

OSMAN, or Othman, whence the common epithets *Osmanti*, and the "Ottoman Empire." A country so unequal in its configuration must needs have great variety of soil and climate; and it is inhabited by as great a variety of races. The entire population is about 37,000,000. The Turks, who are the dominant race, pride themselves on the name of "Osmanli" on account of the ancient splendour of the dynasty. They are all Mohammedans, and number 22,500,000. Of Greeks and Armenians there are about twelve millions; of Roman Catholics and Nestorians, two millions; of Jews, half a million, and of Druzes and other sects about eighty thousand. The Sultan, at the head of the empire, claims to be the legal successor of Mahommed—"the shadow of God upon earth." He is the prophet, priest, and king of the Mohammedan world. It is important therefore to enquire what Mohammedanism really is. The spiritual and the temporal power are united in Islam. The laws of the empire are based on the Koran. The imperial army is a religious army. The national festivals are religious. The giving of evidence is a religious act. Apostacy from Mahommedanism is treason to the state, and this last is the great obstacle to the evangelization of Mahommedans. The system is essentially and intensely formal,—fasting, the pilgrimage to Mecca, praying five times a day; testifying, "there is no god but God, and Mohammed is his apostle"; almsgiving, ablutions, genuflections, circumcision, and repeating the hundred names of God are the acts by which believers purchase paradise. The smallest change of posture in prayer calls for heavier censure than outward profligacy. Islamism is tolerant, but only to Mahommedans. Its hand is against every other man. The prayer of every true Moslem is,—“O Allah! destroy the infidels; fight thou against them, (i. e. the Christians and Jews) until they be utterly humiliated.” It sanctions polygamy. A man may divorce his wife, or wives, without either reason or warning. The sanctity of the family is utterly abrogated. Woman is degraded. The Mohammedans are responsible for the whole Zenana system of India. The theory is that woman can never be trusted: she must be watched, veiled, suspected and secluded. The Moslems are enthusiastic propagandists. They have in Cairo a University attended by ten thousand pupils under three hundred teachers. The Koran is the text-book of the students, who board themselves at a cost of four cents a day, and at the end of their curriculum they come out enthusiastic missionaries. The conversion of this vast, organized, fanatical mass of men is the most difficult problem Christianity has undertaken to solve. As yet, it has scarcely been touched. The missions of which we are

now to speak have been chiefly directed to the other races living among them, and which we shall now briefly describe—"beginning at Jerusalem."

I. THE PALESTINE MISSION. This does not embrace all "the Land of Israel." With the exception of Es salt—the ancient Ramoth-Gilad, it is confined to the eastern side of Jordan and has its northern limit at the sea of Tiberias. At its best estate the Holy Land was only about half the size of Scotland. In the time of Solomon it is said to have contained four millions of inhabitants. The present number is about 824,000. Of Jews there are about two thousand, dwelling chiefly in the four sacred cities—Jerusalem, Safad, Tiberias, and Hebron. Of the Samaritans not more than one hundred and fifty are now found in and around Nablous (Shechem). Of nominal Christians, there are a few belonging to the Greek Church, the Roman Catholic, the Armenian, the Coptic and the Nestorian churches. The rest are Mohammedans. Palestine, around which so many sacred associations cluster, is now a land of ruins and desolation. "Strange that it should be called a mission field," says Christlieb, "yet it is a mission field and a hard one also, yielding little fruit." It is perhaps the least hopeful at the present time of any mission field on the face of the earth. The English Church Missionary Society has maintained a mission in Palestine for many years. Mr. Gobat, a German missionary employed by this Society, who laboured for many years in Egypt and Abyssinia, was appointed bishop of Jerusalem in 1846, and for thirty years after his name was a household word with every Protestant who visited the Holy Land. The staff of missionaries is at present six, with as many stations,—Jerusalem, Jaffa, Nablous, Nazareth, Gaza, and Es Salt. In connection with these are a number of schools, as also at Bethlehem, and one or two other places. The London Jews' Society has a church on Mount Zion where services are conducted in English, German, and Hebrew; also an hospital. There are also German societies at work. The total number of Protestant Christians is about 1500, with as many children in the schools.

The first resident Protestant missionary in Jerusalem was the Rev. Levi Parsons, who along with the Rev. Pliny Fisk was sent to the East by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, in 1820. Landing first at Smyrna, they found good friends by whose advice they spent some six months at the famous Greek seminary on the Isle of Scio, the principal of which was noted for oriental scholarship and also for his freedom from sectarian prejudice. Here they spent their time in acquiring the languages of the East. Mr. Parsons reached Jerusalem