUPERSTITION, AND CORRUPTION
OF THE
CHRISTIANS OF TURKEY,
GREECE, AND RUSSIA,**

**EXPOSED AND CONSIDERED WITH THE PRESENT WAR,
AND THE PROSPECTS OF A REFORMATION.**

BY
JOSEPH BROWN, Esq., Q.C.



LONDON.
EDWARD STANFORD, 55, CHARING CROSS.
1877.

110. m. 241.

THE great and lasting importance of the subject of these pages, and its bearing on Ritualism and Romanizing at home, have induced the writer to attempt to exhibit the present state and prospects of Oriental Christianity, which he has strong reason to believe are unknown to general readers. Very few have ever seen the Rev. John Hartley's 'Researches in Greece' (1831), or Dean Waddington's 'Condition of the Greek Church' (1829), and both works are now scarce, and quite out of date. Dean Stanley's charming 'Lectures on the Eastern Church' (1861) are chiefly concerned with its ancient history, rather than its present condition; and important events have occurred since they were written. This brief essay is intended to put together in a short compass the leading facts and the latest information for the many who would not read a larger work. In his observations the writer has used the freedom of a layman and a lawyer, especially in exposing superstition; but he trusts, without ever forgetting the deep respect due to sincere religion.

54, AVENUE ROAD, REGENT'S PARK,
August, 1877.

EASTERN CHRISTIANITY

AND

THE WAR.

WHILE the great cause of the Cross against the Crescent is being pleaded in the East by the cannon's mouth, that "ultima ratio regum," and all Europe is watching with anxiety this tremendous trial by battle, it may be a relief to turn away for a while from scenes of carnage and cruelty, and to make some inquiries as to the sort of religion professed and practised by the Oriental Christians, for whom our sympathies have been so deeply moved that we have been strongly tempted to take their part in the conflict. What kind of Christianity do they believe and practise? Has it any resemblance to our Protestantism? Is it such a religion that we could consent to fight for? And is it even possible, as some have hoped, to bring about a union between the Church of England and the Oriental Church? Or on the contrary, does it exhibit at this day a living picture of the worst evils of priestcraft and superstition, which we escaped from at the Protestant Reformation? And what hope for its future reformation may be encouraged if the pending war should lead to the overthrow of the Turkish yoke?

These questions appear to be of deep importance at

the present time, when one party are urging us to draw the sword and plunge into the fight between Turkey and Russia; when another party in our own Church are doing their best to undo the work of the Protestant Reformation, and lead the English people back to ritual and traditional religion, auricular confession, and priest-craft; and a third party are dreaming of a union with the Greek Church. Little information is to be obtained on these religious questions from the journalists and political writers, and the author has found considerable difficulty in getting at the whole truth respecting the state of the Christian religion in the East. He has therefore determined to make public the result of his inquiries, which have ranged over many forgotten and curious volumes, and have been aided by information received from those who have long resided among the people in question. It seems to him that at the present time the English people are deeply concerned in learning the real truth, and the whole truth of this matter; and this must be his apology for bringing to light many things which a large party among us would rather conceal.

The religion of the Christians in Turkey is that of the Greek or Oriental Church, which insists on calling itself "The Holy Orthodox Church." Besides the Turkish Christians, this Church embraces three-fourths of the inhabitants of Russia, nearly all the people of Greece and the Greek islands, the great majority of the people of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Servia, and a large portion of the inhabitants of the Turkish provinces in Asia. Though usually called by us the Greek Church, that term belongs rather to its origin

and ancient history than to its present condition; for at least three-fourths of its present members are Slavonians by birth and language, including the Russians, Roumanians, and Bulgarians. The Greeks by birth form only a small minority.

The Oriental Church numbers in its communion probably not less than seventy millions of Christians—a number exceeding all the Protestant Churches together—and is further remarkably interesting as containing all that Mohammedanism has left of Christianity in those countries where it was first taught and propagated. The patriarchs of Jerusalem, of Antioch, and Alexandria claim to be the successors of the Apostles with much better right than the Bishop of Rome, and emphatically assert the title of their followers to be called the “Holy Orthodox Church.”

The facts stated in this paper apply chiefly to the state of the Christians of the Turkish provinces and the countries formerly subject to Turkey—viz., Greece, Servia, and Roumania. But the greater part of them will apply equally to the Church in Russia, except where the contrary is mentioned or implied.

The doctrines of the Greek Church approach very near to those of the Church of Rome. It acknowledges as the sources of faith both the Bible and tradition. By the latter are understood such doctrines as were taught orally by the Apostles and sanctioned by the fathers, especially Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, and John of Damascus, and by the first seven Ecumenical Councils. The consequences of admitting tradition as authoritative we shall presently see. Passing