

the life and fortunes of this remarkable man. It will not, of course, be expected that, at this distance of time and remoteness of place, a mass of facts entirely new should be communicated to the world. The discreet use of the materials already extant is all that can now be reasonably required or attempted. Yet we are not without hope, that in one aspect, at least, our theme may present itself arrayed in a character of novelty and of unwonted interest; we mean, in its connexions with Christianity. An enlightened Christian estimate of the prophet of Arabia and his religion is, we believe, seldom formed, simply because the subject has seldom been so presented as to afford the means of such an estimate. A brief sketch, therefore, of the state of Christianity at the time of Mohammed's appearance, especially in that region of the world in which his imposture took its rise, will properly invite the reader's attention at the outset of the work. This will show more clearly the intended providential bearings of the entire fabric of Mohammedan delusion upon the church of Christ; and, apart from this particular view of it, we are persuaded that an entirely correct or adequate judgment of Islamism cannot be formed.

*State of Christianity in the Sixth Century, particularly in the Eastern Churches.*

The distinction of Eastern and Western churches, in ecclesiastical history, is founded upon a similar geographical division of the Roman empire under the emperors, into two great departments; the one including the countries of Asia or the East, which had been subjected to the Roman arms, and the other those of Europe, more properly denominated the West. This distinction became still more common from the days of Constantine, who removed the seat of the empire from Rome to Constantinople, though the final and complete rupture between the Greek and Latin churches did not occur till the seventh century.

Over the largest portion of the Roman empire the Christian religion was early propagated, and for two or three centuries subsisted in a great degree of its original simplicity and purity. Flourishing churches were planted by the Apostles themselves in the different provinces of Asia Minor, and along the eastern limits of Europe; from which "the word sounded out" to the adjacent territories with a multiplying power, so that the cause and kingdom of the Redeemer continued to spread long after its first propagators had entered into their rest. But a gradual degeneracy supervened upon the primitive prosperity of the church. During the fourth century "the mystery of iniquity," which had been long before working in secret, began to discover itself more openly, and though the Christians, by the laws of the empire, were exempted from persecution, yet from this time forward a growing declension and defection among them is to be traced through every subsequent period, till at length, in the seventh century, "the man of sin" became fully revealed, and, according to the predictions of holy writ, took his seat "as God in the temple of God, opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped." It was about the period at which Mohammed arose that this fearful apostacy had attained its height--