

The BEREAN.

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO.—ACTS XVII. 11.

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BISHOP ALEXANDER'S ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM.

JANUARY 27TH, 1842.

Thro' the gate of Bethlehem, lo! they pass
'Neath old, grey towers and mazy battlements,
And princely palm-trees.

What a motley throng
His flying barb, and stays the swift jerred,
And darts a searching and half-savage glance
Around the unwonted scene.

And thou, poor Jew!
Servant of servants, has thou no concern
In this, the rising of salvation's sun
O'er thy beloved Zion? Has her harp
Not long enough upon the willows hung?
Nor art thou satiate with thine age on age
Of banishment and tears? But on he goes,
Earth-bound and mammon-blinded, and with heart
Like nether flint, 'gainst Him of Nazareth.

Up to his mosque, the turban'd Mussulman
Moves with a master's port, to keep the feast
Of Corban Baviam. Haughtily he leads
The crescent's pallid beam, and bows him down
To his false prophet.

Twilight gently falls
O'er Moab's distant mountains and the face
Of the Dead Sea. Silent, and full of thought
The Prelate seeks his home, amid those shades
Where dwelt the man of grief, the Son of God,
The world's Redeemer.

Walk thou in his steps,—
Drink of his spirit, and so plant the cross,
That in his healing shadow all may kneel
As brethren, and on breezy Olivet
The mingled prayer go up, from Abraham's sons
And those of Islam, and the pagan's voice
Blend sweetly with them, in a choral strain
Unto the Lord of Hosts.

By L. H. S. (Mrs. Sigourney?)
in the Episcopal Recorder.

JEWISH VIEWS OF CHRISTIANITY.

We are all guilty, more or less, of the sin against God and our brethren involved in the recognition of vain, impious and blasphemous fables as part and parcel of Christianity. The very gross idolatry perpetrated in Popish countries does not prevent our extending the term "Christian people and Christian churches" to the worshippers of wood, stone, and flour on the one hand, and on the other, to the places set apart for such worship. We complacently talk of the Latin "Church" and Latin "Christians" in Jerusalem itself; out of our own mouth the indignant Jew condemns us, and who shall condemn him for doing so?

Again, we familiarly talk of the Greek "Church" and Greek "Christians"; and the Jew who has been in the Levant presently calls to mind St. Spiridione, in his glass chair, or some other case of old bones, carried in solemn procession, with mummeries and essentially idolatrous ceremonies scarcely if at all distinguishable from Popery; or perhaps, the holy city rising to his mind's eye, he thinks on the fearful abominations practised in what is called the church of the sepulchre; where the supposed burial-place of our Lord Jesus Christ is made the theatre of such fearful and mocking impieties as to furnish a perpetual jest to the Moslem guards, who are charitably employed in preventing the wretched actors from tearing and trampling each other to death in their wild phrensy. So long as, by our own fault and folly, Christianity was identified with these foul doings; so long, by our fault and folly, the Christian name and the Christian faith were, and must be, a hateful thing, yea, a cursed thing, in the sight of a conscientious Jew.

But this is not all, nor even the worst part of the matter. When Jerusalem was in the hands of the Christians in early times, before the Mohammedan imposture rose, they built many godly churches, and practised a great number of superstitious observances to manifest their feeling as to the sanctity of particular spots, where tradition represented certain scenes in our Lord's ministry and sufferings to have taken place; but there was one spot, by Him regarded as most sacred: the Temple, whence he drove the buyers and sellers; the Temple, where he daily taught; the Temple, concerning which he used that remarkable expression, "He that sweareth by the altar, sweareth by the Temple, and by Him that dwelleth therein"; the Temple, to which the Apostles and the whole company of believers daily resorted, as the appointed house of prayer; and the sight of which ought on every account to be in the estimation of every believer in the Bible, most dear, most sacred, most precious,—whether looking at the past or to the future, sacred indeed to us should be "the mountain of the Lord's house"—Mount Moriah. More sacred than any earthly thing, more dear than the life-pulse in his bosom, it is, it must be, ought to be to the Jew.

Well, these early Christians, when in possession of Jerusalem, made choice of that mountain, and of the site of the Lord's House, for what purpose? As the general receptacle for all the filth of the city. "Thither, up the ascent, they took the trouble to carry every loathsome, every putrid thing, for the one, solo, avowed purpose of polluting that spot, and of wringing the heartstrings of the Jew, as no pagan tyrant had ever thought of wringing them. No Jew had then the privilege of weeping and praying beneath the ruined wall: Christianity, as it called itself, thrust, spurned him away, or permitted his approach only to madden him by the dreadful sight of what was sure to excite his feelings as to furnish an excuse for butchering him on the spot. At length the Caliph Omar, son of Ishmael, came to claim a site for a Mosque, and the Patriarch of the Christian church conducted him to Mount Moriah, as a suitable place; no doubt conceiving that the crescent of Islamism would be even a greater defilement than the contents of all the Christian sewers. Omar cleansed the spot, and to this day it remains guarded, fenced around, unapproach-

able alike to Jew and to Christian, with the exception of the short period when the crusaders overran, grasped, and retained the holy city and, by a general massacre of the inoffensive Jews, whom the milder spirit of Islamism had permitted to take up their abode there, gave them another terrible lesson in what they were told was the true Christian doctrine.

Hence the feeling of horror on the part of the Israelite against a religion, the chief feature of which was so very hideous in the sight of man and God. That religion was not Christianity; and of late years, thanks to the spreading light of the true Gospel, it has been better understood that Christianity is not idolatry, blood, and sacrifice: that instead of hating it loves the Jew; instead of defiling and dishonouring Jerusalem, it takes pleasure in her stones, favours the dust thereof, and longs to see all the nations of the earth going up to worship the Lord God of Israel upon that holy mountain, once more in possession of the Jews, to whom God gave it by an irreversible covenant for ever. Hence, the Jew can now take up the New Testament, without any apprehension of finding in it words answerable to, or justificatory of the dark deeds of those who vainly and blindly professed to be led by it; and to this we must attribute the tone and spirit of the following article, which we give for the express purpose of exhibiting the fruits of a better knowledge of what really is Christianity, than the Jews had formerly any means of acquiring. We trust, also that it will set right those among us, who are led to believe that the Jews of our day occupy themselves in cursing us.

From "The History of the Israelites" by Jost, a learned Jew now living at Frankfurt.

In the mean time, Jesus of Nazareth had grown up to manhood, and commenced to exercise his office of teaching. Nothing is known of his former life, except, that he was once, when twelve years old, conversing with the Pharisees in the temple about the dogmas of their religion.

John, who is known by the name of the "Baptist," was long preparing for the event which was now to agitate the world; he taught in the desert, exhorted the people to repent, and baptized many of them in the river Jordan. This was considered by the Jews as an holy act, through which people not only became members of the covenant, but were also cleansed from their sins. In this time of enthusiasm, when the promised Messiah was anxiously expected, and His delay ascribed to the wickedness of the nation, every one endeavoured to be penitent, and to get rid of the weight of his sins.

Jesus also went to John, and suffered himself to be baptized by him, in order to uphold the national custom. From this moment he entered on the course of a public national teacher, and announced his views. Although he outwardly conformed to the old law, it was nevertheless soon perceived that he aimed at a reformation of the then prevailing opinions, concerning the relation of the Deity to mankind. Above all, he showed himself opposed to the Pharisees. They, from motives which have already been mentioned, placed a high value upon the observance of outward ceremonies. He rejected this idea as pernicious, and raised immediately upon it the whole new structure. This is not the place to state by what means he gained so many disciples. This can be seen in the Gospels, and the innumerable expositions of the deeds of this Teacher. His history can only be touched upon here, in as far as it has any connection with the Jews, and has been the cause of any change in this nation. As the Pharisees hated him, he spread his doctrines first in Galilee, where few of them were found, and where his first disciples joined him. In many synagogues, and even in the Temple itself, he held discourses which moved his hearers, and procured him an ever growing fame. He often disputed with ingenuity, and (according to custom) with proofs from the scriptures, against the then prevailing doctrines; he further revealed his intentions. He cured many sick. Those who believed him recognized these effects, as the direct influence from on high. The opponents looked upon his deeds as the work of the devil, as witchcraft. For at that time the devil stood high in the belief of the people. Jesus was therefore, on account of these medicinal works, partly adored and partly hated; the latter especially by the Pharisees, because in the performance of his wonders he had sometimes disregarded the celebration of the Sabbath. From that time he spoke distinctly of the purposes of his coming, and the object he had in view. He now declared himself openly as the Son of God, as the Messiah and Redeemer promised by the Prophets; called himself frequently a king, yet not one of an earthly kingdom, so that he could not be accused of traitorous views against the government, notwithstanding all the temptations of the Pharisees, who were constantly seeking his destruction especially as a political revoler. By degrees, he was joined by several of the Samaritans, and was much revered in Galilee: chiefly because Jew and Gentile were equally welcome to Him; and he endeavoured to instruct every one without distinction.

But in Judea itself he found less belief, and even to his friends he remained long incomprehensible. His miracles, though they ought to have been convincing to a people that looked for wonders, had nevertheless no effect; yea, the animation of his discourses procured him more zealous followers than all his cures had ever done. This unbelief ought to be noticed, though it will be difficult to ascertain the reason of it. Nor shall we

attempt it here, this not being the proper place for it.

From the time that Jesus showed himself as the founder of a new covenant, he was called Christ (the Anointed) and his followers beheld in Him a Deity under human covering. The Pharisees, however, thought it now their duty to persecute him, because his doctrines were in their opinion wholly opposed to the promises of the Prophets. They imagined that by dissipating the idea of an expected great King, he was destroying all the hopes, wishes, prayers, and ceremonies connected therewith; that by extracting the moral doctrines, and rejecting all the other laws, he was making the reading of the Holy Scriptures superfluous or unnecessary; that he was degrading the value of the sacrifices, and of the Theocracy, as it had until then existed. In short, that he threatened an overthrow of the whole condition of things. That all Pharisees were not of the same opinion, may be concluded from the fact, that so many synagogues were open to him, and that so many congregations listened to him with pleasure. They did not see these important effects, and therefore the new teacher was nowhere persecuted except in Jerusalem and in his native town, but was regarded as another Rabbi. Several Pharisees and members of the Sanhedrim only, wished his destruction, because He was most dangerous to them. They therefore put several questions to him concerning his relative position to the state, and after some trouble, succeeded in having an accusation against him brought before Pilate. Still he could not be found guilty, and Pilate would at the utmost have condemned him to the scourge. But the Sanhedrim, well knowing that their already diminished authority (for they had no more the power to judge in cases of life and death) would be totally destroyed by any innovations in religion, clamoured for his execution; and the incensed populace brought it so far, that the accused was nailed to the cross under mockeries and derision. His disciples may not have been numerous enough openly to oppose this measure. By his death the Pharisees attained, however, but half their object: His followers spoke now so much the louder, and the more freely; and the Jews who adhered to the old law, were hated by the followers of the new doctrine, on account of this murder; and afterwards they were frequently persecuted, notwithstanding the forgiveness granted them by Jesus. Besides, Christianity must have gained much in the eyes of every friend, by the voluntary death of its founder. To this came afterwards, the news of the Resurrection, to convince the Christians still more of the truth of Christianity. But to the Jews, the new doctrine seemed therefore so much the more suspicious; those of the Jews who had already embraced some of the dogmas of Jesus, determined not to favor all the representations of his disciples. The Jews were therefore obliged to withdraw still further behind their barrier, when the new doctrine formerly so like the old law, was assuming a form wholly opposed to the belief of the Jews.

With their idea of God, even when purified of all that is material, they were obliged to reject the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus, of His Mission, Redemption, Resurrection, &c. &c. For that reason, the rise of Christianity at first, had little influence over the condition of the Jews. It soon even departed from its native country, and converted the heathens. It is only at a later period that we see Christianity having any effect on the form of Judaism. At that time, this occurrence was looked upon by the Jews merely as a striking event, but one that might happen every day, and they did not even connect it with the other events of the times.

No one could at that time have foreseen what mighty revolutions of states, what innumerable changes in the culture of mankind, would one day be produced by the offspring of Judaism, and how many of their children would outlive the aged, suffering, powerless mother.

Should the time not yet have arrived, with all Pharisaical religious persecution might cease? Should experience not yet have taught mankind, that the spirit of persecution will at last turn its weapons against itself? It may be true, that the constant struggle of mind will sharpen the faculty of thinking, promote the truth, and keep the will awake and active; it may be true, that friction will often produce sparks of refreshing light, and act beneficially upon the heart; but when the soul forms an alliance with low discord, and unmeaning contention, let the above deed, and its endless consequences serve as an illustration.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

A public exhibition of Relics at Rome. Letter from the Rev. M. Hobart Seymour, to the Editor of the Achill Herald.

MY DEAR BROTHER.—You have asked me to write something for the Achill Herald,—something connected with the workings of Popery, as I have seen it in the seat of its power; and as I believe here is nothing more useful than a simple statement of facts, I shall narrate the proceedings of one day—the public exhibition of relics in the Church of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, on the fourth Sunday in Lent, in the year 1845.

This Church is one of the seven privileged churches of Rome, and the fourth Sunday in Lent is for it the most remarkable and important in the year. All who attend the services of that church on that day are entitled to certain indulgences—all who have part in the masses there celebrated are entitled to the release of one soul from purgatory. The record or official statement and verification of these privileges is suspended near the

High Altar of the Church; I have carefully copied it, but it would occupy too much space to transcribe it at present.

The great scene—the fête connected with this day and this church, takes place in the afternoon, and is attended by a vast concourse of persons. I recognised princes and princesses in all the frippery of fashion, jostled and pressed by dirty pilgrims and wretched beggars. The crowd contained very few of the English, and was essentially Italian. It was diversified by the sombre dresses of the monks and the shewy dresses of the Roman peasants. Here was some Italian lady brilliant in all the newest elegance of Parisian fashion; there was some tall pilgrim with staff in hand, and large scallop-shells attached to the front and back of his pillerine; here knelt some peasant girl in all the yellow, and green, and crimson that give so shewy and brilliant an appearance to the festivals of Rome; there sat some sturdy beggar saying his bead-prayers with all vociferation, interrupted only by his demands on the charity of those around him; here stood a group of Capucine Friars, with their long brown dresses, and their long beards drooping to their breasts; there stood a kind of Franciscan Friars, with their shaven crowns and shaven beards, and their ropes—the cord of St. Francis—around their loins. A few, perhaps one tenth of the assembly, seemed silent and prayerful and devotional, while all the rest chatted upon any and every topic, till a perfect babel of many tongues pervaded the vast assemblage.

The principal object of this motley crowd was the public exhibition of the precious relics, for which this church is so remarkable, and the exhibition of which takes place on this day.

The catalogue of these relics is suspended near the high altar; I carefully copied it. It is as follows:—

Three pieces of the most Holy Cross, deposited by Constantine, and kept in a case of gold and jewels.

The title placed over the cross, with the inscription in Hebrew and Greek and Latin.

One of the most Holy Nails with which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified.

Two Thorns from the crown of thorns of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The finger of St. Thomas, the Apostle, which touched the most holy rib of our risen Lord Jesus Christ.

The transverse beam of the cross of the good thief.

One of the pieces of money supposed to be given for the betrayal of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The bodies of the Saints Casarius and Anastasius.

The Cord by which our Lord Jesus Christ was bound to the cross.

The sponge that was extended to our Lord with vinegar and gall.

A large piece of the coat of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A large piece of the veil and of the hair of the most Holy Virgin.

Some of the clothes of St. John the Baptist.

Parts of the arms of St. Peter and St. Paul.

Some of the ashes of St. Lawrence, the Martyr.

A vessel of the balm in which the head of St. Vincent was dipped.

Some earth from Mount Calvary, saturated with the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A bottle full of the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A bottle full of the milk of the most Blessed Virgin Mary.

A piece of the sepulchre of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A piece of Mount Calvary.

A piece of the place where Christ was smitten.

A stone from the place where Christ was born.

A piece of the stone where the Angel stood at the annunciation to the Most Holy Virgin.

A piece from the house of the Most Holy Virgin.

A piece from the house where our Lord was sitting when he pardoned Mary Magdalene.

A piece of the stone where our Lord sat after having fasted.

A piece of the stone on which Christ wrote the words, given through Moses, on Sinai.

A piece from the place where our Lord ascended to Heaven.

A piece of the stone from the grave of Lazarus.

A piece from the place where the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ was found.

A piece from the stone where St. Peter and St. Paul repose.

A piece of the cotton, in which was collected the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some of the manna with which God fed the Israelites in the wilderness.

Some relics of eleven Prophets.

A portion of Aaron's rod that budded.

A portion of the head of St. John the Baptist.

A portion of the head of St. Clement, Pope and Martyr.

Some relics of Prossade, Virgin and Martyr.

Some of the skin and hair of St. Catharine, of Sienna.

A tooth of St. Peter.

A tooth of St. Jordan.

Some bones of St. John the Baptist.

Some relics of St. Peter and St. Paul.

Some bones of St. Bartholomew, the Apostle.

Some relics of St. James, the Apostle and brother of our Lord.

Some bones of the Holy Innocents.

A portion of the thigh of St. Lawrence.

A portion of the shoulder of Beatus, the Bishop and Martyr.

Some bones of Saints Fabian, Sebastian, and Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Some bones of Saints Hippolytus, Agapitus, Epiphanius, Dionysius.

Some relics of Saints Cosmo and Damien, Martyrs, and of St. Urban the Pope.

Some relics of Sixtus, the Pope.

A knee of St. Jordan, the Martyr.

Some bones of St. Nicholas, the Bishop.

Some relics of Saints Somanus, Regulus, Nereus, Emute, Benedict, Hilarion.

A stone from the house of St. Peter, the Apostle.

A stone from where St. Catharine, the Virgin and Martyr, reposes.

Some bones of Mary Magdalene.

Some bones of Saints Petronella, Anastasia, Potusiana, Agnes, Euphemia.

Some relics of St. Elizabeth, the Queen and Widow.

Some relics of Saints Bridget, Julian, Felicite, Catharine, Margaret, Virgins and Martyrs.

Some relics of the eleven thousand Martyrs.

One hundred and thirty-seven cases of other relics of Saints, both male and female, whose names antiquity has not distinguished.

An image of the Pieta in Mosaic, found among the relics in the reliquary which belonged to Pope Gregory.

This catalogue of relics is placed conspicuously in the church, near the high altar. A very large proportion of them were exposed in a case on the altar; and, strange as it may seem to us, they were undoubtedly believed in, and devoutly worshipped by the people.

At four o'clock there were vespers with music in the choir chapel—a sort of transept to the church. Then all the monks of the convent, to which the church belongs, formed a procession, and passed by a private way into the convent. From the convent they moved into the chapel of St. Helena. This chapel is underground; it is beneath the convent and behind the church. There I was waiting to see them, and there the procession of monks entered, every monk carrying a lighted candle, and all realising those scenes so often described in romances. They passed through this chapel, the floor of which is said to be formed of holy earth brought from Calvary, and all knelt before the privileged altar, opposite to that of St. Helena. The bishop knelt at their head, adoring the Host on the altar, and after repeating a short service there, they ascended by a flight of steps, and in procession entered the body of the church. The cross was carried before them as they passed down the church and returned by the great aisle or nave. They thus approached the high altar; they prostrated themselves before it; they sung, on their knees, a *Te Deum*, and a *Litany to the Saints*. After this they retired to make arrangements for the more special exhibition of the principal relics; and then the whole assembly became a scene of increasing movement, by the passing to and fro of little processions, of various fraternities, dressed in blue, and white, and black, in all varieties of colour, and carrying banners of every hue.

Before I proceed to describe this, I have one observation to make.

When the procession of bishops and monks knelt before the altar in the subterranean chapel, the consecrated Host was on the altar. Before this consecrated Host, as their visible and present God, they prostrated themselves. And this act of worship, however we may disapprove of it as idolatrous, is at least intelligible. But when this procession of bishops and monks knelt before the high altar of the church, the consecrated Host was not there; but, in its stead, was a case of relics. This case was divided into about a hundred minute compartments, each compartment containing a small particle of a bone, or of a thread, or of a stone, or some such fraction of a relic, with a minute label on each with the name of the saint whose relic it was supposed to be. This case, which I carefully examined, was on the altar in the place of the consecrated Host, and to this case of relics the bishop and monks knelt, prostrating themselves and exhibiting precisely the same form of worship as they had exhibited a few moments before to the consecrated Host, as their present and visible God. What may have been passing in their hearts or heads it is not for me to say, but it is most certain that neither I nor any other person present could detect the slightest difference between their worship of the Host and their worship of the relics.

And now I shall describe the exhibition of the principal relics.

At one end of the church there is a small gallery, capable of holding four or five persons. In the centre of this stood the bishop, in his mitre and full canonicals; on either hand stood a priest. On these three every eye in the vast assembly was fixed. And as every eye was strained, one of the priests rung a bell; then the other priest handed one of the relics to the bishop. The bishop reverently receiving it, held it before him, and exhibited it to the assembled multitude,—the priest announcing with a loud voice, "The finger of Saint Thomas, the Apostle and Martyr of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

The bishop then presented the relic—said to be the very finger with which the unbelieving Thomas touched our Lord's side. He held it according to the usual custom, right before him, then turning it to those on his right, then to those on his left, then again to those immediately before him; he then kissed the glass case, which contained the finger, and returned it to the priest.

Another relic was then produced, and placed in the hands of the bishop, the priest, as before, announcing its name—

"Two thorns from the crown of thorns of our Lord Jesus Christ!"