

**Can Any Good Thing Come Out Of Palestine?  
Orientalism and Eastern Christianity in Protestant  
Writings about the Holy Land, 1839-1908**

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The French invasion of Egypt in 1798 stimulated western European and North American interest in the Near East. Napoleon had hoped to cut off Britain's route to India, but his plans ended in defeat at the hands of joint Ottoman and British forces in Palestine in 1799. He slipped back to France to bask in the glory of his "Oriental excursion" while the rest of Europe grew increasingly fascinated by the region he had helped to thrust into the spotlight, not least through the work of more than 150 scientists, scholars and artists who had escorted the invading army. Thus, the politics of colonialism surrounding the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the so-called Eastern Question, merged with a European religious imagination animated by the novelty of easy penetration of Muslim territory and the focus soon came to rest on the familiar territory of Palestine. As homeland of the Judeo-Christian scriptures and backdrop for the Gospel stories of the life of Jesus, this region inspired intense and pious interest among the inhabitants of Christian Europe. In particular, English-speaking Protestants of the Victorian period came to play a key role in what has been called "the rediscovery" of Biblical lands.<sup>1</sup> As the evangelical revival of the early nineteenth century gathered steam, missionaries from Great Britain, the United States of America, and Canada, among other countries, took advantage of technological innovations in travel and the extension of European colonial power to fan out into the farthest reaches of the British Empire and beyond. For mission-minded, sometimes millenarian and often

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maritally-inclined Protestants, dreaming of the evangelization of the world in this generation, the Holy Land held out special promise.

In this paper, I propose to study Orientalism along its hitherto neglected eastern/western Christian axis. More specifically, I will examine the nineteenth century Protestant portrayal of the Holy Land with particular emphasis on western constructions of Eastern Christianity. Edward Said calls Orientalism, “the discipline by which the Orient was (and is) approached systematically, as a topic of learning, discovery, and practice.”<sup>2</sup> Western “(re)discoverers” of the Near East, whether tourists, pilgrims, missionaries, scholars, or diplomats, all participated in that system of approach and so contributed to a modern invention of the East, and of Eastern Christianity in particular. Bypassing almost two thousand years of tradition and the living witness of the people in the land, Protestants claimed the Holy Land for themselves by the authority of scripture and in the name of true and enlightened Christianity. They asserted their primacy over and against the contemporary eastern guardians of the holy places whom, for the most part, they found repellent and incomprehensible. The Protestant agenda was both devotional and rational, aiming to edify, educate, and stir up the faith of Christian believers back home at the same time as pursuing the objective truth of the Bible, through modern scientific methods and emerging academic disciplines, such as archeology and ethnography. A certain individualistic, text-oriented, and even romantic understanding of the priority of the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments overshadowed all other concerns. The religious quest for both a historical and existential experience of the Holy Land along with a yearning to return to unchanging biblical authenticity characterized this western religio-cultural project. In their effort to claim the Holy Land, these writers disregarded the native inhabitants of Palestine by holding to a broad pattern of excoriating Orthodox Christians, appropriating Jews, and expurgating Muslims.

I will focus on the writings of selected British, American and Canadian travelers in Palestine whose works were published between 1839 and 1908. The first volume was published in 1839 at a time when Palestine, under the rule of Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt since 1830, was open to westerners to an unprecedented extent. In power from 1831 to 1840, the Egyptians protected Christians, both native and visiting, and welcomed Europeans to the Holy Land. The final work appeared in 1908 just prior to World War One and the eventual occupation of Palestine by British forces. The preponderance of books, twelve to be exact, published in the

approximately thirty years between 1868 and 1895 illustrates the amazing proliferation of travel books and historical geographies on the subject of Palestine within that time-frame.

Jerusalem represented the ultimate goal of Christian travelers to the Holy Land, whether they were Russian pilgrims or British tourists on a Thomas Cook expedition. As the venue for so much biblical action, the city of David offered an abundance of specific sacred sites, but it was also the locale of many stories about Jesus especially his last days, death, and resurrection. The first view of Jerusalem was a special and symbolic moment. Felix Bovet, professor of Hebrew in Neuchatel, Switzerland, responds with considerable emotion upon initially viewing the Holy City from a distance:

The impression made upon me surpasses all that I had imagined. My eyes fill with tears . . . My first feeling was a kind of softening of the heart, that indescribable mixture of admiration and of pathos which is inspired by the sight of that which one loves. Here, then lies before me that poor little town which has felt itself greater than all the greatest things of the earth, and has recognized itself as the principal city of the world.<sup>3</sup>

The “imagined” city evokes soft feelings and love. This “indescribable mixture of admiration and of pathos” was shared by many Holy Land travelers. Bovet perceives a dual identity for Jerusalem by contrasting the “poor little town” and “principal city of the world.” Philip Schaff, professor of biblical learning at Union Theological Seminary, New York and an influential nineteenth-century church historian, elaborates on this ambivalence:

This was my first, this is my last impression of Jerusalem. I can understand the traveler who said, “I am sadly disappointed, yet deeply impressed;” sadly disappointed as to the present condition of Jerusalem, deeply impressed as to its sacred associations. My low expectations of the former and my high expectations of the latter have been fully met. No city in the world excites such opposite feelings. It is the most holy and the most unholy, or I should say, the most desecrated spot in the world.<sup>4</sup>

In other words, Schaff is deeply impressed at the sacred associations of Jerusalem and deeply disappointed with almost everything else about the

place.

At the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, western observers directly encountered, often for the first time, the Orthodox Christian guardians of the biblical sites. As a result, many concluded that Eastern Christians were to blame for the desecrated and lamentable state of Jerusalem. They designated their Oriental co-religionists as opponents of the twin Protestant causes of “rational religion,” as conducted with reverence “in Spirit and truth.” George Burnfield, “ex-examiner” in oriental languages and literature in the University of Toronto, derides the “ignorant superstitions” of the “hordes” at worship and proclaims that “sweeping away the rubbish of monkish traditions and absurdities there remains a foundation of historical truth, which can support the theory that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre covers the spot of the lord’s tomb and probably his crucifixion.”<sup>5</sup> He thus reasserts the truth-seeking agenda of enlightened religion over against “the traditions and absurdities” – he equates the two – of monks and their attendant deceptions. Later, in the wake of Palm Sunday celebrations at the church, Burnfield writes:

The Latins, Greeks, Armenians, and Copts, march on Palm Sunday, three times round the church over the tomb of our Lord. I saw the procession of the Latins and Greeks, and came away convinced that ignorance, formality and fanaticism, not spirituality, govern in the city, and near the grandest scenes of the Son of God, who is the light and life of men.<sup>6</sup>

Eastern Christians, he suggests, set the tone for the whole city with their unfaithful denial of true spirituality and their desecration of the holy sites. David Randall, for his part, resents the strange and noisy incarnations of Oriental Christianity within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for thwarting his personal attempts at reverence and piety:

Worship was being conducted in different languages in several parts of the church; lawless multitudes were sauntering about; the peal of the organ’s notes, the nasal song of the Greek, and the monotonous chant of the Syrian, blended with the tramp of soldiers and careless talk of the rabble, made a singular jargon, calculated to inspire any feelings but those of devotion.<sup>7</sup>

More than mere crude prejudice, these statements reveal the shape of Protestant Orientalism. Specific discordances emerge between western

Protestant and Eastern Orthodox cultures in the western preoccupation with a quiet and well-ordered devotional propriety.

Protestants strenuously objected to the Holy Fire Ritual which took place at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre one day before Easter. The population of Jerusalem doubled during Holy Week due to the presence of large numbers of Russian, Greek and Armenian pilgrims in the city.<sup>8</sup> The highlight for many visitors was the ceremony on Holy Saturday during which a sacred flame was miraculously lit over the tomb of Christ. Mary Rogers describes the scene witnessed by an enormous crowd of pilgrims:

Wild-looking men, with their clothes disordered and their caps and turbans torn off – some with their shaven heads exposed, were performing a sort of gallopade round [the carved and decorated marble shrine over what is supposed to be the tomb of Christ]. They jumped, they climbed on each other's shoulders, they tossed their arms into the air, dancing a frantic dance, that would have suited some Indian festival . . . They kept this up until they looked mad with excitement, and they beat themselves and each other fearfully. Then they broke up the separate circles and ran round and round the sepulchre again, with frightful rapidity, heedless of trampling one another under foot. Here and there a priest was giving himself up to the frenzy of the people, and to gain a reputation for sanctity, he allowed himself to be most unceremoniously handled . . . The pilgrims believe that the fire would never come down on the tomb unless bands of the faithful thus encircled it.<sup>9</sup>

This continued for two hours until a priest went forward to retrieve and then distribute the miraculous fire from within the Sepulchre.<sup>10</sup> Rogers goes on to describe a great fight which broke out between the Greek and Armenian contingents. She notes that the “many educated Greeks, both priest and laymen” with whom she has spoken regarding this ceremony are “heartily ashamed of it” and later explains that the true reason for this ongoing ritual lies with the huge profits to be made at pilgrimage time by “priests, shopkeepers, [and] relic manufacturers.”<sup>11</sup> Rogers thus perpetuates the image of Eastern Christians as wild, superstitious, credulous, and of their leaders as power-hungry charlatans. For most travelers the ritual merits little more than scornful dismissal. William Thomson, Presbyterian missionary in Beirut for forty years, lets us down easy: “I will not shock your sensibilities with details of the buffoonery and the profane orgies

performed by the Greeks around the tomb in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the day of the Holy Fire. I doubt whether there is anything more disgraceful to be witnessed in any heathen temple.”<sup>12</sup> Readers are left to draw the inference: Eastern Christians are no better than the heathen.

Protestant travelers turned away, often in revulsion, from the claustrophobic and sometimes dangerous experience of sharing confined sacred spaces with throngs of pilgrims. Leaving the Oriental space of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, they took sanctuary in alternatives, ranging from such wide open spaces as the Mount of Olives to the familiar turf of western church and home. Philip Schaff articulates the urge to retreat by commenting: “We are charmed with the beautiful situation and the hills that surround the city of David; but we are disgusted with the wretched interior, the ill-paved, narrow and dirty streets, the ignorance, poverty, and misery of the inhabitants.”<sup>13</sup> The Protestant path to enlightenment charted a figurative course out of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, heavy with the smoke of base superstition, through the crowded city and then well beyond its poor, ignorant people, to a commanding vantage point safely removed from danger. Even without heading for the hills, westerners found ways to escape from the East. Henry Van Dyke, a Presbyterian minister and professor of English literature at Princeton, fled from the Chapel of the Crucifixion in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, “a little room, close, obscure, crowded with lamps and icons and candelabra, encrusted with ornaments of gold and silver, full of strange odours and glimmerings of mystic light,” in search of “. . . the open air, the blue sky, the pure sunlight, the tranquility of large and silent places.” Van Dyke ended up in the “cool, clean, quiet German [Protestant] Church of the Redeemer.”<sup>14</sup> In another account, John Lloyd Stephens

disappointed, disgusted, and sick at heart, while hundreds were still struggling for admission, I turned away and left the church. A warmer imagination than mine could perhaps have seen, in a white marble sarcophagus, “the sepulchre hewn out of a rock,” and in the fierce struggling of these barefooted pilgrims the devotion of sincere and earnest piety, burning to do homage in the holiest of places; but I could not. It was refreshing to turn from this painful exhibition of a deformed and degraded Christianity to a simpler and purer scene . . . I found [Mr. Whiting, an American missionary] sitting at a table, with a large family Bible open before him. His wife was present, with two little Armenian girls, whom she was educating to assist her in the school . . . It was so long since I had heard the words of truth from the

lips of a preacher . . . Here on the very spot whence the apostles had gone forth to preach the glad tidings of salvation to a ruined world, a missionary from the same distant land was standing as an apostle over the grave of Christianity, a solitary labourer striving to re-establish the pure faith and worship that were founded on this spot eighteen centuries ago.<sup>15</sup>

Cool, open, clean, and tranquil spaces helped counteract the ill effects of Eastern Christian ritual and bustle, but “the words of truth” served as the essential antidote to be ingested through Bible study and faithful preaching. The presence of two little Armenian girls at the table, receiving “pure” instruction from an American Protestant missionary, adds to the symbolic weight of Stephens’s redemptive journey from temple of Oriental superstition to the comfort of bible-suffused Protestant hearth and home.

Jerusalem may have frustrated western travelers with its crowds, dirty streets and manifold idolatries, but a sojourn in bucolic Galilee presented less in the way of distractions. If the Mount of Olives pleased Protestants withdrawing from Eastern urban disorientation, enabling them to regain their bearings, it also attracted them due to its associations with the life of Christ. As Schaff puts it,

Whoever approaches Jerusalem from the west, the north, or even the south, will be disappointed. But viewed from Mount Olivet, on the east, Jerusalem presents a beautiful and imposing sight, and justifies all the praises lavished upon her by the singers of Israel. . . . That sight can never be forgotten. It is the spot from which the Saviour looked upon the temple and wept over the unbelief and approaching doom of the ungrateful city.<sup>16</sup>

A pleasing vista is one thing, but to imagine oneself standing where Jesus looked out on Jerusalem – now that was worth a great deal more. Walking on the shores of Lake Galilee, Protestant pilgrims seem to have had this experience more than at any other location. The beauty and peacefulness of the environment combined with biblical images of disciples sitting at the feet of Jesus, soaking up his teaching, to create the perfect conditions for a religious epiphany. David Randall describes a common occurrence among Protestant travelers in the Holy Land:

What numerous associations conspire to embalm this lake in the

memory of the Christian! . . . At 11 o'clock, by previous agreement, our little company assembled in an upper room of one of the old deserted watch-towers of the wall that overlooked the sea [of Galilee], for a season of social worship. Each one selected a portion of Scripture narrating some incident in the life or teachings of the Savior connected with these waters; these read in turn, intermingled with prayer and singing. With what deep interest we read these narratives, and with what life and power they seemed invested as we looked out upon the localities where they transpired . . . Thus we spent the hours of worship, feeling that we were nearer than ever to Him whose words and deeds transcend all human wisdom and power.<sup>17</sup>

Lakes and other pastoral landscapes promised the freedom for an individualistic retreat from the sensual assault presented by alien liturgy. Perhaps most importantly, in these areas it was also easy to avoid the local population. Everywhere throughout the Holy Land, Protestant travelers reached instinctively for their scriptures and extracted biblical texts that matched their locale, often imagining themselves in the company of Jesus as they did their reading. These places were lodged deep, "embalmed," in the memory of the Christian; and then, like Lazarus, they were resurrected, "invested" with new "life and power," through devotion and experience. Palestine lay outside of history for these western observers. The land achieved its transcendent meaning when deserted, only then could it exercise its spiritual force to conjure up the biblical narrative. Along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, no strange people or curious customs interfered with the Protestant claim to that inheritance from scripture.

In Protestant Holy Land writings, the oriental peoples of Palestine divide neatly into three groups: Muslims, Jews, and Christians. Members of the first of these religions receive least attention. The terms "Mohammedan," "Turk," and "Arab" are used interchangeably by most commentators; only rarely do they distinguish between Ottoman Turks and Palestinian Arabs, for example. In general, Muslim people are largely expurgated from the Protestant accounts of Palestine. They make no appearance in the Judeo-Christian scriptures and, hence, they can contribute nothing to the desire of western readers to have a historical experience of the Bible. In his chapter on "Religion in Jerusalem," Philip Schaff completely ignores Muslims. He covers Eastern Christians, "the Old Churches" as he labels them, in one page; Jews take up three pages; and the tiny Protestant community in the city requires a full five pages.<sup>18</sup> And yet, Muslims did serve one useful purpose. From the earliest modern incursions into

Palestine, Protestants were mystified that the land was no longer flowing with milk and honey. H. H. Milman's *History of the Jews* quotes Malte-Brun, an influential Danish geographer at the turn of the nineteenth century, who offers what would become the standard explanation: "Galilee would be a paradise were it inhabited by an industrious people under an enlightened government."<sup>19</sup> The Ottoman Empire was to blame for the state of Palestine. Thomas Talmage, a high-profile Presbyterian minister from New York, goes even farther:

. . . you must remember the land is under the Turk, and what the Turk touches he withers. Mohammedanism is against easy wharves, against steamers, against rail-trains, against printing presses, against civilization. Darkness is always opposed to light . . . That Turkish Government ought to be blotted from the face of the earth, and it will be.<sup>20</sup>

He continues in the same vein: "Let the Turk be driven out and the American, or Englishman, or Scotchman, go in, and Mohammedanism withdraw its idolatries, and pure Christianity build its altars, and the irrigation of which Solomon's pools was only a suggestion, will make all that land from Dan to Beersheba . . . fertile, and aromatic and resplendent . . ."<sup>21</sup> This large-scale attribution of blame echoes in the more mundane writings of Protestants travelers as they journey throughout the Holy Land. Even as they are occasionally glad to accept hospitality from upper-class Arabs, the Muslim villages they pass through en route to new sacred sites are seen as dangerous places and their anonymous inhabitants as thieves. More often, however, Muslims fail to show up in these accounts. Beshara Doumani explains the lacuna thus: "the dominant genres at the time [the late Ottoman period] – travel guides and historical geography – focused primarily on the relationship between the physical features of Palestine and the biblical events described in the Old and New Testaments."<sup>22</sup> Limited in this way by a narrow biblical frame-work, Protestant commentators effectively erased Muslims from their histories.

Western accounts of the Holy Land favoured the Jews of Palestine. The Jewish presence was indispensable in the quest for the historical Jesus and an authentic biblical experience. As Thomson puts it, "Jerusalem is trodden down under the feet of the Gentiles, the Jews are treated with indignity by Mahommedan and Greek. They are aliens in their own land, and strangers in the ancient capital of Israel."<sup>23</sup> He implies that only the Jews belong in Jerusalem. Some Protestants championed the Jews due to a theological commitment to dispensational millenarianism, the belief that

the second coming of Christ would only take place when the Jews were restored to the Holy Land. Schaff describes what he saw at the west wall of the temple, “the Wailing Place,” as “touching and pregnant with meaning.” He then suggests that “God has no doubt reserved this remarkable people, which, like the burning bush, is never consumed, for some great purpose before the final coming of our Lord.”<sup>24</sup> Burnfield elaborates on the theme:

Palestine, Jerusalem in her humiliation, and the Jews in their steady and continued unbelief, are a united and impregnable witness for the truth of Scripture. Their history is full of lessons for nations in these days. History repeats itself, because God’s law repeats itself . . . The hope of the nations of modern times is not in education alone or in the progress of scientific knowledge, but in a firm adherence to the law of God, and the will of God. Not only is our life as a race bound up with that of the Jews, but they are a factor in the future of all races of the world; “for if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead.”<sup>25</sup>

How, then, could Protestants fail to lend the Jews their support? The roots of western, and particularly American, support of Zionism lie in the way many Protestants read and revered the Judeo-Christian scriptures. Doumani argues that

The amazing ability to discover the land without discovering the people dovetailed with early Zionist visions. In the minds of many Europeans, especially Zionist Jews, Palestine was “empty” before the arrival of the first wave of Jewish settlers in 1881-1884. “Emptiness,” of course, did not denote, except for the most ignorant, the physical absence of the native population. Rather, it meant the absence of “civilized” people, in the same sense that the Americas and Africa were portrayed as virgin territories ready for waves of pioneers. The famous Zionist slogan, “a land without a people for a people without a land” was, therefore, but a manifestation of a wider European intellectual network characterized by chauvinistic nationalism, racial superiority, and imperialistic ambitions.<sup>26</sup>

Bovet supplies compelling evidence for Doumani’s claim in what appears to be a prophetic statement regarding the future conversion of the Jews.

The Christians who had conquered the Holy Land were not able to keep it; to them it never was anything but a field of battle and a cemetery. The Saracens who took it from them saw it in turn taken from them by the Ottoman Turks. These latter, who are still nominally its owners, have made it into a desert, in which they hardly dare to set foot without fear. The Arabs themselves, who are its inhabitants, can only be considered as encamped in the country; they have pitched their tents in its pastures, or contrived for themselves a place of shelter in the ruins of its towns; they have founded nothing in them; strangers to the soil, they never became wedded to it; the wind of the desert which brought them there may one day carry them away again, without them leaving behind the slightest trace of their passage through it. God, who had given Palestine to so many nations, has not permitted any one to establish itself or to take root in it; He is keeping it, no doubt, in reserve for His people Israel, for those rebellious children, who will one day have become the “men of a meek and humble spirit,” of whom Jesus said that “they shall inherit the earth.”<sup>27</sup>

And yet, in spite of the widespread view that God would use the Jews of Palestine for his mysterious eschatological purposes, Protestants hardly saw them as equals.<sup>28</sup> Rather, the Jews were viewed as allies due to their status as both proto-Christians – the people with whom the Old Testament originated – and future Christians whose salvation was foretold in the New Testament. With the benefit of unassailable biblical credentials, the Jews were considered to be the best guardians of the Holy Land out of three not-very-good options.<sup>29</sup>

As evidenced by their observations at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, among other holy sites, western Protestants consistently decried the superstition of Eastern Christians. Nonetheless, they wrote about them. Cunningham Geikie explains the fashion in which Holy Week was celebrated in Jerusalem with reference to the diverse body of visiting Christians: “The pilgrims who represent every country of Eastern Christendom – Armenians, Copts, Abyssinians, Russians, Syrians, Arabs, each race by itself, in its national dress, marked by its colors as well as its style . . .”<sup>30</sup> Eastern Christians needed to be classified, though not necessarily explored in depth, if only to help readers understand the proprietary arrangements at sacred sites, such as the multitude of chapels in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, each associated with a different

Eastern Church.

However, beyond the practical considerations of outlining the various denominations and conveying the everyday realities of religious life in the Holy Land, Protestants also present Eastern Christianity in a positive light. Their common faith engendered some measure of loyalty. The western attitude toward Bethlehem and Nazareth illustrates the fraternal instinct in this regard. Both towns were inhabited by largely Christian populations. Protestant travelers took note of the difference. Schaff observes that “the Christian women of Nazareth are more beautiful in person, more cleanly in attire, and more courteous in manner than any in Palestine, with the exception of their sisters in Bethlehem, where nearly the whole population is Christian. They certainly contrast favorably with the ignorance and degradation of women in purely Mohammedan villages.”<sup>31</sup> For his part, Bovet draws more overarching conclusions from the atmosphere in Christian Bethlehem:

One must have seen Oriental countries to form an adequate idea of the civilizing power of Christianity. In Europe it sometimes seems to us as if Oriental Christianity in its degenerate state, atrophied by ignorance, disfigured by formalism and superstition, must be little better than Mahometanism. But it is not so. There is in the Gospel an immortal power of light and life, which the world’s darkness may in some degree overshadow, but can never completely destroy. One is struck with this on visiting Bethlehem: the influence of Christianity makes itself felt; the passengers salute you with a certain affability; they have in their conduct, manners, and expression, more of vivacity and of openness than the other Arabs. They are more energetic, more industrious, more cheerful. Here the people work . . .<sup>32</sup>

Bovet suggests that “the influence of Christianity” opens up a beachhead for the “immortal power of light and life” struggling against the darkness of “Oriental countries.” The positive light which Protestant commentators perceived in Eastern Christianity comes refracted and interpreted through the gospel of western civilization.

The Protestant authors of books on the Holy Land were generally convinced that their version of Christianity was best and that their civilization was supreme. In Palestine, these hegemonic impulses merged with the transcendent significance of the land to set the stage for a unique Christian colonialism. Thomson sums up this sentiment nicely, saying that “Jerusalem is the common property of the whole Christian world – belongs

neither to Greek nor Latin, is neither Papist nor Protestant. I claim a share in Zion and Moriah, Olivet and Siloah, Gethsemane and Calvary; and I mean to pursue my studies and researches with as much freedom and zest as though no eye but mine had ever scanned these sacred sites.”<sup>33</sup> For all that Protestants felt an affinity for the Jews and remembered from time to time that they shared a common faith with the Eastern Christians, they saw themselves as the final solution to the Palestinian problem. As Schaff puts it, “Palestine needs for its regeneration a good government, an industrious population, capital, and a better religion, even the religion of the Bible, which sprung from its own soil and is now almost unknown . . . And what the indolent Turks will never do, the industry and zeal of foreigners will do, and make Palestine once more a land of promise ‘flowing with milk and honey . . .’”<sup>34</sup> The Protestant “re-discovery” of the Biblical lands created an approach to the Orient which expurgated Muslims from the record, appropriated Jews for theological purposes, and attacked Eastern Christians for abandoning the true faith. In the process, British, American and Canadian observers insisted upon a way of reading scripture which dispensed with centuries of tradition in the pursuit of a devotional experience grounded in the clean, well-ordered, and rationalistic emphases of western religion and society. The common Christian identity of Protestants and Eastern Christians failed to significantly undermine the divisions erected by this Orientalist outlook.

### **Endnotes**

1. The use of this expression confounds more than it clarifies. The “re-discoverers” were completely different from the “discoverers” – so much so that one can find negligible continuity between nineteenth century Protestants and medieval Crusaders. In addition, the terms “discovery” or “rediscovery” may suggest, as in the debate surrounding the European “discovery” of the Americas or “the New World” in 1492, that no one lived there before, or, at least, no who mattered. As we shall see, this issue is pertinent to the concerns of this paper. See, among others, Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *The Rediscovery of the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, and Israel Exploration Society, 1979); Ruth Kark, “From Pilgrimage to Budding Tourism: The Role of Thomas Cook in the Rediscovery of the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Travellers in the Levant: Voyagers and Visionaries*, eds. Sarah Searight and Malcolm Wagstaff (Durham, NC: Astene, 2001), 155-74; Naomi Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders: The Western Rediscovery of Palestine* (London: William Collins Sons & Co., 1987).

2. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 73.
3. Felix Bovet, *Egypt, Palestine, and Phoenicia: A Visit to Sacred Lands*, trans. W.H. Lyttelton (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1883), 111.
4. Philip Schaff, *Through Bible Lands: Notes of Travel in Egypt, the Desert, and Palestine* (New York: American Tract Society, 1878), 232.
5. George Burnfield, *Voices from the Orient, or, The testimony of the monuments: of the recent historical and topographical discoveries: and of the customs and traditions of the people in the Orient to the veracity of the sacred record* (Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1884), 298.
6. Burnfield, *Voices from the Orient*, 352.
7. David Austin Randall, *The Handwriting of God in Egypt, Sinai, and the Holy Land: the records of a journey from the great valley of the West to the sacred places of the East with Maps, Diagrams, and Numerous Illustrations* (Philadelphia and New York: John E. Potter & Co, 1868), 154.
8. Mary Eliza Rogers, *Domestic Life in Palestine* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1862), 296.
9. Rogers, *Domestic Life in Palestine*, 299-300.
10. Rogers explains that the priest “had paid a large sum of money for the privilege of representing the patriarch, and gaining for the occasion the title of: ‘*The bishop of the holy fire.*’” Kamiel Pasha was also in attendance and must have been pleased by what Rogers reported that the worshipers shouted: “Christ the Son of God died for us! Christ the Son of God rose for us! This is the tomb of Christ our Saviour! God preserve the Sultan!” (Rogers, *Domestic Life in Palestine*, 301).
11. Only in the final paragraph of the chapter does she inquire in more constructive directions, asking: “Is this strange ceremony a relic of the services of the Fire-worshippers of old? There are two or three Moslem shrines which are said to be miraculously illumined on certain days, and I am told that as early as the ninth-century the Syrian Christians believed that an angel of God was appointed to light the lamps over the tomb of Christ on every Easter-eve” (Rogers, *Domestic Life in Palestine*, 306).
12. William McClure Thomson, *The Land and the Book, or, Biblical Illustrations drawn from the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery of the Holy Land*, Volume 2 (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1858), 565.
13. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 233.

14. Henry Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land: Impressions of Travel in Body and Spirit* (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1908), 118; quoted in Edward L. Queen, "Ambiguous Pilgrims: American Protestant Travelers to Ottoman Palestine, 1867-1914," in *Pilgrims and Travelers to the Holy Land*, ed. Bryan F. Le Beau and Menachem Mor (Omaha, NB: Creighton University Press, 1996), 218.
15. J.L. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land* (Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers, 1839), 90-91.
16. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 234.
17. Randall, *The Handwriting of God in Egypt, Sinai, and the Holy Land*, 313.
18. Queen, "Ambiguous Pilgrims: American Protestant Travelers to Ottoman Palestine, 1867-1914," 223.
19. H.H. Milman, *History of the Jews* (London: John Murray, 1866), 173; quoted in Alistair Mason, "Milman's History of the Jews: a Real Place with Real People," in *The Holy Land, Holy Lands, and Christian History: Papers Read at the 1998 Summer Meeting and the 1999 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. R.N. Swanson (Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewer, 2000), 323.
20. Thomas Talmage, *Thomas on Palestine: A Series of Sermons* (Springfield, OH, 1890), 9-10; quoted in Queen, "Ambiguous Pilgrims: American Protestant Travelers to Ottoman Palestine, 1867-1914," 222.
21. Talmage, *Thomas on Palestine*, 85; quoted in Queen, "Ambiguous Pilgrims: American Protestant Travelers to Ottoman Palestine, 1867-1914," 222.
22. However, Doumani admits that "the indigenous inhabitants were not entirely invisible." He goes on to make the point that "Most importantly, perhaps, Palestinians were the subject of ethnographic studies on peasant society, custom, and religion. More often than not, however, these valuable studies aimed not so much at investigating Palestinian society as it actually was, but rather at documenting an unchanging traditional society before its anticipated extinction due to contact with the West." While ethnographers had their agenda too, this final criticism – that they failed to investigate Palestinian society "as it actually was" – seems both unrealistic and anachronistic. Nonetheless Doumani's broader thesis is well taken (Beshara Doumani, "Rediscovering Ottoman Palestine: Writing Palestinians into History," *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 21 [Winter 1992], 8).
23. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, Vol. 2, 469.
24. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 252.

25. The quote is from Micah 3:12. Burnfield, *Voices from the Orient*, 357.
26. Doumani, “Rediscovering Ottoman Palestine: Writing Palestinians into History,” 8.
27. Interestingly and strangely enough, the native Eastern Christian people are nowhere mentioned in this thumbnail sketch of Palestinian history. Crusaders come up, but not the descendants of the early church (Bovet, *Egypt, Palestine, and Phoenicia*, 379).
28. As Lester Vogel notes, the Jews of Palestine were among the world’s poorest and depended upon financial support from Europe and North America (*To See A Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* [University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993], 79-83).
29. This was more and more the case as the nineteenth century progressed with the arrival of large numbers of European Jews, particularly after 1875.
30. Cunningham Geikie, *The Holy Land and the Bible: A Book of Scripture Illustrations gathered in Palestine*, Volume 1 (New York: John B. Alden Publisher, 1888), 292.
31. One page later, he mentions that “the Protestants [in Nazareth] number not more than one hundred, but represent the hope of the future.” The juxtaposition of “superior” women (which he attributes to the salutary effect of scripture contra the Roman Catholic claim that the influence of the Virgin Mary is responsible) and the leavening effect of western Protestants cannot be accidental – and begs questions surrounding the key issues of sexuality and gender as they relate to Orientalism (Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 324).
32. Bovet, *Egypt, Palestine, and Phoenicia*, 276-77.
33. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, Volume 2, 468.
34. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 388-89.