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## Contributors and Correspondents.

### DIARY IN THE EAST.

ANATHOTH, MICHMASH—FEAST OF PAPHIN IN JERUSALEM—JERICHO, JORDAN, AND THE DEAD SEA.—Continued.

Its inhabitants bear a very bad character and looked their character thoroughly. One of the men followed us back to the hostelry, trying to persuade us to let him give an exhibition of the wild dancing and singing with which they often entertain travellers. We declined the offer, not liking the descriptions of the scenes we had read, and doubting much whether such exhibitions were fit things for Christians to encourage. After dinner, as we were sitting in the tent in the dusk, some men again came wanting to sing and dance for Bakaheesh. The howls with which they introduced themselves were so horrible that we were glad to get quit of them as quickly as possible. After that we were left in peace, the only sound that disturbed the stillness being the croaking of frogs in a stream near us, and the occasional mournful weird cry of jackals. They are very plentiful; we saw them in a field close to our tent. They do not attack human beings, but a gentleman told me that when he was at Jericho, sleeping in the open air without a tent, he and his companions were obliged to watch in turns to keep off the jackals, which were ready to come snuffing about their faces in a manner more familiar than agreeable. They were sleeping without tents in consequence of their muleteers having been attacked on the road from Jerusalem, and robbed of all the baggage, tents, etc. As usual, we enjoyed reading the passages of Scripture connected with our resting place. There is abundance of interest that is certainly connected with Jericho, without taking the many events which are connected with it by doubtful tradition. When taking a little stroll before retiring to rest, I was astonished to see lights far up the wall of the mountain near the mouth of Wady Kelt. These were the lights of some who were spending part of their Lent in caves in the mountains in remembrance of our Lord's forty days fast in the wilderness. It had a very curious effect, the dimly outlined hill, dotted with these two or three solitary sparks.

March 5th proved to be all we could desire in the matter of weather for our ride to the Dead Sea, Jordan, and Elisha's fountain. I had heard so much of the intense heat from which many have suffered at Jericho, that I felt it a matter of great thankfulness that we were again protected by light clouds from the burning heat of the sun which, even so early as March, is here sometimes very oppressive. We perhaps rather erred in not starting earlier, but we made out the expedition very comfortably, though we did not start till 8 a.m. After riding past the village a little way, we again crossed the Kelt, and proceeded in a south easterly direction over a grassy flat dotted with low shrubs. Our Arab guide had a vain hunt after some wild animal, of the deer species I believe, though it started so far in advance of us that I never saw exactly what it was. Much of the ground was very pleasant for rapid riding, and Mr. W., Mustapha, and the guide had some trials of the speed of their horses, while B. and I cantered on quietly far behind. Away to our right we saw a large encampment of the black tents of Kedar, and we passed near an immense number of camels belonging to the Arabs. After riding a little more than an hour we passed from the rich plain down some very unpleasant broken banks of bare soil to a track of barrenness, which lay between us and the Sea. Much of the soil here was covered with crystals of salt and saltpetre. We had some very uncomfortable wet places to get through, the remains of the floods, which had covered all this lower part of the plain for a considerable time during the winter. At last we reached the north-west shore of the Dead Sea, at a little distance from where the Jordan enters it. We dismounted and rambled about for a little on the pebbly beach, picking up curious stones, and tasting the water. It was even more nauseous than I had expected, something like a mixture of sea water, quassia, and soda. It looks so clear and fresh that, till I tried it, it seemed scarcely possible that it could be so very different from any other water I had ever seen. The utter solitude, the complete desolation, with not a blade of grass, or tiniest weed within a long distance of that water that yet looked so bright and sparkling. And then the history connected with it, its mysterious position, and its whole surroundings so strange and unusual. It seems so cut off from all ordinary life, as if left there for ever as a monument of the terribleness of sin. The contrast between the luxuriant vegetation near Jericho, and the utter barrenness of the Dead Sea is very striking. And looking at the fact that the full volume of Jordan continually flowing living and fresh water into it, yet the deadly qualities of the sea have in all these centuries been in no degree modified, but it remains as bitter as ever, it gives a wonderful idea of the force of the elements of death in it. From the Dead Sea we proceeded northwards to the part of the Jordan which is called the Pilgrims' Bathing Place, for there the immense crowd of pilgrims that visit the Jordan at Easter bathe in remembrance of our Lord's baptism in Jordan.

We soon left the bare desolate region at the head of the Dead Sea, and got on the fertile part of the plain, over which we had a full hour's ride to the Jordan. We were rather hindered by wet swampy places which the floods had left, and much of the soil was washed bare, or covered with deposit left by the river. The river itself was a considerable distance to our right, and invisible till we came close to it.

The bathing place is generally boarded by a grassy flat enamelled with flowers, but the unusual floods had so lately retired within the river banks that vegetation had not yet covered the mud and sand left by the river. During part of the winter the river had been so high that when an English missionary wanted to pass it on his way to Sat (Ramoth Gilad), he found the boat he had hoped to use washed away, and the river up to the top of the trees that line its banks, so that only the tips of their branches appeared above the water. We could see the truth of his account by the debris sticking between the twigs high up on the willow trees.

The river had now retired between its banks, but still flowed muddy and rapid, with a very full stream. I should not have liked to try bathing in it. It would have been quite too strong for even a powerful swimmer, but our donkey man managed to find a quiet nook in the banks, and bathed without accident. The aspect of the river quite agreed with the description of the Jordan as it was at the time the Israelites crossed it, and it gave me a new impression of the faith required in the priests who at the command of God deliberately walked into the rushing stream bearing the ark of God. And what a wonderful manifestation of God's power it must have been when this rapid, powerful current suddenly stood still, when the feet of the priests were "dipped in the brim of the water." The willows were just beginning to show a little green. Amid them, growing in the water or at its very edge, were tall flags, something like paupass grass. Their feathery tops were very beautiful. I cut a few to take to Scotland with me, but as I had no way of carrying them except hanging at my saddle bow, their feathery beauty was much impaired before I got them to Jerusalem. We sat a considerable time by the Jordan taking our lunch, and dreaming over all the wonderful events that had here taken place. The passage of the Israelites must have been somewhat near here, as well as those of Elisha and Elisha. Whether our Lord's baptism took place here or not is very doubtful, but the river at least is associated with the wonderful event, when God's own Son thus submitted to be baptized by His Father, and the voice of the Father, and the descent of the Spirit testified to the acceptableness of the act in the sight of God.

From the river we turned nearly due west. First we traversed the flat that immediately borders the river, and which in high floods is overflowed. Then we had a steep bank to ascend to the higher level of the plain of Jericho. Probably it was on the edge of this bank that the "fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off," and saw Elisha and Elisha standing by Jordan before crossing it. Across the plain westward we rode through perfect fields of flowers of various hues—some of the same that we had seen among the hills were here of a much more luxuriant growth. One bright lilac flower, something like a wild stock, grew several feet, in great quantities. We passed the village and hotel, and rode on to the foot of the hills, past two aqueducts, of which a good many arches are still standing. The little fields of grain on this side of the village told how rich the soil is when watered as it is by the stream from the fountain of Elisha; it will grow almost anything. On a bank towards the hills we saw an immense regiment of storks; they were the first I had seen in Palestine. They had not yet appeared in the higher and colder parts of Judea. They seemed to be resting here before migrating further north. Close below the hills we came on great mounds grass grown, and dotted with shrubs and trees. These probably is all that remain of ancient Jericho, the Jericho of Elisha and Elisha. The fountain of Elisha flows out from the base of one of these mounds. There are remains of a large circular reservoir, in which it once was confined, till distributed by ditches over the plain. It now flows forth amid a thick shrubbery of bushes, and small trees. We saw a good many little fish in the water, as well as many fresh water shell fish of a small size. The water is slightly warm, but quite sweet, and clear. Seeing the luxuriant vegetation around it, one could easily understand of what immense value the healing of this spring must have been to the inhabitants of Jericho. The hills rise rugged and steep within a short distance of the aqueduct that cover the remains of the ancient city. They were very conveniently near for the three spies, when by Rahab's advice they fled thence to hide themselves till the search for them had passed by. Had they attempted to cross the plain to the Jordan, no doubt they would have been easily overtaken before they reached the camp of

Israel on the other side of the river. It was a wonderful feeling to stand on the scene of such events—to picture the walled city with its inhabitants looking forth in awe and wonder at the host of the Lord preceded by the ark, and the priests marched day after day in solemn silence round the doomed city. Then the last day came, when at the sound of the trumpet, and the command of Joshua, the people gave a great shout and the walls fell flat, and each man went up straight before him to take possession of that for which he had fought, but which by faith became his. What a day it must have been to Rahab and her family. Perhaps some of them doubted whether there was much wisdom in taking refuge in such a house as hers, so exposed on the city wall, and the blood red signal gave safety there, and supplied a type for all ages of the sure refuge to be found within the influence of that blood "which cleanseth from all sin." The Jericho of the days of our Lord was as I have said, on the other side of the Kelt, close to the foot of the pass by which the road from Jerusalem descends. Some think that even in those days there may have been some habitation on the site of the more ancient Jericho, and that there being thus two Jerichos may account for what seems some confusion in the Scripture narrative in regard to the healing of the two blind men at Jericho. Certainly this abundant fountain must always have been an attractive place of habitation.

From Elisha's fountain we returned to our tents to rest, and dry flowers, and dine. In the thickets near our tents there was a great deal of a small, prickly bush with a flower like a potato blossom, and bearing a fruit like a potato apple, often told is the "apple of Sodom." I at first believed the same, but I afterwards saw the real apple which is a much more curious fruit. It does not grow near Jericho. Those I saw had been brought from Engaddi. They were of the size and colour of an orange or lemon. The friend who gathered them, described his disappointment when, in the heat and thirst, he saw them at a distance, and hoped for some refreshing fruit, but when he came to pluck them found they contained nothing but small seeds, embedded in a quantity of sort of silky filaments. They are so fragrant that it is not easy to convey them to a distance unharmed.

In the evening a slight shower gave us a beautiful rainbow over the Moab mountains, which brightened the effect of the evening colours which tint them with great beauty.

March 6th broke cloudy and dismal. We intended to have started early, but had to delay on account of the heavy rain. The wind was quite cold, and everything looked very unpromising for our ride of between six and seven hours. We had committed our way to the Lord in whose shadow we had trusted, and believed He would help us through, for if we lingered at Jericho it would cause much anxiety to those we had left at Jerusalem, where possibly there might be no rain. About 8 a.m. the rain abated, and we mounted for our journey. We found how good it was to trust, and to be sure that all would be rightly ordered for us whether in pleasure or discomfort. We had not left the hotel long when the rain clouds that looked so thick and threatening broke asunder, and the sun shone forth, and there was not another drop of rain till we reached our half way resting place. We were there hardly under the shadow of an overhanging rock when a torrent of rain poured down, but it did not last long, and was past before we left our shelter. By this time we were so much above the level of Jericho that the wind which had felt so sharp then was quite piercing. Had there been rain with it, we should have hardly known how we two ladies could have braved it. As it was we all wrapped up with every warm thing we had with us. We had much laughing over the funny figures we presented. B. and I took off our hats and tied them round our waists in order to get our heads well covered with water proof hoods; then we had veils, scarfs, and all sort of things over face and throat, till it was difficult to say where we ourselves were. We looked more like an unshapely bundle of clothes on the back of the horse than anything else. Mrs. W. had an immense plaid wrapped around her, and to secure it from flying in the wind tied it round her waist with a cord, which gave her the appearance of a "fir of orders grey." The only way to prevent parting company with his hat was to tie it down with a white pocket handkerchief, which of course added to his funny look. My India rubber cap would persist in getting free, and flapping in the wind with a noise like the sails of a ship. At first this rather startled my horse and set it off at the gallop, which I thought a very good thing, for we wanted to get on as fast as possible. We parted with our Arab escort at the shoulder of the Mount of Olives. He insisted on going through the English ceremony of shaking hands with each of us. As he rode off to Ajlunis it seemed such a little round from the road between Bethany and Jerusalem, that it is quite natural that many should believe that it is Bethphage, to which our Lord sent his disciples in search of the ass, on which he entered Jerusalem.

We reached the city between two and three p.m., very thankful to be sheltered from the rain, which now again poured down. Our friends were very glad to see us safe. The night before at Jerusalem had been a regular gale of wind and rain, and they had been pitying us, and wondering how we ever could ride up the long ascent from Jericho in such weather. But we had been safe in the hollow of His hand, and He had said "cast all your care, little or great, on Him who careth for us."

(To be Continued.)

## Regeneration.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—You must be sometimes disgusted with your correspondents. We are often unwell to yourself as well as to each other. We make statements about our opponents and their productions, which if true, would reflect on your own judgment in admitting them to your columns. We keep rapping at each other knuckles in the way of detecting and correcting minor mistakes, without doing much to advance a knowledge of the subjects under discussion. "W. T." proceeding on this track in last week's number, consigns "A Layman" and myself to the ditch as blind leaders of the blind. But as that is not the best place for clarifying a subject by no mean transparent as yet—one too of some importance—as it lies at the very root of evangelistic work, we may be excused for trying to get up our heads and asking a little more of your space for its ventilation.

I shall not refer to his review of "A Layman's" letter, he can defend himself. But as to my own—he misapprehends the argument. He says it is "to prove that faith precedes life in the soul." It is nothing of the sort. The question had not arisen whether it precedes or succeeds it; indeed the subject of faith was not under consideration. "A Layman" had asked whether a certain act, namely, that "which brings a man into union with Jesus, can be exercised by one who is spiritually dead?" My reply was, "of course it can," and I see no reason to change it. He called it a living act of faith. I regarded it as a mere act of obedience, and gave as illustrations, Peter and Andrew brought into union or contact with him, in the act of obedience to the command "Follow me," and children brought into union or contact with the teacher when introduced as pupils. "W. T." calls this "the most original argument he ever met with." On reconsideration he may admit that it is not only original but unanswerable, and if he had only quoted my words fairly, and observed my definitions, he would not have needed so many points of exclamation. The idea of a convert coming to Christ who "is yet knows nothing, believes nothing, and has no conception of spiritual things," is to him inconceivable and absurd; to me it is the simplicity of Gospel truth. "Come, for all things are ready." "Compel them to come in," "suffer the little children to come to me, and forbid them not." The burden of every evangelistic address is "come—just as you are." And they do come, just as Peter and Andrew did; just as pupils do to a teacher, just as children who know nothing about faith, and as sinners who must be converted and become as children, without being encumbered with any such conditions of enquireness as "whether they believe in His existence," which would be an impertinence, or "that He is divine or what He did for sinners, or that they need Him, either as prophet, priest, or king." These are not milk for babes, they are tough points for strong digestions, or what the apostle calls "strong meat for such as by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil."

"A Layman" and I are exhorted to abstain from the discussion of such topics, but we may make ourselves useful in other spheres of work and on simpler subjects, such as "the sustentation of missions—the support of the ministry—missions as collectors for the schemes of the Church," etc. Anything in the way of raising ways and means; recommendations which we shall try to appreciate. Smallest favours thankfully received. "W. T." may not be a clergyman, but this has a clerical ring about it. "Raise what money you can, but leave theology to us." Ministers should be content to have things their own way in the pulpit, where use and wont now-a-days forbids all interruption or criticism, but so long as you, Mr. Editor, are pleased to open your columns to laymen as well as clergymen, we shall have our say on any topic that seems to call for it.

Yours truly,  
LAYMAN.

## The Bible in Public Schools.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—I have read with much interest a number of articles in your paper in favor of the Bible in public schools. I read with much interest because I believe it to be a matter of first importance that the Bible be retained in our public schools, and because the articles appeared to me to be sound and able, and also as clear as could be expected, treated in the short space they occupied. But I was disappointed to see in your number of August 18th, a correspondent, "G. T.," enter the ranks and with an "earnest protest" shingle down with his "besom of destruction" all the arguments and elucidations of your former correspondents, "trampling them under his feet." "G. T." thinks it ridiculous that your correspondents should support their positions by assertions, while he himself begins and ends the support on his by "an earnest protest" instead of argument. He charges your other correspondents with a lack of discrimination between very diverse objects and ideas, then he exhibits his own discriminating powers by not being able to see some very plain distinctions.

1. He could see no difference between Bible instruction and the teaching of a trade as a means for the formation of the moral characters of our citizens.

2. He sees sectarianism alike in the Bible and the "Shorter Catechism." He evidently thought either that the Bible was made by the Westminster Divines, or that

the Shorter Catechism is a Divine Revelation.

3. He could perceive no distinction between the claim made by the people for the Bible in the public schools, and the claim made by the Roman Catholics for separate schools.

4. He could see no difference between the duty of teaching the Bible in public schools and the duty of the State to endow one sect, and to persecute all the rest. "G. T." making no distinction in questions as above indicated, very pertinently to himself comes to the following conclusions:—

1. That if the Bible be taught in the public schools then "Popish persecution will be consistent."

2. If religion is taught in a Church because it does good—a portion—it ought not to be taught in the public schools.

3. Because Protestantism wants the Bible in the public schools, it is therefore "false to all its former principles and traditions." I admit that these discriminations and conclusions are very remarkable, but it seems to me that they never could have been perceived and drawn by a soul that sees by the light of the Bible.

The cry of sectarianism is raised as soon as the Bible question is introduced. There is nothing more false than the assertion that the dissemination of Bible knowledge in public schools, or even any where else, is sectarianism.

1. All denominations of Christians take the Holy Bible as the Divine Revelation, and base the authority of their teachings upon it.

2. All denominations, but Roman Catholics, join in the dissemination of Bible knowledge, and are now prosecuting it vigorously all over the world.

3. But Roman Catholics are suppressing the Bible wherever they can all over the world, so you can see readily that the sectarianism comes in on the Roman Catholic side of the question. Papists are inconsistent with themselves. They base their Church upon the authority of the Scriptures; then without any authority in the Scriptures, claim that the authority of the Pope is superior to the Bible, and therefore should interpret the Bible for the people; but instead of giving the Bible, God's revelation interpreted by the infallible Pope, they try to blot it out of existence.

4. The contest about the Bible in our public schools is not a contest between different sects of the Bible reading Church, but it is a contest between all of those sects on the one hand and the Romanists on the other. The contest is between Protestantism and Romanism. Whatever Protestantism meant in past days or what was signified by Romanism matters little now. But Protestantism now means the Bible, and Roman Catholicism means the Pope, to the exclusion of the Bible. Romanists will now ask Protestants to give up the Bible from the public schools, and when they will have gained strength to justify it they will ask them to cease disseminating it elsewhere, and not long after they may expect to give up their faith in it or die for it. With blood-thirsty craving she cries always give, give. Settle the question. Which will you have, the Bible or the Pope? You cannot have both. If you choose the Pope by the powers of Romanism you cannot have the Bible. If you choose the Bible, then enjoy its highest benefit, for you will have to fight Romanism to keep it at all.

5. To ignore the right of the Bible in the public schools is nationally to ignore the Bible and its Divine authority over the nation. Thereby we acknowledge and publish ourselves a nation of infidels. Only turn to the nations against whom the fulminations of Divine judgment have been revealed, and learn the sad fate of the "nations that forget God."

Vox Humana.

Farmington, Ill., U. S., Aug. 20th, 1875.

## An Answer Wanted.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—In your issue of the 10th current, you publish an article entitled "A Roman Catholic's Title in Church Property," on reading which it occurred to me that it would be prudent for the Editor of our Church paper not to provoke discussion on that topic. Can you answer the question: "Who owns the property of the Canada Presbyterian Church?" You will find that with very few exceptions the Church property is all in the hands of the clergy. We cannot sell a foot of it without their leave; our contributions, however liberal, give us no right to the property; at least none that the clergy view themselves as bound to respect. At the union, between the U. P. and Free Churches, the clergy without in the least consulting the people did most disgracefully manage to get an Act of Parliament which vested the whole of the Church property in the hands of the clergy, and you may depend upon it, were any or the whole of these congregations now to seek redress from the civil law, we would just as surely be consigned as the Roman Catholics have been. Like them, we would be told we have no legal right, that we may contribute but not control in the matter of Church property. If I am wrong be so good as set me right in the PRESBYTERIAN; and I will take it kind if you will let me know how the new (Knox) College is decided, which will much oblige, Dear Sir, Yours, respectfully,  
HECTOR C. ANDERSON.

Box 17, Ayr P. O., Ont.

SIGNOR GAVAZZI and the Rev. J. O. Van Meter have established a Protestant Mission Hall within two hundred yards of the windows of the Pope's apartments in the Vatican.