A RESEARCH STUDY DEFENDING THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

The Truth about Turkey

DEFENDING JOSIAH LITCH AND THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY, AND UNDERSTANDING URIAH SMITH'S POSITION

WM 1502

PART ONE OF FIVE

INTRODUCTION

Several things about Turkey remain something of a puzzle to us. It is a land far away, and with a history often overlooked by historians. Yet there are questions which have remained unsolved.

First, and by far the most significant, **there are those who are now claiming that the Spirit of Prophecy was incorrect in what was written in *Great Controversy, 334:4-335:1,*** about the Ottoman Empire (which became modern Turkey). That needs to be settled.

***Second*, what was the basis for Uriah Smith's position regarding Turkey as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy? (He was editor-in-chief of the *Review* on and off from 1855 to 1903.)** Did Turkey come under the control of the major Powers of Europe in 1840? Did it in later years slump into the status of a second-rate nation?

***Third*, more specifically, we want to know why Uriah Smith thought that Turkey might be a rising Power in his day**—even though, before Smith became editor of the *Review*, Josiah Litch said that its power had been stripped from it.

Since Turkey figures so prominently in that *Great Controversy* passage, as well as in Smith's book, *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation,* let us go back into history—and try to figure out just what happened to it back in the nineteenth century.

But, in the process, two facts quickly emerge: First, **the earlier history of what is now Turkey must be understood in order to properly assess events in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.**

Second, obtaining this information was found to be difficult in the extreme! You can open almost any history book you wish, and you are not likely to find what I am about to tell you.

To my knowledge, this present tract study is the first in-depth research report on the historical background of these two points: The Litch prediction *(see bottom of this page)* and why Smith took the position that he did.

A brief examination of the earlier history of that region will help us better understand why Turkey was the focal point of European attention for decades in the nineteenth century and into part of the twentieth. This will help explain why Smith thought it was so important,—when today we recognize that Turkey is a nation which many leaders in the European Union would like to forget.

So here is a brief overview of that area:

If you will look on a map *(there is one of western Turkey on the next page)*, you will find that there is an immense rectangular portion of land jutting out into the sea, on the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean. In the time of Christ and Paul, this area was called *Asia*. In later centuries, it became known as *Asia Minor.* And the vast area to the east and northeast of it was given the name, *Asia*. In more recent times, this territory became

JOSIAH LITCH'S PREDICTION—"In the year 1840 another remarkable fulfillment of prophecy excited widespread interest. **Two years before, Josiah Litch**, one of the leading ministers preaching the second advent, published an exposition of Revelation 9, **predicting the fall of the Ottoman Empire**. According to his calculations, **this power was to be overthrown 'in A.D. 1840, sometime in the month of August**;' and only a few days previous to its accomplishment he wrote: 'Allowing the first period, 150 years, to have been exactly fulfilled before Deacozes ascended the throne by permission of the Turks, and that the 391 years, fifteen days, commenced at the close of the first period, **it will end on the 11th of August, 1840**, when the Ottoman power in Constantinople may be expected to be broken. And this, I believe, will be found to be the case' *(Josiah Litch, in Signs of the Times, and Expositor of Prophecy, August 1, 1840).*

"**At the very time specified, Turkey, through her ambassadors, accepted the protection of the allied powers of Europe, and thus placed herself under the control of Christian nations.** The event exactly fulfilled the prediction. When it became known, multitudes were convinced of the correctness of the principles of prophetic interpretation adopted by Miller and his associates, and a wonderful impetus was given to the advent movement. Men of learning and position united with Miller, both in preaching and in publishing his views, and from 1840 to 1844 the work rapidly extended." —*Great Controversy, 334-335*

DATE OF PUBLICATION: AUGUST 2009

IN THE MAP BELOW, notice **Istanbul**. This is ancient Constantinople, which guards the narrow waterway (the **Strait of Istanbul**, today known as *Istanbul Bogazi)* between the **Black Sea** (at the top of the map) and the **Sea of Marmara** (Turkish: *Marmara Denizi)*.

A ship passing from the Black Sea passes through the **first "strait,"** the narrow passageway by Istanbul, into the Sea of Marmara and thence through the **second "strait"** (the narrow passageway which is called the **Dardanelles)**. Those two straits have, for centuries, been known as **"the Straits,"** an old English word for *"narrows"* (as found in Matthew 7:13-14, Luke 13:24, and Philippians 1:23).

The Straits separate **Asia** from **Europe**. As the map indicates, there is a small region on the western side of the Straits which is also included in the modern Turkish nation. The "Straits" are key to the entire region.

known as *Turkey*, because of the Ottoman Turks who eventually conquered it.

Down through the centuries, this land has been very important—but for just one reason. If you will look at the upper left of the map of Turkey, you will find a narrow waterway (called a *"strait;"* the word means *"narrow,"* as in Matt 7:13-14) which connects the Aegean Sea with a small lake called the *Sea of Marmara*. **That strait is called the *Dardanelles*** (Dar-da-NELZ). Most of it is about a mile wide. In ancient times, it was known as the *Hellespont*. Continuing on across the lake, you will find that the Sea of Marmara passes through another extremely narrow strait, and then into the immense Black Sea. **This strait is called the *Bosporus*.**

It is these two narrow waterways which make Turkey so important!—For whoever controls those waterways controls water transportation throughout the entire region. The shores of the Black Sea front a vast area, and are inhabited by an immense number of people. Throughout history, water travel has been the easiest and least expensive. Traders from Europe, the Mediterranean, the Near East, and North Africa have wanted to pass through those two narrow channels—"the Straits"—in order to carry goods back and forth. Down through the centuries, international threats, and even warfare, has occurred over access through those Straits. Historians consistently refer to them as "the Straits," so we will also.

For as long as people can remember, for those living in half of Europe, there has been no other single international problem of greater importance than the control of the few short miles of waterway that connects the Black Sea with the Mediterranean.

Those narrow Straits also separate Europe from Asia. Today, the eastern side is called "Asiatic Turkey" and the western side is "European Turkey." You will recall that the Apostle Paul crossed these Straits *(Acts 16:9-12; AA 211-220)*—at which time Christianity first entered Europe.

> "The [first world] war has made us all unduly weary of diplomatic tangles. The guns have cannonaded the whole Victorian façade of Austrian, Russian and German diplomacy into political rubble. The Constantinople problem of the seventies is as crucial to us as that which faced Byzantine Emperors."—*Lord Birkenhead, Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, in The Times, November 18, 1921.*

Let us now begin our story:

A BRIEF VIEW OF THE STRAITS BEFORE THE 19TH CENTURY

All aside from the legends, far back in ancient history, the city of Troy was built alongside the Straits. Forcing the Greek sailors to halt there, it brought down to its own bazaars the raw materials and produce of the rich Black Sea trade. The Trojan War (not entirely a myth) was actually fought over control of the Straits. It enabled Aegean ships to reach their source of supplies, instead of being intercepted by the Trojans.

Control of the Straits enabled those pre-Trojan and Trojan predecessors of the Turks to reap a rich harvest of market tolls and dues in about the same way the Turks have profited in modern times. **This was a major factor in the development of ancient Greece.** In the period of Greek expansion, when colonies were planted throughout the Mediterranean, an important part of the movement was toward the Black Sea. Of these settlements less is known than of those of the west, on which early Roman civilization was so largely based. But they were an important part of the Greek economy. For apart from the products of the farms of Thrace, they tapped the Oriental trade routes in their harbors along the dangerous southern coast of the Black Sea. And they brought grain and gold from the posts along the northern shore.

Over the centuries, battles were fought, victories won, and nations toppled—because of the Straits.

After the Greeks conquered the Persians at the Battle of Salamis, a Greek sea power, the ships of Athens became a major force to be dealt with—and they made sure that they controlled the entire Straits.

Athenian supremacy was ended in a final sea fight on the Hellespont itself, when the Spartan fleet won the day. With its grain trade cut off, Athens had to surrender.

By the time the Romans reached the Dardanelles, there were no other rivals to exclude. All of the other shipping nations in the Mediterranean had already been conquered. However, grain could now be imported from Egypt and Syria. And this lessened the need for it from countries bordering the Black Sea.

It is well-known that**, in A.D. 330, Constantine packed up and moved the capital of the Roman Empire a great distance eastward—to the small town of *Byzantium*, and made it his new capital, known as *Constantinople*.** I have always wondered why Constantine did this. The answer is that its location made it the most important city in the eastern Mediterranean!

About 30 years earlier, Emperor Diocletian had chosen *Nicomedia* (now Ismid) on the Straits at the southeastern gulf of the Sea of Marmara, as the headquarters for the eastern half of the Empire.

In addition to controlling the waterway, Constantinople lay like a fortress at the ferry on the best and shortest land route between Asia and Europe. It controlled access to both the Straits as well as the land route from Asia to Europe. In later years, when the barbarians broke through the outlying defenses on the frontiers and cut the line of march from east to west, **it was the maritime strategic value of the city that held so well the key to the eastern seas, which protected the Roman Empire in the East until it finally collapsed a thousand years later—in 1453.**

Constantinople not only became a seaport and commercial city, but **it was the only great port which kept alive the traditions of antique culture during the Dark Ages.** This role it owed in part to the strength of its walls, which time and again defied the invader, but also to its fleet, which was able to control the Straits much more

successfully than its armies in the surrounding provinces. (During the Dark Ages, Constantinople was called *Byzantium*. But, for purposes of simplicity, in this brief history we will call it Constantinople. For over a thousand years, until the Ottoman takeover in 1453, it was called the *Byzantine Empire.*)

When Mohammedanism arose in the seventh century, it cut off the Near East from Europe. No longer could Europe get grain from Egypt and Syria. But this made Constantinople all the more important!

The city was able to repulse attacks by the Saracens in 673-677 and again in 718; and, when the Muslims conquered Antioch and Alexandria, the Black Sea route through the Straits again became extremely important to the Western world.

In the eleventh century, the Italian cities of Pisa, Genoa, and Venice fought among themselves for the right to have access to the Straits.

Venice used the Fourth Crusade to control Constantinople from 1204 to 1261. During that time, Venice became powerful, forcing both Pisa and Genoa to accept its terms.

But the Genoese had their revenge, when they helped the Greeks recover their capital and received as reward, in addition to the confirmation of their commercial privileges, the exclusive control of the Black Sea trade.

Thus the battles continued for centuries. Everyone wanted access through the Straits.

THE OTTOMAN CONQUEST

The conquest of the Straits by the *Ottoman Turks* was a gradual one, extending over a century. Their predecessors in Asia Minor and the *Seljuk Turks*, whose rise in the eleventh century was one of the chief causes of the Crusades, had suffered both from civil war and from the Mongolian invasion; so they failed to conquer Constantinople.

But in the closing years of the thirteenth century the chieftain of a new band of war refugees from central Asia, *Osman I* (also called Osmanli or *Ottoman*), made for himself a new sultanate. **The foundations of what would make his people great for centuries was laid when he defeated the inhabitants of the cities on the Straits, just south of Constantinople.**

Control of that strategic area added immensely to the power of the Ottoman Turks! About the year 1350, under the rulership of *Suleiman*, they sent an expedition across into Europe.

Finding the country open to him, **Suleiman finally crossed the Dardanelles and seized and fortified Gallipoli in 1356. From that time, with but slight intervals, the Ottoman Turks have held the fortifications on both sides of the Dardanelles**, which at this point are only about a mile in width. Meanwhile they proceeded to conquer all of what is now called Turkey.

For almost a century after the Turks had taken the ports on the Dardanelles, Constantinople still held its own against the apparently inevitable fate.

The only thing protecting that city was an agreement by the Italian traders with the Turks, for permission to let them send ships through the Straits and an agreement not to conquer Constantinople. (They feared that the Turks might close the Straits entirely if they took Constantinople.)

So Genoa by diplomacy (1387), and Venice by war (1416), won from the Turks the concession of freedom to send their ships through the Dardanelles. Beyond that, they could pay toll to Constantinople and enter the Black Sea. But it was a precarious freedom. For so long as sea power remained to the Genoese and Venetian fleets, the possession of the land fortifications was not enough to secure control of the passage. That had to await the invention of heavy artillery.

The Turks finally mounted heavy cannon on the European side of the Bosporus (the area today called "European Turkey," part of that modern nation) and thus stopped the flow of water traffic into and out of the Black Sea. This **so weakened Constantinople financially, that it was ready for conquest by someone.**

The Turks next worked out agreements with the Italian cities, giving them access through the Straits for the payment of heavy tolls and promising not to sink their ships.

Ships that attempted to pass without halting were fired upon and sunk if they refused to stop. The Black Sea trade was thus brought to the verge of ruin.

In 1453, the Ottoman Turks finally captured Constantinople by both bombarding its walls from ships, in the Bosporus, and with land artillery.

This is considered an important event in history. Ending the Byzantine Empire, it marked the beginning of the full power of the Ottoman Empire.

Because it figures into Josiah Litch's prediction, recorded in *Great Controversy*, we will discuss this event again later.

When the Turks later took Azof and Crimea, they made the Black Sea a Turkish lake. And, **for the next three centuries, until the arrival of Russia in 1774, it was the settled policy of the Ottoman Empire to exclude all foreign ships from the Black Sea going through the Straits.** They alone could traverse it and trade in the Black Sea.

The rise of the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is one of the major events of history, the significance of which is yet not fully appreciated.

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

During the Renaissance, Reformation, and religious wars which followed, the Ottoman Empire was perhaps the largest nation in size since Roman times.

Continued on the next tract

The Truth about Turkey

PART TWO OF FIVE

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

Just when *Martin Luther* was launching his protest against papal domination in matters of religion, *Selim I* (1512-1526) extended his empire by conquering all of Persia, Kurdistan, Syria, and Egypt. Master of the sacred cities of Islam, he forced the last of the Abbasid caliphs to surrender to him and his successors the title of caliph—and rulership over all the Near Eastern lands of Islam.

His son, *Suleiman*, or "Solomon the Magnificent," sent his armies into the Danube Valley. In 1521, he captured Belgrade. And in 1526, at the Battle of Mohács, he defeated the Hungarian King Louis II, who perished with most of his army.

Vienna was next besieged, but without success (1529). And Suleiman's advance to be a world empire was stopped. This was the farthest he ever advanced toward Western Europe. Even as it was, he reached and ravaged Styria and Carniola, almost at the gate of Central Europe. At the same time, his corsair admiral, Khair-eddin—known to the Christians as *Barbarossa*—established his power in Northern Africa and spread terror in the Mediterranean.

This is why, when you read chapter 11 of *Great Controversy (197-210),* you sense that some important event must have occurred between two meetings. At the first *Diet of Spires* (June 1526), the German princes were permitted, by *Charles V,* to maintain their religion. But the situation was reversed at the second one (February 21-April 12, 1529)—when, on April 9, the princes found it necessary to issue their famous "Protest." **It was the success of Charles' forces in turning back the Ottoman Turks at the gates of Vienna that greatly helped in making the difference. He could now give his full attention to crushing Protestantism. Active warfare against them followed.**

The consolidation of the Asiatic Empire of Selim and the conquest of Egypt had at last brought the entire Oriental and East Indian trade into the monopolistic hands of Turkey. The conquest of Constantinople in 1453, while it must have injured this trade with the West, did not do so effectively until Selim's conquests. For the other Near Eastern ports were still open, especially Alexandria. The greatest splendor of Venice, indeed, was in the half-century following the taking of Constantinople. They were able to tap the other routes and generally remained on sufficiently fair terms to bargain with the Turks.

But then, in 1499, Vasco da Gama found the sea route to India (around the south end of Africa). And the flow of trade was diverted from Cairo to Lisbon, sufficiently, at least, to ruin Venice. Spain and Portugal, and later Holland and England, turned to the rich profits of seaborne trade.

Meanwhile, France entered into agreements with the Turks and was permitted by them to use the straits for trade in the Black Sea. **The treaty of Francis I with the Sultan was the starting point for Turkish international relations with the nations of Western Europe. (We will learn later that these contacts led to its downfall, as predicted by Josiah Litch.)**

By agreement, all ships entering Turkish ports throughout the Near East were required to sail under the French flag, unless they acquired similar grants. These agreements changed as each new sultan died and the next ascended the throne at Constantinople. **This placed Europe in subservience to the Ottomans; this domination continued until the mid-19th century.**

The French agreement of 1535 became something of a model to be copied in subsequent treaties with other European states. England arranged one in 1579. The Netherlands followed in 1598 and in 1612. The first full treaty with Germany was in 1718.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

By the close of the eighteenth century all the Christian countries of Europe, except Switzerland and the Papal States of the Church (the name for the portions of Italy controlled by the Vatican), had gained recognition for the rights of their citizens engaged in business with Ottoman territories.

But, oddly enough, none of these treaties (except one for a time with Venice) permitted any European nation to sail into the Black Sea and trade. They could only travel through the Dardanelles to Constantinople, and trade with them, upon payment of heavy fees.

Some European merchants found their way to the Black Sea ports by chartering Turkish shipping. But it was generally a Turkish monopoly.

This occurred when Austria (*i.e.* the Hapsburg monarchy) forced upon Turkey the crushing peace of Passarowitz (1718). But the ancient rule that only Turkish ships should sail the Turkish waters was not surrendered. Merchants might charter boats at Danube ports and send their goods over the Black Sea, but the boats themselves had to be Turkish.

It was not until Russia finally established itself on the northern shores, at the end of the eighteenth century, that Turkey was formally obliged to surrender its policy of exclusion of foreign shipping on the Black Sea. The Bosporus was forced open from the east instead of the west.

During the seventeenth century, Turkey held its own as one of the Great Powers, because of its control of the Straits.

But, at the end of that century, it began a process of decline which slowly continued until the birth of a new Turkey after World War I. Attacked along the whole

of its northern front, it was obliged to surrender most of the Danube Valley—Hungary and Transylvania to Hapsburg, the Ukraine and Podalia to Poland, and Azof to Russia. The Treaty of Carlowitz in 1699, in which these losses of Turkey were registered, marks the first distinct step in the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire.

The Turkish monopoly of the Black Sea was now about to be threatened by two Powers, Austria and Russia. Of these two, however, Russia alone had reached the shores and set out at once to overcome the Turkish claims.

Determined to ultimately take over the Black Sea trade in 1699, Peter the Great, with characteristic energy and aggressiveness, sent an embassy to Constantinople on board a Russian man-of-war, one of the Russian squadrons he had built in the taking of Azof. This first Russian battleship made an impression at Constantinople; but the Turks were not overawed by it, nor by the aggressive attitude of the Russian envoy. And the demand for freedom of navigation on the Black Sea for Russian ships was emphatically refused. The Turkish Government asserted that no foreign vessel should ever sail "the virgin waters of the Black Sea." And, in the face of the intruder, they recalled that this rule had been strictly observed in the past. The negotiations failed; the Turks still maintained that Russian ships should not sail out of the Sea of Azof, and that Russian goods destined for Constantinople should cross the Black Sea in Turkish ships. **Peter was defeated by the Turks in a battle at the Black Sea, and he gave up trying.**

It was left for Catherine II to finally conquer the Black Sea coastlands for Russia. Although her ambition to divide up Turkey, as well as Poland, was not realized, she forced the Sultan to surrender his control of the north shore of the Black Sea.

Although she did not conquer Constantinople, **she broke the Turkish policy of exclusion from the Black Sea—and established Russia along its shores.** This was a new international situation. The Black Sea was no longer a Turkish lake.

This was followed by a treaty in 1774, which added to Russia's importance. **For the first time, Ottoman control of the Straits and the Black Sea had ended. But not for long.**

Catherine was still determined to conquer Constantinople itself. With Austria as an ally she waged a new war on Turkey in 1789. But England, Holland, and Prussia intervened and prevented it.

As Russian merchant ships entered the Straits from the Black Sea end, **it was obvious that the old principle governing the use of the Straits (only Turkish ships passing through them) was broken. The other nations therefore sought to obtain the new advantages.** Austria gained free passage for her ships of commerce in 1784. England was not admitted to the full benefits of this until 1799. France received the concession in 1802 and Prussia in 1806.

The arrival of Russia into the Black Sea had made the question of the Straits one of general European policy. But, so far, the solution affected the commercial rather than the naval side of the problem. **The Turkish commercial monopoly was broken, but its right to control and prohibit the passage of foreign warships through its territorial waters remained unimpaired.** The problem of naval strategy was still to be settled; indeed it was hardly a problem, except for Russia, prior to the nineteenth century.

Napoleon's Egyptian expedition definitely opened the modern phase of the Near Eastern question as we know it. France, for centuries the one Christian power most friendly to Turkey, now became an invader.

England had its attention drawn to the strategic importance of the Near Eastern route to India. But, for the first time awaking to the importance of the Straits, she began to side with the Ottomans. Russia, drawn to the Straits through the same Napoleonic invasion, became the main competitor of England for the domination of whoever controlled the Straits.

It was widely recognized that Constantinople stands at the crossroads of the route to India and the route to Odessa. Because the Napoleonic wars revealed increasing signs of the weakness of the Ottoman Empire, the threefold contest of England, France, and Russia centered to a large degree at Constantinople.

The first effect of Napoleon's campaign in the Orient was to throw Turkey—so far as the Straits were concerned—into the hands of Russia. **The appeal of the Sultan to the Czar brought a Russian fleet, which entered the Bosporus in September 1798; and the resulting alliance between Turkey and Russia was joined a few days later by England.**

The barriers once down, the Russian fleet passed and repassed the Straits without regard to treaty stipulations. And Russia began definitely to formulate plans for the partition of Turkey.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

It was the year 1800. The very important nineteenth century, which would bring us to Josiah Litch's prediction and Uriah Smith's theories about Turkey, had begun.

A very complicated play and interplay of wars, treaties, and military actions followed.

By the negotiations for the Peace of the Dardanelles in 1808-1809, the treaty was cleverly written. Turkey insisted on her sovereign rights over Constantinople and the Straits, and won from Britain a formal recognition of them. In reality, Britain became the guardian of the Straits almost as much as Turkey.

The provisions of this treaty constitute the basis of the international convention laid down in the Straits Convention of 1841, when England again was to have its say as to the settlement of the question. So the Napoleonic period left the matter as Turkey and England wished.

After Napoleon's defeat, in September 1814, diplo-

mats from all over Europe met at the Congress of Vienna, to remake the map of Europe.

The question of the Straits was not considered, nor even the larger problem of the Ottoman Empire; but the British Government supported the plan of Prince Metternich of Austria, to guarantee the existence of Turkey. But Constantinople was suspicious of too much guardianship by the British. British mediation suggested too nearly the idea of a protectorate. In a sense, therefore, Turkey played into the hands of the Czar, who wished to avoid any guarantee of Ottoman integrity; and **Turkey remained outside the European state system. So far, it continued to be a separate nation.**

Although the Ottoman question could not be ignored, the nations delayed any further action for a time.

But when the peace-loving Alexander I died, the forceful **Nicholas I took control of Russia (1825) and quickly pressured Constantinople into accepting a treaty (October 1826) which, among its other terms, granted Russia complete freedom "in all the seas and waters of the Ottoman Empire without any exception"** for its merchant shipping.

Still hesitant to interfere, Europe watched as the Czar of Russia marched his armies across the Balkans, for the first time, and forced upon the Turks the humiliating terms of **the Treaty of Adrianople (September 1829)—which was extremely important.**

First, it made Greece independent; and, because so many of the shipping activities of the Ottoman Empire were in Greek hands, it greatly weakened Turkish shipping and marked a further stage in the dissolution of the Turkish Empire. The treaty granted full freedom to Russian commercial ships in all Ottoman waters, with the unique proviso that no visit or search was to be exercised over Russian vessels passing through the Straits. The degree of Russian domination was expressed in the additional provision that any act or interference by the Turks to this complete freedom would be met by "reprisals against the Ottoman Empire."

In 1832, the existence of the Ottoman Empire was threatened by the great revolt of a rival Muslim upstart, Mehemet Ali, whose troops, overrunning most of Asiatic Turkey, were threatening the Straits. Again, as in the Napoleonic crisis, Russia profited. France was on the side of Mehemet. England declined to act. And the hard-pressed Sultan was obliged to invite Russia to come in, with fleet and army, and save him from the rebels. The results were a Russian fleet and troops for the defense of Constantinople itself, the passage of the Dardanelles by Russian warships, and the establishment of what amounted to a Russian protectorate over Turkey.

The treaty which embodied these conditions was signed in 1833. By it Russia guaranteed the existence of Turkey, offering the use of Russian arms to maintain it.

This *Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi* marks the high point of Russian influence at Constantinople. By it **the Ottomans closed the Straits to every foreign warship except those of Russia.**

These terms were inconsistent with the treaty of 1809, by which Constantinople had agreed to prohibit the passage to warships of any foreign Power. But no one wanted war, and the Western Powers awaited their chance.

We are now nearing 1840, when Josiah Litch's prediction, first published in 1838, was supposed to be fulfilled. Up until this time, temporary control for awhile over the Straits had occurred. But 1840 would mark an event which would render the results permanent for well into the following century—when nearly the entire territory of Turkey governed by Ottoman Empire would be lost to it.

1839 TO 1841

The European nations were extremely upset by the 1833 treaty between Russia and Turkey. They awaited their chance to take action.

In the year 1838, Josiah Litch published his prediction, which appeared impossible of fulfillment.

Then, suddenly and unexpectedly in 1839, war broke out again between the Sultan, headquartered in Constantinople, and the renegade Muslim leader, Mehemet Ali. To the surprise of everyone, it resulted in the complete defeat of the Ottoman Turks! Even though it was only for a brief time (less than a year), for the first time, the Ottoman Empire had been conquered. The results would prove to be lasting.

Here is a rather detailed explanation of what happened next:

1839 passed into 1840. And the Ottoman Empire seemed about to dissolve, with Russia waiting to share the spoils on the north and France about to profit in Egypt by its friendship with Mehemet Ali. England had no desire to see either of these results. **Prince Metternich of Austria had, at the outbreak of the war, proposed action by, what was called, the *European Concert*.**

France and England quickly took up the idea of common action, although French public opinion objected to too close association with English aims. Russia, taking advantage of this rift between England and France, refused to join and advised the Sultan to make peace with Mehemet directly, without reference to Europe.

Russia felt that the action of the European Powers, if they came together, would undo the advantages it had held since the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi. However, **Metternich acted quickly and anticipated objections by having the Austrian ambassador at Constantinople present the Sultan a *collective note* from the Five Powers, stating that these Powers had reached an accord on the Eastern question. They expected Constantinople to "abstain from any final decision without their concurrence and to await the results of their interest in its welfare"** *(British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 28, p. 408).*

This is what happened immediately before and during this European agreement of August 1840:

Russia, having apparently given in on the formal question of the acceptance of the agreement, the Czar's ambas-

sador at London made the most of the situation to sow dissension between France and England. The Czar's strong personal dislike of France was an element in the situation, playing into the plans of Palmerston of England, whose objections to the French plan of favoring Mehemet Ali's ambitions upon Syria were soon shared by Berlin and Vienna as well as St. Petersburg.

Then Russia opened new diplomatic possibilities. To Palmerston's surprise, the Government of the Czar went so far as to intimate a willingness to reconsider the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, stating that the Czar had regarded that treaty not as an implement for establishing an absolute protectorate over Turkey but merely as a means of safety for controlling the Straits. The Russian ambassador declared that the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi might be revised by proclaiming the opening of the Straits at all times a universally recognized principle of the public law of Europe.

Upon the basis of such plans, the Czar's Government then proposed that England's fleet attack Mehemet's port of Alexandria and the Russian army come down to Constantinople to safeguard the capital from the Syrian rebels. Palmerston naturally refused to enter upon a plan which would bring the Russians to Constantinople alone. It was only after rather protracted negotiations in which France was not a party—and her interest in Egypt led to independent negotiations with Turkey—**that an agreement was reached by the four Powers** of Europe: Russia, Britain, Prussia, and Austria.

This agreement was prepared by the Powers in London, England in August 1840, and signed on August 11—the date predicted by Josiah Litch two years earlier in 1838—before the crisis leading to it had started!

The *Treaty of London* on August 11, 1840, in which this agreement was registered, began by stating *(Article I)* that the Contracting Powers had come to an agreement with Turkey as to what terms Mehemet Ali should receive. And that *(Article II)* in case Mehemet refused to accept them, they, the Powers, would undertake to force him to do so.

"Their Majesties engaged to take, at the request of the Sultan, measures concerted and settled between them, in order to carry that arrangement into effect." *Article III* states that, if Constantinople is threatened by invasion, the Powers will send help. And *Article IV* safeguards the Sultan's position in the future, in case Russia and the Western Powers should—for this one time—have to send their armed forces through the Straits.

These two articles *(III and IV)* are fundamental in the history of the international law of the Straits. You will find the complete text in *British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 28, p. 342.*

The significance of the *Treaty of London* is that it translates, into European public law, a principle which had previously been recognized only in the dealings of individual Powers with Turkey.

The "ancient rule of the Ottoman Empire" had been formulated by the Sultan for his dealings with the various States. But now the situation had dramatically changed.

"Four of the leading Powers jointly recognized in a formal international instrument the applicability of the rule of closing the Bosporus and the Dardanelles to warships of all States, whilst the Sultan, engaging to observe this rule in general, formally surrendered his former right of opening the Straits at discretion" *(Phillipson and Buxton, The Question of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, p. 77).*

The Ottoman Empire had finally been broken, and henceforth was submissive to the European Powers. Although it still controlled a vast amount of territory in the Near East, that territory was totally impoverished. **The Straits—the primary source of the Ottoman Empire's income—were now under the dictation of the major European Powers.**

The agreement was signed on August 11, 1840 *(GC 334-335),* and reaffirmed the following year in a Convention of European Powers. It also ended the Ottoman (Turkish) ability to manage its own affairs, especially in regard to the crucial Straits, which constituted the basis of its wealth. **For the remainder of the century, and in the one beyond, Turkey was under the thumb of the European Powers. The total sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire had ended.**

The next year (1841) France joined in a general treaty along these lines, recognizing the obligation of the Sultan to close the Straits to foreign ships of war in time of peace. The Convention was accepted by other Powers later, and became a general rule of European international l*aw (ibid., p. 79).*

This Convention was later reaffirmed in its essentials in the Treaty of Paris in 1856. Again, in the Conference of London in 1871, *it was the fundamental document in the international law of the Straits down to the war of 1914.* The significant phrase is short and clear: "So long as the Porte [Port of Constantinople] is at peace, His Highness will admit no Foreign Ships of War into the said Straits." **Other decisions, affecting the Straits, could be made at any time it was presumed best. The Sultan, headquartered in Constantinople, had been protected from the renegade Muslim leader Mehemet Ali, but at a very high price.**

THE LITCH PREDICTION ABOUT THE TIME PERIOD

What had Josiah Litch predicted, and what had happened? Had his prediction been fulfilled?

In 1838, this prominent Millerite preacher had

Continued on the next tract

The Truth about Turkey

PART THREE OF FIVE

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

published a prediction, based on Revelation 9, that the fall of the Ottoman Empire would occur in August 1840.

Some time before the predicted event occurred, he wrote that, on August 11, "the Ottoman Power in Constantinople may be expected to be broken."

This prediction was fulfilled.

LITCH'S PREDICTION ABOUT 1449

Litch also stated that an event of great importance had earlier occurred in 1449. At first, I could not locate anything on that date. This is understandable; for I found it extremely difficult to prepare this present historical study on the Ottoman Empire. The data is not easy to locate. However, we know that **an extremely important event had occurred only four years later, in 1453: the fall of the Roman Empire in the East, when, for the first time in history after Constantine founded it in 330, Constantinople was captured by an alien Power.**

Therefore, we can assume that **Litch was aware of an important event, four years earlier, in 1449**. Could it have been the beginning of the siege of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks? I then learned that the Ottomans had a difficult time preparing for that final conquest. They had to secretly carry their ships overland, around the Dardanelles, so they could blast the walls of Constantinople with their cannons!

I did learn that the last Byzantine ruler of the city (Constantine XI Palaeologus, 1449-1453) ascended to the throne in 1449. So Litch's prediction may have started with the date of his enthronement.

—*Finally, I learned this:* **When the Byzantine emperor John VIII died in 1449, Constantine XI inherited the throne. Yet, fearful of the Turks, he postponed his coronation until he first made a new truce with Murad II, *who accepted him as a vassal.***

For several historians, this was a major turning point in the history of Constantinople. Its emperor had publicly showed that he could not rule till the Muslim leader sanctioned it!

Revelation 9:15 states, *"An hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men."*

This period amounted to three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days. During this time, the Ottoman supremacy was to exist in Constantinople.

It began in 1449 with the voluntary submission of the emperor to the sultan, and ended in 1840 with the voluntary submission of the sultan to Christian Europe. From 1840 onward, the Ottoman Government was under the dictation of the great Powers of Europe, which reorganized its government and supervised its policies.

When Murad II died, his son *Mehmed II* became sultan. **This new Sultan soon began preparations for the siege of Constantinople which began April 6, 1453. May 29 the Byzantine Empire ceased to exist. Its capital now became the seat of the Ottoman Empire. But it was nearly four years earlier, in 1449, that the Ottomans first gained control of it.** (Josiah Litch, having access to earlier sources, apparently was able to fix that date as August 11.)

It should be mentioned that these dates are adjusted to the Gregorian Calendar. This calendar, currently in use today, was first introduced in 1582 by Italian astronomers during the reign of Pope Gregory XIII (over 30 years after the fall of the Byzantine Empire). It provides for an ordinary year of 365 days and a leap year of 366 days. **It may be that it was the need to adjust the takeover dates of Constantinople, to agree with the Gregorian Calendar, that caused a delay in Litch's final date being set.** Both beginning and ending dates had to be accurate, in order for the termination of the predicted time span to be accurately forecast.

When the Eastern Empire went down, the Turks were "released." There was no powerful empire which stood in their way. So they sent their armies northward.

The fall of Constantinople marked the end of the political independence of the millennium-old Byzantine Empire. **In the approximately 1,100 years of the existence of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople had been besieged many times; but it had been captured only once during the Fourth Crusade in 1204.**

Here is how the final conquest of the city occurred: In 1452, Sultan *Mehmed II* (sometimes Muhammad II) began preparations for conquering the city. He constructed a fortress at the narrow point of the Bosporus, assembled a large and experienced army, and arranged for the neutrality of Hungary and Venice (likely allies of the Byzantines). A 54-day siege began in April 1453. The walled city was bombarded almost constantly from Ottoman cannons on both land and sea. The walls were breached on May 29; Emperor Constantine XI died amidst his Genoese supporters and fellow townspeople. Two days of looting, murder, and rape followed before order was restored by the sultan, soon to be known as *Mehmed the Conqueror*.

The political independence of the millennium-old Byzantine Empire, which was by then already fragmented into several Greek monarchies, had occurred.

In 1840, the 391 years of Litch's prediction was fulfilled.

URIAH SMITH'S THEORY THAT TURKEY WOULD REGAIN POWER

Litch's prediction, based on Revelation 9, was fulfilled when Turkey came under the supervision of the major Western nations in 1840; and this treaty was rati-

fied the next year.

But Uriah Smith's theory about the King of the North, in Daniel 11:40-45, made Turkey a superpower in the last days—extending down to the end of time.

What events caused Uriah Smith, for decades, to think that, in his day, Turkey might once again become a major Power? For it surely never happened prior to his death.

In 1855, at the age of 23, Smith became editor of the *Review*. **His book on Revelation was first published in 1867.** He had worked so hard on it, that Ellen White wrote that he was injuring his health by staying up late writing it *(1T 520)*. She was right. Two years later, in 1869, he was given a year's leave to recuperate. Apparently, he had learned his lesson and ceased writing so intensely. For **it was not until 1873 that his book on Daniel was first printed.**

For years, Smith had been watching the continual turmoil and interplay of events in Europe, which frequently involved Turkey. The war of 1853, partially fought over the Straits, impressed him that perhaps Turkey would again arise to a position of great influence.

This is what happened at the Straits, two years before Smith became *Review* editor:

THE WAR OF 1853 AND THE TREATY OF PARIS (1858)

The Straits Convention of 1841, which had robbed Russia of its predominance in Turkish affairs, could not be accepted by Russia with good grace. Nicholas began to make significant reference to the *"sick man of Europe"* whose inheritance should be divided among the Powers. The first step toward this end, however, showed that the inheritors could not agree. Russia finally invaded Turkey in 1853. (Palmerston in a speech in the *House of Commons*, July 11, 1833, was the first to call Turkey the "sick man of Europe.")

The action of Russia at once involved France, as Napoleon III was strongly committed to a clerical policy. And England, following its traditional lines, was drawn into common action with France in order to defend the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. **The British and French fleets were sent into the Sea of Marmara. War was declared against Russia, and it was fought out on the Crimean Peninsula**, by the aid of the allied fleets which struck at the great Russian fortress on the Black Sea, Sebastopol.

In the peace negotiations (the Treaty of Paris, 1858), Russia was forced to accept the decisions made in 1840 and the follow-up Convention of 1841, about the Straits. Turkey remained subservient to the Powers of Europe.

The most significant act of the Conference at Paris, however, was the declaration of the neutralization of the Black Sea. Russia could not make its shores a fortified arsenal. **None of these events had strengthened the sultan in Constantinople.**

THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR AND THE CONGRESS OF BERLIN (1878)

In the years following the Treaty of Paris, the nationalist spirit of Europe's nations revealed itself in the gradual awareness and acceptance of the fact that the new railways and steam shipping wrought together the economic fabric of the nations, while education and the spread of journalism made possible a citizenship responsive to large political appeals. The era of Italy's and Germany's unification, and of England's worldwide colonial expansion,—left Russia suffering a constant sense of humiliation in the limitation upon her power of defense along the whole southern frontier.

In order to regain the right to freely send its ships through the Straits, Russia declared war against Turkey on April 24, 1877. Russia intended to get the 1840 agreement, which Litch had predicted, changed, enabling Russia to have free access for all its shipping through the Straits. But this almost resulted in a war between Russia and Great Britain.

The conduct of Russia, both before and after the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War, as appears from contemporary records, indicates clearly that it was determined to reopen the question of the Straits. —Russia wanted free passage of all its ships, including warships, through the Straits.

Instead of letting the major Powers dictate the control of the Straits,—Russia would conquer Turkey and totally control the Straits!

Deeply concerned, England prepared to take action single-handedly and to abandon the "conditional" neutrality heretofore adopted, in order to safeguard its repeatedly expressed interests in that region.

On January 23, after the fall of Adrianople to the Russians and its march toward Gallipoli, the British Mediterranean fleet, anchored near Smyrna, was ordered to proceed to Constantinople, unless otherwise instructed at Besiktas.

The signing of an armistice between Russia and Turkey on January 31, 1878, instead of diminishing, further increased England's suspicions. When the final terms became known to the British Government on February 8—that Russia would have full use of the Straits—Admiral Hornby was instructed to send a squadron to Constantinople at once. Russia and the neutral Powers were notified that this step was taken as a precautionary measure to protect British life and property. Russia replied by announcing that she was equally entitled to protect Christians. And she planned to send some troops into Constantinople for that purpose. The resulting acute tension was relaxed a few days later by a compromise, in which Russia promised not to occupy Constantinople and Gallipoli, and England promised not to land troops on either the European or Asiatic coast of the Dardanelles.

By the time the preliminary peace between Russia and Turkey was signed at San Stefano on March 3, 1878, several other nations were becoming worried about the

increasing power of Russia.

Preparations were made for a conference of the Powers to meet at Berlin. The terms of the Treaty of San Stefano were examined in lengthy dispatches exchanged between the various courts.

The obvious objective of Russia, to gain a foothold in the Balkans through what amounted to a Russian protectorate over an oversized Bulgaria, was not looked upon favorably by the other Powers. **It was feared that once Russia had established herself in the comparative proximity of Constantinople, she would be able to gain control over the Straits as well.**

A few days before the Congress met, Great Britain strengthened her position considerably by promising military assistance to Turkey in case Russia should attempt to take away any Turkish territory in Asia beyond that to be fixed by the definitive treaty of peace. In order to enable England to make necessary provision for executing her engagement, **Turkey agreed "to assign the Island of Cyprus to be occupied and administered by England." This only further weakened Turkey.**

Europe's leading statesmen met at the Congress of Berlin on June 13, 1878, to settle the "affairs in the East."

Contrary to recent practice where the prospective victim is not even given a hearing, **the Berlin Congress allowed Turkey representation on a basis of theoretical equality. Of course, the function of the Turkish delegate was merely to receive what had already been decided.**

Thus we see that, by 1878, Turkey continued to be governed by the wishes of the great Powers of Europe.

After a month of arduous labor, the Treaty of Berlin was signed on July 13, 1878. **Article 63 of the Berlin treaty simply affirmed the same principles governing the Straits, as decided by the treaties of 1856 and 1871, which essentially repeated the decisions of 1840 and 1841.**

The occupation of Cyprus by Great Britain was also confirmed. Thus, while Turkey was considerably weakened, Russia emerged from the Congress with far fewer fruits of her success on the battlefields than she had hoped to harvest. Although she had come physically closer to gaining control over the Straits than at any time before or since, once more she found herself blocked in her search for an outlet to the open seas through the Dardanelles.

While the Berlin Congress thus maintained the status quo around Constantinople, it by no means solved the question of the Straits, which merely became dormant for a generation.

In some respects, the accomplishments of the Congress are indeed remarkable in that it was the only instance in the nineteenth century "when the Concert of Powers has been strong enough to bring a victorious belligerent to the bar of Europe and oblige him to submit the results of his victory to the judgment and revision of a Congress" *(Robert Howard, "The Congress of Berlin," in Three Peace Congresses of the Nineteenth Century, p. 48).*

YEARS OF QUIET DIPLOMACY (1878-1908)

The thirty years which elapsed between the Treaty of Berlin (1878) and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary (1908) were filled with diplomatic moves and countermoves on the part of the Great Powers, resulting ultimately in their realignment into the two combinations of the *Triple Alliance* and the *Triple Entente* (which later provided the basis for World War I). This was especially shown in their efforts to strengthen themselves in the Balkans. Yet the records show that, **throughout the greater part of this period, none of the Powers actively sought to disturb the *status quo* in that region—and definitely not their control over the Straits and Constantinople, established in 1840.**

The secret agreement signed at Berlin on June 18, 1881, by the representatives of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia (commonly known as the "League of the Three Emperors") sought to ensure the *status quo* in the Balkans in general and the territorial integrity of European Turkey in particular, **conditioned upon the maintenance of the management of the Straits as laid down in the agreements and treaties of 1840, 1841, 1856, and 1871.**

Documents recently published in Russia reveal that, despite formal agreements and assurances, **the Russian Imperial Government never ceased planning for the realization of the dream first conceived by Peter the Great—to control the Straits and, if need be, Constantinople.**

Russian control of the Straits was considered a historical necessity. It was only through such control that Russian political, military, and commercial interests could be safeguarded and Austrian expansion in the Balkans could be checked.

In the Armenian crisis of 1895-1896, the Russian Government came close to authorizing the Russian commander of the Black Sea fleet to dispatch ships and landing troops to northern Turkey, in order to secure control of the Straits. But this did not happen.

It was during these years of comparative quiet that the question of the Straits as a problem of European concern was further complicated by Germany's new interest in the Straits. **Germany began by carefully assuring Turkey that it could protect it better than England could.**

The first step was the dispatch of a German military mission, headed by Baron von der Goltz, to reorganize the Turkish army. In November 1889, Emperor William II of Germany visited the Sultan at Constantinople, heralding a new era of German-Turkish relations. **During the next decade there was rapid economic penetration of Turkey by German industry, commerce, and finance**, of which the establishment of a branch of the Deutsche Bank of Berlin in Constantinople bore witness.

In 1898, another visit by the German Emperor to the Sultan resulted in the concession of the port of Haidar Pascha to the German Anatolian Railways Company: the

first concrete step toward the realization of the Berlin-Bagdad railway scheme.

The German plan was a dynamic policy of political and economic expansion which conflicted, not merely with Russian ambitions in the Straits but also with French and British special interests in Asiatic Turkey and French political interests in Syria. It also touched upon British interests in the Islamic world and India.

Early in the year 1900, England was occupied with the Boer War in South Africa. Russia was concerned about the Far East, and soon was in war with Japan. So **all that the European nations could do was to attempt, by negotiations, to slow down Germany's activities in Turkey.** Thus, because of an interplay of circumstances, conflicts between the Great Powers with respect to the Straits were submerged for several years.

But when Russia (defeated by Japan in Asia and further weakened by revolution at home) turned her attention anew to Europe and the Near East, the stage was set for her ambitious Foreign Minister, Mr. Izvolski, to rekindle the smoldering question into a burning flame.

Amid all the maneuvering, back and forth, between the great Powers of Europe over whether Turkey would be able to regain its former prestige and power,—Uriah Smith died in 1903. His statements about Turkey being the superpowerful King of the North in the last days were never revised.

But we have learned that Josiah Litch's prediction, as stated by Ellen White in *Great Controversy*, was accurate after all. After August 11, 1840, Turkey did, indeed, become a third-rate nation, never again to become a great nation.

There continued to be disputes over the Straits by the various nations, up to World War I and afterward.

We have now established that, from Litch's predicted date in 1840 up to the time of Smith's death, Turkey remained under the supervision of the major Powers of Europe. Some readers may wish to stop at this point.

But there will be others who want to know the answer to two more questions: Did the rise of modern Turkey, in the early 1920s, cause Litch's prediction to be invalidated and prove Smith's theory to be true?

So here is the rest of the story, and it is just as intriguing as that which has already been told.

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT (1907)

Following her defeat in the war with Japan, Russia sought to strengthen her position by putting her relations with Great Britain on a friendlier basis. Negotiations for a settlement of conflicting interests between Russia and England began in 1906 and led to the conclusion of an agreement, signed at St. Petersburg on August 31, 1907, concerning Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet. This made possible the Triple Entente of England, Russia, and France.

In the course of these negotiations Russia reopened the question of the Straits, in the expectation that a revision of the nineteenth century treaties might be made part of the general settlement. There was indication of Russian intention to raise the issue as early as March 1906. The matter was not actually broached until the end of November 1906, in an interview between the Russian *chargé d'affaires* at London with Sir Charles Hardinge, Permanent Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Both Russia and England recognized the necessity of obtaining the consent of the other Powers to any change in the existing regulations, but nothing came of the idea. **Turkey remained subservient to the major Powers. An important series of events was to follow.**

THE BUCHLAU CONVERSATIONS (1908)

The next incident in the chain of events was the tension between Russia and Austria-Hungary, resulting from the announcement (in January 1908, by Baron Aerenthal, the Foreign Minister of the Hapsburg Monarchy) of the contemplated railway line through the Sandjak of Novibazar, occupied by Austria-Hungary since 1878. This plan, which was expected to link Bosnia-Herzegovina with the Turkish railroads and would also have given Austria a direct connection to Salonika, created consternation in Russia as an evidence of Austria's expansionist policy in the Balkans.

The situation was examined at a secret meeting of the Russian cabinet on February 3, 1908. **It was decided that, should Austria-Hungary feel compelled to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia would adopt a friendly attitude.** Austria, on her part, was disposed toward a confidential and friendly exchange of views concerning Constantinople and the Straits.

The door having thus been opened to an understanding between Russia and Austria-Hungary, a meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries was arranged. This meeting took place on September 16, 1908, in Buchlau, Moravia.

The substance of the agreement reached was that Russia would acquiesce in the annexation, on the promise of Austria to support Russia in her effort to have the Straits opened. Once again, nothing came of it.

THE ITALO-TURKISH WAR (1911-1912)

When **the Italo-Turkish War over Tripoli began at the end of September 1911**, Russia felt that Italy could be counted on not to oppose action to further embarrass her. **The Italian minister liked the idea of Russian help,**

Continued on the next tract

The Truth about Turkey

PART FOUR OF FIVE

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

and did not care about what happened in the Straits. But Turkey wanted to avoid the matter, fearing to disturb the great Powers of Europe.

Meanwhile, a new alignment was taking place in the Balkans, although in the end its results did not bring Russia any nearer to the Straits. The negotiations between Bulgaria and Serbia which began early in October 1911, a few days after the outbreak of the Italo-Turkish war, with Russia's blessing, led to the conclusion of a treaty of alliance on February 29 and March 13 of 1912.

A secret annex to that treaty provided for the partition, between the Balkan Allies, of the greater part of European Turkey (specifically Macedonia). Such partition was to take place at an opportune moment. This annex also recognized Russia as the umpire over any controversy which might arise between the Allies. This provision ensured Russia the decisive word in any redistribution of territory. It thus safeguarded, by implication, her interests in the region of the Straits. This alliance, to which subsequently Greece and Montenegro adhered, was of course concluded in anticipation of finding Turkey materially weakened by the war with Italy—a circumstance which could be utilized by the allied Balkan states to realize their ambitions which, in turn, would put Russia in a stronger position than ever before with reference to Turkey, Constantinople, and the Straits.

The closure of the Straits by Turkey in April 1912, following the attack by the Italian fleet on the Dardanelles, short-lived as it was, inflicted serious losses on Russian commerce. This made Russia more conscious of the disadvantageous regime, from her own point of view, governing navigation through the Straits. **Within a few years these disadvantages had been brought home to her twice: In the war with Japan, Russia's inability to get out her Black Sea fleet embarrassed her as a belligerent, while in the Italo-Turkish War she suffered as a neutral.**

During the Balkan wars which followed in 1912-1913, the question of the Straits was only incidentally discussed, although it loomed large in the background of Russian preoccupations. When the rapidly advancing Bulgarian army was nearing Constantinople, Russia became apprehensive and notified London and Paris, as well as Sofia, that it was absolutely opposed to the entry of the Balkan Allies into the Turkish capital—an opposition which she only reluctantly withdrew in view of their unexpected victories.

The fear that another Power might dominate the Straits caused Russia to oppose the annexation of Adrianople by Bulgaria. And it was only after Russian military leaders had satisfied the Russian Foreign Office that the possession of Adrianople did not necessarily represent a threat to Constantinople that this opposition was withdrawn.

It was in response to these Russian apprehensions that **Great Britain informally proposed, in November 1912, the internationalization and neutralization of Constantinople. But the suggestion was received unfavorably by both Russia and France.** Upon inquiry by France as to Russia's attitude, Sazonow stated, in December 1912, that Russia desired to modify the regime of the Straits along the lines proposed by Izvolski in 1908. But he indicated that Russia would not, at present, take the initiative. (Turkey reoccupied Adrianople during the second Balkan war and succeeded in retaining it under Turkish sovereignty.)

Indeed, during the peace negotiations between the Balkan Allies and Turkey, which began at London in December 1912 and lasted intermittently until the Treaty of London on May 30, 1913, the question of the Straits was never raised, although it doubtless influenced Russia's attitude. The restraint which Russia sought to impose on her Balkan neighbors and its occasional favoring of Turkey's case were motivated, not by any change of heart but, by the desire to preserve Turkey sufficiently intact to keep Constantinople and the Straits until Russia was better prepared, diplomatically and militarily, to take them over.

Although the question of the Straits remained in the background during the Balkan wars, the policies of the Powers indicated their attitude toward the problem. Great Britain, in proposing internationalization of Constantinople, had showed her preference for such a solution as that urged by Russia during the Anglo-Russian negotiations in 1907 and during the Bosnian crisis in 1908. France does not seem to have been eager to give Russia a free hand. On the other hand, Russia apparently regarded the safeguarding of her interests in the Straits as paramount to any other consideration.

THE VON SANDERS INCIDENT (1913)

No sooner was peace reestablished in the Balkans than the question of the Straits was raised in an acute form in consequence of the appointment of a German general, Herr Liman von Sanders, charged with the reorganization of the Turkish army, as commander of a Turkish army corps stationed at Constantinople. **The implications of German control of military forces in Constantinople were fully realized by the Entente Powers in general and by Russia in particular**, where the news of Sanders' mission was received with alarm.

Although the Turkish army had German instructors since the end of the nineteenth century, when Germany had begun to take an interest in Turkey, it seemed to the Entente Powers that there was a vital difference between the role played by a host of German officers led by Gen-

eral von der Goltz, training the Turkish army, and the mission of Liman von Sanders who, with headquarters in the Turkish capital, appeared to dispose of far greater powers and influence. Russia, being most immediately concerned, made strong representations to Germany immediately after the nature of Sanders' functions became known in the fall of 1913, but without any success.

After several weeks during which the incident threatened to develop into a first-class crisis, Germany suddenly gave way. Liman von Sanders was promoted to a higher rank, as Inspector General. And he was thus automatically relieved of the more modest, but real, army post of corps commander.

THE RUSSIAN STRATEGIC DECISION (1913-1914)

The incident served to focus Russia's attention more than ever on the Straits. At the beginning of December 1913, a conference of Russian leaders met to examine the situation. **It concluded that, first, Russia could not allow any Power other than Turkey—which was neither too strong nor too weak—to control the Straits. Therefore, Russia must herself take possession of the Straits, should Turkey disintegrate.**

The conference decided that occupation of the Straits by Russia was impossible, except in the case of a general European war. And that, at the moment, Russian military preparations for such an expedition were wholly inadequate. The conclusions of this private conference were reviewed by key members of the Government on January 13, 1914. The consensus of opinion was that Russia ought not to adopt measures likely to lead to war, unless the active participation of France and England could be secured. At a special conference on February 21, 1914, the inadequacy of Russia's military preparedness was frankly acknowledged, and plans were laid for building up the military and naval machine.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND TURKEY'S "NEUTRALITY"

For nearly two months after the outbreak of the World War, **Turkey was technically neutral. But, in reality, she had committed herself to the Central Powers as early as August 2, 1914, by concluding a secret alliance with Germany.** Searching for the motives of this step, many students have reached the conclusion that Turkey was forced by Germany, much against her will, to line up with the Central Powers. Yet it should be remembered that Germany's interests, as evidenced in the Bagdad railway, offered economic advantages to Turkey, by opening up the hinterland of Anatolia and, at the same time, helping to check the constant Russian threat to the control of the Straits.

Turkey, faced with a choice between two evils, may have been less fearful of Germany than of her traditional antagonist, Russia.

German influence could perhaps have been counterbalanced by Great Britain. But, as was pointed out before, British-Turkish relations had cooled perceptibly after the occupation of Cyprus and Egypt following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. Whatever may have remained of the old friendship was relegated to the background by the resentment felt in Turkey against Great Britain for taking, on the eve of the war, two warships which had been built for Turkey in English navy yards, but not yet delivered. These ships would have given Turkey naval equality with Greece and superiority over Russia's Black Sea fleet.

Turkey's publicly announced "neutrality" was badly compromised on August 10, 1914, when two German warships, the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, passed through the Dardanelles in violation of the Straits Convention of July 13, 1841, reaffirmed by the treaties of 1856 and 1871, and anchored in the port of Constantinople.

Apart from the fact that passage through the Straits was in itself a breach of a treaty, these ships should have been requested, under international law, to leave within twenty-four hours; if the request was not complied with, Turkey, as a neutral state, should have interned the ships with their crews for the duration of the war.

The German warships, however, remained in Constantinople. And, when the Allies protested, Turkey purchased the vessels from Germany for the Turkish navy. The transaction was blatantly fictitious; **although the ships were recommissioned, they remained under the command of German naval officers and, in fact, Germany thus acquired control of the Straits.** The Allies, not desiring to engage in open hostilities with Turkey, contented themselves with protests and warnings.

Another incident, far more serious in its consequences, occurred at the end of September. **A Turkish warship was halted by a British destroyer just outside the Dardanelles and was forced to return. On the following day, September 27, 1914, Turkey closed the Straits** and, while technically still neutral, cut a vital line of communication between the Western Allies and Russia.

A month later, on October 28, **the Turkish fleet, now under German command and including the recommissioned *Breslau* and *Goeben* ostensibly on maneuvers in the Black Sea, attacked, without a declaration of war, units of the Russian fleet and bombarded a number of Russian ports. Russia replied on November 4, by declaring war on Turkey. And the other Allies followed suit. The Straits remained closed for the whole duration of the World War.**

The entry of Turkey into the war on the side of the Central Powers was doubtless one of the most significant events in the history of that conflict. It is generally believed that it prolonged the duration of the war. For, by cutting Russia off from the Western Allies, it put insurmountable obstacles in the way of provisioning the Russian army and thus reduced the effectiveness of Russia's participation in the war. Because of this, **it contributed, indirectly, by making Russia's defeat by the**

Central Powers possible—and led to the Bolshevik Revolution. But these were consequences for the future. The immediate consequence of Turkey's conduct was to make the solution of the Straits question foremost among Russia's war aims and one of the decisive considerations of Russian policy until the advent of the Bolshevik regime.

As you can see, the Straits have been a major issue all the way down to modern times.

THE SECRET ASSURANCES CONCERNING THE STRAITS

After World War I began, in 1915, discussions passed back and forth between Russia and its Western Allies. It was agreed that some solution, conformable to Russian interests, would be worked out if Germany was defeated. But when the plan of a campaign by Britain and France against the Dardanelles emerged, Russia was no longer satisfied with these vague promises.

Russia did not formulate a definite policy regarding the solution of the Straits question until the campaign against the Dardanelles, early in 1915, projected the possibility of the occupation of Constantinople by the British and the French.

On March 4, 1915, a Russian memorandum was presented to the British and French ambassadors at St. Petersburg which, guaranteeing respect for the interests of England and France, **the Western Allies were requested to consent to the outright annexation by Russia of Constantinople, the European coast of the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara with its islands and the Dardanelles**, together with the islands of Imbros and Tenedos, Southern Thrace up to the Enos-Midia line, and a small strip of the Asiatic shores along the Ismid Peninsula.

Under the pressure of war conditions and in view of the necessity of keeping Russia in line, there was not much that England and France could do but assent to Russia's demands which they insisted should be kept an absolute secret, lest knowledge thereof alienate from the Allies some neutral countries concerned—particularly Romania and Bulgaria.

The correspondence between Great Britain, France, Russia, and later Italy also show that this acquiescence was at a price—namely the consent of Russia to the satisfaction of British, French, Italian claims, and the recognition by her of their spheres of interest in the Near East, all at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. **Thus, it was Russia's demand for Constantinople and the Straits which set the stage to take over large portions of Turkey's territories in the Near East and North Africa after the war**, even though the secret treaty relating to the Straits was to lapse because of Russia's desertion of the Allies. (Later, near the end of 1916, Italy learned of the secret plan and agreed to it, if she could also share in the postwar dividing up of the Turkish Empire.)

BOLSHEVIK RUSSIA RENOUNCES CLAIMS TO THE STRAITS

When the Bolsheviks gained control in the fall of 1917, they promptly published and denounced the secret treaties with the Allies,—and specifically renounced all claims to Constantinople and the Straits which, they declared, ought to remain under Turkish sovereignty.

The beginning of separate peace negotiations with the Central Powers, at the end of 1917, gave the Allies the signal to proclaim the lapse of the secret agreements with Russia.

The action of the Bolsheviks, in voluntarily renouncing any conquest, had a very important influence on postwar Russo-Turkish relations. Coupled with the assistance which Soviet Russia gave to Turkey in the Greco-Turkish War during 1919-1922, it laid the foundation for cooperation between the two countries and for friendlier feeling than had existed between these two states at any time for a century.

THE TREATY OF SÉVRES

Having been freed from commitments to Russia, the Allies were confronted with the question of what to do with the Straits.

Great Britain and the United States, which had now become belligerent, were quick to formulate a program envisaging complete freedom of passage through the Straits,—but still under international control.

Speaking on January 5, 1918, before the Trade Unions Congress on the war aims of the Allies, **Lloyd George denied that the Allies intended to take the Turkish capital. But he insisted on the necessity of neutralizing and internationalizing the Straits.**

On January 8, President Wilson published the *Fourteen Points*, of which ***Point XII*** **declared that "the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees"** *(Lansing, The Peace Negotiations, p. 192ff).*

The Allied victory made possible, for the time being at least, the realization of this program. **The armistice of Mudros, signed on October 30, 1918, provided for the opening of the Straits and Allied occupation of Constantinople, as well as of all strategic points along the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus.**

In reality, **this occupation was carried out largely by British forces which remained in control of the Straits until the conclusion of the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923.**

Turkey seemed completely at the mercy of the Allies. The plan to give the United States a mandate over Constantinople and the Straits was frustrated by President Wilson's refusal, while an outright annexation or even a mandate by any of the European Allies was out of the question in view of the jealousies between Great Britain, France, and Italy (which were indirectly responsible for the resumption of hostilities between Greece and Turkey) concerning their Near Eastern possessions and spheres of interest. **Inability to compose their differences induced the Allies to leave Turkey nominally sovereign**

over Constantinople and to propose an ostensibly international control over the demilitarized Straits.

The *Treaty of Sèvres* of August 10, 1920, between the Allies and Turkey was never ratified. But its stipulations are of interest, since they served as a model for the final settlement of the Straits question in the convention annexed to the *Treaty of Lausanne* three years later. Under the Treaty of Sèvres, **Constantinople was left to Turkey and subject to any modification of its status by the Allies, should Turkey fail to observe her treaty obligations. Navigation in the Straits was to be open during times of both peace and war to the merchant vessels and warships, including aircraft, of all nations.**

Except for action undertaken pursuant to a decision of the League of Nations, **no act of hostility could be committed in the Straits. And the area could not be blockaded. A commission was to be set up,** composed of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers. Each of them had two votes. Greece, Romania, Russia, Bulgaria, and Turkey were to be given seats on the commission upon their admission to the League of Nations. **The commission was invested with broad powers, to be exercised wholly independently of the local authorities**, and could invoke the assistance of the troops which the treaty authorized the Allies to maintain in the region, in case of interference with freedom of passage, which was to be ensured by the demolition of all fortifications within the Straits.

THE GRECO-TURKISH WAR

However, the Government at Constantinople, which had been forced to sign the Treaty of Sèvres, was no longer in control of Turkey. **The landing of Greek troops in Smyrna on May 14, 1919, with the permission of Great Britain and France—a permission granted partly in order to forestall Italy in the Near East—signified not only the renewal of hostilities between Turkey and Greece** in Asia Minor but was also a turning point in Turkish history.

From the resistance against Greek invasion, there developed a strong nationalist movement in Turkey. And, ultimately, a reborn Turkey was sufficiently strong to successfully challenge the authority of the Allies and to overthrow the ignominious peace settlement which the Allies intended to impose on the "sick man of Europe."

The Greco-Turkish War was fought largely in Asiatic Turkey. And, except in its later phase, it did not threaten the Allied position in the Straits. **The consequences of this war had a decided effect on the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean.**

On March 16, 1921, a treaty signed at Moscow laid the foundations for friendly relations and cooperation between Russia and Turkey.

Russia, emerging from the desperate struggles with domestic revolution and foreign intervention, gave effective assistance in the form of arms and money to Turkey in her war against Greece.

Thanks to the active assistance of Soviet Russia, the shrewd policy of the Turkish leadership in consolidating the country's diplomatic position, and to the fine spirit of the revitalized Turkish army, **the Greco-Turkish War ended in the disastrous defeat of Greece.** In the last phase of the war, the march of the victorious Turkish armies threatened to bring about an open armed conflict with Great Britain.

It was after several months of stalemate that the Turkish army launched into a large-scale offensive along Sakarya on August 18, 1922. Within three weeks, the Greek army was, for practical purposes, nonexistent. On September 9, Smyrna was in Turkish hands. And there were indications that the Turks were contemplating crossing the Straits and driving the Greeks out of eastern Thrace. Although each of the Allies had resident commissioners in Constantinople, they jointly advised the Turkish command that no violation of the demilitarized zone would be permitted. **England alone seems to have been concerned about the fate of the Straits. British troops were rushed to reinforce the defenses of Constantinople against possible attack and to prevent the Turks from regaining control over the Straits.**

Fortunately, an armed conflict was avoided. **The Allies proposed an armistice, preliminary to an international conference, to settle the whole Eastern question.** Turkey accepted the proposal, at the end of September, and expressed willingness not to move against the neutral zone of Chanak and the Straits under certain conditions. The armistice, providing for the withdrawal of the Greek army behind the Maritza River (temporary Allied occupation of the evacuated zone and the establishment of neutral zones), was signed at Mudanya on October 11, 1922. The signing of this armistice ended the Greco-Turkish War.

THE STRAITS QUESTION AT THE LAUSANNE CONFERENCE

At the Conference of Lausanne, which opened on November 20, 1922, the question of the Straits played a prominent part. Inasmuch as Turkey had accepted, at an early stage of the negotiations, the principle of freedom of passage, the chief antagonists were once more Great Britain and Russia. But the historic position of the two countries on this issue was now reversed!

Great Britain, opposed for a century to opening the Straits to warships, now advocated freedom of passage; while Russia, now under a communist government,

Continued on the next tract

The Truth about Turkey

PART FIVE OF FIVE

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

whose fondest ambition under the Czars had been to secure the opening of the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, sought to close the Straits.

The reversal of position, however, was not wholly surprising. **Control and closure of the Straits by Turkey, during the World War, proved to be a serious handicap for the Allies** in the prosecution of the war. And Great Britain at least—even if France and Italy did not—now regarded it an advantage to be able to hold Soviet Russia in check by keeping the Straits open to warships under international control, even though some concessions had to be made to the Turks on the extent and form of this control for the security of Constantinople as well as for Turkish prestige.

It should also be remembered that **what England had opposed was not the opening of the Straits generally. But they were opposed to a one-sided arrangement of opening them to Russian or other Black Sea Powers only, without reciprocal permission of entering from the Mediterranean into the Black Sea.**

England did not fear freedom for all Powers to enter the Black Sea, for her naval forces were superior to those of Russia.

Russia, on the other hand, felt that the free passage of Allied warships and troop transports into the Black Sea, with the assistance thus given to the enemies of the Bolshevik Revolution, was most disagreeable. And, in view of the utter inadequacy of her disorganized Black Sea fleet and the slender hope of building a strong naval force, her position was exceedingly vulnerable. **The Soviet delegate at Lausanne therefore fought for the closure of the Straits to warships of all nations at all times.**

After many bitter discussions, the *Straits Convention of 1923* (next section) **was attached to the *Lausanne Treaty* of that year. It was based on the principle of freedom of passage advocated by Great Britain.**

Had the Turkish delegates ranged themselves with the Soviet position, the outcome might have been different. Fortunately, **the Turks, although virtually allied with Soviet Russia and indebted for its assistance in the war with Greece, did not succumb to the temptation which the solution proposed by Russia essentially offered: complete Turkish sovereignty over the Straits.**

Turkey's attitude seems realistic enough, considering that she no longer needed to seek active assistance from Russia; and, having again established themselves at Constantinople, the Turks, remembering her time-honored ambitions in that region, may have been wary of putting too much reliance on Russia.

THE STRAITS CONVENTION OF 1923

The *Straits Convention of 1923*, discussed above, was the key decision by the great Powers of Europe in regard to the Straits—the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara, and Bosporus passageways.

The *Straits Convention* was separate from the *Treaty of Lausanne*. But both were signed on July 24, 1923, by the representatives of the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Turkey.

Article 23 of the *Treaty* summarized the terms of the *Convention.* The signatories agreed—

"to recognize and declare **the principle of freedom of transit and of navigation, by sea and by air, in time of peace as in time of war, in the Strait of the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara, and the Bosphorus**, as prescribed in the separate Convention signed this day, regarding the regime of the Straits." (For the text of the Lausanne Treaty, see *British Treaty Series No. 16, 1923*, published in 1929.)

The *"Convention relating to the Straits,"* signed the same day, duplicated in *Art. 1* the principle of freedom declared in *Art. 23* of the *Lausanne Treaty;* and an appendix to *Art. 2* laid down detailed rules to govern **the passage of merchant vessels, warships, and both civil and military aircraft** through the Dardanelles. And the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmara were comprised under the general term of the "Straits."

These rules called for full freedom of passage, day and night, for merchant vessels (including hospital ships, yachts, fishing boats, and civil aircraft) of all nations, irrespective of the nature of cargo, both in peace and in war. Turkey was neutral. In case of Turkish belligerency, Turkey was left free to exercise belligerent rights under international law; *i.e.,* she could attack and capture enemy merchantmen and she could visit and search neutral merchant ships, to prevent their giving assistance to her enemies by carrying contraband, troops, or enemy nationals.

With respect to warships (including auxiliary and troop ships, aircraft carriers, and military aircraft), freedom of passage was provided without distinction of flag. Finally, in case of Turkish belligerency, freedom of passage was given to neutral warships only. And measures taken by Turkey, to prevent passage of enemy forces, were not to prejudice neutral rights; but neutral military aircraft might pass only at their own risk. Submarines must navigate in the Straits on the surface.

To ensure freedom of passage, the Convention provided for the demilitarization of both the European and the Asiatic shores of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, with the exception of the right of Turkey to maintain a garrison not exceeding 12,000 men, an arsenal, a naval base in Constantinople, and the right to transport her armed forces through the demilitarized zones. The islands in the Sea of Marmara and the Greek and Turkish islands in the Aegean Sea, commanding the entrance to the Straits (Samothrace, Lemnos, Imbros, Ten-

edos, and Rabbit Islands), were also demilitarized.

The freedom of passage was to be ensured and supervised by the constitution of an *International Straits Commission* which was composed of one representative of each of the signatory Powers, plus the United States. An annual report was to be made to the *League of Nations,* which the *Commission* was subsidiary to.

France, Italy, and Japan acted jointly and agreed to meet any threat to the freedom or security of the Straits.

These were, then, the rules which governed navigation in the Straits from 1923 to 1936.

While the Convention still imposed limitations on Turkey's freedom of action, Turkey's military and diplomatic position in 1923 was better than under the *Sèvres Treaty* of 1920.

Russia did not sign the Convention until August 14, 1923. And the Soviet Government subsequently indicated its disapproval by refusing to ratify it.

From 1920 to 1922, Kamel Ataturk, head of Turkey, only controlled the immediate area around Istanbul (Constantinople)! The *Treaty of Lausanne* (1923) gave Turkey control of Asia Minor (east of the Straits) and Thrace (a small area west of the Straits). It still governs this territory today.

Turkey was declared to be a republic on October 29, 1923, with Mustafa Kamel (later Kamel Ataturk) as its first president. Ataturk led Turkey until his death in 1938. Kamel adopted a Western way of life and modernized Turkish institutions. **The Caliphate (spiritual leadership of Islam) was renounced in 1924. This was the end of the Sultanate. Henceforth, Turkey no longer had a Muslim government.**

FROM LAUSANNE TO MONTREUX

The supervision of the Straits, established by the Convention of 1923, proved to be acceptable to most of the Powers of Europe,—but not to Russia. It worked well for a decade after the *Lausanne Conference* of 1923.

The country most dissatisfied with the arrangement was Soviet Russia, because she felt herself exposed and threatened. It seemed best for both Russia and Turkey to maintain friendly relations, for both were still outside the "concert" of Powers. Neither Turkey nor Russia was a member of the League of Nations. Moreover, Turkish diplomacy was sufficiently shrewd to appreciate the advantages which it might derive from Soviet diplomatic support whenever Turkey should deem it opportune to press for revision of the system of Straits control. Russia had every reason to refrain from conduct which would drive Turkey into the arms of the Western Allies.

Continued Russo-Turkish cooperation was demonstrated by the signatures of a treaty of neutrality and nonaggression on December 17, 1925. In this treaty, Russia and Turkey agreed to maintain neutrality should one of the parties be attacked by a third Power and to make no political or military alliance directed against the other signatory. But relations between the two nations gradually deteriorated from 1926 onward.

A tripartite treaty between Great Britain, Turkey, and Iraq was signed on June 5, 1926. This terminated a long period of strained British-Turkish relations which had caused Turkey's alignment with Germany before the World War and since with Soviet Russia.

The door was thus opened to gradual rapprochement of Turkey with the Western European Powers—an opportunity of which Turkey availed herself with caution. The progress of this rapprochement was marked by the successive conclusion of treaties of friendship with Italy (May 1928), France (Feb 1930), Greece (Oct 1930), and the admission of Turkey into the League of Nations on July 8, 1932.

To the extent that Turkey improved her relations with the Western Powers, she became less dependent on Russia; nevertheless, she remained outwardly on the best terms with her northern neighbors almost up to the unsuccessful Moscow negotiations in the fall of 1939. In reality, however, Russo-Turkish relations began to cool, imperceptibly, from the late twenties on, when the consolidation of Turkey's diplomatic position with respect to the Allies was more or less accomplished.

Turkey's move for revision of the Straits Convention of 1923 was preceded by a series of events which profoundly altered the foundations upon which postwar Europe was erected. This fundamental change was brought about by a series of treaty repudiations, undeclared wars, the failure of the Disarmament and the *World Economic Conferences*, the increasingly "dynamic" foreign policies of authoritarian governments, and the consequent whittling away of the collective system of international security. For Turkey to raise the question of the Straits under such conditions was both logical and understandable.

TURKEY REQUESTS REVISION OF THE STRAITS CONVENTION

In a note dated April 10, 1936 (addressed to the signatories of the *1923 Convention*, to Yugoslavia, and the Secretary General of the *League of Nations*), the Turkish Government requested the convocation of a conference for the revision of the demilitarization clauses of the *Straits Convention*.

At the time, Italy was waging war against Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and Germany, under Hitler, was busily remilitarizing. Most of the Powers (except Italy) looked with favor on the suggestion. Soviet Russia very much liked the prospect of eliminating the danger to which it felt itself exposed; especially since it believed that Turkey, once again master of the Straits, was and would remain a friend of Moscow.

THE MONTREUX CONFERENCE (1936)

The Conference met at Montreux on June 22, 1936. With the exception of Italy, all signatories of the Lausanne Convention were represented. Yugoslavia,

which did not sign the *1923 Convention*, also sent a delegate; and, pursuant to the transformation of the British Empire into the British Commonwealth of Nations, the self-governing Dominions either sent representatives (Australia) or advised the Conference that they would accept its decisions.

The draft convention submitted by the Turkish representatives went far beyond the indication in the Turkish note of April 10, 1936, as to her plan of revision; it proposed not merely a refortification of the Straits but was also intended to make Turkey absolute master over navigation, especially in time of war, and to establish a regime exceedingly favorable to Russia.

If this proposal was accepted, for the first time since 1840, Turkey would be in charge of the Straits, and thus no longer subservient to the great Powers of Europe.

Once more it was Great Britain which objected to such a modification of the system of the Straits and found herself, as at the Lausanne Conference, in sharp opposition to Soviet Russia.

Again, as at Lausanne, the battle over the Straits was fought principally between the British and Soviet representatives. When the Conference reconvened at the beginning of July after a short adjournment, the British submitted their own draft which differed substantially in several respects from the proposals put forward by the Turks at the beginning of the Conference. **The *Montreux Convention (a formal agreement)*, as finally adopted on July 20, 1936, represented a compromise between the Turkish and British drafts, arrived at after two weeks of debate between the British and Soviet delegations.**

THE MONTREUX AGREEMENT (1936)

The *Montreux Convention*, signed on July 20, 1936, changed somewhat the supervision of the Straits, as laid down in the *Convention of 1923*. The chief beneficiaries of the revision were Turkey and Soviet Russia.

Turkey, though still subject to an international servitude of free navigation through the Straits in peacetime, and in time of war when neutral, was freed from important limitations which the *Lausanne Convention* imposed on her when she was a belligerent. Turkey still lacked control over the Straits. Most important, Turkey, when belligerent (engaged in war), was permitted to close the Straits to warships of all nations. But Turkey's right to close the Straits to warships, when threatened with "imminent danger of war," was subject to a veto by a two-thirds vote of the *League Council*.

Russia obtained the right to send warships through the Straits into the Aegean Sea without limitation of number, type, or tonnage. But they must pass singly through the Straits. This provision conceded the time-honored Russian claim for unlimited passage from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean, which Great Britain had always opposed.

The signatories agreed that Turkey might begin refortification of the demilitarized zones on August 15. After a number of signings, the *Montreux Convention on the Straits* came in force on November 9, 1936.

(For the complete text, see *"The Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Black Sea Straits," in Survey of International Affairs, 1936, pp. 584-651*.)

While both the Lausanne treaty and the Straits Convention of 1923 specified that this control by the Powers over the Straits would expire in 20 years, the Montreux Convention stated that there would be no time limit.

WHAT ABOUT SMITH'S VIEW OF THE KING OF THE NORTH?

Concerning last day events, you will not find any reference to a specific earthly nation, kingdom, or ruler in *Great Controversy* or anywhere else in the Spirit of Prophecy. There is just no mention.

The nation of Turkey is only mentioned one time in *Great Controversy*,—and that is *GC 334-335*, which concerns an event which occurred halfway through the 19th century. No mention is made of Turkey as a last-day superpower.

During my work as a paid Greek reader at college, I was permitted to carefully read a research paper about the King of the North. But, unfortunately, I was not able to obtain a copy of it. It included a quotation by Uriah Smith, shortly after the first edition of his 1873 publication of *Thoughts on the Book of Daniel* was printed. (His *Thoughts on Revelation* was printed in 1867; the two books were later combined into a single volume.)

In this letter that I read, **Uriah Smith said that the way conditions were in the Near East just then, it might be that the nation of Turkey would figure into final events—so he was going to include his theory about it being the King of the North in Daniel 11. But he immediately added that if, within the next few years, Turkey tended to fade out as anything equivalent to a major Power, he would revise his book, change his position,—and state that Turkey was not the King of the North. However, prior to his death in 1903, Smith never did this.** Three factors may have caused that hesitancy on his part: *First*, it would have been embarrassing to publicly retract this, his most prominent theory. *Second*, Doing so would admit that James White's position (that Turkey was not the King of the North) was correct. (Prior to White's death, an intense rivalry had existed between the two men for years.) *Third*, **we now know that it was not until 20 years after Smith's death that the question was finally decided—when Turkey lost most of its extensive Mid-East territories and became a less important modern nation.**

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

After the fall of Rome, in the fifth century, Constantinople (modern Istanbul) was the capital of the Byzantine Empire for a thousand years. Submitting to the authority of the Ottomans in 1449, **the city fell in 1453 to the Ottoman Turks, who ruled an empire, immense in**

size, for over 400 years. It was so vast that it was little wonder that Uriah would imagine Turkey to be the predicted last-day King of the North.

But, in 1840, Turkey had signed an agreement of submission to the major European Powers *(GC 334-335)*. Uriah Smith decided that it might, at a later time, once again become a major Power. That is why he decided to write that Turkey was the King of the North.

The Litch prediction about 1840 had been correct. Yet the possibility of a regaining of power by Turkey had led to Smith's theory which, because of back-and-forth struggles and negotiations between the Powers over Turkey, he never retracted prior to his death in 1903.

Because Turkey controlled Palestine, Smith assumed a *literal (geographical) Near East fulfillment* of Bible prophecy—and declared that Turkey was the key to final events. For decades, many of our people believed that "when the Turk comes to his end, Christ will return."

Yet from the mid-19th century onward, Turkey kept losing territory: Algeria to France in 1830, Tunisia in 1881, Cyprus to England in 1878, Bosnia to Austria in 1908, Libya to Italy in 1912, and Crete to Greece in 1913. The British occupied Egypt in 1882; and Bulgaria declared independence the same year.

Just before World War I, Turkey (although significantly weakened after 1840) still ruled what is now Syria, Lebenon, Iraq, Jordan, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and the islands in the Aegean Sea! Although immense in size, that territory was mostly desert; and, prior to the 1930s (when oil was discovered), it was totally impoverished.

Turkey joined Germany and Austria in World War I. And its defeat resulted in losing most of the rest of its once vast territory. The *Treaty of Sèvres* (1920), which was never ratified, planned to chop up Turkey into pieces and give them to various nations.

The situation had sunk so low that, from 1920 to 1922, Kamel Ataturk, head of Turkey, only controlled the immediate area around Istanbul (the modern name of Constantinople)! **The *Treaty of Lausanne* (1923) made permanent the loss of all Turkey's other former territories**, but gave Turkey control of Asia Minor (east of the Straits) and Thrace (a small area west of the Straits)—which Turkey still governs to this day.

A republic was declared on October 29, 1923, with Mustafa Kamel (later Kamel Ataturk) as its first president. Ataturk led Turkey until his death in 1938. He adopted a Western way of life and modernized Turkish institutions. **The Caliphate (spiritual leadership of Islam) was renounced in 1924. This was the end of the Sultanate—the last vestige of what once was the Ottoman Empire.**

So now you know the story of Turkey! Since 1918, it has been a second-rate nation, of such little importance that even the European Union today is not sure whether to admit it as a member.

As late as December 2000, the IMF (International Monetary Fund) had to issue an emergency loan of $7.5 billion to Turkey, to keep it from total financial collapse.

So Josiah Litch's prediction, approved by Ellen White, was indeed correct. The year, 1840, did indeed mark the end of Turkey's dominant power. Ironically, in the very process of trying to regain it, Turkey lost nearly all the lands that its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire, had once owned.

Turkey today remains an outcast, "the sick man of Europe." It is neither in harmony with the Islamic world, nor the European Union.

Ironically, if Turkey had retained all its former territory,—*it would now be the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth!* For it would today control all the vast oil fields of Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the oil-producing nations south of it, and possibly portions of the Iranian oil fields. Oil was first discovered in Saudi Arabia by American geologists in 1935,—only 12 years after Turkey lost its former territories!

But, instead, as accurately predicted by Josiah Litch, such a bright future was not to happen for Turkey. Uriah Smith, still thinking it might yet occur, hesitated to retract his theory about the King of the North. Instead of reading the headlines, he should have been reading the last half of *Great Controversy*. There is not the slightest hint in that inspired prophetic analysis that Turkey—*or any other modern nation*—would be the King of the North. God's Inspired Books contain all the answers we need at this time. *—vf*

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT—This is the first time in Adventist history that a complete, definitive study has been prepared in defense of Josiah Litch's prediction about Turkey, and explaining the reasoning behind Uriah Smith's theory about that nation. This entire tract series is now available in a low-cost 8½ x 11 booklet for those who would like to purchase a copy. It is entitled *The Truth about Turkey.* The cost at this time is $3.00 + $2.50.