

TRAVELS IN THE HOLY LAND.

AUGUST, 1891. – EDITORIAL NOTES. – NO. II.

We now enter the orphanage kept by the Sisters of Zion (Roman Catholic). It is a new and commodious building, but seems to have but few orphans. It interests us because there seems no room to doubt that it is built upon the site of Pilate's Judgment Hall. In the new building they have preserved quite a large area of the old Roman pavement, which had long been buried under rubbish, some seven feet below the present street level. How interesting to look at the very stones upon which our Master stood and walked! "Pilate therefore brought Jesus forth and sat down in the judgment seat, in a place that is called the Pavement." (John 19:13.) Here, too, remains a portion of the arch upon which it is said that Pilate exhibited Jesus to the people, saying, in his final effort to have them relent – "Behold the man!" – as though he meant, would you crucify such a man, like to whom there is not another in your nation? Here, too, Pilate washed his hands as indicating his innocence of the death of Christ. – John 19:5; Matt. 27:24.

Now let us enter the "Church of the Holy Sepulchre." The building is under the control of the (Mohammedan) Turkish government, which holds it to preserve the peace and to secure liberty of entrance and freedom of worship to the Christian sects represented – Roman, Greek, Armenian and Coptic Catholics – each of which has its own chapel for services under the one roof. Here are pointed out the place of the crucifixion, the sepulchre where our Lord was laid, also the place where the crosses of Christ and the two thieves, and the crown of thorns and the nails, etc., are said to have been found by Queen Helena's workmen. But we take but little interest in these things since, from the location *in the city*, it seems as improbable that this is the real site of the crucifixion

and the tomb of our Lord as that his cross and crown of thorns were found there centuries after.

Let us go outside the gates: let us seek the real Mt. Calvary. Ah! This is more like it. We see no holes such as the crosses were set into, nor should we expect to find them after so many centuries; yet here we see the face of the hill with hollows which in the distance resemble a skull, and which probably gave rise to the name, Golgotha – the place of a skull. (Matt. 27:33.) We linger for a moment on the spot made so sacred by him who died for **[R1394 : page 120]** our sins, and mentally behold the bleeding Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. Gladly we accept of a share in his sacrifice once for all, and rejoice in spirit as we reflect that the hour is not far distant when, his Church having been selected, the Redeemer shall begin his great Millennial work of blessing all the families of the earth – for all of whom he had poured out his soul into death – a sin offering.

Here we see a crevice in the rock – perhaps a result of the earthquake which occurred when our Lord died. (Matt. 27:51.) Below the top of the hill is a garden, and near the garden a tomb hewn in the rock. The place where our Lord was laid was somewhat like it, though the description of the door does not correspond with this. Doubtless, however, the tomb was near Calvary, as it was about sunset when the body was taken from the cross, and but little time remained for burial, as the next day was a Sabbath (holy day) and began at six o'clock the same evening. The garden, too, corresponds; for we remember that the Marys came to the garden and at first mistook the Lord for the gardener. What blessed memories cluster around that garden and that morning of the resurrection; for if Christ be not risen, all our hopes are vain! (1 Cor. 15:17.) (1) His resurrection is the **[R1395 : page 120]** evidence to us that in him was no sin, and therefore the Father raised him from death a new creature, with power to bless and restore those whom he redeemed by his death. (2) We can see how

this one who sacrificed his life in the service of God and his plan for human salvation had a *merit* in God's sight, by reason of that sacrifice, which merit the Scriptures assure us he presented on our behalf when he ascended up on high (Heb. 9:24), a full equivalent and offset, in God's sight, for the penalty which came upon Adam and all his race because of his disobedience. (Rom. 5:19.) (3) Our Lord's resurrection becomes the pledge or assurance that in *due time* God will accomplish through him all the gracious promises of restitution, spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. – Compare Acts 17:31 and Acts 3:19-21.

Next let us visit the Mount of Olives. Its olive trees are fewer and doubtless less cared for than in our Lord's day; yet no other place, probably, remains so much the same as then; and no other place, perhaps, was more frequented by his sacred feet. On the way, as we ascend the slope, is the Garden of Gethsemane. It is no longer an open garden: a Roman Catholic society controls it and preserves it by an enclosure. Visitors are welcome, however, and we enter and meditate. A gardener is watering the plants, to whom we thankfully give a small coin for a few flowers and a sprig from the oldest olive tree in the garden – centuries old, at least.

Standing upon the Mount of Olives, we do not wonder that our Master oft resorted thither for meditation and prayer and to give instruction to his disciples. We recall that here our Lord sat when he uttered the great prophecy of Matt. 24:3-51 and the parables of Matt. 25, just two days before his crucifixion. – Matt. 26:1,2.

Although two thousand six hundred and eighty-two feet above the sea, Olivet is but one hundred and fifty feet higher than the hills upon which Jerusalem is built, and four hundred feet above the intervening valley of Kedron. It affords a splendid panoramic view of the surrounding country for many miles, and from a tower erected upon its summit, to memorialize the spot of the Lord's

ascension, one can see, far to the east, the Jordan valley and the Dead sea, and beyond these the mountains of Moab as well as the intervening village of Bethany, and to the south, Bethlehem and Hebron.

Riding upon donkeys, we descend the farther slope of Olivet, passing over the old road – quite probably the same that our Lord and the disciples often took – going to the home of Martha and Mary and Lazarus. We recall that this is the way the Master journeyed on the ass just five days before his crucifixion, and yonder is the site of the village of Bethphage, where Jesus sent the disciples for the ass upon which he rode into Jerusalem as King. (Matt. 21:1.) We are upon the very ground where the multitude cried, "Hosanna to the [R1395 : page 121] son of David!" while they strewed his way with palm-branches and with their clothing.

Here is Bethany, and near us, to the right, is the site of the house of that Simon whom Jesus healed of leprosy. Here they made the feast for our Lord at which Martha served and Mary anointed him with the precious ointment. (Matt. 26:6,7; John 11:1,2; 12:3.) Yonder is the traditional site of the home of Lazarus and his sisters. The town in Arabic is called *El' Azireyeh*, or the town of Lazarus. What thoughts these scenes and associations awaken!

Within the city of Jerusalem are several items of interest which we have not yet visited. We will go now to the Jew's "wailing place." Through by-ways littered with rubbish and garbage we pass, holding our breath to avoid the heavy odors and commenting that only the pure mountain air prevents pestilence from breaking out in a place so inviting it. We reach finally the "wailing place." It is what is supposed to be a fragment of the Temple wall, and near it is what is known as Robinson's Arch, a remnant of the arch or bridge which once connected the Temple (on Mt. Moriah) with the city (Mt. Zion). Here are some immense stones, one of them measuring 38 feet 4 inches in length, 7 feet in

height, and 3½ feet in width. Here Jews, both rich and poor (especially the latter), and speaking various languages, are coming and going. Some kiss the stones while praying; others touch the stones with their fingers and then kiss their fingers; they chant in a plaintive tone some prayer or prophecy which we could not understand, and occasionally a group gathers around one who leads in a sort of litany. We give below what purport to be translations of two of these –

Leader. For the place that lies desolate,

Response. We sit in solitude.

Leader. For the place that is destroyed,

Response. We sit in solitude.

Leader. For the walls that are overthrown,

Response. We sit in solitude.

Leader. For our majesty that is departed,

Response. We sit in solitude.

Leader. For our great men that lie dead,

Response. We sit in solitude.

Leader. For the precious stones that are buried,

Response. We sit in solitude.

Leader. For the priests who have stumbled,

Response. We sit in solitude.

Leader. For our Kings who have despised Him,

Response. We sit in solitude.

Another form runs as follows: –

Leader. We pray Thee have mercy on Zion.

Response. Gather the children of Jerusalem.

Leader. Haste, haste, Redeemer of Zion.

Response. Speak to the heart of Jerusalem.

Leader. May beauty and majesty surround Zion.

Response. Ah! turn thyself mercifully to Jerusalem.

Leader. May the Kingdom soon return to Zion.

Response. Comfort those who mourn over Jerusalem.

Leader. May peace and joy abide with Zion.

Response. And the branch (of Jesse) spring up at Jerusalem.

Our hearts are touched, especially for the poorer classes of Jews, who seem to be very sincere. We visit several of their synagogues on their Sabbath, and wish that we had the knowledge of their language, which would enable us to tell them the good tidings of great joy. Beginning with Israel's *double* and showing when and why it began and that already the due time has come to "Cry unto her that her appointed time is accomplished and her iniquity is pardoned, because she hath received of the Lord's hands double for all her sin" (Isa. 40:2), we feel sure we should have close attention. As we pass into the synagogue many of the faces of the poorer ones seem to ask inquiringly, Have you no message for us!

Ah! were it not that the Lord has favored us with a share in the work of gathering out the Bride and helping to make her ready for the marriage of the Lamb, we would be here in Jerusalem and, by the grace of God, would do a part in the great work now due of turning away blindness from Jacob. (Rom. 11:25.) We must surely write to John and Peter, the sons of Brother Joseph Rabinowitsch, and urge them to lose no time in getting into this fruitful field, so ripe for the true gospel of the Kingdom, which none here seem either able or willing or worthy to give to them.

Next we will visit the site of the Temple on Mount Moriah. The Mosque of Omar and its court now cover the site. It is surrounded by a wall, and the space enclosed is nearly **[R1395 : page 122]** twice the size of Solomon's Temple and courts. The mosque is a fine one and is surmounted by a most graceful dome. The building has fifty-six elegant windows in Mosaic glass. At one time none but favored Mohammedans were permitted to enter this

mosque, but now it is accessible to all nations, though with some formality and at a trifling expense for guards, etc.

This is a remarkable spot. Here it was that Abraham proved his faith in God and showed his obedience by offering his son Isaac – whom he received again from the dead in a figure. Here it was, too, that, when the plague was among the Israelites, King David purchased of Ornan the Jebusite a threshing-floor as a place for an altar of sacrifice. (2 Sam. 24:18-25.) And it is written, "Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in Mt. Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite." – 2 Chron. 3:1.

The original rock-top of Mt. Moriah is to be seen in the mosque, and a cave under it may be entered. A hole connects the top rock with the cave, and an aqueduct thence leads to the brook Kedron. Hence it is supposed that upon this rock the sacrifices were killed and that the aqueduct or sewer connected by the hole and the cave was used for carrying off the blood, and the water used in flushing and cleansing the altar. When we remember that the brook Kedron is in the valley of Jehoshaphat, "the valley of dry bones" (the general burying ground of the city), and then reflect that this valley was typical, as well as the blood of the sacrifices, we may read it thus – The blood of Christ the antitypical sin-offering, in a way unseen by the world in general, reaches unto all that are in their graves and secures for all mankind an awakening from death and an opportunity for life everlasting. – Rom. 5:9.

"Solomon's Stables" were under the Temple courts, and were vast ones indeed. Probably **[R1396 : page 122]** one-half of the space has been appropriated to use as cisterns, but the remainder would still accommodate twelve hundred or more horses. Thus was the natural slope on one side of the mountain utilized by the wise

man when he desired a surface on the level of the mountain top for the Temple and its courts.

Passing what is termed the Golden Gate, believed to be the location of the "Beautiful Gate," where Peter and John healed the cripple, we gather a few wild flowers as mementoes and proceed to the reputed Pool of Bethesda, where the blind man, whose eyes were washed and anointed with the spittle and clay, received sight. Our hearts instinctively remember that this, like our Lord's other miracles, was to show forth in advance the coming glorious work of his Millennial Kingdom. As we think of the multitudes morally and spiritually blind, we rejoice in spirit at the remembrance of the anti-type, the opening of the eyes of the understanding foretold by the Prophet. – Isa. 35:4,5; 42:7.

There! see! we have a practical exemplification of the Lord's remark about the measure being pressed down, shaken together, heaped full, etc. (Luke 6:38.) Such an effort to give good measure we never before saw. The salesman fills the bushel, then jars or shakes it down solid and fills to the top, then puts in his hands and presses it, then spreads out the top so as to pile on as much as possible and then, running over, empties it to his customer. (*To be Continued.*)
