

## **TRAVELS IN THE HOLY LAND.**

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Next let us visit "Solomon's Quarries," whence the stones for the temple were obtained. They are wonderful in extent, underlying, probably, more than one-half of the city. With lighted candles and our guide we see as much of the quarry as we desire to see, noticing the ancient marks of the quarrymen, and the places from which immense stones had been taken and others are ready to be taken out – reflecting the while upon the quarrying of the living stones, which the great Master Mason, Christ our Lord, is now taking out, fitting and squaring for places in the antitypical temple in the antitypical Jerusalem above.

The space left by this quarrying may yet be utilized for the arrangement of a general sewerage system for the city of Jerusalem, we suggest; and so, too, the taking out from the world of the living stones for the heavenly Temple, the Church, will ultimately redound to the benefit of the world – cleansing it from sin and all uncleanness.

Sunday has come, and we will endeavor to improve its opportunities by becoming acquainted with the missionaries and their work. We attend service at the Protestant Episcopal Church and hear a good practical discourse in English, but find no opportunity for speaking to any of the three ministers present, assisting in the service, nor with any of the congregation. We are rather disappointed at the result of our efforts to gain an acquaintance. We will try another plan, and in the afternoon call upon some other ministers at their homes. We find the Bishop and one of the other ministers absent for the summer season, but find an Episcopal mission service in Arabic, and attend that. The congregation is an interesting one, of native young men chiefly.

Upon inquiry, we learn that many of these are employees of the mission in one capacity or another.

On the whole we are forced to the conclusion that "the Americans" had some ground for their charges that the missionaries here misrepresent the spirit of Christ by their rather haughty demeanor. The natives call the residences of the ministers *palaces*; and indeed they are the finest buildings of the city, aside from hotels and public buildings.

It is a lamentable fact that although some of the missionaries seem to have a desire to do good, they have not that sympathy and consuming desire to do good to the poor creatures about them that they should have, to accomplish much. Here, as everywhere, it requires *the truth* to sanctify wholly and rightly body, soul and spirit in the service, which demands continual self-negation and sacrifice under present evil conditions. The *truth* is the one thing needful even for present service; but in no place do the "religious people" seem more self-satisfied. The Jews, too, are full of the same spirit, and surely not without some cause. Their synagogue services are more reasonable and intelligent than those of the various "Catholic" denominations entrenched here. They worship individually and singly, or in groups, read the Scriptures and talk concerning their signification. The Talmud, against which our Lord spoke as "the traditions of men," explains away or adds to the Word of the Lord and is their chief shackle. Nevertheless, we find one small congregation of Jews here who reject the Talmud and accept only the Mosaic Law and the Prophets. Their Rabbi, through an interpreter, tells us that there are many similar and larger congregations throughout Turkey and Russia. They call themselves "Caraims." The Jews here would be a most hopeful class for a truth-girded, working, self-sacrificing missionary, such as our Lord or Peter or Paul. As it is, a *conversion* of a Jew or a Mohammedan is a rare matter: almost the only converts are children cared for as infants, and who grow

up Protestants or Catholics in *form* and *name*. To offset this, the Jewish schools and orphanages are now active and receive all classes.

Let us go about the city outside the wall and through the valleys, and for this service the docile donkeys will be just the things.

Passing out of the Damascus Gate we soon [R1400 : page 138] reach the "Tombs of the Kings." They are spacious vaults cut in the solid rock, communicating with a central spacious room which connects with the outside by a small doorway closed by a rolling stone, like a large grindstone, such as closed our Lord's sepulchre. Outside this small door is a spacious platform suggestive of a place for public gatherings, funeral services, etc., and from it broad steps (about thirty feet wide) lead up to the surface. The Tombs of the Judges are near our course, a little further along upon the side of the Mt. of Olives. They are large and interesting, but less so than the Tombs of the Kings. We will turn and go down the Valley of Jehoshaphat, otherwise known as the Valley of Kidron. Our path crosses and recrosses the bed of the brook Kidron (dry at this season), and passes near the Garden of Gethsemane; and we recall that the Master and his twelve apostles often walked here in going to and from Olivet and Bethany. (John 18:1.) Looking upward on our left, the slope of Olivet is thickly covered with stone slabs, marking graves and sepulchres centuries old. This Valley of Jehoshaphat is the synonym and reminder of God's promise of a resurrection.

We pause for a drink of water from the long-celebrated fountain *Enrogel*. Farther along we pass the "Kings' Gardens" on our right, and on the opposite side of the valley is the village of Siloam, and a little below it a new Jewish colony in new, small, stone houses, erected, we believe, by Sir Moses Montefiore's benevolence; all very neat and comfortable looking. Just above

these villages is the "Mount of Offence," so called because there, to please his heathen wives, Solomon erected temples to the false gods of the Ammonites and the Moabites, Moloch and Chemosh. – 1 Kings 11:1-7.

Here we turn aside and climb the hill-side to visit the Pool of Siloam, opposite the village of the same name. See, a few of the steps leading down to the pool from the hill Zion may still be discerned. We recall the obedience of the blind man who here received his sight on the Sabbath day, and remember that we are already in the early dawn of the antitypical Sabbath – the Millennium – when the Satan-blinded eyes of men's understandings shall be anointed with the ointment from the Lord's mouth mixed with the clay of human instrumentality, and when by faith they shall wash in the fountains of truth then opened to them. How precious the promises, "Then the blind eyes shall be opened," and "The blind shall see out of obscurity." (2 Cor. 4:4; Isa. 35:5; 29:18.) Never before did we realize so fully as during this journey the need of the whole world for the promised eye-salve; and **[R1401 : page 138]** none seem to need it more than the nominal Christian churches. – Rev. 3:18.

Leaving the Kidron we pass eastward and then northward along the Valley of Hinnom or Gehenna – once used as a place for the destruction of offal and garbage and for the destruction of the dead bodies of the vilest criminals by means of fire and brimstone, and used by our Lord to symbolize the utter and hopeless destruction by the second death, into which all shall be cast who, in the judgment of the Millennial day of trial, shall be found unworthy of life. At the lower end of this valley is the reputed Aceldama or field of blood where Judas hanged himself. The valley is much filled up at present – the natural result of the stone-throwing warfare of former times and of the many destructions of the city and its walls. It is now a fertile garden of olive trees, fig trees, etc., at the lower part.

Passing onward we find ourselves in the Valley of Kidron with its two pools or water reservoirs still fairly preserved. Here it was that Solomon was anointed King of Israel by the command of King David. (1 Kings 1:30-40.) On our left as we ascend the valley are the clean, neat-looking dwellings of "the Germans," or Society of the Temple. We regret that we will not have time for calling upon them.

Now we reach the *new* Jerusalem, rapidly building up to the northwest of the walled city, with creditable modern structures, among which is our stopping place, the Hotel Jerusalem.

We have but one day more at our disposal, and will visit Bethlehem and Solomon's pools. The carriage road is good and our contracting guide and friend has provided us a good coach and team, and we are not long in reaching **[R1400 : page 139]** Bethlehem, the town honored as our Lord's birth-place. On the way we pass "Rachel's Tomb." Near here the beloved Rachel died when giving birth to Benjamin, and tradition declares this to be her tomb. (Gen. 35:16-20.) Here is a cistern where tradition says the star appeared to the wise men the second time to guide them to Bethlehem and the manger. (Matt. 2:1-10.) This reminds us that from the tower upon Olivet we saw the reputed fields where the shepherds to whom our Lord's birth was announced watched their flocks by night (Luke 2:8), and the road we have just traversed in coming from Jerusalem was probably the same that they traveled. We render hearty thanks to God that in the truest sense we have found him that was born King of the Jews and King of all kings, or rather we have been found of him: he has revealed himself to us. "My Beloved is mine and I am His."

Bethlehem is built on a hill in the shape of a crescent. The buildings are of white stone and fairly good for these parts. It has about seven thousand population.

The ancient dress and customs are better preserved here than elsewhere, we are told and we believe. The Bethlehemites are clever people, above the average in intelligence and hospitality. We consider them much better samples in every way of our Lord's times than the people of Jerusalem.

Bethlehem was the home of Boaz, and here it was that Naomi came with Ruth, who became the wife of Boaz and mother of Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David the king. But while notable as the birthplace and home of these, Bethlehem's honor comes as the birthplace of David's Lord, the well beloved son of Jehovah God – "Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, art not the least among the cities of Judah; for out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:6.) Here, to Bethlehem as the chief city of their province, came Mary with Joseph her husband, according to the decree of Caesar Augustus, the Roman Emperor, to be taxed, and here the infant Jesus was born. – Luke 2:1-12.

We visit the Church of the Nativity, built upon the spot. It is in the joint possession of the Roman, Armenian and Greek Catholics, but the apparent harmony between these is somewhat enforced, as appears from the presence of armed Turkish (Mohammedan) soldiers, found necessary to be stationed here by the government to preserve peace between the sects. We descend some steps to about ten feet below the church floor, to the reputed birth-place of our Savior, which is marked by a large silver star, upon which is inscribed, "Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est," *i.e.*, "Here Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary." Another spot marked by a marble slab is claimed to be the place where the holy manger stood.

Connected with this, a long underground passage leads us to a spot where, it is said, the angel appeared to Joseph, directing him to flee with Mary and the child Jesus into Egypt. Farther along we

come to the Altar of the Innocents, said to be over a cave into which the children, massacred by Herod, were thrown. Above these memorial spots are several chapels and convents; one, the chapel of Helena, built by the mother of Constantine the Great, A.D. 327, being one hundred and twenty feet long and one hundred and ten feet wide. It contains forty-four marble columns taken from Mt. Moriah, and supposed to have been pillars of the porches of Solomon's Temple.

Passing along the principal street of Bethlehem to its farther end, we come to the celebrated "Well of Bethlehem," whose water was so highly prized by David. (2 Sam. 23:15-16.) From this point we get a view of the *Shepherd's Field*. The field is probably the same where David as a shepherd boy tended his sheep, and where his grandmother Ruth gleaned in the field of the wealthy Boaz. "And there were in the *same* country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them ...and said, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people."

Oh! would that the shepherds of the Lord's flock were watching: they would now be advised of the second coming of the Lord's Anointed – not again a man, nor to suffer, to die, to redeem, but now in dignity, authority and power, to **[R1400 : page 140]** bless and to offer healing and restoration to all whom he then purchased with his own precious blood. Could they but hear it, the message of peace and blessing given eighteen centuries ago has now new force and beauty: it is indeed "*good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people.*" But now, as then, the wise – the truly wise – shall find and know and worship the King, while others know not of his presence: they will see and be guided by God's star; but this time the guiding star will arise in their hearts in connection with the sure word of prophecy, as saith the Apostle. – 2 Pet. 1:19.

In returning to Jerusalem, we make a detour to the Pools of Solomon. These are vast reservoirs by which the summer water supply of Jerusalem was gathered and stored. From these pools aqueducts conduct the water for miles to the city. These are now much out of repair, and consequently of little use. Indeed, the shortage of literal water fitly represents the scarcity of the truth in these parts. May the fountains soon be opened!

Our return journey from Jerusalem to Jaffa is a very pleasant ride at night, in the full of the moon. We reach Jaffa early in the morning, and have time for a visit to a Jewish agricultural school on the outskirts, before taking steamer for the Suez Canal, and thence by rail to Cairo, to see the Great Pyramid.

We conclude our visit to the Holy Land with the hope that ere long the earthly blessings promised may come to the seed of Abraham according to the flesh and to the land of promise, as well as the spiritual blessings upon the spiritual seed, Christ and his Bride, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city or Kingdom from which all of God's blessings will flow to the world – shortly.

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