

# The Assembly Herald

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## HOME MISSIONS

OCTOBER TOPIC—MORMONISM

### The Octopus.

"Like a huge octopus, the Mormon hierarchy is fastening its tentacles throughout the Rocky Mountain States, and is sapping from its devotees the very life-blood of American freedom."—*Presbyterian Home Missions*, by Sherman H. Doyle, D.D., Ph.D.

So many inquiries have been made regarding "Dr. Thompson's Los Angeles address on Mormonism" that we give our readers that part of the Secretary's address at the General Assembly last Spring.

"I have spoken of the plains. At their end we come to the mountains—gigantic, obdurate, menacing. Knit and compacted by elemental fires, they long resisted the attack of civilization. They stand for some moral conditions that are among them in some of the States of the mountains—gigantic, obdurate, menacing.

"Have you read Victor Hugo's 'Toilers of the Sea?' Then you remember that awful portrayal of the man in the sea who encountered an octopus. Listen to it again:

"Its folds strangle. Its contact paralyzes. It is disease embodied in monstrosity. It is not to be torn away. It adheres closely to its prey. How? By a vacuum. The octopus on the chase hides. It contracts, condenses itself, reduces itself to the simplest possible ex-

pression. It confounds itself with the shadow. It looks like a ripple of the waves. It resembles everything except something living. The octopus is a hypocrite. When one pays no heed to it suddenly it opens—a glutinous mass possessed of a will. What more frightful! Glue filled with hatred! The octopus is vulnerable only in the head. There is a certain moment in which to seize it. It is the instant when it thrusts forward its head. He who misses at that juncture is lost."

"Awful description, but it describes Mormonism. It, too, strangles whatever it enfolds. It, too, is a vacuum—promises that have no substance back of them. It, too, resembles beautiful things—a shadow, a ripple on the wave. It, too, when you touch it is clammy with death. It, too, clings to what it fastens on—relentless, inexorable, glue filled with hatred of what is good! And it, too, has one vulnerable point—only one—its head is an organism of vitality and power. Its ultimate aim is hierarchical domination of the State, and that is not to be educated, civilized, reformed—but crushed! If we miss at that juncture we, too, are lost!

## A Persian Christian.

By *Rev. Benjamin Labaree, D. D.*

The religious reformation which began among the Nestorian people of Persia nearly seventy years ago has produced few characters more eminent or useful than the late Deacon Eleeya, the honored civil head of the Protestant community in Urumia. For more than forty years he had been a conspicuous figure in our churches and church councils, and almost as much esteemed without the church as within it. Christians of all creeds, and Moslems, Jews and Kurds recognized his integrity and trusted his word. He was a worthy representative of this Protestant cause. Long and severe illness had prepared us in some measure for a severance of earthly fellowship with this brother beloved, but none the less the loosing of the silver cord in April last was an occasion of deep felt pain and sorrow to his associates in the gospel work, and it has called forth many a tribute to his worth from others.

Shortly after Deacon Eleeya finished his studies at our Seir training school, early in the forties, he entered upon work as an evangelist, and was finally located in a neighboring district, in a sort of missionary service, to labor principally among other nationalities than his own. Here he continued for fifteen years, and when he withdrew, he left behind him a singularly high reputation as a faithful and tactful preacher of the gospel, as well as for uprightness of character. Upon returning to Urumia he was for a few years the pastor of his native village. But very soon the Protestant community at large determined, with great unanimity, that he was the man of all others needed to be their representative before the Persian courts. The necessity of a strong man to be their civil head, qualified to speak for them on the numerous occasions when they were in danger of being deprived of their rights, had come to be a grave necessity. Deacon Eleeya was elected to the position, and retained it without interruption up to the time of his death, a period of nearly twenty-two years. By his unusually sound judgment and discretion of speech, by his urbanity of manner, and above all by his un-

impeachable integrity, along with his familiarity with Persian legal principles, he year by year intrenched himself more and more in the confidence of the Christian people he represented, and secured a very enviable standing before the Persian authorities in his efforts as an intermediary to abate injustice and oppression. It was a position to fill which satisfactorily became increasingly difficult, if not well nigh intolerable, as corruption and misrule increased in the land; all the more aggravated in these last years by reason of his failing health. But no effort was ever made to get a substitute, for there was no one his equal in all round fitness for the responsible post. His beneficent services to his church and nation have been multitudinous.

As the duties of his position became more exacting, Deacon Eleeya gave up his pastoral work, and did not engage in stated preaching. But at no time did he relax in the matter of his Christian duties. His habits of punctual attendance upon his Sabbath services of the sanctuary and at the regular weekly prayer meetings were a most instructive example for all, and were keenly appreciated by his pastor. Here as in so many other forms of life his genuine humility shone out conspicuously. The grace of God had taken deep root in his heart. Though a man, by habit, of few words, and not given to speaking freely of his Christian experience, yet he was tenderly appreciative of all that is most spiritual in the Christian life, and was quickly responsive to conversation leading along such lines.

During his sickness last winter, being unable myself to visit him, I took occasion to write him a note of sympathy. His reply was a very precious one to me, not simply as the expression of the faith and triumphant hope of a single redeemed Nestorian, but as giving the key note of the whole gracious work which God has wrought in hundreds of Nestorian lives during these nearly seventy years past. In this note, after referring to some of the distressing features of his disease, he goes on to say:—

“Yet I am amazed at the grace of God to-

wards me. In all my life I have not been kept in so much patience and contentment with my condition as during this sickness, although so distressful. Such nearness of approach to him have I received from Christ, that I desire to be with him the whole time, especially at nights. All my pains are forgotten as I am busy in thoughts of his love, his grace, his atoning work, and his intercessions. Sometimes in my mind I am standing upon the shore of the foaming Jordan; and I ask, 'is it possible for me to cross this river, I so guilty a sinner and stained?' My answer I have received: 'Yes, there is a vessel that will safely carry you over.' All glory to the grace of Christ who is the vessel of my salvation.

To-day I place my whole will at the feet of Christ; whatever pleases him, I am content."

Our departed brother may be regarded as a high type of the purer, finer character which has developed among his people under the influence of an evangelical Christianity. His intelligence and his moral sense had received an uplift through much study of the Bible and the practical application of its teachings to private and social life. His spiritual sense was that of the new creature in Christ. I seem to see in him the personification, as it were, of the Gospel work accomplished among this Syriac speaking people; not a spotless product; but a triumph of divine grace over adverse conditions; an earnest of yet a nobler type of Christian life yet to be achieved here.

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## The Condition of the Armenians in Persia.

By Rev. S. G. Wilson, D. D., Tabriz.

At the beginning of modern missions hope was cherished that revived Oriental churches would be the means of spreading the truth through Moslem lands. The wide dispersion of Armenians in Persia would give them great opportunities to do this, if the Spirit and life of Christ were manifested through them. What is their condition and what is the prospect of their becoming propagators of the faith?

*Materially* the Armenians of Persia are prospering as never before. Their numbers have increased greatly both by a high birth rate and by immigration from Turkey. The style of their houses, their furniture and dress have undergone rapid change. Their adoption of foreign customs is hearty and wholesale. This is specially evident in the young women, who are discarding their *chudras* and headkerchiefs and studying the fashion plates for the latest styles of hats and dresses and walking unveiled and unabashed through the streets, in the gaze of the Moslems.

*Intellectually*, the Armenians show rapid development. They have commendable zeal in the establishment of schools both in cities and villages. In Tabriz both wards have schools

for boys and girls with kindergarten and dressmaking departments. On them they expend more annually than our total station appropriations. They are about to open a Central High School in a building costing \$20,000. The Ladies' Society is developing a system of common schools in the villages of the province. As an instance of this: one of our own teachers has lately been employed for a village where houses for the school and teacher are to be built and an endowment of \$5,000 provided by a Russian Armenian.

*Morally*, not so much change can be noted. The same dishonest and unscrupulous principles are professed and practiced in business as formerly with a shocking disregard for truth. On the other hand, the demoralization caused by the revolutionary movement has received a check. Sobriety is on the increase. An anti-Alcoholic Society is prospering. In it the missionaries are united with the Armenians and their Bishop is its honorary president. This temperance movement has had a marked effect in decreasing drunkenness, especially at weddings and festivals.

*Religiously*, there is among Armenians a prevalent indifference. Old rites and doc-