

GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S DEPUTATION TO PALESTINE.

The following letter has come to hand, from which our readers will see that the Deputation of the General Assembly's Committee are now within a brief space of that interesting country—the land of Canaan. It is dated *Alexandria*, 15th May, 1839, and is from the Rev. Mr. Bonar, one of the members of the Deputation:—

“MY DEAR SIR:—I write you from Alexandria, at which we arrived on Monday last, the 13th, in all safety and comfort. Hitherto our way has opened on us as we advanced, as if the Lord had been sending his angel before us to prepare a place. For not only are all of us well and our journeyings pleasant, but we have found kind friends to refresh and aid us. This has been the case here as much as any where. On our arrival we were informed that three cases, supposed to be plague, had occurred at Alexandria that very day. An announcement like this excites in Europeans no apprehension whatever in regard to personal danger; but it has the disagreeable effect of subjecting every individual who leaves the town after that date, to a quarantine of perhaps twenty days ere he can enter any other city of another country. Accordingly, we were in great apprehensions of being delayed in our purpose of proceeding immediately to Palestine; but the kindness of the British Consul, Mr. Larkins, relieved us from fear. He showed us the possibility of passing the frontier at El Arish, before the quarantine regulations could be established there, if we chose to set out without delay, and instead of visiting Cairo, take the route by Damietta. We did not hesitate to follow his suggestion; and in consequence, we start from this place to-morrow morning. We shall begin then to know by experience, the necessity of imitating the patriarchs, who, in their journeyings, ‘*rose up early in the morning*’, and got on their way. We carry our provisions with us, such as bread, rice, dates, and also tents, which we are to pitch every day before noon, resting for some hours, and then in the cool of the day travelling onwards some hours farther, till we pitch again for the night. Our proposed route is by Damietta to Gaza, thence eastward to Hebron, and so to Jerusalem. The journey to Gaza may occupy about twelve days. We have reason to hope that before we reach Jerusalem, the plague there may be so abated as to throw no obstacle in the way, not only of our entering the city, but also entering into intercourse with the Jews. But these are prospective movements, the issues of which are entirely in the hands of our God. We were reading Deut. viii. at our morning worship to-day; and the same God will put under us his everlasting arms, blessing those that seek to carry blessing to Israel.

“Mr. McCheyne wrote you a sketch of our way as far as *Malta*. The associations of *Malta* are interesting in reference to the object of our mission, because the scene of some of the sufferings and trials, as well as labours of Paul, who, though ‘*a Hebrew of the Hebrews*,’ whose heart’s

desire was to see Israel saved, yet came to us Gentiles with the message of salvation. The Lord raise up some one from the Gentiles to be an apostle to the Jews! At *Malta* we found there were very few resident Jews, and little known regarding these few. But several individuals gave useful information; among others, an English clergyman, who, with his lady, had just returned from Palestine. From him we learned that the number of Jews in Palestine is much smaller than is generally asserted, and that they are wretched in the extreme.

“On leaving this island, which we did on the 3th of May, we sailed over a calm and pleasant sea to *Syra*, one of the Greek islands, passing many places famous in history. At *Syra*, at which we touched for a few hours, we visited the excellent and interesting schools established by the Church Missionary Society for the native Greeks. There are about six hundred boys and girls in attendance, instructed in useful knowledge and in the word of eternal life. We trust the Lord will prosper the labours of Mr. Kildner, and his fellow-labourers in this work. Before leaving the island we wrote to an individual in *Corfu*, to whom we had introductions, requesting full information as to the state of the Jews there.—We had been informed that there were five thousand in that island. In Greece, generally, Jews are rarely found, because of the deep antipathy that has prevailed hitherto between them and the Greeks. Can there be any reference to this, as a seed of future events, in *Zechariah ix. 12*, ‘*Thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece?*’ In *Corfu*, British protection quite alters their state; and it was so ordered, in the providence of God, that a French gentleman on board our vessel, had lately come from that spot, and knew it well, whose report quite confirmed what we had heard. I should have mentioned that we have also written to Mr. Ewald, at *Tunis*, requesting particular information as to the Jews in *Morocco* and *Barbary*.

“We left *Syra* on Saturday afternoon, 11th May, and among other passengers who joined us here, were four Jews, who were going up to *Jerusalem*, on a pilgrimage, intending to return in the course of two or three months. They were all from the *Dardanelles*. One of them was a rabbi. We did not at first discover them to be Jews, there being many other Easterns on board, but the sight of their Hebrew books at once led us to the discovery. It was the evening of their own Sabbath; and it so happened that the place of scripture which one of them had open before him, when we joined them, was *Psalms lxxxv. 1, 2*. We soon entered into conversation, for though Spanish was the language they were accustomed to, yet all spoke Italian, and one of them French also. We seated ourselves on the deck along with them. The sun was nearly setting, and we were passing between *Naxos* and *Paros*, under a delightful sky. We read some of the scriptures with them, and drew out their remarks