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# “The Bible.”

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Illustrating the Manners  
and Customs of the  
People in Bible Lands.

By

The Rev. Samuel Schor,

A Native of Jerusalem,  
and the Originator of the  
Palestine Exhibitions.

*Ex Libris*

C. K. OGDEN

# Palestine and the Bible.

Illustrating the Manners,  
and Customs of the . .  
People in Bible Lands.

BY  
THE REV. SAMUEL SCHOR,  
A Native of Jerusalem.

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## Introduction to the Ninth Edition.

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This is the Ninth Edition of this little Book. Altogether 40,000 copies have now been printed. God is using it as a humble handmaid in leading many to a more intelligent study of His Word. A clergyman in recommending his people to get copies said **“I have learnt more from this little book than from many a thick half-guinea commentary.”**

This book was originally intended to be the Catalogue of the Palestine Exhibitions started by the author, but it is read and studied again and again, as a reference-book and text-book on the Customs of the East.

May God continue to bless this book and the Exhibitions with which it is connected.

All lovers of God's Word can help by circulating this book far and wide.

SAMUEL SCHOR.

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# Palestine and the Bible.

BY

REV. SAMUEL SCHOR.



## CHAPTER I.

### Eastern Customs and Manners.

**G**OD'S Word is an Eastern Book. It was written in the East, by Easterns and for Easterns. It is therefore only obvious that a study of that Land, its life and habits, furniture and dress, language and expressions—in short, everything connected with the Land and the People—must throw a flood of light on many passages of Scripture.

And God has made it possible for us to examine the subject thoroughly; for He has, in a most marvellous way, allowed the Land and its inhabitants to remain quite unchanged throughout many centuries. Most countries have changed over and over again. They have altered their habits, their dress, their furniture; they have advanced in

education and culture ; but Palestine has practically remained unchanged. Its life to-day is the life of Bible times. Visit that land, and if you have eyes to see and ears to hear, you will be able to throw yourself back in imagination to the times of Abraham, David, or our Lord.

Moreover, there is another important consideration. The natives of the land to-day are chiefly Arabs, descendants of Ismael and Esau. They know nothing of the Scriptures. They do not choose their mode of life, their habits, their dress. They simply live this primitive life because their parents and grandparents for a hundred generations have lived the same life. They are therefore *unconsciously* living the life of Scripture, and are a daily witness to its truth. Undesigned witnesses are always the most valuable ones.

This little book is, therefore, no record of a visit to Palestine. We have far too many such books already. Many of them form very pleasant but rather useless reading. They describe *ad nauseam* the same little episode of the landing at Jaffa, the first attempt to mount the Arab steed, the obstinate donkey, &c., &c. We then have the very beautiful but very stale sentimental talk about Bethlehem and Nazareth, Tabor and Olivet.

Are we to suppose that God preserved that land through countless ages, and allowed it to



remain unchanged, in spite of a hundred battles and sieges, in order that the modern tripper may fling his little joke at the expense of an ass or a mule!

The greatest desire of Bible students is to understand the Book. Great scholars and divines have, by their knowledge of ancient languages, given us perfect translations and explanations. But commentaries lack life. It is one thing to read about the Shepherd King; it is another to follow a shepherd on the hills of Judea, see him wear the same sheepskin jacket, armed with the same kind of rod and staff, watch him sling his stones, call his sheep by name, take the new-born lamb to his bosom, carry the wounded one gently on his shoulders, lead them to their resting place, go before, while they follow him:—such a visit makes the Bible a living Book; you feel as though the shepherd of Bethlehem had lived this year, that you had just paid him a visit, and that he had fully explained to you his whole life. All this is so intensely simple, that it seems beneath the consideration of the commentator and theologian. It is not scientific, it is not critical. It is far more scientific to sit in one's study, and to prove that the story of the blessings and curses repeated on Gerizim and Ebal in the days of Joshua, was an utter impossibility, owing to the distance of the two mountains from one another, and the fact that it is



known how far the human voice can travel. It may be less scientific to visit those two mountains, and to see if any spot can be found from which the voice of man can travel across the intervening valley, and reach the hearers on the opposite hill; but it has been tried, the very words—the blessings and curses—were repeated, and every word distinctly heard. [Such an “unscientific and uncritical” method must demonstrate, however, to the study-critic, beyond the powers of contradiction, that there is a screw loose in his philosophy.”

The commentary of the future will not devote whole pages in telling us why it does not agree with Meyer or Lange; it will not give us twenty-six reasons—all very learned and ingenious—to prove that Detitzsch’s interpretation of a verse must be wrong, and forty-eight equally learned reasons as to why Alford’s explanation of a sentence cannot be right; it will devote these pages in letting Eastern Customs and Manners throw all their light upon the Book wherever such a process is possible, and the result will be that many difficulties of Scripture will vanish, and many apparently meaningless passages will receive quite a depth of meaning.

For years the author, who is a Native of the Holy Land, has been endeavouring to impress these truths upon Bible students, by means of the Palestine Exhibitions, which he started in the year 1891, and

which, by their very popularity, and by the fact that others have copied them, prove how welcome to countless thousands is the light which the Land and the People sheds upon the Book.

It is his earnest prayer, that this little book may be of some assistance in helping many to "search the Scriptures," and "to find eternal life."





## CHAPTER II.

### Agriculture.

THE Jews were essentially an agricultural people.

The ideal of national peace and prosperity was summed up in the well-known saying, "Every man shall sit under his own vine and fig-tree." (Zech. iii. 10). We are, therefore, not surprised to find frequent allusions to agricultural customs and implements in every part of the Bible. And remember this: the implements used, the nature of the country, the climate, the soil—in fact everything connected with the subject of agriculture—is so different in Palestine, that *you cannot make a more fatal mistake in the world than to compare Bible customs with English customs.* It is wise to lay it down as a general rule if you want to understand any Bible or Eastern custom: think of the very reverse of your own, and you will not be very far wrong.

Let me, therefore, impress upon every reader the importance of studying the agricultural allusions in Scripture in the light of agricultural customs of

the Palestine of to-day. Such a study, and such a study only, *can make the Bible a real living Book.*

Palestine is called *the Land flowing with milk and honey*; (Josh. v. 6), it was a very fertile country. There are two features which tend to make Palestine *a land of almost unbounded resources.*

(a)—**ITS CLIMATE.** Although only a small country it has every variety of climate, from the colds of Norway and Sweden to the tropics of Central Africa. We have our coldest climate in the North, on the Lebanon mountains, and the temperature rises as you descend to the Highlands of Ephraim, and Manasseh and Judah; it rises still more as you descend into the plain of Sharon and along the whole length of the Mediterranean; and it reaches a tropical heat in the hot valley of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. Everything can, therefore, practically grow in some part of Palestine.

(b)—**THE SOIL** is intensely fertile. No artificial manure is used. It is not needed. The source of the fertility of the country to a great extent consists of **Small Soft Limestones**, which are found scattered all over the country, sometimes almost completely hiding the soil itself from view. But when the rains descend and the floods come, part of the lime is dissolved; it mixes freely with the soil, thus enriching the country just as the farmer is about to plough.



**EASTERN PLOUGHS.**—The most primitive ploughs are used to-day, and were no doubt used in Bible times. They are very light, and can easily be carried by one man. Notice the handle. This a man holds *with one hand* (Luke ix. 62), and thus guides the plough. Being light and small, it just scratches the earth to the depth of a very few inches. The plough is fastened to the neck of the oxen with a **YOKE**. You have nothing like it here. Then notice how it is fastened to the neck of the oxen. The oxen pass *under* it. See Jer. xxvii. 8, 11. The weight of the yoke naturally makes the poor animal stoop. Hence the force of the allusion that when God brought Israel out of Egypt and broke their yoke of bondage, He says, "I made you to go *upright*." Lev. xxvi. 13. The yoke is often used as a figure of speech to express bondage. See Gen. xxvii. 40; 1 Kings xii. 4; Is. xlvii. 6, &c. When a very greivous bondage was referred to, no stronger expression could be used than a *yoke of iron*. Deut. xxviii. 48; Jer. xxviii. 14. Yokes of iron are never used: at least, I have never seen or heard of them: It would be used as a figure of speech. Some yokes fit better than others, and could be used with greater comfort by the hard-working animals; thus the yoke which our Lord imposes on us "*is easy*." Matthew xi. 30.

The **GOAD** is a long pole which the ploughman holds in his other hand. One end has a metal point,



with which he pricks and goads the animals in their work, the other end, containing a flat piece of iron, he uses to scrape off the soil from the ploughshare. Like everything else, it is used as a figure of speech in Eccles. xii. 11, and again by our Lord in Acts ix. 6 and xxvi. 14, where it is called "pricks." (See Rev. Version.) Young animals are unaccustomed to the yoke. Jer. xxxi. 18. They fight and kick, but to no purpose, for they only hurt themselves by "kicking against the pricks."

Many farmers will often plough together, each having his own plough and yoke of oxen, and one following close behind the other. Farmers club together in this way, partly for protection from the roving Bedouin robbers, and partly on account of the size of some of their fields. Imagine a farmer making a single furrow one mile in length! Thus Elisha was engaged with eleven others when called by Elilah. 1 Kings xix. 19. Again, Elisha boils the oxen which he slays with the instruments (1 Kings xix. 21), showing they were of wood.

Sometimes animals are "*unequally yoked together.*" A camel and a donkey, or a donkey with a cow. This was forbidden by the Law. Deut. xxii. 10.

**RAINFALL.**—Ploughing is always done after the "*early rains*" have thoroughly saturated and softened the ground. See Ps. lxxv. 10. Here again

you can find no parallel in England. Palestine has practically two seasons only, *the wet and the dry*. The dry season commences in April and lasts until October, and during this long period not a drop of rain falls. The first rains, or early rains, come about the end of October or beginning of November, and the wet season closes with the **LAST** or **LATTER RAINS** in March or the beginning of April. When, therefore, the winter is passed, "the rain is over and gone." Cant. ii 11. Not a drop of rain falls in summer. Hence "snow in summer or rain in harvest" is as exceptional a thing as "honour to a fool." Prov. xxvi. 1. When Samuel prayed that it might *rain in harvest*, it would at once be connected with a judgment from God, for it was most exceptional. 1 Sam. xii. 17, 18. During the winter months we have two or three days of very heavy showers of rain, accompanied often with thunder and lightning, hail and snow, and then a few days of bright warm sunshine.

**THE EARLY AND LATTER RAINS** do not imply two distinct seasons of rain, with a dry season between, but to the beginning and end of the continuous rainy seasons. Both are greatly needed. Without the first rains, no ploughing or sowing can be done; without the latter rains there will be no harvest. A sad distressing picture of the absence of the *latter rain* is given us in Joel i. 7-20. It

implies that the early rains had come, that the seed had been sown, and beginning to grow, but the latter rains in February, March and April had been withheld, and the seed wasted, v. 10. (See 2 Kings xix. 26.)

As soon as the first rains have saturated and softened the ground, the ploughman begins his work. Until the early rains fall he cannot plough. The earth is as hard as a rock, hence the strong and natural expression in Psalm lxxv. 10, "Thou *dissolvest* it with showers," not, "Thou makest it soft."

Sometimes the "early rains" are very late, or insufficient in quantity to *dissolve* the hard clods; in that case the ploughman has to wait (James v. 7) and hope *and pray* (1 Kings viii. 35). "Waiting for rain" implies a season of great anxiety. Job xxix. 23; Jer. xiv. 4. But when once the rains have come in sufficient quantities, he must begin to plough. He may have to plough in the very face of hail and snow, storm and tempest, but plough *he must*, for if he does not plough and sow with the early rains, he will not reap after the latter rains. See Prov. xx. 4. "The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold;" and Eccles. xi. 4, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." No doubt our Lord is thinking of a man ploughing in a storm of rain and hail when he says, "He that putteth his hand to the plough and looketh

behind." Luke ix. 62. Before him the poor man faces the storm, behind him he perhaps sees his comfortable home.

During the harvest the farmer produces his **THRESHING INSTRUMENT**. It is a "sharp instrument with teeth." Is. xli. 15. The corn is cut with a sickle, bound into sheaves, and conveyed on camels' backs to the threshing floor—a field with a hard surface. Here the grain is trodden out by animals. Threshing instruments, where used, are made of two or three thick boards of wood (1 Chron. xxi. 23), fastened together, side by side, and look very much like a sledge. The underneath part has sharp flint stones or pieces of iron fixed to it. These sharp points, "the teeth," not only separate the corn from the ear, but cut up the straw. Look at the sharp stones, and how the instrument is used, and you will understand Gideon's threat, "I will *thresh* your flesh with thorns." Judges vi. 11. God's punishments are often compared with threshing. Is. xxv. 10; Hab. iii. 12. Very often no instrument is used. The oxen are made to tread the corn until it has been threshed.

During this process the **MUZZLE** comes into operation. Animals are generally muzzled during threshing of the corn. This was forbidden in Deut. xxv. 4.



Another important implement is the **FORK OR WINNOWER FAN**. Wheat and chaff are separated with a *fork or winnowing fan*. Matt. iii. 12. The grain is heaped up, and men dip the fork, and toss it in the air. The wind *carries the light chaff away*, leaving the heavier grain on the floor (Is. xxx. 24). Hence the frequent connection found in the Bible between the wind or whirlwind and the chaff. Ps. i. 4; xxxv. 5; Is. xvii. 17; xli. 16; Jer. li. 2; Hos. xiii. 3. You will be able to realize John the Baptist's striking reference, Matt. iii. 12, *He will thoroughly purge his threshing floor, i.e.*, Christ will separate the chaff from the wheat.

Ears of corn, neatly plaited, are brought to the towns by farmers, and presented to their patrons. Thus were they probably plaited when, as the first-fruit, they are waved as a wave-offering. Ex. xxix. 24; Lev. viii. 27.

It is during the period of harvest that you will be able to notice the **LODGE IN A GARDEN**. It is well worthy of a careful study, as illustrating Is. i. 8. During harvest time many of the farmers leave their villages and live in their vineyards or olive yards, in booths made of reeds. These represent the "cottage" of the above verse, the *sukkah*. The same word is translated "booth" in Lev. xxiii. 42, where the Israelites are commanded to make booths on the Feast of Tabernacles. In the booth or



tent the farmer himself and his family live. Should he have any field in which some inferior vegetables or fruit, such as leeks, onions, cucumbers or melons are growing, he makes his servant, or a labourer watch there. The watchman takes four long poles, which he cuts from some trees close by, fixes them in the ground so as to form a square of about six feet. Fastened to these he fixes a platform of wood about four feet from the ground, which he covers with an old straw mat, or a piece of coarse sacking, over which he throws the branches of trees; it shelters him from the burning rays of an Eastern sun. This is the "lodge." As soon as the harvest is over the people return home, leaving the booth or lodge to its fate. The autumn and winter winds blow away part of the branches or matting, leaving them most realistic pictures of desolation and ruin: a striking illustration of a nation without God.





### CHAPTER III.

## Houses and Homes.

EASTERN houses are as unlike Western houses as they can possibly be ; hence the importance of studying the subject very carefully, since every part of an Eastern house is mentioned in Scripture.

**AN EASTERN HOUSE.**—We examine first the exterior. You see four bare ugly walls. There may be one or two windows, and they will generally be covered with lattice work. You also see a very uninviting low street door. And this is more or less the universal custom all over the East, *and has been so from times immemorial*. Judged, therefore, from the exterior, Eastern houses are uninteresting, ugly, and dirty. But it is *only the exterior* that presents so uninviting an appearance, the interior may be beautiful, comfortable, and clean. There is good reason why the exterior should be so unattractive. Rulers in the East have absolute power, and are generally unprincipled men. A ruler has but to covet a house or field or vineyard, and he can

soon possess it; or he can always find his wife, or some unscrupulous time-serving courtier, ready to help him in robbing and plundering the rightful owner. (Remember Ahab and the field of Naboth, 1 Kings xxi.) It is, therefore, customary for the wealthy to *hide their wealth*. King Solomon reminded his contemporaries of this fact when he said "*He that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction.*" Prov. xvii. 19. And the noblemen and gentry of the very city where these words were written realized the truth of King Solomon's saying when Nebuchadnezzar burnt "*every great man's house,*" 2 Kings xxv. 9. Micah denounces those who rob and plunder houses. Micah ii. 2. See also Amos iii. 15.

Now we enter **THE DOOR**. Doors are generally "*two-leaved.*" Is. xlv. 1. This explains the two leaves in 1 Kings vi. 32-34, and Ezek. xli. 24. You next find yourself—supposing you are visiting the house of a wealthy man—in the **PORTER'S LODGE**. It is a small room through which you pass before entering the house. The porter is called "*Bawab,*" literally, *a door-keeper*. All gates of cities, temples, palaces, &c., had *Bawabs*. See 2 Sam. xviii. 26; 2 Kings vii. 20; 1 Chron. ix. 21. When the doors are shut and anyone knocks, seeking admission, the porter does not open at once. He first calls out "Who is there?" Should he not

recognise the voice, he continues questioning until he is satisfied that "all is well." Hence Rhoda first questioned Peter, and recognising his voice, in her joy left him standing without. Acts xii. 13-14. The door would not be opened to any suspicious or unwelcome stranger. The unfriendly neighbour without opening the door, but *from within*, says "Trouble me not." Luke xi. 7. Our Saviour's gracious promise should be remembered here, "*To him that knocketh it shall be opened,*" Matth. vii. 8, *i.e.*, no questions will first be asked as to whether you are worthy of gaining admittance. *All who knock are welcome*; or, "the very fact of knocking I consider a friendly act, and gains for you a ready admittance."

Now we enter **THE COURT**. You see it is no covered hall, but a court open to the sky. It is called **A KHOSH**. All houses have courts. The great palaces have several. Esther v. 1. The Temple had three. Sometimes one court led into another. See Ezekiel's description of such a court in ch. xlvi. 21. They are generally paved with stone, sometimes with beautiful marble slabs, or inlaid with mosaics. Here they keep pots of flowers, or trees with delightful shade or still more delightful fruit, such as oranges, pomegranates, figs, dates. The vine, too, is made to grow over some trellis-work, forming a beautiful bower. It is probably to



the fruit trees growing in these courts that the prophets refer when they say, "Every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree." Remembering the refreshing appearance of a court thus covered with trees, Isaiah's language receives fresh force when, in foretelling the doom of the city, he says that the courts shall be covered "*with reeds and rushes.*" Isaiah xxxv. 7.

In the Court we generally find **THE WELL**. It is **A CISTERN** in which the rain water is collected. During the dry season of the year they are often empty, and form a good hiding-place. 2 Sam. xvii. 18. The word **WELL** should often be read **CISTERN** e.g., Gen. xxi. 19; Num. xx. 17; 2 Sam. xvii. 18; 2 Sam. xxiii. 15. But substitute the word **SPRING** in Gen. xxiv. 13, and in xlix. 22.

Now we enter **THE ROOMS**. They are all built round the courtyard, with all the doors and windows facing it. The rooms are of various sizes, and built entirely of stone—walls, floor and ceiling included. As the weight of the ceiling must necessarily be very great, the roofs are always vaulted, hence the small domes which are so general a feature of all Oriental roofs.

We now make our way up the stairs. They take us to **THE HOUSETOP**. You notice that it is almost flat. A wall about two or three feet high



runs right round it, forming a very necessary protection. This parapet is called "**BATTLEMENT**" in the Bible, Deut. xxii. 8. The wisdom of this law will be apparent to all who remember how frequently they are used. Samuel spends a night with Saul on the housetop. 1 Sam. ix. 25. Imagine a dark night on a housetop without the "battlement!" Here St. Peter prays, Acts x. 9. Idolaters would naturally choose the housetop when they wished to "worship the host of heaven." Zeph. i. 5. The housetop is paved with flat stones. In course of time the cement wears away, the stones become loose, a bird drops a stray seed into the crevice, and in course of time grass and even wild flowers may be seen growing on the housetop. But "*it withereth afore it groweth up*" (Ps. cxxix. 6), having no depth of earth, 2 Kings xix. 26, and Is. xxxvii. 27.

It is quite possible for people to go from one house to another by just stepping across the adjoining roof. But that would be a great breach of etiquette. Only under very exceptional circumstances would it be permitted, *e.g.*, in case of a hurried flight. When our Lord says, "Let him who is on the housetop not come down," &c., Matth. xxiv. 17, He no doubt refers to a hurried flight from one housetop to another until some safe place is reached by which one could descend to the road and escape. It would thus be easy to pass news from

house to house by proclaiming it from the housetop. Matth. x. 27, and Luke xii. 3. Most houses contain one storey only, but some possess one or two rooms on the housetop. These are called "**UPPER ROOMS.**" They are generally the best rooms—the largest and coolest, and would be used as **GUEST-CHAMBERS.** Mark xiv. 14; Luke xxii. 11. Hence the guest-chamber in which our Lord celebrated His last Passover was also called an *upper room*. Mark xiv. 15; Luke xxii. 12.

Can a **ROOF** be **UNCOVERED**? If Eastern roofs are of stone and cemented, how could the man sick of the palsy be let down through the roof? (Mark ii. 4.) We have to remember that our Lord was "preaching the word" (verse 2). He would choose a place where most people could hear. Now a room would obviously be the worst place, as only those actually in the room could hear.

But on many an Eastern housetop, containing perhaps two upper rooms, the space between the two is covered over with boards, branches of trees, straw matting or tiles, and thus affords grateful shelter from the heat of the sun. Now from that spot our Lord could be heard by most of the people crowded there. And what the four men would have to do was to carry their friend in next door, ascend on to the roof, step across to the roof of the house occupied

by our Lord, and proceed to remove the boards, branches, &c.

Having examined the house, we will now visit the **CITY WALL**. There is always a great distinction between cities and villages in the East, consisting not so much in point of size, as in the fact that *all cities* of any importance have walls. This is emphasized in Deut. i. 28; Num. xiii. 28. There existed also a difference in the law between the tenure of land in *walled* cities and in open villages, Lev. xxv. 29-30. The walls are very high, strong and massive. They are so thick that people can comfortably walk on the top. From the top of the wall the besieged would of course seek to repel the invaders. 2 Kings xviii. 26; 2 Sam. xi. 21; Joel ii. 7-9. Here people would also be seen in time of peace. 2 Kings vi. 26. Many of the stones are of great size. One stone on the east wall of the city of Jerusalem measures thirty-seven feet in length, and just below the surface some have been found quite forty feet in length. Houses are sometimes built so close to the wall as to form part of it, containing even a window facing the exterior of the city. Such was Rahab's house in Jericho (Josh. ii. 15), and David's (1 Sam. xix. 12), and St. Paul's in Damascus (2 Cor. xi. 33).

Let us next examine **A CITY GATE WITH NEEDLE'S EYE**. Cities are pierced with several

large **GATES OF IRON**, and are always *two-leaved*. Isa. xiv. 1. When we read that Samson took the *doors of the gate* (Judg. xvi. 3) it means he unhinged *both leaves* and carried both. Gates are closed at sunset, and not opened until sunrise. This is still the case in all Eastern cities. Neh. vii. 3, and xiii. 19. And when once the gates are shut, they will not be opened except to admit a great official who may be out on an errand of importance. The chief captain sends St. Paul from Cæsarea "*at the third hour of the night*." Acts xxiii. 23, *i.e.*, about 9 p.m. A very wise precaution. No one could possibly pursue them until the gates were opened at about six the following morning. This would give the Apostle a nine hour's start, and make it impossible for any Jews to overtake them on the way.

It is interesting to know that for the last few years *the gates of Jerusalem have not been shut day or night!* Is. lx. 11.

When anyone has to be admitted or allowed to leave the city by night, *a smaller door fixed into the larger one* is opened. This is called "**THE NEEDLE'S EYE.**" Matt. xix. 24; Mark x. 25; Luke xviii. 25. Now, try and picture the scene to which our Lord refers. Camels laden with large sacks of wheat, barley, charcoal or wood, are brought into town daily. They are our beasts of burden, for there are no carts



in Palestine. The burdens are evenly balanced on either side of the camel's back, and stand out sometimes, some three or four feet, right and left. A camel, therefore, needs a wide gate to admit it and its burden. Every traveller in the East knows from experience what it means to meet a laden camel coming up a street only just wide enough for it to pass through. He could not even stand against the wall, his only plan is to stoop low, and allow the camel to pass by, whilst the burden just grazes his back! Hence the meaning of our Lord was obvious to his hearers. A camel *with its burden* could not possibly enter the "needle's eye"; its only chance of entering was to have its burden removed first. The point our Lord wished to inculcate was not that a rich man could not enter heaven, but a man *who trusts* in his riches. Mark x. 24.

Gates in the East open always into large squares used as **MARKET PLACES**. **HERE** people congregate, not only to transact business, but also to discuss the news of the day. At the gate sits the judge to administer justice, Deut. xxi. 19; xxii. 24; xxv. 7; Ruth iv. 1-10. The city gate is, indeed, the centre of life and activity in the town. Here labourers sit, waiting to be **HIRED**, Matt. xx. 3. Women bring their baskets with fruit and vegetables for sale. Proclamations are made in the city gate. The

wealthy townspeople sit here on low stools sipping their coffee and smoking long pipes, which they order from a small improvised coffee-shop, while they discuss the news of the day; the city-gate takes the place of a gentlemen's club in England. To be spoken of highly in the city-gate (Prov. xxxi. 23), means that a man is respected by high and low, rich and poor, by the gentry who sit there gossiping, or by the poor peasant women or labourers.

Here also may be seen the **SAKKAH**, or *water seller*, with his *skin bottle* slung behind his back, shouting out "Ho ye thirsty ones, come buy and drink;" (Is. lv. 1.) Here also sits the baker's boy with his basket of barley loaves—he is sure to be found wherever people congregate. John vi. 9.

### EXPLANATION OF A DIFFICULT VERSE.

Close to the small improvised coffee-shop, a *hired minstrel* sits, playing and singing. Very often, when the song happens to be lively, one of the listeners will rise, and treat the public to a dance. Eastern dancing, it should be remembered, is altogether different from the dancing in European countries. In the East *men and women never dance together*. Then again, dancing consists merely in certain peculiar movements of the body and limbs, sometimes very graceful, sometimes otherwise. When the hired minstrel has succeeded in making someone

rise to his feet and go through the usual dancing performance, he is pleased and flattered. It is a sign that his music is appreciated. Sometimes he will change his note to a sad mournful strain. The tune is plaintive, and the words sad. If his listeners are touched, they will actually shed tears, and the minstrel is again pleased, for he knows his music has affected his audience. Now turn to Matth. xi. 16-17. Our Lord compares the Jews to children sitting in the market place and saying, "*we have piped unto you but ye have not danced, we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.*" He wished to imply that their hearts were so hard, that neither the thunders of the Baptist's preaching, nor yet His own still small voice had any effect upon them. The music was there, but there was no response. Both the Saviour and St. John the Baptist *had piped*, but no one had responded.

Outside the city, and all along the hillsides, may be seen numberless caverns. Many of them are **ROCK-HEWN TOMBS**. These are found in every part of Palestine. They are either natural or artificial caves, with niches cut into the sides just large enough to contain one body. People prepared tombs for themselves and families. The *Cave* of Machpelah was the burial-place of the Patriarch (Gen. xxiii). Isaac no doubt added two more niches for himself and Rebecca; Jacob again, for himself and Leah

(Gen. i. 5). Asa prepared his own grave (2 Chron. xvi. 14), and Joseph of Arimathea prepared one in his own garden, in which the body of our Lord was laid (Matth. xxvii. 60). The tomb of Lazarus in Bethany was rock-hewn (John xi. 38-39). You enter the cave through a very low opening. People therefore have to *stoop* to look in (John xx. 5). A round stone, similar to a millstone, only much larger, in an upright position, is rolled against the opening. To open the tomb this great stone has to *be rolled back* into the side. The ground was always on an incline, lower at the door than at the sides; hence it was easier to close than to open. This explains the question of the women, "Who shall roll us away the stone?" (Mark xvi. 3).

In Palestine the body was always wrapped in linen, and then placed in the tomb. Spices were used for sanitary purposes only, the art of embalming being unknown. The Israelites differed entirely from the Egyptians in this; they never attempted to preserve the body from decay. There are however two bodies buried somewhere in Palestine which were embalmed, the bodies of Jacob and Joseph. But they died and were embalmed in Egypt.





## CHAPTER IV.

### Eastern Furniture.

**T**HE first thing to strike a European, when visiting an Eastern Home, is an almost total absence of furniture. Eastern rooms look very bare indeed. They contain low couches, called divans, placed round three sides of the room, some rugs, a very small low table, and that is practically all. There are, of course, houses in large towns, where Western ideas are beginning to prevail, and where many European articles of furniture are to be found, but a truly Eastern home is sure to possess very few articles of furniture beyond those named above.

In 2 Kings iv. 10, we have a list of the articles of furniture in a Guest Chamber, which consisted of a "bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick!"

**THE BED OR COUCH.** How different from an English bed! and no bedstead! Instead of the latter, there is a raised platform built against the

wall. These are found in most houses, and take the place of the bedstead. In the houses of the wealthy, they would be of marble and other beautiful stones. In Esther i. 6, we read that the couches were upon "**A PAYEMENT** of red, white, yellow, and black marble." Now the Hebrew word "**MITTAH**" is sometimes translated bed and sometimes couch, and sometimes even bier! 2 Sam. iii. 31. Another word, **MISHKAV**, from a root meaning to recline, is sometimes translated bed and bedchamber. It depended entirely upon the use made of it. A sleeping place by night was sometimes the place on which guests recline by day, and is then the "couch." Esther was not in bed when she entertained Ahasuerus and Haman at the banquet, as one would imagine from the use of the words, "*And he was fallen upon the bed*," Esther vii. 8, but on her couch, probably similar to those described in the same book, ch. i. 6. Of course, to the poor man, the couch by day becomes his bed by night. But in wealthier houses, where they had "bedchambers," such as in Pharaoh's palace (Ex. viii. 3), or Ishbosheth's mansion (2 Sam. iv. 7), this would not be the case. Sometimes, however, the word "bedchamber" means a recess in the wall, or a small closet, in which the mattresses and bedding are put out of the way during the day-time. In such a place, no doubt, Joash was hid. 2 Kings xi. 2.

When you read of the word **BED**, it therefore is of some importance for the right understanding of the passage to find out whether bed or couch is meant. When David says, "Let the saints sing aloud in their beds," Ps. cxlix. 5, he refers to the couch or **DIYAN**, on which people sit and sing. Notice, too, how the mattresses are covered with fine tapestry or linen. Also an old custom. See Prov. vii. 16.

The bedding consists of a mattress. The **PILLOW OR BOLSTER** is a matter of indifference to the people. Michal makes one of an inflated goat's skin, and that was considered fit for the son-in-law of a king! 1 Sam. xix. 13. Jacob has a stone, Gen. xxviii. 18, and probably others were accustomed to use the same head rest. It was, therefore, the height of luxury to use **SOFT PILLOWS**. Ezekiel, warning the Jews against luxury, referred to them. Ezek. xiii. 18, 20.

In Old Testament times seats were used—a custom which had been brought by the Israelites from Egypt. After the return from Babylon, the Persian custom was adopted of using no chairs at all, but reclining on couches or **DIYANS**. This *reclining instead of sitting*, is referred to in Esther, and frequently in the New Testament. At the feeding of the five thousand, our Lord says, "Make the men *recline*." Matt. viii. 11; and see also Luke

ix. 14; xiv. 8, and xxii. 27. Again, at the celebration of the last Passover, our Lord and His disciples *reclined*. Mark xiv. 18. (See Revised Version to above passages.) It is curious to know that the natives of Palestine have now gone back to the older custom of *sitting* at a meal, but they sit on divans instead of chairs. Hence we find the Old Testament custom in the posture of the people, and the New Testament custom in the seat or divan.

The poor man's bed consists of a rough cotton-wool quilt, called *Ilhaf*. When our Lord said to the impotent man, "Take up thy bed and walk," John v. 8, this was no doubt the bed he had to take. We need not suppose that he was asked to carry a "fourposter."

The **TABLE** is a low stand about 18 inches high, on which is placed **A TRAY** of basket work or copper. The **BASKET TRAYS** (in Hebrew **SAL**) should be distinguished from the larger **BASKETS** (called **DUDIM** in Hebrew.) The "basket of bake-ments" brought to Pharaoh (Gen. xl. 17) was the tray or **Sal**. On the other hand, the baskets in which the heads of Ahab's sons were placed were **DUDIM**. 2 Kings x. 8.

**FRUIT BASKETS.** Fruit is still brought into the market town in **DUDIM BASKETS**. Jer. xxiv. 1.

Gideon used the **SAL**. Judges vi. 19.



The **FIRE-HEARTH** is made of rough clay, used for cooking and warming purposes. Charcoal is burnt. When burning brightly, it is carried into the room, round which the people sit in the evenings *warming their hands*. Thus St. Peter sat. Wealthy people use copper ones. John xviii. 18, and Jer. xxxvi. 22, 23. Remember, they had no stoves, and no chimneys!

**LAMPS** are made of clay. They are very small. Olive oil is always used. A piece of cotton-wool or flax forms the wick. When the oil in the **SRAJ** or lamp is nearly exhausted, a very unpleasant smoke is the result. But the moment oil is added, it ceases to smoke, and burns up brightly. Is. xliii. 17. This is what "the Servant of the Lord," the Saviour, does to the Soul. The same small lamps were used in Bible times.

They hold very little oil, and need replenishing about once every hour; hence *the foolishness of those virgins* who forgot to take a proper supply. Matt. xxv. 2, 8. A vessel containing this supply is to be found in every house.

It is the **CRUSE OF OIL** mentioned in the case of the poor widow, in 1 King xvii. 12, and in Matt. xxv. 4.

The small lamps are placed in lampstands, called **CANDLESTICKS**. Matt. v. 15. They are

made of wood, though sometimes of gold or some other metal. They have **ONE** branch, but no doubt in houses of the wealthy they would have more. Remember the **SEVEN BRANCHED CANDLESTICK**. Ex. xxxvii. 17-21. and Rev i. 20. The light given is very poor, but quite enough to serve its purpose; Easterns never work after dark. Candles are used more for comfort than actual need. Hence sometimes used as a figure of comfort. Ps. xviii. 28; Micah vii. 8. A lamp going out is often used to represent the extinction of a family or race. Prov. xiii. 9. "Lamp of the wicked shall be put out," means he shall die childless. See also Prov. xx. 20; 1 Kings xv. 4; 2 Sam. xxi. 17. (Revised Version.) This probably throws some fresh light on Gen. xv. 17, God's covenant with Abraham and his remarkable vision. "A flaming torch passed between those pieces." Probably to indicate that not only would his lamp not go out, but that it would be a bright flaming torch.

The streets of Eastern cities are not lighted after dark. It is only within recent years that Jerusalem was favoured with street lamps. As the streets are bad, and in complete possession of wild street dogs, a man cannot go anywhere after dark without the **LANTERN**. When carried it throws most of the light *on the ground*. That is where it is

of course most needed, hence God's word compared with a lamp for *one's feet* and a light to *the path*. Ps. cxix. 67.

A very pretty ewer and basin is brought into requisition before a meal. As Easterns use no forks or knives, this is very necessary, both before or after a meal. It is a very ancient custom. A slave pours water on the hands, holding the basin under them. Elisha is thus described as having "poured water on the hands of Elijah." 2 Kings iii. 11. The Jews made a rigorous rule in regard to the washing of hands *before* a meal, which is still the custom. Mark vii. 3; Matt. xv. 2.

When coming from a distance, *the feet too are washed*, i.e., water from the ewer is poured over the foot, under which the basin is held. This, too, is a very ancient custom. The three angels had their feet washed. Gen. xviii. 4; Abraham's servant in Mesopotamia, Gen. xxiv. 32; and Joseph's brethren in Egypt, Gen. xliii. 24. It will therefore be seen that the washing of the feet is the universal custom in the East. It was the work of slaves or lowest menials. When Abigail of Carmel wished to express her sense of deepest humility, she could use no stronger expression than, "Behold thine handmaid is a slave to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." 1 Sam. xxiv. 41. See also Luke vii. 38, 44;

John xiii. 5, 10; and Song v. 3. Hence our Lord's lesson of humility when He washed His disciples' feet. The Pharisees, on the other hand, showed how they despised our Lord by not having His feet washed when invited to a feast. Luke vii. 44.

**EASTERN BOTTLES.**—These are made of the skins of animals, cleaned out and made water-tight. They are of various sizes, and used, not only for water, but for wine. 2 Sam. xvi. 1; Jer. xiii. 12; 1 Sam. i. 24; x. 3; and xvi. 20; and milk, Judges iv. 18. Oil was generally stored in earthen vessels. Our Lord refers to **SKIN BOTTLES** when He says "New wine must be put into new bottles," and for a very good reason. Old bottles are weak, and while the wine was fermenting, would burst. Matt. ix. 17; Job xxxii. 19.

Before "skin" bottles are fit for use they *are smoked*. Ps. cxix. 83 refers to this.

The large skin bottles are carried by men only; a smaller size is carried by women. The bottle which Abraham gave to Hagar was of this kind. Gen. xxi. 14.

**PITCHERS AND JUGS**, called sometimes **BOTTLES OF CLAY**, to distinguish them from skins, Jer. xix. 1, are still carried to the fountain or well to get water, and generally by *women*. See case of



Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. 14; the woman of Samaria, John iv. 28. So exceptional was it for a *man* to carry a pitcher of water, that our Lord was able to send His two disciples into the crowded streets of Jerusalem, and to point out the one man they were to follow; they were to follow *a man* bearing *a pitcher* of water. They were likely to meet many men carrying skin bottles, and women carrying pitchers, but not many men bearing a pitcher. Mark xiv. 3; Luke xxii. 10.

**HANDMILLS** are found in every household. People, especially in the villages and small country towns, grind their own corn, and it is work which has to be done daily, for people only bake enough for one day's consumption. Being so necessary a household requisite, without which the daily food cannot be prepared, we see the forethought of a loving Father who forbid any part of a millstone being taken as a pledge. Deut. xxiv. 6. Women grind, bake, and knead daily, and the whole process does not occupy more than about half-an-hour. The handmill consists of two millstones, the upper one and the lower. Two women sit facing each other and grind together, on account of the weight of the stone. Matt. xxiv. 41. Grinding is always the work of *women and slaves*. Ex. xi. 1. The Philistines were, therefore, heaping the greatest indignity on Sampson when they made him *grind*

*corn in prison.* Judges xvi. 21. Jeremiah laments the fact that the Babylonians “*took young men to grind.*” Lam. v. 13. Isaiah foretells that at the destruction of their city the Babylonian ladies would be engaged in performing the slaves’ work of *grinding*. Is. xlvii. 2. The *sound of the grinding*, though not by any means musical, is nevertheless pleasant to the ears of Easterns, for it is always associated with home comfort, prosperity and plenty. Hence the days must be very evil “*when the sound of the grinding is low.*” Eccles. xii. 4.

**THE KNEADING-TROUGH** IS also found in every home. It is made of wood, and of various sizes. Women may still be seen daily carrying their kneading-troughs on their heads going to the public bake-ovens. Unleavened cakes are always baked when a meal has to be hastily prepared. Ex. xii. 34, 39. Frogs in the Egyptian kneading-troughs must have been particularly obnoxious. Ex. viii. 3. God promised to bless the kneading-troughs; *i.e.*, the bread, or food of the Israelites if they obeyed Him. Deut. xxviii. 5.





## CHAPTER V.

### Eastern Dress.

**E**ASTERN FASHIONS are as changeless as the changeless sun. There is every reason to believe that, with some slight modifications, the people we meet with in the Holy Land to-day, are wearing the same kind of garments worn in the days of Abraham, David, or our Lord. Commentators and translators alike have singularly failed to appreciate the importance of the study of Eastern customs and manners with the object of elucidating many passages; and as a consequence, many a verse which should be easily understood is mystified and the full meaning lost.

One general rule should be observed, **CLOTHING IN THE EAST ALWAYS MARKS THE SOCIAL RANK OF THE WEARER.** It does so to-day, and it did so in Bible times. Hence in studying this subject we shall not only be examining articles of dress, we shall be learning much of *the character and social position of the owners* of these garments. In

many cases the difference between one man's costume and another's may be slight, but it always marks social position or rank, or religion, or even home and country. This is often referred to in the Bible. The woman of Samaria at once recognised our Lord to be a Jew, no doubt by his garments. John iv. 9. Referring to St. John the Baptist, our Lord wished to intimate that people were not attracted to him on account of any pretensions to rank or station in life; He, therefore, contrasts the difference between *his rough garments* and those of the noblemen and courtiers who wore *soft raiment*. Matt. xi. 8. John the Baptist wore the garments of a poor peasant, consisting of a mantle of camel's hair and a leather girdle. Matt. iii. 4. Elijah is at once recognised by his clothing, 2 Kings i. 8; and it appears that his clothing became the token of all prophets (false and true). Zech. xiii. 4. Now, the Baptist's clothing being the same as Elijah's, must at once have attracted the Jews, who were expecting Elijah in person. Mal. iv. 4, 5; Matt. xvii. 11; Mark ix. 11.

The commonest, and probably one of the oldest garments is **THE EASTERN MANTLE**, called 'ABBAYEH by the Arabs. It is made of camel's hair (Gen. xxv. 25; Matt. iii. 4; Zech. xiii. 4), very coarse and rather shapeless. Generally, in two colours, white and brown, or white and red. **RED**



**ONES** are worn by women only. (Why will artists persist in making the most absurd mistakes? There is a well-known picture of the Prodigal Son's return, which graces many a Schoolroom or Mission Hall, and the father is seen wearing *his wife's mantle*!—*a thing he would never do*. A man would sooner go without his mantle than put on any article of dress belonging to a woman. It is an abomination to Orientals to-day, just as it was to the Israelites. It was forbidden by the Law. Deut. xxii. 5).

Among the poor people the mantle by day forms the only covering by night. That it was used for a similar purpose in Bible times is seen in Ex. xxii. 26, 27, and Deut. xxiv. 12, 13. A mantle pledged had to be returned at sunset, for "*that is his covering only it is his raiment for his skin; wherein shall he sleep?*" Showing again God's gracious provision for the wants and comforts of the poor. Amos condemns the people of his day for breaking this law. Amos ii. 10. (See Revised Version.) When Sisera went to sleep, Jael covered him with a mantle. Judges iv. 18. A mantle is not only given in pledge for a debt, but also as a token that a certain promise connected with some business transaction will be kept. See Deut. xxiv. 10-13. This is done to this day, and is called 'Arabon, the same as one of the Hebrew words.

**A COAT WITHOUT SEAM** is a mantle of the same material, shape and colour, but consists of *one piece only*. They are still worn by the peasant classes in the North. Remember that Christ came from the North. John xix. 23. The famous **COAT OF TREYES** cannot be the identical one worn by our Lord, as its appearance, shape, material, and colour are altogether different from the 'Abayehs—the best proof that that famous coat is a fraud.

There are mantles of softer material, though of the same shape, worn by the *effendis* or gentry. These are the “Soft Raiment” of Matt. xi. 8.

Girdles are worn by all, rich and poor alike. But there is a great difference in the material. The peasants and Bedouins wear **LEATHERN GIRDLES**. Elijah and John the Baptist belonged to this class. 2 Kings i. 8; Matt. iii. 4; Mark i. 6.

**SOFT LEATHER GIRDLES** are worn by the Bethlehem gentlemen. They form an intermediate class, higher than the actual peasant but somewhat lower than the townsfolk. Their girdles therefore are not quite so coarse as those made of leather.

The **SOFT GIRDLES**, made of silk or linen, are worn by the upper classes. *Again soft raiment!*

Some are even *worked in gold*. See Dan. x. 5; Jer. xiii. 1; Ezek. xvi. 10; and Rev. i. 13 and xv. 6.

Girdles are worn by all, men, women, and children. When resting they are taken off; and they "*gird their loins*" when preparing for work or for a journey. It is strapped as firmly as possible, and serves as a support and stay in working, running or riding. Hence the order, "*Gird on thy loins,*" always meant—"prepare for action." Luke xii. 37 and xvii. 8; Acts xii. 8; Ex. xii. 11. Elijah girded his loins when hurrying from Carmel with Ahab. 1 Kings xviii. 46. See also Gehazi running to Shunem. 2 Kings iv. 29 and ix. 1. A girdle could be given as a present. 1 Sam. xviii. 11. Symbolically the act of girding the loins meant, "be prepared for action, now is not your rest." Luke xii. 35; 1 Pet. i. 3; and Eph. vi. 14. It was foretold that the Messiah would be girded with righteousness and faithfulness. Is. xi. 5. Some of the girdles contain small pockets, where money and other valuables are kept. See Revised Version of Matthew x. 9, where our Lord says, "*Get you no gold nor silver nor brass in your girdles.*" The word *purse* is a mistranslation. Natives use no purses. The scribe also carried his inkhorn in his belt. Ezek. ix. 2, 11. For "*by his side*" read "*upon his loins*" or in his girdle.

**THE STOMACHER** of Is. iii. 25, was probably a beautiful sash worn as a girdle by ladies. They are still worn, and are often of exquisite workmanship, worked in silk and gold.

Priests were commanded to wear *linen* clothes. Ex. xxviii. 42; Lev. vi. 10; 1 Sam. ii. 18, and xxii. 18. They were *effendis*—*gentlemen*. Prophets wore coarse clothing. Zech. xiii. 4; 2 Kings i. 8; Matt. iii. 4. They were *fellaheen*—*peasants*. Much food for thought here! When those who should have been the shepherds of the sheep proved faithless to their trust (Jer. xxiii. 1,2), God, in very irony, chose servants from the lower orders.

Under the mantle is worn a tunic very much in the shape of a dressing-gown. The poorest wear them rather short, not reaching much below the knee. The sheikh wears one coloured, and much longer, and with *long sleeves*. The longer the sleeves the more respectable the wearer. Joseph's "coat of many colours" was really a long-sleeved robe, worn only by the chief and his heir. Gen. xxxvii. 3. Tamar's robe is called by the same name 2 Sam. xiii. 18. Among the Bedouins the chief will often be distinguished not so much by the richer material of his robes as by the long sleeves, of almost exactly the same shape as the surplice sleeve; and his eldest son or heir will also have the privilege of wearing these long sleeves. This would account for the jealousy of the elder brothers. It was not the fact that Joseph's coat was more beautiful than theirs, but what that coat implied. It meant that Jacob wished his youngest son to be the heir.



**COATS OF MANY COLOURS** are nevertheless worn, and are very popular. They are generally called **ROBES** in the Bible. 1 Sam. ii. 19, xxvii. 14, xv. 27, xviii. 4; 1 Chron. xv. 27; Ezra ix. 3, 5; Ezek. xxvi. 16.

**SANDALS** are worn by the very poorest only; and are fastened to the foot with straps, called **LATCHETS**. Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 7; Luke iii. 16; showing that our Lord wore sandals. So also St. Peter. Acts xii. 8.

**GENTLEMEN'S SHOES** are of soft leather, and generally yellow. Shoes of sealskin or porpoise skin are referred to in Ezek. xvi. 10. Ladies wear beautifully worked slippers, in gold and silver, and often ornamented with a variety of colours. They are mentioned in Ezek. xvi. 10.

Shoes are always removed when entering a room or a sacred place. Ex. iii. 6; Josh. v. 15. Hence the shoe is always connected with everything low and contemptible. To unloose the shoe was the meanest duty of a slave. Matt. iii. 11; John i. 27. Very strong, therefore, was the expression of Amos, that the rulers and oppressors had "*sold the poor for a pair of shoes.*" Amos ii. 6 and viii. 6. "To cast the shoe upon" anyone meant to degrade and humble him. "Over Edom will I cast my shoe," Ps. lx. 8, meant: I will disgrace and conquer Edom.

To walk barefooted was a sign of *mourning*, 2 Sam. xv. 30, Is. xx. 2, 4; or *slavery*, 2 Chron, xxviii. 15; or *intense poverty*, Luke xv. 22, and xxii. 35

Some coats won by roving shepherds are the rough **SHEEPSKIN JACKETS**. They are quite in keeping with the wild, roving life of the shepherd. It is sometimes not even made into a jacket, the piece of sheepskin being simply wrapped round the body, and tied round with some string or rope. Heb. xi. 37, implies that the persecuted ones lived a wild fugitive life. (See *Shepherd Life*).

A very peculiar headdress is the **SYRIAN HORN**, worn by women in the north, and is fast becoming extinct. The white veil is thrown right over the horn, and hangs gracefully down the shoulders, making the woman appear very tall. It is supposed to be referred to in the passages, "*Mine horn is exalted.*" 1 Sam. ii. 1. See also 2 Sam. xxii 3; Ps. lxxv. 4.

Veils are worn by all women, though it is only the town's women who veil the face. They are of different sizes and different material. The peasants wear very long veils, almost as large as a sheet, thrown back from their head. They do not hide their face.

The **BETHLEHEM VEIL** was of this kind. Boaz emptied six measures of barley into it. Ruth iii. 15. In the margin it is called a *sheet*. It was indeed a *sheet veil*. Women may still be seen carrying sheaves of corn in their veils. To remove the veil from a woman is an insult. Song v. 7.





## CHAPTER VI.

### Some Eastern Characters.

**THE EASTERN SHEPHERD.** The rough garments he wears are but a reflex of the wild life he lives. Wandering about the wild mountains, taking his sheep and goats to "green pastures" and "still waters," Ps. xxiii. 2, he is often away from home for many weeks at a time. Jacob refers to this when he says to Laban, "In the day the drought consumed me, and *the frost by night.*" Gen. xxxi. 40. Of course there are shepherds who are able to lead their flocks home by night, and take them out again by day; but these are the exception.

Shepherds are either slaves or the youngest sons, or daughters. Taking care of the sheep is considered very low and menial work. It will be remembered that the youngest son of Jesse was the shepherd, while the elder sons were engaged in the far more honourable occupation of warring or hunting. 1 Sam. xvii. 13, 15. It will also be remembered that Rachel



looked after her father's sheep, Gen. xxix. 9, and Jethro's daughters did the same, Ex. ii. 16, 17. One remarkable exception is to be found in the case of Jacob's sons, and this throws on altogether fresh light on the jealousy of Joseph's brethren. Jacob reverses the general rule and custom when he makes the elder sons the shepherds, while the younger ones stop at home. This no doubt was the origin of all their jealousy and hatred against their younger brother.

Shepherds are always well armed with a formidable club called **NABBUTEH**. With these they defend themselves and their sheep against any attacks from robbers or wild beasts. No doubt David attacked the lion and the bear with a **NABBUTEH**. When climbing up the mountains he is supported by a long **STAFF** called **ASSAYEH**. The staff or stave which David had in his hand when he went against Goliath was the **LIGHT ASSAYEH**, 1 Sam. xvii. 40,—not the heavy club. This evokes the grim wrath of the giant, “Am I *a dog* that thou comest to me with the Assayeh?” 1 Sam. xvii. 43. This he uses as a support. Very beautiful is therefore the allusion to the Nabbuteh and the Assayeh in Ps. xxiii 4, “Thy *rod* and Thy *staff* they comfort me.” David is comparing God's protection to the rod, His support to the staff.

**SLINGS** are made by the shepherds themselves, and used when their sheep stray too far away. They do not hit the sheep, for that would kill it, but they throw the stone just near enough to frighten it. As the slings are in daily use, the shepherds become very proficient in their use.

**SMOOTH STONES** are taken from the rough torrent bed, and kept in their **POUCHES**. See 1 Sam. xvii. Slings were used in warfare. We read of the *slingers* in 2 Kings iii. 25; 2 Chron. xxvi. 14, and of those who could “sling stones *at a hair's breadth*.” Judges xx. 16.

**THE SCRIBE** is described to us in Ezek. ix. 2, 3, clothed in linen and having the inkhorn by his side, or rather in his belt or girdle. Customs have not changed since the days of Ezekiel! Very few people can write. The scribe is therefore a man of considerable importance in a town or village, for he may be the only person in a community who can read or write a letter. Fortunately, through the enterprise of Christian Missions, the scribes are beginning to lose much of their importance, for schools have now been established in every part of the country. But the pioneer of education in the land was the London Jews' Society. Few people are aware of the incalculable blessing this Society has been, and still is, to the cause of the Gospel in the East!

The inspired psalmist speaks of his tongue being as ready to proclaim the attributes of the coming Messiah as "a ready writer" is to write a letter from dictation. Ps. xlv. 1.

**THE SAKKAH** or Water Carrier. Water has often to be bought, for no water-supply exists in most Eastern cities. It has to be carried in *skin bottles*. He walks through the streets shouting, "*He ya, 'atchan, tahaloo yishraboo.*" "Ho, ye thirsty ones, come ye and drink"—the same cries heard in the streets of Jerusalem in the days of Isaiah! Is. lv. 1. Note the difference and the sharp *contrast* no doubt intended by the passage referred to. The "living" water is *given*, not bought; this should always be emphasized in passages of a similar character. John vii. 37; Rev. xxi 6, and xxii. 17, the word *freely* should be *emphatic*. The idea being that the spiritual water is given without money and without price.

There are cases where a man wishing to perform an act of charity, will pay for all the water contained in a skin bottle, or all the bread carried by a baker's boy. The water and bread are then freely distributed amongst the poor. The seller will then change his cry and will literally call out, "Ho, ye thirsty ones, come and drink to-day for nothing, for nothing." The word "*bālāsh*" means freely, without payment.

**THE BAKER'S BOY.**—These lads are seen with their baskets on their heads, selling small loaves of bread wherever people congregate. No doubt the "*lad who had five barley loaves and two small fishes*" was the baker's boy, who, seeing crowds going out into the wilderness, knew he would be very welcome there with his bread, and he must have been very successful since only five were left. John vi. 9.

**SINGING GIRLS** are professional singers and *professional mourners*. At weddings they are bright and cheerful, at funerals they look sad and dejected. They thus "rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Rom. xii. 15. Very skilful are they too in the art of improvising. They are born poetesses. They make up the words without any preparation while they sing, and know how to touch some tender chord connected with the life of those present, thus making them mourn. The Bible speaks of singing *men* as well as of singing women. 2 Sam. xix. 35; 2 Chron. xxxv. 25; Ezra ii. 65; Neh. vii. 67. They are still to be seen and heard, but they have no special dress.

**THE DERVISH.** Very wild and weird he looks with his long hair—a sign of special sanctity to-day. (May this not be a remnant of the ancient custom of the Nazarites? Numb. vi. 2, 13, 18; Judges xiii. 5; Amos ii. 12.) The modern Dervish is the truest



representative of the prophets of Baal. To this day they delight numberless sightseers in the market places by cutting themselves with knives, and piercing their cheeks with sharp iron skewers. 1 Kings xviii. 28. That the prophets of Baal did the same is evident from the expression, "They cut themselves after their manner." It appears too to have been a custom for people to show their grief by *cutting themselves*, Jer. xvi. 6, xli. 5, and xlvii. 5. This was forbidden in the law. Lev. xix. 28 and Deut. xiv. 1.





## CHAPTER VII.

### Eastern Toilet and Ornaments.

**L**IKE all Oriental races, the Jews are very fond of ornaments. We are therefore not surprised to find many references to them in the Scriptures. We must mention first of all the **TOILET BOTTLES**. Ladies always paint their eyelashes and eyebrows. In these bottles the black powder is kept. The small probe is first moistened, then dipped in the bottle, and next passed lightly over the eyelashes and eyebrows. This is done in order to make the eyes *appear* large. Easterns are very fond of large eyes. This is referred to in Jer. iv. 30. Jezebel painted *her eyes*—not the face, as in the authorized version. 2 Kings ix. 30 (see Revised Version).

**SHAVING** was forbidden by the law. Lev. xxi. 5. The Jews are therefore always depicted as *wearing beards*. Remember the Ambassadors of David who had to stop in Jericho till *their beards were grown*. 2 Sam. x. 4-5.

Just as shaving was a disgrace in Palestine, so wearing the beard *was a disgrace in Egypt*. There men always shaved. Joseph was shaved before being taken to Pharaoh. Gen. xli. 14.

**MIRRORS** were in use long before the Israelites brought their mirrors to Moses and Aaron. Ex. xxxviii. 8. They were *not glass*, but pieces of polished metal, and naturally the reflection could not be as perfect as in a looking-glass, hence the force of St. Paul's saying, "Now we see through *a glass* darkly." 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Such a mirror is also referred to in 2 Cor. iii. 18, and James i. 23. Isaiah foretells that the Israelite women would have their **GLASSES** (literally mirrors) taken away from them. Is. iii. 23.

Ornaments in shape of a half-moon, called "round tires like the moon" in Is. iii. 18, are worn round the necks of women, and often put by princes and kings round the necks of their horses or camels. Judges viii. 21 (see margin).

**PLAITED HAIR.** Women wear their hair in many plaits hanging down. The number of the plaits must always be odd. They sometimes have eleven, thirteen, nineteen—always an odd number. St. Peter advises the Christian women to think more of the "beauty of holiness" than the outward adornment of plaited hair. 1 Peter iii. 3.

**JEWELLERY.** All Orientals are fond of Jewellery, and from their frequent mention in the Bible it would appear that in those early days they were equally fond of them.

The ornaments worn are of various kinds ; some are of glass or seeds strung together, others are of metal, brass, bronze, silver and gold.

The poor peasants always wear **GLASS RINGS AND BRACELETS.** They are manufactured in Hebron and elsewhere, and worn by all women and girls. Blue is the favourite colour ; it is the colour of most charms.

**TINKLING ORNAMENTS** contain small bells or chains. Some are worn as bracelets, others as anklets. See Is. iii. 18-20.

*Tinkling Ornaments* are great favourites in the East to-day.

**EARRINGS AND NOSERINGS** are both still in use, and are mentioned in the Bible. Nose-rings are mentioned in Is. iv. 21. Notice also in particular Ezek. xvi. 12, where instead of "I will put a jewel on thy forehead," read "*I will put a ring upon thy nose.*"



**SOAP.** It will probably surprise many readers to learn that Palestine has a very large soap industry. It does not look very tempting, yet it is purer than most soaps made in this country because pure olive oil is used in its manufacture.

Large quantities are manufactured and shipped to Egypt, N. Syria, and the Levant. Soap is twice mentioned in the Bible, in Jer. ii. 22, and Malachi iii. 2, while nitre mentioned in Jer. ii. 22, was also a compound of soap.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### Tents and Tent Life.

[T is hardly possible to over-estimate the importance of this chapter if we wish to understand many passages of God's Holy Word. Many objections raised against the truth of the Bible exist only because so many passages are quite misunderstood, and commentators do not always throw sufficient light on these dark passages. Moreover, even many believers have very serious misgivings in regard to certain passages, for *they seem* so contrary to the high and holy standard of other parts of the Sacred Scriptures. One of these very difficulties finds a most simple and natural solution here.

**THE TENT** is made of thick, coarse material, of goat's or of camel's hair, dyed black. Tents *are always black*. Hence Solomon may well compare them to *black eyes* in Song i. 5. The cloth is made by "*tent-makers*." St Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla, were weavers of the cloth from which tents are

made. Acts xviii. 3. The tents are raised **ON POLES** of various sizes and of the roughest kind. The poles are held up by ropes stretched on all sides, and fastened to the ground with long **TENT PEGS**, called **NAILS** in the Bible. Judges iv. 21, 22, and v. 26.

These tents are generally put up and taken down *by women*. They do most of the menial work, and from constant practice are well accustomed to the huge **WOOD HAMMER** or mallet, and hammering the "nails" deep down in the ground. It was with such a *nail that Jael killed Sisera*. Judges iv. 21.

Tents are generally divided into two parts. One completely closed for the **WOMEN**, the other open, for public use. In the latter part strangers are admitted. Gen. xviii. 5. No strange man is allowed to enter the female part of the tent. When men therefore are entertained, women pass within, and can not be seen. Yet they can hear and even join in the conversation. Gen. xviii. 9, 15. The various pieces of coarse cloth are often not sewn together, but *pinned* with small wood pins, called "**TACHES**" in Ex. xxxvi. 18. The Revised Version calls them clasps. In the Tabernacle they were made *of brass*, not of wood.

In a large encampment the chief's tent is always placed in the very centre, while all the other tents

are pitched around it. This was done all through the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness. The **TENT OF THEIR CHIEF**—God's tent, the Tabernacle—always occupied the centre of the encampment. Num. ii. The chief's tent is further distinguished by a long spear about fifteen or eighteen feet in length, fixed in the ground in an upright position. This was done when King Saul sought to kill David. 1 Sam. xxvi. 7. David took Saul's spear, and the Israelites must have known that he must have been quite close to Saul, and near enough to kill him.

### WHY DID Jael Kill Sisera?

Have you ever seen a satisfactory answer? It is a very great difficulty to Europeans, and yet, the solution could have been settled ages ago if people had done the simplest thing in the world—gone to an encampment of Bedouins and seen something of their strange life. To a Bedouin nothing would be more natural than Jael's action. To understand the reason, two facts must be borne in mind.

*First*, the duty of entertaining strangers in the East is an unwritten law, yet not even the most unprincipled would dare to violate it. Bedouins are most hospitable to strangers. Never in my wanderings have I passed an encampment of



Bedouins without being at once invited to come in and rest. The words they use are exactly the same as used by Jael: "Come in, my Lord come in and rest." Judges iv. 18.

*Secondly*, no strange man is permitted to enter the **FEMALE PART** of the tent. Another unwritten law declares such an one to be guilty of death, and any relation is bound to carry this law into execution. If a woman allows a stranger to enter her part of the tent *she* is guilty of death. Now, bearing this in mind, turn to Judges iv. Sisera was escaping, when he passed Jael's tent. She at once, with true Eastern hospitality, invited him to enter and rest. This she would do with double cordiality, for in this war her people sided with Sisera and against the Israelites. See Judges iv. 17. She of course wished him to enter the public part *only*. But he wanted a good hiding place, and no place could be safer than the *female* part of the tent, for no Israelite would intrude. So he pushed his way and entered—of course contrary to the wishes of Jael. But she had now been insulted; what was she to do? If she protested, her own instinct told her, the intruder was in despair, and would kill her. If she allowed him to stay there, her husband would believe her to be faithless, and kill her himself. She therefore took the law into her own hands, and while he had fallen asleep, she pinned him to the ground.

We are told too in v. 19 that she gave him milk to drink when he asked for water. The same milk is called butter in Judges v. 25. It was no doubt the *butter-milk* much used all over the East. This is considered by some as an *aggravation of treachery*, but it is more likely that she gave him milk *because she had no water*. Every traveller in the East knows it is sometimes easier to procure milk than water. Shepherds are found everywhere on the mountains, and they are always ready to milk the goats and quench the thirst of the weary traveller.

She is therefore called *blessed* in ch. v. 24, not because she committed a treacherous murder, but because, while trying to defend her character and honour, she was unknowingly ridding the Israelites of a great and cruel tyrant.





## CHAPTER IX.

### Eastern Music.

PERHAPS on no subject will this little book be a more complete revelation than on that of music. It is the general impression that the musical instruments of the Bible were capable of producing musical effects similar to those of a complete modern orchestra.

Orientals have *no idea of harmony*. They sing in unison. And instruments are only used as an accompaniment. Instrumental music, strictly speaking, does not exist. Nor did it in Bible times. When we read "Praise the Lord with lute and harp," &c. (Ps. xxxiii. 2; cl. 3), it means *sing* to the Lord, and accompany the singing with lute and harp.

People sang and played in unison, and the music was, as it is to-day, of the most primitive character. This is very plainly shown by the very names given

to musical instruments. In Amos vi. 5, we read of K'elai Shir, invented by King David, *i.e.* *instrument of song*.

The principal instruments of music are —

**THE HARP.** It is the first one mentioned in the Bible (Gen. iv. 21), and consisted of an instrument with many strings, called in Hebrew **KINNOR**, in Arabic Kannun. From the frequency with which it is mentioned in the Bible, it would appear to have been the national instrument of the Jews. It seems always to have been associated with joy and gladness. Hence in captivity “they hung their harps upon the willows.” Ps. clvii. 2.

From David's time it seems to have been generally associated with the worship of Jehovah. Hence the word **KINNOR** is more often mentioned in the Psalms than any other instrument. David, as a lad played on the **KINNOR**, 1 Sam. xvi. 16-23, and to its accompaniment sang some of his sweet Psalms. **NEGINOTH** comes from Hebrew **NAGAN** “to play,” and is always connected with the harp. (Literally “to harp upon the harp.” When Elisha sent for a minstrel, 2 Kings iii. 15, the word is **NAGAN**, again from same root, hence a proper translation would be **HARPER**. It is interesting to compare some of David's Psalms which have the title **NEGINOTH**. Some of these, if sung by David before Saul, would



have inspired the morose king to something like confidence in God. See Ps. iv. 8; "I will lay me down in peace and sleep." And again, Ps. vi., "A prayer for recovery from bodily or mental affliction." Again in Ps. lv., after complaining of sad distress, he adds the comfortable words (v. 22), "Cast thy burden upon the Lord." Ps. lxi. is a prayer to God to preserve and prolong the king's life." (V. 6) "Thou shalt prolong the king's life." Very touching, too is the petition in v. 7: "O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him."

It must have been very unusual for a poor shepherd to be able to play the **KINNOR**. Shepherds only play the flute or pipe. David, the shepherd lad, must, therefore, have been noted far and wide as the talented shepherd who could play the harp. No wonder that even Saul's courtiers had heard of him. I Sam. xvi. 8.

The **ORGAN**, like the Harp, was the earliest invented instrument. Called **UGAY** in Hebrew; Gen. iv. 21. It consists of reeds of different lengths, the player passing his mouth from one to the other. It is the well-known Pan's pipe, the primitive organ. Besides the passage in Genesis it is mentioned with **KINNOR** only in Job xxi. 12 and xxx. 31. Is it not curious that these two earliest instruments, invented by Jubal, should be mentioned by Job only, with

just one exception? May not this be an internal evidence of the antiquity of the book? It is also mentioned once with a long list of other instruments in Ps. cl. 4.

The **PIPE** was a plain reed either single or double, and played like the modern flute or oboe. They are the favourite instruments of shepherds, as they are easily made, and easily played. Called in Hebrew **KHALIL**. Notice plural form in the title of Ps. v. **NEHILOTH**. They are connected with travelling in Is. xxx. 29. Mentioned in 1 Sam. x. 5 and 1 Kings i. 40. From these three passages it would appear that they were in ancient times connected with religious worship, hence the sad degeneracy of the people when they used "the harp, viol, tabret, pipe," in their drunken feasts. Is. v. 12.

The **VIOL** was a one-stringed instrument, and the prototype of the modern violin; though there appear to have been Viols with more than one string. In Ps. xcii. 3 we read of a ten-stringed **NEVEL**, also in Ps. clxiv. 9. Dr. Stainer thinks it was the harp. It seems to have been a very popular instrument from the frequency with which it is mentioned. It is sometimes translated **VIOL** in Is. v. 12, xiv. 11; Amos. v. 23 and vi. 5; and sometimes **PSALTERY** in 1 Sam. x. 5; 2 Sam. vi. 5; 1 Kings x. 12; 1 Chron. xvi. 4. To still further bewilder the Bible

reader the word **NEVEL** is translated in the Prayer-book Psalter **LUTE**. It should therefore be remembered, that **VIOL**, **PSALTERY** and **LUTE** are one and the same instrument.

The next instrument is the **HORN**, or **TRUMPET**. The Hebrew word is **SHOFAR**, the ram's horn, and **KHATZOZERAH**, a metal trumpet, sometimes translated **CORNET**. Trumpets were used as war-signals. See Josh. vi. 4, &c.; Judges iii. 27; 1 Sam. xiii. 3; 2 Sam. xviii. 6, &c. Also on certain religious festivals, in ushering in the year of Jubilee, Lev. xxv. 9, and at the Feast of Trumpets, Numb. xxiii. 24 and xxix. 1. This is still kept by the Jews. It was also used at the coronation of a king, 1 Kings i. 34; 2 Kings ix. 13; 2 Chron. xxiii. 13. With the Shophar Joab recalled the scattered Israelites. 2 Sam. ii. 28. And with the Shophar God will restore scattered Israel, Is. xxvii. 13. And with the Shophar, called Salpynx, ni 1 Cor. xv. 52, God will call the armies of the dead at the last day. "The trumpet shall sound" at the last day, meaning God would raise the scattered dead. Some of the **KHATZOZERAH**, or silver trumpets, are seen on the bas-reliefs on the arch of Titus.

The **SACKBUT** is an instrument resembling the Scotch Bagpipe.

Of **INSTRUMENTS OF PERCUSSION**, we have the **TIMBRELS**, the modern tambourine. Used on all festive occasions. Hebrew word **TZELTZELIM**, from a word meaning to make a rustling, rumbling noise, like the noise of the wings of a swarm of locusts. It is generally translated **CYMBALS**. See 2 Sam. vi. 5; 1 Chron. xv. 16; 2 Chron. v. 12; Ezra iii. 10.)

The **CYMBALS**, (Hebrew **METZILTAIM**) a dual form showing that they consist of two metal plates which are struck together, producing a sharp, clashing sound. This is translated cymbals in Ezra iii. 10, and Neh. xii. 27. Even the Revised Version confuses the Tzilzelim and Metziltaim.

The **TABRET** (Hebrew Toph, Arabic Duff) is the Oriental representative of the modern drum.

They are of various shapes and sizes. The smaller ones are chiefly used by females. With this **TOPH** the women came out to meet Saul (1 Sam. xviii. 6). With it Miriam and the women of Israel sang their Psalm of Victory. (Ex. xv. 20). It is called the adornment of women. (Jer. xxxiv. 4). With the Toph Jephthah's daughter met her father (Judg. xi. 34), and thus "brought him very low." There is also an interesting *play of words* in connection with this instrument in Is. xxx. 32, 33.



The place *Tophet* seems forced until you see its allusion to the instrument Toph in v. 32. The play of words is a thoroughly Oriental custom, of which there are frequent specimens in the Bible. It would make many dark passages clear if such instances were always explained by a note. There is another in Jer. i. 11, 12. Almond tree is "*Shâked*" in Hebrew. "I will hasten" is *Shoked*. (See Revised Version).

**EASTERN SONGS** are very primitive. One very popular one begins with the expression "*Ahya-lal-lalee*." It is an expression of joy, without any meaning. Yet probably a similar expression may have originated the Hebrew word "*hallel*" (to rejoice), from which our *Hallelujah* is taken.

**LOVE SONGS** are the Oriental's greatest delight. He will sing, and others will listen, for hours. The expressions with which he greets his love are very beautiful. The words dove, gazelle, sparkling fountain, beautiful gardens, the rose, the lily, the eyes, &c., are familiar and favourite expressions. Then it should be remembered that the Oriental story of love is simple and pure. Expressions which when translated into an European language seem harsh and coarse, are very sweet and touching in an Eastern garb. Nay, more than this, expressions that would never be used in polite society in England, are used in the most simple and

natural manner in the East. It should be remembered that the disuse of such expressions is not always a sign of refinement ; nor the use of them a proof of the want of refinement. Always remember this when reading the Songs of Solomon. In fact, before reading it, you should throw away your Western ideas altogether. and try to live and think like an Eastern ; then that book becomes one of the choicest of the books of the Bible. Westerns cannot understand it, for the term love has been dragged to the very dust in this age by novels of the lowest kind, and by the reports of the proceedings of the Divorce Courts. Westerns sometimes speak of "falling in love" as though it were a joke to be laughed at. To a true Eastern, love is a sacred word, and he would no more think of making it a subject of mirth than of laughing at religion.





## CHAPTER X.

### Natural History and Botany.

[N the compass of this small book, we are only able to refer to some of the best-known creatures and plants.

The first one naturally thinks of, is the **LOCUST**, the great plague of the East, and belonging to the order of insects called *Orthoptera*. They undergo certain changes in various stages of their existence, but different from those of the beetles or butterflies, their changes being much simpler. They exist in three stages—the *larva*, or caterpillar stage; the *pupa*, or chrysalis stage; and the *imago*, or perfect stage. The great difference between the locust and the butterfly is this: when the locust has passed into the second or chrysalis stage it does not become dormant; on the contrary, it is then far more voracious *and destructive* than when full grown. In the first stage it is very small, and without wings or feet. In the second stage it has feet, but no wings.

In the third stage it is full-grown. In all three stages they are most destructive. Moreover, all three stages are mentioned in the Bible. Joel ii, 25 ; Nah. iii. 15, 16 ; and their destructiveness distinctly referred to in Joel i. 4 ; "That which the palmer-worm (the pupa) hath left hath the locust (full-grown) eaten ; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm (larvæ) eaten." The locust deposits its eggs, which soon hatch and become the destructive caterpillars.

They are always brought by *the East wind*, Ex. x. 13, and carried away by the West wind. Ex. x. 19.

They form the food of the people to-day. Being clean they were permitted by the law of Moses. Lev. xi. 22. They formed, no doubt, the food of St. John the Baptist. Matt. iii. 4. We need not suppose that the *locust beans* or pods of the Kharoob tree were referred to.

For the strange customs of these little insects and the terrible destruction they bring with them, see an interesting description in Canon Tristram's "Natural History of the Bible," p.p. 316-318. I am indebted for much of the information I give on the subject of Natural History and Botany to this most useful and interesting book.

When flying, they most vividly portray the millions of "God's army" going to battle in Rev.



ix. 9, "the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle." No doubt the "day of gloominess and darkness" in Joel ii. is a realistic picture of the locusts, "God's army." They come in millions, and darken the sky by their numbers.

**THE SCORPION** is a very venomous creature, and found everywhere in Palestine. You can hardly pick up a stone without finding one there. It stings with its tail, and is so vicious that when attacked, will often sting itself to death. Its sting is not always fatal, but people do sometimes die from its effects. Its vicious and venomous nature is always brought out in the Bible. 1 Kings xii. 11 ; 2 Chron. x. 14 ; Luke x. 19 ; Rev. ix. 5, 10.

**MUREX SHELLS.** The famous purple dye was procured from this shell-fish. The whole art is lost now, although in ancient times Phœnicia was noted all over the civilised world for its industry in procuring the famous colour with which kings and princes adorned themselves. Purple is mentioned in John xix. 2. Lydia was a "seller of purple." Acts xvi. 14.

**THE OLIVE TREE** is the most common tree in the Holy Land, and always constituted an important part of the wealth of the country. God promised the Israelites "a land of oil, olive, and honey."

Deut. viii. 7, 8. It is also considered the most valuable tree in Palestine on account of the many useful properties it possesses. The berries are the universal article of daily food. Again, from the berries, oil is extracted, and also used as an article of food. To this day the Arabs "dip their bread in the oil." Oil is also used for lighting purposes. It was a good cure for wounds (Luke x. 34). The twigs and branches are used for making fires, the dry roots of the decayed trees are still used for firewood; and lastly, the timber is most useful for ornamental purposes, taking a beautiful polish. It is still made up into a variety of articles both useful and ornamental. No wonder, then, that blessings in the East and in God's Holy Word are always connected with oil. The blessing of Asher (Deut. xxxiii. 24), "Let him dip his foot in oil" was an expression which every Oriental could appreciate, and wish he could claim as his own. See also Is. lxi. 3.

In Palestine every olive tree is now taxed, and very often when a farmer is too poor to pay the tax he will cut down the tree and sell the wood. This accounts for the fact that so few trees are found in many parts of the country.

#### **WHEAT AND TARES GROWING TOGETHER.**

The tares called *Zewan* are the farmer's great plague in the East. When first growing they look just like the wheat; indeed you cannot distinguish between

them until the full-grown ear appears, then the tares are seen to be long and the grains almost black. It must not be confounded with the English *tares*, for it is a species of Darnel, called by naturalists *Lolium temulentum*. Each grain of zewan has therefore to be removed before the corn can be ground into flour, and baked into bread, otherwise the bread would be spoilt, the zewan being bitter and poisonous. Matth. xiii. 24-30. In any exposition of the well-known parable these points should always be remembered—the zewan *looks* like the wheat until the fruit appears, then the difference is seen; it is *black*, the wheat *gold*; it is *bitter* and *poisonous*.

**LOCUST BEANS** grow on a large beautiful tree called *Kharoob tree*. It is supposed to have been the food of St. John the Baptist (Matth. iii.) But, as we have already seen, he ate the real locusts. These beans are eaten by the poorest classes, but more generally form the food of cattle. They are **THE HUSKS** which the swine did eat. (Luke xv. 6.)

**MANDRAKE ROOT.** The root of the *Mandragora*, called in Hebrew "*dudaim*," mentioned in Gen. xxx. 14, 16. It is supposed to possess the powers of assisting or producing conception. And no wonder that ignorant or superstitious people believed this. Examine the root; it is a most remarkable representation of the human form.



## CHAPTER XI.

### Jewish Religious Ceremonies.

MODERN Judaism is to a great extent not the religion of Moses and the Prophets. It contains the shell but not the kernel. Many laws found in the books of Moses cannot be held, and many laws not emanating from Moses, or any inspired teacher, have superseded them, and are held with a tenacity and zeal worthy of a better cause.

One of the greatest features of Modern Judaism is a most curious admixture of superstition on the one hand, and a loose teaching on the other hand on many subjects of vital importance, such as the Inspiration of God's Holy Word, the Doctrine of the Atonement, Sacrifices, and the Messiah. Many of these superstitions are very ancient, and were already in existence in our Lord's day.

No Jew will say his daily prayers without wearing the **PHYLACTERIES**. They are small



square boxes covered over with leather, in which are contained the four passages which command the Jews to bind the law "as frontlets between their eyes, and upon their arms." Ex. xiii. 2-10, xiii. 11-16; Deut. vi. 4-9, ix. 13-21. One is worn on the forehead and the other on the arm. The Jews took those passages in their strictly literal sense, whereas God meant them to be taken figuratively; a mistake which others besides Jews have made, not only in the interpretation of the Old but of the New Testament.

By "binding them upon the forehead" God wanted them to have the whole law *in* their heads—they were to *know it*, and by "binding it upon the arm" God wanted them to *do it*, *i.e.*, to obey the law.

They have to be prepared most carefully, otherwise they are useless. The Talmud says that even God wears Phylacteries, though with what object we are not told. They are of various sizes, the largest being worn by the strict Jews, the modern Pharisees. "They make broad their Phylacteries" (Matt. xxiii. 5) meant they wore the largest they could get so as to appear very pious before men.

The preparing of the Phylacteries is most minutely described in the Talmud, and the slightest infringement of these rules would render them unfit for use. Special reed pens have to be used, special

leather only may be employed, even the writing has to be on a certain number of lines ; while the verses written by a great Rabbi would enhance their value. Thus have Jews made the word of God of none effect through their traditions. Mark vii. 18.

Jewish boys begin to wear the Phylacteries at the age of twelve or thirteen, when they go through the ceremony of *Bar-mitzvah*, similar to our Confirmation Service. On that day he has to stand up in the synagogue and read the portion of the Law. It is very possible that our Lord was taken up from Nazareth to Jerusalem at the age of twelve with the object of being confirmed. Luke ii.

The next thing a Jew has to put on is the **TALITH**. This is the *praying robe* worn over the head. It contains the **ZIZITH** or *fringes*, which they reverently touch and kiss. This was commanded :— “Thou shalt wear thee fringes to the borders of thy garments.” Numb. xv. 38, 39, and Deut. xxii. 12. This fringe was intended as a mark of distinction between God’s people and the surrounding nations, on the principle of “*be ye separate*,” 2 Cor. vi. 17, a law which many Christians break to-day by conforming to wordly practices. God’s people of old were not even to *dress* like the heathen nations around them. There is every reason to believe that this law was kept for many centuries. But during

the Maccabaeen persecution, the fact that Jews could so easily be distinguished by their dress, exposed them to great persecution, and the Jewish leaders, as a matter of expediency, allowed Jews to wear *the fringe in an inner robe*, and only use the fringe on an outer robe during the hour of prayer. This they have continued to do to this day. But it is likely that the more strict Jews continued to wear the fringe on an outer garment. Our Lord's "*hem of His garment*," was the *Zizith*, Luke viii. 44; Matt. ix. 34. And just as the Pharisees "made broad their Phylacteries," so they "enlarged the borders of their garments." Matt. xxiii. 5. The *talith* is generally a bride's present to the bridegroom, and the text is her own work.

Women never wear the Talith or Phylacteries, they need not necessarily pray.

Fixed to the right-hand doorpost of every Jewish house is the **MEZUZAH**, or *door-post*. The idea is taken from Deut. vi. 9. A piece of parchment upon which are written in Hebrew the following verses; Deut. vi. 4-9 and xi. 13-21, is rolled up and put in a case made of wood, tin, or glass. The case contains a small opening showing the Hebrew word "*Shaddai*," which means Almighty. The case is nailed in the right-hand door-post of every Jewish home, and every pious Jew passing by, reverently touches and

kisses it. The Jews consider the *Mezuzah* a charm, keeping away the evil spirits. They flee away whenever they see the Great Name. Hence the Jews apply Ps. cxxi. 5, "the Lord is *thy Keeper*," to the *Mezuzah*.

**THE SABBATH** is still most rigidly kept by Jews, particularly in Eastern countries. A Jew will not even open a letter on the Sabbath Day. Many Christians may "take hold of the skirts of him that is a Jew" and learn from the Jew how "*to keep the Sabbath Day holy*." It is a day he is bound to honour in every way. He must always have a *good meal* and put on his best clothes—all in honour of the Sabbath. It is a *comely Bride* welcomed to the house each week with a beautiful Hebrew Psalm beginning with the words "*Enter in my beloved one*:" reminding one of the Canticles. Those who ignorantly think King Solomon held no lofty ideas when writing his Spiritual Love Song should go any Friday evening and hear the Jews welcoming their Bride, their love, the Sabbath! And if such endearing terms could be used of the approaching day of rest, what words would sufficiently express ones love and devotion for the *approaching Saviour*!

Every Friday evening the wife lights the Sabbath light called **MANORA**. This is her very special privilege for which she thanks God in the words "I thank Thee, O God, that thou hast commanded me



to light the Sabbath light." This is not commanded anywhere in Scripture, it is enjoined by the Talmud, which the Jews consider to be equal in importance to the Law of Moses.

**HAYDALLAH TAPERS** are wax tapers used at the close of each Sabbath. It is lighted, and the youngest person in the house holds it, while the head of the house takes a glass of wine and a *box of spices* called **HADDAS**. He then pronounces a blessing while looking at the light, tastes the wine, and smells the spices. With this ceremony the Sabbath ends.

**CHANUKAH LIGHTS** are used during the *Feast of the Dedication* (John x. 22), in commemoration of the cleansing of the Temple by Judas Maccabeus. A tradition says a miracle took place while the Priests were lighting the lamp, for although there was not enough sacred oil to last longer than one day, it actually continued to burn eight days, giving them time to obtain a fresh supply. Hence the feast is kept eight days. On the first night one lamp is lighted, on the second two, and so on, until on the eighth day all eight are burning. Each candlestick has a ninth light, from this one the others are lighted. The feast is also called the "*Feast of Lights*." The feast generally falls in December, hence the expression in John x. 22, "*It was winter*."

**JEWISH SLAUGHTERING KNIVES** are used by Jewish butchers in slaughtering the animals used for meat food. Jews are not allowed to buy their meat from Gentile butchers. Not only must they buy it from a Jewish butcher, but from *one who holds a license from the Rabbi*. The Jewish slaughterer is called a *Shochet*. He uses knives called *Chalufim*, which must be as sharp as a razor. The throat is cut and the animal held in such a position that every drop of blood escapes while yet warm. The Jews have the greatest horror of blood. He then carefully examines the carcass, and the slightest flaw renders it unclean or *Traifeh*. If perfectly sound it is stamped with a **RABBI'S SEAL** and called *Kosher*, which means clean. A *shochet* is always a learned man. The care with which the best meat food is secured for their people accounts, to a great extent, for the health and longevity of the Jewish race, as compared with their Gentile neighbours.

*The British Medical Journal*, in an article on the subject of Jewish meat compared with other meat, said :—"According to a return of the Board of Agriculture, the meat supply from all sources in 1892 was no less than 2,122,000 tons. In an indirect manner we can form some idea as to how much of this meat was fit for use. A return has been published of the animals slain by Jewish slaughterers at the Foreign Meat Market, Deptford, and at the

Whitechapel and Aldgate Slaughter-houses. From it may be gathered that only seventy-three per cent. of the oxen and sheep were pronounced *Kosher* (fit), the remaining twenty-seven per cent. being presumably sold to the East-end artisan. Allowing that a portion of the twenty-seven per cent. was registered on account of what may be called technical blemishes, we shall be within the mark in asserting that *ten per cent. of the meat sold each year—that is 212,000 tons—is either positively deceased or unwholesome.*"

The Rabbis have complete supervision and control, and can at any time remove the license, and issue public notices to the effect that certain butchers (*giving name and address*) are not licensed.

**LELITH CHARMS** are charms connected with a very peculiar superstition. Lelith was the first wife of Adam, but as they did not live happily together (in Paradise !!) he drove her out and married Eve. Lelith determined in bitter hatred to revenge herself, so to this day she seeks to destroy every new-born descendant of Eve. To prevent her evil designs, these charms are hung up in the room. This is still done by all strict Talmudic Jews. *Lelith* is mentioned in Is. xxxiv. 14, and is translated "screech owl." Revised Version translates it "night monster," but in the margin gives the original.

**MAZZOTH**, or *unleavened bread*, is eaten by Jews during the Feast of the Passover. Unleavened cake is still eaten by the Bedouins especially when on a march, or when food has to be hurriedly prepared for a feast. See not only Ex. xii. 39, but also Josh. v. 1, and Judges vi. 19. The bread which Sarah prepared for the three angels was also unleavened. Gen. xviii. 6.

**ROLLS OF THE LAW**, written on parchment or on the skins of animals. No printed books are used in the reading of the Law in synagogues to-day. These are "the books" so frequently mentioned in the Bible. Such a roll our Lord *unrolled* in the synagogue in Nazareth. Luke iv. 17.

Skins or pieces of parchment, are cut into square pieces, and stitched together, and when completely unrolled are very long indeed. The rolling up of a scroll is referred to in Is. xxxiv. 4, and Rev. vi. 14. Jeremiah writes his denunciations in **A ROLL**. Jer. xxxvi. 2. They are written, in parallel columns, for the word "*leaves*" in Jer. xxxvi. 23, which King Jehoiakim cuts with a knife and throws into the fire, were not leaves or pages, *but columns*. See margin in Revised Version. They are written *on one side only*, the back of the scroll being left blank. Hence when written *on both sides* the fact would deserve to be mentioned. See Ezek.



ii. 10 and Zech. v. 3. Written within and without with threatenings meant that God's judgments were *very full* and would be very severe.

On the **FEAST OF PURIM** the whole book of Esther is read in the synagogue. Whenever the word "Haman" occurs, the Jews shout, repeating the words, "May his name be blotted out." Boys use rattles, and produce a deafening noise.

**JEWISH TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW BIBLE** was prepared especially for home use. As one would suppose, the meaning of every Messianic passage is altered to suit the Jewish idea of interpretation. Isaiah liii., according to modern Jewish notions, does not refer to a suffering Messiah, but to *the suffering people of Israel?* But as certain verses speak very forcibly of the great vicarious suffering, the text is somewhat altered. In verse 10. the sentence, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin," is translated "When (now) his soul hath brought the trespass offering!" Thus has God's Word been perverted.

**THE MISRACH**, which means East, is a picture hung in such a position that when praying the Jew has his face turned towards Jerusalem. Daniel vi. 10). Jews love Jerusalem. They greet one another on their great feast days with the touching words, "*This year in captivity, next year in Jerusalem.*"



## CHAPTER XII.

### Antiquities.

FEW relics have as yet been found in the Holy Land. This is, however, accounted for by the fact that the country formed the battlefield of numberless armies from different parts of the world and at different periods of the world's history, Egyptian, Syrian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Roman, Saracen, Frank and Turk. Every invasion was accompanied by much destruction, and thus most of the ancient temples, palaces, cities and villages have been so completely destroyed that few traces remain on the surface.

Then, for another reason, the Turks guard certain spots with the most jealous care, and will not allow any work of exploration to go on. We hope a time may soon come when these localities will be thoroughly examined. Wherever the Pales-

tine Exploration Fund have been allowed to work, many most valuable discoveries have been made confirming and explaining God's Word.

Egypt and Assyria have, however, received a more satisfactory treatment at the hand of the explorer, with the result, that the history of the past, the customs and manners, live again in our own day by means of many remarkable discoveries, which not only throw a flood of light on God's Holy Word, but confirm the truth of its sacred pages, and even explain many a difficulty which puzzled Bible students in days gone by.

**TEAR BOTTLES** were made of glass or clay, in which tears of mourners were collected at funerals, as a token of their grief. The bottles were then buried with the dead. They are, therefore, found in all ancient tombs. This custom is referred to in Ps. lvi. 8, "Thou hast put my tears into thy bottle."

**TABLETS FROM LACHISH** were discovered a short time ago, and contain inscriptions in cuneiform characters of the highest interest. They describe the condition of things in Southern Palestine at the time the Israelites were under Joshua. The stones and bricks are now crying out, "The Bible is true."

Clay tablets were used chiefly in Assyria and Babylonia, as they had no other material. But they

have also been found in Palestine. With a rod of iron (mentioned in Job xix. 24) the characters were inscribed upon pieces of soft clay. They were then either baked in an oven or simply dried and hardened in the sun. They are supposed to be referred to in Jer. xxxii. 11-13, but that seems somewhat doubtful. Large numbers of *these clay tablets* have been found in the ruins of Nineveh, some of them being exceedingly valuable, as throwing light upon contemporary Sacred History.

**BABYLONIAN BRICKS** are found in the ruins of Babylon, containing in cuneiform characters the name of *Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon*. Daniel, it will be remembered, describes that king as a very proud and haughty monarch (Dan. vi. 30). This is confirmed by these bricks, hundreds of which are found among the ruins of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was so vain and proud that he had his name stamped on every brick used in the buildings of Babylon.

**MANY TABLETS** and Cylinders, discovered in Nineveh, are of the most priceless value.

One was found recording the wars and sieges of **TIGLATHPILESER II.** It will thus be seen that these tablets are official records, and are therefore of the very greatest historical interest. He records how he besieged Pekah, king of Israel, and Rezin, king of Damascus. He also tells us how he took



Damascus and killed Rezin. He says that King Ahaz, who, it appears, was his friend, comes to meet him in Damascus. Read 2 Kings xvi. and you see how this tablet confirms Scripture.

Another tablet records the deeds of **SARGON**, and tells us that he besieged and took Ashdod. These cylinders, therefore, not only explain God's Holy Word, but where difficulties really exist, *they help to remove them*. A most difficult passage was undoubtedly Isaiah xx. 1. "In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when *Sargon, King of Assyria*, sent him," &c. Who was this *Sargon*? His name is mentioned nowhere else. Did such a king really exist? Or was it, perhaps, another name for one of the more familiar kings, Shalmanezzer or Sennacherib? These tablets explain all. Sargon was no myth, but a real king, and a great king, too. He was the son of Shalmanezzer IV., and the father of Sennacherib.

A remarkable cylinder was also found, containing an account of the conquest of Samaria by Sargon. This deserves a somewhat close inspection, for *does not this contradict the Bible?* See 2 Kings xviii. 9, 10. Here it appears that *Shalmanezzer* came and besieged Samaria, not Sargon. So it would seem; but the answer is very simple. Shalmanezzer indeed commences the siege, but he does not live to take

the city : this his son Sargon accomplishes. There is a very long rest between verse 9 and 10, and it is also shown in 2 Kings xvii. 5 and 6. "The King of Assyria," in verse 5, need not necessarily be "the King of Assyria" in verse 6.

Colonel Taylor's cylinder contains a complete account of the wars of **SENNACHERIB**, and the invasion of Judah and the siege of Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah, who is mentioned by name. The whole story is a wonderful confirmation of 2 Kings xviii. And one cannot help thinking that the *omission* is even more remarkable than what it contains. For Senacherib describes every part of the war, he brags of every victory gained, however paltry, every town or village taken, however small, he says he besieged Jerusalem, "*and I shut up Hezekiah like a bird in a cage*"; but there is one remarkable omission. He does not say that he took Jerusalem! Had he done so the record of the capture of the great city would have occupied a very prominent place on this cylinder. But he does not *say that* he took it; indeed the whole record seems to end most abruptly, and one would hardly know how to account for it, but by the sequel of that remarkable siege as found in the Bible. We read in 2 Kings xix. that in one night the greater part of the besieging host were slain by an angel of God, and

the rest escaped never again to molest Judah or Jerusalem. This part Sennacherib naturally leaves out, but *his silence is wonderfully eloquent!*

A picture of **REHOBAM, KING OF JUDAH**, may be seen in the great Temple of Thebes, where the siege of Palestine in the days of Shishak is recorded. Another wonderful confirmation of Scripture. See 1 Kings xiv. 25-28, and 2 Chron. xii. 9.

**THE MOABITE STONE.** This ancient monument was discovered in 1869 in the land of Moab, and was set up by a king called Mesha, who records his victories over his enemies. He speaks of Omri, king of Israel, of "men of Gad," of Edom as combining with Israel. One has but to read 2 Kings iii. 5, 9, to see how remarkably this Moabite Stone confirms the truth of God's Word. Nor should it be forgotten that we have here a confirmation from an enemy of Israel. His testimony is, therefore, of exceptional value.

**DELUGE TABLETS.** For many years infidels were accustomed to speak of the flood as though, beyond question, it were a myth and fable, hardly even needing a word of proof. Recent discoveries have, however, brought to light the fact that nearly all ancient nations had traditions of a flood in which all had perished except one family, who were saved in a ship of some kind.

These tablets give us the Chaldean version of that event, and date about seven centuries B.C. They speak of the anger of the gods, who determined to send a flood. They describe the storm, how some are saved in a ship, the stranding upon a mountain, a dove and a swallow sent out, a raven, and then how they went out and sacrificed.

On the **BLACK OBELISK OF SHALMANEZER II.** Jehu, king of Israel, is mentioned as having paid tribute to the king. Benhaded is also mentioned and Hazael. These were contemporaries of Jehu.

Jehu is shown, bowing to the ground and presenting his offerings of gold and silver and other precious things.

**WOOD TABLETS** are the schoolboys' slates, and are called "writing tables" in Luke i. 63. Probably the very kind used all over the East to-day.

**REED PENS.** These are the only pens used in the East. They are cut with a knife. These were also the pens used in Bible times.

**INKHORNS** are mentioned in Ezek. ix. 2, 3, 11. The case contains the pens, and the small inkpot the ink. They are still worn in the girdles of scribes, just as they were in Ezekiel's day.



The Ancient Hebrew Alphabet was not like the modern square characters. Those in use before the Babylonian captivity were the Phœnician. We can tell what they were from the very important "**SILAM INSCRIPTION**" giving us the very characters in which Isaiah wrote his glorious prophecies. That inscription was made by Hezekiah's workmen.

**SOME PHœNICIAN MASONS' MARKS** were found 80 feet below the surface of the present city of Jerusalem, upon the foundation stones of the Temple wall, giving us a very remarkable confirmation of Scripture; for we read in 1 Kings v. 18, that *Hiram's builders* helped in preparing these stones.

**HIEROGLYPHS.** The ancient language of Egypt. This latter was only the language of the priests, *not* the common language. Is it not curious that at all times down to the present there should always have been in Eastern countries an *educated language* and a *common language*? This is probably referred to in Is. viii. 1, for "the pen of a man" read "*the pen of common characters.*" (See margin of Revised Version.)



## CHAPTER XIII.

### The Tabernacle.

FOR forty years the Israelites lived in tents in the wilderness. Many were born, lived, and died in tents—just like the Bedouins of to-day. This wild roving life accounts for the want, not only of *change*, but of *improvement* among these dwellers of tents. Arts and industries can never flourish while the people have no settled life in cities and villages.

Now, there must have been something altogether exceptional, nay unique, in the case of the Israelites in the wilderness, for it was during the forty years wanderings that those wonderful laws were produced which are the wonder and the model of all laws amongst civilised nations.

Picture to yourself **THE ENCAMPMENT OF THE ISRAELITES**. It is the best commentary to Numb ii. The Israelites lived with perfect order

during their forty years march through the wilderness. There was a division between the tents of each tribe. They clustered round their own ensigns or banners. At the head of each tribe was a captain. Then came the tents of the Levites; again, nearer the centre, were the tents of the great men, like Moses and Aaron. In the centre stood the tabernacle of the congregation.

A description of the perfect order of march is given us in Numb. x. 14-29. This encampment affords a great proof of the divine origin of the Pentateuch. The Israelites left Egypt a nation of slaves, who would not be in possession of any degree of culture or education. Within a year of their leaving Egypt, we find them in a wilderness, and yet with perfect order, a perfect government, a code of laws as perfect as any the world has produced, and with a perfect religion. How can we account for this sudden change from barbarism to civilization? It has taken England centuries to emerge from a state of barbarism to its present state of civilization, but in the case of Israel "a nation was born in a day." Surely, those laws could not have been of human origin.

Just as the centre of every encampment was set apart for the chief's tent, so the centre of the camp of Israel was set apart for Israel's Chief—God

Himself. A large oblong space was separated from the rest of the encampment by screens 150 feet long, 75 feet wide. Within this enclosure stood God's dwelling-place, in the midst of his people. The tabernacle consisted of a framework composed of Shittim wood, probably the timber of the wild acacia, which grows in the wilderness. The boards, overlaid with gold, were placed in an upright position, the lower part fixed in sockets of silver. Long bars of Shittim wood, also overlaid with gold, passed through the rings. These kept the boards together. Over this framework of wood were placed four curtains; the first, or inmost one, of fine embroidered linen, containing figures of Cherubim in purple, scarlet, and blue; the second was a woollen one of goat's hair; the third of ram's skins dyed red; the fourth of badgers' skins.

The tabernacle was divided into two parts. The first was called the holy place. It was 30 feet in length, 15 feet broad, and 15 feet high. Beautiful curtains closed the front. It contained three things—the golden altar of incense, the table of shew-bread, and the seven-branched candlestick. Here a priest entered daily to burn incense. It was in the Holy Place in the temple Zacharias had a vision of the angel (Luke i. 9). Still more magnificent curtains divided the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, which was only fifteen feet long. The High



Priest only was allowed to enter here, and only on the Day of Atonement. It contained the Ark of the Covenant.

The outer court contained the altar of burnt offerings, and the laver made of the metal mirrors, given by the women of Israel.

The Tabernacle is minutely described in Exodus xxv., xxvii., and xxxvii. The Tabernacle, its furniture and services, should be studied by all who wish to grasp by means of helpful illustrations, the teaching of the Gospel. This is too wide a subject for discussion in a small handbook, but many good books exist which should be well studied.





## CHAPTER THE LAST.

### Jewish Missions.

“THE Jew has had his day, and is played out; nothing more to expect from him.” “Jewish Missions are a failure.” In these two sentences may be summed up all the adverse criticism levelled against Jewish Missions; and both are not only wrong, but absurd. If the Jew “has had his day, and is played out,” then why has he been allowed to remain in a most miraculous manner a separate people, scattered everywhere, yet not absorbed among other nations?

When nations are played out they become extinct. When a watch is played out, it stops. The Jews show a most remarkable vitality in every sphere of life and thought. They are distinguished in every profession, they take a prominent part in politics, finance, literature and music. Is it not then absurd, in the face of the very conviction of our eyes, to say the Jews are “played out?”

But some apply this phrase to religion only, and wish to imply that God gave the offer of salvation, first to the Jews, which they, having rejected, have now lost all chance. But is there any passage of Scripture to prove this? How many statements about the Jews are made with the greatest assurance, but which are absolutely wrong. The Jews were condemned without a hearing by a spurious Christianity in the dark ages of the Church; and although we have reformed many of our doctrines and Church practices, and have brought them into line with primitive and Apostolic Christianity, yet we have retained to a very great extent the bitter Jew-hatred of the Middle Ages.

To take one illustration only. Note the misleading titles which are placed at the head of each chapter of the Bible, more particularly in the Prophets. In one chapter the Jews are denounced for their sins, and threatened with severe punishments. The titles rightly attribute this to the Jews. In another chapter God is promising great blessings to the same people, to the same place. The expressions, Judah and Israel, Zion and Jerusalem, occur in both cases. But our titles refer these blessings, not to the Jew, but to "the Church." Now, can an interpretation be right which applies "Judah and Jerusalem" to the Jews in one place, and to "the Church" in another. If "Judah and

Jerusalem " apply to the Church when blessings are mentioned, then surely they should apply to the Church when curses are named. But this would reduce the exposition of Scripture to an absurdity. Now if the curses and denunciations cannot be interpreted of "the Church," but can only refer to the Jews, then surely the promises of blessing and prosperity can also only be referred to the Jews. If Judah and Israel, Zion and Jerusalem, apply to the Jews where the curses are pronounced, then surely they must apply to the Jews where blessings and mercies are promised.

When we are clear on this point, and turn to the Sacred Scriptures, we find that God says in *Jer.*, "Though I make a full end of all the nations of the earth, yet will I not make a full end of thee." St. Paul predicted a time when "all Israel should be saved," and Zechariah says, "they shall look on Him whom they have pierced and mourn." "Hath God cast away His people? God forbid," says St. Paul. And we have the distinct command of our Lord to "begin at Jerusalem" (*Luke xxiv. 47*). Like other passages, it has been wrested from its true meaning. If we are at all in doubt as to its true meaning, we have but to turn to the men who were likely to be the best judges, namely, the Apostles.

In the Acts of the Apostles we find that they always went to the Jew first in every city they came



to, showing by this very act that they understood our Lord to mean they were always to go to the Jew first wherever they came to.

Our Lord would surely not have given so direct a command, nor would the Apostles have obeyed it so faithfully, if they had believed that the Jews were "played out."

The annals also of Jewish Missions confirm this.

Jewish Missions are not very popular, and do not appeal to a very large body of Christians; the support received is therefore small. Yet God has blessed the work beyond all expectation; and in any comparison between Jewish missionary enterprise and work in heathen lands, Jewish missions certainly take the first place so far as results go. Many may be prepared to question this. The following facts I would venture to commend to our readers:—

1. There are to-day about 300 clergymen of the Church of England who are descendants of Abraham.

2. The Jews have given to the Church three of her Bishops.

3. Christian Jews are providing some hundreds of preachers on Nonconformist pulpits at home and abroad.

4. Some chairs of the great Universities in England and abroad are occupied by Christian Jews, who are thus helping to train our future theologians and clergymen.

5. They have produced many distinguished authors like Edersheim and Saphir, Neander and Dr. Christlieb, musicians like Felix Mendelssohn, financiers like Sir Moses Salvador, lawyers like Lord Herschell.

6. They have supplied the ranks of nearly every Missionary Society with some of their most faithful and devoted workers.

7. They gave the Chinese a translation of the Old Testament in the Mandarin dialect, and for the Mongolians one who was able to translate and revise parts of God's Word. They gave to the Afghans their translation of the Bible.

8. And the rank and file of Jewish converts, on the authority of Professor de la Roi, number about 200,000.

Can any mission to the heathen, nay, can *all the missions of the world put together*, give such a record! These facts must not be misunderstood. We are not attempting to run down other missions and other societies. These facts must be plainly stated because Jewish missions have been run down ;

it is therefore necessary to draw a comparative statement, and show how unfounded are the attacks made against Jewish missions.

The author hopes every reader of this little book will become a warm friend and supporter of Jewish missions. The London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, the Society with which he has the honour to be connected, is the oldest and largest, with a staff of 200 workers, stationed in about 54 missionary centres, and doing a glorious work for the ingathering of Israel.

The author gratefully acknowledges his great indebtedness to this good Society's missionaries, who were the means of leading into the fold of Christ his own father and mother; the former in Egypt, the latter in Jerusalem.

Jesus Christ took not on Him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. Christ was a Jew. Do you believe this? Then we claim your love and sympathy on behalf of our Lord's own brethren.

*"Go, tell my brethren."*



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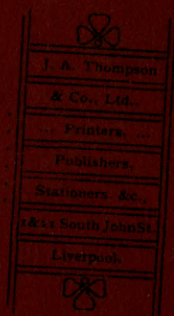
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