

Miscellaneous.

DISCOVERY OF THE SINAI MANUSCRIPT.

TISCHENDORF'S ACCOUNT. [The Theological Electric for this month publishes an original translation, from MS. furnished by the author, of Tischendorf's discovery of this great biblical treasure— one of the most valuable known to Christendom. We condense the account of the discovery from the Electric.]

But I must carry my readers into no further details touching these travels, although many interesting circumstances in this connection might be mentioned; as, for example, the interest expressed in my undertaking by the Pope, Gregory XVI, in a long audience given me in May, 1843, as well as my intercourse with that distinguished philologist, Cardinal Mezzofanti, who even honored me with some verses in Greek. Let us rather pass directly to the journey to the East, undertaken in the year 1844. As already mentioned, it was in April, 1844, that I embarked at Leghorn for Egypt. My hope touching the discovery of precious remains of manuscripts, especially of Biblical manuscripts of high Christian antiquity, was even in this journey, beyond expectation, realized. The pearl among them was found at Sinai. In May, 1843, at the convent of St. Catherine, at the foot of Sinai, as I was exploring the library, a huge, wide basket was observed standing in the middle of it, containing a quantity of ancient parchments. The librarian, an intelligent man, informed me that two basketfuls of similar remains had been committed to the flames. How great was my astonishment at finding in this third filling of the fateful basket, a considerable number of the leaves of a Greek Bible of the Old Testament, which instantly made upon me the impression of being one of the most ancient which I had ever seen!

I had the great satisfaction of securing, without any considerable cost or trouble, about one-third part, in all forty-three leaves; notwithstanding the entire contents of the basket had come so near taking a departure for the fire. I did not, however, succeed in securing the remaining leaves. To the perfect unconsciousness touching my aim, I had neglected to oppose the reticence necessary for its attainment. Transcribing an entire page from the text of Isaiah and Jeremiah, I earnestly recommended the most careful preservation of all the remainder and of everything similar which might be discovered.

A second journey to Sinai, was unavailing to obtain any further intelligence of the treasure. A third, undertaken under the sanction of the Czar of Russia, was more successful. In the last days of January, 1850, for the third time in the course of fifteen years, I greeted the convent of St. Catherine. In honor of the mission with which I was intrusted, I was received with marks of special consideration. The prior greeted me with the wish that I might succeed in discovering new supports for the Divine truth. In this he uttered more than he was probably aware of.

Having spent several days among the manuscripts of the convent, and having been fortunate enough to discover considerable valuable matter, on the 4th of February I ordered the camels to be in readiness for my departure to Cairo on the 7th. At noon of the above-named day, I made an excursion, in company with the steward of the convent, to the neighboring mountain, and, as we were returning to the convent at nightfall, he invited me to take some refreshment in his cell. We had hardly entered, when, alluding to our previous conversation, he said: "I also have here a Septuagint," (i. e., a copy of the Greek Old Testament translated by the Seventy.) He went to a corner of the room and brought a parcel wrapped in a red cloth, and laid it before me on the table. I opened the cloth, and to my extreme astonishment beheld before me the Sinai Bible. It consisted not merely of the fragments of the Old Testament which I had taken from the basket fifteen years before, but also of other Old Testament fragments, and especially the New Testament, as well as the complete Epistle of Barnabas, and a portion of the Shepherd of Hermas. (The additional constituents of the parcel had been discovered soon after my departure in 1844. Their connection with the fragments which I had so urgently commended to notice had been recognized, and all had been placed together.) In the most joyful excitement, which, of course, neither the steward nor any of the brethren present comprehended, I begged permission to take the cloth with its entire contents to my room. There first I gave myself up to the impression produced by the event. I knew that I held in my hand the most precious jewel which, for the investigation of the Bible, could be found; a manuscript which exceeded all others in the world, with which I had busied myself for twenty years, in antiquity and value. To the emotions of such an hour no description can do justice. The night was cold, yet I sat down immediately to the work of transcribing the Epistle of Barnabas. Of this document, which ascends so nearly to the origin of the Christian Church, the first part, in the Greek text of the original, had been sought in vain since the second century. And the Epistle of Barnabas, as well as the Shepherd of Hermas, from the end of the second to the beginning of the fourth century, had been regarded by many as a component part of the New Testament. For this reason both were included in the Sinai Bible, which had been written in the first half of the fourth century, or about the time of the first Christian emperor.

Very early on the 5th of February, I summoned the steward, and asked permission to take the manuscripts with me to Cairo, for the purpose of a full transcription. As, however, the prior had departed for Cairo two days before, in order to accompany the authorities of the mother convent in that city to Constantinople, for the choice of a new archbishop, and, as one of the brethren raised objections to my request, I departed hastily on the morning of the 7th, desiring, if possible, to meet the authorities there, and to come to an understanding with them.

My third departure from the convent was honored by a formal and stately adieu. The Russian flag waved from the walls, and a discharge of firearms awakened the echoes of the mountain. The most prominent among the brotherhood escorted me to the borders of the neighboring plain.

The same sympathy which had so highly favored me among the Sinaitic brotherhood was repeated in Cairo. The priors, who had fortunately been detained there, after a short deliberation, granted my request, and sent an express messenger by dromedary, to bring it from Sinai. As early as the 24th of February, that invaluable prize was placed in my hands for transcription.

The labor was prodigious; for it contained more than one hundred and ten thousand lines, with countless passages obscured by later corrections, and many also faded, which had to be transcribed under a most painful scrutiny. Moreover, the temperature at Cairo, in the months of March, April, and May, never fell below some twenty degrees, Reaumer, in the shade.

A continued intercourse with the convent gave me the opportunity to suggest to the brethren the idea of presenting the original Scripture manuscript to the Czar of Russia, as the shield and protector of the Greek orthodox faith. On the 28th of September, with demonstrations of the highest respect and confidence, they placed in my hands the Sinai Bible, for transmission to Petersburg. In the present condition of the convent, this could be only a provisional and not a definitive conveyance. The possession of the manuscript was primarily accorded to myself, but only for the object, by a constant inspection of the original, to prepare an exact edition for publication.

In the early days of October, whilst yet the palm-groves were basking in the glowing heat of the South, I left the land of the Nile, and on the 19th of November, when the northern winter was already settling upon St. Petersburg, I presented my rich collection of ancient manuscripts, in the Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Arabic, and other languages, to the Imperial Majesty of Russia, at Zarsko Selo. The epynose and crown of the collection was the Sinai Bible. Tempting invitations to settle in St. Petersburg permanently, or at least for a number of years, I deemed it my duty to decline. On the contrary, it was at Leipzig, that in the course of three years, making in the mean time a triple journey to St. Petersburg, I finished this difficult undertaking by the publication of the work in four volumes, folio.

In October, 1862, I went to St. Petersburg, in order to make presentation of it. The gracious Emperor, who had liberally borne the expense, and also granted my request, that a work so important for Christendom might make its appearance in connection with the millenary festival of the Russian monarchy, distributed the major part of the copies to the Christian Church at large. The deepest gratitude for this act has manifested itself in the collective Christian Church, without distinction of creed. The Pope himself, in an autograph letter, expressed to the editor his kind wishes and his admiration. It is only a few months since that the two principal universities of old England, Cambridge and Oxford, honored the discoverer and editor of the Sinai Bible with the most hearty recognition of his services, bestowing upon him their highest academic dignity.

A venerable man of letters availed himself of this opportunity to remark, that he would rather be the discoverer of the Sinai Bible than the finder of the Kohinore of the Queen of England, (the so-called "mountain of light," the great diamond, valued at millions of money.) But what is far dearer to me than all these flattering tokens of recognition and gratitude, and the pleasure derived from which cannot be diminished by the assaults of envy, is the conviction that the Sinai Bible is a gift of Providence, bestowed upon us in this period, so fruitful in the products of an anti-Christian activity, as a clear light in the exploration of the Sacred Scriptures, both to establish their truth and to demonstrate their uncorrupted form.

THE HIGHER NATURE ACCESSIBLE. "Don't you speak Arabic?" "No, nor mean to. What's the use? I know 'bad,' 'good,' 'come,' 'go,' 'bring,' and a few more such words. The courier (whip) does the rest. Nothing like knocking down a fellow for teaching him his study?" "You don't much look as if you often knocked people down."

"Ah! you don't know, Miss Russell. An Arab can't get on without it among the Arabs."

"I don't agree with you in that," said Walter. "It may be one way of getting on; but I don't believe it's the only way, and certainly not the best way."

"You don't mean to say that a good cuff now and then isn't the only thing they will mind? Now, there's that boy you have got, Constantine; he was my servant once—a lazy little rascal. I thrashed him three times a week."

"Then you saved us the trouble, for we never thrash him. I would not demean myself by lifting my hand to another," said Walter.

"When one's angry, one don't stop to think of that. But how do you make him mind?" "Ask my sister."

Two fellahbeen were walking past, and certainly they were counting—"Eighty and fifty, that's one hundred and thirty; and twenty?" "Is one hundred and fifty," responded the other.

"Now, I mean to say, Miss Russell, that every Arab is like those two fellows, forever thinking of money. You watch and you'll find it so."

"Not quite always; for my two servants were disputing for at least an hour, as to which was the greatest, Mar Girius or Mar Saba; the one being patron saint of my woman-servant's late husband, the other of Constantine's brother. But even supposing that they do think of nothing but money, what does that prove?"

"That they are a covetous, lazy set. Liars we all know they are, and as for the laziness, nothing but the whip will get that out of them."

"We know that lying is the vice of an oppressed people," said Walter; "their laziness may be accounted for by the ease with which they can obtain a mere livelihood. Offer them a sufficiently powerful motive for being industrious, and I imagine the laziness will disappear. I should say the same about their perpetual thinking of money. When they find that there are other interesting things in the world, money won't engross their minds."

"And pray, Mr. Russell, what motive can you possibly offer an Arab for being industrious?" "I will answer your question by another. Have not you got one or two pretty good masons in your employ?" "Only two."

"Well, what made those two? not the whip, I suppose? Come, confess; was it not better rate of pay as they improved?" "There you go again, appealing to their pocket."

"And why not—in the beginning, at least? Are both your men equally clever?" "No; Anton is the best by far."

"Good. Would he be pleased if you were to ascribe some of his work to the other, or to point out a stone hewn by the other as Anton's work?" "That's just what did happen yesterday, and I thought Anton would have knocked us both down in his indignation."

"There you have a motive. That fellow is proud of his work, and that feeling is capable of cultivation."—Home in the Holy Land.

THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES. TYPES OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN OUR OWN TIMES. Of all the accessions to the standard of Christ while here on earth, and to that of his apostles afterwards, we have no evidence that so much as one came from the ranks of the Sadducees. The high priest Caiaphas, and Annas, his father-in-law, who took the lead in the condemnation of our Lord, belonged to this party, as we are expressly told (Acts v. 17); and if they were virulent then against the spiritual religion taught by our Lord and his lofty supernatural claims, much more virulent were they when his resurrection was proclaimed by the apostles as attesting all his claims, believed by thousands in Jerusalem itself, and attested by fresh miracles before their own eyes. Thus—contrary to what one might expect, it was the more sceptical school who, when they had the power, proved the most active enemies of the Lord and his apostles. They could put up with Pharisaism and even conform to its usages in many things, provided it put up with their latitudinarianism. The traditionalism of the Pharisees, being essentially a human thing and inherently weak, they could afford to tolerate, claiming only the liberty of regarding it with indifference. But supernatural claims, such as our Lord and his apostles advanced, and demands such as they made on every man to surrender himself, body and soul, to the new views, left them no longer free to think on religion according to their own notions of what was reasonable, and live as circumstances might direct. It was too strict a gate for them to enter, and too narrow a way for them to walk in. So they deemed it necessary, in self-defence, to put it down, and did their poor best with that view.

In entire contrast with these, all the cases of sincere and "anxious inquirers" among the rulers belonged to the Pharisaic class. Nicodemus is the first and most notable of these—"a man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews." That his companion in the burial of our Lord—Joseph of Arimathea—was of the same class, we may reasonably conclude, because while a "counselor," as Nicodemus was, his discipleship was, like Nicodemus's, "secret, for fear of the Jews;" because he is described as "a good man and a just," terms descriptive of the strict and more honest class (compare Acts xxiii. 12); and because it is said of him that he was one of the "waiters for the kingdom of God," a phrase not at all applicable to the Sadducean notions of religion. So much for the beginning and end of our Lord's public life. Towards the middle of it we have "a certain scribe saying to Him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," and the answer shows that the spontaneous outburst of admiration and attachment to Christ which would endure the privations of discipleship. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Matt. viii. 19, 20.) The Pharisee with whom Jesus dined, when the woman that was a sinner stood weeping behind Him, seems to have been actuated by an honest enough desire to study his claims; though, not wishing to commit himself, he treated his guest with a coldness which he thought it necessary to remark on. The case of the rich young ruler, who was so anxious about eternal life that he came and knelt before our Lord in the highway and questioned him about it, does not look like a Sadducean state of mind. In a word, it was "one of the scribes" who, when he asked our Lord in Jerusalem, within a few days of his death, which was the first commandment of all, and received that sublime answer, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," &c., and the second which is like, namely this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: there is none other commandment greater than these"—made this candid reply, "Well, Master, thou

hast said the truth, for there is one God, and there is none other but he, and to love him with all the heart . . . and his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." And it is of this Pharisaic scribe that it is added, "And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly" (or intelligently), "he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God"—language which we believe he would never have applied to a lax thinking Sadducee.

To us this opens up matter for solemn reflection with respect to the same two schools of religious thought in our own day. Those who sit upon the Scriptures in a rationalistic spirit of negative and sceptical criticism, not simply asking what they say, but whether even what they do say is not to be accommodated to more reasonable and general principles of religion—are in a far less hopeful state, or, as our Lord would express it, much further from the kingdom of God, than those who even overlay the Scriptures with a load of human traditions, provided they be sincere and open to conviction. Look at Luther, drawn into a cloister under the strong force of unenlightened but deep alarm about his eternal salvation, spending hours in fasting and mortifications, sweeping the floors and begging from door to door at the bidding of his monastic superiors, and ascending the *Santa Scala* at Rome on his knees. Look at Francis Lambert, of Avignon, who did the same, and Bucer, and many of the chief Reformers, who issued from monastic establishments to become the leaders of a movement bringing peace to the conscience through the blood of the cross, breaking every yoke, and letting the oppressed go free. These trophies of the Reformation were the spoils of a traditional system, from whose meshes they with difficulty, and after many a hard struggle, at length escaped. But, on the other hand, what trophies of the rationalistic school of thought adorned the ranks of the Reformation? None that we remember.

So long as we sincerely and devoutly cling to what is God's, and along with this to such as His which is not so, all we need is better light, and docility enough to take it in. But when once we have allowed ourselves to sit in judgment on the contents of the Scriptures themselves, we have assumed a *disloyal attitude*, and until we are cured of that, whatever we believe is believed on wrong grounds, the foundations of positive belief are already sapped, and the mind, escaping out of one objective position after another, is in danger of settling down into a Christianity emptied of everything definite on which the heart can repose and hope be built—a cheerless negotiation.—Good Words.

THE COMPOSER WEBER. Weber could be pleased with honest praise. Once at Wiesbaden, at the table d'hote, he sat next to a Dr. Horn, a man of talent and accounted a great musical critic. The conversation turned on literature and art. The music in the gallery brought up the subject of "Der Freischutz." Surprised at the knowledge respecting music displayed by his unknown companion, Dr. Horn ventured to ask his name. "I am not ashamed of it," replied the composer, with a quiet smile; "it is Weber." "O, Gottfried Weber?" "No." "The Weber of Berlin?" "He is long since dead." "You don't mean to say," stammered the eager man, with quivering breath, "not—not—" he could not speak out, "Carl Maria von Weber—yes," was the reply. The astonished man was speechless for a while; then, with tears springing into his eyes, he said in a soft whisper, "What a happiness has Heaven permitted me!" Weber was never indifferent to incense from the altar of fame, although he set no special store to it. "But now," he himself wrote, "I could not but feel grateful to Providence for having given me the power to affect so deeply the heart of such a man: it was a rich reward."

A few days later he was at Ems.—The little, lame, modest-looking man was received with a sort of sulky indifference at the well-known hotel of the Four Towers, and shown into a poor apartment. Presently, whilst occupied in shaving before the glass, after unpacking his luggage, he was struck by an uproar in the hotel. In another moment, landlady, and waiters of every rank and description in the hierarchy of waterdom, rushed into his room. In a state of suffocating agitation the mistress gasped forth the words, "Had I not known! Preis Gott! Preciosa! I'll turn every soul into the streets!" and rushed out again, followed by her whole bewildered troop. Next came, one after the other, a succession of inmates, offering to give up their rooms; one gentleman brought his luggage with him, already packed; and willy-nilly, the great composer, more worried than pleased, was obliged to transfer his domicile to the state apartments of the hotel. At dinner in the canteen, for a time he was left quiet, hearing the buzzing conversation relative to the possible, probable, and even actual arrival of the great composer, listening to anecdotes of him—his personal appearance, and his adventures. Presently the rumor spread around that he was sitting at the table. A shout of jubilee was raised—his health was drunk with loud huzzas—the band struck an air in "Der Freischutz"; and the poor worried man could only rise and slip away as best he could. Then came serenades from the bath music, from the military bands, from every one who had an instrument to play, or a voice to sing—and ever "Der Freischutz" ever "Preciosa." "No wonder Weber wrote, 'I could almost curse the hour I ever composed a note. There is no escape from my own confounded self!'"—Weber's Life.

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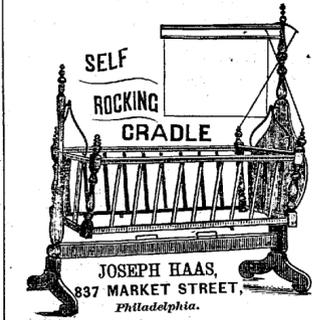
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