

**MODERN EGYPT, ITS
WITNESS TO CHRIST:
LECTURES AFTER A
VISIT TO EGYPT IN 1883**

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ITS WITNESS TO CHRIST.

Lectures after a Visit to Egypt in 1883.

BY

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PREFACE.

It should be explained that the following Addresses are the reprint, almost *verbatim*, of Lectures delivered week by week to a mixed and fluctuating congregation of visitors and residents in a Northern watering-place. Prepared without any view to their permanent publication, in such scanty leisure as could be found in the pressure of ordinary parish work, they were printed each week by two local newspapers; and even in their present less ephemeral form are nothing more, in style and substance, than a reproduction of what they were originally intended to be. This will, it is hoped, explain, and in part excuse, certain peculiarities of style and composition, largely due to their local and rhetorical colouring, of which the writer is very sensible.

In regard to the Addresses themselves, he can only hope that they will sufficiently explain themselves. They are an endeavour to present in a popular and colloquial form some of the results which have accrued to the study of the Bible History from recent discoveries in Egypt.

Incidentally, it is hoped that one of the results of this endeavour may be to stimulate an occasional reader to support the undertakings of the recently-formed "Egypt Exploration Fund." It may be again repeated here that contributions to the objects of this society (of which Sir Erasmus Wilson is President) would be gratefully received by the writer, or may be sent direct to the Treasurer of the Fund, R. Stuart Poole, Esq., British Museum, London, W.C.

It should be added that the Chronology here adopted is based upon the second English edition of Brugsch-Bey's "History of Egypt."

H. B. O.

MODERN EGYPT.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

(ON THE EVIDENTIAL VALUE OF MODERN TRAVEL).

Good news from a far country.—*Proverbs xxv. 25.*

(*June 3, 1883.*)

THE groundwork of our faith is solid fact. The Bible is a landscape whose background is History and Geography. If it be not this, it is far worse than nothing.

The creed of Christendom is far too serious a delusion, for any toleration to-day, if it be not in truth the most serious of realities.

A well-known picture presents itself to my memory.

Two figures moving across a dark landscape:—the one, a soldier, clad in mail,—all steel, from helm to spur,—he leans forward, looking downwards on the rugged path; it is so dark, he cannot, dare not, lift his head; and, as he plants his footsteps, one by one, he probes the ground with the point of his trusty sword; and so, step by step, in earnest determination

he feels for the path he is to tread ; he must know the certainty of every step ; he must touch and prove. And so, painfully and slowly, he fights his way through the night of doubt.

His companion seems to have no share in the perplexities of the soldier's path. With face upturned to the watch-fires of the stars, he is carried on angelic pinions easily through the night ;—no lurking pitfall gives him anxiety ; he floats forward, his face aglow with heavenly light, onwards, without doubt or fear ; for faith has lent him wings.

It is a fitting emblem, surely, of the temper of faithful souls, in an age of progress like our own. Some men there are, some few and highly favoured ones, who are borne by the wings of a placid and childlike trust along the dark pilgrimage of life and death, their presence all aglow with an unearthly radiance ; they are the pioneers of Heaven, the angels of a sin-stained earth. Thrice blessed. No darkness is there in their pure hearts ; it is all light ; they have heard the Master's voice from childhood ; faith has been the lodestar of their life ; love, and hope, and prayer, and works of mercy, have been their daily bread ; they have not seen, and yet they have believed.

But alas ! it is far otherwise with most of us. The sins of youth have too oftened darkened the heavenly light, and that, which to the pure in heart is a flight on angel's wings, is a toilsome road, a pilgrimage of pain, to those whose hearts are dull by reason of their sin. Nay, even to the purest hearted, it is not always easy to believe and trust ; this doubt, this resolute

determination to be *sure*, quite sure,—it is the price we pay for the great boon of intellectual advance, it is the reprisal of that culture which is so dear to our hearts.

And so it is that the soldier's attitude is one which will move our sympathy. And, for my own part, I think we need not shrink from it. *Knowledge*, after all, is one of the factors of faith; it was no part of the apostolic gospel to require men to believe without good *reason*.

The preaching of St. Paul was based upon a certain event which he alleged to be historical,—the Resurrection of One Who was dead and had been buried. That event was one which challenged critical investigation; and the creed which was based upon it can, no more than the original fact, claim exemption from the criticism of science; it must stand or fall with its historical credibility.

All this is realised in our time with increasing intensity. And it is mainly on this account that I am about to invite you to follow the witness of modern investigation in the series of addresses upon which we are entering.

A religion which, on the face of it, makes such a momentous tax upon our attention as Christianity does cannot any longer be permitted to occupy the neutral ground of quasi-reality to which, too often, it has been consigned by modern parodies of the old gospel. We cannot afford, nowadays, to lose any opportunity that may serve to deepen our view of Christianity as a religion of veritable human experience.

And so it is that, having been permitted to visit, for myself, those great countries of the East in which our faith was cradled, I venture to believe that they, in their modern condition, have a most notable, a most urgent message for us, here in our island branch of Christ's Church Catholic throughout the world.

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."

Distance is always a hindrance to us in dealing with the Bible. We are so far from Eastern life and manners that any means of bringing us nearer is always welcome.

It is not merely that even the briefest acquaintance with Eastern life is sure to infuse as it were an electric shock into Bible passages and phrases and scenes that before were paralysed by our ignorance; not only that the whole meaning of Scripture often becomes, as it were, alive instead of dead: but beyond all such incidental benefits, it is surely of the utmost possible advantage to be able to test our own conceptions of the Scriptural History by looking upon the very countries where it was enacted. Our Western habits of thought and life, especially here in England, are necessarily confined within very narrow limits; and in the countries beyond the Mediterranean there is, as it were, a new world of life and feeling; and to come in contact with it is to gain at once a far truer and nobler conception of the dealings of God with the human race at large.

As to the "evidence" to be derived from a view of sacred localities, as regards the truth of our childhood's faith, that is a matter upon which I hope to speak in