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Contributors and Correspondents.

DIARY IN THE EAST.

LAST WEEK IN JERUSALEM—JEWISH PASSOVER—JOURNEY TO NAZARETH.

My last week in Jerusalem had come. A week full of interest in many ways, besides the sad interest of parting, visits to Bethany, the Mount of Olives, Pool of Siloam, etc.

March 31st I found a small party on a visit to the great Mosque, which now occupies the site of Solomon's Temple. The enclosure round the mosque may only be entered by Christians under the guardianship of a Kawasseh, or one of the consulates. Each of the European consulates has one or more of these official servants, who, splendidly dressed in native costume, march before the consul on any state occasion. Of course their attendance in visiting the Mosque has to be paid for, as well as a Baksheesh given to the Sheikh of the Mosque who goes round the sights with the party. It used altogether to be a very expensive business, but now the charges are more moderate, so that it only cost me about 5s. for my share.

We were particularly well off in having the company of a German connected with the London mission to the Jews in Jerusalem, who had made a very fine model of the Mosque, which was exhibited in Vienna, so that he was very thoroughly acquainted with the whole place. Going down the steep, narrow street that leads from the Jaffa gate (with several bonds) all the way to the Mosque enclosure, we entered by one of the western gates. It stood wide open, and there was no appearance of any gate-keeper or guard to keep Christians out. But such precautions are needless, for every Mahomedan in sight would be ready to act guardian of the sacred place and fall on the bold intruder. The gate which we entered opens directly on the central paved portion of the area. On each side, as we entered, we saw a long range of cloisters going round the outer wall, and dating from about the 14th century. In front of us, occupying the middle of the elevated paved platform, stood the octagonal Mosque, or Dome of the Rock, occupying most probably the very site of the Temple of Solomon, and of that other temple the glory of which so excelled Solomon's, because in it He who was "greater than the temple" so often worshipped and taught. The raised platform, which is reached by several flights of steps, occupies but a small part of the whole enclosure, the rest is partly laid out in grass, and planted with magnificent yew trees, while in other parts the original rock of Mount Moriah appears in large bare flats. The Mosque is very handsome even now in decay, the whole exterior between the numerous windows being covered with highly glazed tiles of bright colors, and intricate patterns, which reflect the sun in a dazzling manner. Much of this outer ornamentation had got broken, and when I was in Jerusalem the tiles were being removed to be replaced by others. But whether the present Moslems are equal to renovating the work of their ancestors remains to be seen. The interior of the Dome was also in the hands of workmen, but not so as to prevent our seeing it all. Of course the most interesting place within the building is the large rock, which is directly under the centre of the dome. It is just the pinnacle of Mount Moriah, round which the platform has been built, so as to form a flat place on which, according to Josephus, the temple was erected, while over this central rock stood the great brazen altar of sacrifice, the immense size of which must have nearly covered it.

It is wonderful to think of standing on the very spot where, in ages past, the father of the faithful offered up the Son in whom all his hopes for salvation for himself and his race centred, and where God "provided himself a lamb for a burnt offering" instead of Isaac. Here, too, the man after God's own heart, came to offer sacrifice, when, in answer to his repentant prayer, God stayed the hand of the destroying angel. The large bare rock is just such a place as would still be used for a summer threshing floor. Beneath the rock is a large cave, whether natural or artificial it is impossible to say, but it corresponds well with the cave described in old Jewish writings, into which the blood of the sacrifices offered on the brazen altar flowed. Here, too, we are told, in the 14th century of our era, the Jews used to come to mourn over the desolation of their temple. Now, even if they were permitted, they would not enter the place polluted by the worship of the false prophet. Leaving the dome of the rock, we went down the steps from the paved platform, and passed many little prayer niches, cupolas, and fountains to the southern side of the temple area, where stands the Mosque el Aksa. It is most likely the very church built by Herod the Great. Its whole appearance and arrangements reminds one of a Christian church. Its southern side is on the very edge of the enclosure, and from its windows there is a fine view down to the

Kedron valley far below, and away to the Hills of Moab.

From this Mosque we went to what is almost as interesting as the rock under the dome—that is the huge vaults under the south-eastern corner of the enclosure. These vaults, which are formed within the exterior wall which supports the enclosure, bear the name of Solomon's stables. That's mere nonsense, but they were used as stables in the times of the Crusaders, and the holes are still to be seen in the piers of the arches that support the platform above.

The greater part of the work in these vaults dates only from Arab times, but there are some remains of old Jewish stones in the foundation, and much of the Arab work is composed of old materials used up by them. Through the roof of these vaults the roots of the yew trees come down, and appear like great trunks of trees passing down to the floor of the vaults.

From the vaults we visited the inner side of the Golden Gate, and then mounted a minaret at the north-east corner of the enclosure, from which a fine view is obtained all over the city. Close to the minaret a scarp of rock seems to mark the place where the castle of Antonia rose, thus bounding the temple enclosure on the north, and commanding its courts, much to the disgust of the Jews. A sacred interest attaches to this spot, as, whether it was in this fortress that Pontius Pilate had our Lord brought before him or not, there can be little doubt that here was the castle to which Paul was carried when rescued from the hands of the Jews by the chief captain and soldiers; and near here must have been the steps on which he stood and addressed the angry multitude gathered in the temple courts, who, "when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue, kept the more silence." From the top of the minaret we could get a very good idea of the topography of Jerusalem. But how changed from ancient days. Zion still rises high above the temple enclosure, but the deep valley which formerly divided the two hills is filled up with the ruins of the temple and houses, till the old gates of entrance are buried deep in the rubbish. And how small a part of the ancient compass of the city is now within the walls, and yet people can imagine that the Church of the Sepulchre, which is even now deeply imbedded in streets, was once outside the city wall.

Jerusalem was beginning to swarm with travellers, and their tents dotted all the good camping grounds without the walls. Easter was near, and long processions of pilgrims were continually moving about from one so-called holy place to another. The Moslems, too, were celebrating one of their festivals, and noisy drums often called me to the windows to watch the wild-looking crowd carrying many a banner, in the middle of which some holy man was borne shoulder high, and others danced along in a wild state of excitement, sometimes even cutting themselves with knives.

April 1st, the Passover, was celebrated by the Jews. I had never seen the ceremonial, so was very glad to have an opportunity of doing so in Jerusalem. This opportunity was opened to me by an invitation from a devoted German lady who had the superintendance of the hospital for Jews, maintained by the London Jewish Mission Society. Her task there was no light one, but was faithfully performed from love to that Heavenly Master, who has since then taken her home to rest with himself. Miss Hoffman had invited a Rabbi and his family to conduct the Passover service in the hospital, so that everything was done according to the true Jewish ceremonial. It would take too long to describe all the various readings, eatings, drinkings, etc., each minutely prescribed by tradition. The company was pretty large, but among them all I only saw one face that bore any trace of reverence. One handsome elderly Jew did not take much part in their irreverent sort of chanting and reading, though he had his book open before him, but his serious thoughtful face struck me so much, that I asked Miss Hoffman about him. She told me that he was one of the patients, of whom she had great hopes that he would receive Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah. Perhaps, as he sat there, and heard the boy ask (as he prescribed) what was the meaning of this celebration, and heard him told that a pointed back to the deliverance of his people from Egypt, he might feel how wanting the feast was in all that once made it so solemn. Where now was the slain lamb, where the sprinkled blood? The bond of mutton from which they tore the flesh with their hands, the unleavened bread bound in a cloth on the back of one of the men, the bitter herbs of which they partook, all could avail nothing without that shedding of blood which alone could atone for sin. If the burden of sin lay heavy upon him, as it does on many a conscientious Jew, perhaps this Passover service, so wanting in its very central object,—the slain lamb,—might remind him of Daniel's prophecy of the "ceasing of the oblation and the sacrifice" after the "Messiah" was "cut off, but not for himself." The Rabbi had a young wife with him, his third wife. From the others he had been divorced, and by each marriage, and each divorce (according to tradition) he did a good deed, and had up a stock of merit for himself. Thus do they still make void God's law by their traditions.

The service connected with the preparation of the Passover bread are very numerous and strange, beginning from the time when the ripe grain is ready to be cut down. This must be done under inspection of a Rabbi, and from the time when the ears are cut the utmost care must be exercised that not one drop of rain or any other moisture shall fall on it for fear of fermentation. If rain should fall when the corn is still in the field after it is cut, it is useless as far

as the Passover is concerned; but rain in "wheat harvest" is still as much a phenomenon in Palestine, as in the days when Samuel called on God, and he sent it that the people of Israel might "perceive and see that their wickedness was great." After the grain is thrashed out, still it must be guarded with the most jealous care all the year through till the next Passover season. If a drop of water should fall on the bag of wheat, if any mouse or unclean animal should touch it, it is ruined. Then, before grinding it, the mill must be thoroughly cleansed from all remains of ordinary flour. All must be done under authority. A friend told me of seeing a Jewess in sore distress. She had brought her bag of corn to the mill, and while there it was discovered that a mouse had nibbled a hole in it, therefore the wheat was useless for the Passover bread, and she had no more of the carefully kept grain wherewith to make it. Truly they still lay heavy burdens on men's shoulders by their traditions.

(To be continued.)

The Evangelistic efforts of Uneducated Men.—Are such of permanent value to the Church?

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—In your report of services held at the opening of the new Knox College building, as given in the PRESBYTERIAN of Oct. 15th, certain sentiments touching lay effort in the service of Christ are credited to the Chairman of the Board of Management, which it is to be hoped are entertained by few of the ministers of our beloved Church. Although the Rev. speaker aims his shafts mainly at those individuals who, though gifted with no higher theological culture than the love of Christ in their own souls, nevertheless make bold to tell the story of a Saviour's grace to their fellow men, his remarks take scope sufficient to depreciate Christian work of every other description performed by any, save college graduates. The illiterate children of God may breathe from the heart the prayer "Thy kingdom come," supplicating the Divine countenance and blessing on all ministerial work;—grace for the souls of relatives and neighbours, and salvation for all men,—giving of their substance for the cause of truth, and obeying obedience to the varied injunctions of the Divine Spirit whose temples they are, yet the net results, it appears, can be summed up in the few sad words, "little permanent good."

A manifest hesitancy, however, it must be confessed, characterizes the Rev. speaker's utterance at this point in his address, as if his mind was not fully made up as to the expediency of acknowledging to the full extent his conviction of the fruitlessness of the efforts at Christian work, of unlettered men; therefore we pass on to the consideration of another phase of the subject, on which he dilates with a much greater degree of confidence. He says, "The truth is, that uneducated men, as preachers at least, have done very little permanent good to the Church of Christ." Had the Rev. gentleman qualified this observation by remarking on the "little permanent good" which the Presbyterian section of the Church of Christ had derived from the labours of such men, he would have been more easily understood, inasmuch as lay preaching is comparatively a novelty in our Presbyterian Churches, from which the bitter opposition to that kind of work, which was a characteristic of the Presbyterianism of the past, is only beginning to pass away, in consequence of the manifest tokens of Divine blessing which accompany the evangelistic labours of untrained preachers at the present day. In recording my dissent from the views embodied in the above quotation, I would not be understood as attempting to detract in the least degree from the dignity and efficiency of an educated ministry. As an ordinance of God, it is above criticism, and ought to be treated with reverence, being a means whereby He maketh Himself known. Such may not, however, be the only agency He employs for spreading abroad among men the knowledge of His name. If we find that the humble efforts of believers, who have enjoyed none of the advantages of training which the schools afford, meet with Divine sanction and are accompanied with Divine power for the ingathering of souls, surely such ought to be regarded with equal consideration. Nor is there lack of proof of this in the Word of God. The earnest Christian, how meagre soever his literary acquirements may be, whose heart yearns with compassion for the lost, may, with his finger on the Divine command, "Let him that heareth say, come."—Rev. xxii. 17.—Preach to the many or the few, and tread his way through all the arguments with which the learned theologian may attempt to bar his progress.

In the brief narrative of the persecution that arose about Stephen, recorded in Acts viii. 1-4, and xi. 19-21, we find that the members of the Church at Jerusalem were all scattered abroad, except the apostles; that they preached the Word at the places whether they went, and that the hand of the Lord was with them, and great numbers believed, and turned to the Lord. But what of the Apostles themselves? With all deference to the Rev. Dr.'s views regarding their claim to rank as "educated" ministers of the Word, we nevertheless think Scripture testimony is against him. When Peter and John, leading men among the twelve, were brought before the chief priests and elders of the Jews to answer for their conduct in connection with the healing of the cripple at the temple gate, they took occasion to preach a powerful Gospel sermon to these dignitaries, who, we are told, "perceiving that they were unlearned and ignorant men, marvelled; and took knowledge of them that they had

been with Jesus. Again, we find no rounded periods, no marks of the cultivated mind, in the sermons preached by them with such marvellous success at Pentecost and on other occasions. The simple facts of the death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and second coming of Christ, clothed in the plainest language, were all that was necessary, with the power of the Holy Ghost, for the quickening of multitudes of souls. These simple truths must still form the burden of the preacher's message, if souls are to be reached and the world claimed for Christ. But, I ask, is this testimony bound up in the hands of the theologian in these latter days? Is there no room for the ministry of such men as John Bunyan, the Bedfordinker, or "The Missionary of Kilmarnock," the friend of Chalmers, who gave it his opinion that "a scotch of Latin would spoil Sandy," when friends recommended a course of college training before entering on his work, or of Duncan Mathieson, the soldier's friend; or of Robert Flockhart; or of Messrs. Moody and Sankey, on the back of whose labours the Rev. gentleman's strictures descend with a singularly bad grace? In no sense does it detract from the honourable and permanent character of the work in which such men were engaged, to know that they were uneducated, and that the trophies of grace which rewarded their efforts were gathered chiefly from the masses.

Whether better results in the way of "permanent good" might be expected from the ministry of polished theologians in the same fields, it is difficult to tell, because, as a general rule, it is not in such spheres of labour that they exercise their gifts.

The cry, "come over and help us," is to all such, with but few exceptions, a "regular Gospel call" only when it comes in the shape of a request from an organized company of professed believers, to minister to them in holy things. Now, we find no fault with this mode of service; it is perfectly Scriptural, and believers need to be guided onward in the Divine life. We do, however, find fault with endeavours to undervalue the self-denying labours of men whose compassion is moved to active exertion by the cry, "No man can enter for our souls." A kind of begrudged recognition, it is true, is extended to them by the Rev. speaker whose remarks we have been considering. He says, "They have often done good work as pioneers in new countries and heathen lands, but their labours were almost inevitably succeeded by a reign of scepticism and irreligion, or by educated men as preachers." To the list of places here mentioned as having benefited by the labours of uneducated preachers may be added our Christian Churches. How often have the simple services conducted by such men as Moody or Varley, been blessed to souls who for many years had wasted on the ministrations of educated ministers without apparent benefit.

There are few intelligent Christians on either side of the Atlantic, who are at all conversant with the religious movements of the present day, who will dispute this fact, and I leave it to the Rev. gentleman, the task of reconciling the phenomenon, with his own theory regarding the human agency engaged in its accomplishment.

Yours, etc., AN ELDER.

Some Hints in Scripture Interpretation.

The answer to the third question in the Shorter Catechism was not given by chance by its compilers. That answer is expressed in accordance with a great principle running through the Word of God. "The Scriptures," it says on the one hand, "principally teach what man is to believe concerning God," and on the other hand "What duty God requires of man." On the one hand there is declarative objective truth, and on the other hand commanded subjective truth. On the one hand there is a Divine Sovereign aspect, and on the other hand a human responsible aspect. As long as we are considering the truth from the Divine aspect we have no difficulty. When God declares the eternal nature of His purposes, His election of individuals, the plan of His redemption scheme, His regulation of the world, etc., there is nothing conflicting to the mind, and it is a comparatively easy matter to build up a system of truth from such data. Thus when Christ says, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you," we say at once that means election, or again when he says, "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered," we say that means the minuteness of God's providence. Guided by this class of truths, the compilers of the Confession of Faith built up the admirable system therein contained.

It is only when we have to deal with those truths in which man is addressed as a responsible agent that any great difficulty appears to arise. For instance, take the text, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Many are distressed to know how a dead soul can arise, and many seek refuge in Antinomianism, whereas the simple explanation of the matter is, that God addresses men through His Word, recognizing the fact that the Spirit in all His power is already among men, although He does not say so every time He addresses them. He says to the world "awake," crediting it with the agency of the Spirit. He says to men "believe, knowing that the Spirit is not far from the heart of any one." At the time the blind and dumb man possessed of a devil was healed by Christ, we have no mention of the Spirit.—Matt. xii. 22. Afterwards, however, in answer to the Pharisees, the fact of the Spirit's agency comes to the surface. Then again Christians are addressed, the possession of the Spirit being credited to them. Thus, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Knowing this important

fact, however, "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

We only wish to mention at present one more point bearing on the second class of truths under consideration, that in which the Word is addressed to the Saints, leaving out of view their possession of the Spirit. In Rom. viii. chap., where Paul is proving the doctrine of the perseverance of the Saints, he looks at the work as one wrought by God, and as Hodge well shows in his system, proves the doctrine by a series of arguments. Let me quote from Hodge. "It will be seen that the Apostle does not rest the perseverance of the Saints on the undestructible nature of faith, or on the imperishable nature of the principle of grace in the heart, or on the constancy of the believer's will, but solely on what is out of ourselves." From data such as this we easily formulate the doctrine. But when we read 1 Cor. vii. 21. "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died," it appears to conflict with Rom. viii. The Apostle in the chapter is speaking of the evil of the brother strong in faith by his not leading a weak brother to sin. The great truth before his mind is the sin of the strong man and not the sin of the weak, yet we are not told that the strong man perishes. He speaks of the weak as a man influenced by the conduct of another, and represents him as a weak sinful mortal, leaving out of view the Spirit and imperishable seed within. He would not most certainly perish in his sin were it not for the power of the divine life, and the strong is to act as though his wrong conduct might lead to the destruction of a soul whose natural bent is to do evil. S.

The Late Rev. Dr. Stewart, Wyastone Leys.

We recently recorded the sudden removal of Dr. Alexander Stewart, minister of the English Presbyterian congregation at Wyastone Leys, near Monmouth. Dr. Stewart was born in Dublin, of Scotch parentage, in 1802, his father having settled in that city as a physician. The youngest of ten children, he was educated for the Irish Bar at Trinity College, from which he successively received the degrees of A.M. and LL.D.; but on experiencing a change of heart, his thoughts were directed to the ministry of the Gospel. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Dublin, and for some time laboured, without any fixed charge, in the south of Ireland. About 1834 he became minister of the Presbyterian congregation of Stafford, but after a brief time there he resigned his charge, and became associated with the "Plymouth Brethren." After worshipping with these for about twenty years, certain circumstances arose regarding which his conscientious and sensitive mind could get no satisfaction, and leaving their connection, he was in 1854 readmitted by the Presbytery of Dublin. Subsequently, from 1866 to 1868, he was settled at Gainsay, after which, with impaired health and strength, he became pastor of the small English Presbyterian congregation at Wyastone Leys, from which he has so suddenly been called to his rest.

In preaching, Dr. Stewart's manner was a general calm and undemonstrative, rising frequently to energy and even eloquence. His sermons were marked by scriptural richness and the attractive thoughtfulness of an accomplished and scholarly mind.

In the quiet sphere in which he spent his last years his Christian consistency and courteous kindness won for him the respect of all sorts and conditions of men, even of those who ecclesiastically differed from him the most widely. But the truest tribute to his memory are the precious results which remain of his pastorate at Wyastone, and of his loving voluntary ministrations in the neighbouring town of Monmouth. Within the last year, chiefly in connection with his ministry, a marked work of grace has been experienced at both places. Like the palm-tree, with fruit most abounding in old age, he has left many now walking in bowness of life who mourn for him, and will remember him as their father in Christ.

Dr. Stewart was twice married, leaves a widow and two little children.

Dr. Stewart was the life long intimate friend of the late Dr. Henry Cooke of Belfast, who brought his case before the General Assembly in 1864. Dr. S.'s labours in his peculiar charge were confined to a particular class, and shut him off from the masses of the people. This, however, did not satisfy his ardent spirit. He connected himself with the "W. King Men's Association" in the town of Monmouth, to whom he preached every Lord's day, with wonderful success. Dr. Stewart took a lively interest in the work of Moody and Sankey.

Golden Candlestick.

A discovery of some interest has recently been made at Gaza, in the old mosque of that city, which was once a Jewish synagogue. But on one of the marble columns of this mosque is a beautifully executed model of the golden candlestick of the temple. It resembles very much the one on the arch of Titus at Rome, only this one is surrounded with a wreath, as if trimmed for some festive occasion, perhaps the feast of tabernacles. It has the seven branches with candles burning in the sockets. The knifes of sacrifice hang from one of the branches, and some other instrument from another branch on the opposite side. The name of Rabbi Hanna, son of Joseph—Jehoiada, the son of Joseph—in old Hebrew is inscribed below it in the same old Heb. script.

The north wind can kill weeds better than the south wind.