

THE CHALDEAN CHURCH.

(From the Episcopal Recorder.)

All the missionary explorations that have been set on foot, whether by Presbyterians or Episcopalians, for ascertaining the state of the decayed Christian Churches in the East, seem to have resulted in disclosing two important facts. First, that all those ancient Churches are Episcopally constituted, and profess to have been so from the beginning; and, secondly, that though for ages they have been enveloped in error and kept in the fiery furnace of persecution, they are in worship and doctrine, far more free from error, and more conformable to the Scriptural standards than either the Latin or Greek Churches.

We have been particularly interested in some facts that have recently come in our way in relation to the Chaldean Christians. These facts are gleaned from a work recently published in England by Mr. Ainsworth. Mr. Ainsworth was sent out in 1838 by the Royal Geographical Society, and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, in charge of the exploring expedition to the Christian tribes in Chaldea. The work to which we refer, contains much that is interesting in reference to the scientific and geographical results of the expedition—the character of the countries visited—the peculiarities of their inhabitants, their scenery and antiquities. But it is the facts unfolded by the author in reference to the present religious condition of the Chaldean Christians, and their views of Church discipline and government, that most deeply interest us. The July number of The Churchman's Monthly Review contains an able and somewhat extended notice of these volumes of Mr. Ainsworth. To this Review we are indebted for our information on this subject.

The Chaldeans, at a very early period, took a stand against Romish usurpation. They seem remarkably free in most things from the corruption and superstition of Rome. They give no countenance to the doctrine of transubstantiation or of veneration of pictures. The Chaldeans, on the subject of pictures, says Mr. Ainsworth, remarked of them, "If the Christians of Europe, and of the Greek Church, make pictures and kiss them, or bow down before them and worship them, where is the difference between them and the heathen?" They could not away with the Romish crucifixes. When a brass crucifix made at Rome was presented to the Chaldean Patriarch by a Priest, he took it in his hand, and after looking at it a little while, he shook it before the priest's face, saying, "The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands; they have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not, neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them, are like unto them, so is every one that trusteth in them." He continued about a minute after this turning it over and over looking at it, and repeating the words—"Oh unbelievers! oh blasphemers!"

But our readers will be more gratified to read, in the author's own language, some sketches which he has drawn of this interesting people. He tells us he had reached the village of Hays, "near which were two or three smaller villages, all belonging to Chaldeans. The waters from the spring flowed to the Khabar, along the valley of the tributaries to which, and in the heart of the Babylonian country, there is said to be a considerable Chaldean population, and which we found indeed afterwards extending to the banks of the Tigris by the vale of the episcopate of Mar Yohannan."

The description which Mr. Ainsworth gives of the Bishop of Berrawi, whom he met at Hays, is very interesting:

"At the village of Hays we found Ishayah, Bishop of Berrawi, with his attendants waiting for us; although an old man, he had walked from his residence at Duri, a distance of nine miles, to meet us. This first specimen of a chief dignitary of the Chaldean Church was highly favourable. I had expected a bishop who was a stout, coarse-looking man, with a coat-of-mail; but, instead of that, we saw an aged man, of spare habit, with much repose and dignity in his manners, and a very benevolent and intelligent aspect, his hair and beard nearly silver white, his forehead wrinkled, and his eyes clear and bright. He was eating meat, uncommonly clear and fair. Welcoming us in the most urbane manner, he held his hand to be kissed, a custom common in this country, and accompanied the ceremony by expressions of civility and regard. Dr. Grant describes the same bishop as a most patriarchal personage, and the bishop who presented himself to me, was of the use of a horse. I was not fatigued, and preferred walking; but he had never been accustomed to ride, and it was with some difficulty that we got him to mount a loaded mule, where he could sit safe between two men. We then started, Kasha Mandu, a portly-dressed man carrying a hooked stick, walking ceremoniously before."

"The happy moral influence of Christianity could not be more plainly manifested than in the change of manners immediately observable in the country where the more force from its contrast with the sullen ferocity of the Mohammedans. The kind, cordial manners of the people, and the great respect paid to their clergy, were among the first fruits of that influence which showed themselves. Nothing could be more gratifying than a prolonged residence among the proud Mohammedans and servile Christians, than to observe on this little procession, the peasants running from the villages even a mile distant, and flocking to kiss the hand of the benevolent white-haired dignitary. St. Paul said—he with much reason, 'I was glad to see the Christians of Tarsus, and to greet as to great as the anxiety to perform this act of kindly reverence, that little children were held up in the arms of their fathers to partake in it. Kasha Mandu also came in for his share of congratulations and welcomes. Everywhere the same pleasurable testimonies of respect, mingled with love, were exhibited."

Mr. Ainsworth gives a very interesting account of his conversation with the Bishop.

"We spent the evening with the bishop. We were in a grove of luxuriant growth and variegated foliage; golden orioles sang from the shades and pigeons cooed from the rocks above; the men sat round and patted us on the back with their hands, and the women crowded to enter into the passing conversation. The bishop was much pleased when the proposition was made to him to open schools, and to effect some improvement in the education of the people; he looked upon it as we are worthy of that which we can afford it, and I hope we shall also prove ourselves worthy of the friendly assistance of those who can bestow it upon us. A tear gathered in his eye as he talked of the years of oppression and neglect, and oblivion, which had passed over his people, and as he recalled the efforts of his brethren to school, of priests rising in the scale of humanity. He also asked many questions concerning the doctrine and government of the Church of England. Among the most interesting of these, were his inquiries as to whether the priests of England put the consecrated bread into the mouths of the people, or communicate them with bread only. Upon it being explained to him that our forms were here similar, he was much pleased. He said he had thought that there was no church in the world which communicated as the old churches did.

"He asked me concerning the penance of fasting. I said, our Chaldean interpreter, was instructed to say that fasting is enjoined in our liturgies on many occasions, and is almost generally practised on certain holy festivals; it is observed by the people on the days of the week, and regarded by others. The bishop said, 'We attach importance to the act of fasting, because (quoting the leading apostle) our Lord said to the Jews, concerning his disciples, 'As long as the bridegroom is on earth, they do not fast, but when he is absent, they fast.' We, on our part, made direct inquiries regarding the sacraments of the Chaldean Church. The bishop answered, 'Two sacraments only are mentioned in our liturgies, baptism and the eucharist, and so the fathers of our Church taught us; but the rest (and he enumerated more than its original part, do, evidently considering the word sacrament as being applied to the consecrated bread in the bread and wine, and to the consecrated wine, and applying it to consecration of churches, &c.) are only holy ordinances or forms of the Church.' He remarked that no layman can enter into the holy place (the bishop chanced to be present) and that the priest must consecrate it again."

"The aged dignitary expressed at length his feelings of deep regret at the corruption and apostasy which had found their way into this church—a church which he fondly remembered had stood from the earliest times of Christianity, amid all kinds of difficulties, reverses, and persecutions. Often had he seen the altar of the God sold as slaves, their churches pillaged, and their books destroyed. 'Yet,' he continued, 'thank God, we are still as we were, only in a great city there should be apostates among us.' (Vol. ii, p. 212-214.)

We shall, in our next number, present our readers with some further accounts of this interesting people.

THE BISHOP OF JERUSALEM'S FIRST ORDINATION.

(From the Jewish Intelligence for July.)

Our Bishop held his first ordination on Sunday, 17th April, 1842. His Lordship desired me to communicate to you the particulars of that solemn occasion. Under present circumstances, however, I can do so but very imperfectly. The candidate was Mr. John Muhlisen, one of the two Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, destined for Abyssinia, who had been directed by their Committee to return from Cairo to Jerusalem for that purpose. After both had spent some time in the Holy City, preparing for the sacred occasion, one of them was directed by the Committee, for special reasons, to return to London, and the one named above was thus the only remaining candidate, who, after previous examination by Mr. Williams (the Bishop's Chaplain), was admitted to deacons' orders. It having been known that the solemnity was to take place on the day named above, our little chapel was quite crowded at the usual hour of service. Several persons from the Greek convent and church were present, and, but for the inconvenience of the hour, more would have been there from that of the Armenians also. There was also a number of English travellers. I first read the morning service as usual, up to where the Litany should have followed. The Bishop then preached, with deep emotion, a very impressive sermon on the occasion from Rom. x. 15, "How shall they preach except they be sent?" He concluded in the following manner, being sent of his address to the candidate:

"One hope only I would express before I conclude, that, as you are the first ordained under our episcopate, and as you receive your sacred commission on the most interesting spot in the world, so you will never cease to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. And when you shall be engaged in distant lands proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation, remember that it is also a part of the duty of a minister of God to 'declare in the isles afar off, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations; He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand that was stronger than he; therefore thy shall come and sing in the heights of Zion,' &c. &c. Jer. xxxi. 12, 14.

His Lordship then proceeded with the Ordination Service, assisted by Mr. Williams, and closed the whole by the administration of the Holy Sacrament in which five Clergymen partook with him and the Deacon, as did also other travellers and members of the mission. In the afternoon the Deacon read prayers for me at the German service, and will, with Mr. Ewald, supply my place in this during my absence, as he will remain here some months to receive priests' orders.

The absence of that increased sense of solemnity on such occasions in England, from the number of those thus solemnly set apart for the Christian ministry, was richly made up for on this occasion, by the thought, that it was the first time that, since a period of full 1700 years, this sacred ordinance had been performed in the Holy City by a son of Abraham, a brother of the apostles and of the Lord, as well as a successor to them in the apostolic office. It is interesting to reflect that this, the ordaining of deacons, is the first on record of the specifically episcopal functions exercised by the apostles on that very same spot. (Acts vi.)

SCRAPS FROM THE JOURNAL OF A TRAVELLER.

(From the Achil Missionary Herald.)

Walked to and from the G— station, and lectured, with usual service, to the isolated little flock of that remote spot. Subject, Isaiah xlii, 1—12, same as at M— on Sunday night. On the way I succeeded in distributing a few tracts amongst some of the Jews, and in reading along that line, and in a Romish hedge school near G— read for the master, his pupils, and two or three women, a portion of God's Word with some observations and illustrations expounding and applying the sacred text. The Testament out of which I read, being the Rhemish version, I was glad to be able to tell the Jews of their own books that they were reading for them. This they believed, and were accordingly the more attentive. It is not, however, at all times that we can be so fortunate as this. No association in the minds of many of them is the notion of any thing bearing the name of Bible or Testament, with every thing terrible and bad, that the very production of even their own books for them. 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