

Turkey.

A Jerusalem Correspondent.

My first acquaintance with the Turkish Empire dates from the close of the Crimean war, when I travelled in it, and resided within its territories three years—1856-58—and was instrumental in planting the Church of Scotland's Missions at Salonica and Smyrna, I have ever since taken very deep and constant interest in all that concerns Turkey, watching closely and attentively its political, social and religious destinies. Why so? Because, Turkey's flag covers lands of the highest interest to Bible students; to antiquarians, to historians of the human race, and to all who believe in the restoration of the Jews to Palestine and in the second coming of Messiah—the Lord Jesus—in glory and majesty to reign over the whole world.

And I firmly maintain that they are fully warranted in their belief, for it is indubitably taught in the Bible, the inspired Revelation of God, clothed necessarily in human phraseology and in divergent styles, but still the *Word of God*—the Oracles Divine, despite all the ingenuity and quibbling of the higher criticism in vogue now-a-days, higher only in its own presumptuous conceit. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because (literally) the dawn of day has not risen upon him"—he is still in the darkness of night. (Is. viii. 20).

There is Armenia, the cradle of mankind,—poor, bleeding Armenia, where thousands of our fellow-creatures—men, women and children—have been mercilessly, cruelly, barbarously butchered, and tens of thousands have been reduced to starvation and indescribable misery, mainly because they do not belong to the religion of the dominant race! It is a disgrace, a woeful disgrace to the Christian powers of the world on both sides the Atlantic, that this should, could, happen in our boasted age of advanced, progressive civilization; and happen with complete immunity.

There is Egypt with its grand incomparable Pyramids and hoary antiquities; and there are the old lands of Edom, Ammon and Moab; of the ancient empires of the Hittites and Ammorites; and of Phenicia the mother of seafarers and of navigation to distant shores.

And there is above all and superior to all, *the Land of the Bible*—Palestine—the land of the Patriarchs and Prophets; of the Apostles and Martyrs, Immanuel's land and the city of the great King, than which no other possesses equal interest, either as regards its past history, replete with manifestations of Divine power; its present condition, so irrefutably proving the inspiration of prophecies delivered hundreds of years before the predicted events; and finally the events now looming on the horizon of Turkey and the Orient so beaming with the approaching fulfilment of prophecy.

Here am I again in Turkish territory, in the land of my forefathers, since Nov. 1887, and in the Holy City since Aug. 1890, with the exception of about fifteen months in 1893-94 visiting friends in England and the United States and speaking in hundreds of pulpits and platforms,—here am I again in close contact and attentive observation of events transpiring in this land of Turkey, and watching its horizon and the thick clouds gathering around it; and here I give to your readers a few thoughts on the peculiarities of this land.

TURKEY DIFFICULT TO GOVERN.

There is no land in this world more difficult of government than Turkey. Why so? Because of its varied inimical divided inhabitants, belonging to antagonistic races, speaking different languages, and holding to irreconcilable creeds. The wonder is that the Turk has succeeded in keeping the divergent parts under his dominion so long. Thus much in exoneration of Turkish misrule.

The great bane of Turkey is the sectarian spirit and mutual hatred of Papists, Greeks, Armenians, Copts, Melchites, Maronites, Jews and the dominant Moslems, and these last are also divided into sects and races, bearing no love to each other. It is a house divided against itself, and it cannot stand together much longer—it must go to pieces—unless the Christian nations permit the extermination of one section of the mongrel population, after another with the iron rod of despotism

—could the several so-called Christian sects be brought into accord and concord, and to act harmoniously for the general good, and to co-operate with the Jews in common objects for the welfare of all, the discordant elements might subsist longer compactly. But the Christian sects, particularly the Greeks, hate the Jews intensely, and it cannot be expected that the Jews would love them, or care to promote their separate interests, and it is pretty much the same amongst themselves.

The Language of Jesus.

In what language were the beatitudes, the exquisite parables of the New Testament, and the "other commandment" first spoken? What was the mother tongue of Jesus? The history of the attempt to answer this query is perhaps as interesting as the question itself, for no dead language can now convey to us any happier sense of the inspiration of the Master than that to which we have learned to respond in the familiar words of our own daily life. The earliest of the fathers of the church gave no consideration, as far as is known, to the exact language employed by Jesus; the term "Hebrew" seemed to cover all allied and kindred tongues. Since the renaissance of letters and the general stirring up of critical inquiry in the sixteenth century, there have been many guesses. The Jesuits are said to have maintained that Latin must have been the original language of the apostles and their Lord, because the Vulgate, published under the sanction of the Catholic church, was in that tongue. Of course this was soon answered by the opposite assumption of Protestants, that, as the Septuagint was in Greek, so Jesus must have spoken in that language. Recently a very scholarly and satisfying inquiry into the whole matter has been made by Dr. Meyer of the University of Bonn, the results of which he has published in a small volume. Dr. Meyer's conclusion is as follows:—"The facts in the case, especially as seen in the words of the New Testament other than Greek, show that the Lord spoke an Aramaic language, and of this language, again, a Galilean dialect. The Aramaic is a branch of the north Semitic, and, as such, a sister tongue of the Hebrew. Long before the close of the Old Testament canon the Aramaic had supplanted Hebrew in population use in Israel, and had become the language of trade and business between the peoples of Syria and countries farther east. Already a Jeremiah and an Ezekiel show the influence of this tongue. The same is true of the later Psalm, Ecclesiastes, and especially Ezra and Daniel, both of which contain portions written in this dialect. During the Maccabean period the Aramaic had virtually supplanted Hebrew in Israel. It is used in the Talmud; and its general use is reported by Philo, a contemporary of Saint Paul, and by the historian Josephus, who calls it the 'language of the fatherland.'" In connection with this study Dr. Meyer tells us there is one work, and only one, extant in the exact dialect used by Jesus; and that is a version of the Talmud, called the "Jerusalem Talmud," written the third century after Christ, in the city of Tiberias. This, at least, is a most interesting bit of information.—*Christian Register.*

The Believer's Union with Christ.*

* BY REV. ADDISON P. FOSTER, D. D.

Christ in continuing His words of comfort to His disciples, as He is about to leave them, speaks at length of the union existing between them and Him. That union is most intimate. It is such as exists between a vine and its branches, in which there is the same life and where the branches not only cease to bear fruit but perish if separated from the vine.

Christ characteristically considers this relationship in its results and this in three aspects;—the results upon Christians, the results on Christ and the results on the world.

UNION WITH CHRIST RESULTING IN FRUIT BEARING.

The fact of union with Christ is tested by its fruit bearing. If one does not bear fruit he is rejected; there is no vital union in the case. The Divine life does not flow into him, for if it did, it would inevitably lead to fruit. By fruit is undoubtedly meant all such results as naturally come from the Christian life and these are both inward and

*An Exposition based on (John xv. 1-25), in the Bible Study Union Course on "The Teachings of Christ."