
**“Drying up the Euphrates”:
Muslims, Millennialism, and Early American
Missionary Enterprise**

Timothy Marr

When the first American missionaries set foot on the lands associated with the Bible in the early 1820s, they believed they were also entering the “the strong holds of Satan’s kingdom” under the control the Ottoman Turks. “What would you think of a man approaching you of gigantic stature, long beard, fierce eyes, a turban on his head, which if stretched out would make a blanket, long flowing robes, a large belt, in which were four or five pistols and a sword?”¹ The formidable nature of the fearsome Turk is clear here in the interrogative tone of Levi Parsons, who felt himself confronted by the enigma of a contemporary Goliath. “What are *we* in such an empire?” he humbly asked, “what is our strength before Leviathan?”² In their efforts to fathom the terrible status of the Turk, early Americans in the Near East sought out various models to explain the perplexing problem of their political ascendancy over the Holy Land. To William Goodell, who arrived in Turkey in 1823, the proud and pistol-bearing Turk reminded him of “the Anakims of old”—the gigantic foes eventually subdued by the ancient Hebrews.³ When Jonas King accompanied Pliny Fisk on the overland journey from Egypt to Jerusalem in 1823, the desert of Sinai seemed to him a Sodom filled with Bedouins like “fiends from the world

Timothy Marr, Assistant Professor
Department of American Studies
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
North Carolina, USA

below” ready to spring upon him at any time. King wrote home after arriving in Jerusalem: “Oh, that you could be with me in Calvary, where I am writing, and hear the roaring of the Turks from the minarets, and see the deep iniquity with which this Holy Land is polluted! . . . Everything around me seems blasted and withered by the Curse of the Almighty.”⁴

Exporting Christian purity back to the Holy Land was a crucial divine duty that many Americans of the early republic felt would culminate in the establishment of the New Jerusalem. The fact that the Holy Land was in the hands of the Turkish “empire of sin” remained one of the major obstacles and therefore one of the central themes of eschatological interest. If the United States were to live up to its Puritan image as a type of the spiritual Israel, it could not avoid the religious struggles in the actual Holy Land; it would in fact have to be instrumental in the conversion of the Jews.⁵ However, before the Jews could be restored to Jerusalem—not to a Jewish nation like the present state of Israel but to a redeemed Kingdom of Christ—Islam’s hold over the Holy Land would have to be loosened. Just before Levi Parsons sailed in 1819 to inaugurate the mission of the United States to the Holy Land, he professed this clear path: “Destroy the Ottoman empire and nothing but a miracle will prevent the Jews’ immediate return from the four winds of heaven.”⁶

Since Christians resisted viewing Islam as a legitimate religious dispensation, they were forced to invent explanations of why God had permitted so much power to such a false religion. The earliest images of Muslims in the west had been fabricated out of fear and ignorance and demonized Muslims as fabulous monsters with the heads of dogs.⁷ Medieval polemicists employed what R.W. Southern called “the ignorance of triumphant imagination” to devise the earliest orientalist legends which emerged largely because Islam was a

distant religion claiming a direct revelation from God after that of Christ that therefore could not easily be placed within a Christian world-view. Its very existence was a “divine scandal” that shook the foundations of Christian belief—spelling spiritual ruin, a return to moral chaos, and the justification for crusade.⁸

From the earliest years of the Reformation, when the Turkish threat to Europe was a topic of intense public concern to the west, the notion that the antichrist and his empire was split into an eastern and western manifestation—with Islam and Catholicism as the two legs of a satanic colossus—was a common belief of Protestant biblical exegetes. The Turks, a label frequently and often indiscriminately applied to all Muslims, were frequently viewed as the newest type of Eastern horde and assumed the status previously held by the Babylonians, Assyrians, and Persians, and they were also linked with the mysterious tribes of Gog and Magog.⁹ To Protestants, the idea of a violent assault against Islam smacked of antichristian pride. Their crusade was staged on the discursive level of prophetic promise, where believers—like the early American missionaries—faithfully wielded the sword of scripture and its arsenal of analogy and explanation as assurance of their spiritual supremacy.

Martin Luther defined the Turk as the fleshly embodiment of antichristian spirit who, like their biblical forebear Ishmael, confused temporal power with divine election. Protestants interpreted Islam not as an independent religion but rather as the physical manifestation of corruption within the Church, viewing the Turks as a rod of divine wrath raised up to chastise Christians for their infidelities. The ultimate defeat of the military hegemony of the Turks thus corresponded integrally with the spiritual reform of the Church, and Luther exemplified the emergent Protestant belief that any weakening of the

Turkish position directly signaled the imminence of the “Judgment Day.”¹⁰

As a faith in a future millennium became a respectable tenet of Christian belief, Protestants became attuned to the high stakes of the divine drama between the Church and Antichrist and sought out scriptural indications of the nature of the coming apocalypse. They believed that the hand of providence had placed verses within the Bible that prophesied the glorious future of Christian victory and intimated the prior stages through which history had to pass on the way to the promised millennium. One of the most important of these stages was the disappearance of Islam. Early American religious understanding of Islam thus emerged most fully neither from substantial comparative dialogue with Muslims nor from scholarly study of Islamic texts but rather from a process of eschatological exegesis that involved harmonizing sequences of scriptural symbols describing the “time of the end” with the chronology of secular event.

Biblical commentaries established strong and persistent interpretive communities around consensual readings of scriptural verses, especially those from the Books of Daniel and Revelation, and their conclusions—sanctioned as they were with some of the power of the sacred—comprised an important fundament of Christian belief. This process of eschatological projection formed a deeply influential genre of orientalist narration through which Protestants biblically contained the transgressive threat of Islam and reprocessed it into a confirmation of Christian superiority. Protestant eschatology in this way helped to form powerful dispositions about Islam and Muslims that implanted dehumanizing notions about one of the world’s major religions within the cultural perspective, and even the religious faith, of many educated Americans.

Indeed it was in large part the power of this millennial promise that had encouraged the missionaries to assume their mission to Western Asia, fortifying them with the faith that, despite the clear ascendancy of Muslim “foes” over the entire territory of the eastern Mediterranean, the “dark dominions” of Islam would soon be illumined by the light of Christianity. Pliny Fisk, sent out with Levi Parsons by the American Board, conquered his fears with the assurance that “[I]t is not more certain, that the walls of Jericho fell before the ancient people of God, than it is, that the whole Mahommedan world will be subdued by the Gospel.”¹¹

If the early American missionaries figured the Turks as such Old Testament nemeses as Goliath, Leviathan, and the sons of Anak, the phantasms of the Book of Revelation enabled them to place an even more terrible face on those they saw as enemies of Christ. For the eschatological imagination was deeply teratological in its typology of the forces of antichrist. According to a transatlantic interpretive tradition established by major European millennialists, carried on in America beginning with the first generation of Puritan settlers (and even persisting in premillennialist circles today), the rise of Islam was foretold in the first twelve verses of the ninth chapter of the Book of Revelation.¹² Called the fifth trumpet or the first of three trumpets of woe, these verses tell of the “angel of the bottomless pit” who was commissioned to take vengeance on a corrupt Christianity. Commentators saw the smoke which this angel summoned out of the abyss as an appropriate symbol of the false religion of Islam that had occluded the teachings of Christianity. The locusts with tails like scorpions that emerged from that smoke likewise suggested the early Muslims (or Saracens) who, while spreading their religion from France to the further East, tormented Christian lands with both the force of their arms and the poison of their

doctrines. Protestant exegetes linked Muhammad with the “angel of the bottomless pit” and viewed the epithets Abaddon and Apollyon (which mean “destroyer”) as apt titles for the Prophet and his Caliphs. Interpreters also found it fitting that Islam, conceived of as a delusion introduced by the Arabian destroyer, emerged from some subterranean hell and not from any heavenly inspiration. By seeing Islam as prophetically figured by smoke, commentators at once emphasized both its eclipse of the sun of Christian truth and its status as an empty and superstitious form of worship that would soon vanish. Readers associated such a smoke with pestilence and plague as shown by Cotton Mather’s justification of the Eastern practice of inoculating individuals against smallpox by claiming that the disease itself had “been brought into *Europe thro’ Africa; on the Wings of those Arabian Locusts, that in the Saracen Conquests did spread over the Face of the Earth.*”¹³

While the fifth trumpet had sounded well before the Reformation and the torment of the Saracens was therefore a matter of the historical record, there was less agreement about the duration of the sixth trumpet (or second woe)—the last plague prior to the great Day of Judgment. Many commentators viewed this woe as prefiguring the rise of the Ottoman Turks. Exegesis of the sixth trumpet described at the end of Chapter nine of Revelation explained how Ottoman horsemen had been permitted to overrun the Byzantine Empire (“the third part of men”) because their idolatries had drawn forth divine displeasure in the very form of the Turkish armies. The fire, smoke, and sulfur emerging from the mouths of the horses seemed to a number of interpreters a “most manifest allusion” to ordinance and gunpowder believed to be invented by the Turks.¹⁴

Interpreters sought to determine the exact dates when this scourge of divine wrath had commenced and, more

importantly, how long its woe would endure. After intricate reasoning about calendar schemes and consultation of available secular histories, most commentators became convinced that the Turkish woe had terminated in the late seventeenth century after the further spread of the Ottoman Empire in Europe was checked.

Cotton Mather's reflections offer a fascinating example of the salience of the Turkish woe to American millennial thought. Mather preached to the Artillery Company of Massachusetts in 1691 about the nearness of the time when the swords the soldiers were holding would be turned into plowshares, arguing that a "dying *Mahometanism*" was a clear "symptom" of approach of the second advent of Christ. Using Thomas Brightman's dating scheme of the duration of the sixth trumpet, Mather prophesied that "within less than *Seven Years* from this Time, the *Turk* should be under such Humiliations, as might Obstruct his ever giving *Europe* Trouble any more."¹⁵ Mather interpreted news of any reversal in the fortunes of the Turkish Empire as confirmatory "Declarations" of "the *Second Wo Passing Away*."¹⁶ As the date for the final termination of the Turks approached, Mather's prayers that Christ would deliver on his promise became fervent. Mather proclaimed in a 1696 sermon that he wished he could "speak with a voice as loud as the seventh trumpet" that the most wonderful revolution in history would be experienced within the lifetimes of most of his listeners: "*The Day is at Hand*, when the *Turkish Empire*, instead of being any longer a *Wo* to *Christendome*, shall it self become a *Part of Christendome*."¹⁷ Mather was confirmed in his belief after reading the meticulous 1706 calibration of William Whiston that the signing of the Treaty of Carlowitz in 1699 signified the termination of the sixth trumpet. In 1716, Cotton Mather still viewed the "astonishing Destruction" of the Turkish

armies invading Europe as confirmation of the expiration of the second woe. “Is this not a *Token for Good?*” he reasoned, “Yea, a *Token*, that it will not be long, before the *Great Trumpet shall be blown*; And Oh! The Glorious Things to be done in the Days thereof!”¹⁸

The belief that Turkish spiritual hegemony was at its prophetic end, as it had with Cotton Mather, continued to stimulate apocalyptic speculation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially since it served as a visible sign of the imminent onset of the seventh trumpet bringing on the Day of Judgment when “the mystery of God shall be finished.” However, the fact that the Ottomans still held their ground after the apparent sounding of the sixth trumpet forced prophetic-minded exegetes to seek out additional explanations for their perplexing persistence. For example, the notorious American eschatologist William Miller and his followers revised the prophetic timetable of the sixth trumpet and argued—in a similar logic as Mather’s—that Mehemet Ali’s refusal to accede to peace terms dictated by several European powers in 1840, a event which guaranteed their support of the Ottoman Empire, signalized the passing of the second woe.¹⁹ Most commentators, however, promoted another prophetic sign of the end times from the Book of Revelation—the pouring out of the sixth vial—as the key to explaining the perplexing persistence of the Ottomans after the ostensible completion of their time of woe. Chapter sixteen, verse twelve describes how “the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings might be prepared.” If the sixth trumpet had loosed and then thrown back the tide of Turkish invasion from the Euphrates, exegetic logic reasoned that it was up to the pouring of the sixth vial to effect a complete evaporation of Islamic power, after which the wrath of

God would destroy all antichristian forces in the battle of Armageddon. The Euphrates was thus transformed from a spiritual type of ancient Babylon into a scriptural symbol of the Ottoman Empire. It was in large part the conjuncture of this heritage of biblical commentary, the continuing conundrum of Turkish control over Jerusalem, and the apocalyptic desires raised by the American and French revolutions, that led Islamic history to emerge in late eighteenth century as what the historian Ruth Bloch has called a “major theme in American millennial literature.”²⁰

Commentators gave the sixth vial such prominence during the early national period not only because it explained why the Turks had failed to fall despite the passing of their time of woe but also because it helped thinkers to resolve the “Eastern Question”—the troubling secular events occurring in Europe and western Asia—within a religious world-view. This eschatological connection of the end of the Turkish hegemony over the Holy Land with passionate faith in the promise of Christ’s imminent return led prophecy-watching Americans of the early national period to pay an surprising amount of attention to the historical events of what was for them a distant and satanic empire.

Commentators frequently employed the fact that the Sultan’s Empire was shrinking in the face of European encroachment as secular proof of the desiccation of the eschatological Euphrates. Other expositors charted the weakening of the Ottoman Empire by focusing on the internal dissension in the politics of the Sublime Porte. The rebellion of Mehemet Ali, the Wahabi movement, and Shi’ite sectarianism each signified to different Americans the impending doom of the Ottoman Empire. Several thinkers viewed the Turks’ loss of Greece as manifesting the pouring out of the sixth vial.²¹ Mention of natural calamities in the press, travel narratives, or

any other form of intelligence that made its way from the east, was promoted as evidence of the overdue extinguishing of the vitality of Islam. To watchers of the signs, the sanctuary seemed to be becoming more cleansed by the year.

The progress of these historical events stoked the millennialist aspirations of the evangelism enterprise by encouraging missionaries that they could accomplish mighty deeds. However, the deaths of the first two missionaries Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons and the fact that Ottoman law punished apostasy from Islam made the conversion of Muslims to Protestantism a daunting task. William Schauffler canceled his proposed mission to the Muslims in 1826 partly because of the hostilities surrounding the Greek rebellion against the Turks. Henry Augustus Homes, a missionary that the ABCFM sent to Constantinople to proselytize the Muslim population, soon retired because he found “no access to the mind of Islam.”²² Although missionaries in the Near East remained committed to the ultimate conversion of Muslims, their “long-avowed and oppressive enemies,”²³ they turned their efforts to redeeming the eastern churches viewing their ritualistic belief in saints and relics as central impediments preventing the non-idolatrous Muslims from perceiving the merits of Protestant salvation.

However, in the 1830s, missionaries redoubled their efforts at the direct conversion of Muslims with revived confidence that their efforts would bring on apocalyptic success. The waning of conflict in the Mediterranean following Greek independence and the institution of Ottoman political reforms opened doors for new traffic into the Levant. Attempts to read “the signs of the times” as it related to the Turks centered on speculation about who was east and north of the Ottoman Empire. The object of the drying up of the Euphrates was to “prepare the way for the Kings of the East,”

and Daniel 11:44 had spoken of “tidings out of the east and out of the north” that would provoke antichrist to set in motion the train of events that would culminate in his destruction.

This curiosity about the further east prompted the American Board to envision expanding its stations beyond the Mediterranean littoral and as a result they initiated “Christian Researches”—or exploratory journeys deep into the Asian continent for the purpose of locating areas for future evangelical effort.²⁴ The first fruit of these ventures was a trek east out of Constantinople through Armenia and into Persia. The publication of *Researches in Armenia* in 1833 helped to heighten interest in the populations lying east of the Ottomans and encouraged the ABCFM to establish a mission to the Nestorian Christians living in northwest Persia. One of its authors, Eli Smith, felt that that “providential preparation” had set in motion changes that were “humbling” the “wall of arrogance” that had prevented earlier access to Muslims. “I have seen the wrath of the Turk restrained,” he testified. Reminding his audience that those in the dark ages Christians had been able to muster whole armies to challenge Muslim hegemony, Smith exhorted his listeners to enter these emerging fields so there would be “some one . . . ever at hand to throw the light of divine truth into the opening mind of every Mohammedan inquirer.”²⁵

Smith’s researches and sermons and the renewed interest in the martyr-model of Henry Martyn—a British missionary who had preceded Parsons and Fisk to Muslim lands dispensing his translations of the New Testament in Hindi and Persian—were part of the forces that inspired two young American seminarians to devote their lives to proselytizing Persia. The Episcopalian Horatio Southgate and the Presbyterian James Lyman Merrick each journeyed into Persia

performing “Christian researches” for their respective denominational boards. Even very brief sketches of their experiences dramatize the conclusion that actual encounter with Islam as a persistent religious tradition frustrated the eschatological myth that Islam was nothing but an insubstantial error to be swept aside by Christian fact.

In 1836, “thoroughly convinced that the time has come for a successful attack on the religion of the false prophet,” Horatio Southgate was funded by the Protestant Episcopal Church to travel to Turkey and Persia.²⁶ Southgate imagined the missionary as a conquering crusader: “If we can but gain a stand-point within the entrenchments of Mohamedan prejudice, we have little to fear from a religion which exerts so feeble a control over the mind, is so corrupted by superstition, and so weakened by defection.”²⁷ Yet when he returned to New York four years later, Southgate wrote how his experience in the Near East forced him to reevaluate his ardent beliefs about the capacity of American Protestants to convert Muslims. Southgate made the error of many of his generation of misinterpreting the political weakness of the Ottomans and the resulting decrease in bigotry as a sign of the waning of Muslims’ faith in Islam. “At the end of my first month’s residence in Constantinople, I might have promulgated my opinions on Turkish institutions and customs with the utmost confidence,” confessed Southgate, “[a]t the end of three months, I began to perceive the fallacy of most of my conclusions, and when six months had passed, I found that I knew next to nothing of the object of my study.”²⁸ Southgate’s exasperation was evident in his description of the Persian as a “wily antagonist” who “likes nothing better than to display his subtlety in disputing about essences, substances, and spirits . . . a metaphysical chaos, where there is neither shore nor bottom.”²⁹ For Southgate, the bottomless pit served as a fitting metaphor

for his own capacity to comprehend the religion of Islam. Like many missionaries, Southgate then turned his efforts to the Eastern Churches. But, by 1850, after serving as the “Missionary Bishop in the Dominions and Dependencies of the Sultan of Turkey,” he had rejected the fundamental assumptions of the foreign missionary enterprise that human effort was necessary to bring on the hoped-for millennium. Despite Southgate’s retreat from the Orient, he never gave up his hopes that the religions of the east would be redeemed; yet, these desires were expressed through the nostalgic form of romantic fiction, published as *The Cross above the Crescent* in 1876. “I call the work a Romance,” wrote Southgate in its preface, claiming also that “it might, with equal truth, be called a Reality.”³⁰ A similar effacement of the boundaries between romance and reality, as we have seen, characterizes early American imagination of the Muslims of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Unlike Southgate, James Lyman Merrick never gave up the calling to evangelize the Persians that he experienced as a student at Amherst College, but his career ended up one of deep frustration. After years of preparing himself for his chosen mission, the American Board charged him to acquire an intimate understanding of the languages and doctrines of Muslims, and to travel extensively through the cities of Persia and, if possible, beyond to cities in Central Asia where the mysterious “kings of the east” may be awaiting the stimulus of the Gospel to play their prophetic parts.³¹

After three years in the Islamic orient, Merrick wrote candidly about the difficulties and dangers of direct proselytization. More importantly, Merrick’s obedience to his instructions “to become intimately conversant with Mohammedanism” had caused him to reassess the common attitude that Islam and its teachings were nothing more than

a “powerless hush.” In this sensitive statement Merrick grasped part of the reason why Islam continued to endure.

Perhaps the general impression in Europe and America respecting Mohammedanism is, that is such a flimsy, frostwork structure, that a few rays of science, a smattering of literature, or a modicum of the arts would annihilate it at once. Whatever may have been the origin of the materials of Mohammedanism, they have been so artfully built on truth, and cemented by excellent sentiments, that the fabric, the more I examine it, appears in every joint and angle a master-piece of skill and power. If I should take my own experience as a criterion, I should say that few have understood Mohammedanism, who have not bestowed laborious research on the subject. The small advantages I have hitherto enjoyed to arrive at the truth of the case, only convince me, that it is a “bottomless pit,” not easily fathomed or filled up.³²

By revising the traditional meaning of the “bottomless pit” and applying it to Christians’ own inability to adequately appreciate Islam, Merrick challenged the eschatological status quo and displayed an appreciation of Islam as a religious system that few Americans of his era were capable of perceiving.

Unfortunately, this sensitivity was not the intelligence that the ABCFM was looking for. and the Board eventually curtailed Merrick’s mission to the Muslims in 1839. He and his wife were eventually recalled in February of 1845, apparently in part for Merrick’s unwillingness to abandon the Muslims as the primary focus of his efforts. His services rejected, Merrick could only find solace once again in the divine promise that even if the ABCFM might “conclude to abandon a people as given up by God,” the prophetic scheme had a different agen-

da. He felt assured that the divine will was “carrying forward a providential work among the people of my choice and tender interest, which no resolution of missionary organs can repress.” Merrick ended his lengthy appeal to the Board by quoting a dream of Henry Martyn taken from the prophecy of the sixth vial, one that he himself had hoped to help bring about, proclaiming that “[t]he way of the kings of the East is preparing; thus much may be said with safety, but little more. The Persians will also probably take the lead in the march to Zion.”³³

The predominant missionary response to Islam was to pit it as a strong Satanic force that would ultimately bend to the power of the Holy Spirit, which the signs of the times seemed to be accomplishing regardless of their own direct efforts. Most ante-bellum American missionaries stationed in Ottoman lands redoubled their faith in the prophetic promises and increased the fervency of their declamations against Islam rather than launch new efforts at direct evangelism.

This eschatological faith absolved them of the need for meaningful dialogue with Muslims about the tenets of their religion, thereby limiting the ultimate effectiveness of their missionary approach. The meaning and status of Islam was explained through prophetic projection and not as part of the struggle of understanding intercultural difference. Forcing diverse human communities into the procrustean bed of biblical metaphors—especially those describing them as locusts and scorpions—was a process of dehumanizing violence that sanctioned a religiously motivated prejudice. By failing to engage Muslims as humans with highly developed cultures of belief, these Christian thinkers demonstrated the degree to which the orientalism of eschatology produced ideological blinders that prevented the perception of diversity. The fatalism that Christians saw as elemental to Muslim belief

ironically serves as both an apt description of their own prophetic enterprise and a sign of the strength of Islamic faith even at a time of political weakness and incipient colonization.

Notes

¹ Daniel O. Morton, ed. *Memoir of Reverend Levi Parsons* (Burlington: Chauncey Goodrich, 1830), 248.

² Morton, 286, 255.

³ *The Old and the New; or, The Changes of Thirty Years in the East* (New York: M.W. Dodd, 1853), 43. George Rapelje, a secular tourist traveling the same time as Fisk, found Muslims to be more “horrid in aspect...than the wild savages of America, in their war dress.” *A Narrative of Excursions, Voyages, and Travels* (New York: West & Trow, 1834), 250.

⁴ F. E. Haines, *Jonas King, Missionary to Syria and Greece* (New York: American Tract Society, 1879), 123.

⁵ Reiner Smolinski discusses this important point in his article “*Israel Redivivus: The Eschatological Limits of Puritan Typology in New England*,” *New England Quarterly* 63 (1990): 357-95.

⁶ Quoted in James L. Barton, *Daybreak in Turkey* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1908), 86.

⁷ John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 62-9. R. W. Southern, *The Western View of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 28.

⁸ Hichem Djait, *Europe and Islam*. Peter Heinegg, trans. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 13.

⁹ Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse* (Oxford: Sutton Courtenay, 1978), 99. Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reform to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 17.

¹⁰ *Luther's Works*. 55 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortune Press, 1965), V, 88. Luther contemptuously called the Turkish Empire “nothing but a morsel of bread which a rich head of a household throws to his dogs” claiming that they “have no promise of God only their stinking Koran, their victories, and the temporal power on which they rely.” IV, 29. See also George W. Forell, “Luther and the War Against the Turks,” *Church History* 14 (1945): 264, and Harvey Buchanan, “Luther and the Turks 1519-1529,” *Archiv Für Reformationsgeschichte* 47 (1956): 155.

¹¹ Alvan Bond, *Memoir of the Rev. Pliny Fisk* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1828), 114. William Goodell viewed his mission in these terms: “We have had to go into the very heart of the kingdom of darkness, ‘where Satan’s seat is,’ and there, amidst conflict, noise, and strife, and deadly hate, to break open the prison doors, and proclaim liberty to the miserable captives.” *The Old and the New*, 64.

¹² See, for example, Joseph Mede, *The Key of the Revelation* (London, 1650); Thomas Brightman, *The Revelation of St. John* (Amsterdam, 1644); Charles Daubuz, *A Perpetual Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (London, 1720). The Adventist Le Roy Edwin Froom, in his massive four-volume study of the historical development of prophetic interpretation, argues that the application of verses from the Book of Revelation to account for the rise and fall of the Saracens and Turks was “almost axiomatic” and that “the final drying up of the Turk and his crucial place in the closing events of earth were of deepest and immediate interest, and frequent exposition.” *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of the Prophetic Interpretation* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1946-54), II, 786; IV, 399-400. Paul Boyer, in his 1992 study of prophecy belief in American culture, argued that there has existed a “constant” interest in Islamic leaders and their prophetic significance since the time of the Crusades. *When Time Shall be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 78.

¹³ Cotton Mather, *The Angel of Bethesda* (New London, Conn., 1722), 112, as quoted in Mukhtar Ali Isani, "Cotton Mather and the Orient," *The New England Quarterly* 43 (1970): 49-50.

¹⁴ Bishop Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies* (1754; London: B. Blake, 1840), 554.

¹⁵ Cotton Mather, *Things to Be Look'd For* (Cambridge, 1691), 31-4. Already by 1690, Cotton Mather was eagerly awaiting "the Happy Chiliad," because "'tis now past Question with me, *That the Second Wo is past, and the Third you know then cometh quickly.*" *The Present State of New England* (Boston, 1690), 35.

¹⁶ Cotton Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (Boston, 1693), 39-40.

¹⁷ Cotton Mather, *Things for a Distress'd People to Think Upon* (Boston, 1696), 34-5.

¹⁸ Cotton Mather, *Menachem: A Very Brief Essay on Tokens for Good* (Boston, 1716), 40. In *Theopolis Americana* of 1710, Mather likewise asserted "[w]e have a world of Reason to Believe, That the Second Wo is passing away" and that the world was entering the "black Time" of the seventh trumpet. (Boston, 1710), 3-4.

¹⁹ William Miller, *Evidences from Scripture* (Brandon, Vt.: Vermont Telegraph, 1833), 43. Josiah Litch, *The Probability of the Second Coming of Christ* (Boston: David H. Ela, 1838), 154-8.

²⁰ Ruth Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 145.

²¹ Ethan Smith, *Key to the Revelation. In Thirty-Six Lectures* (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1833), 318. George Stanley Faber, *The Sacred Calendar of Prophecy*. 2nd ed., 3 vols. (London: W.E. Painter, 1844), III, 353, 287.

²² Cyrus Hamlin, *My Life and Times*. 2nd ed. (Boston and Chicago: Congregational Sunday School and Publication Society, 1893), 203-4.

²³ Isaac Bird, *Bible Work in Bible Lands* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publications, 1873), 16.

²⁴ The model of this approach was the Christian Missionary Society's publication of William Jewett's *Christian Researches in the Mediterranean* in 1824 which includes reflections on the "deeply painful" fact of the continued prevalence of Islam in the region.

²⁵ Smith noted these changes in a sermon titled "Trials of Missionaries," given in 1832 at the departure of new missionaries for the Holy Land that "[t]he Turks are so kept in check by fear of the power and vengeance of Christian nations, that, where you go, your life will rarely, if ever, be endangered by their wrath." (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1832). The influence of Smith's points can be seen in a sermon called "The Aspect of the Age, with Respect to Foreign Missions." "Let the spirit of inquiry once be diffused and the refinements of European habits and character become popular, and the absurdity of the Moslem faith must and will be exchanged...." *The Princeton Review* 5:4(October 1833): 454.

²⁶ Letter to George Boyd, November 9, 1835 in The Horatio Southgate Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University. For an introduction to Southgate, see Kenneth Walter Cameron, "The Manuscripts of Horatio Southgate—A Discovery," *American Church Monthly* 152 (October 1937), 155-73.

²⁷ *Encouragement to Missionary Effort among Mohamedans. A Sermon, by the Rev. Horatio Southgate, Jun. Missionary of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, to Persia, &c.* (New York: Protestant Episcopal Press, 1836), 8, 18-9.

²⁸ Horatio Southgate, *Narrative of a Tour Through Armenia, Kurdistan, Persia and Mesopotamia*. 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1840), I, 72.

²⁹ “On Missionary Efforts among the Mohammedans,” in *The Spirit of Missions* 9(February 1844): 55.

³⁰ Southgate, *The Cross above the Crescent: A Romance of Constantinople* (Philadelphia: J.P. Lippincott, 1878)

³¹ “Instructions of the Prudential Committee, to the Rev. James Lyman Merrick” in *The Missionary Herald* 30(1834): 402-5.

³² “Letter from Mr. Merrick, Dated at Ooroomiah, June 19, 1837” in *The Missionary Herald*, 34(1838): 64.

³³ Rev. J.L. Merrick, *An Appeal to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission* (Springfield: John Wood, 1847), 82, 125. Merrick’s life-long devotion to his calling is manifested in his bequests to educational institutions to support the study of the Persian language.