

PAROCHIAL MISSION TO THE JEWS FUND.

Notes from the Pen of the Bishop of the Church of England in Jerusalem and the East.

This very useful Fund is less widely known, and certainly less generously supported at present than it should be. It is something to supply a want and to fill a place, in the front of a vast necessity. The Fund does this. It is not only advisable, but necessary that proper attention should be given in these days to the urgency of Jewish work, and to its unique openings. We are ready enough to confess that we have duties to fulfil towards the *heathen*, in obedience to our Lord's command, 'Go ye into the world, and make disciples of every creature.' There are various societies for that end; some meeting the demands of party feeling, some answering the requirements of a special, or diocesan mission, rather than those of one or other of the great missionary handmaids of the Church. But having done this people are apt to be pleased with themselves, and content. They forget that the primary clause of standing orders of missionary enterprise (in abeyance during the absence of Jews from Palestine), is now on us with all its original urgency, 'beginning at Jerusalem.' Whatever may have been the case since the first century of Christianity, there are now plenty of Jews there to begin amongst to satisfy the warmest lover of Israel. To give a few general statistics—there are 8,000,000 Jews in the world at the present day; and those that want to find them and 'to do them good' will find them in all countries of the world. They are growing very fast in numbers in Palestine. A few years back there were 8,000 in all Palestine; in 1882 there were 20,000, of whom 8,000 were at Jerusalem. Now the *Spectator* reckons them at 120,000, possibly correctly; but to be within safe limits, we may say there are at least 80,000 in Palestine, of whom 34,000 are in and about Jerusalem. No less than 3,000 came up the other day to keep the Feast of Pentecost at Jerusalem. A pretty large enterprise is before those who are willing to promote their evangelisation, 'beginning at Jerusalem.' Again, there is a large number in England; in London, and in most of the great towns, there are Jews. Everywhere on the Continent you find them; in America, in New York City also there are 90,000 (far less, however, than in London, or at Vienna, or Warsaw.) In Egypt they are massed in large numbers. At Cairo they are reckoned at 30,000; at Alexandria perhaps not very much less, though the number is not clearly known.

There are two societies at work amongst Jews attaching to the Church of England: the society known as the 'London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews,' and also the subject of our present notice, the 'Parochial Missions to the Jews Fund.' Of the former, with its old established connection, and its variety of agencies in many lands, we do not now propose to speak. It has much to refer to with pride, and to its credit, much success to be thankful for. Its interesting publications, greatly improved of late, are very good reading. Some may think it a little archaic; wanting elasticity and adaptation to the thought of the present day, and in enterprise and faith to venture. But it is doing honest and good work, and is capable of very much more if only it could escape from grooves, precedents, and party restrictions. May it shake itself loose from these in the supreme interest of the great work to which it is devoted, and hurry on to undertake its mission.

But there is pressing need and ample scope for the energies of a second association, and the young society we are speaking of presents some new capabilities, and has certain advan-

tages born of modern experience. Instead of managing everything in a secretary's office the younger society takes the line of grants-in-aid. In England it grants the stipend of a curate for Jewish work in parishes where there is a large Jewish population. Thus a specially trained and qualified man is assigned to special work; but his duties are not self-centred; his work remains part of the general work of the parish, and its centre is the parish church. For some years the Fund confined itself to this line and to English work. But the great need of a second society for foreign Jewish work, which could appeal to a large constituency of English parishes and parishioners who at present hesitate to support the elder society, or whom it does not at present invite to the work, gave extension to the aims of this Fund. Its rules contemplated foreign work from the beginning; and it was only the infant state of the funds that confined its work to England.*

In 1887 Bishop Blyth, on his return from a primary visitation of Egypt and Syria, pressed upon the society the opportunity for taking up work in Egypt. He recommended Alexandria as being at present unoccupied by any Church agency, and as containing an immense Jewish population. The elder society was more than adequately occupied with its stations in Palestine, which field of work was by no means the best manned within its charge. The Bishop urged on them a considerable increase of work, and that the staff of every post should be materially strengthened. He then pressed on the 'P.M.J.' the occupation of Alexandria. This was agreed to the same year; but funds did not come in with the rapidity hoped for. In the meanwhile, and to keep up the society's interest in foreign work, and to attract the aid of many who like to help when they know something is being done, the Bishop proposed that they should aid a Jewish curacy in the charge of the Bishop's chaplain at Beyrout. And this was agreed to, and at once acted on. A catechist of considerable qualifications and good training was sent to Beyrout; the Fund giving £25, with an intimation that this would be materially increased whenever he might be ordained. His ordination will take place in Advent. He has already had considerable success; he has attracted to Christianity a youth of high rank and great wealth (which he has had to sacrifice for his religion, learning contentedly some trade to support himself). It was a reproach alleged against Jewish missions by the Jews that they rarely made a convert except of the lowest rank, who wanted to mend his future. The sensation therefore produced by this success was considerable, and very encouraging. It is hoped that an opening may arise for placing this youth out in some way more suitable to one of birth and education than that which he is content to embrace. The plan of the mission is simple enough. A convenient house within the Jewish quarter is rented, giving accommodation for classes (the catechist has a night school), and for residence. It is hoped that eventually some medical work may be added, and a school for children. The Jews are more open to medical work than any other, and the example of our Lord's method is before those who use this way, whether by nursing or other medical work, in order to

*EGYPTIAN FUND OF THE PAROCHIAL MISSIONS TO THE JEWS FUND.—The Committee have sometimes been asked how a Fund calling itself the 'Parochial Missions to the Jews Fund' should extend its operations to foreign parts. It must be remembered that Foreign work was from the first one of the intentions of the Committee (*vide* rule vi.) The title of the Fund merely emphasizes the fact that it was to be administered with due regard to Ecclesiastical Jurisdictions, that its agents should have no roving commission to go where their fancy pleased them, but should work under Episcopal supervision.—*Extract from Report, 1889.*

bring in the medicine of the soul to those who are sick and in need of that healing gift.

If one of those lady nurses who offer themselves for Mission work in Africa so readily would come to Beyrout for the Jewesses there, she would be invaluable, and cordially welcomed: but she must come as the African volunteers do, at her own charges at first, for the work's sake. There is no fund at present to provide this great want for the mission. The catechist attends the daily service in the chaplain's chapel, and it is hoped that by-and-by he will be able to hold Hebrew or Arabic services in this chapel for the Jews. The work in his charge closely follows out the line of the Fund in England, with its Jewish curacies. But the connection with the Bishop in Syria is more immediate than in England, as the English chaplaincy at Beyrout depends upon the Bishop's Fund.

While the arrangement for the 'P.M.J.' opening work under the Bishop at Alexandria was in abeyance, as the Fund was not large enough, an opportunity offered to the 'London Jews' Society' to open work in Alexandria. They happened to have a spare missionary, and sent him there. It was well that Alexandria could be thus promptly occupied; and the 'P.M.J.' and the Bishop both acquiescing in the arrangement for that city by the elder society, because of the close connection between the somewhat migrating Jewish population of Alexandria and that of Palestine, the proposal for Alexandria was transferred to Cairo, which offered several advantages to the Fund. In the spring of the present year an unexpected opportunity offered of beginning that work. The following letter, which was received by the Committee from the Hon. Secretary, will be read with interest, as it gives full details of the undertaking:—

"During a visit which I recently paid to Egypt and Jerusalem I made special enquiry as to the desirability of establishing Mission work in connection with the P.M.J. Fund in Cairo. Remembering that the fundamental principle of the Fund is that its work should be conducted in conformity with Church order and with due regard to Ecclesiastical jurisdiction I directed enquiry not only as to the number of Jews in Egypt, but as to the way in which any movement on the part of our Church might be regarded by the Greek Church. I have now much pleasure in reporting that I have received assurance that that ancient Church will welcome the work under our Fund.

There is a large number of Jews resident in Cairo, of whom many speak Arabic, others the usual Jewish languages. Dean Batcher who has long been Chaplain of the English Church in Cairo, strongly advised the establishment of a Mission there, stating that in his opinion the time was fully ripe for action, and that many of the Jews of the better class are disposed to accept Christianity. The Dean had baptized a Jewish family in the week preceding my visit. Unfortunately I was not in time to see Bishop Blyth in Egypt, but I had the opportunity of talking matters over with him in Jerusalem. He was very anxious from the first that the work should be commenced as soon as possible. During my visit to Jerusalem I was thrown much into the company of the Rev. Naser Odeh, an Arab clergyman, ordained by the Bishop of London, working till the time of my visit under the Church Missionary Society as native pastor of St. Paul's Church, Jerusalem. Owing to theological differences with the C.M.S., Mr. Odeh thought it desirable to sever his connection with that Society. I may state that Bishop Blyth has a very high opinion of him, and that during my visit he was regularly taking part in the services in the Bishop's Chapel. As moreover Mr. Odeh acted as my interpreter, I had many opportunities of forming an opinion of him, and am not surprised at the high regard in which he is held by the Bishop and others who know him. Mr.