

# The Pilgrim Church - Part 5

by E.H. Broadbent

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*The Paulicians and Thonraks, early Christian groups, were persecuted by the Byzantine Empire but eventually assimilated into the Roman Catholic Church.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:10, Matthew 10:22, Acts 5:41, Romans 8:35, 2 Timothy 3:12, Hebrews 10:34, 1 Peter 3:14, 1 Peter 4:12, Revelation 2:10

**Topics:** "Persecution", "Faithfulness"

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## Description

Persecution by Theodora: Theodora ordered systematic slaughter, beheading, burning, and drowning of believers, resulting in the death of 100,000 persons between 842 and 867. Despite the persecution, the believers remained steadfast. The Armenian book 'The Key of Truth' describes the beliefs and practices of the Paulicians, emphasizing the importance of repentance, faith, and baptism. The believers faced intense persecution but stood firm in their faith, even when faced with imprisonment and death.

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## Transcript

[Persecution by Theodora]

Systematic slaughter, beheading, burning, drowning, began afresh under the Empress Theodora's orders, and continued for many years; but it failed to shake the steadfastness of the believers. It was claimed that between the years 842 and 867 the zeal of Theodora and her inquisitors had brought about the death of 100,000 persons. This time is described by Gregory Magistros, who, 200 years later, was in charge of the persecution of similar people in the same district. He writes: "Prior to us many generals and magistrates have given them over to the sword and, without pity, have spared neither old men nor children, and quite rightly. What is more, our patriarchs have branded their foreheads and burned into them the image of a fox ... others again have put their eyes out, saying, 'you are blind to spiritual things therefore you shall not look on sensible things'".

["The Key of Truth"]

The Armenian book entitled "The Key of Truth"[29], mentioned above as having been written between the seventh and ninth centuries, describes the beliefs and practices of those called Paulicians, of Thonrak, at that time; and although there were doubtless many differences in the numerous scattered churches, yet this authentic account given by one of themselves, is applicable to most of them. The author is unknown, but writes with power and eloquence as well as with deep feeling and earnestness. He writes to give to the

new born children of the Universal and Apostolic Church of our Lord Jesus Christ the holy milk whereby they may be nourished in the faith.

Our Lord, he says, asks first for repentance and faith and then gives baptism, so we must follow Him and not do after the deceitful arguments of others, who baptise the unbelieving, the reasonless, and the unrepentant. When a child is born the elders of the church should give counsel to the parents that they may train the child in godliness and faith. This should be accompanied by prayer, the reading of the Scriptures, and giving the child a name. When anyone is baptised it should be at his or her earnest request. Baptism should be in rivers, or other water in the open air. The one to be baptised should, on his knees in the midst of the water, confess his faith before the congregation present, with great love and tears. The one who baptises should be of blameless character. Prayer and the reading of Scripture should accompany the act.

Again, the ordaining of an elder requires great care lest anyone unworthy be chosen. It must be ascertained whether he has perfect wisdom, love, which is chief of all, prudence, gentleness, humility justice, courage, sobriety, eloquence. In laying hands on him, which is to be done with prayer and the reading of suitable Scriptures, he is to be asked, "Art thou then able to drink the cup which I am about to drink, or to be baptised with the baptism with which I am about to be baptised?" The answer required of him shows the dangers and responsibilities that such men accepted, which none would take on themselves unless there were an earnest love and a will to suffer to the uttermost in the following of Christ and caring for His flock. The reply is; "... I take on myself scourgings, imprisonment, tortures, reproaches, crosses, blows, tribulation and all temptations of the world, which our Lord and Intercessor and the Universal and Apostolic Holy Church took upon themselves, and lovingly accepted them. So even do I, an unworthy servant of Jesus Christ, with great love and ready will, take upon myself all these until the hour of my death".

Then, with the reading of many Scriptures, he was solemnly and earnestly commended to the Lord, the elders saying: "We humbly supplicate, entreat and beseech Thee, ... bestow Thy holy grace on this one, who now is come and asks of Thee the grace of Thy holy authority ... make him resplendently pure from all evil thoughts ... open his mind to understand the Scriptures".

Writing of images and relics the author says: "... Concerning the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not of any other holy ones, either of the dead, or of stones or of crosses and images. In this matter some have denied the precious mediation and intercession of the beloved Son of God, and have followed after dead things, and in especial after images, stones, crosses, waters, trees, fountains, and all other vain things; as they admit and worship them, so they offer incense and candles, and present victims, all of which are contrary to the Godhead".

The conflict which these churches of God in the Taurus Mountains and adjacent countries maintained with their persecutors in Constantinople led to their laying more emphasis on some portions of Scripture than on others. The great professing Church had incorporated Paganism with its system by the gradual introduction of the worship of the Virgin Mary, and had brought the world into its ranks by its practice of infant baptism. This caused the primitive churches to lay great stress on the Lord's perfect humanity at His birth, showing that Mary, though the Lord's mother, cannot properly be called the mother of God, and to emphasise the importance of the baptism of Jesus, when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him and the voice from heaven declared: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased".

In the many controversies as to the Divine and human nature of Christ, which after all efforts at explanation still remains a mystery, they used expressions which their adversaries construed as implying their disbelief in the Divinity of Christ before His baptism. They seem, rather, to have held that His Divine attributes were not in exercise from His birth to His baptism. They taught that it was at His baptism, when 30 years old, that our Lord Jesus Christ received authority, the high-priesthood, the kingdom; then He was chosen and won lordship; it was then that He became the Saviour of sinners, was filled with the Godhead, ordained king of beings in heaven and on earth and under the earth, even as He Himself said in Matthew 28. 18, "All authority is given unto Me in heaven and on earth".

These churches, carrying out the New Testament principles in a large measure, though no doubt in varying degree in different places, called by their adversaries Manichaeans, Paulicians, and other names, suffered for centuries with patience and without retaliation the dreadful wrongs inflicted on them. During the reigns of the iconoclastic Byzantine Emperors they had a respite, but the extraordinary persecutions carried on by the Empress Theodora goaded some of them to desperation, so that they took up arms against their oppressors.

#### [Carbeas Makes War]

In pursuance of her cruel orders the Imperial executioners had impaled a man whose son, Carbeas, held high rank in the Imperial service. On hearing this, Carbeas, in flaming indignation, renounced all allegiance to Byzantium; five thousand others joined him, and they established themselves at Tephrike, near Trebizond, which they fortified, and, in alliance with the Saracen Caliph, made it the centre of attacks on the Greek countries of Asia Minor. With this Mohammedan help they defeated the Emperor Michael, son of Theodora, captured the cities as far as Ephesus and destroyed the images they found there.

Carbeas was succeeded by Chrysocheir, whose raids reached the western coast of Asia Minor and even threatened Constantinople. Ancyra, Ephesus, Nicaea, and Nicomedia were captured. In Ephesus horses were stabled in the cathedral, and the utmost contempt was shown for the pictures and relics, the building being considered as an idol temple. The Emperor, Basil I, was obliged to sue for peace, but Chrysocheir refused any terms short of the abandonment of Asia by the Greeks. Basil, compelled to fight, surprised his enemy; Chrysocheir was killed and his army defeated. The Byzantine army took Tephrike and scattered its inhabitants, who maintained themselves thereafter in the mountains.

As these revolted Paulicians saw on the one side the worshippers of images inflicting on them the most wicked oppression, and on the other the Mohammedans, free from any taint of idolatry, offering them liberty and help, it must have been difficult for them to judge which of the two systems was nearer to, or rather which was further from, the Divine revelation given in Christ. The Mohammedans, however, were incapable of progress, for they entirely rejected the Scriptures, and, by placing themselves under bondage to the Koran, a book of human origin, were necessarily prevented from advancing beyond that to which its originator had himself attained. The Greek and Roman Churches, though they had departed from the truth, yet retained the Scriptures, and thus there remained among them that which, by the Holy Spirit's power, was capable of bringing about revival.

#### [Scripture and Koran]

In extracting some details of the history of these churches from the writings of their enemies, it cannot but be observed that these writings are so violent in abuse as to become manifest folly. To found accusations upon them, therefore, is to put trust in untrustworthy evidence, whereas any good that they may admit is

likely to be an unwilling acceptance of what could not be denied, especially as we find that this good is usually explained to have been based on some evil motive. The constant accusation of Manichaeism is not credible in the face of its equally constant denial by the accused, and by their consistent teaching of, and suffering for, the contrary doctrines of Scripture. The admitted fact that they had the Scriptures, or a large portion of them, in pure, unaltered form, and diligently studied them, is not compatible with their being Manichaeans, as the doctrines of Mani could only be held by such as rejected the Scriptures or altered them.

Accounts of unnaturally wicked behaviour do not agree with the admission that they were pious and of excellent conduct, superior to those among whom they lived, and it is unreasonable to explain that all their good behaviour was nothing but hypocrisy. The character of the somewhat voluminous witness of their enemies, combined with the few records of their own which have survived, gives confidence in rejecting the legend of Manichaeism and wickedness and in recognizing in these persecuted churches a people of the Lord who in their day maintained the testimony of Jesus Christ with faith and indomitable courage.

By scattering and alienating these brave and pious mountaineers, and driving them into alliance with the Mohammedans, the Byzantine Government destroyed its own natural defence against the threatening Mohammedan power and prepared the way for the fall of Constantinople.

In the middle of the eighth century the Emperor Constantine, son of Leo the Isaurian, who sympathised with the refusal of the brethren to attach any value to images, transferred a number of them to Constantinople and to Thrace, and later, about the middle of the tenth century, another Emperor, John Zimisce, an Armenian, who delivered Bulgaria from the Russians but afterwards added it to his own empire, moved a larger number to the West. These came among the Bulgarians, who in the ninth century had accepted Christianity through the Byzantine missionaries Cyril and Methodius and belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church.

There the immigrants from Asia Minor made converts and founded churches which spread rapidly. They came, over wide areas to be called, Bogomili<sup>[30]</sup>, a Slav name meaning "Friends of God", derived from the phrase, "Bogu mili", those dear or acceptable to God.

[Basil--11th & 12th Centuries]

Out of a multitude whose very names have been forgotten the memory of a few has been preserved. One of them is Basil, who, though continuing to practise as a physician in order, by earning his living, to set a good example and so rebuke the lazy lives of those who made religion an excuse for begging, was, for some forty years of his life (1070-1111) indefatigable in preaching and teaching.

After this long period of uninterrupted ministry, he at last received a message from the Emperor Alexius himself, telling him that he admired his character, was deeply interested in his teaching, and had become desirous of conversion. With it there came an invitation to a private interview in the palace in Constantinople. Basil was entertained at table by the Emperor and a full discussion of doctrine took place, in which Basil spoke with the freedom of one addressing an anxious inquirer. Suddenly the Emperor, drawing aside a curtain, revealed a shorthand writer who had taken down the conversation (afterwards used as evidence), and ordered servants to put his guest in chains and cast him into prison. There he remained for years, until (1119), having refused to recant any of the doctrines he had taught, he was publicly burnt in the Hippodrome in Constantinople.

The Emperor's daughter, the accomplished Princess Anna Comnena, describes these events with satisfaction; the preparation for the great day in the Hippodrome, the appearance of Basil, "a lanky man, with a sparse beard, tall and thin"; notes the crackling of the fire, how Basil turned his eyes from the sight of the flame and how his limbs quivered as he approached it. At this time many "Friends of God" were "ferreted out" and burnt, or imprisoned for life. The Princess laughed at their low origin, uncouth appearance, and habit of bowing their heads and muttering something between their lips. (They surely had need of prayer at such times!) She was horrified at their doctrines and at their disdain of the churches and church ceremonies. The document drawn up as the result of the entrapping of Basil by the Emperor has not much value owing to the fact that there was no check on what those who published it liked to put in it.

#### [Opinions about the Brethren]

The opinions expressed by outsiders about these Christian congregations, both in Asia Minor and in Bulgaria, vary greatly, for while it was usual to speak of them and their doctrine as being indescribably wicked, there were those who judged differently. The earliest writers appear to have written more as partisans than as historians. They accuse the "heretics" of practising vile and unnatural fleshly sins, repeat from hearsay what was current about them and include much from Mani and from what was written against him. The writer Euthymius (died after 1118), says: "They bid those who listen to their doctrines to keep the commandments of the Gospel, and to be meek and merciful and of brotherly love. Thus they entice men on by teaching all good things and useful doctrines, but they poison by degrees and draw to perdition."

Cosmas, a Bulgarian Presbyter, writing at the end of the tenth century, describes Bogomils as "worse and more horrible than demons", denies their belief in the Old Testament or the Gospels, says they pay no honour to the Mother of God nor to the cross, they revile the ceremonies of the Church and all Church dignitaries, call orthodox priests "blind Pharisees", say that the Lord's Supper is not kept according to God's commandment, and that the bread is not the body of God, but ordinary bread. He attributes their asceticism to their belief that the Devil created all material things and says: "You will see heretics quiet and peaceful as lambs ... wan with hypocritical fasting, who do not speak much nor laugh loud", and again, "when men see their lowly behaviour, they think that they are of true belief; they approach them therefore and consult them about their soul's health. But they, like wolves that will swallow up a lamb, bow their head, sigh, and answer full of humility, and set themselves up as if they knew how it is ordered in heaven."

The Church Father, Gregory of Narek, said of the Thonraks that they were not accused of wickedness of life, but of free thought and of not acknowledging authority. "From a negative position as regards the Church this sect has taken up a positive line of things and has begun to search out the foundation itself, the Holy Scriptures, seeking there pure teaching, sound guidance for the moral life." A learned writer of the tenth century, Muschag, was greatly impressed by the teaching of the Thonraks, regarding it as unchristian and unworthy merely to condemn such people. He thought he found true Apostolic Christianity among them. Hearing of a case of persecution which they suffered, he said the lot of these persecuted ones was to be envied.

There is no evidence to support the charge that these Christians, whether called Paulicians, Thonraks, Bulgarians, Bogomils or otherwise, were guilty of wicked practices, and the accounts of their doctrines given by their enemies are unreliable. It was generally admitted even by these that their standard of life, their morals, their industry, were superior to those which prevailed round about them; and it was largely

this which attracted to them many who failed to find in the State Church that which satisfied them.

[Denounced at Constantinople]

Byzantine persecution drove many of the believers westward into Serbia, and the strength of the Orthodox Church in Serbia pushed them further, into Bosnia. They continued active on the eastern side of the Peninsula and in Asia Minor. In 1140 supposed Bogomil error was found in the writings of Constantine Chrysomalus and condemned at a synod held in Constantinople. The teaching objected to was, that Church baptism is not efficacious, that nothing done by unconverted persons, though baptised, is of any value, that God's grace is received by the laying on of hands, but only in accordance with the measure of faith. In 1143 a synod at Constantinople deposed two Cappadocian bishops on the charge of being Bogomils, and in the following century the Patriarch Gemadius complained of their spread in Constantinople itself, where, it was said, they got into private houses and made converts. Their churches continued in Bulgaria.

As late as the 17th century congregations known as "Pavlicani" (Paulicians)[31] remained in Philippopolis and other parts of Bulgaria reaching even North of the Danube, who were described by the Orthodox Church as "convinced heretics" and who condemned the Orthodox Church as idolatrous. Then came Franciscan missionaries from Bosnia and laboured with much zeal among them, in spite of many dangers from the wrath of the Orthodox clergy. Taking advantage of the persecution suffered by the Paulicians at the hands of the Orthodox Church, the missionaries gradually persuaded them to put themselves under the protection of the Roman Catholic Church and so won them for Rome. Long after this, however, they continued some of their former practices, especially their custom of meeting together for a meal in common, but they were little by little assimilated to the Roman practice, received images into their churches, and are now known as Bulgarian Catholics in contradistinction to the Bulgarians generally, who are either Orthodox, or Pomaks, that is, descended from ancestors forcibly converted to Mohammedanism.

[Bogomils in Bosnia]

It was, however, in Bosnia that their greatest development took place. In the twelfth century they were already very numerous there, and spread to Spalato and Dalmatia. Here they came into conflict with the Roman Catholic Church. The title of the rulers of Bosnia was Ban, the most eminent of these being Kulin Ban. In 1180 this ruler was addressed by the Pope as a faithful adherent of the Church, but by 1199 it was acknowledged that he and his wife and family and ten thousand Bosnians had joined the Bogomil or Patarene heresy, otherwise churches of believers, in Bosnia.

Minoslav, Prince of the Herzegovina, took the same stand, as did also the Roman Catholic Bishop of Bosnia. The country ceased to be Catholic and experienced a time of prosperity that has remained proverbial ever since. There were no priests, or rather the priesthood of all believers was acknowledged. The churches were guided by elders who were chosen by lot, several in each church, an overseer (called grandfather), and ministering brethren called leaders and elders. Meetings could be held in any house and the regular meeting-places were quite plain, no bells, no altar, only a table, on which might be a white cloth and a copy of the Gospels. A part of the earnings of the brethren was set aside for the relief of sick believers and of the poor and for the support of those who travelled to preach the Gospel among the unconverted.

Pope Innocent III, with the help of the King of Hungary, brought such pressure to bear on Kulin Ban that, at a meeting (1203) between the Pope's envoys and the Ban, accompanied by the magnates of Bosnia, at Bjelopolje, "the White Plain", where Kulin held his court, the Bosnian leaders agreed to submit to the Roman Church, promised never again to relapse into heresy, but to erect an altar and a cross in each of their places of worship, and to have priests who should read the Mass and listen to Confession, and administer the Sacrament twice a year. They agreed to observe fasts and holy days, that the laity should cease to undertake spiritual functions, and that those who ministered in spiritual matters should be the clergy only, who would be distinguished from the laity by wearing cowls and being called brothers, and that when these elected a Prior, they would apply to the Pope for confirmation. Heretics were never again to be tolerated in Bosnia. Though, under pressure of the threat of war, the Ban and rulers of the country made such an agreement, the people entirely refused to accept it or to be bound by it in any way.

Brethren in Bosnia had intercourse with their fellow-believers in Italy, in the South of France, in Bohemia, on the Rhine, and in other parts, reaching even to Flanders and England. When the Pope declared a crusade against the Albigenses, and Provence was being wasted, fugitives found refuge in Bosnia. Bosnian and Provençal elders consulted together on matters of doctrine. Rumours were current that the spiritual movements in Italy, France, and Bohemia, were all connected with a "heretical Pope" in Bosnia. This was only imaginary, as no such person existed, but it showed that a strong influence went out from Bosnia. An Italian Inquisitor, Reniero Sacconi, living in the reign of Kulin, who, having been himself a "heretic", knew more about them than most, calls them the Church of the Cathari, or pure-living, a name used from before the time of the Emperor Constantine, and says they extended from the Black Sea to the Atlantic.

#### [Bosnia Invaded]

The peace which Kulin Ban purchased by yielding to Rome was not of long duration, for he could not compel his people to observe its terms. On his death (1216) the Pope appointed a Roman Catholic Ban, and sent a mission to convert the Bosnians. The churches of the country, however, increased the more, and spread into Croatia, Dalmatia, Istria, Carniola and Slavonia.

Some six years later the Pope, despairing of converting the Bosnians by other than forcible methods, and encouraged by the success of his crusade in Provence, ordered the King of Hungary to invade Bosnia. The Bosnians deposed their Roman Catholic Ban and elected a Bogomil, Ninoslav.

For years the war went on, with varying fortune. Ninoslav yielded to circumstances and became a Roman Catholic, but no change in their rulers affected the faith and confession of the great bulk of the people. The country was devastated, but whenever the invading armies withdrew, the churches were found still existing, and the industry of the people quickly restored prosperity. Fortresses were erected throughout the country "for the protection of the Roman Catholic Church and religion"; the Pope gave the land to Hungary, which long ruled it, but its people still holding to their faith, he at length called a crusade of "all the Christian world" against it; the Inquisition was established (1291), and Dominican and Franciscan brothers competed in applying its terrors to the devoted churches.

Meanwhile, the constant pressure of Islam was becoming an increasing danger for Europe, and Hungary was in the forefront of the fight; yet this did not awaken the Catholic countries to see the folly of destroying a barrier between them and their most dangerous foe, and the Pope wrote (1325) to the Ban of Bosnia:

"Knowing that thou art a faithful son of the Church, we therefore charge thee to exterminate the heretics in thy dominions, and to render aid and assistance unto Fabian, our Inquisitor, forasmuch as a large multitude of heretics from many and divers parts collected, have flowed together into the Principality of Bosnia, trusting there to sow their obscene errors and to dwell there in safety. These men, imbued with the cunning of the Old Fiend, and armed with the venom of their falseness, corrupt the minds of Catholics by outward show of simplicity and lying assumption of the name of Christians; their speech crawleth like a crab, and they creep in with humility, but in secret they kill, and are wolves in sheep's clothing, covering their bestial fury as a means whereby they may deceive the simple sheep of Christ."

#### [Toleration of Bogomils]

Bosnia experienced a period of political revival during the reign of Tvrtko, the first Ban to take the title of King. He and Kulin are the two most prominent of Bosnian rulers. Tvrtko tolerated the Bogomils, large numbers of whom served in his armies, and he greatly extended his kingdom. Towards the close of his reign the battle of Kossovo (1389) extended the Turkish rule over Serbia and made the Mohammedan menace to Europe more serious than ever. Even this did not suffice to stop persecution, and the Pope again encouraged the King of Hungary, promising him aid against the Turks and the "Bosnian Manichaeans and Arians." King Sigismund of Hungary was successful in destroying the Bosnian army under the successors of Tvrtko, and caused 126 Bosnian magnates, whom he had captured, to be beheaded and thrown from the rocks of Doboj into the river Bosna (1408).

Then the Bosnians, driven to desperation, turned to the Turks for protection. Their chief magnate, Hrvoja, warned the King of Hungary--"so far I have sought no other protection, as my sole refuge has been the king; but if matters remain as they are I shall seek protection in that quarter where I shall find it, whether I thereby stand or fall. The Bosnians wish to hold out their hand to the Turks, and have already taken steps towards this." Soon afterwards the Turks and Bogomil Bosnians, for the first time united, inflicted a heavy defeat on Hungary at the battle of Usora, a few miles from Doboj (1415).

#### [Muslim Invasion 1453]

The struggle between Christendom and Islam swayed to and fro on its long battle-front. But whenever the Papal party prevailed, persecution in Bosnia began afresh, so that (1450) some 40,000 Bogomils, with their leaders, crossed the frontier into Herzegovina, where the Prince Stefan Vukitchich protected them. The capture of Constantinople in 1453 by Mohammed II, which led to the speedy subjection of Greece, Albania and Serbia under the hands of the Turks, did not cause the negotiations and intrigues for the conversion of the Bosnian Bogomils to cease.

Sometimes their rulers were won over to Rome, but the people never. Therefore, as the end drew near, we find Bosnian kings appealing to the Pope for help against the Turks, which was only given on condition of fresh persecution of the Bogomils, till at last (1463) when the Turks, who had been driven back for a time, advanced again on Bosnia, the people refused their king any aid, and preferring the Turk to the Inquisition, made no resistance to the invader, with the result that within a week the Sultan took possession of seventy towns and fortresses, in a country naturally strong for defence, and Bosnia passed permanently into Moslem hands, to stagnate for four centuries under a deadening system destructive of life and progress.

These "Friends of God" in Bosnia have left but little literature behind them, so that there remains much to be discovered of their doctrines and practices, which must have varied in different circles and at different



periods. But it is evident that they made a vigorous protest against the prevailing evils in Christendom, and endeavoured with the utmost energy to hold fast to the teachings and example of the primitive churches, as portrayed in the Scriptures. Their relations with the older churches in Armenia and Asia Minor, with the Albigenses in France, Waldenses and others in Italy, and Hussites in Bohemia, show that there was a common ground of faith and practice which united them all. Their heroic stand for four centuries against overwhelming adversity, though unrecorded, must have yielded examples of faith and courage, of love unto death, second to none in the world's histories. They formed a link, connecting the Primitive churches in the Taurus Mountains of Asia Minor with similar ones in the Alps of Italy and France. Their land and nation were lost to Christendom because of the inveterate persecution to which they were subjected.

#### [Bogomil Tombs in Bosnia]

Scattered over the country, within the confines of the old Kingdom of Bosnia,[32] but nowhere else, are numerous stone monuments, often of great size--Bogomil tombstones. Sometimes one stone stands alone, sometimes they are in groups, which in places may number hundreds. It is estimated that there might be some 150,000 such monuments. The people call them "Mramor", i.e., marble, or "Stetshak", that which stands, or "Bilek" a sign or landmark, or "Gomile", an ancient tomb or mound. The very few inscriptions on them are in the Glagolitic character. They are remarkable for the absence of crosses or any symbols associated either with Christianity or Mohammedanism. Where, as occasionally, such symbols are found, it is evident that they have been added at a later date. The great majority of the stones are entirely without inscription of any kind, the few inscriptions there are give the names of the persons buried there. A few are elaborately carved with figures illustrating the life of the people at that time, warriors, hunters, animals, and varied ornamental designs. They are most numerous in the neighbourhood of Sarajevo, an immense group being found above the fortress, on the road to Rogatitza. One of the largest tombs stands alone on the Paslovatz Hill, near the ruins of Kotorako, a giant sarcophagus of white limestone, hewn out of one solid block, together with the yet larger flag upon which it rests; at a distance it looks like a complete building.

Though they had so long resisted both the Greek and Latin churches, many of the Bosnians yielded to the Turks (who were at once their deliverers and their conquerors) and submitted to Mohammedanism. Some rose to the highest positions in the Turkish service. The family names of the present Mohammedan population of Bosnia preserve the record of their origin, while testifying also to the steady process of subjugation to Islam. Over the window of many a shop in Bosnia the traveller will find the Bosnian or "Southern Slav" name united with a purely Arabic or Turkish name which is generally placed before it. There are two distinct words in daily use throughout Bosnia to signify Turk or Moslem, the one meaning a Moslem of real Turkish or Anatolian origin, and the other a person of Slav race who has adopted the religion of Islam.

#### FOOTNOTES:

[25]"Die Paulikianer im Byzantischen Kaiserreiche etc." Karapet Ter-Mkrtschian Archidiakonus von Edschmiazin "The Key of Truth A Manual of the Paulician Church of Armenia" F. C. Conybeare. "The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" Edward Gibbon. "The Later Roman Empire" Prof. J. B. Bury, Vol. II, c. 14.

[26]A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church Edited by the Rev. N. Sanday, D.D., LL.D., Oxford. "John of Damascus, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith" translated by the Rev.

S.D.F. Salmond D.D., F.E.I.S., Aberdeen.

[27]"Latin Christianity" Dean Milman Vol. III.

[28]"Die Paulikianer im Byzantischen Kaiserreiche etc." Karapet Ter-Mkrtschian. Archidiakonus von Edschmiatzin

[29]"The Key of Truth" translated and edited by F. C. Conybeare. This document was found by the translator in 1891 in the library of the Holy Synod at Edjmiatzin, and he has added valuable annotations.

[30]Some derive the name Bogomil from the name of a man prominent in the reign of the Bulgarian Czar Peter (927-968); sometimes they are called Bulgarians. Bogomili is a Slav plural form, hence the usual form in the West, Bogomils. Analogous names are still to be found in daily use in Slav countries; in Yugoslavia, for instance, the Bogomolici, i.e., those who pray to God (from Bogu, "to God" and moliti, "to pray"). There is little doubt that the Bogomili were so called because they did strike their contemporaries as men and women who enjoyed a certain peace and communion with God. "An official tour through Bosnia and Herzegovina" J. de Asboth. Member of Hungarian Parliament. "Through Bosnia and the Herzegovina on Foot" etc. A. J. Evans. "Essays on the Latin Orient" William Miller. "Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics" Hastings. Article, Bogomils.

[31]"Das Fürstenthum Bulgarien" Dr. Constantin Jirecek Wien. 1891. F Tempsky

[32]"An Official Tour Through Bosnia and Herzegovina" J. de Asboth, Member of Hungarian Parliament.

## Chapter IV

### The East

B.C. 4-A.D. 1400

The Gospel in the East--Syria and Persia--Churches in Persian Empire separated from those in Roman Empire--Eastern churches retained Scriptural character longer than those in the west--Papa ben Aggai federates churches--Zoroaster--Persecution under Sapor II--Homilies of Afrahat--Synod of Seleucia--Persecution renewed--Nestorius--The Bazaar of Heraclides--Toleration--Influx of western bishops--Increase of centralization--Wide spread of Syrian churches in Asia--Mohammedan invasion--Catholikos moved from Seleucia to Bagdad--Genghis Khan--Struggle between Nestorianism and Islam in Central Asia--Tamerlane--Franciscans and Jesuits find Nestorians in Cathay--Sixteenth century translation of part of Bible into Chinese--Disappearance of Nestorians from most of Asia--Causes of failure.

The "wise men from the east" led by the star to Bethlehem, worshipped the Child newly "born King of the Jews"; presented to Him "gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh", and "departed into their own country" (Matt. 2), where they doubtless related what they had seen and heard. Among the multitude assembled at Jerusalem at Pentecost were "Parthians and Medes and Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia", who were witnesses of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and of the signs and wonders that accompanied it, and heard Peter preach that "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2). By them the Gospel was carried in its earliest days to the synagogues of the East.

Eusebius, writing of events which took place in the second century,[33] relates that many of the disciples at that time:

"Whose souls were inflamed by the Divine Word and with a more ardent desire of wisdom, first fulfilled our Saviour's commandment by distributing their substance to those that were necessitous; then after that, travelling abroad, they performed the work of evangelists to those who had not yet at all heard the word of faith, being very ambitious to preach Christ and to deliver the books of the Divine Gospels. And these persons, having only laid the foundations of faith in remote and barbarous places and constituted other pastors, committed to them the culture of those they had perfectly introduced to the faith, and departed again to other regions."

Thus churches were founded and the evangelists pressed further afield, and that, not only within the wide bounds of the Roman Empire, but within the borders of its greatest neighbour, the Persian Empire, and beyond. A writer in the third century says:

"That new power which has arisen from the works wrought by the Lord and His Apostles has subdued the flame of human passions and brought into the hearty acceptance of one faith a vast variety of races and nations the most different in their manners. For we can count up in our reckoning things achieved in India, among the Seres, Persians and Medes; in Arabia, Egypt, Asia and Syria; among the Galatians, the Parthians and the Phrygians; in Achaia, Macedonia and Epirus; in all the islands and provinces which time rising or the setting sun looks down upon."

The churches which spread so rapidly in Syria and the Persian Empire were shut off from many of the influences which affected the Western churches by difference of language and by political circumstances, Aramaic being spoken in Palestine and Palmyra and used as the commercial language down the Euphrates valley, and the mutual jealousy and mistrust of the Roman and Persian Empires acting as a further bar to intercourse.

The Eastern churches kept their simple and Scriptural character longer than those of the West.[34] Even in the third century there was no definite organization of the separate churches into one system, the country was not divided into dioceses (there might be several bishops in one church at the same time), and the churches were active and successful in spreading the testimony continually into new regions.

[Papa Ben Aggai 4th Century]

Early in the fourth century Papa ben Aggai propounded a scheme for the federation of all the churches in Persia, including those in Syria and Mesopotamia, under the rule of the bishop of the capital city, Seleucia-Ctesiphon, a position which he himself then occupied. This proposition was strenuously opposed, but continued to be pressed, and the bishop came to be called the *Catholikos*, and in time (498) the title Patriarch of the East was adopted.

[Zoroaster ?]

The prevalent religion in Persia was derived from that introduced some eight centuries B.C. by Zoroaster. He, in his day, protested against the prevailing idolatry and wickedness, teaching that there is only one God, the Creator; that He is good, and alone to be worshipped. Zoroaster would use no compulsion in matters of religion, but trusted to the truth of what he taught to spread it. He made use of fire and light to represent the works of God, and employed darkness and charred wood to illustrate the powers of evil. He

believed that God would bring about that which is good, and gave an epitome of conduct in the words, "Perform good actions, and refrain from evil ones." From the sixth to the third century B.C. Zoroastrianism prevailed generally among the Persians, but then its profession declined until it was revived by the Sassanid dynasty, which was the reigning dynasty at the time here considered.

[Persecution under Sapor II]

When Constantine made Christianity the state religion in the Roman Empire the Kings of Persia began to suspect those in their own country, whom they called Nazarenes, of having sympathies with, and leanings towards, the rival Empire, which they hated and feared. In the long reign of the Persian King, Sapor II, this suspicion broke out into violent persecution, which was fanned by the magi, the Zoroastrian priests, unmindful both of their founder's precepts and of the testimony of those magi, their predecessors, who had been led by the star to Bethlehem. This persecution lasted for forty years, during which period the Christians suffered every imaginable torment. Some 16,000 are supposed to have lost their lives, and indescribable loss and misery was inflicted on countless confessors of Christ. By their patience and faith the churches in Persia came through this long and terrible trial victorious, and after a generation of suffering (339-379) considerable liberty of worship was restored to them.

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