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THE

PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

FROM THE ORIGINAL PROSPECTUS.

No country should be of so much interest to us as that in which the documents of our Faith were written, and the momentous events they describe enacted. At the same time no country more urgently requires illustration. Even to a casual traveller in the Holy Land the Bible becomes, in its form, and therefore to some extent in its substance, a new book. Many an allusion which hitherto had no meaning, or had lain unnoticed, starts into prominence and throws a light over a whole passage.

It is proposed to raise a fund to be applied to the purposes of investigating the Holy Land, by employing competent persons to examine the following points :—

1. *Archaeology*.—Jerusalem alone would furnish an ample field in this department. What is above ground will be accurately known when the present survey is completed ; but below the surface hardly anything has yet been discovered. The Tombs of the Kings on Mount Zion—the course of the Tyropeon Valley—the real extent of the Temple enclosure—the site of the Tower of Antonia—of the Palace of Herod—of Ophel—of the Pool of Bethesda—the position of the towers of Hippicus and Psephinus—the spring and conduit of Hezekiah—are all awaiting excavation.

2. *Manners and Customs*.—A work is urgently required which shall do for the Holy Land what Mr. Lane's "Modern Egyptians" has done for Egypt—describe in a systematic and exhaustive order, with clear and exact minuteness, the manners, habits, rites, and language of the present inhabitants, with engravings intended like his "not to embellish the pages, but to explain the text." Many of the ancient and peculiar customs of Palestine are fast vanishing before the increasing tide of Western manners, and in a short time the exact meaning of many things which find their correspondences in the Bible will have perished.

3. *Topography*.—Of the coast-line of Palestine we now possess an accurate map in the recent Admiralty Charts. What is wanted is a survey which

when we advance inland should give the position of the principal points throughout the country with equal accuracy. If these were fixed, the intermediate spots and the smaller places could be filled in with comparative ease and certainty.

4. *Geology*.—Of this we are in ignorance of almost every detail. The valley of the Jordan and basin of the Dead Sea is geologically one of the most remarkable on the earth's surface. To use the words of Sir Roderick Murchison, "it is the key to the whole of the geology of the district." Its Biblical interest is equally great. To name but one point. The decision of the question whether any volcanic changes have occurred round the margin of the lake within the historical period, may throw a new aspect over the whole narrative of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

5. *Natural Sciences—Botany, Zoology, Meteorology*.—These are at present but very imperfectly known, while the recent investigations of Mr. Tristram, limited as they necessarily were, show that researches are likely to furnish results of no common scientific interest.

It will perhaps be said that many of the points above enumerated have been already examined—that Robinson, Stanley, Rosen, and others have done much in the department of topography—that Hooker, and more recently Tristram, have reported on the botany—that Roth and Tristram have brought home shells, fish, birds, and eggs—that the researches of M. Lartet on the geology of the Dead Sea, and those of the Duc de Luynes, De Vogue, and De Saulcy on archaeology, are on the eve of publication. This is true; but without intending to detract from the usefulness or the credit of the labours of these eminent men, it is sufficient to observe that their researches have been partial and isolated, and their results in too many cases discrepant with each other. What is now proposed is an expedition composed of thoroughly competent persons in each branch of research, with perfect command of funds and time, and with all possible appliances and facilities, who should produce a report on Palestine which might be accepted by all parties as a trustworthy and thoroughly satisfactory document.

Her Majesty the Queen has been graciously pleased to become the Patron of the Association, and to contribute to its funds.

Subscriptions are received by the Bankers of the Association, Messrs. Coutts and Co., Strand; and the Union Bank of London, 4, Pall Mall East, and by the Honorary Secretary.

By order of the Committee,

GEORGE GROVE, *Hon. Secretary.*