

Contributors and Correspondents

JOURNEYINGS IN THE HOLY LAND

Continued.

I do not feel inclined to say much of the Church of the Sepulchre. All I saw in it was most repugnant to every feeling of my soul. The guard of Turkish soldiers at the door to begin with, tells of the hatred, malice and all uncharitableness by which the different sects of nominal Christians who share the building amongst them, and who have so often in the very Church, fought even to bloodshed, that now soldiers are continually on guard to keep the peace. I could not help thinking that Mahomedans despise Christianity when they have before them such specimens of it. Going further in, and seeing the countless shrines, and marvellous collections of sacred sites, and traditions accumulated within the huge rambling building, I found not one thing to move me to a feeling of reverence. A few poor pilgrims were making their round of the stations, kissing spot after spot, and bowing and kneeling everywhere, and these, poor things, perhaps they were seeking their Lord, and there was neither angel, nor man to tell them "he is not here, he is risen." In one chapel a few monks were going through a service; most of them were utterly devoid of even the pretence of solemnity in their worship. Altogether I came away with a feeling of deep thankfulness for having been taught from childhood to seek the Lord in His Word, and by prayer in a spiritual worship which draws its value and sacredness not from the spot of earth on which it is rendered, but from its being offered in the name of Him who is our advocate with the Father, and by faith in whose death for sin we can alone appear acceptably before the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity. Such a worship, happily, is to be found in Jerusalem in all purity in the pretty little English Church, where on our first Sabbath the good Bishop preached an earnest Gospel sermon, in which, as in all his discourses, the sinner was directed to the Saviour, and the Christian had faithful words of warning counsel and comfort given to him. The afternoon service is always in German, for a large part of the European population of Jerusalem is from the "fatherland." The weekly prayer-meetings too, are always conducted half in English, and half in German, so that a little knowledge of the latter language is a great advantage in Jerusalem.

On my first Friday, I of course wanted to see the Jew's Walling place, of which I had heard so much—Friday being the day which they congregated there in greatest numbers. My kind young friend Miss S. was my guide there, as in many another interesting expedition, both on foot and on horseback. We passed down through the bazaars, and through part of the Jewish quarters, which is a complete labyrinth of narrow filthy lanes. At last we turned round a corner into a narrow passage, the one wall of which rose high above our heads, composed of huge bevelled stones. These stones are among the most ancient in Jerusalem, and form part of the western outer wall of the Temple enclosure. Deeply revered they are by the Jews, and there every Friday for hundreds of years many of these poor people have gathered to pray and mourn over the sunken state of their nature; uttering their prayers and lamentations at the crevices between the ancient stones, vainly hoping they will thus the more surely enter into the ear of the God of Abraham. Miss S. said there was an unusually large concourse of both men and women on the Friday I speak of, and thinking it must be some special occasion she asked one of the women about it. The woman had some wonderful tradition, (from the fatherland I suppose) about that day of December being the beginning of the month in which father Abraham was put in the fire. We told her there was no such thing told of Abraham in the Bible, but she persisted that he had been put in the fire. Whether the fiery trial which he endured when called on to offer up his only son on that mount Moriah, on the slope of which we there stood could be the origin of this tradition I know not, but the woman seemed firmly convinced that he had really and literally been put in the fire. It was a curious conceit in the midst of which we were. Close to the old wall a line of men stood uttering their prayers aloud. From time to time some Rabbi would begin a kind of chanting prayer, to which the whole assembly would utter a response, at the same time they all swayed themselves back and forward with a most odd motion, raising themselves for a moment on their toes, and then falling back on their heels. By this bodily exercise they say they fulfill the words of the Psalmist "All my bones shall say I Lord; who is like unto Thee." Some of them uttered groans, and shed tears; even quite little boys I saw in tears. With some, especially the new comers to Jerusalem, this grief is doubtless genuine, and most natural as they contrast their present degraded condition with the former glories of their nation, but many of those who go week after week to the same mourning place evidently have to work themselves up to the pitch of squeezing out a few tears. Most of the assembly took but little notice of us, but one or two women were anxious to show us their prayer books, which were in various languages. One woman spoke in a very kind manner to Miss S., saying she was sure to have a reward hereafter for her kindness to the Jews, contrasting her loving deeds, and friendly words with the contempt and scorn they often meet with.

From the Jew's Walling place we passed on to another interesting point in the outer wall of the ancient Temple enclosure. Going into a cabbage garden on the one side of which the wall rises up loftily, we saw projecting from the surface of the wall several enormous old stones, which by their projection show that they had in old days formed the beginning of an arch. This marks the spot where in ancient times a splendid bridge spanned what was then a deep valley, (the lower part of the Tyropean) and united the Temple Area with the hill of Zion. It was curious to stand in that flat cabbage garden, and to know that deep beneath our feet there had been found by the sinking of shafts proofs that just here there was formerly a gorge 150 feet deep, which has been entirely filled up by the wreck and debris of ancient Jerusalem. The foundations of the bridge now lie hidden beneath this vast accumulation of broken stones and soil. I tried to picture to myself how the city must have looked when on one side of this deep gorge it rose up in tier above tier of houses, while on the opposite side the magnificent Temple crowned the rocky height of Moriah, its golden roofs and pinnacles glittering in the sunshine. What a contrast to the mean half ruined houses, and dirty lanes that now cover the filled up valley, and cling to the sides of the Hill of Zion, while even the buildings on the Temple Area, honoured as it is by the Mahomedans, are allowed to go to waste and run like almost everything else under the hands of the Turk.

If my first walk round Jerusalem was interesting, what shall I say to my first ride? It was to Bethany. Going out of the Jaffa gate, in order to avoid riding over the slippery pavement of the steep streets, we went quite round the north end of the city, and following an old and well-worn path down the steep slope of the valley of Jehosaphat, we crossed the Kedron bridge by an old bridge, and ascended the slope of Olivet. The road we took round the southern shoulder of the hill is believed to be the very track by which our Lord came from Bethany in his own brief hour of triumph. On this road at one point the whole city is suddenly revealed to any one coming round the hill from the east; and there, as He beheld the city in all its beauty, crowning the height of Zion, with the Temple in the foreground, conspicuous in its splendor, He wept as He thought of the miseries awaiting it, miseries which its inhabitants will bring on themselves by their stubborn rejection of Him and His Gospel of Peace. Going by the Jericho road, we turned round the Mount of Olives, and came to the little cluster of houses of which Bethany is now composed. More ruins than houses they look, but the situation is pleasant, and there are more trees around it than in most places in the neighbourhood. Of course we were assailed by people who wished to guide us to the house of Martha and Mary, and the tomb of Lazarus, but we were in no humor for monkish traditions and numbers, and took our way up the slope above the village, and returned to Jerusalem by another path over the Mount of Olives. Diverging from the path we crossed a ploughed field, and got to the small open space which still remains on the crest of the hill, for, alas! it is now getting enclosed, and covered with mosques, houses, and nunneries. From the height above Bethany, as well as from the top of Olivet, there is a wide view over the rugged nearer hills to the north end of the Dead Sea, and the valley of the Jordan. It was my first glimpse of that wonderful sea, lying deep down in its bed, sunk more than half as far beneath the level of the Mediterranean, as we on our hill stood above it. We could not see the Jordan itself, though we saw where it enters the sea, and could also discern the line of trees which marks its course through the valley. The Dead Sea lay calm and bright, glittering in the sunshine. There is nothing in its appearance at this distance to tell how different it is from other inland seas. It has rather the aspect of a bright, refreshing lake. From the minaret of the mosque on the summit of Olivet the view of the Dead Sea is still finer. Thence I saw one day when all the heights round Jerusalem were sprinkled with now-fallen snow, while the lower heights, near the west side of the Dead Sea, had not a speck of white on them. By-and-by I made a nearer acquaintance with the strange and mysterious lake. Passing through the village on the summit of Mount Olivet, one is sure to be assailed by men and boys wanting to hold the horses and be guides to the Church of the Ascension, or offering antiquities real or pretended. I found, however, that when I passed by on foot I was much less annoyed. Probably they thought a foot-passenger must be too poor to be good for much *Baksheesh*—or, as one of them expressed it in Arabic when we refused their services, "not worth an onion paring." All my subsequent visits to Bethany were on foot; it was one of my favorite resorts, and I never found that I met with any molestation, though some of my friends in Jerusalem shook their heads over my venturesomeness in going so far alone. I found the interest deepen each time I went. As I mounted the steep path up Olivet, I could feel as if in the company of the Psalmist, as in deep grief and humiliation he toiled up the hill, weeping, barefooted, with covered head, fleeing from his rebellious son, and taking home to his heart the bitter truth that his own sin was bearing these bitter fruits to him. When tired of the steep climb under a hot sun, I could sit under an olive tree, and looking across the gorge to the City and Temple Platform, and seeing the Mahomedan mosque where the Temple of Jehovah had once stood, could remember how, as our Lord sat on the Mount of Olives, His disciples came to Him asking an explanation of the terrible words of doom which He had spoken. "Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." The fulfilment of these words was under my very eyes, for not one stone of that Temple so adorned with "goodly stones and gifts," remains; and the shrine of the false prophet stands where stood God's House of Prayer for all people. Going a little further on, I could again rest in the shade of a tree at the corner, where the riding road turns round the hill, and fancy I heard the multitude that surrounded the King who comes to His peo-

ple, march and sitting on an ass; a multitude now shouting "Hosanna, to the Son of David," but which, alas! in a few short days would shout while surrounding the same meek and lowly figure, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" But where are all the trees from which they so readily stripped palm-branches to celebrate this simple triumph? All gone! And their very absence is a token of the truth of the sad forebodings of blight, and misery, and ruin to the land and people, which brought pitying tears to the compassionate eyes of the Lord, as, at the very corner where I then sat, he "beheld the city and wept over it." Continuing on over the shoulder of Olivet, stopping many a time to gather the brilliant wild flowers which appeared in countless thousands as spring came on, I at last would take my seat amid almond trees, just above the little village of Bethany, as it nestles in a hollow on the eastern slope of Olivet. There I could sit on ground all starred with gay anemones, ranunculus, and pleasant eyes, and spotted with the white petals of the almond blossom, which fall in showers from the trees, and dream of the days when that little village contained a house where those dwell whom "Jesus loved," a house where sometimes for a few hours He sheltered Himself from the bitter opposition, and caviling, and a scorn which He daily met when in His Father's House He taught the people the great truths of that Gospel He had brought from heaven. The stillness around was just the help to meditation that one wanted, and the bright blossoms around reminded me of the loving care of the Father in heaven, who while He thus clothes the flowers of the field, "much more" watches over his redeemed children, and who had so lovingly granted me the wish of a lifetime, in permitting me to look on the scene where the Lord of Glory had dwelt as a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Returning to Jerusalem by the steep rough path down Olivet, and the less steep rise up to the St. Stephen's Gate, I seemed to feel myself in the very footsteps of the Lord, as day by day, during the last week of His life, He left the loving home in Bethany, and took his weary way up this path to the Temple. Some think that not far from this path, a rounded knoll, in shape resembling a skull, may be the very spot where the Lord was lifted up on the Cross a spectacle to men and angels, and that on the opposite slope of Olivet the women sat beholding afar off. It may be, but it matters not, the exact spot has been hidden from us; but the fact remains—and what a fact it is!—that outside this same City of Jerusalem they crucified the man Christ Jesus, the God of heaven and earth! There He hung, apparently weak, helpless, "a worm and no man," and the people as they passed by, taunted Him, "he saved others, himself he cannot save." True, most true, though they meant it not so. He cannot save Himself because He will save His people. His name explains all. He is "Jesus;" He will save His people from their sins; He is Christ the anointed Son of God; He has power to bear these sins in His own body on the tree. And we, what are we doing as regards this mighty fact, a fact the immense import of which dwarfs every other greatest fact of history? It is a fact that will meet us again in the last great day, when that same Jesus shall return in His Father's glory to judge the world; and we shall see Him, and shall either say, "This is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation," or (which may God forbid) we shall say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb," that Lamb of God whom we had rejected when he offered Himself to us as the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

Pastor and People.

Ministers' Manners

Rev. Dr. John Hall, the Presbyterian preacher, of New York, has succeeded Mr. Beecher in lectures on practical preaching to the Yale theologues, and his remarks must be credited with a good deal of shrewd sense, liberality and charity. While Dr. Hall does not overflow with the special Gospel of love which Mr. Beecher was commissioned to bear, his long years of service in the pulpit and of mingling with men have mellowed his views of life, as well as schooled him with the serpent of wisdom. The other day he devoted his hour to answering a score of questions which had been put up by his audience as to the conduct of the minister's culture and life. The first one was to the "practical use of Hebrew." Dr. Hall answered that he should not think of preaching from an Old Testament text without reading it in the original. Besides the obvious reasons for such a precaution, Dr. Hall said that it was "essential for self-respect if for nothing more." We rather like that. It used to be very disrespectful to the Bible to offer any amendments to the literal text from the Hebrew, and we have heard references to the original characterized as attempts to "tear the Bible to pieces." But we fear that, with all the efforts of the theological schools and of the Hebrew grammarians and interlinear translators, comparatively few preachers enjoy that extreme self-respect which comes of having looked up the text from the original. But on broader grounds, we cannot help thinking Dr. Hall's detection of the true relation between the original culture and self-respecting honest manhood as very shrewd. Dr. Hall evidently reacts against the current condemnation of pastoral visiting. He advises his pupils to keep rolls of their congregations and to make the acquaintance of all. He rather thinks it is a good thing to "talk religion" on pastoral calls, but with tact and not arbitrarily and necessarily. He wants to see his people in the "living rooms" of their residences, and "not spend his time admiring drawing-room pictures and furniture which were not where the life of the family lay." It was necessary often to speak with women

alone, but a safe precaution to hold such interviews in the house-study, not at the church-study. Women whom he did not know he turned over to his wife, and, not long since, Mrs. Hall and her husband were the means of reconciling and marrying two lovers, of whom the bride came to them an entire stranger. As to visiting sick parishioners, the clergyman should be subject to the physician, but the physician should give due weight to the value of spiritual comfort. Sick bed "experience," however, were of comparatively little value to the man or woman. As to the activity of women in the social prayer-meeting, he would not dogmatize, though the opinion of the majority of his female counsellors were against it. He didn't believe in trying to make prayer-meetings "interesting,"—such generally depreciated into a "young people's frolic."

Dr. Hall was "perhaps prejudiced" on the subject of "clerical tobacco," but he regarded it as deteriorating from a preacher's usefulness and health,—a very moderate and sound view. He didn't know much about theatre and opera, never having attended either, but the people who went to "learn Shakespeare" probably know less of him than thousands who had never been inside a theatre. True, probably; but on the other hand, thousands get their first introduction to Shakespeare or their only knowledge of him from the stage, who else would never have known him, and it cannot be denied that those who know him by book could know him better from the stage.

Dr. Hall has had access to "a report prepared at some expense by a person familiar with American and European theatres, which went to show that the average theatre-goer too often began with the best, and went down and down as he became satiated, till plays and spectacles not to be mentioned were reached." Such a tendency would be difficult to substantiate, we apprehend. Dr. Hall was also opposed, though not dogmatically, to the skilled song of a few against the unskilled song of the congregation. He says the question is, "To whom should the song worship be acceptable?" manifestly to God. This is one of the few points which the eminent preacher seems to miss. The question seems to us to be rather, in what does song of worship consist? Does it consist in singing or in listening? Must all preach aloud and must all pray aloud? No; the worship is conducted by the man in the pulpit, but participated in and rendered by the dumb and listening congregation. As a large portion of the congregation are more edified by the preaching of somebody else than they would be by their own, so we doubt not a still larger portion feel a greater elevation of the soul from hearing the singing of others, skilled to express the highest melody and feeling, than they would from their own rude efforts. In fact, we suspect that some of the sticklers for congregational singing mistake the glow of self-conceit for the glow of worship.

One of the best remarks of Dr. Hall is on the cultivation of manners. "They are most important," he says,— "not all the conventional forms, but the gentlemanly spirit." He does not regard the minister's office as privileging his manners in any direction whatever, a very wise disavowal which his hearers will do well to take to heart. "Whatever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely," was his rule, and a good one.—Springfield Republican.

Gratitude for Present Blessings.

It conduces much to our content if we pass by those things which happen to trouble, and consider what is pleasing and prosperous; that by the representations of the better, the worse may be blotted out. If I be overthrown in my suit at law, yet my house is left me still, and my land; or I have a virtuous wife, or hopeful children, or kind friends, or hopes. If I have lost one child, it may be I have two or three still left me. Enjoy the present, whatever it may be, and be not solicitous for the future; for if you take your foot from the present standing, and thrust it forward to tomorrow's event, you are in a restless condition; it is like refusing to quench your present thirst, by fearing you will want to drink the next day. If to-morrow you should want, your sorrow would come time enough, though you do not hasten it; let your trouble tarry, till its own day comes. Enjoy the blessings of this day, if God sends them; and the evils of it bear patiently and sweetly; for this day is ours. We are dead to yesterday, and not yet born to to-morrow.—Bishop Jeremy Taylor.

"The Kingdom Within."

"The Kingdom of heaven is within you."—Luke xvi. 21. Doubtless, *entos emon* may mean this; but how could the Lord address this language to the Pharisees? A very different kingdom from the kingdom of heaven was within them, not to say that this whole language of the kingdom of heaven being within men, rather than men being within the kingdom of heaven is, as one has justly observed, modern. The margin reading "among you," should have brought the text to "He in whom the whole kingdom of heaven is shut up as in a gorm, and from whom it will unfold itself, stands in your midst."—Archbishop Trench.

The Three Crowns

JAMES I: 12. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." (See also Rev. ii. 10). 2 TIMOTHY iv: 7, 8. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing. 1 PETER v: 4. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away."

Random Readings.

Give us this morning that flow out of heaven; Give us this morning when thy church is given; Give us this morning and our sinners are given; Lovingly, utterly, joyally given; Not the way to drops of thy cup overflowing; Not the faint specks of thy fourth ever glowing; Not a part had from the June roses blessing; Give us He have thee, who gave thee to live.

He lives long that lives well; and thuo mis-spent is not lived but lost.—Fuller.

The closest walk with God is the sweetest heaven that can be enjoyed on earth.—Bunyan.

Oh, how sweet to work all day for God, and then lie down at night beneath His smile.—M'Cheyne.

SHALL I gudge to spend my life for Him who did not gudge to shed His life-blood for me.

ONE may live as a conqueror, or a king, or a magistrate; but he must die a man. The bed of death brings every human being to his pure individuality, to the intense contemplation of that deepest and most solemn of all relations between the creature and the Creator.

RESOLUTION which springs from Christian principle, and is fortified by it, is fearless as well as unremittent. It is conclusive of good purposes, and the pledges of their being executed effectively in noble sentiments and worthy deeds. The soul of the resolute is less calm than firm.

SOMETIMES speak with God; at other time hear him speak to you. Let him instruct you by his precepts; let him be your governor in all things. Whom he maketh rich, none can make poor. There can be no penny with him whose heart hath once been enriched with celestial bounty.

WE hold to earth and earthly things by so many more links of thought, if not of affection, that it is far harder to keep our views to heaven clear and strong; when this life is so busy, and, therefore, so full of reality to us, another life seems by comparison unreal. This is our condition, and its peculiar temptations, but we must endure it, and strive to overcome them, for I think we may not try to flee from it.—Dr. Arnold.

How few persons have what is called a real symmetry of character. It seems as if every one ran to some mania or other, some extreme, rode some hobby; nourished some pet scheme. If anything can awaken one's admiration more than angels, it is the study of Christ as a man, it is that he was perfect as respects a well-balanced mind and will, in fact in his whole character. It was complete equipoise, and it was just here we are to strive to imitate him in our lives. A man is truly great that can attain to such a height of character.

In every evil sin there is a dark and almost infinite vista. It is like an opening into a mysterious cavern. Imagination dreads dangers and evils, serpents hidden in the cave, pestilential, poisonous atmosphere, concealed dungeons or pitfalls. It is like the entrance into a dense wood, we hesitate whether we should venture, we dread the attack of fierce beasts or cruel men. And yet men are so little afraid of entering into sin, though they know not what it leads to, fancying they can retruce their steps at any moment.

It is an axiom of physical science that no two things can occupy the same place at the same time, and it is a spiritual as well as a physical axiom. Christ and Satan cannot, will not, occupy the same heart at the same time. If the one is in the other must be out, and when Christ comes in by the door Satan must go out—any way, and as quickly as he can. Not only are they two, but they are two opposites, and, as our language just hinted, they are like the two figures in the old household weather-fellers—Christ out and Satan in, *faul!*—Satan out and Christ in, *fair!*

The most common and most serious failures in life originate in a want of respect for little duties. While wondering for what particular service Providence designed us, and looking abroad in search of that, the small and ordinary duties lying all about us are neglected and ignored. That was a wise remark that a certain teacher made to his pupils "Many men are troubled about what God meant them to do; but, young gentlemen, my experience teaches me that God means very few of us to do anything in particular." Our lives will be the sum of numberless small duties, and will be successful or unsuccessful, noble or ignoble, in proportion as we are true or untrue to these.

THERE are many things we cannot see save in the dark. The stars shine all day long, but we cannot see them till night comes on; and it is the same with many other starlights. We need the dark to see them, and God kindly lets some shadow fall upon us, and we grumble at Him for His thoughtful goodness! . . . It is only in the dark the glow-worm is to be seen, and if you shall "take your lamp to it you shall not see it. Symbol, truly, of many of the glowing lights of God's truth. Persist in looking at them by the light of your lamp, however well trimmed that lamp may be, and you shall not see them at all. They must be looked at in that Great Light which is their own.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Shall health and vigour, worldly activity, a good business, a round of pleasant, social engagements, travel, visits, absorption in science or secular literature, or the snares of the pursuit of money? Are not these pleasant things much more perilous oftentimes to the Christian than the painful list enumerated by the Apostle? And the Christian has not merely to ask, "Shall these things separate?" but, do they already separate? It is a matter of fact that such attractive things really are occupying our time and attention to such an extent as to prevent us from giving to Christ's service that amount of devotedness which His spirit and His word teach us ought to be given by us? If our consciences do not enable us to return a peaceful reply to this needful self-interrogation, may we earnestly seek in prayer for the assistance of the Holy Spirit to "help our infirmities," and enable us to keep nearer to Christ's love forth.