

And as they, men of real poetic fire and imagination, were plainly possessed with "what they were to say" far more than with "how to say it," so we in reading them can hardly lose sight of this. Here is a safeguard (if any be needed) against our thinking too much as critics of the beauties of Scripture, too little of its moral lessons, too much of the manner, too little of the matter. And so we may end, as we began, with Bishop Jebb's remark (applicable more widely than to the limited field we have been considering), that "the Bible may safely be read for pleasure," and that it is a worthy task to study its beauties.

W. C. GREEN.



ART. IV.—MODERN PALESTINE.

II.

WE have now to consider (II.) *the inhabitants* of Palestine. They are a very mixed multitude. Probably no other country has so many aliens among its settled residents, who carry on their business whilst owning no allegiance to the rulers of the country, and in every difficulty claiming the "protection" of some foreign power. In Jerusalem especially, and in the large mercantile towns, this foreign element is very conspicuous, and the occasion of no small difficulty and embarrassment to local governors and even to the sublime Porte itself. The Turks are very few in number, and almost confined to the military and higher civil officials, their position being not unlike that of the English in India. They have little real sympathy with the natives, although of the same religion, seldom intermarry with them, and are more feared than loved. It is an aspiration of the young Moslems of Syria, and of all Arab races, to throw off the yoke of the Turk, and restore the Caliphate to its early home in Arabia; and it is the knowledge of this aspiration that renders the Ottoman Government so extremely jealous of the intrusion of Europeans into the trans-Jordanic country. It occasioned the expulsion of Captain Conder's Survey party, and probably the murder of Professor Palmer.

The *natives* of Palestine are of three very distinct classes—the fellaheen, or cultivators of the soil; the dwellers in the larger towns; and the wandering Arabs. The fellaheen are a handsome, sturdy race, capable of undergoing great fatigue upon very meagre diet, simple in their habits, brave, good-natured, but easily excited and revengeful. They are the

easiest of people to govern, the most difficult to civilize or raise to the conception of a high ideal of moral and social excellence. The majority are Mohammedans, and in some districts, as Jebel Nablus, are exclusive and fanatical. Although their blood is mainly derived from the Arab conquerors of the country, it is no doubt mixed with that of older denizens of the soil. They are not called Arabs by the natives, that term being applied only to the Bedouin who dwell in tents. Several important places, such as Bethlehem, Ramullah, Ain Karim, and villages further north, are almost wholly peopled by Christian fellaheen, who in their general habits and character do not materially differ from their Moslem neighbours. And in the northern part of the country many villages are inhabited by Druzes.

The one pursuit of the fellah is agriculture. Holding the land in the manner already described, he has generally a hard struggle to earn a livelihood, and would hopelessly fail if his wants were not few. Coarse bread of wheat, barley, or millet, lentils, olives, sour milk, cheese, oil and wild herbs, form his diet if he is well off, with cucumbers, prickly pears, and other fruits in the summer; meat he seldom tastes, except on festive occasions. In bad seasons, or if his cattle die, or other misfortunes overtake him, his sufferings are extreme. Borrowing, the usual resource of the embarrassed, is of course resorted to, and there are few of these children of the soil who do not before middle age become involved in a mesh of debts and obligations from which they are never able to free themselves. Their life is a *low* life. Not one in five hundred can read, or has knowledge of anything that does not more or less directly bear on his own individual existence and his means of supporting his family. There is no culture, no refinement of thought and feeling, in a fellah's home, and no one either in village or town who endeavours to lead him to higher and better things.

The citizen is a very different kind of person. Affable and courteous, somewhat cringing to those he fears, somewhat overbearing to those who fear him, shrewd and cunning, with a handsome face and a winning smile, he is a singular mixture of attractive and unattractive qualities. Yet he has virtues of his own, is capable of a higher life, values education, and repays the care which the missionary or philanthropist may bestow upon him. His one great weakness is the want of reliability. His conceptions of truth and honourable conduct are—oriental. Like his brother the peasant, he is essentially a child of this world, and can with difficulty bring himself to forego a temporal advantage from scruples as to straight-forwardness. He is a good servant, when constantly over-

looked; a faithful agent, when he cannot cheat. The Mohammedan citizen is graver and more dignified in demeanour than either the Christian or the Jew, and has the virtues and failings inherent in races which have been dominant through many centuries. He is often very poor, and bears his privations with a proud, uncomplaining spirit fostered by the fatalism of his creed and the hopelessness of seeking help from others. The Christian has the convent to look to in time of trouble, the Jew has always friends of his own or other races to afford him aid, but the poor Moslem has no one to whom he can turn in his misfortunes for sympathy and assistance. Many Mohammedan families who were formerly owners of considerable wealth have gradually parted with houses and lands to secure the means of living, and are now in a state of poverty. A very great change has come over Palestine during the last thirty years. Real estate has been passing into the hands of non-Moslem owners; the followers of the Prophet are being "elbowed out" by their more industrious and enterprising neighbours, and the religious and politico-religious undertakings of certain European nationalities have contributed not a little to alter the conditions of the country and the fortunes of its former lords. On the walls of a magnificent erection on the Mount of Olives the Lord's Prayer is inscribed in all the languages of Christendom, and a tablet records that the spot was "recovered for Jesus Christ" by the exertions and wealth of a French princess. The same sort of thing is going on throughout the land. We are living in the time of a new crusade, not, as yet, carried on with arms and bloodshed, but slowly and surely "recovering" for Christians, if not for Christ, a dominating influence in the home of our faith. This great and continuous movement gives a double importance to the spiritual work of Protestant missions in the country, which have to combat not only with Jewish unbelief and Mohammedan error, but with a corrupt Christianity, a hurtful ecclesiasticism, in alliance with political ambitions and aspirations. Never were these missions more clearly the duty of evangelical Churches than at present.

The condition of the Jews in the Holy Land must always be a subject of surpassing interest. It is well known that they have largely increased of late years, and the attempts to found agricultural colonies for them have frequently been before the public. Probably they now number not less than forty thousand, without reckoning Beyrout and Damascus. They are no longer oppressed, as in the old time, and are free to carry on almost any occupation they please. A very large proportion are not subjects of the Porte, but retain their European nationalities, chiefly Austrian, German, or Russian.

There is little in the state of the country to make it worth the while of a prosperous Jew of some means to settle in it, and of those who go there some are induced by religious feelings, many by poverty—as there is always a pittance in the shape of alms to be got—some from mere love of wandering, and not a few young men in order to escape conscription. An outbreak of persecution in other countries is sure to drive many of them to Palestine, and there is something touching in the persistency with which in their sorrows and sufferings they turn for refuge to the land of their fathers. The difficulties which have successively arisen in Poland, Hungary, Morocco, Roumania and Russia have each been followed by an influx of “refugees” into the Holy Land. The Turkish Government has recently forbidden their being allowed to disembark; but Turkish laws are easily evaded, and, moreover, to drive away the subject of a foreign power, even though he is a Jew, might lead to “complications.” So the stream of immigration flows steadily on, and although some return disheartened whence they came, the Jewish population is always increasing. Only a small proportion are able to earn a subsistence, and the greater number soon find their store of money exhausted, and become dependent on the contributions of pious Israelites in more fortunate lands, or of the relatives they have left behind them. The holy cities of Palestine are a great poor-house of the Jewish nation, and cause the leaders of that people as much embarrassment as the pauper-question occasions the authorities in the large cities of England.

The Bedouin still find many parts of Western Palestine wild and uncultivated enough for them to pitch their tents there, and around and below Gaza some powerful tribes are located. Gipsies also wander over the land, and get a living by shoeing the horses of the Arabs and fellahs, or mending tin pots and pans. Their condition in winter seems to be very wretched. It is pitiful to see them in their scanty garments shivering with cold, and apparently half-starved. Yet, like other nomads, they love their free outdoor life, and are never known to change it. Within the last few years two new elements have been added to the motley population of the country. One of these consists of a horde of Mohammedan Circassians, who, when driven from their own country by the Russians, were hospitably received, and had lands given to them by the Turks. They are located in the country beyond Jordan, about Damascus, and in the western plain, and do not enjoy the best of reputations, being more ready to shed blood than the Arabs, and not more honest. It is said that they know how to hold their own amongst the wild tribes of the districts in which they settle, and that the Bedouin are afraid of

them. Another set of new-comers are the Bosnians. They also are Moslems, and when Austria took possession of their land, they preferred exile to remaining under a Christian government. They are established amidst the ruins of Casarea, and the houses which they have built for themselves out of the stones of that once famous city, form a conspicuous object in the view of the coast which the passenger by the steamer from Jaffa northward obtains. Like the Circassians, they have not entirely won the confidence of the people of the land, and are believed to be inhospitable and thievish. Yet they have splendid opportunities; for the district allotted to them is extremely fertile, and the position of their dwelling-place, midway between the flourishing towns of Jaffa and Haifa, should enable them to make money by entertaining travellers, whilst there is perfect facility for transporting their own produce to those ports by means of boats.

Amongst the settled inhabitants of the country the German colonists—the Tempel-Freunde—may now fairly be reckoned. These began to arrive about eighteen years ago, and although their religious views seemed, and indeed still seem, to outsiders somewhat obscure and uncertain, it was soon evident that they had very practical ideas as to their worldly concerns, and a very practical way of carrying out their plans. They bought land at Jaffa and Haifa, built houses, established themselves as carpenters, smiths, merchants, doctors, and farmers, and after experiencing severe losses and disappointments, are at length reaping the fruit of long years of toil and privation. Their experience is of great interest with reference to other colonizing schemes more recently set on foot in favour of Jewish refugees; for if the steady hardworking German peasant, accustomed to outdoor labour, could not make ends meet as a colonist in Palestine before nearly a dozen years had passed, it is pretty certain that the Jew, to whom hard muscular labour is always irksome, and often insupportable, will be long in learning to maintain himself by the cultivation of the soil.

Besides these Germans, and the European Jews to whom allusion has been made, there is a vast crowd of foreigners from other lands. Greek, Russian, French, Spanish, Italian, and Austrian ecclesiastics, monks, and nuns; Protestant missionaries, deaconesses, schoolmasters, and doctors from England and Germany; American spiritualists and other religious enthusiasts; consuls from many nations; Mohammedan devotees from Persia, India, Central Asia, Morocco, and the Soudan; bishops and priests from Abyssinia and Egypt; and in the spring of the year many thousands of pilgrims.

All, or nearly all, these claim to be under the protection of their respective governments. The Turks dare not put a finger on them without the permission of their consuls, and it argues not a little for the wonderful power of government which the astute Ottoman still possesses that the country is so quiet and safe as we now find it, and that instances of injustice are so few.¹

III. *The existing State of Religion.*—This, unhappily, is far from satisfactory. A few years ago a considerable movement of Mohammedans in the direction of Christianity seemed to be commencing. A desire to investigate its claims was manifested. Young Moslems read the New Testament and other Christian books, and gladly entered into conversation respecting the differences between the two creeds. One here and another there was baptized. But political troubles began. The turmoil of war was heard, and the spirit of Islam was roused. To read Christian books or discuss religion with Nazarenes now stamped a Moslem as a kind of traitor to his own people and his father's house, and what persecution might have failed to effect was accomplished by the force of patriotic feeling. The movement was crushed; and a cry was raised that the dwindling of the power of Islam was owing to the unfaithfulness of its adherents to the teaching of their Prophet. A sort of Puritan reformation set in. Men gave up some of their grosser sins, and became diligent in their attendance at the Mosques, and the observance of prescribed religious ceremonies. Then came the struggle with Arabi Pasha and the Mahdy, both of whom were secretly or openly regarded as champions of Islam, and against both of whom Sultan and Khedive alike were banded with the Infidel. A cessation of the highly-wrought religious feeling occurred, since it had no better foundation than the hope of worldly advantage, and that hope had failed. Many began to doubt the truth of their religion, to dabble in philosophy and pseudo-philosophy, and have unhappily developed into sceptics and mere worldlings. If what was good in the early spirit of Islam now exists anywhere it is not in the Holy Land, or indeed in any part of Turkey. Yet some individual Moslems still retain the higher and nobler characteristics, and amidst the general corruption and decadence will bear comparison as just and honourable men even with the Christian standard.

The religious condition of the Christians in Palestine is a

¹ Want of space prevents more than a passing reference in this footnote to the Samaritans, Turkomans, Tokarna, and domestic slaves who help to make up the sum of the population.

delicate subject to write upon. To many Englishmen the "Holy Eastern Church" is an object of unalloyed veneration, perhaps because they have little practical acquaintance with it, whilst others have been supposed to misrepresent and malign it. It may be well in this article to quote the testimony of two well-known and independent observers. In "Syrian Stone-Lore," page 273, Captain Conder thus writes :

I have stood in the Chapel of St. Saba, have watched the holy fire, the Christians at Bethlehem, the Maronite Easter ; I have taken part in the gorgeous ritual of the Russian Cathedral, and have followed Armenian processions with their nasal chants ; I have visited Georgian hermits and Jacobite bishops ; and on such occasions, especially when standing among the pale and dying ascetics at Mar-Saba, watching the incense rise, the feeble forms hanging in their miserere seats, the hoarse chanting, the listless or fanatical faces, I have felt able to understand the Byzantine age, its superstition, its unbelief, its fierce narrow controversies, its blasphemy, immorality, and dishonesty. The Eastern clergy do not bear, as a rule, in our own times, any better reputation than that which honest, moderate, and pious men, such as Gregory, or Cyril of Jerusalem, have recorded against them in the fourth century. They are still, as then, chosen from illiterate peasants ; they are often vicious and corrupt ; they are utterly ignorant of all the best results of modern progress. Good men are found among them still ; but self-advancement, which is the vulgar ambition of the many, is attained by arts and deeds which disgrace the Church in the eyes of the world.

Mr. Laurence Oliphant, in a chapter on "Easter among the Melchites" in his recently published work,¹ tells us :

This Eastern festival lasts three days. The merriment increases and culminates on the last day, at the expiration of which everybody has given proof of his religious devotion by arriving at a blind state of intoxication. When in this sanctified condition disturbances not unfrequently occur between these Christian worshippers and the Moslems, in whose mind Christian religious ceremonial is inseparably connected with drunken riots and wild orgies.

Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that priests and people are all such as described in these quotations. Those who know the inner life of the country are aware that amongst clergy and laity, especially the former, there are many thoughtful and spiritual minds, men who make the Scriptures their study, and are earnest searchers after light and truth. The Oriental Churches are at least *beginning* to awaken from their long slumber, and one visible sign of the change is the attention now given to education. The Armenian schools are especially well conducted, and probably in no way inferior to schools of the same class in any European country. But reform of ancient customs and habits proceeds slowly, and however much the union of Christendom may be desired, and a closer communion between the Eastern and Anglican Churches

¹ "Haifa ; or, Life in Modern Palestine."

be sought, it may not be forgotten that three obstacles (which to many earnest Protestants will appear insuperable) at present stand in the way of intercommunion; namely, "the superstitious use of the icons" (as it has rather euphemistically been called) —in other words, picture-worship; the invocation of the Virgin Mary; and the scandalous ceremony of the Fire in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. A first step towards abolishing the latter ceremony was taken a few years ago by the late Armenian Patriarch, who warned his people from the pulpit that what they were going to see must not be regarded as a miracle, but only as a symbolical representation of the great truth that spiritual light came into the world from the tomb of our Lord.¹ It is not known that the leaders of other oriental Churches have followed this example. Greek, Russian, and Syrian pilgrims may still be seen struggling and fighting for the possession of the fire, and singeing their bodies with it, apparently without being reproved and better instructed by their priests.

But all Eastern Christians are not members of the Eastern Churches. Besides the Greek Catholics and other Oriental sects in communion with the Church of Rome, there are many communities of Roman Catholics scattered over the country. Some of these, as the Franciscans, are ancient, and have in their time done good service by holding up the lamp of Christianity amid the spiritual darkness and desolation of Mohammedanism. Monks, if it was ever useful anywhere, was useful in Palestine in those dark days when the convent was the only refuge of the poor Christian from oppression, and the "father of the rope," as the monk is popularly called, his only friend and adviser. Since the war in the Crimea terminated, Romish missionaries have been actively employed in Palestine founding new institutions, purchasing sites, and drawing members of the Greek Church into joining their community. The Latin Patriarchate has been re-established at Jerusalem, and by an unceasing activity the influence of Rome is being greatly extended and strengthened. The money with which all this is done comes chiefly from the French, and the French Government lends its sanction, protection, and pecuniary support. A similar energy in securing the possession of sites, building up ruined convents, and covering the land with their influence, is shown by the Russians in connection with the Greek Church.

The Jews are much more attentive to their religious

¹ I did not hear this sermon preached, and should not have understood it if I had heard it. But I was informed of it at the time by some who both heard and understood it.

observances than either the Christians or the Moslems. Nowhere is the Talmud more diligently studied, or greater efforts made to obey its precepts. A careless Jew can hardly live in Jerusalem. The tone of the community is against him, and he soon finds that he must either conform, or leave. Great devotion is shown by many able and learned rabbis, who have left comfortable homes and honoured positions in Europe to become the religious guides of their people in Palestine. The leaders of the native, or Sephardite, Jews are not less learned, nor less diligent in regulating the affairs of those who look to them. The Chief Rabbi, whose appointment must be ratified by the Sultan's Government, is always chosen from this class. They have a bench of magistrates (*beth din*) of their own, and are permitted to judge all disputes occurring in their community, and even to send transgressors to the Government prison. Yet it is not difficult to perceive that Rabbinism is losing its hold on Jews even in the holy cities of the Holy Land. It is, indeed, a system that cannot stand the test of free contact with the world. Designed to strengthen the bonds of the Law, and keep the people distinct from the nations amongst whom they dwelt, it has admirably fulfilled its function. But the changed conditions of life in the present age—the increase of wealth, the freedom of commerce, the facilities for intercommunication—cause indifferent Jews to fret under the restrictions of laws designed to separate them from the rest of mankind, whilst the pious and thoughtful are beginning to inquire into the real causes of their long degradation, and in many instances to show a tolerance for Christianity and Christians unknown amongst them before.

IV. Amidst so much that is depressing in the social and religious state of the country it is pleasant and cheering to note the good works being carried on in it by Protestant Christian agencies. Other branches of the Church are, as we have seen, not wanting in activity; but it is the Protestant alone whose religious zeal is unsullied by national or political interests. His aim is purely spiritual. His methods are those adopted and commanded by Christ Himself. To heal the sick, to teach the ignorant, to lead to Him the little ones, to raise the women, to preach the Gospel—these are the objects of the various Protestant Missions scattered through the country. It deserves to be noted that all the educational and philanthropic institutions of the English, with one exception, are of a missionary character. The hospitals and schools, whilst dispensing temporal benefits, are designed also to lead

those who receive these benefits to a knowledge of Christ as the Redeemer.

The earliest missionary efforts of the English in the Holy Land were those of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, in connection with which Christ Church, Jerusalem, was erected and the Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem founded. The work of this Society has gone on constantly increasing in importance, and their hospital, schools, and other missionary operations are beyond doubt exercising a great and beneficial influence on the Jews of the country. Prejudice has in great measure been removed; intercourse for religious purposes has become easier; Jews have learned to distinguish between true Christianity and that which has become corrupted; a spirit of inquiry has been excited; the New Testament has been distributed and read, and a large number of Jews have been admitted into the Christian Church. What the Jews' Society has done for the Jews, the Church Missionary Society has been doing for the Gentiles, and with similar results. Their work is attended with a difficulty which is hardly felt in the work among the Jews, namely, the formation, in connection with the English Church, of native Protestant communities, which are mainly composed of former members of one or other of the Eastern Churches. Many good and earnest men regard this as a schismatical procedure, and condemn it accordingly. Yet it is difficult to say what other course could be adopted. An Oriental Christian who begins to read his Bible, to think for himself about religion, to talk with the Protestant missionary and to attend his services, soon finds himself out of sympathy with his own priest and his own people, and has no resource but to join himself to those who have been the means of enlightening him. His position is similar to that of the Protestants in our own country before the Reformation. The Eastern Churches have the remedy in their own hands. If they will endeavour to reform, cast aside unscriptural practices, and seek and encourage personal, spiritual religion, there will be no need of, and no room for, Protestant communities. But unhappily, reform of Christian Churches has nearly always resulted in disruption, and there is much reason to fear that the same may occur in connection with the reformation which is slowly going on now in the Churches of the East.

Besides that of the two great evangelical societies, much other valuable work is being done. In the Lebanon are the excellent British Syrian schools, commenced after the Syrian massacres, and since carried on with well-sustained and, indeed, increasing efficiency. The Female Education Society has its noble establishment at Nazareth, and another, still in

the early stage of its existence, at Bethlehem. Miss Walker-Arnott's school at Jaffa has for twenty-five years been doing excellent educational and evangelistic work amongst Jews, Christians, and Moslems. In the same town and the villages around the admirable medical and mission work of the Mildmay deaconesses is doing great good. The important part which Christian women have taken in these various labours is very remarkable. Amongst the evangelical Germans also, who have laboured side by side with the English, the work done by devoted women has been very conspicuous. The hospital of the Kaiserswerth deaconesses at Jerusalem was commenced soon after that of the London Jews' Society, and has become a large and important institution. Their free boarding-school, which is now located in a handsome building erected for the purpose outside the wall of Jerusalem, is one of the best in the country. At Beyrout they have the care of the hospital of the German Order of St. John of Jerusalem, which is equal in every respect to the best hospitals of the same size in Europe. At Nazareth and Tiberias medical missions are supported by the Scotch; and at Safed the Jews' Society has recently strengthened its mission by the appointment of a medical man in connection with it.

These various efforts are not without visible results. The country is no longer sunk in ignorance and apathy. The Greeks, the Jews, and even the Moslems, have been provoked to jealousy and have established schools of their own. Civilization, education, Scriptural truth, are permeating the population in every direction. The long dark night is already past, and a new day has begun to dawn on the Holy Land.

THOMAS CHAPLIN, M.D.



ART. V.—CHURCHWARDENS.

Addresses to Churchwardens. By Chancellor ESPIN, D.D. Liverpool: Adam Holden, 1887.

THOMAS FULLER describes the good Parishioner¹ as one who "hides not himself from any parish-office which seeks for him, but if chosen Churchwarden is not busily idle rather to trouble than reform." Certainly the office, if honourable, is onerous too. Until recently it was the exception rather than the rule to find men of good position and education

¹ "The Holy State," p. 86, anno 1652.