

"Mezan-ul-Hakh," or, "The Balance of Truth," proves in a very telling manner that the Koran cannot be an inspired book. The little "Balance of Truth" has been extensively circulated for the last two years. Some of the missionaries regard the circulation of such a book as imprudent or ill-timed. Others say that it is one of the most useful instruments for awakening the Mohammedan mind, and leading it to truth. A body of several thousand Mohammedans had petitioned the Porte for a reformation of the Mohammedan faith. It was under such circumstances and amid such a growing excitement that the authorities of Constantinople have been led to pursue those extreme measures of which all Christendom have heard. On Monday, July 18, without the slightest warning or indication that a change had taken place in the views of the authorities, a number of the police proceeded to the rooms occupied by the English and American missionaries, as meeting places and book depositories, including that of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and forcibly closed them, turning out all the persons they found in them, and arresting at the same time a number of native teachers. This must, no doubt, be regarded as an attempt instigated by the reactionary and fanatical party to intimidate the missionaries, and stop their work.

It is evident that the authorities of Constantinople have grossly violated the pledge which, under the sense of recent benefits, was given to the Western Powers at the close of the Crimean War. The firman of 1856 promises that "energetic measures will be taken to ensure the freest possible exercise of every religion," and undertakes that, "as all religions can be exercised freely throughout the Ottoman dominions, no one will be molested on account of his religion, and no one forced to change his religion." The book stores and offices of the several societies are re-opened, and a limited liberty of preaching restored. The missionaries may preach in their own chapels or houses to all comers, but not in the khans or other public places. The sale of the Bible in book stores is permitted, but not its colportage about the capital.

Our missionary in Galata, Mr. Tomory writes:—

"I think the worst is over. Dr. Pfander's book is the main cause and his operations will suffer most.

"Of course these proceedings of the Turkish Government do not affect us; but it were time that our committee should apply to the Foreign Office, and recommend to them our mission for protection. Hitherto I have protected the mission through my Legation. I have a diploma as marine chaplain of the Dutch Embassy,

and they have been very kind. The Consul, Mr. Koen, is a godly man, and he serves us for the Lord's sake. But, of course, his power and influence is limited to defend and vindicate the principles of religious liberty. To make an impression upon the Turkish Government in favour of a question of such importance as the present one, there is only one man who can do it—and that is the British Ambassador."

Mr. Tomory again writes:—

"Sir Henry Bulwer has sent a very friendly communication to one of the Church Missionary Society's labourers, which, if fairly interpreted, might form a basis for an amicable arrangement. If they will act with prudence and discretion, he says, nobody will interfere with them. New conversions, however, may again alarm the Turks. The worst is that there is an infidel party mixed up with these movements and the Government confound the two together. Eight or ten converts of the missionaries are imprisoned; but there is a large number of others who are tired of Islamism, and are very loud in their infidel professions."

Both English and American papers blame Sir Henry Bulwer for the troubles that have arisen. He evidently cares nothing for Missions and regards the Missionaries as busy-bodies that he would gladly be rid of. What a contrast to the noble policy of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe! It is stated that the Roman Catholic and Greek ecclesiasties had a good deal to do with stirring up this crusade against the Protestant Missionaries. Certain it is that the Romish Missions are left wholly undisturbed. British public opinion will no doubt compel the Government to instruct Sir H. Bulwer to protect the missionaries and their converts.

PREACHING AND ITS IMPROVERS.

We extract the following admirable article from the *United Presbyterian Magazine* for October.

It is well known that the number of persons who have never tried to preach, but think they could do it if they had the opportunity, is somewhat considerable. It may be a great loss to the Church and the world that so many lights should be hid in obscurity and it must naturally be, at least to the lights themselves, a matter of unspeakable regret; but this state of things must be submitted to, until some existing prejudices have been removed, and certain irksome ecclesiastical restraints got quit of.