

# INVENTING THE HOLY LAND



AMERICAN PROTESTANT PILGRIMAGE TO  
PALESTINE, 1865–1941



Stephanie Stidham Rogers

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For Christopher, Lane, and Sophie



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I believe that the significance of American Protestant pilgrimage to the Holy Land endures and that further study of the period that saw the birth of these tours is highly warranted. It is my hope that this book will contribute to a fuller analysis of the role of the Holy Land in the history of American Protestant thought and practice and that also in some small way it will foster conversation, understanding, and create new avenues of intercultural self-understanding. I have been guided and sustained by the belief that travel narratives were at least as widely read as novels during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and that their significance to religion and culture must be more carefully examined. Hence, I am grateful to my editor, Melissa Wilks, for choosing this manuscript for publication and for all of her support throughout the process.

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## *Chapter One*

# **Introduction**

By the second half of the nineteenth century, more Americans than ever before were given the opportunity to travel abroad due to the invention of the steamship. This era heralded a new age of more affordable and convenient leisure tourism for many, including would-be Holy Land pilgrims in the United States.<sup>1</sup> A new world of journeying possibilities emerged and for the first time among middle-class American Protestants, and there was a fresh interest in the land of Palestine.<sup>2</sup> Also augmenting the new popularity of Holy Land travel was the global ethos of Western expansion and the subsequent economic stability that was particularly evident in Palestine, where the Ottoman Empire began to weaken, and completed this decline in power by 1918.<sup>3</sup> Among the various destinations now available to American travelers, the ancient land of Palestine was increasingly popular with religiously minded Protestants. In fact, little restrained would-be Palestine settlers and religious pilgrims after the 1840s—there were no passports or restrictions on immigration at this time—creating the largest global human migration in human history.<sup>4</sup> Within this larger context of increased mobility and Western expansion, newly upwardly mobile American Protestant pilgrims journeyed to Palestine, the Christian Holy Land, and sought to claim spiritual and physical pieces of the ancient lands for their own. This book will focus on a specific phenomenon that occurred within the larger context of increased mobility and Western expansion, i.e., newly mobile American Protestant pilgrims traveling to Palestine (the Christian Holy Land) in search of a renewal and fulfillment of religious identity.

After the prevailing wave of religious enthusiasm, the Second Great Awakening, swept Americans into new popular movements between 1790 and 1845, American Protestants traveled to Palestine in search of a rekindling and realization of their religious uniqueness. Many of the movements

of the Second Great Awakening related to the development of an earnest, new, more international outlook, primarily through missions ventures, as local churches began to grow rapidly and look to far off lands as new mission fields.<sup>5</sup> They undertook countless campaigns for various causes under a powerful reformist impulse.<sup>6</sup> The earliest and most influential American missionaries to Palestine were Levi Parsons and Pliny Fisk—memoirs of their experiences were published in 1824 and 1828, respectively.<sup>7</sup> The impassioned Parsons wrote, “The best interests of Zion are embarked in a spiritual crusade to the land of promise; and upon its success suspended in a very important sense, the final dissolution of the empire of sin.”<sup>8</sup> Missions to Palestine began to bear millennial hopes. As American Protestants both looked and traveled eastward, they sought out programs that would make Palestine more “biblical”—in an American, Western, Protestant sense of understanding the Bible. This book chronicles this new Holy Land Protestant pilgrimage trend of the nineteenth century and shows how Protestants reacted to Palestine by creating new sites there and mythologies that would make it more culturally familiar, in part as a way to cope with the paradoxes presented by the land.

My thesis is that American Protestants, torn apart by a fratricidal war, the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, the debates surrounding millennialism, and the impact of Darwinian criticism, went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in search of new meanings, adventure, and religious self-understanding. When they arrived, they often experienced profound disappointment and filth, and often felt shame, shock, and insult. Out of this common experience, Holy Land pilgrimage narrative writers create a new world in print—at first existing only on the page—then quickly becoming an impetus to physically carve out a more biblical East, a new Protestant homeland with new Protestant shrines in a landscape dotted with Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Armenian, and Muslim shrines, using Protestant theological frameworks. In order to do this, Protestants reveal a variety of new attitudes such as calling Palestine the “fifth gospel,” transforming local Arabs into biblical figures acting out a Protestant drama in photographs, reinventing or reworking the biblical idea of a prophetic “curse” upon the towns that rejected Christ and his teachings, and rejecting the shrines of the Eastern Orthodox, Armenian, and Roman Catholic churches; all while creating an iconic view of nature and the out-of-doors in the Holy Land.

Before the 1880s, American Protestants encountered a land that was politically, culturally, and socially dominated by Arab Muslims. During the second half of the nineteenth century, American Protestants were relative newcomers in Palestine, having no basic claims of heritage to traditional pilgrimage, land, or property. In 1841, E. G. Robinson put it succinctly: “Protestants do not exist in Syria as a native sect, nor in any other part of the Turkish Empire; nor are they, as such, tolerated.”<sup>9</sup> In fact, to the dismay of many pre-1890s Protestant pilgrimage account writers, most of the holy Christian sites

were wholly owned and administrated by Muslims, while a few others were overseen by Catholics, Armenians, and Orthodox Christians. Robinson wrote, "It is by the operation of this principle [nonrecognition of Protestantism] of the Turkish government, and by this alone, that the rise of Protestantism in Syria is checked."<sup>10</sup> Christians were "dhimmis" or protected people, but they still suffered certain restrictions to mark their inferiority, such as the poll tax and the land tax.<sup>11</sup> There was no base of operations or historical cultural niche for Protestants in Palestine. Therefore, agriculturally based settlers such as the French, Russians, Germans, Americans, and Jewish émigrés from the United States and Europe had begun to arrive in Palestine in significant numbers during the 1840s, competing with the local population for land and resources and practicing self-government in miniature colonies.<sup>12</sup>

The small sampling of the larger body of pilgrimage accounts that are the basis of this study reveal that Protestants viewed Eastern Christian expressions of piety through architecture and liturgy, and expressed dismay at their alienation from Eastern religious expression, and by extension, from the pilgrim experiences available in Palestine. In addition, Protestants were remarkably ambivalent about the Arabs they encountered: sometimes they saw them as dirty and uncivilized, while at others, they found them to be conveniently biblical-looking and providing useful authentic scenery—enhancing the tourist experience by posing for a multitude of remarkable photographs labeled as Bible scenes that have survived to this day. They are at the very heart of these popular pilgrimage narratives.

American Protestants were also influenced by the new impact of various forms of premillennialism that had gained significant popular ground during the second half of the nineteenth century. Millennialists fell into two general groups during the second half of the nineteenth century: those who held that the millennium, or thousand-year reign of Christ, would follow the second coming (premillennialism), and those who held that the millennium would precede the return of Christ (postmillennialism).<sup>13</sup> The premillennial outlook tended to be more pessimistic, anticipating evil, tribulation, and the Antichrist at the end of time. In contrast, the more optimistic postmillennial outlook anticipated a golden age with the reign of the church on earth. After the first half of the nineteenth century, a period in which many disruptive and revolutionary religious movements were born, the stage was set for the evangelical revivalism that would challenge traditional church practices. This was signified by religious enthusiasm and changes in four main areas: perfectionism, millennialism, universalism, and illuminism.<sup>14</sup> This new religious fervor brought an emphasis upon millennialism that resulted in renewed attention to the Holy Land that focused on its new, critical role in the concepts of the final days of history. Various end-time scenarios and predictions emerge that



are based upon different readings and interpretations of the Bible's prophetic messages.

When Americans sought to illuminate millennialist ideals by traveling to Palestine, they attempted to bring forward ideas "as ancient as the Bible itself."<sup>15</sup> Many of those influenced by premillennialism believed that the dominant church was now mostly apostate or lost and interpreted all opposition as clear evidence of damnation. In their quest to renew the church, they sought to find a clear role for the freshly relevant Holy Land.

Seeking out an ancient biblical past, many American Protestant pilgrims sought out various means to make the land of Palestine more socially and culturally welcoming to Western foreigners. This book also argues that the experience of alienation and foreignness in Palestine among American Protestant pilgrims to Palestine during the nineteenth century caused them to adopt an interpretive program that included several transforming methods, allowing them to create a Holy Land that was more biblical, or more Protestant. In turn, the Holy Land entered the very center of the American theological landscape. It suddenly enters Bibles in the form of maps and photography, and bolsters the scientific credentials of Christianity. In the quest to solve "the social question," the Jews of the urban ghettos in the West are moved into pilot programs—experimental agricultural farms in Palestine. Protestants become Zionists.

## DEFINITION OF "PILGRIM" AND METHODOLOGY

Protestants traveled to Palestine as "pilgrims" because of their identity as foreigners in a foreign land, as wayfarers traveling across land and sea with a religious purpose. "Pilgrim" in this sense is defined differently from sightseers or leisure tourists—in this case, the Protestant pilgrim seeks out a religious reality and history that is unique to their religious role as Protestants and their national identity as Americans. Typically, pilgrimage relates to the folk experience of the theological question of the immanence of God—and often stands slightly to one side of organized religion since it reveals a direct communication with the divine.<sup>16</sup> "The rally, the revival, the pilgrimage serve as horizons in an otherwise unduly bland experience . . . and are a commentary on the perceived . . . limitations of the parochial system."<sup>17</sup> A pilgrim is therefore defined in the simplest terms as one who moves across the earth, one who leaves one's home in order to journey to a shrine or a holy place as a devotee, seeking a closer affinity to the divine through physical proximity.<sup>18</sup> Many pilgrims came to a sacred place believing and hoping for direct communication between themselves and God. The pilgrim's journey is an ellipse; it is complete when the devotee has returned home with a new

understanding of themselves and their God that is embodied: it is found and realized through physical proximity—a journey that is both physical and spiritual.

The American geographer John Kirtland Wright defined “pilgrim” in terms of scientific terms he invented: “geopiety” or “georeligion,” i.e., the devotion brought forth in people through their awareness of terrestrial locales that subsequently brought forth awe or wonder.<sup>19</sup> A later American geographer, Yi-fu Tuan, expanded the idea of geographically expressed piety to include the unique patchwork of relationships between humans and nature.<sup>20</sup> American anthropologist Victor Turner (1920–1983) and other postmodernists deconstructed the universalized conceptions of the “religion-magic-science paradigm” of the European tradition, emphasizing the cultural specificity of terminology and complex historical circumstances surrounding each unique pilgrimage practice. For Turner, the “liminoid” or playful is an element of Catholic pilgrimage, which is communal in nature, and it promises a release from mundane structure and a homogenization of status among pilgrims in addition to a release from ordinary time. This liminoid “anti-structure,” according to Turner, can generate and store a plurality of alternative models for living and is central to pilgrimage.<sup>21</sup>

How does one define pilgrimage for Protestants in their unique and varied nineteenth-century social contexts? Mircea Eliade writes that the “road” of the traveler can be transfigured into a religious experience, because every miniature road can symbolize something larger, i.e., the “the road of life,” or a peregrination to the center of the world:

If possessing a house implies having assumed a stable situation in the world, those who have renounced their houses, the pilgrims and ascetics, proclaim by their “walking,” by their constant movement, their desire to leave the world, their refusal of any worldly situation. The house is a “nest,” and . . . the “nest” implies flocks, children, and a “home,” in a word, it symbolizes the world of the family, of society, of getting a living.<sup>22</sup>

Eliade highlights the aspect of movement and danger against stasis and stability in the nature of pilgrimage. Movement and change are defining features of pilgrimage. Victor Turner importantly included the nonritualized factors as well as the ritualized ones in pilgrimage, i.e., the “play” times of travel and enjoyment. In Turner’s definition, pilgrimage does not serve the static status quo; rather, it recollects an alternative, more fluid mode of social being and a world where “*communitas*,” rather than a bureaucratic social structure, is preeminent.<sup>23</sup>

For Protestant reformers the clear demarcation between work and leisure brought by John Calvin during the Protestant Reformation lowered the importance of special festival-like events such as pilgrimage and feast, while sacralizing a person’s worldly occupation as the sphere in which to serve

God. According to Turner, when bringing about this change, reformers sacralized what was formerly the most profane, and profaned what was formerly sacred—the festivals, cakes, and ale of popular religious life.<sup>24</sup> The ideal of hard work in one's calling promoted ascetic dedication to systematic profits and thrift, hardly a friendly atmosphere for the excesses and lengthy absences required by traditional pilgrimage practices. Thus, for Protestants "play" can be a form of moral laxness, and Protestant pilgrim travel takes on a notably serious and holy tone of scientific or educational "work" in comparison to common folk pilgrimage among Catholics.

In contrast, Meccan pilgrims wear the clothing on their pilgrimages that will be their death shroud. The ideal in this case is that they may present themselves at the last judgment covered with their "ihram" pilgrim's garb. The idea of holy geography is critical to the Islamic faith, and their history, like that of Christians, is also one of conquest, victory, and defeat. Christian pilgrimage has historically been less critical in the life of the believer, has had less connection with assurance of salvation, and has been seen as less necessary than is the pilgrimage to Mecca among devout Muslims. Pilgrimage is an early Christian practice first attributed in the second century that has historically endured, whether on a local level or in connection to a longer journey, due to its popular appeal and the important meaning assigned to particular regions of the world. The nineteenth century set the stage for the broad public acceptance of the land of Palestine as a spiritual homeland for Judeo-Christian peoples. It also set the stage for the inability to empathize with a more universal idea of connection to sacred locales among those whose claims were at odds with alternative views of the religious past or future.

While pilgrimage cannot be exhaustively defined under a universal rubric or as liminal "play" or "work," there have been many recent attempts to describe the phenomenon. Edward Soja, in his 1996 book, explores pilgrimage as a dynamic mixture of space, the social order, and history.<sup>25</sup> In this understanding of geopoietic activity, space is the socially constructed, symbolic order where value-laden lived experience is represented through fluid symbols interacting with human behavior. Soja holds that "spatial practice" is often comprised of a duality—active participation in a dominant ethos, and simultaneous active resistance to the control exerted by this ethos. Virginia Brereton writes about pilgrimage as a constantly shifting social phenomenon, with the geographical holiness as a "will-o'-the-wisp" destination sought by those who wish to reestablish the presence of a fluid, sacred order in the midst of normal human life, yet in the end, "the sacred and the profane are hopelessly tangled together."<sup>26</sup> Thus pilgrimage is often currently defined as a complex field of human social interactions in exchanges with spiritual practices and constructed spaces.

For the purposes of this study, the consideration of American Protestant pilgrimage to Palestine under a scientifically based “universal” geopious rubric would be too narrow to completely describe the unique, diverse historical phenomenon that occurred among American Protestants during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition the attention to specific terminologies, the complex and unique pilgrim histories used by anthropologists such as Turner are useful for this project. These include the clash between structure and antistructure and the “domestication of the primitive” by clergy so evident in the history of Catholic pilgrimage as described by Turner. The cases of Lourdes and Compostela, however, are less relevant to the Protestant situation during this time period due to the unique national attachment of Protestants to North America as homeland. Another factor in this instance is their pious, official regard for the Holy Land as a singular, unique place of Christ’s birth, and the often wholehearted affirmation of the pilgrimage there by the clerical elite. Useful to the American Protestant case, however, is Turner’s assertion that in pilgrimage, when pilgrims return from “wilderness” wanderings to their primary lives, they may experience enhanced religious status, but overall may also have lost status in the realms of work and human relationships due to their long absence. While tribal patients draw kin and healers closer to them in order to be cured, in the West pilgrims go out and separate from kin in the process of religious or spiritual healing. Much of Turner’s work reveals the striking cultural differences between pilgrimages.

Finally, the definition of pilgrimage as a dynamic interaction of space, history, and society that is socially constructed predominantly informs this study. This is because the factor of the power of human perception vis-à-vis history and society in this unique case is useful in understanding what is often a great chasm. This gulf is between stated expectations and actual perceptions of reality in the Holy Land pilgrimage narratives of the nineteenth century. Protestant pilgrims sought out the holy in Palestine but were often disappointed—so they created new shrines and locales in order to both fulfill and shape expectations. The Holy Land they invented was a complex, layered construction, and a socially constructed phenomenon.

## TEXTS AND PERIODIZATION

The more than thirty-five primary texts that inform the central part of this research were chosen as representative samples from the few hundred that were written from the 1840s through the end of the Ottoman Empire in Palestine in 1918, until the start of World War II in 1941. This segment out of a larger group of approximately five hundred pilgrimage narratives were

chosen in particular because they include representative samples by male and female authors from many of the mainline and other Protestant denominations, including both influential and less influential Baptists, Presbyterians, Unitarians, Methodists, and Episcopalians, to name a few. They also include writings by a few American Protestants who were not part of ordained ministry, such as Frances Willard (founder of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union), or the female president of Wellesley College, yet claimed to speak with authority on matters of religious interest, a not uncommon phenomenon during the nineteenth century. They include, for example, the writings of William Seward, Mark Twain, Lyceum lecturers, and a few devout, interested laypersons. Therefore, the primary texts include a mixture of writings by American Protestants—professional clergy and interested laypersons from many different walks of life who wrote with publicly accepted authority on religious topics. The common elements are Palestine and American Protestants. While there are some easy generalities to be made, in many cases the individual idiosyncrasies of each author defy such tactics (stemming from denomination, gender, eschatology, etc.) and will also be represented as much as possible. Typicalities are not the sole goal of this study, because the individuals studied each reflect the concerns of their own inner lives as they survey Palestine, and together these variations provide access to a multifaceted tapestry.

All of these books allow the reader to access and understand the intrinsic new appeal of the Holy Land to a broad spectrum of nineteenth-century American Protestants. The thirty-five hardcover books (usually between 150 and 250 pages) chosen are “typical” of the Palestine travel narrative genre and broadly representative of the mood of this particular period.<sup>27</sup> They are intentionally chosen for their diversity and ability to draw from a broad swath of Protestants. Although the books cover a wide spectrum of authors, there is often a surprising similarity in tone, perspectives, and approaches. The “spatial practices” of these varied authors develop a rhythm over the period, as Protestants adopt Holy Land traditions. The narratives settle into predictable patterns that reveal useful information. For example, most have a chapter on Jerusalem with specific mention of the Holy Sepulcher and other key locales. Viewing the spectrum of pilgrim narratives one can see how (for American Protestants) the Holy Land moves from a classic, artistic, geographical image, as seen in utopian Bible illustrations and other artistic renderings in the 1850s, to the dimensions of a new geographical mythology with social and political ramifications powerful enough to influence popular culture in America by the turn of the century.

The methods that Protestant pilgrimage authors employed in order to describe and promote their pilgrimages to Americans at home are varied and reflect a diverse set of approaches. They include the construction of parallel pilgrimage sites such as General Gordon's tomb (a “Protestant Holy Sepul-

cher" less than half a mile away from the original), and a visual transformation of local Arab peasants, expressed through the medium of writing, into ancient biblical figures set in the backdrop of familiar Bible tales and scenes. Another method of creating a more Protestant Holy Land included a new, increasing acceptance of the idea of the modern restoration of the Jews to Palestine through agricultural colonies in line with a diverse array of millennial hopes.

In the pilgrimage narratives written by Protestant pastors, visible images of the Holy Land were translated into popular theological frameworks. When a Bedouin shepherd stood in a field, he became an American Bible illustration image: e.g., "Abraham tending his flocks" in a caption below the photograph. Therefore, the egalitarian nature of pilgrimage—as in Catholicism, where it is thought to be democratic rather than hierarchical—is significantly altered in the Protestant case. While the pilgrimages of Catholic peasants of this time are now regarded as anarchical and anticlerical with a populist message—linked to popular nationalism, millennialism, and peasant revolt—the Protestant case is quite the reverse. Protestants tended to send their clerics on the journey to encounter the powerful religious sacra of the pilgrimage, in order to interpret it and to deliver it to the religious congregation at home. Therefore, the experience of *communitas* is almost nonexistent, and the association with laicization, described by Jonathan Sperber in his study of popular religious pilgrim life among Northern European Catholics during the nineteenth century, certainly does not seem as relevant to this particular case.<sup>28</sup>

The overarching concern about popular pilgrimage during the nineteenth century in northern Europe by clerics and business leaders contrasts with the general enthusiasm among Protestant pastors for their own pilgrimages to Palestine and the popular books they subsequently published. Rather than bringing revolt, revival, and anticlericalism, they served to bolster the position of Protestant pastors and cultural leaders as interpreters and managers of religious phenomena to the masses.<sup>29</sup>

Popular Catholic pilgrimage has historically included anyone willing and able to walk and travel, and has been democratic, anarchical, anticlerical, and populist in tone—even linked to popular nationalism and millennialism. Protestant pilgrimage narratives, where ordained ministers make the trip and present it in predigested form for their congregations back home, appears quite different from the ancient Christian practice dating from the second century C.E. and from the customarily individualized pilgrimages of both Catholics and Muslims. "Honorary" pilgrimage, attempted through the purchase of a book, waters down and certainly tames the essence of the pilgrimage journey itself, for the journey has not physically been taken. This represents the centrality of the local pastor in American Protestant religious life. By the turn of the century, pilgrimage was often mediated by travel agencies

and church or denominational tours where contact with the sacred was less individual and more group-oriented, and also highly controlled. In this scenario, human freedom was not necessarily enhanced. Religious experience trickled down from the religious and social elites to the public through purchased books.

## PERIODIZATION

The periodization for this study falls between the years of 1865 and 1941. Pilgrimage narratives are the most popular and influential for the most part during the second half of the nineteenth century, although at times will draw from the years immediately before this period for background, including the important works of John Lloyd Stephens,<sup>30</sup> E. G. Robinson,<sup>31</sup> and Clorinda Minor,<sup>32</sup> to name a few, all of whom published in the antebellum period and herald the backdrop of the new era of Holy Land travel books. The pilgrimage narratives of Maltbie D. Babcock in 1902 and Henry Van Dyke in 1908 are in the center of the travel-narrative period before the dramatic development of Palestine after World War I. These years before World War I comprise the comparatively “quiet” years in the history of Palestine before the dramatic political events of the twentieth century. A new American imperialism emerged in the decades after the Civil War that was

more classically colonialist, in the sense of foreign land, people, and resources being controlled without being assimilated . . . national identity became increasingly solidified as the United States began rampant industrialization and the settlement of the West . . . the shift overseas was inevitable as the frontier began to close. As the balance shifted from an agrarian to industrial economy, importing and exporting to the far-flung world began to supercede the energies spent on developing Western farming or grazing lands.<sup>33</sup>

During the final decades of the nineteenth century the nation’s path was more clearly laid out and less insecure. There was an interest in viewing other nations or new frontiers in relationship to the United States. The years between World War I and World War II continue with similar themes and show how such strong opinions were formed among Protestants before the land became politicized with the developments of the post–World War II Zionist movement. After World War I, Palestine travel increasingly becomes a tourist commodity as opposed to a novelty fraught with danger or Oriental variation. Themes from both the Fundamentalist-Modernist theological controversy and the Dispensationalist movement are well represented in the travel narratives up until World War II.

The dates for this study have been carefully selected in order to show the intentional transformation of Palestine into a more Protestant and biblical Holy Land during the nineteenth century, a profoundly colonial era, in the most complete fashion. The date of 1865 is crucial for the opening up of the travel floodgates to Palestine. For the new American middle class, it was an area of fascination and a highly sought after pilgrimage site. There were many precursors to the post-Civil War influx of travelers and books. One was that of Union Seminary professor E. G. Robinson, who published his *Biblical Researches in Palestine in the Year of 1838* in several volumes. The *Researches* caused a stir among those American Protestants able to appreciate the trend that it would develop into and the intellectual currents within the newly introduced field of biblical archaeology and history that it signaled. Another precursor was John Lloyd Stephens's 1837 *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land*. This book helped to establish the popularity of the genre and was frequently republished over the next thirty-five years.

After the Civil War, however, many middle-class American Protestants begin to arrive in Palestine in droves, and it is the first period of this study, 1865 through the end of the nineteenth century, that sees the primary growth of the trends that occur in Palestine. The central portion of this study, after the turn of the century and the close of the First World War, is critical because it signals the end of the Ottoman era in Palestine, and the beginning of the British colonial occupation. Travel to Palestine becomes increasingly packaged and regulated into a tourist commodity. By 1917 the popularity of pilgrimage narratives begins a slow yet noticeable decline. Still, many Americans were not able to make the trip themselves. Also, after 1917, the period of the major growth and flourishing of Protestant establishment programs in Palestine has been well recognized and the popularity of the package tour begins to come into play—permanently changing the landscape of American Protestant pilgrimage to Palestine. The ending date of 1941 before the beginning of the events of World War II allows the book to set the stage for the striking changes about to occur in Holy Land tourism and provide as much background as possible for understanding the history of the trends in American Protestantism such as the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy and the Dispensationalist movement.

## OVERVIEW

American Protestant tourists have been traveling to the Holy Land in significant numbers since the middle of the nineteenth century and the invention of the steamship. In these pages, I will describe what the travels of the first



American Protestant pilgrims were like, why they came, and how they set the stage for later tourism. American readers at home consumed the narratives of travelers, creating a broad market for such accounts. These readers become honorary pilgrims in the process as they took imaginative mental tours of the Holy Land and were fed with rich imagery of Palestine. Such a widespread Christian social phenomenon had a political impact, especially in the area of contribution to the Zionist cause.

The Protestant tourist phenomenon is mainly limited to the middle and upper classes in the sense that such travels were costly and out of reach for many people. Due to the wide publication of travel narratives, however, it is safe to say that such narratives were read by a wide economic spectrum of Christians from many denominations, including the historic African American denominations such as the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, who sent Charles Walker, an influential nineteenth-century minister, to the Holy Land. Walker subsequently published a popular account of his journey. The predominance of Holy Land imagery in African American spirituals gives Israel/Palestine an equally important role among black churches. Therefore, the travel phenomenon cannot be said to be an exclusively white mainline Protestant or exclusively upper-class one.

In summary, this book will argue that resentfulness towards Arab control of Christian holy sites, alienation from the already established presence of historical Eastern Christian piety, the desire to achieve a satisfying pilgrim-tourist experience, and the increasing influence of millennialism caused American Protestants who visited the Holy Land during the nineteenth century to seek out programs that would create a more culturally familiar Protestant or biblical Holy Land that would fulfill desires and expectations created before the visit while still in America. These include the creation of parallel pilgrimage sites, the transformation of Arab peasants into biblical characters in pilgrimage narratives, and an increasing acceptance of the idea of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, in line with their diverse millennial and Zionist hopes. The question of how and why the American Protestants engaged the Holy Land to make it mold more closely to their religious desires, and how they accomplished this program, is the topic of this book.

The study also seeks to ferret out general trends in the transformative American Protestant emphasis or program in Palestine. While different denominational perspectives certainly inform the various approaches to Holy Land makeovers, it is useful for the purposes of this study to show the similarities in emphasis that all worked together to make the interpretation of the Holy Land more welcoming and amenable to the American Protestant pilgrim in part by the 1880s, and in a more compete sense by the end of World War I. I show that American Protestants built on a unique tradition of developing the out-of-doors and nature itself as a popular pilgrimage site.

## CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Chapter 2 outlines specific items that demonstrate a new interest in the East and provides evidence for this American fascination, along with travel patterns and a description of the most basic or common experience of pilgrims from the middle part of this study (1860–1900) and the initial impressions of many travelers to Palestine. Next, an exploration of the ambivalence or confusion experienced by pilgrims will set the stage for the Protestant attempts to culturally transform areas of Palestine discussed in future chapters into a place that meets the expectations created before leaving home.

These initial impressions of Palestine can be characterized as ambivalent for many reasons. First, I show how confusion resulted from the lack of similarity between the rococo, utopian nineteenth-century biblical illustrations of the Holy Land seen throughout childhood by many Protestants in America—and the actual reality of the Ottoman backwater that so often disappointed them. Second, Protestants tend towards an initial positive feeling about the Holy Land in their first impressions because of an emotional link to their childhood days and experience of the stories that relate to the land of Palestine; however, they also have heard and read in the New Testament of Palestine/Israel as the cursed land that killed Christ, including mention of specific cities such as Jerusalem or Capernaum.<sup>34</sup> The dichotomy between the utopian Bible illustrations and the idea of an afflicted land that killed Christ creates a form of disappointment and unmet expectation among pilgrims. This confusion is difficult to resolve, and Protestants adopt a number of new frameworks that allow them to interpret the seemingly incongruent sensory experience that bombards them.

Finally, contributing to the sense of bewilderment or ambivalence is the historical Protestant suspicion of shrines and memorials, and indeed the actual practice of pilgrimage as an expression of Christian piety. Creating another sense of tension in this regard, Protestants report “anti-scientific feelings” as well as the “defeat of modern enigmas.” On the one hand, they fear superstition and popery, while on the other, they find themselves in a particularly “nonrational” mood, newly interested in parsing the language of American pilgrimage experience.

Thus, chapter 2 explores the general bewilderment or ambivalence reported by many Protestants upon arriving in the Holy Land. The disorientation created a sense of frustration due to the widely held belief that Christ was “uniquely present” in the “speaking landscape,” yet the landscape did not deliver or speak any one, coherent message. Instead, a confusing jumble of multicultural experiences awaited Protestants, who then were faced with the task of constructing meaning out of the raw materials of Palestine. The difficulty of this task is revealed in the differentiated programs or methods

used to transform the Holy Land into something more credible or legible to the contemporary Protestant mind.

Chapter 3, “Protestants, Arabs, and Islam in the Holy Land,” explores the topic of the ways that American Protestants in Palestine viewed the local Arabs, and how these Arabs conveniently served the role of both creating confusion among Protestants and then alleviating it—in the encounters with Palestine described in the course of pilgrimage narratives. Like figures frozen in a miniature diorama, or even like figures based upon nineteenth-century Bible illustrations, unbeknownst to them, Palestinians often represented a fresh, living vision of the ancient world for Protestants. On the other hand, the occasional scorn of Arabs toward Christians along with their control of Christian holy sites at times elicited a response of anger, fear, or even violence. Finally, the treatment of women in Arab communities along with their comparative lack of technological advancement served as a rationale for viewing Arabs as nonhuman or nonpersons without basic individual rights.

Many pilgrims expressed the idea that history had stood still in Palestine due to its lack of contact with Western evolutionary development. Pilgrims could view Arabs as unchanged and living history, easily ignoring the dramatic political, social, and cultural changes that had swept across the Palestine landscape over two thousand years. The posited lack of development was thought to only enhance the grim views, or overall tourist experience, wherein one could view an unchanged landscape. Travelers who viewed dervishes and sword swallowing found Arabs frightening, strange, underdeveloped, or inferior. In addition, the “enhanced” secondary status of women in Palestine only widened and sharpened the cross-cultural exchange. Yet still some other pilgrimage authors described local Arab women in sensual, Oriental terms. Others were disappointed by the willingness of wealthy Arab women to wear Parisian fashions (this made them look less authentic). It was undecided whether the primitiveness of Palestine was despicable mismanagement, or picturesque historical scenery.

The local residents of Palestine provided Protestant pilgrims with a conundrum. Seeking a pleasant tourist-pilgrim experience, they wanted to see real Bible figures wandering the landscape engaged in biblical activities. However, the social and political ownership of the land and the sights often created anger and frustration. Seeking a new, primitive text to exegete in the land of Palestine, Protestant pilgrims found it necessary to suppress or ignore Turkish and Arab culture. Some then took the next step, describing Arabs as dirty, conniving, and benighted and proclaimed their damaged American national pride. Others carried guns, whips, and small security detachments in order to ward off any potential threats of property loss or to protect personal safety. In summary, American Protestants who were somewhat bewildered by Palestinian culture sought both to protect Arabs as useful, picturesque children, and to fear them as savage tribesmen and decry their horrible treat-

ment of Arab women. In the midst of this controversy, the presence and existence of the historical Arab Christian community was hardly noted at all.

Chapter 4, “American Protestant Zionism and Pilgrimage Narratives,” shows that many Protestants initially viewed the newly emerging idea of the entitlement of the Jews to the Holy Land with uncertainty, and only a few, isolated figures became early champions. Protestants were overall initially ambivalent about the role of the Jews in Palestine. At times, Protestants wrote of the Jews as Christ-killers who had inflicted the permanent curse of decide upon the land of Palestine, insisting that their punishment for their crime was ongoing. In this sense, the bedraggled inhabitants of Palestine and the general confusion and disarray provided a theatrical sense of a grand Jewish tragedy, an eerie sense of curse, and a biblical sense of the fulfillment of prophetic blight.

On the other hand, many Protestant pilgrim authors influenced by new millennial currents by the 1880s increasingly wrote that Palestine should be Israel, and that it should be Jewish, just as it was in the days of the Bible. This trend developed during the second half of the nineteenth century, and by the twentieth century, this was a quite common assessment among Protestants of various denominational backgrounds. In this case, the prophetic vision was forward looking, as opposed to the backward looking remembrance of past curses discussed above. The futuristic millennial hopes of many Protestants (whether gloomy or triumphant in nature) included some idea of the restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land in order to usher in the return of Christ. The early Zionism of figures such as Protestant W. E. Blackstone and Jewish leader Theodore Herzl in the 1880s gained increasing prestige and support until the time of the First World War, by which time they had achieved a broad base of confirmation.

While during the earlier period of Palestine pilgrimage among American Protestants there was confusion about the role of the Jews in Palestine, the political movements of the late nineteenth century garnered enough political support for a more widespread acceptance of Zionism as another way to make the Holy Land more Protestant and biblical. Therefore, the Jewish people served a purpose not unlike that of the Arabs outlined above, who provided rather wooden representations, as in a diorama, of ancient Bible figures. Jews would become living actors in the final millennial drama to be played out in Palestine. Bringing and encouraging Jewish settlement in the Holy Land would create a seeming fulfillment of biblical prophecy, especially among evangelicals who were often influenced in part by premillennial Dispensationalism.

Finally, chapter 5, “The Out-of-Doors Gospel in Palestine: Protestants Encounter Catholic and Orthodox Shrines and Create Their Own Traditions,” explores another area of Protestant ambivalence regarding Palestine that provided impetus for new programs of change and development there. When

Protestants visited the ancient shrines and pilgrimage sites of the Eastern Church, they often recoiled with mixed disgust, revulsion, and fear of idolatry at the unfamiliar traditions and forms of worship or veneration. The foreign expressions of devotion and reverence disappointed them, and one of the ways they dealt with this bewilderment or sense of foreignness in the Holy Land was to contrast the dual roles of “civilization” and “nature.” They insisted that the true Jerusalem or Holy Land was a spiritual one, while at the same time looking to nature as an iconic representation of the ancient biblical world.

While pilgrims reported that civilization’s corrupting influences and negative potential could be seen in the American context of the cities that were overrun by immigrants during the late nineteenth century, civilization as they understood it was also sorely lacking when Protestants began to travel to Palestine. They decried the evidence of its excesses found in the churches and shrines of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Churches. On the other hand, they also saw the shrines as “overcivilized” or overencumbered with excessive tradition departing from the Bible. In Palestine, even the simplest conveniences were often lacking, decreasing the ability to travel in luxury and comfort. Conversely, pilgrims expressed a sense of grief for the wild, natural Holy Land that was quickly disappearing before their eyes in the wake of the Ottoman modernization efforts of the late nineteenth century in Palestine—including a new railway system.

It was important to writers such as Henry Van Dyke to contrast Christ’s simple life in nature with that of immigrant children in the United States. T. DeWitt Talmage also used the jargon of “civilization” to add authority to his voice and vision in the Holy Land, claiming to be a civilized Anglo-Saxon man in a wild land, interpreting the land for other Anglo-Saxons. During the nineteenth century, the idea of civilization and empire moving west and culminating in the New World in contrast to Oriental degradation, decay, passivity, and deviance was a popular one.<sup>35</sup> Others lugged along serious scholarly tomes on their camel caravans, in order to make reference whenever possible to scholarship directly relating to the land. Philip Schaff found nature in the Holy Land to be delightfully impervious to the mismanagement of the Ottomans, as well as the “monkish traditions” of the idolaters who administered ancient, holy shrines in Palestine. Some urged pilgrims to “be another Luther” to all of the various superstitious people inhabiting Palestine. By the early twentieth century, pilgrim authors such as John Haynes Holmes began to notice and decry the large amounts of money the eastern Christians were taking as profits from Protestants at their sacred shrines. During the 1930s, Harry Emerson Fosdick claimed that the greed and idolatry of the Eastern Christians was still driving Protestants out-of-doors to seek Christ in nature. By the twentieth century, there was a general, organized call for missions to Eastern Christians, who were seen as locked in a double-bind:

they were religiously primitive in their faith, and overcivilized in the areas of ceremony, church architecture, and liturgy.

When American Protestants started to visit the Holy Land during the nineteenth century, they were confronted with an array of bewildering paradoxes and experienced a deep sense of foreignness in a place that was supposed to be their spiritual home. They did, however, adopt a number of carefully engineered responses to the problem, adapting the Holy Land in their writings to popular Protestant beliefs and expectations. While often deeply honest about their confusion, they also created images or pictures in writing to counterbalance the enigmatic problems. One of the most fascinating of these methods can be seen in the transformation of local Palestinian Arabs into biblical Jewish figures in the process of acting out Bible stories. Since Protestants who arrived in Palestine during the mid-nineteenth century were initially quite marginal in the sense that they had no basic land, property, or historical devotional claims there—they adopted multiple programs in order to gain a sense of a foothold in the Holy Land's diverse religious landscape.

This book outlines both the response of ambivalence or confusion, and the methods used to cope with it. Physical evidence shows that the initial reaction to the Ottoman backwater was a stark, disappointing contrast to the utopian, triumphant, and verdant Bible illustrations they viewed throughout childhood. Writers were faced with the difficult task of constructing meaning out of the raw materials of Palestine. Other physical evidence of Protestant programs can be found in writings about Protestant military and scholarly religious heroes, some of whom set up parallel sites geared towards Protestants in Palestine. Charles "Chinese" Gordon, General Edmund H. H. Allenby, T. E. Lawrence, and E. G. Robinson all contributed to a new Protestant ethos in Palestine. They created space, both spiritual and physical, in the Holy Land that allowed Protestants to begin to make a claim to their small, off-location Holy Land shrines and places in their own unique way.

Protestants carved opportunity out of the confusion by transforming local Arabs into biblical figures in the process of acting out Bible stories, like actors in a play. While often angry or dismayed at Arab control and ownership of Christian religious sites, they also condemned Arabs as dirty, benighted people whose mismanagement threatened the holiness and viability of the Holy Land. Many Protestants also became fascinated about the role of the Jews in Palestine. While there was initially little support for the idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, by the turn of the century, the idea had gained a popular foothold among many diverse Protestants, who wanted to make Palestine more biblical by filling it with living Jews who would act out the millennial drama of the last days. Still, some referred to the Jews as the killers of Christ, and to Palestine as an accursed land due to the death of Christ there. Either way, the growing acceptance of a dramatic millennial

story involving the Jewish people and Palestine can be seen through the course of this study. Finally, Protestants reserved special disgust and fear for the Eastern Christians and Roman Catholics, whose shrines and devotions seemed unusually foreign and thus often reprehensible to them. Coming from the context of the new urban poor in American cities during the second half of the nineteenth century, some American Protestants chose to reject these ancient Christian communities as “overcivilized” and to look for revelation in the Holy Land in the wild out-of-doors. The other Christians had an ancient presence in the Holy Land, while Protestants were relative newcomers.

## NOTES

1. Alexander Stille, “Globalization Now, a Sequel of Sorts,” *New York Times*, August 11, 2001, A16–A17. See also *Henry Bell Encyclopedia Britannica*, [www.britannica.com/eb/article?tocId=9015232](http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?tocId=9015232). The steamship was the most common mode of transportation after 1850 for Americans until airline travel took its place in the 1950s.
2. Kevin H. O’Rourke and Jeffrey G. Williamson, *Globalization and History: The Evolution of a Nineteenth Century Atlantic Economy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 1–4.
3. Roger B. Beck, Linda Black, Larry S. Drieger, Philip C. Naylor, and Dahia Ibo Shabka, *Modern World History: Patterns of Interaction* (Evanston: McDougal Littell, 2004), 302–26. “Allenby, Edmund Henry Hynman Allenby, 1st Viscount,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, [www.britannica.com/eb/article?tocId=9005796](http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?tocId=9005796).
4. J. Bradford DeLong, quoted in Stille, “Globalization Now,” A16.
5. Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, Vol. 2 (San Francisco: Harper, 1985), 244–46.
6. Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1972), 428.
7. See Daniel Oliver Morton, *Memoir of Rev. Levi Parsons: First Missionary to Palestine From the United States: Containing Sketches of His Early Life and Education, His Missionary Labors In this Country, In Asia Minor And Judea: With an Account of His Last Sickness and Death* (Hartford: Cooke & Co., 1830). Also see Alvan Bond, *Memoir of Pliny Fisk, A. M.: Late Missionary to Palestine* (New York: Crocker and Brewster, 1828).
8. Morton, *Memoir of Rev. Levi Parsons*. See also Bond, *Memoir of Pliny Fisk*.
9. E. G. Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, Vol. 3 (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1841), 464.
10. Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, Vol. 3, 464.
11. Anthony O’Mahoney, *The Christian Communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land: Studies in History, Religion, and Politics* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 5. Local Christians not on pilgrimage wore distinctive clothing and were prohibited against carrying arms and riding horses.
12. Lester I. Vogel, *To See a Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 127. “Palestine,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, [www.britannica.com/eb/article?tocId=45065](http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?tocId=45065).
13. Van A. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms* (New York: Collier Books, 1964), 151.
14. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 474–76.
15. A. Leland Jamison, “Religions on the American Perimeter,” in *The Shaping of American Religion*, eds. A. Leland Jamison and James Ward Smith (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 197–98. Qtd. in Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 476.

16. Jennifer Westwood, *Sacred Journeys* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1997), 12–15.
17. Bryan Wilson, “New Images of Christian Community,” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*, ed. John McManners (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1992), 589.
18. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition* (Springfield: Merriam-Webster Inc, 2006).
19. John Kirtland Wright, *Human Nature in Geography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).
20. Yi-Fu Tuan, “Geopiety: A Theme in Man’s Attachment to Nature and Place,” in *Geographies of the Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).
21. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969). Victor and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978). Victor Turner, *Process, Performance, and Pilgrimage: A Study in Comparative Symbolology* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1979). For more on the rejection of the Western worldviews on magical practices, see *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) by Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah.
22. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc., 1959), 183–84.
23. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 37.
24. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 33.
25. Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996). Burke O. Long, *Imagining the Holy Land: Maps, Models and Fantasy Travels* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).
26. Virginia Brereton, “Sacred Spaces in Chicago,” address at the American Society of Church History annual meeting, 2003.
27. There are a few exceptions if one defines the genre more broadly. One is a much longer series of volumes, such as in the case of E. G. Robinson’s more scholarly *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, and the lengthy Palestine Journals of Frances Willard, which have never been published. I chose to include her Palestine Journals for multiple reasons—one of which is the fact that they provide another female voice. While many of the pilgrimages are written by men, it was not too difficult to find a half dozen penned by women. On the shorter side of the genre, Blackstone’s 1892 Christian Zionist and millenialist tract “Jesus is Coming” is under fifty pages.
28. Sperber discusses popular pilgrimage in the context of the empowerment of the laity apart from the official church, and the experience of revivals among common people such as artisans and bourgeoisie—often to the dismay of priests who concurrently reported lowered church attendance. One nineteenth-century priest describes a mass of pilgrims at a popular Dutch shrine: “In addition to all these problems, there is the annoying mish-mash, at least in Kevelaer. In one place, people are chattering away, in another they are praying—in Dutch, or, a few steps away, in German. In one spot people are singing, in another they are wailing. While all this is going on, things are being sold or traded, people are drinking and eating, etc.”
- This excerpt from a frustrated priest concerned with bringing order to religious practice at a pilgrim’s shrine illuminates the festive, often communal atmosphere of popular Catholic pilgrimage. Furthermore, frustrated parents and community leaders near Kevelaer complained that their young adult children begged incessantly to go on pilgrimages and frequently gathered at the unruly sites. By the mid-nineteenth century, Prussian bureaucrats, “the self-styled architects of economic growth and rational social structure,” organized active political opposition to pilgrimage as an archaic practice that was harmful to economic development. Calculating leaders sought to liaison with priests in order to lump together processions and pilgrimages and to confine them to Sundays when no one was working.
29. For Victor and Edith Turner, themselves frequent Catholic pilgrims, the control of pilgrimage by clergy represents the omnipresent attempts of religious specialists to domesticate the primitive because manifestations of *communitas* are potentially subversive and threatening to clerical status and orderliness. Clerics have historically sought to transform pilgrimage into a neater phenomenon that is more susceptible to ecclesiastical control. Western pilgrimage has become more solemn in tone and is often effectively mediated by travel agencies which provide



tour guides with a commercial goal in mind. As this transformation of pilgrimage has occurred, the promises of liminal experiences are no longer necessarily available, no matter how much they are promised or advertised. The liminoid or playful, communal element of pilgrimage is attractive because it promises a release from mundane structure and a homogenization of status among pilgrims, in addition to a release from ordinary time. The liminoid resembles, without being identical to, the liminal. It is an independent domain of creative activity and is associated with anti-structure and can “generate and store a plurality of alternative models for living, from utopias to programs, which are capable of influencing the behavior of those in mainstream social and political roles” (Turner).

30. John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land*, ed. Victor Wolfgang von Hagen (New York: Harper, 1837).

31. Clorinda Minor, *Meshullam! Or, Tidings From Jerusalem From the Journal of A Believer Recently Returned from the Holy Land* (1849; 2nd edition published by author, 1851; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1977).

32. E. G. Robinson and E. Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mt. Sinai, and Arabia Petraea: A Journal of Travels in the Year 1838 Volumes I–III* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1841).

33. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms*, 26.

34. A few examples of biblical curses of specific geographical locations include: Jeremiah 13:27: “I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, [and] thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when [shall it] once [be]?” Daniel 9:11: “Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that [is] written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.” Matthew 11:23: “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.” Luke 10:15: “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.”

35. Malini Johar Schueller, *U.S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature 1790–1890* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 2.

## *Chapter Two*

# **American Protestants and Palestine**

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Palestine began to play a new role in American society, particularly among Protestants. It moved from being a classic, artistic image in utopian Bible illustrations to being a geographical mythology which bore the political and millennial hopes of many by the turn of the century. This chapter will provide background evidence for a culture-wide fascination with the East, as well as a Protestant attraction through high fashion, consumer culture, World's Fair exhibits, Sunday school trends, the changing functions of maps, and the rise of departments of Ancient Near Eastern Studies in universities. Also discussed is the role of the parlor Bible and of Bible illustrations, the stereoscope, popular literature, the Lyceum circuit, print and tract culture, and a case study of the sensationalization of one tour by Protestant lion T. DeWitt Talmage, as well as the role of Palestine in the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy. Following this broad sweep is a history of Protestant pilgrimage in Palestine, starting in the 1840s, through the advent of the package tour in the 1890s. The final section of the chapter discusses Protestant impressions of Palestine, including the role of personal doubt, and the danger of idolatry.

Many factors—the popularization of steamship travel in the 1840s, the relative stability of Palestine after the Crimean War (1853–1856), prosperity in America, the emergence of new ideals of individual independence by President Andrew Jackson in the 1830s<sup>1</sup>—created a hospitable climate for travel during the middle of the nineteenth century. Many mid-nineteenth-century U.S. citizens were concerned with noncontinental, non-European realms and the archive of travel literatures is “staggeringly immense.”<sup>2</sup> By the second half of that century, middle-class lay people in increasing numbers, as well as wealthier public figures such as politicians, generals, and authors, made pilgrimages to Palestine that would have previously been im-

possible.<sup>3</sup> Among Protestants there was particular interest, evidenced by the publication of at least five hundred different pilgrimage narratives between 1850 and 1917.<sup>4</sup> A study of popular culture in America during the second half of the nineteenth century shows a particular area of growth in pilgrimage travel to the Holy Land.

Emotional attachment to the Holy Land seems something of a contradiction, since Americans are thought to have had no strong bond to “place” at that time, as evidenced by the national saga of Western migration during the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Yet American Protestants grew to love visiting Palestine, whether going themselves or reading about it vicariously in books. During the 1850s and 1860s, those who wanted a greater understanding of physical particulars sought information by studying parlor Bibles. By the turn of the century, however, Palestine had taken on a life of its own, having become a geographical myth that bore the symbolic weight of Protestant millennial hopes, dreams of Jewish resettlement, and reassurances in the light of higher criticism of the Bible.

## PALESTINE IN POPULAR AND ELITE AMERICAN CULTURE

During the nineteenth century, overseas travel began to signal both prestige and a thoughtful and well-rounded education, for it brought an awareness of the world beyond the limitations of North America. One fashionable New Yorker noted as early as 1828 that every member of his large dinner party had been overseas.<sup>6</sup> Some nineteenth-century travel centered, of course, on intellectual and artistic Europe, but, in addition to European travel a new interest developed in traveling to countries in the Near and Far East. Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933), son of the founder of Tiffany & Co., spent his younger years traveling extensively throughout the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and North Africa. His first experiments in stained glass began after his 1870 travels and feature “exotic motifs of the Near and Far East” that popularized the natural sights he had witnessed abroad. Tiffany’s glasswork is an expression of the broad quest to depict and understand the Levant.<sup>7</sup>

Reflecting a similar passion for the East, entertainment pioneer P. T. Barnum (1810–1891) designed his estate “Iranistan” in Bridgeport, Connecticut, as an oriental villa which evoked the mysterious East, a region of the world associated with luxury and permissiveness, and John and Mabel Ringling christened their Moorish Sarasota estate “Ca d’ Zan” in 1910.<sup>8</sup> At his oriental palace, Barnum hosted such notables as Horace Greeley, Matthew Arnold, and Henry James. The lavish and elegant Tampa Bay Hotel, built in the Moorish Revival style, opened in 1891 and was the southern outpost for the wealthy elite in winter during the 1890s. Newspapers in 1891 reported

that the ornate hotel was “brightly illuminated, filled with sumptuous decorations, thrilling music, and graced with turrets, domes, and minarets towering heavenward and glistening in the sun.”<sup>9</sup>

While many people were interested in the East as a whole, Protestants in particular became focused upon Palestine because of its relationship with the Bible. One Protestant leader, the elegant and cultured president of Wellesley College, Caroline Hazard, reflected in her Palestine pilgrimage narrative in 1908 that “Wellesley ought to be a better college because its president has been on a [Holy Land] pilgrimage.”<sup>10</sup> By the turn of the century, Palestine was a newly important site for American Protestants, among both the elite and the popular audiences.

### Overseas Travel

Such pilgrimages had an air of the traditional, elegant, pedagogical “Grand Tour,” as experience beyond the limitations of North America signaled thoughtfulness, worldliness, and prestige. Conscientious travelers devoured guidebooks and novels of place even before departure, in order to understand how to see the sights, and wrote their own travel literature with similar themes.<sup>11</sup> Mark Twain pointed out the genre’s conformity in his travel narrative, *Innocents Abroad* (1869), noting that Americans often habitually trusted the perceptions of others more than their own.

In some cases, travel gave the romantic writer of the nineteenth century an illusion of flight from self. The theme of the writer as a wanderer is, of course, ancient, perhaps beginning with Homer’s *Odyssey*. It was a popular theme among American Protestants, for whom Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* was a touchstone during this period. Early missionary to Palestine Pliny Fisk wrote that his passage to Jerusalem was only a metaphor for the greater pilgrimage of the ending of a Christian life.<sup>12</sup> Those who could not travel themselves in actuality could read about the travels of others, and still receive the benefit of “permanent and radical influences on health, morals, and politics.”<sup>13</sup>

## VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE HOLY LAND

### Duplicate Holy Land Sites in America

Further evidencing the new Palestine trend, “Palestine Park” at Chautauqua, New York, was a half-acre tract of land outfitted in 1874 with a scaled Jordan River, Galilee, and Jerusalem, allowing visitors to stroll symbolically through the land of the Bible—sometimes even decked out in what was simply called “oriental.” Here, the features of the Land of the Bible were set

up in an area about 75 feet wide by 120 feet long for purposes of education, but they also served as a venue sometimes for special events.<sup>14</sup> Later, a small-scale city of Jerusalem was “the hit of the fair” at the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair. Madame Lydia Mamreoff von Finkelstien Mountford, “an elocutionist and fantasist of biblical life,” spoke at the groundbreaking ceremonies of the exhibit to a spellbound crowd.<sup>15</sup> Part of her presentation included demonstrations and explanations of various religious practices in the ancient world. Madame Mountford exclaimed, “You cannot go to Jerusalem, so Jerusalem comes to you. To American energy all things are possible!”<sup>16</sup> This sensational exhibit drew a large, fascinated audience eager to catch a glimpse of the culture of the exotic East and to link it to Bible stories and scenes they knew by heart.

### **From Illustrated Bibles to Sunday School**

The large, illustrated parlor Bible was an anchoring social symbol for most middle-class Protestant Americans by the middle of the nineteenth century. With Palestine pilgrimage, a shift appears in the way Bibles were published, appreciated, and read in the home, so that later, educational Sunday School movements and Bibles included maps, charts, and information about customs in the Near East where before there had only been artful scenes and illustrations. Scientific methods, cartography, and map use in Bibles afforded a sense of intellectual thoughtfulness and access to exclusive learning as well as the prestige of historicity. Colleen McDannell writes:

For most of America’s history, the Christian Bible was not merely the writings from the Old and New Testaments. During the nineteenth century, the Bible became the center of a material Protestantism that depended on the physical senses to produce religious emotion.<sup>17</sup>

Awash in a sea of mass-produced nineteenth-century parlor Bibles, of which the peak years were 1810–1870, Americans of all stripes were steeped in “affectionate religion and domestic sentimentality.”<sup>18</sup> Most significantly for this study, American Protestant Bibles included lavish, Edenic illustrations of Bible stories and events in Palestine, depicted against a backdrop of the Promised Land dripping with floral scenes, costuming, milk, and honey. In some instances, actual texts of Scripture itself became almost secondary to the “illustrated Bible dictionaries, treatises on ancient coins (and gems, trees, plants, flowers, manners, and customs), illuminated parables and the Lord’s prayer, and chronologies.”<sup>19</sup> Victorian housewives used Bible illustrations as inspiration for household decoration, reproducing the familiar etchings in needlepoint. Representations of the Holy Land were thus commonly and widely available during the mid-nineteenth-century period. By the end of the century, “people sang sentimental songs about Galilee and Jerusalem, they

bought expensive wooden cabinets filled with Holy Land memorabilia; they attended elaborately staged fantasies of biblical story and custom.”<sup>20</sup>

It is of particular interest to note the origin of many of these Protestant Bible illustrations. One of the most popular illustrators was Paris-based Gustave Doré (1832?–1883), a French Catholic artist who “drew the reader into a fairytale land of mighty pharaohs, seductive women, and powerful redeemers.” Doré was one of the most successful printmakers of his time, and his exuberant and “bizarre” fantasies of biblical and classical stories created dreamlike scenes that were widely emulated. The “drama, pathos, and detailed characters engaged the viewer emotionally and permitted the opening up of the religious imagination.”<sup>21</sup> Religious imaginations of American Protestants were thus inspired by illustrations designed by a French Catholic who had a “naïve but highly spirited love of the grotesque.” Such pictures formed their expectations regarding the Holy Land and created powerful impressions that many would carry on pilgrimage.<sup>22</sup>

Mid-century Victorians preferred fantasy-rich, ornate illustrations, but during the 1890s a broad effort arose, spearheaded by William Rainey Harper (1856–1906), Hebraist and the first president of the University of Chicago, that would make Sunday School genuinely educational, even to the extent of including student terms and examinations.<sup>23</sup> For the first time, towards the end of the nineteenth century, church school classrooms posted freshly updated maps and images of geographical Palestine, further focusing attention upon the East. Some depicted idealized representations of Christian biblical events, but these were now of local American and Protestant rather than French origin, and portrayed Christianity as a historical and geographical religion based in the ancient cultures of Palestine, increasingly employing more scientific information.

Perhaps the most dramatic change can be seen in the Bibles of American Protestants themselves at the end of the nineteenth century. The elaborate illustrations from France disappeared and were replaced by maps of Palestine, actual photographs, historical charts, and a greater sense of realism—a reformation of the visual senses founded upon travel, observation of Palestine, and the new biblical sciences. When Frances Willard went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land she saw something remarkable. It was a rare curiosity that she desperately wanted to purchase for her mother but could not afford—“such a Bible”—a “Testament . . . with photographs of Jerusalem.”<sup>24</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, similar Bibles with photographs could be purchased in America. They were highly sought after for their educational components based in science, and their clear connections to the Holy Land.

According to Bruce Harvey, geography enjoyed comparatively heightened prestige in the nineteenth century, and from early on the youngest children were schooled in facts and maps about the larger world outside of America. One geography textbook author wrote that “no other science tends

so much to enlighten and improve the mind as well as to enlarge the understanding.”<sup>25</sup> By the end of the century, geography had found a place in the Bible itself, as Palestine pilgrims depicted it as the Holy Land bearing the hopes and dreams for the American Protestant future. As maps appear in Bibles, they function as title deeds for American Protestants, signifiers of their ownership of the ancient Promised Land. American Protestant Bibles did not only contain records of births, weddings, and deaths, but also tucked inside were important family papers. When Holy Land maps appear, they signify a larger shift in understanding, a new way of life.

Yet the floral depictions and sentimentalism endured in Sunday morning Protestantism, albeit in a lesser form, outside of the Bible itself. When Maltbie D. Babcock, a Presbyterian pastor and hymn writer, traveled to Palestine in 1900, he sent four hundred cards adorned with botanical drawings of the flowers of Palestine to Sunday School children in the United States, and many of these drawings ended up framed and cherished. This generous gesture was regarded with respectful awe by churchgoers fascinated with the magic of Palestine and eager to have their children learn its natural history.<sup>26</sup> The gesture became all the more meaningful when Babcock became ill with brucellosis (also called Mediterranean fever) while on pilgrimage and died tragically at the age of forty-three in Naples, Italy in 1901, leaving his church without a pastor. Sentimental florals and depictions were still cherished among American Protestants, but by the end of the nineteenth century they had disappeared from the Bible itself, replaced by maps and more scientifically accurate images, deeds pointing to both the actuality and the future of the physical Holy Land. These Palestine maps and charts rested alongside critical family records and papers in American Protestant Bibles, sealing an invisible covenant of the heart, a connection to a faraway place as a biblical home.

### **Images of the Holy Land through Stereoscopes**

Additional evidence of the sudden new educational interest in realistic portrayals of Palestine appears after 1860, when the parlor pictograph viewer became popular. It provided touched-up, idealized photographic landscape views with a light, instructive commentary. These stereoscopes were first introduced in 1851 at the Crystal Palace Great Exhibition in London to a fascinated crowd that included Queen Victoria, and by 1860 mechanical viewers were found on tables in most American parlors. Sharing views of foreign places, especially the Holy Land, was a highly popular pastime. People wanted to access informed knowledge through experts, and the medium of photography enabled them to do this.

Controversy over the roles of science and religion emerged in connection with the stereoscope just as it did with archaeology.<sup>27</sup> Jesse Lyman Hurlbut,

a well-known teacher-preacher, and Charles Foster Kent of Yale University, an expert in the history of the Hebrew people, published a particularly popular stereoscope tour of the Holy Land in 1900. In his stereoscope commentary, Kent, who fought to place the Bible under the same scrutiny accorded the natural sciences, referred to Palestine as the “fifth gospel” and urged viewers to “go back in imagination from the ignoble present of this land into its mighty past.”<sup>28</sup> Visual media, whether in the form of parks, lavish illustrations, maps or pictures, fed the fires of the new Palestine trend.

## SCIENCE AND THE HOLY LAND NOVEL

### **Archaeology**

The second half of the nineteenth century also saw university departments beginning to accept archaeology as a discipline, which opened the way for discussions on the relationship between science and faith. Biblical scholars such as E. G. Robinson (1794–1863) began excavations as early as the 1840s. The application of science to the geography and history of the land lent prestige to biblical studies, but archaeology did not become clearly defined and rooted in American university culture until the 1880s.

The rise of departments of Ancient Near Eastern Studies in America from 1880 to 1920 demonstrates the ongoing conflict between the sacred and the secular in American universities. Would university-funded expeditions focus upon non-Christian cultures, such as Egypt or Mesopotamia, or would they use time and money to search for biblical origins in Palestine? In 1889, American scholars contrasted the transience of non-Christian ancient spirituality with the eternal truths of the Protestant Bible, while in the first half of the nineteenth century, explorers had attempted to draw connections between the Greco-Roman world and the Judeo-Christian one.<sup>29</sup>

As the sciences took on a transcendent value previously available only to religion, and as religion lost prestige in university departments, W. F. Albright, the Midwestern son of American missionaries, emerged as a scientist who would popularize the biblical past. He quickly became a hero to religiously inclined students by applying science to Palestinian archaeology, so that “his work and intelligence threatened to make the study of Egypt and Mesopotamia orbit around that of the Holy Land.”<sup>30</sup>

Early expedition-oriented scholars of the East also gained fame and heroic status. They exemplified a “style of male aggressiveness” and scholarly bravado that was marked by wearing khaki clothing (first introduced among British troops in Afghanistan in the 1850s) and embarking on lengthy and dangerous overseas voyages in search of a mysterious yet scientific past.<sup>31</sup> This “manly” attitude of “muscular Christianity” both contributed to and



reflected an overall tone common among visitors to the Holy Land. At the turn of the century, “manliness was not something intrinsic to all men . . . instead (it) was a standard to live up to, an ideal of male perfectibility to be achieved,” frequently linked to ideologies of civilization.<sup>32</sup>

Maria Susanna Cummins’s 1860 novel, *El Fureidis*, had used the Middle Eastern setting to radically reconfigure traditional gender roles of her time, allowing her heroine an educated Oriental upbringing and a more active and intelligent role than Victorian New England society would have allowed.<sup>33</sup> This thwarts the male “hero as explorer and sole interpreter of the Orient” role of her romantic interest, an Englishman who is “overwhelmed by the language and culture of the Near Eastern Orient.”<sup>34</sup> Havilah, the heroine, is gifted in music, modern languages, scholarly pursuits, and has sophisticated sensibilities in the area of religion. Her giftedness is a “comment upon the limitations imposed upon womanhood in the United States.”<sup>35</sup>

The Oriental-born Havilah (ethnically American and Greek) originally rejects the Englishman Meredith because the Holy Land is for warm, faithful love, not only the scholar’s cold faith in Scripture. The Englishman’s faith is “hollow at the core, the spirit is not linked to the Highest.”<sup>36</sup> Meredith wins Havilah’s love in the end, and it is acknowledged that the Englishman brings both ideas for sensible engineering improvements and the money to bring them about. Furthermore, in Meredith “the people have found a surer banker, a more faithful friend” to the poor than the local money lender.<sup>37</sup> In the marriage between Havilah and Meredith, or East and West, the Protestant West is shown to bring thrift, hard work, engineering, and fairer financial dealings. The East brings warmth, sunshine, history, and a new Oriental perspective linked to the biblical past.

### **John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* and Pilgrimage Narratives**

From the Revolutionary War to the Civil War, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* was one of the most widely read books in America.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the idea of pilgrimage stood to become a familiar one among American Protestants in a new way. *Pilgrim’s Progress* is “an acute drama of paralysis, at once intimate and cosmic, a crisis of stasis . . . the lonely drama of the individual soul on its hazardous journey heavenward.”<sup>39</sup> Bunyan’s Puritan epic highlights the soul’s introspection and demonstrates that life is a journey towards a goal. In places, Bunyan conflates the actual rebuilding of ancient Jerusalem’s altar with both Ezekiel and St. John the Divine’s millennial visions.<sup>40</sup> During the first half of the nineteenth century, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* remained a “live-ly best seller,” appealing to the “lonely reader of the Bible passionately seeking salvation,” but it quickly fell out of fashion after the Civil War, in many cases supplanted or replaced by the new Palestine pilgrimage narratives.<sup>41</sup> Yet reading Bunyan allowed ideas of literal pilgrimage to develop

among American Protestants who had been schooled to think of themselves as pilgrims on a journey.

Numerous attempts to improve on and imitate *The Pilgrim's Progress*, mostly by theological conservatives, addressed an audience nurtured on Bunyan, attacking Deism, Unitarianism, and other free-thinking ideologies.<sup>42</sup> In one, Christian encounters a figure named "Literal" who wants to introduce him to his friend "Rational." Later on, Christian meets "Mr. Church Patronage: a man of Great Stature and Increasing Bulk" and also "Mr. Christian Abolitionist."<sup>43</sup> One imitator described the land of California as a "New Jerusalem" for those moving West, but warned of the city of "San Fastopolis" (San Francisco), a place thought to need a "cleansing apocalyptic fire."<sup>44</sup> Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1843 *Celestial Railroad* falls within this genre. In Mark Twain's version, *Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrim's Progress*, the change that came after the Civil War is signified, as moralistic Presbyterians on Clemens' ship are humorously ridiculed as a part of the entertaining travel commentary.

Still one more writer, Cheevers, composed yet another "pilgrim's progress" in answer to Clemens' during the twilight of Bunyan's influence (or, the dawning of an era of more literal pilgrims) after the Civil War. In his version the pilgrims meet a pleasure yacht skippered by one "Captain Glib." The yacht itself was built in the country of "Liberal Christianity." Its first mate is "Deism," its helmsman "Mr. Man's Wisdom," its second mate "Plausible," and its crew made up of men like "Surface," "Tradition," "Anything," and "Prejudice."<sup>45</sup>

Before the Civil War, Bunyan's work was an oracle, and no one questioned its importance. After the Civil War, however, Bunyan's work was often ridiculed, misunderstood, or had its meaning reversed. As American Protestants began to compose pilgrimage narratives, they sought to fill a void, both physical and mental, left by the new public social disregard for Bunyan after the Civil War. The pilgrimage was no longer only a spiritual one—Americans newly sought the geographical East as a Protestant Holy Land.

## Popular Novels and Travel Narratives

Popular novels and travel narratives of Palestine after the Civil War also demonstrate the increasing popularity of actually visiting the Holy Land. In these works, sacred geography takes on mythic proportions, becomes a stage for human actors, or an expression of the political and millennial hopes of many. As the "fifth gospel," Palestine was thought to provide access to previously inaccessible truths and serve as the vehicle to future millennial hopes. No longer a frozen image, popular novels and travel narratives of Palestine from home and abroad provided an interesting sacred stage for

humor and dramatic human interactions. Mark Twain's travel narrative *Innocents Abroad* (1869), George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876), Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur* (1880), and many others show a new popular interest in a Palestine that was no longer the classic artist's image of the parlor Bible. By 1870, *Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrim's Progress* by Mark Twain was selling seven thousand copies per month.

Twain's breakout bestseller and first travel narrative, *Innocents Abroad, Or The New Pilgrim's Progress*, satirizes prominent American pilgrims to the Holy Land who relied too heavily upon guidebooks rather than their own faculties, and emphasizes America's new focus on the future rather than the past in the new era of tourism after the Civil War. Interspersed with humorous commentary on American travelers themselves are passages that give history, statistics, and fresh social observation, together with Twain's reactions. Such travel narratives may also have been especially popular during the nineteenth century due to lingering Puritan disapproval for the novel genre.<sup>46</sup> Twain's travel narrative mocked his fawning countrymen who traveled to genuflect before the old masters and shrines, writing at times with more critical scrutiny of his fellow passengers, the "Innocents," than of the pilgrim sites themselves.<sup>47</sup> Turning his gaze upon travelers as well as the physical, descriptive information of the travel site was an innovative, fresh approach. Additionally, where "romantic reveries" and "raptures" were an established popular travel narrative convention, Twain balanced his with "shrewd cynicism."<sup>48</sup> He also entertains with outlandish mockery of excessive sentimentalism, when he weeps at the tomb of his "poor dead relative," Adam.<sup>49</sup>

Another popular book set in the East was *Ben Hur*. Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur* tells the story of a young patrician named Judah Ben Hur who lived during the time of Jesus's life. A Native Palestinian, Ben Hur eventually triumphs through the intervention of Jesus and by his own persistence. Maria Susanna Cummin's popular novel, *El Fureidis* (1860), tells of a love story between a male archaeologist and a missionary woman on the new frontier of the East. One common thread in some of these tales is Judaism or Islam and Christianity meeting in Palestine, whether through love and marriage or through Jewish conversion to Christianity or the reverse. Of the genre "Puritan Zionism," some of these novels typically juxtapose race and Protestant identity with longing for a utopian (or millennial) unified Protestant-Jewish Holy Land.

Much popular Holy Land literature from this period is characterized by earnestness, respectability, and evangelicalism,<sup>50</sup> but some audiences were titillated by the novels of writers like Rider Haggard, Edgar Saltus, and J. K. Huysmans, devouring their tales of sexual adventure set in the steamy East. This Orientalist fiction fell into the genre of the erotic thriller set in the Levant.<sup>51</sup> Yet the mainstream American writer Robert Hichens was among

the most popular respected novelists at the turn of the century. He wrote best-selling *The Garden of Allah* (1898), *The Spell of Egypt* (1908), and *The Holy Land* (1910), and was so well received that two of his novels were made into plays and later into movies. Everyone, it seemed, wanted to go East, even if it was only from their armchairs.

Imaginative knowledge of the East and of American self-identity in relationship to foreign lands was a marker of education and prestige. "Twain masterfully illustrated how the new American, the tourist, should function in the new age."<sup>52</sup> *Innocents Abroad* was a watershed because it marks the beginning of the new tourist age as an elaborate "picnic on a gigantic scale."<sup>53</sup> In Palestine, the expectation-versus-reality theme is a recurring discussion. Twain notes that Galilee is best viewed at night, and Damascus from a distant mountain. For Twain, the present is an irrelevant nuisance for the contemporary Holy Land pilgrim, who seeks imagination and faith rather than plain, honest observation.<sup>54</sup> Celebrating the impostures of touristic faith, the readers can immerse themselves in imagination and memory, their preconceived notions as opposed to the blemishes of reality.

### The Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy

Palestine became a stage for theological battles at home. A trip to the Holy Land was thought by many to affirm traditional Protestant piety. A 1905 pilgrim wrote that, while walking through the Holy Sepulcher, "at every step, the conviction is driven home that after all of the modern wrangling and disputing the old tradition stands immovable."<sup>55</sup> For some, the Holy Land pilgrimage acted as a bulwark against the opposing extremes of Modernism and Fundamentalism.

Though modern disputes raged on, many writers thought that the Holy Land would remain the same, just like Christian faith. It was a bulwark against Modernism or "the conscious intended adaptation of religious ideas to modern culture,"<sup>56</sup> and one might expect liberals to eschew such pilgrimages; instead, they delighted in applying modern scientific methods to the geographical study of Palestine, adapting it to their own needs and concerns.

Holy Land pilgrimage narratives reveal that regardless of whether one believed that God was immanent in human cultural development or that human society was moving towards realization, Palestine could provide an affirmation of theological beliefs. Additionally and perhaps more importantly, both groups vigorously affirmed political Zionism after the turn of the century, with only a few notable exceptions. Conservatives often embraced Zionism because they employed it for interpretation of current events in light of a Christian framework emphasizing popular millennialism. Many liberals also adopted Zionism subsequent to adopting Modernism, and they came to see it as a progressive social program that advanced human culture and

allowed them to renounce long-standing categories of “religious” and “secular.”

### Pilgrimage Narratives

All of these cultural phenomena provide the backdrop for Protestant Palestine pilgrimage narratives. Pilgrimage narratives by popular American Protestant ministers provide a unique window into the role of Palestine in Protestant consciousness. One part of a much larger culture-wide fascination with Palestine and the Levant, these narratives were written by an array of Protestants whose different denominational backgrounds demonstrate the ubiquity of Holy Land mania. These authors include WCTU founder Frances Willard (1870), Episcopal church historian Philip Schaff (1878), African American Baptist Charles T. Walker, “The Black Spurgeon” (1891), premillennial dispensationalist William E. Blackstone (1892), evangelical Congregationalist Dwight L. Moody (1890), popular orthodox Presbyterian minister, Princeton University professor, and popular novelist Henry Van Dyke (1908), and liberal Episcopalian Phillips Brooks (1915). These prominent Protestants are just a few; in fact, several hundred books on the subject were published between the end of the Civil War and World War I. The myths of Palestine, Jews, and Arab natives that these accounts contained would persist in American Protestant culture well into the twentieth century.

The uniquely Protestant interpretation of the Holy Land offered by these narratives can be identified through the common use of the term, the “fifth gospel,” a nomenclature that came into use after the Civil War. Setting the early stage for this trend, in 1838 E. G. Robinson wrote that the “Holy Land would provide a tangible, empirical counterpart to the infallible text of the Bible.”<sup>57</sup> No longer a classic, frozen, artistic image, the Holy Land was to become an addition to the idea of a “deposit of truth” found in the Bible—an immediate, material, scientific revelation of divine truth. The “fifth gospel” (i.e., the Holy Land) became a way to skip centuries of ecclesiastical corruption and excess (a crucial theme for Protestantism) to return to the basic, original, and undeniable truths of the Gospel, and at the same time make use of the prestigious sciences of cartography, archaeology, history, and photography. Open skepticism of church tradition, along with the application of modern science, was an expression of intense Protestant piety, not one of doubt. Placed alongside the Bible, or perhaps “inside” the Bible as an addition, Palestine began to focus American millennialism. Palestine maps begin to show up in Protestant Bibles. The Holy Land is elevated to the high status of Scripture in the Protestant faith.

## Zionism

Pilgrimage narratives played a key role in introducing ideas of Zionism to American Protestants, many of whom began to see a unique millennial role for the Holy Land, focusing the role of the Jewish people at the end of history. In the late 1830s and 1840s, the group of ideas that later became Zionism were virtually unheard of among Protestants, but by the turn of the century, most are its clear proponents. There was a significant liberal group who opposed Zionism at the turn of the century, but after World War I even liberals such as Harry Emerson Fosdick and John Haynes Holmes spoke out for Zionism in pilgrimage narratives.<sup>58</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth century, the American Jewish population expanded dramatically, primarily in New York City. This led to a greater sense of Zionism throughout the United States by the first decade of the twentieth century as an answer to the problems raised by overcrowding and poverty in ghettos. For turn-of-the-century immigrant Jews, longing for the Holy Land was linked to a romantic, idealized remembrance of the lost *shtetl*, or village.<sup>59</sup>

Many Jewish groups were initially ambivalent regarding the Zionist movement. "Labor leaders and socialists regarded Zionism as bourgeois, escapist, romantic, and chauvinistic. Orthodox leaders saw it as a secularist misunderstanding of Jewish hope."<sup>60</sup> Young, fresh Jewish minds at the turn of the century, however, saw things differently. As the forces of secularization attracted second-generation Jews, secular Zionism became an attractive option in the inhospitable context of anti-Semitism and nativistic organizations that had originated in America in the 1870s and flourished into the new century. While Zionism and hope for return to the Holy Land has arguably been an intrinsic element of Jewish religious practice for some time, serious political maneuvering for the colonization of Palestine was born in the second half of the nineteenth century (in the context of vicious anti-Semitism) by Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), who I will later show, worked in the American context as well as the European one. Influenced by liberal social thinking, the celebrated brave young utopian agrarians spearheading the kibbutz movement began to emigrate to Palestine. At its beginnings, Zionism was an idealistic, romantic movement with a socialist heart that drew youthful, optimistic Jews to Palestine to farm and to build microcosms of a great Jewish society. Palestine was thought of as available for newcomers—a "land without a people."

Zionism provided prominent roles for young women, giving them visibility and a clear revolutionary role.<sup>61</sup> Differing from many late-Victorian colonists, young Jews believed they were making a contact with God in their ancient ethnic homeland with the catchphrase from the beginnings of Zionism—"a land without a people for a people without a land." Zionism, al-

though new, quickly became a common American word that signified an influential religious and political ideology, and Israel would later be grouped with South Africa as one of the two most valued Western enclaves in non-Western areas of the world.<sup>62</sup>

By the turn of the century, Zionism was a wildly popular idea among Protestants; prominent business leaders of the time who publicly supported Zionism included J. P. Morgan, J. D. Rockefeller, and Philip D. Armour, among others.<sup>63</sup> Some saw Zionism as a resettlement plan for Jews similar to earlier ones attempted for African Americans involving Liberia, with the potential to solve social problems such as overcrowding in North American cities by sending the struggling poor to form colonies abroad. Others liked the way that Zionism newly helped to flesh out popular millennialist schemes.

### **The Lyceum**

The Lyceum lectures furthered Zionism and Holy Land interest. The public had a “seemingly insatiable” desire for pilgrimage narratives,<sup>64</sup> and popular Lyceum lectures provided another access to the Holy Land. The Lyceum movement was an early form of adult education popular in the Northeastern states after 1826. Voluntary local organizations linked to the Chautauqua movement, they allowed diverse groups of people to hear popular topics discussed. Popular authors of pilgrimage narratives such as Bayard Taylor, the most prolific of Oriental travel writers, promoted their books in some of the three thousand Lyceums that had sprung up in the United States by 1834. Taylor was known for satirizing some of the imperialistic presumptions of his fellow Americans.<sup>65</sup>

The tourist gaze of American authors, personalities, and popular speakers brought the distant biblical past into the present for eager audiences.<sup>66</sup> Lyceum speakers described Palestine in a uniquely American way, fusing a national concept of geography with American national identity. The popularity of Palestine speakers in the Lyceum circuit demonstrates the broad appeal of the topic.

### **Talmage’s Pilgrimage Publicity**

The way the pilgrimage of Gilded Age pulpit lion and celebrity T. DeWitt Talmage was received in New York City in 1892 reveals much about public consciousness of Palestine at the time. Among other prominent church “lords of the pulpit,” Talmage was in a class of his own, envied and emulated all over the country.<sup>67</sup> Some called him “the most popular preacher of the Gilded Age,” a man whose influence in the 1880s and 1890s has been likened to that of Billy Graham a hundred years later.<sup>68</sup> Talmage held important pastorates in Philadelphia, Brooklyn, and Washington, D.C., during a “period

when pulpit luminaries in large cities attained national fame and influence.”<sup>69</sup> Known for his rhetorical gifts and dramatic physical flair, some criticized him as a “pulpit clown.” Nevertheless, he dramatically increased church attendance at each place that he served, and became a highly remunerated speaker who at times expressed disdain for Darwinian evolutionary science.

Prior to his well-publicized Palestine pilgrimage, Talmage was delightfully overwhelmed with financial support. Several notables wanted his impressions of Palestine and provided funding. His journey was followed in the Christian press and the *New York Times*, as well as other periodicals. Some criticized Talmage for his sensationalism, while others lauded the spiritual revelations he brought from Palestine. Many watched his tour, and everyone seemed to have an opinion about the man and his pilgrimage.<sup>70</sup> While in Palestine, Talmage obtained two symbolic stones, one from Calvary and one from Mount Sinai, to be placed in his new tabernacle in New York City, an act which lent the prestige of the “fifth gospel” to his ministry. When Talmage’s steamship arrived in New York harbor, thousands of admirers turned out for his first public appearance. A platform was erected at the east end of the armory of the Thirteenth Regiment, behind which “Welcome Home” was spelled out in gas jets. The mayor of Brooklyn presided over the event, and many people had to be turned away for a lack of space.<sup>71</sup> Such occasions demonstrate the celebrity value and the general excitement generated by events and people linked with the Holy Land.

### **The Role of the Protestant Press**

Additionally, by the middle of the nineteenth century, Protestants had transformed from Christians who listened to sermons to people who preferred mass-produced pictures and religious writings beyond parlor Bibles. This trend helps to explain the vast numbers of pilgrimage narratives produced during the second half of the nineteenth century and the consumers who purchased them. “Belief was converted into graphic information and disseminated cheaply over great distances . . . and an ever-expanding infrastructure of distribution.”<sup>72</sup> Mechanical reproduction democratized visual response, making Christian art and writing available to almost everyone in his or her home or Sunday school classroom. Instead of just Bibles, Protestants began to collect Christian fiction and nonfiction.

While some argue that there was an inevitable “loss of aura” when an image or pilgrimage narrative was mechanically reproduced by printers, David Morgan points out that it performed the opposite function among Protestants, bringing the viewer or reader directly into contact with the subject of the image, such as the holy places of Palestine, and they felt that they had been there personally. Protestants viewed the means of mass reproduction as



unobtrusive and thus able to infuse the original subject with sacred power.<sup>73</sup> The Protestant pilgrim sought to provide each person on earth with the changeless truths of Christianity, concisely written, and easily accessible.<sup>74</sup> Their optimism cannot be overstated; they worked feverishly. For some writers, Palestine was the vehicle for providing a dramatic spiritual and educational encounter with the essential truths of Christianity. Yet many reversed ancient Christian pilgrimage traditions, offering a top-down experience in which clergy translated the meaning of the event.<sup>75</sup> Many Protestants continued to receive an indirect sense of the pilgrimage and the Holy Land, because it was often interpreted by a person in authority, and they were susceptible to the interpretation offered. As American opinion regarding Palestine transformed from 1840–1917, in many cases ordained clergy and prominent members of society were at the helm of the revolution. In the era of Christian education, mass-produced information about Palestine in many forms became a valuable addition to the Protestant household, and popular books about Palestine were laid alongside the Bible, in some cases threatening to eclipse its previously central role.

During the period from the Civil War to the First World War, the American perspective of the Holy Land was as a place that raised questions of faith, nature, and destiny. For others, it became an American frontier; while for still others, it was a fashionable diversion and a solution to social problems. From lavish French parlor Bible illustrations of the mid-century to the maps, pictographs, archaeological accounts, and pilgrimage narratives so popular after 1880, a shift was apparent in the way that Protestants viewed Palestine. For many, this was an awakening from a static artistic rendering to a geographical myth bearing political and millennial hopes. As John Davis writes, “Though the actual physical size of the Holy Land was tiny, minuscule, in comparison to the vistas of North America, as a landscape of the psyche the Holy Land was expansive and broad.”<sup>76</sup> For many Protestants, Palestine became a touchstone representing the quantifiable progress of God’s kingdom on earth, an enduring metaphor that could be made to signify many things.

## PROTESTANT ITINERARIES IN PALESTINE

As perspectives upon Palestine became informed by greater emphasis on the sciences, education, and entertainment, those who toured the Holy Land in the latter years of the nineteenth century had fewer options for how to achieve their aims. Itineraries in the 1850s were much more varied than what we find in the 1890s due to the development of the proto-package tour. Earlier pilgrimages to Palestine included random and exotic itineraries, at-

tempts to cater to the whims of individuals, distractions by caravan leaders, vagaries of the weather, danger from robbers, and outbreaks of disease. In many cases, earlier trips were lengthy and exhausting—it was several decades before pilgrimages were streamlined and simplified so that sites critical to Protestants were defined.

### Early Itineraries

E. G. Robinson's pioneering excursion in the 1840s was quite different from later proto-package tours. Arriving over land in a camel caravan from Cairo rather than by sea, Robinson had armed attendants and faced the threat of bandits and drought. In addition, Ottoman authorities routinely locked cities down in order to contain disease outbreaks. Yet, on embarking from Egypt across the desert Robinson optimistically wrote:

Our Arabs, as they walked by our side, were full of song and glee, at the idea of being once more free from the city and abroad upon their native wastes. To me also it was a new and exciting feeling, to find ourselves thus alone in the midst of the desert, in the true style of oriental travel; carrying with us our house, our provisions, and our supply of water for many days; and surrounded by camels and the wild sons of the desert in a region, where the eye could find naught to rest upon but desolation. It was a scene which had often taken possession of my youthful imagination; but which I had not dared to hope would ever be realized. Yet all was now present in reality; and the journey which had so long been the object of my desires and aims was actually begun.<sup>77</sup>

A groundbreaking adventurer and scholar, Robinson literally began American Palestine exploration in the 1840s, facing many privations and risks and an occasional lack of assurance for his safety and well-being. Multitudes would follow him. He spent days on a camel caravan, and wrote, "The peculiar gait of the camel causes a long rocking motion, which to the rider is monotonous and tiresome."<sup>78</sup> On the hot, tedious journey, hallucinations tricked his senses more than once: "we had seen several instances of the Mirage, (Arabic, *Serab*) presenting all around us the appearance of lakes of water, with islands and shores distinctly marked."<sup>79</sup> Robinson also glimpsed the remainders of a dying land-based merchant culture, when he passed camel caravans loaded with coffee and dry goods snaking towards Cairo.<sup>80</sup> After the physical exertions of his travel and research, Robinson, age forty-four, became so weakened and ill on the journey home that he was left for dead by a doctor in Vienna, watched only by his devastated companion.<sup>81</sup> Robinson, however, surprised everyone and eventually awakened from his serious illness and was able to make the journey home to New York. Robinson's only predecessor with similar aims, the hardy Swiss-born Johann L. Burkhardt (1784–1817), had died of disease on excursion in Upper Egypt at the age of thirty-three.<sup>82</sup> It is difficult to find a page in Robinson's books that

does not make reference to Burkhardt's careful journals, but he focused in an unprecedented fashion on the Bible and its physical, historical geography in what quickly became a trend-setting fashion.

Another early Holy Land traveler/writer that must be mentioned is Clorinda Minor, one-time Millerite and author of *Meshullam! Or, Tidings From Jerusalem*, a narrative of her meandering, challenging, and solitary 1851 visit to Palestine. Minor was truly a pioneer—it was nearly unheard of for the women of New England to travel to the Levant alone. Women's travel had been severely curtailed by societal expectations,<sup>83</sup> and voyages had been almost entirely a male prerogative in the decades before her journey.<sup>84</sup> Yet, traveling with extremely limited means and meeting up with kindred spirits, she reported in her narrative that “we have not experienced one harsh word, or unkind act; but hearts have been moved to feel for and assist us, in different tongues and places.”<sup>85</sup>

Minor was assisted by local Jews, Jewish Christians, American merchants, and Arabs throughout her arduous and cobbled-together journey. She became impressed with the effort of one local Jewish Christian, Meshullam, to cultivate the land and offer agricultural training to the locals, and helped to conceive one of the first agricultural settlements in Palestine. While there, there were “difficulties of language, acquaintance with the manners and strange customs of the people, protection, conveyance and traveling equipage, etc.,”<sup>86</sup> not to mention the limited supply of clean food and water. When Minor tried to visit the Jordan river in 1850 she reported extreme levels of discomfort: “the heat and smell was such that I came out [of the tent] and chose a place on the ground, outside . . . the family camel came along and crouched at my feet . . . the circle of Arabs all gazing at the strangers.”<sup>87</sup> Minor's awful night of Holy Land camping was punctuated later by the constant barking of the dogs, the rising of the bright moon, and “the close neighborhood of so many animal fleas.”<sup>88</sup> Early pilgrims often faced challenging circumstances.

Culture shock for American pilgrims who followed Robinson and Minor in droves began as the ship came into port in Jaffa where “the act of being tossed into small boats commanded by strangely dressed Arabs became a real rite of passage into the exotic world of the East.”<sup>89</sup> Amid the chaotic shouting and strange smells, pilgrims before 1864 often agreed upon prices that would change once the journey had already begun, under the threat of desertion in the desert. Over the following decades, pilgrim tours gradually took on more regular shapes, forming what became a dependable consumer commodity by the 1890s. This topic is covered extensively in chapter 5.

## Later Itineraries

A specified Protestant pilgrimage industry gradually developed that provided greater luxury and safety. Prepaid, prearranged, organized tours such as those provided by the entrepreneurial Thomas Cook (1808–1892) became immensely popular by the 1890s.<sup>90</sup> One-time Baptist missionary Thomas Cook was the founder of modern tourism, and his heirs continued his company after his death in 1892; until today it is one of the largest travel companies in the world. Americans could purchase the tours from places such as the World's Fair in St. Louis in 1904, where Cook's employees set up a sales exhibit next to the Holy Land display for the fascinated public.<sup>91</sup> Holy Land pilgrims traveling under Cook's agency were nicknamed "Cookies" and were particularly conspicuous since they traveled in luxury (in contrast to the standard of living enjoyed by Palestinians) with clattering, lengthy trains of camp boys, waiters, servants, and cooks. "Cookies," some of whom were women traveling alone, arrived in port on steamships and traveled in tent cities laid out with oriental rugs, iron bedsteads, tables, mirrors, and washbasins. The food served in the Cook dining tents included tea and coffee, potted salmon, bacon, and Yorkshire ham, with plenty of fresh fruit.<sup>92</sup> Maltbie D. Babcock, on pilgrimage in 1901, ate a six-course dinner each night including soup, roast bird, salad, sweets, and desserts before retiring to his private tent to write.<sup>93</sup> The hordes of pilgrims had finally arrived, entrepreneurs had taken note, and locals were ready for the fledgling business of modern tourism. Later itineraries followed a predictable pattern, featuring highlights of Palestine, such as Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, the Dead Sea, Jericho, the Jordan River, Galilee, Nazareth, and Mt. Tabor. The "important" sites for Protestants were being carefully and methodically defined.

## DEFINING AMERICAN PILGRIMAGE TRADITIONS

Many of the popular elements from earlier, self-organized tours remained in package tours. Reading particular Scripture passages relevant to sacred sites, praying special prayers at particular locations, and singing appropriate hymns were critical elements of the Palestine pilgrimage experience for those fortunate enough to make the trendy religious or spiritual voyage.

One pilgrimage practice changed dramatically during the second half of the nineteenth century, however. Slowly but surely, no longer did the Protestant pilgrim visit sites associated with Catholic, Arab, and Eastern Christian traditions. In 1876, Colonel Charles Wilson, a careful and detailed surveyor of Palestine, had noted ironically that every small village in Palestine, without exception, claimed a notable shrine with biblical connections. In many cases, Catholic and Eastern Christians claimed warring shrines in the same

town and each one charged a fee for entrance.<sup>94</sup> E. G. Robinson, thirty years earlier, asserted that one should “avoid the multiple sites inhabited by monks and apply instead to the local Arab population” for the best and most accurate information.<sup>95</sup> The confusing variety of options in the early period (before the advent of the package tour in 1890) was often bewildering. Faced with opportunism and competing claims at every turn, Protestants began the process of establishing patterns of visiting such sites as the uninhabited ruins of Capernaum at Galilee.

The construction of a rational, readable, interpretive Palestine for Americans out of the raw material of Ottoman Palestine was a process that spanned several decades and built upon the achievements of early travelers such as E. G. Robinson. It is notable that Robinson was one of the most distinguished biblical scholars of his time, having studied in Germany from 1826–1832, and he employed the most avant-garde critical techniques in the study of the Bible. By mid-century, the chaos and confusion experienced by early pioneers was slowly giving way to parallel and alternative sites emphasizing upon education, geography, cartography, and photography.

### **Robinson’s Arch and The Holy Sepulcher**

For example, Robinson discovered an arch in Jerusalem that became a key pilgrimage site for Americans, starting in the 1850s.<sup>96</sup> Just around the corner from the Wailing Wall, it became a Protestant answer for Christians and Jews to the restricted access imposed by Muslims to ancient Temple Mount, and a monument to American scholarly achievements. When Americans traveled to Robinson’s Arch, they affirmed the advancement of American scientific progress in interpreting the raw data of the ancient biblical world. Frances Willard wrote of “our own Robinson, of whom an American grows prouder with every day’s investigation of Jerusalem.”<sup>97</sup>

Weighing in on the topic of which sites Protestants should choose to visit in Palestine before the advent of the Cook tour, the highly respected Philip Schaff (1819–1893),<sup>98</sup> well-known as an internationalist, bridge-builder, and defender of academic freedom, wrote in 1878 that there is “no city of greater interest to a Christian [than Jerusalem].”<sup>99</sup> Schaff also wrote that “Bethlehem is as familiar to us from childhood days as our own home.”<sup>100</sup> For Schaff, one spot was the defining feature of Palestine for Protestant Christians: “Calvary, or Golgotha, is the most sacred spot in Jerusalem and in the world. . . . Genuine or not, it has been for many centuries a center of devotion, the very holy of holies of the largest portion of Christendom.”<sup>101</sup> Schaff’s opinion regarding the Holy Sepulcher was not shared by many Protestants, one of whom, General Charles “Chinese” Gordon, would look for a new, uniquely Protestant Calvary. In 1850, Clorinda Minor included the Holy Sepulcher on her itinerary, as would nearly all of the pilgrims following after her. As she

visited she reported that “a deep sadness oppressed me” and left in disappointment as she was crowded by poor beggars.<sup>102</sup> In the decades before the 1890s, everyone weighed in on the important topic of which sites were the best and most important in Palestine. The Holy Sepulcher was often disappointing but nevertheless nearly always included.

### **Gordon's Garden Tomb**

When the British military hero General Charles “Chinese” Gordon (1833–1885), legendary for his bravery and military valor, spent a year’s furlough in Jerusalem from 1882–1883 to study antiquities just prior to his famous ill-fated assignment to Khartoum, Sudan (in which he was defeated by the Mahdi and ultimately killed); his military assistant (who was also rumored to be his lover) became highly involved with the religious activities at the Spaffords’ American colony in Jerusalem. The Spaffords were a prominent Chicago family who had publicly broken with orthodox Calvinist theology and emigrated to Jerusalem in 1881 with eighteen friends to found a controversial religious community with utopian ideals and a millennialist emphasis.<sup>103</sup> Gordon spent many idle hours alone on the rooftop of this colony waiting for his colleague, where he looked out and contemplated an outcropping of rock near the Damascus Gate that later became his “Garden Tomb”:<sup>104</sup> the place that became the most prominent parallel or alternative Protestant site in Palestine, i.e., a location that developed specifically as a Protestant substitute location competing with the claims of the Holy Sepulcher. While Gordon referred to the Spafford colony unfavorably in a letter as a “cult,”<sup>105</sup> Gordon himself was associated with an eccentric, unorthodox, and mystical brand of Christianity.

Notwithstanding compelling archaeological and traditional evidence to the contrary both in the 1890s and over the last century,<sup>106</sup> Protestant pilgrims to this day have remained staunchly loyal to Gordon’s Garden Tomb, as well as to Gordon’s “memory” or “legend,” sealed in 1966 with a Hollywood film starring Charlton Heston. The established Protestant Golgotha was thus fathered by a British military hero’s speculations, and remains in consistent use until this day.

Scholarly findings which showed that the location was wrong had little or no affect upon its popularity, because it offered an alternative to the Holy Sepulcher (popular among Catholics and Eastern Christians) and could be molded to comfortably fit Protestant expectations. In addition, the reputation of the tomb may have been linked more to Gordon’s reputation than to Calvary itself. In 1911, one American Protestant pilgrim wrote that Gordon’s “inquiry” into archaeology led him to “inquire into the matter himself . . . and he unearthed a tomb.”<sup>107</sup> The pilgrim felt it necessary to remind readers that

it was “not Gordon’s Tomb” but the actual “tomb of Christ.” Therefore, the tomb was often referred to popularly as simply the “Garden Tomb.”

The relationship of the Garden Tomb to the fallen general is a complex one that reveals some of the currents that determined sacred space in the late Victorian period, and tales and reports of Gordon’s deeds were well known in America through the press. Many viewed Gordon as a “common sense” intellectual and “martyred warrior saint” after the Khartoum siege, and he was a symbolic hero at the waning of the Victorian colonial era.

The first of the popular military heroes of the nineteenth century had been Admiral Horatio Nelson of the famed battle of Trafalgar. Upon Nelson’s death, he “ceased to be a living hero and became a god.”<sup>108</sup> Similarly, Gordon’s legendary commitment to his ideals in the face of orders from superiors to the contrary evoked the larger question of the responsibility of the colonizer to the colonized, thus raising further questions regarding Christian missions, Christian international roles, and Christian civilization. The symbolic place of Gordon in his society lent significant prestige to what would become the well-funded, visited, and established Garden Tomb pilgrimage operation. Additionally, it mirrors to some extent the original founding of the first Calvary site, the Holy Sepulcher, founded by the mother of Constantine, the military hero of the fourth century.<sup>109</sup> Constantine was associated with being a Christian warrior, albeit of the ancient world, like General Gordon was in his time.

The emergence of parallel sites catering specifically to the needs and expectations of American Protestant pilgrims signifies the rapid changes occurring in Palestine pilgrimage by the turn of the century. As will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5, Protestants almost always preferred the out-of-doors in Palestine. General Gordon’s Garden Tomb is set up as an outdoor experience. Simple benches are placed in the middle of a garden full of trees and flowers. From the benches, one can contemplate the face of rock that is Gordon’s Calvary under the canopy of trees and sky. In fact, the only indoor area at Gordon’s Garden Tomb is the gift shop and ticket booth tucked out of sight at the edges of the property. As parallel sites are developed by the turn of the century, Holy Land pilgrimage becomes more of a tourist commodity, more easily packaged to fulfill cultural expectations.

### **General Allenby and Palestine Pilgrims**

Another general noted for his bravery in the Holy Land was Allenby. British General Edmund H. H. Allenby (1861–1936), the general who directed the successful Palestine campaign in World War I, like Gordon, had a particular “strength of personality” that “created a new spirit in his army.” Allenby’s innovative, successful use of mounted cavalry led to the capture of Jerusalem

in December 1917. For the first time in hundreds of years, a Christian army had taken Jerusalem, and American Protestants were entranced.

One pilgrimage author wrote on meeting Allenby after the war, "Here I was, face to face with a great human being."<sup>110</sup> The pilgrim, John Finley, then recounted asking Allenby to read the book of Isaiah with him, whereupon they agreed that "the prophesied desolation had certainly come upon the Land."<sup>111</sup> As I will show in chapter 4, after the 1890s, Protestants tended to view all political events occurring in Palestine in a different light from events occurring elsewhere—with a particularly religious, millennial framework. According to Finley, General Allenby was a "God-Prophet" because his name in Arabic was *Allah-Nebi* (*Allah*, "God," and *Nebi*, "Prophet"), and Allenby was the "Deliverer of Palestine" with a "Godlike Prophecy."<sup>112</sup> For the pilgrim author Finley, Allenby was a modern-day savior and prophet, a missionary of a different order, and an envoy of a significant message. Allenby's power came directly from God and Finley read the Book of Revelation in the light of those events—"And the beginning of the end of the Great War with the Beast, I shall ever believe, was the advance of Allenby's men out upon the vale of Armageddon."<sup>113</sup> A British general became the leader of the Army of God in a millennial historical framework. Since WWI was thought to be the "war to end all wars," it naturally followed that millennial questions were linked to its tragic events. The transformation of ideas from remote and spiritual ideas to contemporary ones was irresistible for many.<sup>114</sup> The enduring stamp of approval and legitimacy provided by Holy Land heroes such as Robinson, Gordon, and Allenby helped seal one aspect of the role of Palestine pilgrimage.

## AMERICAN PROTESTANTS RESPOND TO PALESTINE

The hundreds of American Protestant pilgrim accounts from the second half of the nineteenth century are sometimes divided into two groups: namely, those who try to maintain "scientific" objectivity, and those who do not.<sup>115</sup> Even those who did not seek to observe in a scientific manner have different perspectives, and at times the authors seem to contradict themselves. For example, British Protestant statesman Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881), whose novels were read in America, described impressive landscapes and gorgeous vistas in his lush Oriental novels.<sup>116</sup> On the other hand, Mark Twain (1835–1910) wrote, "There are almost no images which portray the squalor—dirt, poverty, disease—which almost all of the travelers commented on."<sup>117</sup> Clorinda Minor wrote in 1850 that upon arriving in Jerusalem "my first feelings were of happy surprise, to see thrifty olive trees, pomegranates, and figs in its vicinity" after having heard so much of "the sterility of its



neighborhood and its appearance of desolation.”<sup>118</sup> Each found things that contradicted their own negative or positive statements at different times. When disappointed, pilgrims emphasized the difference between the Palestine they found in their Bibles and the one that they saw in front of them.

## Disappointment

The Palestine viewed on pilgrimage was often different from the Palestine studied in Sunday School, in spite of all of the new educational emphasis and study of Palestine. One pilgrimage author, H. V. Morton, wrote upon surveying Palestine after 1900 that “there was nothing of the gorgeous East about it.”<sup>119</sup> “I was distressed to find that the real Jerusalem, full of donkeys and camels and men selling oranges, was very different from the clear street plan I knew by heart.”<sup>120</sup> Reconciling the reality of backwater towns in Palestine with the imaginative Bible history learned in childhood was complicated. For Morton, the unexpected disparity brought a sense of shame:

I felt ashamed of my thoughts. I had blundered on the way of the cross and I had treated it as if it were any ordinary street. I felt ill at ease. . . . It was almost with a shock that I realized that the Via Dolorosa could be a real road with men and women and animals on it.<sup>121</sup>

Even by just after the turn of the century, after the educational benefits of cartography, photography, and archaeology were available, many pilgrims were still unprepared for what they saw.

When Henry Van Dyke (1852–1933), Presbyterian minister, poet, and Princeton University professor, traveled to Palestine in 1907, he was aware of the problem of disenchantment, perhaps from reading the accounts of other pilgrims:

For a long time . . . I was afraid to go to Palestine, lest the journey should prove disenchantment, and some of my religious beliefs be rudely shaken, perhaps destroyed. But that fear was removed by a little voyage to the gates of death, where it was made clear to me that no belief is worth keeping unless it can bear the touch of reality.<sup>122</sup>

The Holy Land was a place where religious beliefs came into contact with “reality” for Van Dyke. He had feared that a visit to the powerful land of Palestine would confirm, deny, or even “destroy” his faith. As a result, he reflected upon the tradition of “translating” Palestine—the process by which pilgrims came to understand what they’d seen: “the conventions of travel do not always correspond to the realities of the heart. Your first sight of a place may not be your first perception of it: that may come afterward in some quiet, unexpected moment.”<sup>123</sup> For many, the moment of first impression only

began a process of understanding and interpreting Palestine—something that was usually done in community.

Fifty years earlier in 1856, William Prime traveling in caravan with his wife, struggled to see, understand, and interpret Palestine. He struggled to connecting sights in Palestine with powerful threads of human memory:

I stood in the road, my hand on my horse's neck, and with my dim eyes sought to trace the outlines of the holy places which I had long before fixed in my mind, but the fast, flowing tears forbade my succeeding. The more I gazed, the more I could not see; and at length, gathering close around my face the folds of my coufla.<sup>124</sup>

The emotional crisis was brought forth when emotion, memory, and visual comprehension were forced together. Prime wrote of Jerusalem: "The general aspect is melancholy and desolate. There is no such thing as cheerfulness, even on a sunny, spring, day. Streets are old, narrow, and in disrepair from the Crusader times. There are rivers of filth in the streets."<sup>125</sup>

When American educator and reformer Frances Willard (1839–1898) visited Jerusalem in the 1870s, she wrote tellingly, "I fail to feel where I am."<sup>126</sup> Compared with the lovely Holy Land constructed at Chautauqua in the 1870s, or the depictions found in parlor Bibles, the reality hardly fulfilled expectations.

Reportedly, the stench of the walled city of Jerusalem was legendary during the nineteenth century. From the middle of the nineteenth century, bands of marauders roamed the countryside, and it was necessary to lock the city gates at night—although many with greater means chose to hire local security to guard their tent cities. While inside the walls of Jerusalem in the 1870s, Willard wrote:

Jerusalem is the most disagreeable, dismal, ugly city I have ever, anywhere seen. There is so little that attracts—and so much that repels and everything is so shut up. . . . I can heartily echo the sentiment of some author I have recently read, that he congratulates himself upon the fact that the Jerusalem of David's Song and Solomon's wisdom, magnificence, and above all Christ's divine love, is half a hundred feet below where we are walking.<sup>127</sup>

In Willard's case, the image of Jerusalem formed before visiting Palestine is kept safely out of sight, yet she is certain that it is there. Willard notes, "After careful weighing of the evidence for and against its authenticity and it was without any feeling other than contempt, which rose to anger, which deepened the sadness that I looked over the score of "sacred places" here sought out."<sup>128</sup> Willard also disagreed with Philip Schaff's assessment of the Holy Sepulcher as "the holiest site in all Christendom," writing that "it is not without deep grief that one can contemplate even the pretended tomb of Christ as the seat of a superstition, perhaps the most absurd of which the dark

ages have handed down to us.”<sup>129</sup> Her ire is palpable, and the only bright spot in Jerusalem for Frances Willard was when she visited “Robinson’s Arch” on the Temple Mount. But as she prepared to leave, Willard wrote that Jerusalem “draws to her withered bosom with a spell to which [the visitor] gladly yields, and melting his heart with a love, pity, and hope that take fast hold upon the dearest ties—ties that reach backward through all the ages.”<sup>130</sup> The ties remained in spite of the fact that “the miserable village [of Jerusalem] retains not a single landmark of the wondrous history that has sent out its name in all the earth.”<sup>131</sup>

When former Senator and Secretary of State William Seward (1801–1872) and his wife visited Palestine in 1870, he wrote that “our first surprise was that so famous a city should be so small.”<sup>132</sup> The Searwards summed up how unsatisfactory it was to enter Jerusalem: “In a word, the Jerusalem which was so beautiful seen in the softening light of the setting sun from the summit of the mountains of Judea, shrunk into a vulgar Turkish town the moment we entered it.”<sup>133</sup> The Searwards described the bleak economic status of Jerusalem in the following way:

Jerusalem, without trade, without any organized society, without even rich, landed proprietors, is a congregation of ecclesiastics and mechanics or artisans who subsist by supplying the few wants of the annual crowds of religious pilgrims, generally poor, who come to pay their vows at the Sepulcher. Probably no town of equal population in the Alps or Rocky Mountains is so universally poor as Jerusalem.<sup>134</sup>

Lack of natural resources, financial investment and political neglect left Jerusalem in its natural state, perhaps from antiquity. Pilgrim authors, however, seemed to have expected a more shining, utopian, glorious religious city, like the pictures they had seen in Bibles or the scenes they had imagined. In many cases they were shocked and disgusted with what they saw. Even though “scientific” information about Palestine was available in the form of photographs, such mediums were “sanitized” and interpreted more than people realized.

### **Enhancing Belief Through Travel**

The stark contrast between many Protestant pilgrims and the throngs of poor peasant pilgrims from places such as Russia also caused Protestants to express self-doubt and even shame. Parallel pilgrimage sites evolved for the different economic groups. The disparity between Western and non-Western Christian pilgrims became increasingly conspicuous from the 1890s until 1914, because there were more and more Protestants of means and they were able to travel in greater comfort than ever before. In 1910, one American pilgrim wrote that, “seeing the piety of the Russian pilgrims, I felt almost ashamed to be on horseback.”<sup>135</sup> Others echoed the sentiments, contrasting

their luxury with floods of hungry peasants who carried all their possessions in a small bag.

Doubt, both self-doubt and religious doubt, increasingly became a motive for going on pilgrimage. Poor Russians arrived on foot for various reasons, but Americans liked to confirm their biblical education by seeing things with their own eyes. A pilgrim wrote in 1910:

Honest doubters undertook the journey to find some evidences to fortify their faith. Others satisfy a longing to see for themselves the places about which they had often read, and find explanation, illustration, and confirmation of the narratives and facts contained in Holy Writ.<sup>136</sup>

The scientific study of Palestine, whether through cartography, biblical archaeology, or some other science, fed the problem of faith and doubt for many. Another pilgrim went to Palestine in 1912 when his faith was irresolute:

In fact, my faith was wavering, I was in doubt, yet one verse in Matthew compelled me to go: "Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." I went, I asked, I knocked: I doubt no longer, now I know. The journey on horseback through the Holy Land was a revelation to me; may my description of it be a help to many.<sup>137</sup>

Palestine began to play a new role in faith, bringing to Western eyes what they believed was the very scientific source of their religious beliefs and enhancing that belief through travel. Like Thomas of the New Testament, these latter day "honest doubters" wanted to touch, see, and to feel the truth.

Yet Palestine did not always deliver the reassurance and proof that the visitors desired. Jerusalem was a filthy, foreign town, nothing like what they had expected. One English pilgrim wrote in 1910:

As I was entering Jerusalem, the noise, the smell, the dirt, the crowds, bewilder one. The charm, the poetry, the glamour, the glory, all seems to go. The spell is broken, the dream is over. You stand like one bewildered. Is this Jerusalem? . . . Did our Lord really visit this dirty, unsanitary, ill-ordered city?<sup>138</sup>

The low ordinariness of the holy places destroyed the dream and broke the spell, leaving pilgrims wondering about the sanitation and orderliness of their Holy Land. Yet Americans seemed to crave a complicated encounter, whether in their own travel or when buying accounts of the travels by others. One 1905 English pilgrim, Elizabeth Butler, wrote that she was disturbed by the ease of her own experience:

I had what I can only describe as a qualm when we reached, in but a hundred steps, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. It was all too easy and too quick. You can

imagine the sense of reluctance to enter there without more recollection. I had a feeling of regret that we had not waited until tomorrow, and I would warn others not to go on the day of arrival.<sup>139</sup>

No longer a penitential journey, unless the inconvenience of visiting a “vulgar Turkish town” in a luxury caravan can be counted as penance, pilgrimage became easy. When contrasted with pilgrimages of the Middle Ages, nineteenth-century Protestants often denigrated their own “coldness” and “modernity.” A pilgrim wrote in 1857 that “it was an involuntary imagination that then and there made me for an instant forget that I was a cold, modern man of these faithless latter years.”<sup>140</sup> When Frances Willard saw poor pilgrims outside the Holy Sepulcher kneel, kiss the ground, and enter backwards, she ruminated that she “would have given something just then for a little of their faith—but dear me, fervor and filth, sanctity and smells—go hand in hand.”<sup>141</sup>

Christ’s choice of an unsanitary, ugly, backwater city along with filth, smells, and poverty created an experience of alienation at one of the most holy sites for Christianity. A feeling of cold withdrawal pervades this part of the accounts. The feeling of disorientation made pilgrims doubt themselves—since they saw themselves at times reflected as chilly luxury tourists, cold “Modernists,” or simply more sanitary Westerners who valued organization, seeking the lost world of their elaborate parlor Bibles back home in North America.

### **Finding a Genuine Pilgrimage**

In spite of bitter disappointments, many Protestants found positive meaning in Ottoman Palestine. E. G. Robinson came to Palestine in 1838 as an interested scholar. Yet he was typical of the early period before 1864 in expressing discomfort with the idea of pilgrimage in that he feared that it could take on a false sacramental tone and replace genuine Christian feelings.

In such a state of things it cannot be a matter of wonder, that the end should often be forgotten in the means, that a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, instead of being resorted to merely as a means of elevating and purifying the religious feelings, and quickening the flame of devotion, should come to be regarded as having in itself a sanctifying and saving power; and so the mere performance of the outward act, be substituted for the inward principle and feelings.<sup>142</sup>

Like many others traveling before the 1890s, Robinson recalls tender moments of childhood:

From the earliest childhood I had read and studied the localities of this sacred spot; now I beheld them with my own eyes; and they all seemed familiar to me, as if the realization of a former dream. I seemed to be again among cherished scenes of childhood, long unvisited, indeed, but distinctly recollected; and it was almost a

painful interruption, when my companion (who had been here before) began to point out and name various objects in view.<sup>143</sup>

Palestine thus was almost as familiar as home, and the importance of both childhood memory and Bible stories sealed its relevance. For Robinson, Jerusalem “cannot but be deeply interesting even to the infidel or heathen; how much more to the heart of the believer! What a multitude of wonderful events have taken place upon that spot! What an influence proceeded from it!”<sup>144</sup>

In the 1850s, another pilgrim wrote that his pilgrimage was a fulfillment of childhood dreams planted by the stories devout parents told him about Palestine:

In long gone years I had sometimes thought of the Holy Land. In my home in the upcountry, standing by my father’s knee, I had heard him tell of the hills of Jerusalem. Lying in my mother’s arms, year after year, I had slept peaceful sleep as she sang the songs of the Christian story. . . . My mother’s hand taught my footsteps their first essays on the sad earth; and lo! Here what far pilgrimage they had accomplished.<sup>145</sup>

During the mid-nineteenth century, family Bible reading was still a central element of Protestant culture in America. From early childhood, many heard of the far-off Holy Land, and the accomplishment of pilgrimage was a great honor. During the 1850s an American pilgrim wrote:

Then once more I bowed my head. It is no shame to have wept in Palestine. I wept when I saw Jerusalem, I wept when I lay in the starlight at Bethlehem, and I wept on the blessed shores of Galilee. My hand was no less firm on the rein, my finger did not tremble on the trigger of my pistol when I rode with it in my right hand along the shore of the blue sea. My eye was not dimmed by those tears, nor my heart in aught weakened.<sup>146</sup>

Mark Twain, a witty global traveler with a commentator’s perspective,<sup>147</sup> makes fun of the American mid-century pilgrim in his own narrative with an illustration of a man kneeling in tears and religious contemplation outside Jerusalem, his revolver clutched to his chest and his sword ready. Earlier pilgrims remained on high alert for bandits and thieves—a seeming contradiction to some of their higher aims.

Philip Schaff went on pilgrimage during the 1870s as a “penitential” journey. After the death of his daughter, he felt that the family needed a special holiday, a *religious holiday* that would provide healing and allow them to reconnect on a deeper level with Christianity.<sup>148</sup> Although the “poetry” of the Holy Land was somewhat “marred” for Schaff by the Arab and Eastern Orthodox presence there, the reality of the experience nevertheless “deepened” his pilgrim’s experience.<sup>149</sup>

In spite of much confusion related to itineraries and sites before the package tours of the 1890s and the advent of modern tourism, some were able to achieve the experience they were seeking. In the 1850s one man wrote, "Count all the years of your life, my friend, and if you are anything less than a century old, I will pledge you my word you have not lived in all these years so much as I lived in the short time I was in the City of David."<sup>150</sup> By the 1880s, Western organizations funded detailed, exploratory scientific surveys of Jerusalem, analyzing each historical site and comparing them with the ancient texts that were available.<sup>151</sup>

Frances Willard's pilgrimage in the 1870s, so often disagreeable, also rekindled powerful childhood memories of Bible stories, but she found her true pilgrimage away from the cities and popular sites. Willard wrote that her first impression of Palestine was that it was "mysterious," yet its "choice-ness" and "immutable potency" were "undeniable."<sup>152</sup> Disgusted with dirty Jerusalem, Willard's best moments were out in the wild areas. She wrote, "on a field, we please ourselves by fancying that possibility our Savior's footsteps may have touched them as he passed along the hillside."<sup>153</sup> Willard wrote, "I thought as I rode musingly along how often mother had told me Joseph's story—and how those early days of my life were linked to these eventful ones by the enduring tie that binds my heart to hers."<sup>154</sup> Family ties, as well as religious feeling, made pilgrimage more meaningful by the end of the nineteenth century, particularly in the wild areas (not the cities), as we shall come to see.

The ready acceptance of Palestine pilgrimage as a social expression of piety or a "holy vacation" can be seen by the late 1880s, when Protestants occasionally began to join in with masses of poor pilgrims. One wrote as she approached the Holy Sepulcher:

The silent ghost-like throng never looks to the left or the right, lost in earnest prayer, meditation, and sad memories, it seem oblivious of all else but its intense desire to plead in this holy of holies for pardon to the great Consoler or all the afflicted. In the gloom of the inner chapel, the thoughts of the worshipper become absorbed in such an acute sense of intense apprehension and supreme expectancy that even identity is lost, and all material things appear shadowy and unreal.<sup>155</sup>

Absorption into the pilgrimage experience was expected by the early twentieth century. Even the sense of time changed: "One day was like another; each day was like every day on every ocean; but now that we have learned about the nearness of Palestine; suddenly the aura has changed . . . all have been transformed."<sup>156</sup> William and Olive Seward wrote in 1870 that Jerusalem was beneficial to the heart of the believer in spite of the fake shrines: "notwithstanding the provocation to doubt, it may well be believed that no one ever stands over that broken and worn marble slab unmoved."<sup>157</sup> But by the

1870s, the role of Palestine is clearer—historical links to the biblical past make it exciting and deeply interesting.

As discussed earlier, during the 1890s two immensely popular preachers visited the Holy Land, Dwight L. Moody and T. DeWitt Talmage. Both wholeheartedly affirmed the role of Palestine pilgrimage, while often glossing over the negative aspects. Moody reflected that even though he had been preaching for twenty years, he had “never felt so solemnized as at that moment, never felt so much to put the shoes off from his feet, for it was holy ground.”<sup>158</sup> Moody’s son later reflected that in his sermons in Palestine Moody had “preached with an emotion that he had rarely, if ever, equaled in any previous sermon.”<sup>159</sup> Talmage likewise reported that at Mount Calvary, he spent “the most solemn and overwhelming hour of [his] life.” Overcome with emotion, he challenged his readers:

I defy anyone on this spot to read with firm voice and consecutive utterance the description given by Luke and John of the mightiest scene of all the ages which was enacted here. Our group lying down on the place where the three crosses stood, I read to them, and I think the prayer of the penitent malefactor became the prayer of each one of us.<sup>160</sup>

Such unqualified support of Palestine pilgrimage by popular evangelical leaders such as Moody and Talmage confirmed the role that it had begun to play in American Protestant culture. Palestine had become a “fifth gospel”—a source of material revelation.

By the turn of the century, some had begun to adopt practices that would become central to Protestant Palestine pilgrimage, such as walking outside and surveying the natural landscape in a religiously reflective way (avoiding the shrines): “Something leads me to believe that I shall come nearer to him—my hearts ideal—there in the peace and serenity of unchanged Nazareth.”<sup>161</sup> Many affirmed the idea that Christ was uniquely present as they wrote, “I feel myself to be close to Him, my master, here in undisturbed primitive Nazareth.”<sup>162</sup> Fosdick similarly wrote that “it is not strange that in the most characteristic teaching of Jesus one finds himself, not in close confines, but on an open road.”<sup>163</sup>

Over time, Protestants accepted Palestine pilgrimage as the new normal, a typical expression of faith. Questions regarding sincerity and inward faith, for the danger of idolatrous attachment to the Holy Land, were rarely, if ever, raised, except when criticizing Catholics, Armenians, or Greek Orthodox. One pilgrim wrote confidently, “It does not seem to matter to me very much whether it is the actual road or a memorial to the actual road. What is important is that men and women who have walked on it have met a vision of Christ.”<sup>164</sup>



In 1900, Jesse Lyman Hurlbut and Charles Foster Kent defined what Palestine pilgrimage had become. It was a vehicle for obtaining a subjective experience, a signifier of a different reality:

The important thing is the experience of being in the presence of the land. That is wherever we are we have to do with what may be called two kinds of realities, one objective, the material world about us, earth, buildings, people—and the other subjective, the states of our conscious selves—thoughts, emotions, desires. And it is these subjective states that we seek in travel . . . with the stereoscope . . . we do have the subjective reality.<sup>165</sup>

Hurlbut and Kent used photography to promote religious thoughts, emotions and desires, asking their viewers to use their religious imagination to link the present with the past: “We must people these streets with the busy life of two thousand years ago, which was as real as though it was only yesterday. We must make the heroes of these hills of Palestine live again, by an effort of our thought. We must get out of the Present into the Past.”<sup>166</sup> This need to “escape” to the past became a central element of Protestant pilgrimage. As Henry Van Dyke wrote in 1908, pilgrimage to Palestine was “a long journey in the spirit, and a short voyage in the body.”<sup>167</sup> For Van Dyke it was deceptively easy to get to Palestine, “but how to find the Holy Land—ah, that is another question.”<sup>168</sup> It was necessary to create the Holy Land for readers out of the raw materials.

Palestine began to resemble a portal to a spiritual place in books—the “Holy Land”—a source of grace linking one to Christ in a way that included both political (Zionist) and millennial ramifications. In 1928, John Haynes Holmes wrote while that “the substance is still left—the spirit is still abiding. I felt nearer to Jesus [in Palestine] than I had ever felt before.”<sup>169</sup> Phillips Brooks agreed, writing in 1915 that “there is a reality about these things here [in Palestine] which is very enjoyable.”<sup>170</sup> By the twentieth century, Palestine pilgrimage had become a critical component of American Protestantism. A rite of passage for many devout laity and clergy, it signaled a connection between historical Christianity and material revelation in a new way.

## CONCLUSION

Before the end of the Civil War in America (1864) Palestine existed in the minds of American Protestants as a frozen, artistic image that was at times equated with heaven, as it is in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Later, a gradual reawakening to the East in general and to Palestine in particular created a new dimension. Religious instruction was augmented by photography, cartography, archaeology, and physical geography—new, modern revelation

that at times threatened to eclipse the role of the Bible itself. Both doubters and religious professionals sought out the Holy Land, writing books and speaking to eager audiences. In some cases, Palestine became an answer to questions about the historicity or veracity of the Bible.

The construction of a rational, readable, interpreted Palestine out of Ottoman Palestine spanned several decades, building upon achievements of early travelers such as E. G. Robinson. Beset by confusion and competing claims, Protestant pilgrims had wandered, weighing the rival assertions of locals and Christians from other traditions. But by 1881, specifically Protestant sites had emerged such as Robinson's Arch and General Gordon's Tomb. New Protestant traditions developed, such as Scripture reading at certain sites and looking to wild, uninhabited areas for a sense of ancient Palestine. Images of Arabs, Jews, and Eastern and Catholic Christians popularized in pilgrimage narratives had an enduring impact into the twentieth century. These images are the subjects of the following chapters.

## NOTES

1. H. W. Brands, "People's Choice," *Smithsonian* 36, no. 7 (October 2005): 112.
2. Bruce A. Harvey, *American Geographics: U.S. National Narratives and the Representation of the Non-European World, 1830–1865* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 8.
3. See for example T. Roosevelt, *Diaries of Boyhood and Youth* (New York: Scribner, 1928), Olive Risley Seward and William H. Seward, *William H. Seward's Travels Around the World* (New York: D. Appleton Co., 1873), J. F. Packard, *Grant's Tour Around the World* (Philadelphia: W. Flint, 1880), Benjamin Harrison (in Lew Wallace, *The Life of General Benjamin Harrison* [Philadelphia: Hubbard Brothers Publishers, 1888]). Popular authors include Mark Twain and Herman Melville.
4. See bibliography listing approximately four hundred Palestine pilgrimage narratives from the nineteenth century by senior staff member of the Library of Congress, Lester I. Vogel, in *To See a Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 287–99. The author counted approximately an additional hundred narratives not in the Vogel bibliography in the Luce Library, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J.
5. Vogel, *To See a Promised Land*, 9.
6. Neil Harris, *The Artist in American Society: The Formative Years, 1790–1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 124.
7. Amanda Henry, "Decorative Arts Master Influenced by Nature," *The Tampa Tribune*, August 11, 2005, 7. The term Levant refers to the countries bordering on the Eastern Mediterranean, from French *lever* meaning "to rise" or "where the sun rises."
8. Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 51.
9. Henry B. Plant Museum, "The 1891 Hotel," [www.plantmuseum.com/history/hotel.shtml](http://www.plantmuseum.com/history/hotel.shtml).
10. Caroline Hazard, *A Brief Pilgrimage in the Holy Land Recounted in a Series of Addresses Delivered in Wellesley College Chapel by the President* (Boston and New York: Houghton & Mifflin Co., 1909), vi.
11. Harris, *The Artist in American Society*, 126.
12. Alvan Bond, *Memoir of Pliny Fisk, A. M.: Late Missionary to Palestine* (New York: Crocker and Brewster, 1828), 280. "Thus it often is with the last hours of the Christian. He is

obliged to pass over a rough and wearisome way, where he is continually exposed to the attacks of enemies, till near the close of his life, till his feet are about to stand within the gates of the New Jerusalem, and then he is favored with some bright visions of the place he is soon to enter."

13. Harris, *The Artist in American Society*, 127.
14. Vogel, *To See a Promised Land*, 2.
15. Burke Long, *Imagining the Holy Land: Maps, Models and Fantasy Travels* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 3.
16. "City of Jerusalem. Site Dedicated with Most Unique and Interesting Ceremonial Rites in the Presence of Thousands," *Worlds Fair Bulletin* 4, no. 10 (August 1903): 38.
17. Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 68–73.
18. McDannell, *Material Christianity*, 92.
19. McDannell, *Material Christianity*, 89.
20. McDannell, *Material Christianity*, 90.
21. McDannell, *Material Christianity*, 93.
22. Web Museum of Paris, *Nicolas Pioch*, July 14, 2002, [www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/dore](http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/dore).
23. James P. Wind, *The Bible and the University: The Messianic Vision of William Rainey Harper* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 99–101.
24. Frances Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard, Vols. 35–37*, transcription by Carolyn De Swarte Gifford, deposited at the Frances E. Willard Memorial Library (Evanston: National Women's Christian Temperance Union Headquarters, [1870] 2005), 18.
25. Harvey, *American Geographics*, 37. It is also of interest to note that *Peter Parley's Method of Telling about Geography to Children*, written in 1830 and revised in 1844, sold some two million copies and was structured as a travel narrative that included landscape topography, concise manners-and-customs descriptions, reference to major historical figures, and significant buildings and monuments (Harvey, *American Geographics*, 45). This is a clear precursor to the methodology and style of the Protestant pilgrimage narrative. It also points towards the ultimate revision of the Bibles themselves, those printed for Protestant Americans later in the century.
26. John Timothy Stone, *Footsteps in a Parish: An Appreciation of Maltbie Davenport Babcock as a Pastor* (New York: Scribner, 1908), 37.
27. Vogel, *To See a Promised Land*, 11.
28. Hurlbut and Kent, *Travelling Through the Holy Land with the Stereoscope* (New York and London: Underwood & Underwood, 1900).
29. Kuklick, *Puritans in Babylon: The Ancient Near East and American Intellectual Life, 1880–1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 177.
30. Albright's impact drove the division of Ancient Near Eastern Studies into two separate groups, namely, a higher, critically minded group focused upon biblical archaeology with a reformed Christian tone and a secularly oriented Ancient Near Eastern Studies group. Albright was responsible for founding Palestinian or biblical archeology as a distinct field.
31. Kuklick, *Puritans in Babylon*, 200.
32. Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 27.
33. Maria Susanna Cummins, *El Fureidis* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1860).
34. Malini Johar Schueller, *U.S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature 1790–1890* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 99–102.
35. Harvey, *American Geographics*, 124.
36. Cummins, *El Fureidis*, 128.
37. Cummins, *El Fureidis*, 247.
38. In 1847 an American missions organization seeking to spread Protestant Christianity in Tahiti sent five thousand Bibles and four thousand copies of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. From Isabel Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of The Pilgrim's Progress* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 11.

39. Michael Davies, *Graceful Reading: Theology and Narrative in the Works of John Bunyan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 2. Kathleen M. Swaim, *Pilgrim's Progress, Puritan Progress: Discourses and Contexts* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 1.
40. Aileen M. Ross, "Paradise Regained: The Development of John Bunyan's Millenarianism," in *Bunyan in England and Abroad: Papers Delivered at the John Bunyan Tercentenary Symposium*, eds. M. van Os and G. J. Schutte (Amsterdam: VJ University Press, 1990), 79.
41. David E. Smith, *John Bunyan in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), 3. Swaim, *Pilgrim's Progress*, 5.
42. Smith, *John Bunyan in America*, 25.
43. Qtd. in Smith, *John Bunyan in America*, 28.
44. Qtd. in Smith, *John Bunyan in America*, 33.
45. Qtd. in Smith, *John Bunyan in America*, 39.
46. Ron Powers, *Mark Twain: A Life* (New York: Free Press, 2005), 197.
47. Powers, *Mark Twain*, 215.
48. Jeffrey Alan Melton, *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002), 39.
49. Qtd. in Melton, *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism*, 40.
50. M. H. Abrams, "The Victorian Age," in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Fifth Edition, Vol. 2* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 1986), 926.
51. Rider Haggard (1856–1925) wrote *King Solomon's Mines* in 1885. Edgar Saltus (1855–1921) wrote shocking erotic thrillers set in the East. Frenchman Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848–1907) wrote violently styled tales of sexual misadventures with Eastern themes that were set in the nineteenth century.
52. Melton, *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism*, 59.
53. Melton, *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism*, 60.
54. Melton, *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism*, 71.
55. Elizabeth Butler, *Letters from the Holy Land* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1906), 20.
56. William R. Hutchinson, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1992), 2.
57. Brian Yothers, *The Romance of the Holy Land in American Travel Writing 1790–1876* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2007), 23.
58. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage To Palestine* (New York, Macmillan, 1927), introduction. John Haynes Holmes, *Palestine Today and Tomorrow: A Gentile's Survey of Zionism* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), introduction.
59. Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 970.
60. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 974. See also Carl Schorske, *Fin-De-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981).
61. Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot, *A History of Women: Emerging Feminism from Revolution to World War* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1993), 221.
62. Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity, Vol. 2* (San Francisco: Harper, 1985), 335.
63. Some of these leaders suggested a settlement plan for Jews, citing earlier moderately successful colonization schemes used for African Americans. One was written by Rev. William E. Blackstone and submitted to President Harrison in writing in 1891.
64. John Davis, *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century Art and Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 5.
65. Schueller, *U.S. Orientalisms*, 33.
66. Davis, *The Landscape of Belief*, 26.
67. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 740.
68. Ferenc Szasz, "T. DeWitt Talmage: Spiritual Tycoon of the Gilded Age," *The Journal of Presbyterian History* 59 (1981): 18–32.
69. Clarence E. Macartney, *Six Kings of the American Pulpit* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1942).
70. T. Talmage, Jr., *T DeWitt Talmage as I Knew Him* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1912), 230. See also Macartney, *Six Kings of the American Pulpit*, 42.

71. Charles E. Banks, *Authorized and Authentic Works of T. DeWitt Talmage* (Chicago: Henry Neil, 1902).

72. David Morgan, *Protestants and Pictures: Religion, Visual Culture, and the Age of American Mass Production* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 6.

73. Morgan, *Protestants and Pictures*, 8.

74. Morgan, *Protestants and Pictures*, 27.

75. Traditional Christian pilgrimage has been tied to Marian devotion. Pilgrimage was an expression of nonliterate piety, open to any one who can move about. Because Protestant traditions so highly value the verbal and written modalities, the visual and experiential aspect of faith has been widely rejected. As John Dillenberger writes, "the visual as the Bible of the illiterate or the unlearned, as the older tradition expressed it, has been transformed into the visual illiteracy of the learned." John Dillenberger, *Images and Relics: Theological Perceptions and Visual Images in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Pilgrimage originated as an individual pursuit.

76. Davis, *The Landscape of Belief*, 5.

77. E. G. Robinson and E. Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mt. Sinai, and Arabia Petrea: A Journal of Travels in the Year 1838, Vols. I–III* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1841), vol. I, 56.

78. Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. I, 58.

79. Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. I, 61.

80. Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. I, 64.

81. Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. III, 451. "We had probably laid a foundation for it, in the change from an oriental to an occidental mode of life, and from constant and vigorous exercise, to the indolence and listlessness of a steam boat . . . here my disorder [in Vienna] after a few days, assumed a new and alarming form, and brought me speedily to the borders of the grave. One day the physician left me, saying to my companion that I should probably expire in two or three hours—He afterwards returned, expecting to find me dead. Meantime, through the mercy of God, a crisis had taken place; I had slept, and was better. Just two days later my family arrived."

82. Johann Ludwig Burkhart, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (London: John Murray, 1822). His journals were published posthumously.

83. Owing to "the many Dangers we are subject too from your Sex," it was "almost impossible for a Single Lady to travel without injury to her character." Abigail Adams to Isaac Smith April 20, 1771, qtd. in Woody Holton, *Abigail Adams* (New York: Free Press, 2009), 48.

84. Holton, *Abigail Adams*, 161.

85. Clorinda Minor, *Meshullam! Or, Tidings from Jerusalem From the Journal of A Believer Recently Returned from the Holy Land* (1849; 2nd edition published by the author, 1851; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 37.

86. Minor, *Meshullam!*, 37.

87. Minor, *Meshullam!*, 67.

88. Minor, *Meshullam!*, 67.

89. Ruth Hummel and Thomas Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred: English Protestant and Russian Orthodox Pilgrims of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995), 11.

90. Piers Brendon, *Thomas Cook: 150 Years of Popular Tourism* (London: Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd., 1991).

91. Long, *Imagining the Holy Land*, 57–58.

92. Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred*, 12.

93. Maltbie T. Babcock, *Letters From Egypt and Palestine* (New York: Scribner, 1902), 59–61. In spite of the fact that almost no expense was spared for his comfort, Babcock still caught a fatal illness in Palestine and died before returning home to New York. Palestine travel remained risky for many.

94. Colonel Sir Charles W. Wilson, *The Land of Galilee and the North including Samaria, Haifa, and the Esdraelon Valley* (reprint by Ariel Publishing Co., Jerusalem, 1880). See also *Sinai & the South Including a Short Description of the Negev* (reprinted by Ariel Publishing Co., Jerusalem, 1880).

95. Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. I, 375.
96. For an early example see William Prime, *Tent Life in the Holy Land* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1857), 140.
97. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 15.
98. Of Swiss birth, Schaff was raised in an orphanage in Switzerland, educated at Tübingen in Germany under the most famous scholars of his time, such as F. C. Bauer. He then emigrated to the United States where his thirty-year career was spent mainly at Union Theological Seminary. He founded the American Society of Church History.
99. Philip Schaff, *Through Bible Lands: Notes of Travel in Egypt, the Desert, and Palestine* (New York: American Tract Society, 1878), 220–35.
100. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 220–35.
101. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 259–63.
102. Minor, *Meshullam!*, 48.
103. Vogel, *To See a Promised Land*, 155.
104. Bertah Spafford Vestor, *Our Jerusalem* (1950; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 25.
105. Charles Gordon to R. H. Barnes, June 6, 1883. Courtesy of the Boston Public Library.
106. Thomas A. K. Reilly, “Mount Calvary,” transcribed by Michael T. Barrett, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, available online at [www.newadvent.org/cathen/03191a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03191a.htm). Most archaeologists and historians have dismissed Gordon’s Tomb—along with the famed Holy Sepulcher—because Christ should have been immolated north of the altar, like victims in Leviticus. In addition, Calvary was a place for public execution and the place reserved for crucifixion, if there were one, would be identical with a presumed stoning place; and a modern Jewish tradition as to a different fixed stoning place can be substantiated from the time of Christ.
107. G. E. Franklin, *Palestine Depicted and Described* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1911), 37.
108. Andrew Lambert, quoted in “The Battle of Trafalgar,” in *National Geographic* 124 (October 2005): 60.
109. The authenticity of Constantine’s mother Helena’s Calvary site is also problematic for historians and archaeologists, since she chose the location of the largest, most popular Isis temple in the ancient city for Calvary, and then commenced construction. While that original building was destroyed, the current Holy Sepulcher dates back to the Crusader period and is thought to be built on the same site.
110. John Finley, *A Pilgrim in Palestine: Being an Account of Journeys on Foot by the First American Pilgrim After General Allenby’s Recovery of the Holy Land* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1919), 10.
111. Finley, *A Pilgrim in Palestine*, 14.
112. Finley, *A Pilgrim in Palestine*, 107.
113. Finley, *A Pilgrim in Palestine*, 34.
114. Finley also met T. E. Lawrence (1888–1917) while in Palestine and accorded him the same epic role in history, reflecting the mood and excitement of the age in regards to Palestine. He wrote, “I met T. E. Lawrence who had himself, as governor of Damascus, for three days sat in the seats of Hazael, Darius, Tigranes, Pompey, and all the rest better known to him than to me, and who had, this gentle scholar, set machine guns in the street after the capture of Damascus, to prevent looting—that he having finished this piece of work, was now, as he said to me about to take off his Arab costume, put the shoes of Western civilization on his bare or sandaled feet, and go back to his don’s task again” (199). Lawrence’s greatest victory was the seizure of Aqaba on July 6, 1917. He was a tireless proponent of Arab independence.
115. Nita Rosovsky, “Nineteenth Century Portraits through Western Eyes,” in *City of the Great King: Jerusalem from David to the Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 220.
116. Benjamin Disraeli, *Contarini Fleming*, 1832, *Lothair* vol. 1-3 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1870), or *Endymion*, vol. 1-3 (London: Longmans, Green, & Co, 1882).
117. Mark Twain, 454.
118. Minor, *Meshullam!*, 43–44.

119. Henry V. Morton, *In the Steps of the Master* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1934), 2.
120. Morton, *In the Steps of the Master*, 6.
121. Morton, *In the Steps of the Master*, 10.
122. Henry Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1908).
123. Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land*, 16.
124. Prime, *Tent Life in the Holy Land*, 56.
125. Prime, *Tent Life in the Holy Land*, 105–6.
126. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 4.
127. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 5.
128. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 5.
129. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 13.
130. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 20.
131. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 21.
132. Seward and Seward, *William H. Seward's Travels around the World* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1873), 629.
133. Seward and Seward, *William H. Seward's Travels around the World*, 632.
134. Seward and Seward, *William H. Seward's Travels around the World*, 663.
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### *Chapter Three*

## **Protestants, Arabs, and Islam in the Holy Land**

As American Protestant interest was drawn towards the Holy Land and the Middle East through multiple venues, there were changes in the cultural perceptions of Palestinians and Islam. While one might argue that Palestinians were often invisible because the land was considered symbolically empty (i.e., “a land without a people”), they would play a unique role in Protestant pilgrimage narratives. On pilgrimage, many Protestants encountered Palestinian Arabs, both Christian and Muslim, for the first time. As pilgrims, however, they sought to experience the Holy Land of the first century rather than the contemporary Ottoman culture.

These interactions between Protestant Americans and Arabs deeply affected the transformation of the idea of the Holy Land from a static Bible illustration image to a vibrant modern mythology. Palestinians will play an important role in the new American Holy Land theater. What pilgrims saw in the Holy Land was shockingly different from the romantic, European-looking characters depicted in parlor Bibles, and hardly familiar or edenic. Americans had seen the land of Palestine through books and pictographs, but by the 1890s they saw local people through the new, developing medium of photography. They saw pictures of Palestinians and opted to view them as a direct, historical link to more accurate understanding of the Bible when ideals of “historicity” gained prestige. Still, some pilgrim authors engaged in a different way and wrote stinging critiques of Palestinian politics and culture. Palestinians often emerge in the extremes: either as educationally symbolic Bible characters, or as a benighted, backwater people.

Since many of these authors at times appear racist to the modern eye, it is important to note that this does not single them out from their broader culture in any particular or notable way, racism (or rather Anglo-Saxon superiority)

being a common perspective often taught from textbooks and the earliest school days as an essential part of education. The most popular geography textbook of the nineteenth century taught students that the torch of civilization had passed to America “and that Providence intended for U.S. Anglo Saxons the spotlight role in ushering the world into the new millennium.”<sup>1</sup> To Protestant Americans, Arabs were most commonly known as Turks, but they also sometimes designated them as Saracens, sons of Ishmael, “Moors, Persians, Tartars, Malays, Arabs, Bedouins, and Ishmaelites” without particularly careful attention to actual ethnicity, geographical origins, or religion.<sup>2</sup>

Before the era of Holy Land pilgrimage, American Protestants were schooled in Bunyan’s idea of the Christian life as an interior pilgrimage.<sup>3</sup> The doctrine of Manifest Destiny is also apparent in Protestant perspectives on Palestine. This chapter will show how their “discovery” and study of the Holy Land created a change in what many Americans saw when they looked eastward. During the Revolutionary War, Abigail Adams wrote her husband of a common concern of the time, namely, that the most fundamental problem or area of mental privation in New England education in general was “the little Intercourse we have with strangers.”<sup>4</sup> During the nineteenth century, Americans were seeking an escape or remedy for this isolation. They were hungry for knowledge of other lands and peoples. Palestinian Arabs, in their geographical setting, play a key role in this transformation, as I will show. Yet many of the cultural ideologies around Muslims that emerge reveal as much about American imaginations as they do about the character of Muslim beliefs.<sup>5</sup>

The most prevalent depictions of Palestinians in pilgrimage narratives by American Protestants fall into three basic categories. First, the prevalent or common colonialist mindset during the nineteenth century led American Protestants either to idealize Palestinians as living biblical figures in a life-sized diorama—or to at times view them as nonpersons without basic rights or claims to the land they’d inhabited for centuries. This was a paradoxical perspective that represents an inability to cope with the confusions resulting from the missed expectations brought to the cultural encounter. Second, the two strongest critical attitudes towards Palestinian culture by Protestants came in response to the treatment of women, particularly in the countryside, and from the perceived threat of robbery or attack by bandits. A third source of censure can be found in the resentment of the ownership of the holiest Christian sites by Muslims during the Ottoman Empire. For many Americans, “Islam produced immoderate sensuality rather than public chastity, easy indolence rather than hard work, and irrational fatalism rather than progressive reform.”<sup>6</sup>

Arab Christian communities were rarely mentioned if they were observed. The only careful narrative anecdote of an Arab Christian that I have found is in John Lloyd Stephens’s *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia*

*Petraea, and the Holy Land* published in 1838. Stephens was looking for a place to sleep, and he took refuge in their monastery and observed their worship. He described the priest as follows: "His fine head, his noble expression, his earnestness, his simplicity, his apparent piety, his long black beard and mustaches, his mean apparel and naked feet, all gave him the primitive aspect of an apostle."<sup>7</sup> Stephens reported that their "simplicity of character" and their "worshipping in all honesty and sincerity" caused him to "regret his unworthiness bitterly."<sup>8</sup> Stephens is a rare glimpse into the interaction between American and Arab Christian. He reported feeling a strong tie to the man, visiting in a country in which religion is the principal dividing line, and where he had heard his faith reviled and seen its leaders persecuted. Later in the nineteenth century, it would appear that such interactions as Stephens described occurred only rarely. Yet arguably the more common perspectives on Arab Palestinians (i.e., as figures in a biblical diorama or play) presented by pilgrimage narratives would endure to impact public popular opinion well into the twentieth century.

## AMERICAN PROTESTANTS AND PALESTINIAN HISTORY

Local Christians were often invisible to American Protestants in Jerusalem and the Holy Land during the second half of the nineteenth century (at least in their pilgrimage accounts). Yet, how many local Palestinian Christians were actually present in Jerusalem in the nineteenth century? Why weren't American Protestants interested in connecting their heritage to the early church, or why did Palestine become a Jewish Holy Land for Protestants as opposed to a Christian one?

Historically, medieval European Christians had viewed native Palestinians as wrongly and "impiously" occupying a Christian land.<sup>9</sup> Remaining local Christian communities were smaller and oppressed in the society. Yet during the twelfth century, Crusaders, Western European Christians who attempted to halt further Muslim expansion,<sup>10</sup> intermarried with the local Syrian Christian or Armenian population, remained in the land, and created a new Latin lineage in Jerusalem that would endure into the nineteenth century. Crusader accounts describe a thriving, diverse ethnic Christian community in Jerusalem, including Greeks, Jacobites, and Copts.<sup>11</sup> By the thirteenth century and the end of the Crusades, most Palestinian Christians were slaves and were forced to pay special tribute, yet they were characterized as a "flourishing and peaceful population," whose descendants continued to reside in Palestine into the nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

When two groups of Christians (American and Palestinian) converged in the Ottoman backwater of Palestine during the last decades of the nineteenth

century, many American Protestants had their first encounter with an Arab person—and they were perhaps unprepared to meet well-established Christians from other non-Protestant traditions there. The social context of Palestinian Christians differed significantly from that of American Protestants. Laboring under several hundred years of Turkish hegemony, Palestinian Christians suffered from an “insistent inferiority”<sup>13</sup> based upon their long subservient status. Therefore, they did not provide an organized challenge to the imperialistic dreams of Americans to exert greater control in Palestine (demonstrated below) or to colonialist attitudes viewing Palestinians as inferior. By the 1840s, some political protection for Christian Arab minorities had been established by Western nations under the aegis of securing pilgrims’ residence, shrines, and passage, but this had bequeathed “long legacies of ambivalence, perplexity, and suspicion” and “no patronage was without its vested interests.”<sup>14</sup> In short, Arab Christians divided their loyalties between foreigners interested in protecting Christian shrines and their homeland. When Western Christians encountered this ambivalence, they saw it as an example of “a lively independence of mind” for a benighted Arab people “accustomed to hierarchical control.”<sup>15</sup> As stated above, Western Protestants were also transformed by the Palestine encounter, although not in the ways one might expect. American Protestants were already accustomed to viewing spiritual life as an idealized pilgrimage through familiarity with Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.

American Protestants wanted to view the historical past in more vivid color, even if the most crucial journey of faith would still remain an interior one. The Ottoman period had schooled local Palestinian Christians to security and prudence, and when they were later forced to decide between being Arab and taking part in Western Christianity<sup>16</sup>—the fact that Western Christians had rejected many parts of local culture played an important role in the subsequently deepened alienation between American Protestants and Palestinian Christians.

The Ottoman Empire, of which Palestine was a small backwater, had been created by Turkish tribes in Anatolia during the fifteenth century and spanned more than six hundred years.<sup>17</sup> At its height during the sixteenth century, it included North Africa, the Middle East, Greece, and most of southeastern Europe to the gates of Vienna. Palestine was just one small state within it. During the nineteenth century, the rule of Mehmet Ali in Palestine (1831–1839) played a critical role in opening up Palestine to Western pilgrims, and with it the encounter between Western and Palestinian Christians. Mehmet Ali had embarked upon a program of expansion and modernization, dramatically increasing taxes and inciting localized urban rebellion due to native anger over the unbearable government levies.<sup>18</sup> When the Crimean War ended in 1856, the Ottoman Land Law of 1858 encouraged development and the expansion of private property, including farming outside of ancient

city walls and villages. From then until the end of the century, European and American influence—and the balance of geographical power—were primary forces shaping tiny Palestine's destiny, and leaders such as Mehmet Ali were forced to engage the wider interest. Sometimes local proposals to modernize or build roads were rejected by Ottomans in a savvy attempt to protect themselves from Western incursion. Holy sites were divided into multiple administrative units for safety and security, which kept any one overlord from exercising too much power.<sup>19</sup> Ottoman rulers had already established a tradition of "divide and conquer"—separating Christian groups and inciting antagonism between them in order to consolidate power and to maintain control. Palestinians were the most oppressed minority among the larger society that was already generally oppressed.

Yet many native residents of Palestine, whatever their religious beliefs, began to prosper more after the 1860s. Undoubtedly, the new wave of Protestant tourism was an economic force. Additionally, there was a cotton boom during the 1860s, when many Americans from northern states purchased cotton from Palestine due to the blockades on the American South during the Civil War, creating an instant urgent market for foreign cotton. Yet as the American South rebuilt itself and locust swarms attacked the Palestinian countryside in 1866, the region was once again plunged into a renewed cycle of poverty and famine. In Maria Susanna Cummins's 1860 novel of the East, she describes it as "a region where everything in Nature is liable to convulsions and overturns."<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, the agricultural industry as a whole grew steadily from the late 1860s onward, although visitors regarded the ancient farming methods as inefficient. As Western farming settlers, both Christians and Jews, began to arrive in large numbers during the last few decades of the nineteenth century, they were able to grab the best land from locals. The new immigrants followed the prevalent Western attitude, namely that Islam was "the instigator of moral chaos" that also "destroys the family through polygamy and concubinage."<sup>21</sup> Local Palestinians were pushed out of the premier areas into the less desirable ones; these areas would later become the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank.<sup>22</sup> Yet some Palestinians clearly benefited from the growing travel and pilgrim industry, and at least one American travel writer praised the competence and bravery of their hired Muslim helpers.<sup>23</sup> During the antebellum period, missionaries wanted to evangelize Muslims; they imagined "the removal of the Ottoman Empire as a necessary stage signaling the onset of the millennium of peace."<sup>24</sup> Protestant pilgrims after 1865, however, were more likely to focus evangelization efforts upon Eastern Christians.

Western Christians and Jews who shared the heritage of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament may have interpreted passages from it that admonished the Israelites to conquer native inhabitants of the Holy Land as relevant to

modern times. After the Exodus, the Israelites were commanded to annihilate every man, woman, and child in the Promised Land and to take control of it for themselves and their children (Deuteronomy 20:16–17). American Protestants were introduced to the Arab inhabitants of the Holy Land, the “Canaanites,” in a way that sometimes provoked disgust and fear. During the prior centuries, Americans had been steeped in negative perceptions of Arabs. Sermons and public documents of the American colonial period demonstrate that Islam and the Arab peoples were often held up as negative examples. Protestants were aware of Islam, not merely through the knowledge of thousands of Muslim African slaves working on colonial plantations in the Americas such as Bahia,<sup>25</sup> but also through the popular genre of narratives and stories of the East written either by or about North Americans enslaved in North Africa.<sup>26</sup> But they regarded Islam with a “paranoic repugnance,”<sup>27</sup> seeing Arabs as barbaric and monstrous, particularly because they were popularly regarded as natural pirates. One need only think of the lauded American hero and young naval captain Stephen Decatur, who led a successful publicized campaign against the Muslim Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean just prior to the War of 1812.<sup>28</sup>

Americans saw themselves as a chosen people and nation. The background for nineteenth-century attitudes can be found during the eighteenth century when Christian thinkers as different as Jonathan Edwards and Timothy Dwight had both referred to the church in America as “Zion” or “Jerusalem.”<sup>29</sup> Yet by the second half of the nineteenth century, the real Jerusalem was in Palestine, and it was a Jewish, not Christian, homeland. It was not uncommon for premillennialists to refer to Muslims as “the Eastern Horde,” or the “Babylonians, Scythians, Assyrians, Persians, or the mysterious tribe of Gog and Magog” in the antebellum period.<sup>30</sup> The popular doctrine of “Manifest Destiny,” coined by John O’Sullivan in 1845 in his *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, had enduring significance in American thinking throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup> In the popular 1860 novel by Maria Susanna Cummins, *El Fureidis*, the principal Arab character Abdoul is depicted as little better than a wild animal “with the covetous eye of his race,”<sup>32</sup> while the Englishman Meredith showed “that patient allegiance which is with his race a habit superior to almost every impulse.”<sup>33</sup> A tone of natural American dominance guided by loathing and trepidation of the untrustworthy Muslims had been clearly set before many of the Protestant pilgrims set foot upon the Holy Land.

## PROTESTANT MINISTERS AND ARABS

A culture that mistrusted Islam yet sensationalized all things Oriental was unprepared to face the more mundane realities of the East. An early traveler, John Lloyd Stephens, reports in 1838 that his treatment by Arabs and other sojourners in Sinai varied between the extremes, showing no particular established patterns of treatment in the days before the onslaught of steamship travellers:

as I passed among them in my European dress, [they] noticed me according to their various humours, some greeting me with a smile, some with a low and respectful salaam, and others with the black look and ferocious scowl of the bigoted and Frank-detesting Musselman.<sup>34</sup>

When Stephens traveled during the antebellum period, the occasional American, or “Frank” as they were more commonly known, was more of an oddity than an established presence. One congratulatory and positive note came from an English Episcopal missionary writing in 1840. He lauded the way that Muslims of all social classes forgot all earthly distinctions when they worshipped together, bowing down side by side.<sup>35</sup> Still, most other antebellum ministers from America were perplexed by the seeming global ascendancy and endurance of Islam. They at times referred to Islam in an eschatological light, with Islam’s reign acting as a “fifth trumpet” period in history that would be followed by a “period of peace” after 1830.<sup>36</sup> This divinely ordained “season” of Muslim rule was all a part of a larger divine plan.

On rare occasions Americans also transformed local Jews into New Testament figures. In one example, wildly popular travel writer Bayard Taylor runs into a Jewish man in Jerusalem and visually transforms him into Jesus:

I was sauntering slowly along, asking myself, “Is this Jerusalem?” when, lifting my eyes, they met those of Christ! It was the very face which Raphael has painted—the traditional features of the Saviour, as they are recognized and accepted by Christendom. . . . I could see nothing but the ineffable sweetness and benignity of that countenance.<sup>37</sup>

Taylor was walking along wondering how to find the Holy Land of the Bible, and when he encountered a local person, he felt that “he had just seen Christ.” This encounter with the divine on pilgrimage to Palestine reflects the common trend of assigning locals roles in the American Protestant biblical visual catalogue.

Many pilgrimage narratives after 1865 presented a more Christian Orient in which native Palestinians, no longer Islamic and transformed into biblical characters, played a starring role. After 1865 there was less concern ex-



pressed about the global ascendancy of Islam. Unlike the seedy characters in novels set in the East or fuel for eschatological fires described by missionaries, pilgrimage narratives in the second half of the nineteenth century presented the Muslim inhabitants of Palestine as vivid historical characters in a Bible setting—part of the quaint travel scenery. They were transformed from Muslims into biblical actors as in a diorama or play. As Benjamin Bausman, a German Reformed minister wrote of his pilgrimage, “nowhere have these primitive habits of the patriarchal times been retained in greater purity than among the Bedouins.”<sup>38</sup> John Lloyd Stephens wrote in the antebellum period as he traveled through Sinai that the “Bedouins, with their empty sacks, like the children of Jacob of old, journeying from a land of famine to a land of plenty.”<sup>39</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, examples such as this early one by Stephens can be found. This idea of direct, uninterrupted cultural continuity with the Bible times was prevalent among American Protestants—at least until World War I when many Arabs began to wear Western-style clothes.

By the 1920s, stylish literary traditions for viewing Palestinians had been established by decades of pilgrimage narratives. John Haynes Holmes, who began his career as a Unitarian minister after World War I, wrote, “What we did was not to see Nazareth, in the ordinary tourists’ style, but to feel it. We let our imagination play upon it.”<sup>40</sup> In viewing Palestine in this way, they participated in a tradition with its roots in the second half of the nineteenth century. Authors like Dwight L. Moody had insisted to their readers during the 1890s that once one visited the Holy Land, one would read the Bible as if for the first time, because everything in the landscape would shed new light. Similarly, Henry Van Dyke wrote in 1907 that he had never really read the Bible before his tour to the Holy Land, but he now realized that it was “a book written in an Oriental atmosphere, filled with the glamour, the imagery, the magniloquence of the East.”<sup>41</sup> Arabs living there provided access to the ancient biblical world and became unknowing actors in a Protestant Bible scene.

Sometimes, the “simplicity” of Arab life was held up to be the most valuable aspect of their culture for teaching. Palestinians became the new “noble savage.” A 1906 pilgrim wrote, “As I try to penetrate the meaning of Christ’s message I return, repeatedly, to this primitive [Palestinian] mode of human life.”<sup>42</sup> Visitors counted themselves fortunate to view the ancient world in Palestinians’ daily lives. One pilgrim wrote, “In spite of the fourth attempt to westernize Palestine (the previous attempts were made by the Greeks, the Romans, and the Crusaders), the country and its way of life remain remarkably unchanged.”<sup>43</sup> For many, the lack of technological advancement among Arabs provided a convenient alley through which to view ancient culture. Later, the lack of advancement among Arabs, their quaint “simplicity,” would become one rationale for political Zionism.<sup>44</sup> During the

1850s and 1860s, the Jewish population in Palestine was small and impoverished, not the forerunner in modern farming techniques that they would become at the turn of the century. Instead, one Protestant pilgrim during the 1850s described Jews in Palestine as even worse off than many Muslim Palestinians—they were “abject in the extreme, there are vast numbers who rely upon begging for their sustenance.”<sup>45</sup>

Some pilgrims, like William Seward in the 1870s, reported that “Mohammedism”<sup>46</sup> in Palestine was in decay, “only slightly better than paganism,” but still “a perversion of Christianity, derived from the Jews.”<sup>47</sup> He wrote that much of Muslim civilization was in decline. The mere fact that “no discipline, no order, wild gesticulations, and loud yelling voices unpleasant to the ear”<sup>48</sup> were common in Arab cultures provided evidence for the inferiority of both Arabs and Islam. Indeed, these were common views from Western Protestants whose own culture valued orderliness. In 1880, Laurence Oliphant, a British politician on pilgrimage, summed up a common Ottoman and Western view of Palestinian identity as backward tribesmen and itinerant wanderers:

It is worthy of note that when I submitted a scheme for colonizing the region to the government . . . the difficulty of dealing with the Arabs was never once suggested as an objection, nor did the nomad population seem in the eyes of the government to possess any prescriptive rights which should interfere with the purchase of this country by immigrants.<sup>49</sup>

Palestinians were commonly seen as nonpersons, “nomads,” and drifters without human rights who could be pushed aside by the colonists who purchased land. Philip Schaff wrote during the 1870s that “they [Baron Rothschild and Moses Montifiore] ought to buy Palestine and administer it on principles of civil and religious liberty.”<sup>50</sup> In this common view, westerners would bring a more civilized government to Palestine, one marked by social liberties and equality. The view of “a land without a people for a people without a land” formed in this milieu.

Protestant pilgrims also reported when they witnessed Arab cultural events such as dervish dancing, sword swallowing, eating of scorpions, live snake eating, fire eating, walking on fire, and the plunging of knives into one’s stomach. These practices were unsettling and rather less peaceful than a parlor Bible illustration—and one pilgrim summed up his feelings with the phrase “decidedly unpleasant.”<sup>51</sup> Many Protestant pilgrims throughout the last decades of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century agreed that entertainments offered by Arab culture were not only backward, but also “frozen” in time. American culture, on the other hand, was marked by general progress. One early pilgrim reported that the native dwellings were repugnant and filthy, “generally swarming with fleas and all sorts of

vermin.”<sup>52</sup> Yet the villages were still “now what we have every reason to suppose they were in the time of the Savior—a small place where every joy and sorrow that befalls a member of the little community is sympathized with by all the others.”<sup>53</sup> As late as 1911, a pilgrim still wrote, “though [Jerusalem] has changed, I do not think that the manners and customs, dress, and habits of the natives are much altered with the march of time.”<sup>54</sup> For many Protestants, resistance to the idea of the possibility of significant historical changes in Palestine naturally allowed them to view and present the Bible’s context—a living diorama.

### TRANSFORMING PALESTINIAN ARABS INTO BIBLICAL CHARACTERS

A survey of Protestant pilgrimage narratives shows that most Protestant ministers throughout the period between the end of the Civil War and the First World War in America commonly wrote that one could trace the customs in plain sight in Palestine straight back to Bible times. Americans often curiously thought of the Palestinians as ancient biblical figures, as Jesus himself, as well as Moses, Rebecca, David, and the disciples, and they gleaned information about Bible customs from the modern Ottoman Palestine culture. In the process, Palestinians became actors in the Protestant play—albeit as wooden representations that made the country appear more biblical, seemly, and holy.

Parodying the earliest era of Protestant pilgrimage narratives of Palestine in the late 1860s, Mark Twain, in his debut travel narrative, recounted his embarkation into the Holy Land on horseback in his lifetime bestselling book, *The Innocents Abroad*. While Twain may not have considered himself a pilgrim in the same sense as a pious Christian minister, but rather as a journalist and traveler or “sinner,” his purpose was to record and satirize the pilgrimage of devout American Protestants from the middle and upper classes of the United States for the American public. Like those who followed, Twain asserted that time had stood still in Palestine. While in Palestine Twain noted the disjuncting element to the scenery that the American Protestants represented and portrayed—the disconnect between the land of the Bible and the Protestants of the New Era:

But maybe you can not see the wild extravagance of my panorama. You could if you were here. Here, you feel all the time just as if you were living about the year 1200 before Christ—or back to the patriarchs—or forward to the New Era. The scenery of the Bible is about you—the customs of the patriarchs are around you—the same people, in the same flowing robes, and in sandals, cross your path—the same long trains of stately camels go and come—the same impressive religious solemnity and silence rest upon the desert and the mountains that were upon them in the remote

ages of antiquity, and behold, intruding upon a scene like this, comes this fantastic mob of green-spectacled Yanks, with their flapping elbows and bobbing umbrellas! It is Daniel in the lion's den with a green cotton umbrella under his arm, all over again.<sup>55</sup>

Twain remarks that while traveling through Palestine surrounded you with biblical scenery, and that the face of nature there had not necessarily changed much over the centuries, there is a striking disconnection between American Protestants' (the "Innocents") expectations and the actual land associated with the origins of their Protestant Christian religion.

American pilgrim G. E. Franklin wrote in 1910 that because "a respectable Moslem lady would never appear in public with her face uncovered," one could assume that it was "the exact custom of the Bible times."<sup>56</sup> In 1892, T. DeWitt Talmage, a prominent Protestant minister, told of visiting an ancient well where he saw a young woman. "There is Rachel watering the camels. There are young men and maidens looking at each other roughly bewitchingly."<sup>57</sup> The facing panel in his narrative is a Victorian engraving entitled, "modern women of Samaria." Two women recline on an oriental rug amid scattered pottery, their backs against a wall, arms draped over their heads, eyes half open, faces bared. Talmage described women that he called "modern," in seeming contradiction to the popular idea that Palestinians were replicas of ancients in plain sight in the modern world, alluding to another common American perception, namely, that Orientals were characterized by an exoticism and permissiveness now absent in American culture. Many noted Talmage's uncanny ability to make "oriental scenes strikingly real to his congregation."<sup>58</sup> Americans sought something original and different in Palestine, something at times seen as lacking at home—a connection to origins.

Looking for signs of the lost Bible times in Palestine, Henry Van Dyke wrote in 1912 of an elderly Palestinian, "the unspeakable solemnity of old Father Abraham's face is lit up, now and then, with the flicker of a resistless smile."<sup>59</sup> Van Dyke also saw the boy Jesus working with his father in 1908 when he peeked into a carpenter's shop in Nazareth.<sup>60</sup> Harry Emerson Fosdick, seeing a group of gaily dressed Arab women returning from a festival, "almost expected them to break into the ancient song, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."<sup>61</sup> Another American pilgrim exclaimed: "How completely the life of today in these Oriental lands copies that of two thousand years ago! Here in the court of a house are the two women grinding at the mill!"<sup>62</sup> Some pilgrims published their photographs of local Arabs with a biblical inscription. For example, a picture of a man and woman in a field is simply inscribed "Ruth and Boaz."<sup>63</sup> They provided a new Bible illustration for the modern era. One English pilgrim, Charles Leach, concluded: "Though the city has changed, I do not think that the

manners and customs, dress and habits of the natives are much altered with the march of Time.”<sup>64</sup> For the imaginative pilgrim, contemporary Palestinians became the lost heroes and heroines of the Bible.

Most nineteenth century pilgrims held that while Anglo-Saxon civilization had progressed steadily towards a goal, Palestine was frozen in time. Talmage wrote that the nineteen centuries that had passed since the time of Christ were like the “blink of an eye.”<sup>65</sup> He cited the steady progress of Anglo-Saxon thought and lamented the dire consequences of little contact between Arabs and the intellectually and culturally well-endowed West. Talmage went so far as to say that lack of contact with “Anglo-Saxonism”<sup>66</sup> stalled development among Arabs, while also enhancing their desirability as subjects.<sup>67</sup>

Like so many others of the final decades of the nineteenth century, Talmage called Palestine the “fifth gospel,” as if the land were a newly uncovered ancient text to be read and interpreted by modern, Anglo-Saxon analysts. Both the land and its people were a newly discovered text that provided a clearer link with the divine. For Talmage, “The Bible can never be what it was. It is fresher, truer, lovelier, grander, mightier!”<sup>68</sup> Philip Schaff wrote that “manners and customs are so stationary in the East, that you are transferred as if by magic to the age of the apostles, the prophets, and the patriarchs. . . . Palestine has not been ineptly termed ‘the fifth gospel.’”<sup>69</sup> The commonly used term “fifth gospel” among self-called Palestine pilgrims demonstrated the esteem in which these tours were held—almost as if they added to the existing biblical corpus as a latter day revelation for Americans.

Schaff also echoes the Protestant emphasis upon the unchanging out-of-doors while in Palestine, seeking the pilgrim experience in nature: In this sense, the Palestine “fifth gospel” was less subject to the historical errors in translation that occur over time within written texts.

For eighteen hundred seasons the earth has now renewed her carpet of verdure, and seen it again decay. Yet the skies and the field, the rocks and the hills, and the valleys around, remain unchanged, and are still the same as when the glory of the Lord shone about the shepherds, and the song of the multitude of the heavenly host resounded among the hills.<sup>70</sup>

The sameness and unchanging character of Nature allowed access to the primitive past of the Gospel and the Bible. Here simple truths were found in the annual rhythm as the seasons pass without changing, and the pilgrim can find them in natural laws. The physical landscape was superior to the written in some instances because it was thought to be impervious to human error. For example, one cannot move the mountains or change the hills—they remain stationary, solitary, and unchanging witnesses to the march of human

history, unlike the Bible, which becomes mutable and vulnerable once falling into human hands.

Phillips Brooks also focused on unchanging nature and the local Arabs who, like the hills, resisted time. He assured his readers that mountains and views were “just as they were” in Elijah’s time and that what he saw may have been actual scenes unchanged from the time of Christ. He reflected:

These last two weeks have been like a curious sort of dream; all the old Bible story has seemed so strangely about us, the great flocks of sheep that we meet everywhere, wandering with their wild shepherds over the hills . . . the sowers in the fields scattering their seed, half on the stony ground (it is almost paved with stones) and half among the great thorn bushes that grow up everywhere . . . and the families with mules and asses, women and children, who seem to have no purpose in their traveling but just to fill up your picture for you.<sup>71</sup>

Palestinians functioned as living history in the landscape partly because it was thought that their culture, like the mountains, had experienced little change. They seemed to fill a purpose of pervading and imbuing with truth a picture that might have otherwise been empty, or lacking—a sort of unpeopled Holy Land. Their role as actors in a Protestant biblical drama that eagerly sought the unchanged past unfolded in the pages of Protestant travel narratives, perhaps unbeknownst to them.

Much later, the post–World War I pilgrimage narratives demonstrate the effectiveness, enduring quality, and the legacy of the narratives from the turn of the century and before. For Harry Emerson Fosdick, traveling after World War I, the communion of old and new in Palestine seemed a bit mixed up. He noted that “in no country that I ever visited do the old and the new so strangely jostle as in Palestine.”<sup>72</sup> Fosdick wrote that “he who sees the land without eyes to see the long astounding play that has been staged upon it has not really seen the land at all.”<sup>73</sup> For many Protestants, it was crucial to view the land of Palestine as directly linked to Bible times. Fosdick, like others decades before him, transformed both Muslim and Christian Arabs into biblical Jews. In Bethlehem, he experienced a direct, living encounter with the biblical past: “I went out to Bethlehem one day of a purpose to neglect the later, larger memories of Christ’s nativity, and to think only of David. I found what I wanted. I saw him. He was a sturdy, Arab shepherd boy, ruddy, a lad with fine eyes and of a handsome appearance.”<sup>74</sup> Still later, at the Dead Sea, Fosdick came upon yet another David: “David came upon us, he was a handsome, strapping, youthful Arab. . . . I shall never think of David the fugitive again without re-seeing that picturesque and sturdy Arab youth who came in from the wilderness.”<sup>75</sup> For Fosdick, everywhere he looked in Palestine, he saw what he called “the origins.” Fosdick believed that the Arabs of the desert (the Bedouins) were the true, ancient Semites; indeed, “for a vivid

visualization of those early, crude beginnings one need not trust his imagination.”<sup>76</sup>

Similarly, John Haynes Holmes noted, “it seemed as though the years had rolled away, and we were back in the days of the Nazarene.”<sup>77</sup> The landscape was valuable simply because it was unchanged: “But these low, stone houses were not unlike those which Jesus knew; this shepherd and his sheep the young lad must have seen a thousand times; and the shelter of the hills, threaded by its deep paths and winding camel tracks, must have looked to him precisely as it did to me.”<sup>78</sup> Walking the same paths and seeing the same views as Jesus did became a popular part of pilgrimage tradition. On his pioneering “pilgrimage” decades earlier in the late 1860s, Twain had written, “Palestine is not changed any since those [Bible] days, in manners, customs, architecture, or people.”<sup>79</sup> Indeed, the sameness of Palestine is a theme running through half a century of American Protestant pilgrimage narratives.

Constant refrains of the “sameness” of Palestine and the Israel of Bible times suppress the reality of a culture that was perhaps only moderately biblical or “holy.” When American Protestants looked towards the East, they sought out new biblical material; they sought out a “fifth gospel” or an addition to the New Testament corpus. They created this somewhat frozen, mythical Holy Land, peopled with modern-day ancients and biblical characters. This provided a salve for a sense of loss related to progress and modernity in America and the controversies over the authorship and historicity of the Bible. While it was impossible to view the events of the Bible as they occurred two thousand years hence, it was possible to plainly view sights and events in Palestine and to feel secure about one’s perceptions.

For tourists, Palestine became a sort of imaginative diorama, a living history show, that gave meaning to the whole pilgrim experience. “Families who might be on a journey from Deuteronomy to the book of Kings walk behind laden donkeys; here and there a fine old Patriarch who reminds one of Abraham, leans on his staff to watch the daily train go past.”<sup>80</sup> At times, it became efficacious to metaphysically transform Islam in Palestine in order to weave the narrative tale of pilgrimage. In one case of imaginative transformation, a Muslim Imam becomes Jesus. In 1889, Matilde Serao wrote, “On my way out of the [Al Aksa] mosque I saw a holy man surrounded by his pupils. They sat in the shade eagerly listening to his discourse. He was teaching in the very spot where the greatest teacher in history [Jesus] sat amid the vanished splendor of Herod’s temple.”<sup>81</sup> Virtually any Middle Eastern person could become a part of the visual drama play or the holy biblical diorama that became the “fifth gospel” for American Protestants in these narratives. When it came to meaningful scenery, many agreed that Palestinians rarely disappointed. One pilgrim wrote:

The Arab fellahin, many of whom are descendants of the ancient Canaanite, still lives and thinks much as his forefathers of the Old Testament. Round Beersheba the wandering Bedouin carries into modern life not only the features but also the traditions of Abraham. Those of us who go to Palestine to seek out the past are therefore not disappointed.<sup>82</sup>

In this sense, the Palestinians could also become biblical characters, including the Canaanites, with whom the Israelites were often at war in the biblical narrative. The visual transformation of the Palestinians shows an inability to process their Turkish culture. The subgroups, and the general cultural complexity they undoubtedly faced in the Ottoman backwater. Uncertainty and a particular awkwardness ensued from any claims that Palestine was completely different from the locale of the biblical past. For American Protestants, the Turks and Palestinians presented a bewildering complexity and even at times a tragic otherness in the Holy Land. If some entered into this density of cultural perception and found themselves lost, they did not always present this to their readers, except under the rubric of personal doubt, later healed by the visual transformation. This visual transformation was dependent on a need to translate, to interpret, to give meaning, and to understand.

Many pilgrims praised Palestinians as “picturesque creatures.”<sup>83</sup> For a few, like Frances Willard, the imagination of the moderns as ancient biblical characters, however, did not allow her to make up for what she perceived as the reality. She wrote, “Nothing could well have been more out of harmony with the spot where tradition locates the baptism of our Savior than this tempest of Arabic and these belligerent gesticulations—I don’t know, though, but the thought rather heightened my impression of the spot.”<sup>84</sup> The difference between the locals and her image led Willard back to the biblical story. Unsatisfied by what she saw, she reflected upon a familiar childhood version. Most pilgrims, however, saw Arabs as Matilde Serao did—as a living icon of the historical Christ: “Once I met a shepherd painfully climbing the hill, leading his sheep, talking to them all the time, and on his shoulder he carried a lamb, holding it by the four legs as in pictures of the Good Shepherd.”<sup>85</sup> They coaxed out of it a newer “fifth gospel,” one that could be plainly seen and witnessed today.

## PROTESTANTS AND PALESTINIAN WOMEN

When not a part of the biblical scenery, Arab women were an important focus of moral and ethical commentary. American Protestant pilgrims were generally disgusted by the treatment of local women and felt compelled to take a moral stance, in spite of the ingrained lower status of women commonly accepted in America at this time. Elizabeth Cady Stanton summed up



contemporary feminist sentiments when she wrote in 1895 that “the Bible and organized religion had been more of a hindrance than a help to women’s emancipation.”<sup>86</sup> But many did not share Stanton’s views, and while discrimination against women in the U.S. was an ingrained part of life and culture, it was not commonly noticed in writing either by many women or men. While on pilgrimage, however, the rights of women became a chief concern for many American Protestants.

The popularity of the romanticized idea of Western male chivalry also led many turn-of-the-century male pilgrims to cherish the idea that women enjoyed a heightened esteem and particularly gentle treatment at home in America, again providing irrefutable evidence of the inferiority of Arab civilization. The outcry against the treatment of women in Arab cultures has been viewed as a constant refrain throughout the history of the encounter of West with East, stemming in part from medieval attitudes. Interestingly, the conspicuous consumption of Eastern luxuries was an emblem of power for American men, merchants of the nineteenth century, who liked to have themselves painted in oriental dress as “howajis” or travelers of the Islamic Orient. A deep romance with oriental masculinity is evident in the nineteenth century.<sup>87</sup> The exotic energies of Jihad were romanticized as reckless and devil-may-care, able to fortify manly resolve. Yet as they constantly expressed concern about Muslim women, some American men may have liked to imagine themselves chivalrously rescuing them from Muslim men.

At the turn of the century, the more pronounced secondary status of Palestinian women caused both alarm and comment among American men and women on pilgrimage. Arab culture was thus negatively assessed by contrasting the status of Arab women with that of more fortunate American women. While the descriptions of the treatment of Palestinian women in pilgrimage narratives are deeply disturbing in any era, it is difficult to know to what extent they should be taken at face value. Surprisingly, given that Palestinians were linked to ancient biblical characters by Protestants, they did not make the next step in concluding that the Bible arose from a profoundly patriarchal culture or that the “origins” or the “fifth gospel” were somehow also marred. Instead, the extreme sexism was thought to deviate from the biblical scenery and was mentioned in a different context. The accounts must be placed alongside the tendency to idealize Palestinians on the one hand in light of biblical history and to lambaste them for controlling Christian sites on the other.

One of the earliest missionaries to Palestine, Pliny Fisk, who traveled in 1823, reported that a local “Maronite began to beat his mother because she did not cook his victuals as he wished. Mr. Wolf went to him and reproved him severely for such conduct. The Turks said tauntingly, ‘he is a Christian.’”<sup>88</sup> In 1838 John Lloyd Stephens interviewed a Bedoin about the “ethics of the desert” regarding women. He found that a Bedoin man “must never

withhold protection and shelter from his sister.”<sup>89</sup> To do so would mean that either “he or one of his near relations would be killed.”<sup>90</sup> Stephens also was told that only in extraordinary exceptions would a Bedouin man keep more than one wife.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, a few writers gave concentrated, focused attention to the status of Palestinian women. There are two exceptions, Frances Willard, the founder of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, and Laurence Oliphant, who later emigrated to America and founded a religious society that sought to purify relations between the sexes. Willard visited every female school that she could while in Palestine and wrote careful descriptions.<sup>91</sup> Many other writers, however, gave more than passing mention to the plight of Palestinian women and their voices are included here to provide a more nuanced picture of the American-Palestinian cultural interaction.

E. G. Robinson was one of the first Americans to comment upon Palestinian women as a subject unto themselves in the early years of American pilgrimage (1838). While he noticed local peasant women moving about the towns, he complained that women of the upper classes were wholly inside, “kept out of view,”<sup>92</sup> a comment which revealed his curiosity about them, but also showed interest in this hidden group of more privileged women.

Mark Twain wrote humorous yet distressing passages for his American audience about the sale of girls for marriage in the Middle East in the late 1860s. The concern with the “women as property” theme is evident. Circassians<sup>93</sup> were thought to be the most beautiful in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>94</sup> For Twain, the circumstances were somewhat ludicrous, and he therefore imagined how a “market report” on the sale of girls might appear in an American newspaper report:

Slave Girl Market Report: Best brands Circassians, crop of 1850, L200; 1852, L250; 1854, L300. Best Brands Georgian, none in market; second quality, 1851, L180. Nineteen fair to middling Wallachian girls offered at L130 @ 150, but no takers; sixteen prime A 1 sold in small lots to close out—terms private. . . . The Georgians now on hand are mostly last year’s crop, which was unusually poor. The new crop is a little backward, but will be coming in shortly. As regards its quantity and quality, the accounts are most encouraging. In this connection we can safely say, also, that the new crop of Circassians is looking extremely well. His Majesty the Sultan has already sent in large orders for his new harem, which will be finished within a fortnight, and this has naturally strengthened the market and given Circassian stock a strong upward tendency. Taking advantage of the inflated market, many of our shrewdest operators are selling short. There are hints of a “corner” on Wallachians. There is nothing new in Nubians. Slow Sale.

Eunuchs—None offering; however, large cargoes are expected from Egypt today. I [Twain] think the above would be about the style of the commercial report. Prices are pretty high now, and holders firm; but, two or three years ago, parents in a starving condition brought their young daughters down here and sold them for even

twenty and thirty dollars, when they could do no better, simply to save themselves and the girls from dying of want. It is sad to think of so distressing a thing as this, and I for one am sincerely glad the prices are up again.<sup>95</sup>

Even knowledge of the recently abolished slave markets in America did not fully prepare the American pilgrim for the sight of the public sale of girls in the Middle East. The unthinkable idea of selling one's daughter as property for cash was shocking to many Americans. Twain gives it a humorous twist by likening these sales to those of livestock or other commodities.

Frances Willard paid particular attention to the status of women when she was on pilgrimage in the 1870s. She noted that the faces of many Muslim women were completely covered—not even their eyes were allowed to show, just as Willard had seen in Egypt.<sup>96</sup> Willard was sufficiently moved by the plight of these women to make contributions to local charities run by Westerners: “Naturally, I was most interested in the girls—the condition of women is so abject here, I am so fortunate to help lift from their degradation several of these—in my lifetime, and this will bless not only them but their children and their children's children.”<sup>97</sup> She also noted that women visited, stayed at, and socialized at graveyards, congregating with their children, “patient and still,” next to the “lonesome mounds”<sup>98</sup> and reported seeing some bold women at the Fountain of the Virgin in Nazareth, an area she pointed out as having a historic, native Christian population. Since women were not allowed in some of the mosques and had limited areas of freedom to move about, they “resort to the cemeteries to wail for the dead.”<sup>99</sup> She had been looking for “Madonna faces” but found none, but then saw a group of women and called them “modern Rebeccas” with “bright and saucy faces.”<sup>100</sup> On a positive note, Willard also visited a school for girls with a bilingual Syrian woman as the head teacher. Willard wrote that the teacher “conducts her examination with great dignity and skill.”<sup>101</sup>

Laurence Oliphant, British immigrant to America and founder of an American religious colony while traveling in the 1880s, commented on the sale of women in Arab cultures when he visited a tribal sheikh. It is a rare comment found in the literature upon the status of women that shows the writer retroactively reflected upon Western culture in light of the Palestinian women Protestants viewed as oppressed:

The first inquiry the sheikh made was whether we had brought our harems with us. This might possibly have been with a view to trade, for the Ansariyeh have no idea of a woman except as a marketable animal without a soul, and their marriages are all distinct sales for money down, and not indirect ones, as they so often are with us [emphasis mine].<sup>102</sup>

Oliphant's musings reveal his discomfort at the overt degradation of women through an open system of bartering and cash sales. Others simply reported

that “women are still bought and sold” in Palestine.<sup>103</sup> The practices of polygamy and harems also shocked and disgusted Protestants unaccustomed to hearing and witnessing such practices. One writer described the practice of polygamy in terms of the layout of the household—since the Muslim law forbid any man to keep two wives in one house, the “house” became “an aggregation of independent rooms, or suites of rooms.”<sup>104</sup> Divorce was easy for Muslim men, pilgrims reported that they need only say “cover they face and return to thy father’s house, I am done with thee,” and the wife went home.<sup>105</sup>

Oliphant, a British citizen who later emigrated to America, further noted that poor treatment of Palestinian girls began at birth when they were put carelessly aside, covered unclothed, and repeatedly refused nourishment, while their male counterparts were pampered. The disappointed new father would have heard the phrase “blessed be the bride,” reminding him that the girl would be worth more than livestock when she came of age and he could send her off.<sup>106</sup> Only Muslim girls hardy enough to survive neglectful treatment were “capable of surviving the fatigue and privation they have to undergo for the rest of their lives.”<sup>107</sup> A local group told Oliphant that women were the “seed of Satan” and ought not to be taught religion. In some cases, daughters were sold into marriage, where religious services were not thought necessary. Reportedly, as they entered their new homes, the new husband struck his bride two symbolic, yet real, blows as a foretaste of what she should expect if disobedient and as proof of her secondary status and subjection.<sup>108</sup> Of course, American pilgrims such as Oliphant responded with loathing and violent denunciation of practices seen as savage or inhumane.

A young turn-of-the-century pilgrim author described the role Arab daughters had in relation to Arab sons and the raw violence that occurred between children at a young age. An attack upon a “little girl” by a “small boy” who was forbidden by his parents to sit where he wanted occurred when the boy “vented” in a “violent rage.” “Screaming he darted at her, dug his fingers into her hair, and shook her, kicking at her with his feet and legs like one possessed . . . the little victim uttered not a sound, only shrank back and cowered to the ground with a stubborn, set, face.”<sup>109</sup> The author marveled that no adults in the vicinity seemed to notice or to care. After asking, he was told that “the boys, especially are allowed to have their own way. The sisters have to yield in every particular.”<sup>110</sup> A pilgrim noted for his readers that Muslim girls were married “in their twelfth or thirteenth year, sometimes when they are only ten years old.”<sup>111</sup>

An exception to the purely negative view of the lives of Muslim women in the harem can be found in Maria Susanna Cummins’s popular 1860 novel, *El Fureidis*. Cummins demystifies the harem as a freighted, negative symbol of Islam where women are kept as property or prisoners, using it as a maternal space. The novel takes the heroine into the interior of a Bedouin harem,

representing it as a “gendered, nurturing, domestic social space for women . . . at once the storehouse, kitchen, bedroom, and nursery of the household.”<sup>112</sup> Such a depiction reframes the harem as a safe space for women. But a different perspective can be found in missionary Sarah Barclay Johnson’s “Appeal in Behalf of Oriental Females” in 1858. Johnson depicts the harem as abject slavery to the men who live like lords and she insists that the harem makes companionate marriage impossible.<sup>113</sup>

Another exception to the widely reported harsh treatment of women and girls by nineteenth-century travel writers was found among the Druse (or Druze), an eclectic group<sup>114</sup> which has historically had excellent relations with the West and the state of Israel.<sup>115</sup> Oliphant observed in the 1880s that among the northern Druse hill country peoples:

Instead of that shrinking, cringing manner which the Moslem female thinks fit to exhibit in the presence of a stranger of the other sex—who in fact feels guilty of an impropriety if he dares so much as to address her—the Druse woman boldly talks to him from behind her veil, daringly, and yet not immodestly “fixing” him with her one eye, and evidently much too proud to be a victim to bashfulness or timidity.<sup>116</sup>

While Druse women were certainly wealthier and better treated than their Muslim sisters, they remained veiled, protected and less well treated than women in Western societies.

Another interesting trend in America shows that some American women may have had a perception that Eastern forms of dress could signify liberation. Capitalizing on the association with Oriental power, women’s rights advocates wore the “bloomer style” of Turkish pants as a symbol of liberty and garment reform during the 1850s.<sup>117</sup> Clearly, the confining rigidity of domestic duties, whalebone corsets, and heavy garments of the American woman were seen as less desirable than the Eastern style to many. It was not without good reason that they admired the Turkish pantaloons:

The massive “Great Pyramid” style of dress subjected the female body to ten to fifteen pounds of material made up of up to six petticoats with padded bustles made from eighteen to twenty yard of starched flannel or muslin. Tightly laced corsets, sometimes made of whalebone, necessary to keep this weight from falling off the body further immobilized freedom of movement.<sup>118</sup>

While the outcries against the treatment of Arab women may have been a double standard, for some American women the East did not signify repression, but rather another option or openness to other alternative modes of living.

There is, however, and undeniable theme of distress over the observation of Palestinian women. Clorinda Minor writes of the women of Jerusalem who wake at midnight to turn millstones until morning—thus avoiding the

full heat of the sun. She grieved to think of the “weakness, suffering, and toil which occasion it.”<sup>119</sup> In many cases the roughest labor was done by women in Turkish Palestine. As late as 1900, the treatment of women still provoked both despair and lament for American Protestants Jesse Lyman Hurlbut and Charles Foster Kent (New York Methodist Episcopal clergyman and University of Chicago and Yale professor, respectively), authors of a stereoscope guide, who both bemoaned what they saw:

How forlorn and Hopeless [the women] look! The lot of woman in a land where almost every family is desperately poor, and where women are regarded as little better than beasts of burden, is such as to give all the women of the working class a tired, wretched, almost despairing look.<sup>120</sup>

Of course, Hurlbut and Kent noted that poverty contributed to the suffering of women anywhere, but they point out that in particular, being treated as animals heightens the visible misery and anguish in a poignant way. Muslim women were not allowed to work outside of their homes anywhere that men also worked (such as the market or in trades), and therefore they were found “doing the hardest kind of manual labor, as in Bohemia or Hungary.”<sup>121</sup>

Not every pilgrim, however, felt compassion for the women—some felt anger and disgust and erupted into cruel invectives against the women themselves. A. Goodrich-Freer wrote that he saw three varieties of Palestinian women: “The womanly woman, the ass-woman, stupid and self-willed, and the dog-woman, who, like the dogs of the East, screams for the least thing, and delights in running about the streets and stirring up unpleasant matters better left alone.”<sup>122</sup> Goodrich-Freer laments in his pilgrimage narrative that the ugliness of local women has been “too frequently multiplied” through human reproduction—and concludes that “in fact the woman of the East seems to be, in many respects, nearer to the brute than the human creation.”<sup>123</sup> Interestingly, he praises the Muslim men, “in spite of allegations to the contrary, for their certain chivalrous recognition of the higher womanly qualities.”<sup>124</sup> Goodrich-Freer provides a rare alternative to the sorrowful comments of others who expressed pity and outrage; however, his attitude towards the local women is somewhat unusual for its insulting, sexist tone.

After 1910, American pilgrims began to lament the loss of the traditional garb worn by Muslim women and the customary ways of life because the scenery, particularly among the Palestinian women, was seemingly becoming less authentic. By the first decades of the twentieth century, wealthy Arab women, either Christian or Muslim, were wearing Parisian fashions rather than the robes their grandmothers had worn, and veiling was seen less and less often. Such changes made the women less biblical and certainly less scenic or Oriental. Departure from the old ways meant that “innumerable old customs which illustrate Bible scenes and incidents . . . are fast dying out.”<sup>125</sup>

Some wanted the customary ways to endure because they were good for teaching, photography, and tourism.

In summary, while the treatment of women was shocking to many pilgrims who often expressed compassion, it also quickly fed into a broader stream of disgust for Arab culture in general. One writer even seemed to agree that Palestinian women resembled the animals they were treated like. Though at times supporting the secondary status of women in America, they still reacted strongly to a situation that seemed so much worse. Yet pilgrims did not rejoice as the Muslim woman modernized. After 1900, it is not uncommon to hear complaints about the modern dress of Arab women. Also, the later the pilgrimage narrative, the less outrage was expressed about the treatment of women, because significant Western influence took place in Palestine by the first decades of the twentieth century.

By World War I, picturesque photo opportunities of native women in native dress were becoming scarcer and soon would disappear completely. The mixed outrage and compassion expressed by writers about the treatment of women must be read alongside the idealization of Palestinians as pleasant scenery, and the anger because Muslims controlled Christian shrines as discussed below. Righteous ire heightened the distance between the two groups of people and helped to enlarge the unfortunate chasm of misunderstanding and miscommunication between American Protestants and Palestinian Muslims. Before the end of Ottoman rule, however, Muslim control of Christian sites increasingly became a greater source of consternation.

### “MUSLIMS CONTROL CALVARY”: PROTESTANT ANGER

Control of Christian holy sites by “inferior” Muslims was especially aggravating to Protestant pilgrims. Summarizing the view of many, Phillips Brooks wrote in the 1870s, “It is sad to see how Moslem power rules here. The very keys of the Holy Sepulcher are kept by the Mohammedans!”<sup>126</sup> Muslims had also refused to allow most Protestants to tour their holy sites such as the interesting and oriental Al Aqsa Mosque (sitting atop the ancient temple mount in Jerusalem) until the 1870s.<sup>127</sup> Phillips Brooks’s comments much later on the eve of the British victory in Palestine (1918) echo decades of American Protestant frustrations. Political events occurring in Palestine were interpreted more and more in a postmillennial light due to the growing influence of Scofield Bibles<sup>128</sup> among broad swaths of American fundamentalists and some evangelicals after the turn of the century. There was also a new sense of outrage about Muslim ownership in pilgrims’ accounts. The situation was further politicized by the fact that Muslim peddlers crowded about Christian areas shouting, while “the Mohammedans never allow any-

thing of this kind to profane their places of worship.”<sup>129</sup> Increasingly, Palestine bore the weight of a religious myth, and some Protestants wanted Palestine in the role that they claimed the Bible had predicted.

The low regard in which Christians were publicly held in some areas of Palestine such as Damascus was well publicized in the 1869 publication of *Innocents Abroad*, Twain’s bestselling book during his lifetime. Christian pilgrims were regularly treated roughly at pilgrimage sites. One pilgrim wrote, “The Turkish soldier chuckles with concealed delight as he pitches into this frantic mass of hated infidel foes with the bayonet or the butt end of his gun.”<sup>130</sup> Twain was angered by the disdain of the Muslims towards Christians and wondered at the recent global alliances that had protected the Ottomans:

in Damascus they so hate the very sight of a foreign Christian that they want no intercourse whatever with him; only a year or two ago, his person was not always safe in Damascus streets. It is the most fanatical Mohammedan purgatory out of Arabia. Where you see one green turban of a Hadji elsewhere (the honored sign that my lord has made the pilgrimage to Mecca), I think you will see a dozen in Damascus. The Damascenes are the ugliest, wickedest looking villains we have seen. All the veiled women we had seen yet, nearly, left their eyes exposed, but numbers of these in Damascus completely hid the face under a close-drawn black veil that made the woman look like a mummy. If ever we caught an eye exposed it was quickly hidden from our contaminating Christian vision; the beggars actually passed us by without demanding bucksheesh; the merchants in the bazaars did not hold up their goods . . . on the contrary, they only scowled at us and said never a word. . . .

It is soothing to the heart to abuse England and France for interposing to save the Ottoman Empire from the destruction it has so richly deserved for a thousand years. It hurts my vanity to see these pagans refuse to eat of food that has been cooked for us; or to eat from a dish we have eaten from; or to drink from a goatskin which we have polluted with our Christian lips . . . I never disliked a Chinaman as I do these degraded Turks and Arabs.<sup>131</sup>

The disdain of the Muslim Arabs was difficult for Christians to bear; the overall disorder of the society became a typical source of anger or frustration for Protestant pilgrims. Even the desperate commerce of locals living solely by their wits seemed to be stopped at Damascus, which was more extreme in religious practice than many other areas, and the effect was certainly insulting.

Philip Schaff wrote in 1877 that in the Orient, all is “primitive,” and he carefully noted the “semi-barbarous character and condition of the inhabitants, both Moslems and nominal Christians.”<sup>132</sup> Schaff was nevertheless reminded of the ancient Jewish past, and, as he bargained with an Oriental, he reminded himself of Abraham bargaining at Ephron.<sup>133</sup> Phillips Brooks considered the Palestinians “dirty” and “rascally looking” people who inhabited “vile hovels.”<sup>134</sup> Arabs were thought to be particularly conniving in a



unique way, due to popular cultural associations with the East. Certainly, their housing arrangements and lack of sanitation appeared unpleasant to many Americans.

When T. DeWitt Talmage traveled to Palestine as a pilgrim in 1890, he was so dismayed at Muslim control of Calvary that he attempted to barter with the owners of the site for its purchase, "for the sake of all Christendom."<sup>135</sup> In one of his few references to Bedouins,<sup>136</sup> Talmage calls them "bandits" and emphasizes that his weapons and guards protect him from their "treachery." Likewise, Dwight Moody reported that he was deeply wounded by the sight of Muslim guards at the Holy Sepulcher and at the Church of the Nativity.<sup>137</sup> Similarly, Henry Van Dyke wrote that "it hurts to see it all in Moslem hands."<sup>138</sup> Muslim or Islamic ownership contradicted the new American mythology of the Holy Land because it made important sites appear less biblical. This was because they appeared in a particularly Muslim light, impacted by their keepers and shaped by Islamic culture. Yet the rough treatment was indiscriminate. One pilgrim watched the local trial of a Muslim Arab accused of stealing, writing that they "cruelly ill-treated him. It was a painful scene, such as generally occurs at a criminal trial in Palestine."<sup>139</sup>

Pilgrims were jeered in some towns. Phillips Brooks, traveling on horseback, was angered at the lack of respect shown. While passing through Samaria, Brooks noted, "As we passed through the streets, the small boys cursed at us and spit at us. Think of that for a free American to stand!"<sup>140</sup> For many Americans, Arab control was galling, and Arab disrespect heightened the sense of injury.

The lack of modern cleanliness, comforts, and manners, however, and hygienic standards was not always a negative thing for those on pilgrimage who wanted to view the origins of Christianity. Henry Van Dyke, for example, wanted to eschew "civilization" while in the Levant and escape into the past. He wrote, "I want to get away from here; to return into the long past, which was also the hidden present, and to lose myself a little there, to the end that I will find myself again."<sup>141</sup> Yet, in spite of the benefits, an undercurrent of damaged pride was evident, and the hostility could be mutual. Frances Willard experienced enmity specifically because she was a Christian: "the shepherds in their long, striped robes call to us from the hilltops where their tall forms stand out against the sky, cursing us for a pack of Christian dogs."<sup>142</sup> In another case, Arab boys demanding money snatched Willard's bridle. When she grabbed it back and tried to whip them, they threw a stone at her. She wrote that after this she "made good retreat from such heathenish neighbors and rode down into the valley."<sup>143</sup> The threat of violence and religious resentment kept nerves on edge. An early pilgrim, William Prime, who went on pilgrimage in the 1850s guarded his American flag with rifles:<sup>144</sup>

The American flag was floating gaily over Miriam's tent. It was the first time, I have reason to believe, that had it ever been seen in Syria, except guarded by officers of the American government. . . . I determined to trust its safety to revolvers, in the hands of 2 American travelers, supported by six Arabs who would have died for us, and Miriam volunteered, with her repeater, to help in case of need. It was never taken down from that day 'til we left Syria . . . and it was never insulted by look or word, so far as my knowledge extended.<sup>145</sup>

In a land that could be hostile, the American flag was an important symbol needing special protection. Ideas regarding the benefits of Christian civilization were important during the activist heyday of foreign missions, and Americans assumed that conformity to their American culture of Christianity would benefit others.<sup>146</sup> This is true not only of Americans and Protestants, but of Western countries in general, an attitude that underpins the whole colonial movement, which is also related to the missionary movement.

In the 1850s, Prime had been turned away from the Dome of the Rock (the purported shrine at the location of Christ's crucifixion) in Jerusalem, a site jealously guarded from Christian eyes. He was refused entrance because the guards had been "grieved to see profane eyes turned in idle curiosity to what they had been accustomed to venerate."<sup>147</sup> In the 1870s, Philip Schaff approached the tombs of the patriarchs in Machpelah with trepidation and "not without some danger from Moslem fanaticism."<sup>148</sup> Religious tensions were sometimes also directed towards the Jews. Caroline Hazard lamented in 1908 that if the Jews "hadst known,—if thou hadst known the time of thy visitation! Then, indeed, would Jerusalem not be a Moslem city, as it is this day."<sup>149</sup> Writers lament that because Christ was rejected by the Jews, Jerusalem's "palaces are long since leveled to the ground; and the haughty Muslim now for ages treads her glory in the dust."<sup>150</sup> For some, like E. G. Robinson as early as the 1840s, the pilgrimage experience was marred by Muslim scorn at the Christian holy sites:

The whole scene indeed was to a Protestant painful and revolting . . . but to be in the ancient city of the Most High, and to see these venerated places and the very name of our holy religion profaned by idle and lying mummeries; while the proud Musselman looks on with haughty scorn; all this excited in my mind a feeling too painful to be borne; and I never visited the [Holy Sepulcher] again.<sup>151</sup>

Broken expectations and anger at the "haughty Moslem control" of Christian sites was a common theme in narratives as pilgrims encountered Islam. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, many interpreted events in Palestine in light of God's ultimate plan that would include the end of time, according to the practice of interpreting all events in Palestine, both political and social, in light of Christian millennialism. One pilgrim saw the destruction of the Temple and the Arab control in light of God's overall design for

human history. This was in spite of the fact that these events were more than a thousand years apart, yet because it fit neatly into the popular new millennial framework influenced by Scofield and some evangelicals he wrote: "I believe, however, that it was the purpose of God Almighty to destroy the temples utterly that man would turn from the contemplation of sticks and stones unto him who said, 'destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.'"<sup>152</sup>

As Zionism was increasingly discussed in pilgrimage narratives, so was Muslim control of Christian sites. In fact, many Christians saw Jewish ownership as preferable. They thought that those more civilized or "fit" were destined to rule. Benevolent paternalism, however, ought to be shown to Arabs. Harry Emerson Fosdick wrote:

The Jew comes with the very qualities which the Arab lacks—energy, vitality, aggressiveness, knowledge of the methods of modern science—and the Arab has not the faintest chance in competition. . . . This knowledge makes the Arab afraid and angry and the Jew confident and aggressive.<sup>153</sup>

Thus, many from the West came to believe that, like children, Palestinians must be protected from themselves by the benevolence of their superiors. In one passage, John Haynes Holmes wrote that Arabs are "savage tribesmen," and he concluded that Palestine offers "a picture from the Arabian Nights if there ever was one!"<sup>154</sup> Like interesting folk characters in a story's visual diorama, the Arabs presented a fascinating story but were not seen as possessing special rights to the land.

With controversy around Muslim control of Christian sites, the treatment of Palestinian women, and the nearly ubiquitous tendency to view all Arabs, both Christian and Muslim, as biblical scenery, few commented upon Christian Arabs as fellow Christians. Providing a rare exception, E. G. Robinson described Arab Christians as "thoroughly oriental." He notes, for example, that Arab Christian women were kept out of view just like their Muslim sisters. Finally, Robinson marvels at the historical nature of the Arab Christian community but refuses to make a connection between the churches he sees before him and those of ancient times:

That Christian churches existed at Ramleh before the age of the crusades, we know from the testimony of Eutychius, Patriarch of Alexandria. . . . Thus there is no [physical] historical evidence, that the spot in question was ever occupied by a Christian church at all; and also no traditional evidence, reaching further back than the 16th century.<sup>155</sup>

It was extremely difficult to make assessments about the historicity of Palestinian Christian communities based upon the visual evidence in the nineteenth century. In general, Christian pilgrims did not notice Palestinian

Christians as Christians *per se*, nor were they viewed as significantly different from Muslims. Discussed only rarely, in one case they are contrasted with Muslim Arabs:

It seems rather hard upon the Moslems, whether they be Arab, or Turk, or Slav, that the sympathies of the public should be entirely withheld from them on the ground that they do not bear the name of Christian, even though they may be of the same race. As a rule the Moslem peasant is, in fact, far more worthy of their sympathy, for he is more oppressed, more honest, more orderly, and quite industrious.<sup>156</sup>

The above quotation is an exception to the general rule. Arab Christians were often invisible to the Protestant pilgrim unless they happened to be part of the scenic diorama of Palestine that enhanced the biblical nature of the pilgrim experience. Trapped in the past as frozen figures in a black and white photograph, they ceased to exist for readers as living Christians or contemporaries with particular rights.

In summary, American Protestant pilgrims wrote accounts of their initial encounters with Palestinian Arabs, both Muslim and Christian, for an eager American public. As the Ottoman Empire's influence declined, many expressed protest and anger at Muslim (or Islamic) control of Christian holy sites, seeking to make the Holy Land more biblical (at least in print) and preferring Jewish control, in spite of interpreting modern Arabs as ancient biblical characters. Palestine underwent swift modernization during the second half of the nineteenth century as the country opened up to waves of foreigners. Once a stagnant, neglected backwater, natives of Palestine saw a new commercial class of immigrants and service providers emerge in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Many Western visitors to Palestine viewed Arabs as ignorant, benighted, and resistant to civilization. They were thought to be locked in an isolated society and frozen in the ancient past, providing authentic oriental scenery for pilgrims. The treatment of women among the peasantry appalled most Western pilgrims. After the turn of the century, women's roles and attire began to change. All of a sudden, veils began to disappear and Palestinian women began to wear Western clothes. Though they had previously objected to the seemingly brutal treatment meted out to women, some pilgrims expressed disappointment over these changes, since it made the scenery less authentic. Harems had provided a tantalizing glimpse into traditional oriental life.

Many Protestants expressed resentment and frustration at Muslim administration of Christian holy sites and began to reflect upon the future of Palestine. Yet Protestants also thought that Palestinians, when they were not lordling it over Christian holy sites, represented the lifestyle, dress, and culture both of biblical Jews and New Testament figures, from Abraham to Jesus,

because they believed that time had stood still in Palestine. At the same time, they thought of Arabs as unfit to rule, and interpreted modern Palestine under a Christian rubric. Also, they increasingly looked for a Jewish role in the Holy Land in accordance with their millennial hopes. American Protestants largely ignored Arab Christians, and small outbreaks of hostility, sometimes violent, between Arabs and the Westerners became a norm. By the turn of the century, many Americans were ready to see Palestinians moved out of the centers and into the corners, out of the way of developments. The most popular expression of this point of view would be Zionism, the subject of the next chapter. Zionism was a movement from the 1880s that sought to bring Jews to settle in Palestine, building a modern “third commonwealth.” The next chapter will show how Protestant pilgrims and pilgrimage narratives played a critical role in the early acceptance of Zionism in America, as well as discussing the role of Protestant millennialism in shaping expectations for Jews in Palestine.

## NOTES

1. Bruce A. Harvey, *American Geographics: U.S. National Narratives and the Representation of the Non-European World, 1830–1865* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 54.

2. Timothy Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6.

3. In one example, the connection between the physical pilgrimage and the spiritual one is made explicit in the Preface of a pilgrimage narrative from 1880: “And now, with the cheerful hope and fervent prayer that our pleasant pilgrimage together through the earthly Canaan may hereafter be resumed and perpetuated in the heavenly, the author bids his courteous reader farewell.” Excerpted from William M. Thomson, D. D., *The Land and the Book: or, Biblical Illustrations Drawn From the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery of The Holy Land: Southern Palestine and Jerusalem* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1859), preface.

4. Qtd. in Woody Holton, *Abigail Adams* (New York: Free Press, 2009), 115.

5. Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism*, 7.

6. Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism*, 10.

7. John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1838), 82.

8. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt*, 83.

9. H. Dajani-Shakeel, “Natives and Franks in Palestine,” in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands: Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, eds. Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi (Bloomington: Medieval Studies Institute, 1990), 169.

10. Between 1095 and 1291, there were numerous military expeditions to the Holy Land from the West. Many saw these as a means of redemption and for the expiation of sins by participants. A siege of Jerusalem began in 1099, and many of the soldiers participating in Crusades were German, French, or Italian. Some of their descendants still reside in Palestine.

11. Dajani-Shakeel, “Natives and Franks in Palestine,” 179.

12. Dajani-Shakeel, “Natives and Franks in Palestine,” 181.

13. Kenneth Cragg, *The Arab Christian: A History in the Middle East* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 121.

14. Cragg, *The Arab Christian*, 123.

15. Cragg, *The Arab Christian*, 128.

16. Cragg, *The Arab Christian*, 135.
17. The Eastern or Asian portion of Turkey.
18. Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), chapter 1.
19. Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 91.
20. Maria Susanna Cummins, *El Fureidis* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1860), 236.
21. A. Wessels, *Arab and Christian? Christians in the Middle East* (Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1995), 167–68.
22. George M. Frederickson, “Colonialism and Racism,” in *The Arrogance of Race: Historical Perspectives on Slavery, Racism, and Social Inequality* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 218–21.
23. “Our Bedawin friends here stood us in good stead; sticking their tufted spears before our tents, they mounted their steeds and formed a military cordon around us. But for them we should have been run down, and most of our effects trampled upon, scattered and lost. Strange that we should have been shielded from a Christian throng by wild children of the desert—Muslims in name, but pagans in reality. Nothing but the spears and swarthy faces of the Arabs saved us.” Excerpted from W. F. Lynch, *Narrative of the United States’ Expedition to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1849), 260–61.
24. Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism*, 89.
25. For more information on Muslim slave populations and the role of Jihad see João José Reis and Arthur Brakel, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Washington: Johns Hopkins Studies in Atlantic History and Culture, 1995).
26. Thomas S. Kidd, “Is It Worse to Follow Mahomet than the Devil? Early American Uses of Islam,” *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 72, no. 4 (December 2003): 766.
27. Kidd, “Is It Worse,” 770.
28. The Barbary pirates were legendary among most sailors and greatly feared all over the maritime world. They were known as fierce warrior Muslims (clearly linked with Islam), and prior to Decatur’s brave battle against them virtually every nation that sailed off the coasts of North Africa had to pay annual tribute to them for safe passage.
29. Robert T. Handy, *The Holy Land in American Protestant Life, 1800–1948* (New York: Arno Press, 1981), xii.
30. Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism*, 91.
31. After being coined by O’Sullivan, the term “manifest destiny” entered into increasingly common use over the subsequent decades and was often used by American expansionists to explain the annexation of new territories during the nineteenth century.
32. Cummins, *El Fureidis*, 145.
33. Cummins, *El Fureidis*, 144.
34. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt*, 106.
35. Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism*, 129, from Englishman Rev. Horatio Southgate’s *Narrative of a Tour Through Armenia, Kurdistan, Persia, and Mesopotamia with Observations on the Condition of Mohammedism and Christianity in Those Countries* (London: Tilt and Bogue, 1840).
36. Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism*, 98. “According to William Miller, Islamic oppression of the Christian global community would evaporate when the sixth vial was poured out sometime during the year 1839 followed quickly by the sounding of the last trumpet.” The conundrum presented to Protestants by Muslim rule was solved through eschatology wherein Muslim demise at the end of time would signal God’s power and reign.
37. Bayard Taylor, *The Land of the Saracens* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1855), 81–82.
38. Benjamin Bausman, D. D., *Sinai and Zion, or A Pilgrimage Through the Wilderness to the Land of Promise* (Philadelphia: Reformed Church Publication Board, 1861), 201.
39. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt*, 111.
40. John Haynes Holmes, *Palestine Today and Tomorrow: A Gentile’s Survey of Zionism* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 39.

41. Henry Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land: Impressions of Travel in Mind, Body, and Spirit* (New York: Scribner, 1908), 30. He was minister of Brick Presbyterian Church in New York City from 1882–1900 and later professor at Princeton University.

42. Bradley Gilman, *The Open Secret of Nazareth: Ten Letters Written by Bartimaeus, Whose Eyes Were Opened, To Thomas, a Seeker after Truth* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1907), 46.

43. Henry V. Morton, *In the Steps of the Master* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1934), vi.

44. See also Morton, *In the Steps of the Master*, introduction, for one example of this line of thinking.

45. William C. Prime, *Tent Life in the Holy Land* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1857), 140.

46. Olive Risley Seward and William H. Seward, *William H. Seward's Travels Around the World* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1873), 644.

47. Seward and Seward, *William H. Seward's Travels*, 661.

48. Dwight Elmendorf, *A Camera Crusade Through the Holy Land* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), 3.

49. Laurence Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead with Excursions in the Lebanon* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1880), 288. Oliphant later became an American immigrant and joined T. L. Harris's religious community, the Brotherhood of the Common Life, which sought to purify relations between the sexes. Oliphant spoke out on behalf of the community for the cause of a Jewish homeland in Palestine until his death in 1888.

50. Qtd. in Handy, *The Holy Land in American Protestant Life*, xviii.

51. Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead*, 428–30.

52. W. H. Bartlett, *Footsteps of Our Lord and His Apostles in Syria, Greece, and Italy: A Succession of Visits to the Scenes of New Testament Narrative* (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue, & Co., 1852), 188.

53. Bartlett, *Footsteps of Our Lord*, 190.

54. G. E. Franklin, *Palestine Depicted and Described* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1911), 42.

55. Mark Twain, *Innocents Abroad*, 467, <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/innocent/iahom-pag.html>.

56. Franklin, *Palestine Depicted and Described*, 70.

57. T. DeWitt Talmage, *From Manger to Throne: Embracing a New Life of Jesus the Christ and a History of Palestine and its People Including an Account of the Author's Journey to, Through, and From the Christ-Land* (New York: The Christian Herald Bible House, 1893), 71–73.

58. Clarence E. Macartney, *Six Kings of the American Pulpit* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1942), 178.

59. Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land*, 12.

60. Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land*, 12.

61. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 102.

62. Jesse Lyman Hurlbut and Charles Foster Kent, *Travelling Through the Holy Land with the Stereoscope* (New York: Underwood & Underwood, 1900), 139; see also Elmendorf, *A Camera Crusade Through the Holy Land*, 17.

63. Elmendorf, *A Camera Crusade Through the Holy Land*, 18.

64. Charles Leach, *The Romance of the Holy Land* (London: Edward Arnold, 1911), 47.

65. Talmage, *From Manger to Throne*, 26.

66. Talmage, *From Manger to Throne*, preface.

67. Talmage, *From Manger to Throne*, 45.

68. Talmage, *From Manger to Throne*, 95.

69. Philip Schaff, *Through Bible Lands: Notes of Travel in Egypt, the Desert, and Palestine* (New York: American Tract Society, 1878), 14.

70. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 222.

71. Phillips Brooks, *Letters of Travel* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1915), 50–51.

72. Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, 26.

73. Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, 27.

74. Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, 100.
75. Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, 105.
76. Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, 124.
77. Holmes, *Palestine Today and Tomorrow*, 37.
78. Holmes, *Palestine Today and Tomorrow*, 37.
79. Twain, *Innocents Abroad*, 504.
80. Morton, *In the Steps of the Master*, 5.
81. Matilde Serao, *In the Country of Jesus* (New York: Gilmore, 1889), 97.
82. Morton, *In the Steps of the Master*, vii.
83. Gilman, *The Open Secret of Nazareth*, 59.
84. Frances E. Willard, *The Journal of Frances E. Willard*, Vols. 35–37, transcription by Carolyn DeSwarte Gifford, deposited at the Frances E. Willard Memorial Library (Evanston: National Women's Christian Temperance Union Headquarters, 1870), 28.
85. Serao, *In the Country of Jesus*, 105.
86. See Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Woman's Bible* (New York: European Publishing Co., 1895). Susan Hill Lindley, "You Have Stept out of Your Place": *A History of Women and Religion in America* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 275. Nancy F. Cott et al., eds., *Root of Bitterness: Documents of the Social History of American Women* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996).
87. Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism*, 265. Marr also documents the popularity of the Zouave units during the Civil War. These were soldiers in Oriental dress espousing Oriental styles of battle who also performed and recruited soldiers in the South: "The Zouave mystique offered soldiers a glamorous vision of the skill, adventure, and community of war-making that contrasted with the stuffy gentility of military officialdom" (289).
88. Bond, Alvan. *Memoir of Pliny Fisk, A. M.: Late Missionary to Palestine* (New York: Crocker and Brewster, 1828), 270.
89. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt*, 118.
90. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt*, 118.
91. Willard, *The Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 20.
92. E. G. Robinson and E. Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mt. Sinai, and Arabia Petrea: A Journal of the Travels in the Year 1838, Vol. III* (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1841), 37.
93. People inhabiting the northwest regions of Caucasus near the Black Sea; a Caucasian people speaking a northwest Caucasian language.
94. William Eleroy Curtis, *To-Day in Syria and Palestine* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1903), 145. Curtis reports that while the Circassian women normally cost between \$500 and \$3000, some went for as high as \$5000.
95. Samuel Clemens, *Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrim's Progress: Being Some Account of the Steamship Quaker City's Pleasure Excursion to Europe and the Holy Land: Wit* (Oxford: The Oxford Mark Twain, 1869), 369.
96. Willard, *The Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 2.
97. Willard, *The Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 2.
98. Willard, *The Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 16.
99. Curtis, *To-Day in Syria and Palestine*, 146.
100. Willard, *The Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 12.
101. Willard, *The Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 20.
102. Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead*, 29.
103. Curtis, *To-Day in Syria and Palestine*, 143.
104. A. Goodrich-Freer, *Inner Jerusalem* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1904), 263.
105. Curtis, *To-Day in Syria and Palestine*, 146.
106. Goodrich-Freer, *Inner Jerusalem*, 260.
107. Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead*, 40.
108. Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead*, 40.
109. Stanley Inchbold, *Under the Syrian Sun: The Lebanon, Baalbek, Galilee, and Judea* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1907), 430.
110. Inchbold, *Under the Syrian Sun*, 430.



111. Curtis, *To-Day in Syria and Palestine*, 142.
112. Malini Johar Schueller, *U.S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature 1790–1890* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 103.
113. Brian Yothers, *The Romance of the Holy Land in American Travel Writing 1790–1876* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2007), 38–39. See Sarah Barclay Johnson, *The Hadji in Syria, or Three Years in Jerusalem* (1858; reprint, New York: Arno, 1977).
114. A relatively small (currently 250,000), prominent, and eclectic religious sect with one thousand years of key roles in Middle Eastern history. They permit no conversion away from or to their religion and no intermarriage. The Druze have been able to make key alliances with the West that have secured their prominence and increased their wealth.
115. I visited a Muslim Druze family in 1993 in their home and found commemorative plates celebrating the history of the United States in the living room. Druze have been generally accepted into the Israeli army and are employed to police other Palestinians.
116. Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead*, 405.
117. Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism*, 282.
118. Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism*, 282.
119. Clorinda Minor, *Meshullam! Or, Tidings From Jerusalem From the Journal of A Believer Recently Returned from the Holy Land* (1849; 2nd edition published by author, 1851; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 49.
120. Hurlbut and Kent, *Traveling Through the Holy Land*, 140.
121. Curtis, *To-Day in Syria and Palestine*, 141.
122. Goodrich-Freer, *Inner Jerusalem*, 252–53.
123. Goodrich-Freer, *Inner Jerusalem*, 253.
124. Goodrich-Freer, *Inner Jerusalem*, 254.
125. Franklin, *Palestine Depicted and Described*, vi.
126. Brooks, *Letters of Travel*, 73.
127. S. C. Bartlett, *From Egypt to Palestine: Through Sinai, the Wilderness, and the South Country: Observations of a Journey Made with Special Reference to the History of the Israelites* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1879), 434. Bartlett, a congregational minister and the controversial president of Dartmouth discussed how the Crimean War had dramatically altered Christian and Muslim interactions in Palestine.
128. By the middle of the twentieth century, the Oxford edition of the Scofield Bible was continuously evolving and had inserted what can be considered an eleventh commandment, subtly making it a sin to criticize the State of Israel in any way, regardless of its policies. Currently some evangelical Christians consider it a sin to “Go against the State of Israel” and will angrily and at times viciously accost verbally or physically anyone who criticizes the state’s policies. See John Shelby Spong, *Why Christianity Must Change or Die* (San Francisco: Harper & Bros., 1999) for a history of the changes to the Scofield Reference Bible over the twentieth century.
129. Bausman, *Sinai and Zion*, 223.
130. Bausman, *Sinai and Zion*, 235.
131. Twain, *Innocents Abroad*, 461, 463.
132. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 209.
133. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 214.
134. Brooks, *Letters of Travel*, 63.
135. Talmage, *From Manger to Throne*.
136. Bedouins (Arabic Bedawi) are the nomadic, Arabic speaking indigenous population of Palestine and the Middle East. They are animal herders who migrate into the desert during the winter rainy seasons and move back toward cultivated land during the dry summer months. Their social structure is patriarchal, and the leader of a clan is called the Sheikh.
137. J. Moody, *Recollections of Dwight L. Moody* (London: Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier, 1905), 137.
138. Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land*, 78.
139. Reverend James Neil, M. A. *Palestine Explored: With a View to its Present Natural Features, and to the Prevailing Manners, Customs, Rites, and Colloquial Expressions of its*

*People, Which Throw Light on the Figurative Language of the Bible* (New York: A. D. Randolph & Co., 1882), 217.

140. Brooks, *Letters of Travel*, 66.

141. Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land*, 5.

142. Willard, *The Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 32.

143. Willard, *The Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 8.

144. William Prime, an evangelical, devout layperson, graduate of Princeton, attorney, and editor-in-chief of the *New York Journal of Commerce*, was perhaps Mark Twain's favorite travel guide to poke fun at while in Palestine. He satirically refers to him as "Grimes." Handy, *The Holy Land in American Protestant Life*, 107.

145. Prime, *Tent Life in the Holy Land*, 29.

146. Josiah Strong's seminal book, *Our Country* (1885), vividly expressed his enthusiasm and hope for the future of "Anglo-Saxon" Protestantism. Some of the American Board's overseas missions were "semi-imperialistic," according to Sydney Ahlstrom. See "Missions and Empire," in *A Religious History of the American People*, ed. Sydney Ahlstrom (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 862–67.

147. Prime, *Tent Life in the Holy Land*, 181.

148. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 212.

149. Caroline Hazard, *A Brief Pilgrimage in the Holy Land Recounted in a Series of Addresses Delivered in Wellesley College Chapel by the President* (Boston and New York: Houghton & Mifflin Co., 1909), 123.

150. Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine Vol. III*, 75.

151. Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine Vol. III*, 331.

152. Elmendorf, *A Camera Crusade Through the Holy Land*, 43.

153. Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, 281.

154. Holmes, *Palestine Today and Tomorrow*, 13.

155. Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine Vol. III*, 32–37.

156. Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead*, 322.



## *Chapter Four*

# **American Protestant Zionism and Pilgrimage Narratives**

In the minds of American Protestants in the middle of the nineteenth century, Palestine was a static, Eastern, and oriental image. I will show how Zionism helped to transform it into a creatively based new political-prophetic mythology bearing Christian millennial hopes during the final half of the nineteenth century. For American Protestants, new ideas fostered by Dispensationalism meant that the settlement of Palestine by the Jews would hasten the millennium and act as a harbinger of the end times and the return of Christ. New Protestant perspectives on the Jews found in pilgrimage narratives contributed to the transformation of the ideal from Ottoman Palestine to Jewish homeland. Conservative Protestants forged a new alliance: they began to collaborate with Zionist Jews in a common goal: the colonization of the Holy Land by Jews residing in the West. Protestants sought to hasten Christ's return through the fulfillment of biblical prophecy of the end times that would be signaled by the return of the Jews to Palestine. Pilgrimage narrative authors witnessed and reported widespread poverty and suffering, a plight that for many writers provided sad evidence of a "curse" of Christ-killing upon the Holy Land, and even upon the Jewish people.

Arguably, Judaism has always looked towards Palestine as a Promised Land<sup>1</sup> and has spoken in terms of a "return," either literal or figurative, throughout history.<sup>2</sup> Hostile social attitudes (anti-Semitism) and campaigns in Europe combined with the climate of colonial expansionism made the young Zionist movement increasingly viable and attractive to Jews.<sup>3</sup> At the same time as new images of Palestine emerge, there is accompanying discussion of the role of Jews in history. Political "advocacy" in Protestant Pilgrim narratives, however, must be placed alongside the conundrum of the mention of biblical prophecies condemning the Holy Land and/or the Jews for killing

or rejecting Christ in narratives. While regarding the Holy Land and Jews as blighted for rejecting Christ, Protestants were nevertheless swayed by an interpretation of Palestine in which the Jews would play a critical role in the future of Christianity. A diverse array of Protestants, including, for example, Clorinda Minor, W. E. Blackstone, Arno Gabelein, John Haynes Holmes, and Harry Emerson Fosdick, became activists for Zionism among their American Protestant readers and audiences. In addition, prophetic conferences and Bible institutes helped to popularize programs that would help provide for the swift resettlement of Jews in Palestine after the turn of the century.

### THE ORIGINS OF MODERN PROTESTANT ZIONISM

Arguably, Zionism was the response of nineteenth-century Jewish youth to the anti-Semitism that had been prevalent in Western society for centuries, and a few key leaders helped to make the movement, which was centered in Vienna, a focal point for politics in the 1880s and 1890s. The new ideas were quickly disseminated in America through universities and the popular press. Viennese Theodore Herzl (1860–1904) was a man that many consider the father of Zionism, a man who for many conservative Christians “wore the mien of a prophet” and organized the first Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897.<sup>4</sup> Other key Jewish organizers were Max Nordau (1849–1923) and Martin Buber (1878–1965). While the *Haskala* or “Enlightenment” movement of the late eighteenth century had urged Jews to assimilate,<sup>5</sup> this was ultimately unsuccessful because “the Jews were regarded as a strange tribe, a horde of deicides whose aim was by propaganda to infuse their spirit into the Christian peoples and in addition to obtain possession of great wealth.”<sup>6</sup> Yet Jews effectively bridged the cultural chasm between communities through shared Scriptures—they organized themselves and joined Christian millenarians who had an interest in a Jewish return to Palestine through Zionism.

The organizers of the first Zionist Congress wanted to gain the support of Jewish masses and win a war of words against the liberal elite that still tirelessly advocated cultural assimilation.<sup>7</sup> The Zionists were successful and set up the World Zionist Organization in Vienna with Herzl as president. Opposed only by a handful of liberals, “the intensity of the debate suggested the charismatic appeal of Zionism” for many.<sup>8</sup> Herzl preached that “if you will it, it is no dream.”<sup>9</sup> With Zionism, suddenly Jews from Europe and America were united in a common cause and were supported by many established Christians. Herzl’s international campaign made him a “renowned international prophet and diplomat in America.”<sup>10</sup> In New York, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise carried the momentum forward, finding many followers among

the Eastern Jewish poor. Herzl said that “the character of a people may be ruined by charity.”<sup>11</sup> Hence, Jews should seize the opportunity to fashion new opportunities in Palestine. Herzl wrote in his book, *The Jewish State*, that “the anti-Semites will become our most loyal friends, the anti-Semite nations will become our allies.”<sup>12</sup>

Clorinda Minor, an American Millerite of limited means who went on pilgrimage to Palestine in 1850, became an early pioneer of the idea of agricultural renewal as a path towards aiding the plight of Jews in Palestine, keeping in mind her ideal of cooperating with God to complete the outward preparatory work for Israel’s return. “Her role within the eschatological drama was solely to restore the Land so the people of Israel, and through them the Gentiles, could return under God’s direction.”<sup>13</sup> She imagined a mutually profitable enterprise at a farm called Alta outside of Bethlehem that would develop Palestine for future settlement while alleviating the severe poverty among the Jews. While visiting Hebron, she was visited by Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, and Leah in a dream. They looked upon her and “Ishmael’s seed” and said “thrice welcome, children of another fold, thrice welcome home! . . . I drank in the sense of their rejoicing at the glory now soon to be fulfilled!”<sup>14</sup> After Minor, many would attempt to plant agricultural settlements and colonies in Palestine.

After 1892 Baron Rothschild, a wealthy English Jew remembered as “the Benefactor,”<sup>15</sup> became an entrepreneur of a Jewish experimental farming empire in Palestine. He successfully introduced innovations in agriculture while implanting a “caste of white settlers in Palestine parasitically dependent on hired fellahin labor.”<sup>16</sup> He laid the groundwork for the later masses of American Jewish immigration. Driven by a “kind of delirium,” Edmund Rothschild forged “a cadre of Spartan, pious, self-reliant yeoman cultivators amidst the dunes and rubbles” of Palestine.<sup>17</sup> An American Protestant pilgrim in 1903, however, detracted from the idealism of the venture when he proclaimed the farms a complete “failure.”<sup>18</sup> According to Protestant pilgrim Curtis, since Rothschild gave each Jewish refugee an ample home and a daily allowance, they had no incentive to work. Curtis observed that many were “indolent, indifferent, neglectful, and mischievous . . . they remained in their villages trading jack-knives and engaging in other petty mercantile transactions and theological disputes, and hired Arabs to do work for them.”<sup>19</sup>

By 1900, many of the relocated Jewish workers had drifted away, while others, “loafers,” were seen “promenading, standing around in groups, gossiping with each other.”<sup>20</sup> Curtis concluded that “Baron Rothschild overdid himself and pampered his colonists too much,” or that in essence, he “pauperized” them.<sup>21</sup> Some resettled Jews “occupied their time abusing the management,” while others reportedly stated that “there are too many Jews in Palestine already.”<sup>22</sup> The grand dream of Zionism evidenced by Rothschild’s settlements appeared a bit ridiculous to Curtis, a notable Chicago journalist.

He found the million-dollar philanthropic scheme a catastrophe. The Rothschild plan of twenty agricultural colonies, however, looked brilliant on paper and sounded highly progressive to donors in the West, who created funds in an ongoing fashion to continue the resettlement work. Zionism was an idealistic plan that may have looked better on paper than in real life during the 1890s.

In 1915 Chaim Weitzman met with Lord Sykes (MP and government advisor on the Middle East) promising assistance from all Jews in the Middle East. On the other hand T. E. Lawrence, the British officer renowned for his liaison role during the Arab Revolt against the Turks from 1916 to 1918, was pro-British and pro-Arab and wrote to Sykes against the Zionist plan to buy up Palestine. By 1919, however, the battle over minds had already been won. Arthur Balfour assured Lord Rothschild in a letter that the Jews were increasingly being seen as a cohesive political entity able to exert their weight collectively.<sup>23</sup>

The political agenda of the Zionists pushed forward after the turn of the century, and Theodor Herzl stepped up to this task with a brilliant sense of tactics. Once an elite secularist, Herzl had had a utopian perspective on the future of society during his youth. Yet his own experience of vicious anti-Semitism, particularly the Dreyfus Affair of 1894, led him to reject socialist solutions. In 1896 he published *Judenstaat*, advocating resettlement.<sup>24</sup> Herzl originally regarded Jews in general with distaste, as being physically and mentally restricted due to what he called the “crossbreeding” of the ghettos. He abandoned hope of assimilation when he noted that anti-Semitism threatened all Jews including the elite, himself included.<sup>25</sup> Employing romantic and feudal values, Herzl advocated Zionism under the rubric of offended aristocratic honor.<sup>26</sup> Originally Herzl had rejected the idea of gradual progress. He wanted to communicate directly with the Pope to organize a mass conversion of Jews to Roman Catholicism in exchange for help against anti-Semitism. When this was unsuccessful, Herzl converted to the Zionist cause.

Like Herzl, many wondered what to do about the “Jewish problem.” At the end of the nineteenth century, anti-Semites often attacked all Jews, regardless of their position on assimilation. The American depression of the 1870s caused lasting conflict and misery on a scale never seen before in the United States and Jewish immigrants were often attacked.<sup>27</sup> In May 1892 in Berlin, for example, three hundred thousand copies of a flier entitled “Talmud-Auszug” were spread across the city, fanning the flames of hatred. One excerpt demonstrates their bitter anger:

The Talmud is the spawn of the Jewish brain, it has become a curse to the nation, a curse that can never be gotten rid of. . . . The horrible, abysmal hatred for all non-Jews, especially Christians, speaks from this work of the devil, it shows the coward-

dice, the mistrust, and shamelessness of Judaism, its revolting arrogance, haughtiness, its chosenness, and it declares behaviors, which every other creature with a human countenance brands as a crime.<sup>28</sup>

Anti-Semites worsened what was already becoming an unbearable situation, in particular by reviving the ancient charges of ritual murder, the subversion of Christian society, and deicide. During the years 1904–1907, some writers began to assert that Jews had no place in modern society since they refused to assimilate. Jews were “people who flit through life like shadows, who feel nothing for the country they live in, who despise their host nation as impure creatures, who feel nothing for the country they live in, who detest the language, morals and customs, and everything that is holy to these nations.”<sup>29</sup> Some feared the subversion of Christian society. In many cases, Jews were seen as people outside the social fabric, failures at the assimilation that was seen as so critical to public life. In 1894, Bernard Lazare wrote that “at the bottom of the anti-Semitism of our own days . . . are the fear of, and hatred for, the stranger.”<sup>30</sup> In response to anti-Semitic accusations, Herzl wrote in 1896, “We have sincerely tried everywhere to merge with the national communities in which we live, seeking only to preserve the faith of our fathers. It is not permitted to us.”<sup>31</sup>

In response to the cultural crisis posed by overcrowded ghettos and rising anti-Semitism, and failure of assimilation in nationalizing Western countries, leaders such as Herzl abandoned their liberal hopes for assimilation. Herzl once proclaimed, “A man who invents a terrible explosive does more for peace than a thousand mild apostles.”<sup>32</sup> Farming settlements in Palestine were an escape hatch from the boiling political pot. Zionism seemed the perfect solution. Herzl became an imposing political presence during the 1890s and was often called “Führer,” “Heil,” and “Lord Israel.” Seeking a new Jewish society with an authoritarian structure, he later advocated a “democratic monarchy” for Palestine.<sup>33</sup> For Herzl and his Zionist followers, Palestine was symbolically empty, and he did not consider a particular role for native Palestinians other than as hired labor.

While Dreyfus was eventually cleared of charges, the trial and its aftermath led to a massive split in French society, with supporters of Jews on one side and detractors on the other.<sup>34</sup> The political base for the young Zionist movement was clearly defined. By the turn of the century, only a few elite, liberal, assimilated European Jews opposed Herzl, and he applied these double pincers to his dwindling Jewish detractors: the anti-Semitic elite cultural leaders on the one hand, and the ghettos and Eastern European Jewry on the other.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, those opposing Herzl were under attack from both ends of the social spectrum. Herzl successfully appealed to Baron Rothschild,<sup>36</sup> who subsequently gave Zionism significant financial support. In constant contact, New York rabbis quickly disseminated the movement in America.



As stated above, the young Zionist movement was remarkable in that it appealed to Jews in both Europe and America since both had teeming ghettos and anti-Semitism. In the American context, Jewish communities were seldom singled out for particular persecution, but rather were lumped together with other “foreigners,” as the “scapegoat for a vast variety of curses that many Americans would be rid of: city dwellers, peddlers, bankers, non-Protestants, non-Anglo-Saxons, anarchists, freethinkers, etc.”<sup>37</sup> The ubiquitous idea of nation that ultimately fed into fascism in the West was a racial one.<sup>38</sup> The American context was only slightly less inhospitable than the European one, though, because Jews were thought of as only one of many undesirable groups, rather than as a unique “menace,” as in Europe. At one point, a shocking proposal was even made to resettle Jews residing in the West to Uganda.<sup>39</sup> Yet Zionism had already become popular in Africa—new Christian Zionist congregations with a messianic and millennial emphasis were already to be found in Liberia, the Ivory Coast, and the Congo.<sup>40</sup> It seems that everywhere there was discussion of the resettlement of the Jews to Palestine in light of Christian prophecy.

To some Zionist American historians a unique interpretation of the shared Old Testament Bible became central. Israel became the “3rd commonwealth during the last decades of the nineteenth century—with the first and second being Joshua’s invasion of Canaan, and the second the culmination of the Maccabean state.”<sup>41</sup> Rather than a bitter expulsion, Zionism was a fulfillment of biblical history and prophecy. Zionist historians look to David Ben Gurion (1886–1973) and his claim that “we were drawing ever closer to the source and historic root of our nationhood and to the spiritual legacy of the biblical period.”<sup>42</sup> Ben Gurion, having settled in Palestine in a 1906 agricultural colony, was considered the “father of the nation.” Zionist settlers promoted a sense of direct continuity with the biblical past, an idea that many American Protestants also liked. In fact, the Bible seemed to justify Jewish domination in the Holy Land. In the Old Testament, Israelites were commanded by God to possess the land and to annihilate all of its inhabitants,<sup>43</sup> claiming it for their own. In some passages, no woman or child should be spared, and all the riches were the reward for the military campaigns. Under a rubric of continuity, the Old Testament, or the particularly holy and crucial Torah<sup>44</sup> for Jews, itself mandated the possession of Palestine by any means necessary. In fact, the word “Palestine” is often thought of as merely a degradation of the ancient term “philistine,” making the biblical link perhaps even more prominent for those who sought to use a biblical warrant to claim the land exclusively for Jewish settlers.

As I have shown, the decline of liberal politics advocating Jewish assimilation, the failure of integration, urban poverty and unrest, along with American and European anti-Semitism only fueled early fires of pan-Jewish Zionism from 1880 to 1900. The early movement also advocated violence

but later focused on resettlement. Jews were roundly criticized for not properly assimilating into modern societies, for being disloyal to their host countries, and even for Christ-killing and ritual murder in some situations. Jewish leaders such as Herzl thus abandoned assimilationist programs and advocated the resettlement of Jews in Palestine, an idea that became increasingly popular among Protestants because of millennial hopes. Millennial movements during the nineteenth century provided fertile soil for the seeds of Zionism.

## THE PROTESTANT BATTLE OVER MILLENNIALISM, PROPHECY, AND THE JEWS

Protestants picked up Zionist ideals with great interest. They were introduced to the idea of resettlement during the 1870s and 1880s and came to relatively widespread assent to Zionism during the 1890s, a pattern that mirrors the Jewish experience. By the first decades of the twentieth century, political Zionism had taken over as a dominant force. By the close of World War I, Zionism was nearly unchallenged among the theologically conservative, but it also had advocates in the liberal camp, including both Philip Schaff and Henry Van Dyke. Even so, a small handful of liberals advocating assimilation fought against this prophetic vision.

### Background

The expectation that Jews would return to Palestine has been a “persistent motif in Christian history.”<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, the idea of reading about, studying, and imagining the Orient was nothing new in nineteenth-century America.<sup>46</sup> For example, William Brewster carried a travel narrative with him on the *Mayflower* advocating the colonization of the Orient. Academic institutions in New England such as Harvard always stressed the importance of Oriental familiarity.<sup>47</sup> The expectation once found only in the halls of academia became a popular movement at the end of the nineteenth century.

The East was also a topic in New England pulpits. Puritan theology was fascinated with Hebrew lore, and Puritans saw themselves as latter-day Israelites in the wilderness. Yet Zion was also sometimes a sublimation during the nineteenth century, divorced from this-worldly reality, as in African American Christianity. Mormons also speak of a Zion that is purely transcendent.<sup>48</sup> For still many others the idea of the Jews returning to Palestine called to mind their American affinities with pioneer life and religious zeal.

Elias Boudinot (1740–1821), a congressman from New Jersey, wrote *A Star in the West*, a book that looked toward the restoration of the Jews to Palestine.<sup>49</sup> But the most important popularizer of the restoration idea was John Nelson Darby (1800–1882). Although he was English, he traveled and

spoke extensively in the United States. Darby was the dominant personality in the Plymouth Brethren, an American movement that emphasized biblical prophecy and the second coming of Christ. They also argued for literal rather than spiritual readings of the word “Israel” and regarded many Old Testament promises as yet unfulfilled.<sup>50</sup> Dispensationalism is the idea that human history is divided up into dispensations, or epochs, each of which has a covenant plan from God, wholly based upon a ‘literal’ reading of the Bible.<sup>51</sup> By the time of Darby’s death in 1882, his Dispensationalist teachings were well-established, and ideas of restoration exploded in popularity along with the premillennialist framework.<sup>52</sup> The return of the Jews to Palestine was a part of the Dispensationalist prophecy. Yet during the 1880s and 1890s, mainline liberal postmillennialists fought against the premillennialists (such as Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey) in Bible conferences over the role of Palestine in Christian millennialism. Postmillennialism had been widely accepted among American Protestants during the middle of the nineteenth century, but by the turn of the century it would become the minority view, eclipsed by Dispensationalism and Zionism. According to James Moorhead,

The postmillennialist hermeneutic was profoundly ambiguous. It wanted to treat the hope of the Apocalypse partly as a figurative truth and partly as literal. Against the premillennarians, for example, postmillennialists fought verse by verse, insisting that prophecy had a spiritual rather than carnal fulfillment. Prophecies of a political kingdom for the Jews were types of Christianity’s religious influence.<sup>53</sup>

Liberal mainstream postmillennialists sought progress for a “kingdom without end” that de-emphasized supernaturalism, while extolling the virtues of constant optimistic kingdom-building activity, while, on the other side, masses of Protestants were entranced by a more pessimistic premillennialist schemework into which Zionism fit neatly. Dispensationalism held that they lived in dangerous, tumultuous “end times.” All Protestants were encouraged to view events in the Middle East through an apocalyptic lens. Yet, liberals hesitated and opted for a symbolic interpretation of end-time prophecies, choosing not to replicate the mistake of those first-century Christians who erroneously assumed that Christ would return during their lifetimes.<sup>54</sup> The acceptance of Zionism among American Protestants varied from group to group in its ease and scope, but it succeeded overall in becoming an influential ideology among many by World War I.

### **Fundamentalists, Moody, and Zionism**

As stated above, the early Fundamentalist movement rejected symbolic interpretations in favor of literal ones, so that the biblical term “Israel” became synonymous with “modern Jews and geographical Palestine.” For example, the first large gathering of Fundamentalists in 1878 emphasized a literal

restoration of contemporary Jews to Palestine, claiming that Jews would be “gathered back” to “Israel” in their unconverted state at the end times.<sup>55</sup> They asserted that the signs of the events of the end times were already taking place. Israel had to be Palestine and the Jews, not the Christian church, as was previously the accepted practice among liberal contemporaries. For conservative groups such as early Fundamentalists, “Israel” could only mean modern Jews.<sup>56</sup>

The influential, popular American evangelist, Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899), whose “rough-hewn sermons with homely anecdotes”<sup>57</sup> were well received by the public, both mirrored and helped to shape American attitudes towards Palestine and the Jews. As premillennialist sentiment that anticipated darker end times increased throughout the United States, there was a clear impact upon Moody. While Moody did not constantly seek signs, he stopped all evangelizing among Jews before the turn of the century, because he came to agree that all Jews would be geographically restored to Palestine in an unconverted state at the end time.<sup>58</sup> The Jews would bring about the return of Christ by playing a unique role in the drama of salvation history.

Moody agreed with other conservatives regarding the link between biblical prophecy of the end times and modern Jews—the idea that when the Jews returned to Israel, Christ would come again. Like others, however, he at times contradicted himself, claiming on the one hand that Jews were the “sinning sons of Israel” who “stubbornly persisted” in disobeying God because they did not receive Christ, while on the other hand claiming to have profound respect for Jews, saying, “Isn’t every Jew a monument of God’s word?” Later he adopted a policy urging converted Jews to remain Jewish in practice, i.e., not to “gentilize but to remain Jews who believe in Christ.”<sup>59</sup>

### James H. Brookes

Another influential American writer who helped to popularize Zionism among Christians was James H. Brookes, a Presbyterian pastor in St. Louis, who wrote the periodical *The Truth or Testimony for Christ* from 1875 to 1897. It has been called “the granddaddy of early Fundamentalist periodicals.”<sup>60</sup> A central discussion point was the idea that Christians appeal to every curse against Israel as an argument in favor of the divine origin of the Bible as evidenced by history, while appropriating to themselves every promise of forgiveness, restoration, and happiness. Going against liberal trends that spiritualized Bible interpretations, Brookes popularized the belief in “imminent return”<sup>61</sup> (of the Jews to Palestine), founding and leading the influential Niagara Bible Conference from 1875–1900. Brookes’s appeals for the resettlement of the Jews in Palestine therefore reached a significant American audience. In addition, Brookes counted C. I. Scofield, editor of the

premillennial Dispensationalist *Scofield Reference Bible* (1909), as his parishioner.<sup>62</sup> The *Scofield Reference Bible* included in its footnotes literal interpretations of prophecies regarding the restoration of the Jews as well as broad support for Zionist ideals<sup>63</sup> and reached a broad Protestant audience. Ironically, for many Protestants, the new footnotes in the Bible were often regarded as nearly equal to Scripture. Thus those familiar with the *Scofield Reference Bible* may have given applied prophecies to modern Jews more often than others did.

By the turn of the century, the Zionist political movement had become closely linked with conservative evangelical Christianity. By World War I, however, Zionism had gained even wider support among progressives eager to solve American social problems. In addition, the conservative “millenarians grew more aggressive . . . the ideal of a constantly improving world in which presently peace would reign, had been shattered.”<sup>64</sup> The war to end all wars had nearly destroyed optimism about human progress. Yet, still fighting for gradual optimistic improvement, Shirley Jackson Case called these Zionist evangelical opponents of liberal progress “the premillennialist menace.” He argued that the kingdom would be ushered in by persuasion rather than by force. He also held that Zionist premillennialists represent a delusional mindset that tries to “resuscitate ancient millenarianism with its primitive world view.”<sup>65</sup> In reply to this charge, conservative Zionist premillennialists argued that liberals made “an inconsistent attempt to unite modern spirituality with the primitive view.”<sup>66</sup> While the theological battles raged on, however, broader public opinion had definitively shifted in favor of Zionism.

### The Battle over Prophecy

If sheer numbers determined the outcome, the conservatives won a smashing victory of persuasion regarding Palestine, prophecy, and restoration. Many regarded with suspicion the “Secular Great Awakening” of late nineteenth-century Protestant liberals. Further, many Christians liked the appealing connection that premillennialists made between current events and biblical prophecy because it helped to give meaning to events that could otherwise be confusing.

Not all Evangelicals were premillennialists before 1875, but by the 1880s many had changed their minds. Israel and the Church were two distinct peoples of God, and God had a distinct plan for Israel (read, “modern Jews”) in Palestine.<sup>67</sup> In the years before World War I, Zionism grew widespread and popular among Evangelicals, who then retroactively regarded the movement they’d created together with Jews such as Herzl as the historical fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Jewish and Christian Zionists often collaborated closely<sup>68</sup> because they shared a common goal of restoration of modern Jews to Zion.

The emphasis upon the fulfillment of prophecy, combined with the belief that the term “Israel” in the Bible was a direct reference to modern Jews, helped to discourage the idea of a Christian Holy Land in Palestine. The rhetoric of conquer was arguably much less central to the New Testament. Yet, from the fourth to the seventh centuries, Christians had viewed Jerusalem as their own uniquely Christian city, as did those who fought there during the Crusades.<sup>69</sup> For nineteenth-century Christians, however, Palestine was Christian in a spiritual sense only, but a homeland for Jews in a literal sense if one read biblical prophecy correctly.<sup>70</sup>

The push to resettle Jews in Palestine was not necessarily a spiritual solution to a spiritual problem. It also helped to rid American and European cities of immigrants often thought to be “undesirable.” Whether non-Jews opted for Jewish relocation to a far-off land as an expression of affinity or of disdain is difficult to tell, as every shade of feeling is present. Much later in the 1930s the Nazi party in Germany exhibited similar ambivalence regarding the Zionist movement, at times expressing strong support for it and at other times preventing Jewish emigration to Palestine.<sup>71</sup> The social context is also one in which schemes for the resettlement of American blacks to Africa were occasionally proposed and the inhabitants of the city (many of whom were Jewish) were thought to represent a blight or social problem.

In addition, the newly popular premillennialist framework included an anti-Semitic prophecy that the Jewish state will be led by the Antichrist, a sinister yet famous Jew. A reign of terror would leave only one-third of Jews alive, and at the beginning of the millennium Jesus would be ruler of the world and all Jews would convert to Christianity, abandoning rabbinical Judaism forever.<sup>72</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, such beliefs had become widely accepted by evangelical Christians. In the premillennialist scheme, the Jewish nation was a pawn, a means to a Christian end. Though making strange bedfellows, the link between conservative Christians and Zionist Jews strengthened and exerted great influence upon public opinion. The link between the politics and the eschatology is clearly found in the ideal of the “return” of the Jews to Palestine as a harbinger of the second coming of Christ.

### **W. E. Blackstone**

One Protestant Zionist worthy of note was W. E. Blackstone (1841–1935), a Methodist associate of Moody’s, and a successful businessman. His bestselling book *Jesus is Coming* was first published in 1878 and went through multiple editions. A runaway success, approximately seven hundred thousand copies of the book were printed, and it was translated into thirty-one languages.<sup>73</sup> It was “the most popular dispensationalist tract in the world,” and it loudly supported the imminent return of the Jews to Palestine.<sup>74</sup>

The publication of *Jesus is Coming* was only the beginning of Blackstone's Zionist political activity. In 1891, he petitioned President Benjamin Harrison requesting the relocation of persecuted Russian Jews to Palestine and the creation of a pan-Jewish homeland. This petition predates the first Zionist Congress by six years and anticipates the rise of organized political Zionism in Europe. It was signed by 413 prominent Americans including J. P. Morgan (1837–1913), John D. Rockefeller (1839–1937), and William McKinley (1843–1901). In constant close contact with leaders of the Jewish community, Blackstone organized a Christian-Jewish conference in 1890 on the topic of the Jewish return to Palestine. Many of Blackstone's earlier writings bear a striking resemblance to Herzl's later, well-known Zionist proposal.

By 1916 Blackstone had decades of successful activism behind him. That year he wrote the "Zionist Memorial to President Woodrow Wilson," co-signed by leaders of mainline Protestant denominations, as well as heads of state. A rabbi popularized the story that in 1917 during a private conversation with President Wilson regarding the Blackstone Memorial, Wilson exclaimed, "To think that I, the son of a manse, could restore the Jews to Palestine!"<sup>75</sup>

Central to Blackstone's popular view of Jews and Palestine was the idea of a "curse" over the Holy Land and the Chosen People of God. In *Jesus is Coming*, Blackstone affirms that Jews are God's people and are "still beloved and dear to God." At times, however, he contradicts himself and lapses into anti-Semitism: "in the first Restoration, because of their blindness, and hard, stony hearts, they rejected and killed Jesus. But in the future Restoration they shall repent of all this, and have clean hearts."<sup>76</sup> While the curse of Christ-killing and rejecting Christ still hangs over them, according to Blackstone, in the future Jews will have the opportunity to redeem their race. The redemption, however, will not come without a price. The guilt of innocent blood was upon the Jewish people and "there is an awful time of trouble awaiting her [Israel or the Jews]."<sup>77</sup> Blackstone wanted to bring Jews to Jerusalem for their "ultimate exclusion from the Christian millennium."<sup>78</sup>

Blackstone traveled to Jerusalem and concluded that it must return to Jewish rather than Christian hands, because it was "so long trodden down by the Gentiles." For Blackstone, Christianity and Judaism were inseparable. He wrote, "A Virgin Jewess was the mother of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus was a Jew, and all the light and joy of his salvation has come to us through Israel."<sup>79</sup> Further, Blackstone held that Jews were superior to all other races, and, given a free chance, Jews would "outstrip all competitors and rise to leadership in every nation."<sup>80</sup> Currently under bondage to heathen in the ghettos of the West, Jews should be given the Holy Land that had previously been denied to them because of the curse of deicide. The favor of God notwithstanding, Blackstone claimed that the Jews continued to reap

punishment for their rejection of Christ. So convinced was Blackstone of the truth of his assertions that he housed a cache of his tracts in Palestine so that Jews could read it and convert during the imminent “time of Jacob’s trouble” that he anticipated.

Although contradictory to modern eyes, Blackstone’s writings won the support of his contemporaries, including signers and readers of his 1890 petition and 1916 Memorial, many of whom held positions of power both inside and outside of Protestant Churches. Because the assimilation of the Jews had failed, Blackstone’s plan to resettle Jews in Palestine in keeping with prophecy was immensely popular and exerted significant influence upon public thinking.

### Arno C. Gaebelein

Another Christian Zionist of note was Arno C. Gaebelein (1861–1945), a turn-of-the-century missionary to urban American Jews who taught himself both Yiddish and Hebrew, composed evangelical tracts, established the “Hope of Israel” mission in the New York ghettos, and wrote a book entitled *The History of the Scofield Reference Bible*. He offered physical relief to Jewish families, a few of whom responded to his religious call or converted to conservative Protestantism. Ultimately he wanted to amalgamate belief in Christ with Judaism, and he believed along with premillennialists that the future of Jews held both destruction and glory.

Gaebelein edited a journal entitled *Our Hope* that held a critical place in the Fundamentalist movement<sup>81</sup> by influencing many who knew little about Jews and Judaism. In this respect, Gaebelein’s mission was one of education and enlightenment to Christian churches, not to “the Jew.”<sup>82</sup> In his journal, Gaebelein explained Jewish colonization societies such as Choveve Zion, Benai Zion, and Shove Zion and charted their progress in light of the Christian faith. Gaebelein read Jewish periodicals and passed on information to his Christian audience, so that in 1895 he was engulfed with demands for speaking engagements and sought after as an expert on modern Jews and Palestine.

An excerpt from *Our Hope* in 1896 demonstrates how Gaebelein introduced and popularized the idea of Jewish return in the United States:

It shows the great interest awakened on the question in our day. Only a few short years ago an earnest discussion of this subject would have been practically impossible except among close students of prophecy. The general intelligent public both Jewish and Christian, would have declined to entertain the mere thought as a wild dream. Dr. Herzl . . . has succeeded in getting it before the minds of the public.<sup>83</sup>

Gaebelein used his journal to publicize Zionism and considered himself a “Christian Zionist” like Blackstone. By 1896, he congratulated himself, Dr. Theodore Herzl of Vienna, and the movement for its great success in achiev-



ing a widespread, curious, and in many cases affirming, public. For Christian Zionists such as Gabelein, there was an inseparable, organic, and prophetic connection between Judaism and Christianity that was ordained by God and plainly shown in the Bible.

### Nonevangelical or Liberal “Christian Zionists”

While mainline Christians, particularly liberals, comprised a much later generation of Christian Zionists, there were a few early supporters of Jewish restoration, such as Episcopal Professor Philip Schaff, a forerunner among liberals. Liberal Christians did not, however, act as organizers and facilitators before the turn of the century, because bitter theological battles were being fought over the role of the Bible and the Jews in Christian millennialism.

Popular travel author and mystic Laurence Oliphant (1829–1888) wrote during the early 1880s that Palestine was a favorable home for the Jews because “Christian fanaticism in Eastern Europe is far more bitter than Moslem; and indeed the position of Jews in Turkey is relatively favored.”<sup>84</sup> The idea of settling Jews in Palestine, while “often urged on sentimental or scriptural grounds,” was a “practical and commonsense solution” that would preclude future difficulties with Jews. Oliphant wrote that Zionism is a “theological chimera” for Christians, but that Christians should avoid prejudice purely on that basis. Oliphant did not want mainline Christians to favor Zionism simply because “a large section of the Christian community” advocated it. Instead, Christians should look at Zionism with fresh eyes as an “important political and strategic question.”<sup>85</sup> Towards the end of his life, Oliphant founded a small religious community in Palestine dedicated to purifying relations between the sexes while he continued to write and speak in favor of Jewish “resettlement” in Palestine.

Like other liberal Protestant thinkers during the first part of the twentieth century, Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971) identified Zionism as a progressive solution to the problems of urban Jews.<sup>86</sup> Others who were likeminded included Presbyterian Edwin Sherman Wallace, U.S. Consul to Jerusalem from 1893–1898;<sup>87</sup> John Haynes Holmes (1879–1964), Unitarian pacifist and social reformer; and social gospel affiliate, and Walter Clay Lowdermilk (1888–1974), soil scientist, geologist, and Palestine conservation leader. Thought to be a creative alternative to cynicism, Zionism offered liberals an avenue for social reform. For example, Holmes, interested in the “social question,”<sup>88</sup> wrote that “the Zionist cause must succeed” after his tour of Palestine.

One unique figure, Warder Cresson, left his American family and farm in the spring of 1844, emigrated to the Holy Land, and converted from Christianity to Judaism, authoring a pamphlet entitled *The Key of David* in 1852.<sup>89</sup> He argued that the Scriptures had only been fulfilled spiritually thus far, and

that “Jerusalem is to be transformed to conform to biblical promises” in reality.<sup>90</sup> He established Jewish agricultural settlements and urged wide-scale Christian conversion to Judaism.

These few examples of Christian Zionists and activists—from Fundamentalists to Unitarians—show how captivating the idea of Zionism was to many Protestants. It did not follow, however, that the Zionism adopted by Protestants supported the Jews wholeheartedly. Instead, at times it provided convenient relief for social problems, and fit neatly into a Christian millennial framework in which the Jews were prominent players who would usher in the foretold end times by fulfilling prophecy. The following section will show how many American Pilgrim Protestants, both conservative and liberal, thought that the Holy Land and the Jewish people lived under a divine curse. Their narratives on the subject provide an important piece in the larger puzzle of how American opinion regarded Palestine and Zionism.

### JEWS, PALESTINE, AND THE CURSE

While on pilgrimage, many Protestants commented in their popular travel narratives on the small, impoverished, Jewish population, and then reflected upon scriptural texts pronouncing curses against them. The idea of a general curse may have helped American Protestants to understand the abject misery of the local inhabitants. Most became convinced that Palestine was desolate not because it had been badly ruled for centuries, but because it had lost God’s favor. As mentioned above, groups of Protestants on pilgrimage read Scripture out loud as well as individually. Whenever possible, they would read a particular Scripture passage relating to a specific location. As a result, Scripture passages including curses were read at sites of ruins or neglected villages, affording an opportunity to reflect upon the truth of the prophecies. At Capernaum, Jesus said, “Woe unto you, Korazin. Woe to you, Bethsaida.”<sup>91</sup> Some carried this a step further, concluding that not just a few towns, but the whole land had been afflicted by a general curse for killing Christ and the prophets. Still others concluded that all Jews and Palestine labored under the same curse. Whichever the reasoning, the curse of deicide or the result of prophetic blight was a central theme. Sometimes this curse was even used to explain negative historical events.

As early as 1822, the pioneering missionary Pliny Fisk held that the physical land was cursed because most of the residents were enemies of the faith.<sup>92</sup> Fisk wrote in 1823 that “we felt as though Jerusalem were a place accursed of God, and given over to iniquity.”<sup>93</sup> Jews, Turks, Greeks, and Armenians all contributed to the state of affairs in which Fisk later wrote, “the wrath of God burns hot against Jerusalem.”<sup>94</sup> The idea of a curse was

nearly ubiquitous among nineteenth-century Protestant pilgrims to Palestine. In 1850, the normally optimistic pilgrim Clorinda Minor remarked while visiting the Jordan River that “here I considered the curse that still rests on the fair heritage of Jacob. The fountains and wells have failed, the wells have been filled with stones and lost, the sky is like brass, and the earth has become like ashes.”<sup>95</sup> Similarly during the 1850s, William Prime reflected on well-known Bible verses, saying that “wild rocks were everywhere, ragged and fierce in their utter barrenness, and hill and valley were alike apparently cursed with the curse of God.”<sup>96</sup> Pilgrims did not always speak in general terms—in many cases they mentioned specific verses and cities. For example, when Frances Willard saw a woman with her eyes scooped out by leprosy, she wrote of Jerusalem, “a city shrunken within its walls—ever so much empty space—fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy,<sup>97</sup> ‘Zion shall never be plowed as a field.’”<sup>98</sup> When Willard visited Tyre, she wrote of the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy regarding the place, quoting, “Tyre, thou shalt never be any more.”<sup>99</sup> Neglect in Palestine showed the truth of biblical prophecy as well as the cost of disobedience.

During the 1870s, politician William Seward (1801–1872) wrote that God deserted Palestine because its inhabitants rejected Christ and because of its stubbornness: “Long before the fall of Jerusalem the ‘star of the empire’ had begun to move westward. It is likely to move in the same direction until it returns to the point in the heavens whence it took its departure.”<sup>100</sup> A common view, civilization or the star, a symbol of Christ’s rule, had moved westward, presumably to Greece, then to Rome, until it rested above America. For Philip Schaff, Palestine was both loved and deserted by God. Reflecting upon this paradox, he wrote that Jerusalem was “the most holy, and the most unholy place on earth.”<sup>101</sup>

Traveling in the 1880s, Matilde Serao reflected upon what had happened to Palestine because the Jews rejected Christ and Jesus cursed various towns and their inhabitants. Palestine was the home of all that rejected Jesus:

This high city [Jerusalem], perched above ravines and lying among the debris of the centuries, might, it seemed, be the abode not of men and women and children, but the dwelling place of ruthless emotions such as Pride and Arrogance and Hate. As I sat down for a long while looking down on Jerusalem, I thought to myself: that is undoubtedly the place that crucified Jesus Christ. Like an echo to my thought came a terrible reply: “and it would probably do so again.”<sup>102</sup>

Jerusalem seemed haunted to some Protestant pilgrimage authors, inhabited by people having rejected God, as though it was their destiny as they lived under a curse. Jerusalem’s past became its future. Serao later seemed to hear the “Voice” of Jesus:

Strange that the greatest event in the history of Mankind should have occurred on this bare plateau; stranger still, perhaps that Jerusalem should still wear her historic air of intolerance. I seemed to hear a Voice in the pulse of the air and the Voice said: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets."<sup>103</sup>

Jerusalem was surrounded by drama and retribution. The city that kills God's messengers, at times for American Protestants it was a blighted, cursed place, uniquely rebellious for many pilgrimage authors. It was intolerant, the natural home of stubborn people who turn their faces against God.

For these writers, the idea that prophecy was being fulfilled seemed to explain the barrenness of Palestine and the poverty of its inhabitants while it also provided a way to interpret the stranger phenomena of the Holy Land. What people realistically expected from Bible illustrations was tempered by tragic sights and tinted with a sense of curse. When Dwight Moody traveled to Palestine, he thought the "mean condition of Palestine" was "in accord with prophecy." In addition, when seeing some red poppies on the east Temple wall in Jerusalem, he said, "Look there! Drops of blood, a symbol for the blood shed for sin! It seems as though the ground itself is testifying for Christ against the unbelief of the city."<sup>104</sup> For many Christians the idea of the prophetic curse on the land may have simply helped to explain the general misery.

In 1902, Maltbie D. Babcock noted that the lack of civilization in Jericho was a sign that prophecy was fulfilled. He wrote that "Jericho has fulfilled every prophecy in its degeneracy and degradation, being only a collection of hovels and Bedouin tents, and only a sign or two left that ever a city stood here."<sup>105</sup> Presumably, the lack of a modern flourishing town was a sign that God was actively displeased with its poverty-stricken inhabitants. In 1903, notable Chicago journalist William Eleroy Curtis wrote that the curse upon Palestine was the fault of the people of Israel and their unfaithfulness. According to Curtis, the Bible prophesies that God will "cut off Israel out of the land that I have given it."<sup>106</sup> Further, "the evidences of the fulfillment of prophecy appear everywhere in Palestine with striking force and are incontestable."<sup>107</sup>

A 1906 English Protestant pilgrim, Elizabeth Butler wrote, "We visited the wailing place of the Jews. Strange and pathetic sight, these weird men, women, and children weeping and moaning with their faces against the gigantic stones of the wall."<sup>108</sup> Deserted by God, Jews mourned their sad fate. In contrast, American Protestants who lived in a society characterized by the quest for prosperity, thrift, and maximum use of time<sup>109</sup> regarded themselves as marked by God's clear blessing and favor. The doctrine of Manifest Destiny and the ideas of social Darwinism placed American success and wealth at the apex of human achievement.

The descriptions of curse were sometimes dramatic. One pilgrim traveling in 1910 wrote of the sadness Jesus must have felt as he cursed the city of Jerusalem. Because Jesus was so compassionate to humanity in general, it must have grieved him to heap doom upon Jerusalem: "It was over this city [Jerusalem] that the great Sympathiser of humanity wept as He foresaw its doom, crying in the words of the tenderist anguish: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, though killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee.'" <sup>110</sup> But this verse merely predicts the downfall of Jerusalem; it does not curse the city or its inhabitants. It is of note that many American pilgrimage writers believed there was a general, overriding curse.

After the turn of the century, modern farming colonies supported by the Rothschilds were in place, as well as a new railway that connected Jerusalem with the coast, and a modest economic upswing occurred due to the burgeoning travel industry. These were all factors that lent a sense of hope. In addition, Palestinians were beginning to be influenced in a positive way by Western technologies. But some pilgrims still recalled God's curse while looking towards an eschatological future and imagined a millennial role for the Holy Land. Pronouncements of doom were intended to bolster historicity while adding a dramatic and tragic sense of place:

Truly the situation of Mount Zion, where the temple stood, is beautiful, but now desolate. The sad prediction of Christ is fulfilled: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee . . . behold, your house is left unto you desolate." <sup>111</sup>

The general poverty and disarray offered a sensible interpretation for these verses, and even when conditions improved, Palestine still lacked what was taken for granted in Western countries. Phillips Brooks noted in 1915 that in Samaria countless columns lay in ruins and the population was tortured by swarms of fleas, so that "the prophecy seems strangely fulfilled." <sup>112</sup> How else might one explain the sheer misery of the inhabitants? Mark Twain was one of the first Americans to observe the countryside during the 1860s:

As we rode into Magdala not a soul was visible. But the ring of the horses' hoofs roused the stupid population, and they all came trooping out—old men and old women, boys and girls, the blind, the crazy, and the crippled, all in ragged, soiled and scanty raiment, and all abject beggars by nature, instinct, and education. How the vermin-tortured vagabonds did swarm! How they showed their scars and sores, and piteously pointed to their maimed and crooked limbs, and begged with their pleading eyes for charity! . . . As we paid the bucksheesh out to sore-eyed children and brown, buxom girls with repulsively tattooed lips and chins, we filed through the town and by many an exquisite fresco, till we came to a bramble infested inclosure and a Roman-looking ruin which had been the veritable dwelling of St. Mary Magdalene, the friend and follower of Jesus. The guide believed it, and so did I. <sup>113</sup>

Twain also noted that most of the children were hungry and had untreated eye infections. Flies swarmed on eyes that were seldom washed, and a significant number of people were blind by adulthood. The plight of the locals may have caused Protestants to seek a way to comprehend it, and perhaps they recalled biblical prophecy as a way to understand the suffering.

Traveling in 1918 at the beginning of the British Mandate period, one prominent “camera crusader” and acquaintance of Teddy Roosevelt (to whom the book is written in the form of a letter) wrote that he and General Allenby read Isaiah together in light of current events. According to Elmen-dorf, the two agreed that “the prophesied desolation had come upon the Land.”<sup>114</sup>

Harry Emerson Fosdick continued this literary tradition into the early 1920s, but connected it to the lives of contemporary Arabs. One small story reveals a confirmation of fulfilled prophecy that Protestants also found sadly uncanny:

As we turned to go, dropping backsheesh into the hand of a tattooed Bedouin woman who sat lonely among the ruins in sight of her tattered tents, the mist, which all the morning had hung thick among the hills, condensed into a sudden driving rain, and we left the forsaken jumble of stones [ruins] with the Master’s words oppressively meaningful: “Woe unto thee, Chorazin.”<sup>115</sup>

In just the same way at times the land was called the “fifth gospel” to provide a direct link to the biblical past, the fulfillment of a prophetic curse also created a link to the past that bolstered the biblical nature of the land and the historical truth of the Bible.

The prophetic curse was thought to take different forms. For some, the curse was upon the Arabs, because they lived in the barren, desolate land. For others, the curse was upon the Jews, many of whom would nevertheless be saved during the end times. Millennial-minded Protestants could thus imbue Palestine and the Jews with multiple meanings and offer meaning to readers seeking to understand the “fifth gospel” and changes in contemporary history.

In summary, as American Protestants adopted a premillennialist perspective, they became more likely to view Palestine as a Jewish homeland rather than a Christian one in order to interpret modern events in light of biblical prophecy and hasten the second coming. In the early nineteenth century, Christian missionaries had “precipitated a no-win choice for Palestinian Jews—either join Christianity or provoke enmity.”<sup>116</sup> But with the dawn of premillennialism, Jews in Palestine became the actors in the eschatological story. In addition, social problems created by a climate of anti-Semitism and overcrowded urban ghettos made a resettlement program for Jews increasingly viable and desirable. In this creative new Zionist way, everyone could

seemingly be drawn into the new American dream, and those who would not or could not join (the Jews) could move along to their homelands in places such as Palestine.

Prophetic conferences, Bible institutes, popular evangelists, outspoken liberals, political and business leaders, and Protestant social reformers all acted as sounding boards for popular ideas about Zionism and Ottoman Palestine. A Jewish Holy Land raised the millennialist hopes that many Protestants had for the return of Christ. Protestant thinkers and writers such as W. E. Blackstone, Arno Gabelein, James H. Brookes, C. I. Scofield, and Dwight L. Moody actively advocated Zionism. Further, a small handful of liberals espoused Zionism as progressive in response to “the social problem” of urban overcrowding and poverty. Out of these movements and the hopes they represented emerged Protestant Zionists who would advocate and publicize the resettlement of the Jews in Palestine as a way to usher in the kingdom of God. Although the land was sadly cursed with poverty and misery, prophecy foretold a new role for the Jews there at the end times. Palestine became the Holy Land and the Jews became its natural residents.

## NOTES

1. A. Heschel writes: “There is a unique association between the people and the land of Israel. Even before Israel becomes a people, the land is preordained for it. What we have witnessed in our own days is a reminder of the power of God’s mysterious promise to Abraham.” Abraham Heschel, “The Spirit of Judaism,” in *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1955). “The Torah, or Traditional Judaism, must therefore be understood as having made of the Jews both a nation (ummah) and an ecclesia (K’nesset Yisrael).” Mordecai Kaplan, “What is Traditional Judaism?” in *The Greater Judaism in the Making*, ed. Mordecai Kaplan (New York: Reconstructionist Press, 1960).

2. [www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/History/HISTORY](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/History/HISTORY). Israel is referred to as the “ancestral homeland” for the Jewish people. See also H. Sacher, “A Jewish Palestine,” *The Atlantic* (July 1919), [www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/19jul/sacher.htm](http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/19jul/sacher.htm). “The Zionist movement dates from A.D. 70, the year of the destruction of the Temple and the Jewish State,” and “the idea of the Jewish people is inseparable from the idea of the Jewish land.”

3. [www.mideastweb.org/history.html](http://www.mideastweb.org/history.html). See also “Macrohistory and World Report: Jews and Arabs in Palestine, to 1939,” [www.fsmitha.com/h2/ch17jeru.html](http://www.fsmitha.com/h2/ch17jeru.html).

4. *The Jewish Virtual Library*, [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Herzl.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Herzl.html).

5. *Jewish Virtual Library*, [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/zionism.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/zionism.html). The term “Zionism” was coined in 1890 by Nathan Birnbaum. *The Washington Report on Middle Eastern Affairs*, “History of Zionism,” [www.wrmea.com/html/focus.htm](http://www.wrmea.com/html/focus.htm).

6. Bernard Lazare, *Antisemitism: Its History and Causes*. (1894) [www.fordham.edu/halsal/jewish/lazare-anti.html/#chapterfifteen](http://www.fordham.edu/halsal/jewish/lazare-anti.html/#chapterfifteen).

7. Christian Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2005), 73.

8. Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse*, 75.

9. [http://thinkexist.com/quotes/theodor\\_herzl](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/theodor_herzl).

10. Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 974.

11. [http://thinkexist.com/quotes/theodor\\_herzl](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/theodor_herzl).
12. Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, 2006 ed., [www.bnpublishing.com](http://www.bnpublishing.com).
13. Gershon Greenburg, *The Holy Land in American Religious Thought, 1620–1948: The Symbiosis of American Religious Approaches to Scripture's Sacred Territory* (Lanham: The University Press of America, 1994), 205.
14. Clorinda Minor, *Meshullam! Or, Tidings From Jerusalem From the Journal of A Believer Recently Returned from the Holy Land* (1849; 2nd edition published by author, 1851; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1977), 60.
15. Simon Schama, *Two Rothschilds and the Land of Israel* (New York: Knopf, 1978), 14.
16. Schama, *Two Rothschilds*, 19.
17. Schama, *Two Rothschilds*, 10.
18. William Eleroy Curtis, *To-Day in Syria and Palestine* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1903), 327.
19. Curtis, *To-Day in Syria and Palestine*, 328.
20. Curtis, *To-Day in Syria and Palestine*, 331.
21. Curtis, *To-Day in Syria and Palestine*, 332.
22. Curtis, *To-Day in Syria and Palestine*, 332.
23. James Barr, *Setting the Desert on Fire: T. E. Lawrence and Britain's Secret War in Arabia, 1916–1918* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2008), 132, 173, 208.
24. [www.dreyfus-affair.org/4\\_HIST\\_deport.htm](http://www.dreyfus-affair.org/4_HIST_deport.htm). During the Third Republic in France, Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935), a Jewish officer, was accused and convicted of treason in a highly irregular trial on insufficient evidence. Virulent anti-Semitic factions exploited “L’Affaire” to show the disloyalty of French Jews and their uncertain status as French citizens.
25. Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-De-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 151.
26. Schorske, *Fin-De-Siecle Vienna*, 155.
27. Hewitt Clark et al., *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's Economy, Politics, Culture, and Society, Vol. 1* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), 560.
28. Qtd. in Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse*, 111.
29. J. Fromer, 1906, qtd. in Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse*, 293.
30. Lazare, *Antisemitism*, chapter 15.
31. Theodore Herzl, *Der Judenstaat*, February 1896, translated and quoted by *The Jewish Virtual Library*, [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/herzlex.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/herzlex.html).
32. Qtd. in Schorske, *Fin-De-Siecle Vienna*, 169.
33. Schorske, *Fin-De-Siecle Vienna*, 174.
34. Emile Zola exposed the Dreyfus case as a sham in 1898—historian Barbara Tuchman has called it “one of the greatest commotions in history.”
35. Shorske, *Fin-De-Siecle Vienna*, 170.
36. *Jewish Virtual Library*, [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/herzlex.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/herzlex.html).
37. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 854.
38. Kenny Anthony, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Western Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 359.
39. *Jewish Virtual Library*, [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/herzlex.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/herzlex.html).
40. Vivian Green, *A New History of Christianity* (New York: Constantine, 1996), 318. These congregations have links to the Christian Apostolic Church in Zion founded by Alexander Dowie in Chicago, Ill.
41. Louis Finkelstein, “The State of Israel as a Spiritual Force,” in *With Eyes Towards Zion, Vols. I–V*, ed. Moshe Davis (New York: Praeger, 1991).
42. David Ben Gurion, “The Spirit of the New Israel,” in *With Eyes Towards Zion, Vols. I–V*, ed. Moshe Davis (New York: Praeger, 1991).
43. Bible verses for examples: Exodus 15:14: “The people shall hear, [and] be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestine.” Exodus 15:15: “Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.” Exodus 23:31: “And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee.” Exodus



34:12: "Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee:" Numbers 33:52: "Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places:" Num 33:53: "Ye shall dispossess [the inhabitants] of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it." Numbers 33:55: "But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them [shall be] pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell." Deuteronomy 13:15: "Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that [is] therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword" (New Revised Standard Version).

44. The first five books of what Christians know as the Old Testament, including the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

45. Robert T. Handy, *The Holy Land in American Protestant Life, 1800–1948* (New York: Arno Press, 1981), 181.

46. Malini Johar Schueller, *U.S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature 1790–1890* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 24. "By 1723, Harvard could boast a large list of Orientalia, including Thomas Fuller's *A Pisgah—Sight of Palestine*, Aaron Hill's *A Full and Just Account of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, and Richard Hakluyt's *History of the West Indies*."

47. For Emerson during the 1830s, Asia was gendered as a woman, representing the faculties of emotion. He called his wife "my Asia," whereas he thought and wrote of himself, "Emerson," as the faculties of intellect or the West (Schueller, *U.S. Orientalisms*, 165).

48. Greenburg, *The Holy Land in American Religious Thought*, 4.

49. Elias Boudinot, *A Star in the West; Or, A Humble Attempt to Discover the Long Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, Preparatory to their Return to their Beloved City, Jerusalem* (Trenton: D. Fenton, S. Hutchinson, and J. Dunham, 1816).

50. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church: The Search for Definition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 155.

51. C. Norman Kraus, "Dispensationalism," in *The Eerdmans' Handbook to Christianity in America*, ed. Mark A. Noll et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 327.

52. Premillennialism emphasized that the world would not be improved until Jesus personally came again and set up his kingdom on earth. It predicted a period of steep decline and impelled Christians to more vigorous missionary and evangelistic efforts. From Noll et al., *Eerdmans' Handbook to Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans' Publishing Co., 1983), 295.

53. James H. Moorhead, *World Without End: Mainstream American Protestant Visions of the Last Things, 1880–1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 29.

54. Moorhead, *World Without End*, 185.

55. David A. Rausch, *Zionism Within Early Fundamentalism: A Convergence of Two Traditions* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999), 84.

56. Rausch, *Zionism*, 91.

57. James F. Findlay, "Dwight Lyman Moody," *American National Biography Online*, February 2000, [www.anb.org/articles/08/08-01029.html](http://www.anb.org/articles/08/08-01029.html) (accessed April 23, 2004).

58. Rausch, *Zionism*, 215.

59. Yaakov Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes Toward Jews, Judaism, and Zionism, 1865–1945* (New York: Carlson, 1991), 34.

60. Rausch, *Zionism*, 216.

61. Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 27.

62. Paul C. Wilt, "James H. Brookes," *American National Biography Online*, February 2000, [www.anb.org/articles/08/08-01996.html](http://www.anb.org/articles/08/08-01996.html) (accessed April 23, 2004).

63. Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 48.

64. Moorhead, *World Without End*, 173.

65. Moorhead, *World Without End*, 174.

66. Moorhead, *World Without End*, 182.

67. Timothy Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism 1875–1982* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 156–57.

68. Lester I. Vogel, *To See a Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 32–39.
69. Robert Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), xiv.
70. [www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/scofield-reference-notes/romans/romans-11.html](http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/scofield-reference-notes/romans/romans-11.html). Scofield notes read as follows: “During the church-age the remnant is composed of believing Jews. But the chief interest in the remnant is prophetic. During the great tribulation a remnant out of all Israel will turn to Jesus as Messiah, and will become His witnesses after the removal of the church” (Romans 11:4–5). Also, “Prophecy does not concern itself with history as such, but only with history as it affects Israel and the Holy Land.” From commentary to Daniel 11.
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72. Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 21–23.
73. Handy, *The Holy Land in American Protestant Life*, 181.
74. John Fea, “William E. Blackstone,” *American National Biography Online*, February 2000, [www.anb.org/articles/08/08-01994.html](http://www.anb.org/articles/08/08-01994.html) (accessed April 23, 2004), February 2000.
75. Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel*, 90.
76. William Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming: God’s Hope for a Restless World* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revel, 1892), 67.
77. Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*.
78. Greenburg, *The Holy Land in American Religious Thought*, 217.
79. Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 69.
80. Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 70.
81. Rausch, *Arno C. Gaebelein*, 19.
82. Rausch, *Arno C. Gaebelein*, 20.
83. Gaebelein, *Our Hope*, 1896. Qtd in Rausch, *Arno C. Gaebelein*, 31.
84. Laurence Oliphant, *The Land of Giliad with Excursions in the Lebanon* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1880), xviii.
85. Oliphant, *The Land of Giliad*, xxxiii.
86. Moshe Davis, *With Eyes Towards Zion, Vols. I–V* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 64.
87. Wallace wrote a book entitled *Jerusalem the Holy: A Brief History of Ancient Jerusalem with an Account of the Modern City and its Conditions Political, Religious and Social* in 1904.
88. “The Social Question” was the extremely volatile conflict between the ruling classes and the working classes in the United States, Europe, and Australia at the end of the nineteenth century.
89. Warder Cresson, *The Key of David* (1852; reprint edition New York: Arno Press, 1977).
90. Brian Yothers, *The Romance of the Holy Land in American Travel Writing 1790–1876* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2007), 52–53.
91. Matthew 11:20: “Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. (21)Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. (22)But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. (23)And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. (24)But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you” (New International Version).
92. Greenburg, *The Holy Land in American Religious Thought*, 121.
93. Alvan Bond, *Memoir of Pliny Fisk, A. M.: Late Missionary to Palestine* (New York: Crocker and Brewster, 1828), 294.
94. Bond, *Memoir of Pliny Fisk*, 312.
95. Minor, *Meshullam!*, 70–71.
96. William Prime, *Tent Life in the Holy Land* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1857), 55.
97. Jeremiah 26:18, “Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and said to all the people of Judah: ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Zion shall be plowed as a

field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height.” Micah 3:12: “Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height” (English Standard Version).

98. Frances E. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard, Vols. 35–37*, transcription by Carolyn De Swarte Gifford, deposited at the Frances E. Willard Memorial Library (Evanston: National Women’s Christian Temperance Union Headquarters, 2005), 11.

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100. Olive Risley Seward and William H. Seward, *William H. Seward’s Travels Around the World* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1873), 665.

101. Philip Schaff, *Through Bible Lands: Notes of Travel in Egypt, the Desert, and Palestine* (New York: American Tract Society, 1878), 232.

102. Mathilde Serao, *In the Country of Jesus* (New York: Gilmore, 1889), 211.

103. Serao, *In the Country of Jesus*, 21.

104. J. Moody, *Recollections of Dwight L. Moody* (London: Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier, 1905), 390–92.

105. Maltbie T. Babcock, *Letters From Egypt and Palestine* (New York: Scribner, 1902), 71.

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107. Curtis, *To-Day in Syria and Palestine*, 451.

108. Elizabeth Butler, *Letters from the Holy Land* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1906), 21.

109. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1930), 157.

110. G. E. Franklin, *Palestine Depicted and Described* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1911), 30.

111. Dwight L. Elmendorf, *A Camera Crusade Through the Holy Land* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1912), 40.

112. Phillips Brooks, *Letters of Travel* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1915), 65.

113. Mark Twain, *Innocents Abroad*, <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/innocent/iahompag.html>, 504.

114. John Finley, *A Pilgrim in Palestine: Being an Account of Journeys on Foot by the first American Pilgrim After General Allenby’s Recovery of the Holy Land* (New York: Scribner’s and Sons, 1919), 14.

115. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 205.

116. Greenburg, *The Holy Land in American Religious Thought*, 133.

## *Chapter Five*

# **The Out-of-Doors Gospel in Palestine: Protestants Encounter Catholic and Orthodox Shrines and Create Their Own Traditions**

When traveling to Palestine, American Protestant pilgrims encountered Christians from differing traditions and ethnic backgrounds who not only had a historic presence in Palestine, but who also owned real estate upon the very sites where most of the important events depicted in the Bible had occurred. From the earliest records, American Protestants reject the indoor shrines of Palestine and worship out-of-doors. Early missionary Pliny Fisk wrote in 1823 that the “gaudy” shrine in Bethlehem “exhibited an appearance of splendor widely different from that of a stable. . . . Wholly unlike what our . . . imagination had conceived.”<sup>1</sup> In contrast, later, when Fisk came to the outdoor Shepherd’s Field, the “delightful valley,” “green fields,” and “barren rocky hills” made it “delightful to imagine how a multitude of heavenly host descended from above.”<sup>2</sup> In a fashion to become a typical Protestant pattern, Fisk experiences his best pilgrimage under the sky. Additionally, Fisk begins a pattern of outdoor worship by Protestant Americans that endures to the current day. At Mount Olivet, “we held our first Monthly Concert of prayer in the Promised Land.”<sup>3</sup> Finally, Fisk wanders about the fields of Nazareth in the new Protestant ritual of walking and reflection that occurs under the open skies in Palestine: “I love to reflect as I walk over the plain of Nazareth, and the hills around it, that our Lord and Savior used to walk over the same ground.”<sup>4</sup> Repeatedly, American Protestants will find their pilgrimages in the out-of-doors.

John Lloyd Stephens wrote in 1838 that Mount Sinai is one of the undoubtable biblical sites, “the holy mountain; and among all the stupendous works of Nature . . . for the exhibition of Almighty power.”<sup>5</sup> He lauded its “terrific solitudes and bleak majesty” as particularly meaningful among the disappointments of the “East, the fruitful parent of superstition.”<sup>6</sup> For Stephens, the day spent hiking Sinai on the mountain trail was “one of the most interesting of my life.”<sup>7</sup> In other instances where he lauds nature above all else in the Holy Land, Stephens “subsumes deserted ruins, however obviously of human construction, under the category of nature.”<sup>8</sup> A Romantic fascination with ruins is an important theme of nineteenth-century literature and is seen at times in the Holy Land travel genre. As was the case with Stephens, Americans treasured the opportunities for meaningful experiences that could be had out-of-doors, in unchanging nature, in direct contact with biblical history.

Time, history, and tradition, however, alienated American Protestants from Eastern and Catholic Christians in Palestine. In 1840, E. G. Robinson estimated that there were approximately a half of a million Christians in Palestine, only a miniscule fraction of whom were Protestant.<sup>9</sup> Robinson described the Christian population in terms of five various sects. They included “Greeks and Greek Catholics (the most numerous group, which also included many Arabs), Maronites/Jacobites of Syriac origin, Syriac Catholics, Armenians, and Latins (very few and only in convents).”<sup>10</sup> Robinson and many other Protestants wrote of his deep concern over the danger of idolatry for Protestants while visiting Palestine, then discredited and denounced many of the local shrines. Rejection of the shrines evidences Protestant piety. A clear pattern is evident in American Protestant Palestine pilgrimage: a preference for the out-of-doors as a pilgrimage site.

Providing early evidence for this trend, Clorinda Minor enjoyed the outdoor Garden of Gethsemane more than “any other of the marble-covered and cherished localities.”<sup>11</sup> She celebrated simple, natural elements, as would most Protestants coming after her: “The native earth and stones were bare gray; the ragged time-worn trunks of the hoary trees, like solemn witnesses stood there, with their thin foliage, bearing olives still.”<sup>12</sup> Protestant pilgrims avoided and condemned indoor shrines. They urged Christians to “be another Luther” to “heathen Christians” and wrote of the Reformers as the “latter day Prophets” whose ideas would cleanse the Palestine landscape of corrupt priests. Time and again, they advocated the out-of-doors experience in the Holy Land as the most aptly Protestant one.

In Maria Susanna Cummins’s 1860 novel set in the Levant, *El Fureidis*, the popular trend of Protestant out-of-doors worship can again be seen. As a caravan containing an American family, an Englishman, a priest, and their servants travel through Hermon at twilight under a starry sky, “the whole scene was grand, illusive, shadowy. It favored meditation, and the thoughts

of all soared.”<sup>13</sup> Suddenly the daughter Havilah breaks into song, singing a Christian hymn about the great Shepherd among the hills. “The effect of the song was at once solemn and inspiring. It was as if they had been at worship in the temple, and the service was ended.”<sup>14</sup> Protestants, lacking any historical edifice for worship in Palestine, return to the idea of nature as the ultimate “grand” cathedral for “meditation” and worship in their writings set in the Holy Land.

Rejecting the existing Christian shrines, Protestants sought Christ in nature, in the out-of-doors, or erected their own parallel sites. Influenced by Romanticism, they gloried in the fields and flowers of the bold landscape, imagining a simple, natural childhood for Jesus, unencumbered by centuries of tradition. They contrasted the simple lessons of the beauty of nature to the excess trappings of ancient civilization so evident in the shrines of other Christian traditions. The historical Protestant emphasis upon Scripture and education are evident in the usage of the Bible as the “best guide book to Palestine.”<sup>15</sup> For some it was the only acceptable guide book to Palestine, one that led at times to “groping in the dark” and hopes for better ones in the future.<sup>16</sup> Traveling on pilgrimage to Palestine appeared to bring Protestants closer to their theological roots, such as elevating the importance of Scripture, rather than further away from them—they refused to follow the pilgrimage traditions of the Eastern and Catholic shrines that they had historically defined themselves against.

## THE DANGER OF IDOLATRY IN PALESTINE

One method pilgrim authors used to distance the veneration of the Holy Land from any notion of idolatry was to insist upon the otherworldly truth of the gospel, as a religion primarily of “heart” and not of “place”—while lauding certain spaces above other spaces. This option diffused some of the danger of the beatification of the Holy Land. Most Protestant pilgrims vehemently decried the superstition and idolatry they found in Palestine. Only a few lone voices differed, such as high church Episcopalian William Henry Odenheimer,<sup>17</sup> who compared Palestine shrines to the secular iconography of America found on such sites as Plymouth Rock.<sup>18</sup> This was the exception, however, as most rejected Catholic and Eastern shrines altogether as idolatrous. Henry Van Dyke, concerned about the danger of idolatry, wrote a “Psalm of the Unseen Altar” while in Palestine.<sup>19</sup> Unlike the churches in front of him on his Holy Land tour, this sanctuary was an altar of the “heart” rather than of a “shrine.”<sup>20</sup>

Philip Schaff also expressed discomfort with the danger of idolatrous attachment to the Holy Land: the intensity of spiritual connection to material

elements in Palestine, which were physical rather than purely spiritual.<sup>21</sup> Surveying the actual Calvary he wrote, “there is a better Calvary, which, like the manger of the nativity and the spot of the Ascension, has a spiritual omnipresence in Christendom, and is imbedded in the memory and affection of every believer.”<sup>22</sup> Schaff represented a common conviction among preachers who sought to clarify the nature of their commitment to the idea of a holy sight and to distance themselves from the evils of shrine veneration. Perhaps such sentiments contributed to the definition of Palestine as a Jewish Holy Land rather than a Christian one.

Maltbie D. Babcock, like Schaff, was concerned about the potential for idolatry at the sight of the cross and insisted that in “the true cross we may find in supreme loyalty to the will of God.”<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, Babcock wanted to retain the idea of a pilgrimage site for Protestant Christians in Jerusalem.<sup>24</sup> He writes, “Jerusalem, more than Rome or Greece, is the center of light for the whole earth.”<sup>25</sup> Behind this statement is a provision for a Protestant alternative and a rejection of both Roman Catholicism and modern philosophy.

Fosdick also noted this paradox for Protestants.<sup>26</sup> Christians, he claimed, must not become excessively caught up in the excitement of the newly rediscovered Holy Land by attempting to understand Christ purely in terms of his environment:

In Jesus’ day, as now, the fountain, the village [Nazareth] that stood near it, and the villagers who lived there—the entire physical and human matrix in which his life was set—were probably to ordinary eyes thus dull and drab and uninspiring. . . . You cannot explain Christ by his environment; his secret runs far back into the abysmal depths of personality.<sup>27</sup>

For Fosdick, the environment did not provide the only key for understanding Jesus—even though it provided a powerful one. The contrast between the Spirit of Jesus on the one hand, and historic Christianity or Palestine on the other, was especially shocking in Palestine, where Fosdick was forced to conclude that “in the end even the traveler who at first is shocked discovers the real Jerusalem.”<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the real Jerusalem lay in the hearts and minds of believers rather than in a particular landscape when one is concerned about the dangers of idolatry. In the end, Protestants would conclude that Palestine should be a homeland for Jews, not Christians. Palestine’s natural landscapes are the most important signifiers; they help to point to an ethereal, spiritual reality that resided in another realm.

According to Schaff, Fosdick, and others, one must always keep “real” spiritual Christianity in tension with the “material” revelation offered by the Holy Land. It was necessary for these pilgrims to make disclaimers in their narratives, stating that Christianity cannot be fully understood through the

exegesis of the Holy Land. This disclaimer revealed the extent to which the Holy Land had captured popular imagination and influenced popular theology. Protestant leaders wanted to retain the idea of pilgrimage, while erasing its negative associations.

Frances Willard, writing in 1870 on tour in Palestine, spoke of “mankind” as inevitable “golden calf makers.”<sup>29</sup> She ruminated that the shrines so often visited in Palestine “are consecrated only by the credulity of ages [because] Christ our Savior cared too much for the Spirit & too little for the letter.”<sup>30</sup> The “real” places in Palestine have been lost, and the imitations become holy only by virtue of historical tradition. In his essence, the spiritual Christ rejects the physical worship of golden calves, or the “letter.” Another Protestant pilgrim wrote that on his journey he struggled “not to find an empty, open tomb as one who sought the Asian Sepulcher. I seek the kingdom of the Risen One Within.”<sup>31</sup> The question of the larger journey or pilgrimage of life for a Protestant—whether interior or exterior—also occupied some pilgrims.

While Willard rejected the indoor shrines, a favorite thought of hers was the idea of walking where Christ had walked while she was outdoors. This was an idea that often passed through her pilgrimage group like electricity:

I have so often noticed . . . how often such sentences as these would break the silence: “To think that He has passed this way!” “I wonder what He meant by this passage,” or “Do you imagine His journeys included the section through which our route lies today?” Hardly ever is the name mentioned—the name that thrills our hearts here as never before that inspires all our researches and has set our long procession winding among these hills & vales.<sup>32</sup>

Like most Protestants, Willard enjoyed the religious aspects of her Palestine pilgrimage while she was outdoors. The popular idea of “walking where Christ walked” was a sought-after experience. Willard seems to sense the divine only when she is outdoors in Palestine. In one instance, she is “baptized” by a storm into her own race:

This was a memorable ride to me for the ocean in a storm stirs my nature like no other spectacle;—it speaks to me of God—of the mystical past & the wonder that shall be in unborn ages;—it baptizes me with its feather spray into the vast army of my race that have sailed over its billows in triumph or sunk beneath them in despair.<sup>33</sup>

Willard experiences an anointing of sorts from Nature while riding along the Mediterranean in Palestine. She feels a kinship with the “army” of her “race” at the beach, whereas she feels only disgust and anger at the non-Protestant indoor Palestine shrines. A few days later, these feelings cause her to reflect upon the role she hopes her race might have in Palestine. She depicts the Arabs as an elderly race “far gone in decrepitude” whose “dull eyes” will be



closed by her “children,” who will take her place and fill it with their “active enterprise.”<sup>34</sup>

The active enterprise that Willard sought and prized was to walk out-of-doors where Christ walked. In Jerusalem she reports that she “followed Christ’s path when coming from Jordan and went through the probable wilderness.”<sup>35</sup> While camping, Willard enjoyed the singing: “we all sing ‘Rock of Ages’ & these good men lift their thoughts in prayer & I try to do the same.”<sup>36</sup> The Armenian and Catholic services in Jerusalem were a disaster for her. Willard enjoyed reading aloud for her companions the chapters of the Bible “as related to Jesus’ teachings from Mount Olivet” after visiting there.<sup>37</sup> Palestine was thought to particularly illumine the Bible. “What force-freshness & added pathos I found in all these wonderful words after the experience of this marvelous week.”<sup>38</sup> As was the case for most American Protestant pilgrims, Willard enjoyed the outdoors and direct study of the Bible while in Palestine.

When Willard stood outside alongside the pool of Siloam she wrote that “the divinity of the religion in which I place my hopes thrilled through my heart as perhaps never before.”<sup>39</sup> Whether in the City or out in the countryside, the preference was clearly to be outside and walk where Christ walked. At the mountains of Moab she reflected upon the crucial Palestine Holy Land: “what a matchless landscape this—impossible to rival on the wide face of the beautiful earth;—more significant to the Christian heart than all the classic plains or poetic mountain heights.”<sup>40</sup> The most critical pilgrimage experiences with the Divine in Palestine are found within the larger landscape, nature, and the outdoors. The dark shrines seemed to promote idolatry and were often avoided and met with disgust.

Willard was not the only Protestant to feel strange in an unfamiliar Orthodox setting. One American pilgrim of Scottish Calvinist background wrote as he entered a Greek Orthodox shrine: “I feared my Scotch ancestors within me might make protest in the presence of all the ritualistic emblems . . . but they were, after much argument, reconciled and forgot their differences in their approach to this hallowed place.”<sup>41</sup> German Reformed minister Benjamin Bausman wrote in 1861 that “the Greek Easter is the greatest moral argument against the spot [Church of the Holy Sepulcher] . . . probably the most offensive imposture to be found in the world.”<sup>42</sup> Of the Garden of Gethsemane missionary William Thompson wrote: “The Latins . . . have succeeded in gaining sole possession of it . . . and seem disposed to make it like a modern pleasure garden. . . . The Greeks have invented another site a little north of it.”<sup>43</sup> The very foreignness of other Christian traditions was difficult to resolve in many cases.

In rejecting the Holy Land as an object of veneration, Protestants participated in an ancient Christian tradition of spiritualizing the Holy Land.<sup>44</sup> Discussions regarding Christian pilgrimage can be traced back to Gregory of

Nyssa (335–394 C.E.), who was both an adherent and a detractor of Holy Land pilgrimage. Gregory called holy places “saving symbols,” and he believed that the Holy Land had received the “footprints of life itself.” Gregory of Nyssa wrote that just as perfume leaves its fragrance in a jar, so God has left traces of God’s presence in Palestine.<sup>45</sup> At other times, however, Gregory stated that God is no more present in one place than in another. This example is somewhat representative as there is a tradition of Christian ambivalence about the Holy Land, regularly discussing where the difference between a pilgrim, a traveler, and a tourist lies. Palestine/Israel has also been viewed as a part of the romantic, chivalrous medieval tradition that began with the first crusades, the renewed interest in the Holy Land during the English Reformation, and the ongoing interest in pilgrimage. Actual pilgrimage was in deep decline among Protestants from the Reformation until the nineteenth century when the Holy Land is being rediscovered with the advent of steamship travel, although actual Holy Land pilgrimage or crusade has remained a popular literary focus in the Western tradition.<sup>46</sup>

In the literary Holy Land tradition of seventeenth-century England, Milton portrayed the Holy Land as a land of wonder and terror, and during the eighteenth century, another period of low Protestant pilgrimage participation, hymns of the Wesley’s, Cowper, and Watts portray it as a pastoral, miraculous place. Hymnody of the eighteenth century depicted the Christian life as a pilgrimage. In addition, during the nineteenth century, Palestine became a symbol of truth for Romantic poets such as Blake,<sup>47</sup> while pious ministers begin to travel there and write spiritualized narratives for their congregations.<sup>48</sup>

The tradition of Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land started with the pilgrimage of Constantine’s mother, Helena, to Jerusalem in the fourth century. Little has been written on the topic of Christian Holy Land pilgrimage itself, although particular voyages such as that of Egeria of Spain in the early church period, and that of English Margery Kempe in the late medieval period are well known. The books on pilgrimage in Christian history, which do not focus on a particular character, tend towards devotionism in some cases, while others seek to illumine the impact of pilgrimages to the East on art and literature in the West. Many of the books above are listed in order to show that they exist and to demonstrate the scope and limitations of interest in this topic among Christians.

In general, the early church highly valued pilgrimage to Jerusalem. During the medieval period, large extensive tours were often the norm. For example, in 1064 the bishop of Mainz led a pilgrimage of seven thousand people to Jerusalem. There they were able to purchase sacred items and bring them home. They touched their rings to the site of the crucifixion and carried Jordan water back with them. Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* are set in a pilgrim’s inn as strangers meet on their journey to tell their tales on the way to

Jerusalem. Pilgrimage was a central element of medieval life that was later rejected and disparaged by the leaders of the Protestant Reformation.

While Protestants did not begin to travel to Palestine en masse until the nineteenth century, it was a living ideal as well as an important place on the cultural map in theology and art. When Protestant ministers begin traveling there, however, the cultural associations evolve and change in new ways. In nineteenth-century popular culture, the East is broadly associated with the exotic and with permissiveness, a trend reflected in fashion and popular literature.<sup>49</sup> Protestant pilgrimage authors fashion a more pious East for a Christian audience. In their clear preference for the out-of-doors, Protestant pilgrims fashion parallel sites by the turn of the century.

General Gordon's Garden Tomb is created as a Protestant Calvary alternative to the Holy Sepulcher—a site rejected for its superstitious idolatry and excessive tradition.<sup>50</sup> General Gordon's Tomb is a wholly outdoor site, wherein visitors sit on simple benches in the midst of a garden under the canopy of trees and sky, surrounded by a garden of typical Palestine foliage. From these benches they have a vantage of the landscape and the outcropping of rock that Gordon called "Golgotha."

Similarly, Robinson's Arch is an out-of-doors site that must be viewed from a simple nature path around the back of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. There, American Protestants can stand in the midst of a natural, parklike setting under the sky and survey a previously hidden archaeological wonder discovered by an American scholar, untrammelled by predecessors, unfettered by centuries of tradition. In 1870 Frances Willard described her visit to Robinson's Arch: "we all sit on the lower stone of the arch or recline in the fragrant wheat near by & Dr. Goodwin reads to us at length."<sup>51</sup>

Similarly, when visiting the Jordan river, a favorite must-see on most itineraries, American Protestants also gather out-of-doors on the banks to read Scripture and sing hymns. One historically popular site on the banks of the Jordan offers simple stone steps and guardrails leading into the river's waters under the sky, a pathway down into the fabled stream surrounded by trees and roofed by the natural heavens. In the same way, Protestants gather on the grassy banks of the Mount of Beatitudes. Most often they do not go inside the shrine—but rather are content to sit on the grassy slope under the sky and read from the New Testament. Seeing too much of the contemporary religious scene in Palestine is an obstacle to getting back to the "real" Holy Land of the Bible that they seek.<sup>52</sup>

American Protestants claimed their pilgrimage sites in the open places—charting a clear path away from the others whenever possible in order to safely practice their earnest faith. The American Protestant preference for the out-of-doors in Palestine as the clearest pathway to the most important spiritual reality is perhaps the most unique and defining characteristic of their pilgrimages. They claimed the rocks, hills, trees, gardens, ancient walls, and

sky as their own religious heritage and most important sites of contact with the sacred. When necessary, these out-of-door sites were institutionalized, named, and venerated as signifiers and links to the central tenets of Protestant religion, namely, the rejection of idol worship (outward forms), the emphasis upon science and education, and the insistence upon returning to the most simple, untrammelled reflection of the Bible and its geographical sources.

## LEISURE-TOURISM AND PILGRIMAGE

What is the role of leisure-tourism in such American Protestant pilgrimage? Many pilgrimage sites of the nineteenth and early twentieth century are full of the trappings of consumer commercialism and the opportunity to shop for souvenirs. During the mid-nineteenth century, the souvenir, this enduring, historical element of pilgrimage (and perhaps all travel), was also crucial. The records of the presence of religious memento hawkers outside of a Christian religious site testifies to this ancient traveling tradition and the eagerness to buy. For example, one 1838 traveler returned to Germany with “rosaries, mother-of-pearl tablets, crucifixes, petrified olives, and peas, and a certificate of his visit to the Holy Sepulcher.”<sup>53</sup> At home, the themes of the East and Orient were the hottest ideas for early department store marketing, because for many the East symbolized a sensuality and openness that Judeo-Christian culture lacked.<sup>54</sup> During the nineteenth century, travel, no matter how thrilling the voyage, was often justified as a repair for ill health rather than for enjoyment’s sake alone. Travel to Palestine was defensible as an especially worthy use of time due to its religious significance, i.e., a Christian vacation or a sanctified vacation. Protestants rarely cast their journeys as pilgrimage, rather more as a pious, educational adventure.

While many Protestants continued the ancient Christian theological tradition of ambivalence about the significance of the Holy Land, they remained outspoken about the dangers of idolatry. Willard warned of “golden calf makers,” while other leading Protestants such as Schaff, Babcock, and Fosdick urged readers to seek a more spiritual Jerusalem or Holy Land. This spiritual Holy Land, they asserted, was the true one.

## “BE ANOTHER LUTHER” TO “HEATHEN” CHRISTIANS

The busy and crowded ancient shrines of Jerusalem provided the economic backbone of the city during the nineteenth century, as it was often full of foreign pilgrims. The industry of the monks and other religious leaders provided a significant source of cash for local monastic and religious commu-

nities. The earliest Protestant missionary to Palestine, Pliny Fisk, was pulled aside by a “padre” in a Palestine monastery during the 1820s. He related the conversation:

He said he was aware, that the English wish but the distribution of books to form a party in the East. But said he in a confidential manner, as if telling me something very important, I perceive they do not know the character of the people in the Levant. One third of the money, which they spend for books, if distributed secretly, would form a large party. Whereas, by distributing books, they effect nothing . . . the fact that this is the method adopted by the Catholics in order to make proselytes, make me believe, that he was sincere in what he considered the best method of converting men. This man has been thirty years a missionary without learning the language of the country.<sup>55</sup>

This realistic portrayal of the missions field prompted Fisk to state the real object of the Bible Society to give the Bible to the locals in their own dialect due to their ignorance of the Scriptures. Fisk’s other principle object had been to begin “regular Protestant worship in the Holy City.”<sup>56</sup> The missions field was a complex one, but Fisk worshipped in a Protestant fashion both in his own room, and also in the out-of-doors. A Protestant pilgrim traveling during the 1850s wrote, “The support of Jerusalem is its holiness. Pilgrims sustain it entirely. In Easter week their number is immense, and all the year round it is considerable.”<sup>57</sup> Yet Protestant institutions did not benefit financially from pilgrim activity, having no basic claim to any holy locations or shrines in Jerusalem. In addition, they resented the piety of the other traditions, which was hardly familiar to them. Protestants commonly viewed Catholics as a mission field.<sup>58</sup> The types of non-Protestant Christians in Jerusalem in 1840, according to E. G. Robinson, were “mostly Greeks and Armenians, very few Latins were seen; and only now and then a straggling Copt.”<sup>59</sup> Over time, Protestants came to view the Holy Sepulcher as a modern version of the Israelite temple of Jerusalem—overrun by moneychangers and robbers.<sup>60</sup> Protestants wanted to “cleanse the temple” of corruption and inappropriate elements just as Jesus had done in his day, and also as the Protestant Reformers had done in their own time. Yet the desire to preserve the holy places and shrines unchanged was a central focus of the late nineteenth-century Catholic approach to the Holy Land.<sup>61</sup>

E. G. Robinson wrote despairingly of the state of Jerusalem in the 1840s while proudly reflecting upon Protestant worship in light of the foreign forms of worship he saw: “The simplicity and spirituality of the Protestant worship was to me affecting and doubly pleasing in contrast with the pageant of which we had just been spectators.”<sup>62</sup> Having been delayed in his travels, he narrowly missed all of the events of the Holy Week for Christians and the Jewish Passover celebrations and counted himself lucky. He wrote:

In consequence of our late arrival we thus missed all the incidents of the Holy Week. This however we counted as no loss, but rather a gain; for the object of our visit was the city itself, in relation to its ancient renown and religious associations; not as seen in its present state of decay and superstitious or fraudulent degradation.<sup>63</sup>

The dilemma of the Protestant traveler to Palestine reflects a larger conflict in Protestant biblical theology in general. This is seen in the way that they found the biblical past of the imagination and the Bible in a situation of historical decay in a derelict, outlying Turkish village. Robinson was careful to reject “superstitious” pilgrimage piety—jumping over centuries of tradition back to biblical origins and affirming instead the solid ground of science for the Christian scholar-traveler. According to Robinson, Protestants of all varieties laid aside their distinctions in Jerusalem, finding they had more in common than they had perhaps once believed. Besides, in a setting like the Holy Land, “each religion was obliged to define itself, to show that the others were different and of lesser value.”<sup>64</sup> In the face of such obstacles, Protestants were more likely to overcome their differences and focus on their similarities instead.

Protestants described the “grafting onto Jerusalem” of “a vast mass of tradition, foreign in its source and doubtful in its character; which has flourished luxuriantly and spread itself out widely.”<sup>65</sup> For missionaries during the first half of the nineteenth century “the curse of Islam had been divinely sanctioned to punish Christians for corrupting worship with rites and rituals alien to the spirit of the Bible. Exporting Christian purity back to the Holy Land was a crucial divine duty.”<sup>66</sup> Protestants doubted the sincerity and validity of the shrine operations that served many pilgrims. Writing during 1870, Frances Willard made note of the contrast between the extreme poverty of the throngs of pilgrims in contrast to the expensive clothing and elaborate hairstyles of the priests. She found the rituals repetitive:

There was little of novelty [at the Holy Sepulcher]. The same dirty, longhaired, ill-smelling crowd of feverishly eager worshippers, the same priests with locks like a woman’s hanging down their backs & gorgeous robes of purple, green, & gold. The same singsong ritual though without the splendid harmony.<sup>67</sup>

Many Protestants began to see the local Christian priests as a corrupt, wealthy class of persons who took advantage of the multitudes of poor, non-Protestant pilgrims who traveled to Palestine. Their rituals were hardly familiar, and were regarded by Protestants as cacophonous rather than orderly. Willard later wrote that the “Reformers” are the “prophets” of the later ages. Indeed, many Protestants of the nineteenth century suggested that the biblical mantle of prophecy had fallen upon Protestants who needed to speak out to the corrupt priestly class in Jerusalem, just as Jesus had done almost two

thousand years earlier to the religious elite of his time, the Pharisees and Sadducees.

In another fashion, one 1910 pilgrim quoted a Psalm lamenting the public defeat and humiliation of warring Christian groups while referencing the legendary fighting he witnessed between Christian groups, particularly at the Holy Sepulcher. He wrote, "Now I know at least one reason why Mohammedans despise Christians, 'Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.'" <sup>68</sup> An official U.S. mapping expedition was rescued from a throng of thousands of disorderly pilgrims by their "Bedawin friends." They wrote, "Strange that we should have been shielded from a Christian throng by wild children of the desert." <sup>69</sup> Eastern Christians were often seen as an embarrassment to American Protestants, who saw them as hopelessly superstitious, corrupt, and disorderly.

The policing role of the Muslim soldiers in 1880 at Christian shrines remained a sign of Christian disunity and discord. Many Protestant pilgrims felt ashamed that Christians were not able to maintain peace and order at their own shrines. One pilgrim described the melee at the Holy Sepulcher:

The crowds of pilgrims and devotees calling themselves Christian, who were only kept from flying at each others' throats over the tomb of the Founder of their Religion by a strong guard of Moslem soldiers, evidently inspired the latter with a contempt and disgust which one felt compelled to share. Nor can we wonder that the followers of the Prophet who are called upon to protect the degrading rites and superstitions practiced in this bitter and fanatic spirit, should regard some forms of modern Christianity as little better than paganism. <sup>70</sup>

In this instance, the fighting between Christians witnessed and literally policed by armed Muslim soldiers was viewed as a radical departure from the tenets of the Christian religion. "In all the wild haste of a disorderly rout, Copts and Russians, Poles, Armenians, Greeks, and Syrians . . . on they came . . . talking, screaming, shouting in almost every known language under the sun." <sup>71</sup> The false notions of the other pilgrims were perceived as ignorant, debased, and corrupt—similar to "paganism." <sup>72</sup> In fact, Eastern Christians were also blamed for the ascendancy of Islam in the Holy Land. The belief in saints and relics was viewed by Muslims as idolatrous practices that blocked Muslims from perceiving the merits of Protestant salvation. <sup>73</sup>

During the nineteenth century, Protestants chose more often to see themselves as scholars, scientists, and reporters for an audience back home than as humble pilgrims. Sometimes, they chose to see themselves as adventurers. While pilgrimage is often theologically associated with relics and superstition among Protestants, Protestant travel was often overtly associated with education and connection to a historical past (a traditional Protestant emphasis) rather than with miracle and spirituality. "Pilgrimage" smacked too much of ignorance and spiritual sentimentality for Protestants, who also of-

ten viewed themselves in terms of the influence of the Enlightenment and the progress of science.

The nineteenth and twentieth century would see the development of a multitude of Protestant parallel sites in Palestine—a clear rejection of the centuries-old venerable Orthodox shrines. Protestants often did not identify with other Christians in Palestine. Instead, they often treated them with hostility and disdain. E. G. Robinson wrote, “All ecclesial tradition in and around Jerusalem and throughout Palestine is of no value except as it is supported from scriptures or from other contemporary testimony.”<sup>74</sup> Robinson further recommended for the sake of honest research that one avoid contact with the monks altogether, instead applying for information solely to the native population, and going off the beaten track.

For many Protestants, other Christian traditions were depleted of the vitality and force that only contact with the West could give them: “Western civilization is living and effective, and, while it is progressing in the West, it is actively regenerating the effete civilization of the East.”<sup>75</sup> One representation of the idea of clash between “civilization” and “nature” discussed above is exemplified in the insistence by many Protestant ministers that the out-of-doors was the true pilgrimage site, as opposed to the sacramental sites offered by Eastern Christian churches. Upon seeing the Eastern churches, Philip Schaff lamented that the Holy Land was “fearfully desolate and neglected now”—the abundance of nature was nowhere to be seen.<sup>76</sup> These Eastern churches, for Schaff, remained unchanged, like the Bedouin Arabs: the “Armenians, Nestorian, and Copts have been providentially preserved in a petrified state.”<sup>77</sup> In contrast, the out-of-doors remained pure and untrammelled (truly unchanged and more biblical)—more ready for analysis by Protestant preachers. Heavily incense-scented, darkened, ornate, candle-liturgical, icon-containing churches and shrines of the Eastern church in Palestine presented American preachers with what was likely a new religious experience. In general, they did not respond well to this different approach to Christian worship.

According to Schaff, it was no heresy to dissent from any of the “monkish” traditions concerning the holy places in Palestine, because the church has never claimed geographical and topographical infallibility. In fact, Protestants strongly begged to differ with the piety of their Eastern Christian brothers and sisters: “I cannot say that I have been favorably impressed. I would gladly recognize piety and devotion to Christ even under the crude and distorted forms of superstition. But I could not restrain the feeling that this is not the worship in Spirit and in truth which our Savior demands.”<sup>78</sup> Schaff, along with others, remained convinced that Eastern Christians were insincere idolaters.

Dwight L. Moody also engaged in a heartfelt conversation with an Eastern Orthodox priest from America while in the Holy Land. Moody urged him



to preach the gospel of Christ to his people, while encouraging him to be “another Luther” to his “superstitious” and “deceptive” people.<sup>79</sup> One can only imagine his response, which is not recorded in the narrative. Similarly, John Haynes Holmes wrote the following condemnation of Eastern Orthodox Christians: “It is a beautiful system—build a church, give it a reputation through the world as the place where Jesus did something or other, and then sit at the seat of customs and rake in the money of those who have to see everything that is properly advertised.”<sup>80</sup> Clearly, Holmes viewed his own marketing and profit of the Holy Land through the sale of his pilgrimage narrative in a different light. Protestant preachers viewed their own veneration and retailing of the Holy Land in another way altogether.

This fear and/or mixed contempt for Eastern worship and the love for the out-of-doors quickly turned into a call for missions among pilgrims to the misguided Eastern Christians. The earliest American Protestant mission efforts to Palestine were made by Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons in the 1820s. Both died of disease approximately five years after arriving in the distant Land, and were widely considered Protestant martyrs.<sup>81</sup> Their stated goal was to “rekindle the flame of primitive piety on the crumbling altars of a long corrupted Christianity.”<sup>82</sup> The feeling was mutual: in 1846, an Armenian bull of “perpetual excommunication and anathema forever” barred all Protestants permanently from membership in the Armenian Church.<sup>83</sup> The idea that Christian identity was universal among believers and that it transcended any other cultural or regional commitment was pervasive among Gilded Age Protestants during the heyday of the American foreign mission enterprise. These ministers conflated Christianity and Western civilization in their writings, as many liberal proponents of missions would do during the Progressive Era. They shared many of the common assumptions of the missionary mood as they traveled abroad to the Holy Land. According to William Hutchinson, this mood included “convictions about the Adamic or Christ-like innocence of the Americans, a national destiny made manifest in biblical prophecy, and America’s redemptive role within the divine plan.”<sup>84</sup> Thus, Protestant ministers’ views of the Armenians, Nestorians, and Copts of the Holy Land as “heathens” in need of true salvation must be understood within the context of the imperialistic American conceptions of national destiny guiding relations with cultures deemed primitive by the Western world.

Writing in this mood, Schaff concluded his travel narrative with a call for missions to the misguided inhabitants of the East. He wrote, “Once Europe called upon Asia, ‘come over and help us!’ Now the same cry comes from Asia and Africa to Europe and America.”<sup>85</sup> For Schaff, the lands of the Bible comprised a vast mission-field. It must be “conquered with spiritual weapons for Christ and Christian civilization by the Western nations, in discharge of a debt of gratitude for the blessings received from them.”<sup>86</sup> Yet when Protestant missionaries began to appear in the Holy Land, they appeared in an area

where the Church had existed for centuries. Most initial efforts, however, were directed toward Muslims.<sup>87</sup> In time, with their knowledge of Greek and Syriac and their Hellenistic/ Byzantine cultural background, Eastern Christians would play key roles as mediators between Protestants and Muslims.<sup>88</sup> Protestants believed that Americans should not neglect the “heathens” inhabiting the Palestine landscape in the broader mission enterprise.

## THE CHRIST CHILD IN NATURAL PALESTINE

Protestant pilgrims were somewhat undecided about the roles of “civilization” and “nature” in the Holy Land and ruminated on this topic at length. Though civilization gave them their knowledge and credentials as Anglo-Saxons, they recognized that civilization could corrupt and that it had the potential to banish the religious romance and power of the Holy Land. For example, Talmage wrote that he was glad he was able to see the Holy Land before the inevitable “civilized” development occurred. When a planned train from Jaffa to Jerusalem was realized, he noted, one would no longer need physical strength and diligence on such tours. Instead, sadly, anyone would be able to respond to the conductor’s cry, “all aboard for Jerusalem!”<sup>89</sup> The conflict between the excesses and the benefits of civilization was somewhat resolved, however, as Talmage presented his trip in the best possible light.

At the moment of the book’s production in 1890, Talmage hoped to present to his readers the pinnacle of what civilization could offer, combined with the pristine, untouched, blank slate of a holy, biblical landscape unspoiled by the excesses of this same civilization. The abundance of God afforded by the land notwithstanding, Talmage claimed, “[n]othing but Christian civilization will ever roll back the influences which are spoiling the Egyptians.”<sup>90</sup> Yet fortunately, the lack of civilization in the Orient had preserved the Orient as a record of the Christian past. This conundrum, i.e., placing the benefits and costs of Anglo-Saxon civilization at odds with each other, was a paradoxical theme running through the Holy Land tour genre.

The transformation of social anxieties into physical ones was also apparent in the Holy Land tour genre’s discourse on “civilization” and “nature.” In contrast to the “civilized” American city with all of its social problems, the landscape of Palestine was unencumbered. Talmage’s elegant sermon rhetoric back home denounced the evils of urban life.<sup>91</sup> In contrast to the ugly lives of urban immigrant children, Christ’s childhood was a fresh and direct encounter with nature. His boyhood was spent “among birds and flowers” while “drinking from wells and chasing butterflies.”<sup>92</sup> There were no factories or bureaucratization in Christ’s childhood. The only disruptions, accord-

ing to Talmage, came from majestic exhibitions of the power of nature. It is not surprising that Protestants would conclude that the wide vistas of unsettled Palestine were the perfect homeland for crowded ghetto residents of the West.

The real, spiritual Jerusalem could be found in pristine nature, and some pilgrims spiritualized an imagined clash between civilization and nature. For Schaff, the victory of Protestant Christianity in Palestine must be a spiritual victory rather than an earthly, civilized one. Christians must not make the mistake of the Crusaders once again. Fosdick also noted that “if one would get at the real Jerusalem as it was at first, one must leave the present city altogether.”<sup>93</sup> The true Holy Land was actually found in the areas where “primitive” Arabs reside close to nature: “One lives here in the atmosphere of the *Arabian Nights*. The world of normal regularity and scientific law grows dim and the mind is transported back to pre-scientific days, when anything could happen and everything that did happen was immediately ascribed to God.”<sup>94</sup>

The intended audience for some Holy Land tour accounts, however, was the geographically distant, civilized white American male, ensconced as it were and quite removed from “nature.” According to Talmage, his account *From Manger to Throne* (1890) was a life of Christ which “a business man, getting home at eight o’ clock at night and starting from home next morning at seven o’ clock may profitably take up, and in the few minutes before he starts and after he returns, read in snatches and understand.”<sup>95</sup> Talmage here was specific about the civilized racial stream of which he is a part, positioning himself at the forefront of the evolutionary development of the Anglo-Saxon race, citing with pride his white forebears:

We shall tell the story in Anglo-Saxon, the language in which John Bunyan dreamed and William Shakespeare dramatized, and Longfellow romanced and John Milton sang, and George Whitfield thundered. What is the use of dragging dead languages into the service of such a book? Sailing on the Atlantic Ocean I asked where did all this water come from, and answered it by saying, “the Hudson, the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, the Amazon, the Seine, the Tagus, and the Guadalquivir.” And so I thought all the rivers of language, freighted with the thoughts of all lands and all ages, have emptied into the ocean of Anglo-Saxonism. Blessed to me was the hour when my mother taught me how to frame the first sentence out of it, and my last word on earth shall be a draught upon its inexhaustible treasury.<sup>96</sup>

Talmage explained his choice to write a less scholarly book in the vernacular English, or Anglo-Saxon. His own language, English, was loaded with evolutionary benefits coming from ages of civilized intellectual development. In fact, all of the intellectual developments of the world had emptied themselves into the “ocean” of Anglo-Saxonism. This Anglo-Saxonism, therefore, was superior to dead languages, and the civilized middle-class, white, male reader

should know that the language and culture he received at his mother's knee was an especially great one, if not the greatest. The Protestant minister viewed a primitive Arab biblical landscape, interpreted it in terms of Anglo-Saxon civilization, and made it available to the same more refined culture. They simply chose not to regard historically present Arab Christians as a source of wisdom or information in any sense.

Also evident in the Holy Land tour genre was the influence of Romantic religion, especially with its lack of concern for evil, pain, and death and the treatment of sin as blindness to nature. The commitment to the ideal of immediate awareness of God through sense-experience of nature and landscape in the Holy Land was related to the Transcendentalist mood sweeping antebellum America.<sup>97</sup> Perhaps the distant land of Palestine allowed popular, orthodox Presbyterian preachers the intellectual space to experiment with such ideas regarding the divine in nature in a safe way.

Many of the travel accounts called forth a Romantic Christ in direct communion with nature and in rejection of the excesses of civilization. For example, Talmage wrote: "One day I see that Divine boy, the wind flurrying his hair over his sun-browned forehead, standing on a hilltop."<sup>98</sup> Jesus' Romantic encounter with nature was pure and direct, as was that of the English Romantic poets: "[T]hese mountains and seas could not have touched his eye without irradiating his entire nature with their magnificence."<sup>99</sup> In some senses, the Palestine landscape itself became divine. God channeled important prophetic messages and power through the conduit of nature, "and all this spring and song and grass and sunshine and shadow woven into the most exquisite nature that ever breathed or wept or sung or suffered."<sup>100</sup> The modern city may be "stinking and evil," but Palestine, the land of Christ's youth, like Wordsworth's Lake District, remained pure and natural, ready for observation by American Protestants.

A turn-of-the-century pilgrim wrote that the simplicity of Christ's surroundings held the keys to understanding some of his essential teachings. He writes, "The simplicity of this Syrian life,—both in village and open country,—makes a deep impression upon me, and as I try to penetrate the meaning of Christ's message. . . . I return, repeatedly, to this primitive mode of human life."<sup>101</sup> Similarly, for many pilgrims Gethsemane became the place where "nature held communion with nature's God."<sup>102</sup> Here it became clear that a not-too-infrequently stated mission against German "rationalism" (the Modernist Controversy) uses the imagery and philosophy of Romanticism as a vehicle for divine truths over and against the methods of the turn-of-the-century Modernists. Supernatural events became a transformation of damaged nature. In Talmage's biography of Christ, as Christ rises there is "a benediction upon the whole earth until every mountain is an Olivet of consecration, and every lake a Galilee on whose mosaic of crystal, and opal, and sapphire divine splendors shall walk."<sup>103</sup>

Adding his voice to the chorus of the celebration of nature over civilization, Philip Schaff concluded, "Nature cannot be destroyed by the mismanagement of the Ottomans."<sup>104</sup> Fosdick weighed in with the conviction that "nature is the true pilgrim's Palestine."<sup>105</sup> For Fosdick, the Master's world was an out-of-doors world with flowers, husbandmen, children, and God. When Fosdick surveyed the landscape, he concluded: "There is hardly a hillslope in that blossoming land in springtime on which the Master could not point to the profuse and brilliant beauty of the flowers, and one who walks by the Sea of Galilee finds Wordsworth's picture of the daffodils of England true to the poppies and anemones of Palestine."<sup>106</sup> Similarly, Maltbie D. Babcock identified the American pilgrim's love for the Holy Land with the Romantic poet's love for England, stating to friends and admirers back home that he favored the poems of Wordsworth during his time in Palestine.<sup>107</sup> The celebration of God's presence in nature that Holy Land tours often brought about for Protestant ministers recalled for them the English Romantic poets' love for the British countryside.

This framework, which juxtaposed the benefits and disadvantages of civilization and nature as two opposing worlds, adds to the picture of orientalism in the Holy Land tour genre regarding Arabs. Like Americans who travel to Africa strictly in order to view wildlife and topography while overlooking living Africans and their culture, Americans who traveled East were forced to integrate various stimuli into the primitivist perspective in order to conjure biblical primitivism. Civilization was an asset only for those distant from primitive origins. Nature, on the other hand, was an asset to areas and peoples deemed closer to relevant religious origins.

The civilization discourse regarding the primitive biblical past received a new challenge, however, when pilgrims confronted the shrines of the Eastern churches that they believed were hopelessly overcivilized and removed from biblical origins. Protestants constructed an idea of untouched nature as a shrine unto itself, and understood nature as the true stage or key to Christ's earthly life. In so doing, they were able to create an alternative to the Christian shrines that were hardly familiar to them, and they feared were hopelessly corrupt. They made the hills into monuments to freshness and youth.

## THE OUT-OF-DOORS AS A PROTESTANT SHRINE

Frustrated by the confusing experience of visiting strange and unfamiliar Christian shrines, one pilgrim wrote, "if ever an altar rises for all Christendom to the man of Galilee, it should be here upon these hills where he walked, looking across the sea and the plain . . . toward the mountains."<sup>108</sup> By the turn of the century, Protestants had not only created official parallel

shrines (e.g., the alternate Golgotha, General Gordon's Tomb) but also had begun to look to the out-of-doors in order to create sacred spaces in Palestine. A 1910 pilgrim claimed that the hills of Palestine were almost infallible, in that they had been untouched by humans, and therefore remained enduringly and reliably the same. He wrote, "These and many more places we cannot know. . . . Men cannot take away the mountains, nor put the lake in some other place. There they remain; and it is to see them, in fact or in imagination, that I intend to take you."<sup>109</sup> Undestroyed by human, corrupt traditions, the bald, unchanged faces of nature deliver the Protestant pilgrims safely to the holy place that they seek in Palestine but are often frustrated in their attempts to find. General Gordon's Garden Tomb and Robinson's Arch were both institutionalized responses to this Protestant conundrum.

By the time of his Holy Land tour narrative, taking place four decades after that of Philip Schaff, Harry Emerson Fosdick promised to present Christians with a new vision of "the most impressive portion of mankind's spiritual drama," which was played out on the hills of Palestine (note, not at the locations of the shrines).<sup>110</sup> It also demonstrates the changes that had taken place in the ways that Protestants viewed the sacred spaces of Palestine. By the time of Fosdick's tour, Palestine pilgrimages had become increasingly commercialized and increasingly ambivalent about the shrines important to Latin and Orthodox traditions. Liberal Fosdick (1878–1969), who rejected Fundamentalist assertions about the church and Christian faith throughout his career weighed in. He was associated with evangelical liberalism and the creation of the interdenominational Riverside Church in New York City in 1931 after his refusal to capitulate to conservative Presbyterians at the "First Church." By the time Fosdick published his pilgrimage narrative, *In the Steps of the Master*, he was a renowned author worldwide, having published six successful books between 1908 and 1920. After visiting Europe at the end of World War I, he became an outspoken pacifist, and also championed racial and economic justice throughout his life, engaging in a popular, prophetic ministry, even as neo-orthodox challengers would bring about the muting of his reputation along with that of other religious liberals in the postwar period.<sup>111</sup> For Fosdick, nature in Palestine could be the only true Protestant shrine if there was to be one.

Henry Van Dyke also sought the elusive sense of place that came along with pilgrimage to Palestine: "That Spirit of Place, that soul of the Holy Land, is what I fain would meet on my pilgrimage—for the sake of Him who interprets it in love. And I know well where to find it,—out-of-doors."<sup>112</sup> The primitive, undeveloped nature of Palestine provided the conditions that led to the possibility of sacred encounter for Van Dyke, who wrote, "The cities have sunken into dust: the trees of the forest have fallen: the nations have dissolved. But the mountains keep their immutable outline: the liquid stars shine with the same light, move on the same pathways."<sup>113</sup> The sense of

history and time standing still in Palestine that is so characteristic of travel narratives is here pronounced in the physical, natural landscape.

Historical Christian pilgrimage is often centered upon the moment of approach to the sacred altar or site wherein the pilgrim is momentarily transformed into the savior and the redemptive tradition through a process of identification with the divine. This moment makes up the converse of a ritual of affliction, wherein Christians emphasize their alienation from the holiness of God. Instead, the pilgrim has a moment of powerful recognition and identification with religious sacra. Protestants reacted to the ritual experience in predictable patterns. The altars of the local shrines provided a strange and confusing experience for many Protestants, who in turn “created” a shrine out of the hills and flowers they saw in nature while visiting Palestine.

Another constructed “altar” was that of Protestant scholarship and Bible reading. Protestant ministers typically brought several volumes of learned scholarship on their tours of primitive biblical lands in consonance with typical journeys of civilized males to uncivilized lands at the turn of the century. It was necessary for Talmage to load the saddlebags of his horse on his journey with many volumes of learned books. In order to produce *From Manger to Throne*, he claimed to have “ransacked the world of literature, sacred and secular.”<sup>114</sup> He provided a lengthy list of the scholarly tomes to which he was indebted, thus asserting his qualifications as a learned authority on the life of Christ. The theme of the manly Anglo-Saxon male abroad, viewing the untrammelled pristine biblical past through the lens of civilization, was represented in his discourse. Like Theodore Roosevelt, Talmage brought the trappings of the civilized male with him on journeys to primitive lands. Thus, readers and vicarious pilgrims were assured that there was a strong intellectual heritage undergirding his observations of the primitive, elemental, biblical landscape.

Harry Emerson Fosdick lauded the out-of-doors as the place where true pilgrims remember the life of Christ, as opposed to the indoor shrines offered by Eastern Christians. As Fosdick put it: “It is only the out-of-doors that matters much [in the Holy Land]. Almost everything that men have put under a roof they have spoiled for the intelligent.”<sup>115</sup> After making this observation and planning to spend his entire pilgrimage out-of-doors (Fosdick deliberately eschewed contact with civilization by refusing to ride trains or stay in hotels; instead, he only rode a camel and camped), Fosdick attacked the Eastern church for its greed and worldliness: “Wherever they have found an excuse they have built a chapel or a church and ecclesiastical hangers-on have gathered there to live under the benefactions of the pilgrims. This is an ugly side to Palestine but it has one good effect: it drives the traveler out-of-doors.”<sup>116</sup> Fosdick, as a Protestant, sought to differentiate himself from the long tradition of Catholic pilgrimage to shrines that the Protestant reformers had criticized so harshly. He condemned the Eastern churches for their “pre-

tentious and ugly paganism mingled with disgraceful imposture.”<sup>117</sup> Fosdick and other Protestants found the true Holy Land Christ in the natural out-of-doors in a way that is suffused with popular Romantic sensibilities and Victorian sentimentalism.

Henry Van Dyke also developed a new conviction while in Palestine, namely, “that Christianity is an out-of-doors religion.”<sup>118</sup> He rhetorically asked his readers, “How shall we understand [Christianity] unless we carry it under the free sky and interpret it in the companionship of nature?”<sup>119</sup> Van Dyke also imagined the boy Jesus in communion with, and surrounded by, the bounty of nature. The boy Jesus, according to Van Dyke, often gathered flowers out-of-doors upon the hilltops of the Holy Land in a Romantic encounter with nature.<sup>120</sup> While in Jerusalem, Van Dyke experienced a silent understanding among his fellow travelers characterized by a sense that Christ’s crucifixion had actually occurred in the open air of the out-of-doors, rather than inside any of the buildings containing Eastern Orthodox shrines. Here, the out-of-doors became a shrine unto itself. Indeed, for many Protestant pilgrims the shrines of the Eastern churches were “intolerable.”<sup>121</sup> They looked elsewhere for shrines and there were none they found suitable, so they created their own.

Like Fosdick, Dwight L. Moody eschewed “civilization” on his Holy Land tour in order to experience the land in a similar fashion to Christ. Moody insisted on walking whenever possible, stating, “I am not going to drive where my Lord footed it.”<sup>122</sup> Echoing these sentiments, Van Dyke declared, “I will not sleep under a roof in Palestine, but nightly pitch my wandering tent beside some fountain.”<sup>123</sup> Van Dyke refused to take a convenient train from Jaffa to Jerusalem, because he did not want his first glimpse of Jerusalem to be from a “car window” in a “mechanical way”; rather, he wanted to “take the old high road.”<sup>124</sup> Later in his pilgrimage, Van Dyke lamented the fact that God had ever suffered humanity to build the city with all of its idolatrous shrines.

Many Protestant pastors and other pilgrims looked to the out-of-doors or to hills and valleys in order to find the altar or shrine that they were seeking while in Palestine. They avoided the overcivilized trappings of excessive, grafted-on tradition that Eastern churches and shrines represented. They sought the simple and fresh childhood of Christ, and looked to the vistas of unchanging landscapes of nature in order to gain this understanding and thus were able to fashion almost out of nothing altars and shrines that served a Protestant understanding of the Christian faith. Later, they would argue along with Zionists in favor of the resettlement of the urban Jews of the ghettos to these vistas, in order to usher in a new millennium and hasten the return of Christ.

In summary, Protestant pilgrims employed various methods in order to create culturally relevant shrines or altars while in Palestine. They rejected



outright the worship of “idols” or “golden calves” by setting up other Christian traditions as negative examples, and warned of the danger of idolatry in Palestine while asserting that true Christianity was spiritual rather than material. Protestant pilgrims also began to urge missions towards Eastern Christians, whom they often regarded as heathens or pagans. They sought to “be another Luther” and to cleanse the temple of the “money changers” who materially benefited from the simple piety of peasant pilgrims. Turning away from the ancient shrines already in place in Palestine that were hardly familiar to them, they looked to nature in a Romantic sense in order to find the essence of Christ’s life. Avoiding the corrupting affects of civilization while hopefully retaining the positive ones such as book-learning and scholarship, they were able to seek a spiritual rather than physical reality by describing the Child Christ in unmitigated contact with fresh and pure nature. The out-of-doors became the new altar or Protestant shrine, since Protestants insisted that anything found inside while traveling in Palestine was essentially worthless. Protestants thus conjured up new elusive altars for themselves and were able to boldly survey the hills and valleys and proclaim them as mighty unchanging sermons to the life of Christ, uncorrupted icons of creation.

## NOTES

1. Alvan Bond, *Memoir of Pliny Fisk, A. M.: Late Missionary to Palestine* (New York: Crocker and Brewster, 1828), 291.

2. Bond, *Memoir of Pliny Fisk*, 292.

3. Bond, *Memoir of Pliny Fisk*, 298.

4. Bond, *Memoir of Pliny Fisk*, 342. See also, “To walk over the ground where our Lord used to walk, will neither make us holy, nor subdue our sins. It is only imitating his example that will do this. Here he went about doing good. May I also be an instrument of doing good, as I go about in the same place,” 343.

5. John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, and the Holy Land* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1838), 124.

6. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt*, 125.

7. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt*, 122.

8. Brian Yothers, *The Romance of the Holy Land in American Travel Writing 1790–1876* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2007), 68.

9. E. G. Robinson (1794–1863), American biblical researcher, translator, and academic who, through his travels to Palestine, became known as the “Father of Biblical Geography.”

10. E. G. Robinson and E. Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mt. Sinai, and Arabia Petraea: A Journal of Travels in the Year 1838, Vols. I–III* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1841), vol. II, 462.

11. Clorinda Minor, *Meshullam! Or, Tidings From Jerusalem From the Journal of A Believer Recently Returned from the Holy Land* (1849; 2nd edition published by author, 1851; reprint edition New York, Arno Press, 1977), 81.

12. Minor, *Meshullam!*, 81.

13. Maria Susanna Cummins, *El Fureidis* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1860), 274.

14. Cummins, *El Fureidis*, 275.

15. Cummins, *El Fureidis*, 103. “This English Pocket Bible, which served our traveler as text-book, manual, and guide in his journeyings and explorations through Palestine, bore many

marks of the frequency with which it was called into requisition. Its margins were crowded with annotations and references, numerous leaves were turned down at the corners, or had slips of paper inserted between them, and in general it represented not a little the notebook of a man of business."

16. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Egypt*, 126. "From the borders of Egypt to the confines of the Holy Land I was in some measure groping in the dark; the Bible was my only guide; and though the best a man could have in his pilgrimage through life, and far better than any other in this particular journey, yet others would have been exceedingly valuable, as illustrating obscure passages in the sacred book: and particularly as referring besides, to circumstances and traditions other than scriptural, connected with the holy mountain."

17. William H. Odenheimer, *Jerusalem and Its Vicinity*, (1855; reprint New York: Arno Press, 1977).

18. Brian Yothers, *The Romance of the Holy Land in American Travel Writing 1790–1876* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2007), 55.

19. Henry Van Dyke (1852–1933), Presbyterian minister and Princeton professor, later minister to the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

20. Henry Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land: Impressions of Travel in Mind, Body, and Spirit* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1908), 122–23.

21. Philip Schaff (1819–1893), professor, theologian, and historian of the Christian Church.

22. Philip Schaff, *Through Bible Lands: Notes of Travel in Egypt, the Desert, and Palestine* (New York: American Tract Society, 1878), 270.

23. Maltbie T. Babcock, *Letters From Egypt and Palestine* (New York: Scribner, 1902), 89.

24. Maltbie D. Babcock (1858–1901), a noted American Presbyterian clergyman and author associated with Brick Presbyterian Church, New York City.

25. Babcock, *Letters From Egypt and Palestine*, 74.

26. Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878–1969), the most prominent American liberal Baptist minister of the early twentieth century. John D. Rockefeller funded and attended his Riverside Church in New York City.

27. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 174.

28. Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, 99.

29. Frances Willard (1829–1838), an American educator, suffragist, social reformer, and founder of the Women's Christian Temperance Movement in 1874.

30. Frances E. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard, Vols. 35–37*, transcription by Carolyn De Swarte Gifford, deposited at the Frances E. Willard Memorial Library (Evanston: National Women's Christian Temperance Union Headquarters, 2005), 24.

31. John Finley, *A Pilgrim in Palestine: Being an Account of Journeys on Foot by the First American Pilgrim After General Allenby's Recovery of the Holy Land* (New York: Scribner's and Sons, 1919), 249.

32. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 16.

33. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 23.

34. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 32.

35. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 34.

36. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 12.

37. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 17.

38. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 17.

39. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 8.

40. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 14.

41. Finley, *A Pilgrim in Palestine*, 48.

42. Benjamin Bausman, D.D., *Sinai and Zion, or A Pilgrimage Through the Wilderness to the Land of Promise* (Philadelphia: Reformed Church Publication Board, 1861), 234.

43. William Thomson, D.D., *The Land and the Book: or Biblical Illustrations Drawn from the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery of the Holy Land: Southern Palestine and Jerusalem* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859), 432. Thompson found his own little Gethsemane in a "vale several hundred yards to the northeast . . . in some secluded spot which I hope will remain forever undisturbed by the idolatrous intrusion of all sects and denominations" (432).

44. Alexander Keith, *The Land of Israel According to the Covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and with Jacob* (Edinburgh: William Whyte and Co., 1844). Scotsman Keith wrote that the papal powers in Palestine were the powers of “the beast,” but that this was a part of prophetic fulfillment: “Persecuting powers, imperial and papal, were successively to arise against the church, and power was given to the beast for a time, and times and a half” (488).

45. Christian Classics Ethereal Library, *Gregory of Nyssa: Dogmatic Treatises, etc.*, [www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf205.toc.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf205.toc.html).

46. Andrew Wheatcroft, *Infidels: A History of the Conflict Between Christendom and Islam* (New York: Random House, 2003). John Bunyan and Thomas Fuller both wrote books entitled *The Holy War* (1682). The full title was *The Holy War Made by Shaddai upon Diabolus for the Regaining of the Metropolis of the World, or the Losing and Taking Again of the Town of Mansoul*. In the Saxon countries the ideal of the crusade had become an antiquarian interest or the subject of rousing talks for boys by the nineteenth century, 198–202.

47. M. H. Abrams, “William Blake,” in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, 5th Edition, Vol. 2* (New York: Norton, 1986): “I will not cease from Mental Fight/Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand:/Till we have built Jerusalem in England’s green & pleasant land” (1804, 45).

48. There is a difficulty in translation and location of sources for the study of the Holy Land during the nineteenth century. Indeed, many resources are currently accessible only to scholars with access to and skill with the language of Turkey. Kaganoff’s annotated bibliography of resource material in British, Israeli, and Turkish Repositories provides a “tantalizing glimpse of the heretofore untouched Ottoman resources in Turkish repositories.” The British archives are most useful for the period of the British Mandate (1920–1948).

49. Howard M. Jones, “Israel in the Anglo-Saxon Tradition,” in *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century Art and Culture*, ed. John Davis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

50. There is Protestant dislike/disgust for the Holy Sepulcher in nearly every nineteenth-century account, along with invectives against superstition and idolatry. One interesting exception can be found in the writings of William Thomson, who expresses concern at the “proud contempt” and “cold neglect” of Protestants. He calls it by the Arabic name “El Kiyameh,” and “the most interesting half-acre on the face of the earth.” Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 468.

51. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 9.

52. Yothers, *The Romance of the Holy Land*, 23.

53. Naomi Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders: The Western Rediscovery of Palestine* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 171.

54. William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 104–11.

55. Bond, *Memoir of Pliny Fisk*, 348.

56. Bond, *Memoir of Pliny Fisk*, 358.

57. William C. Prime, *Tent Life in the Holy Land* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1857), 104.

58. Roger Finke and Rodney Starke, *The Churching of America, 1776–2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 131.

59. Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. 1, 329.

60. Ruth Hummel and Thomas Hummel, *Patterns of the Sacred: English Protestant and Russian Orthodox Pilgrims of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1993), 17.

61. Gershon Greenburg, *The Holy Land in American Religious Thought, 1620–1948: The Symbiosis of American Religious Approaches to Scripture’s Sacred Territory* (Lanham: The University Press of America, 1994), 313.

62. Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. 1, 332.

63. Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. 1, 329.

64. Greenburg, *The Holy Land in American Religious Thought*, 351.

65. Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. 1, 374.

66. Timothy Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 83.

67. Willard, *Journal of Frances E. Willard*, 12–13.

68. Dwight Elmendorf, *A Camera Crusade Through the Holy Land* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), 18.

69. W. F. Lynch, *Narrative of the United States' Expedition to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blandchard, 1849), 260–61. "Striking our tents with precipitation, we hurriedly removed them and all our effects a short distance to the left. We had scarce finished, when they were upon us: men, women and children, mounted on camels, horses, mules, and donkeys, rushed impetuously by towards the bank. They presented the appearance of fugitives from a routed army. Our Bedawin friends here stood us in good stead—sticking their tufted spears before our tents, they mounted their steeds and formed a military cordon around us. But for them we should have been run down" (260).

70. Laurence Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead with Excursions in the Lebanon* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1880), 314.

71. Lynch, *Narrative of the United States' Expedition*, 261.

72. One pilgrim reported a happy exception to this rule when he met a friar "comforted and sustained by faith in happy futurity. Would that every adherent of his creed were an imitator of his example!" W. H. Bartlett, *Footsteps of Our Lord and His Apostles in Syria, Greece, and Italy: A Succession of Visits to the Scenes of New Testament Narrative* (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue, & Co. 1852), 96.

73. Marr, *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism*, 117.

74. Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. 1, 375.

75. Olive Risley Seward and William H. Seward, *William H. Seward's Travels Around the World* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1873), 662.

76. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 207.

77. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 393.

78. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 241.

79. J. Moody, *Recollections of Dwight L. Moody* (London: Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier, 1905), 273.

80. John Haynes Holmes, *Palestine Today and Tomorrow: A Gentile's Survey of Zionism* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 38.

81. Bond, *Memoir of Pliny Fisk*, v.

82. Bond, *Memoir of Pliny Fisk*, 281.

83. Leon Arpee, *A History of Armenian Christianity from the Beginning to Our Own Time* (New York: The Armenian Missionary Association of America, 1946), 268.

84. William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 5.

85. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 392.

86. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 391.

87. A. Wessels, *Arab and Christian? Christians in the Middle East* (Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1995), 166. An 1842 missions report read: "Whenever those Oriental churches having had the Gospel fairly proposed to them, shall reject it, excising and casting out from their communion those who receive it . . . then it will be necessary for our missionary brethren to turn from them" (171).

88. Andrea Pacini, ed., *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East: The Challenge of the Future* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 4.

89. T. DeWitt Talmage, *From Manger to Throne: Embracing a New Life of Jesus the Christ and a History of Palestine and its People Including an Account of the Author's Journey to, Through, and From the Christ-Land* (New York: The Christian Herald Bible House, 1893), 52.

90. Talmage, *From Manger to Throne*, 54.

91. Ferenc Szasz, "T. DeWitt Talmage: Spiritual Tycoon of the Gilded Age," *The Journal of Presbyterian History*, 59 (1981):18–32, 30.

92. Talmage, *From Manger to Throne*, 187–88.

93. Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, 108.

94. Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, 137.

95. Talmage, *From Manger to Throne*, 1.

96. Talmage, *From Manger to Throne*, 2.

97. Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 599.
98. Talmage, *From Manger to Throne*, 186.
99. Talmage, *From Manger to Throne*, 187.
100. Talmage, *From Manger to Throne*, 188.
101. Bradley Gilman, *The Open Secret of Nazareth: Ten Letters Written by Bartimaeus, Whose Eyes Were Opened, To Thomas, a Seeker after Truth* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1907), 46.
102. Talmage, *From Manger to Throne*, 483.
103. Talmage, *From Manger to Throne*, 535.
104. Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, 388.
105. Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, 21.
106. Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, 184.
107. Charles E. Robinson, *Maltbie Davenport Babcock: A Reminiscent Sketch and Memorial* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1904), 73.
108. Finley, *A Pilgrim in Palestine*, 191.
109. Leach, *Land of Desire*, 79.
110. Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, 23.
111. Robert Moats Miller, "Fosdick, Harry Emerson," *American National Biography Online*, February 2000, [www.anb.org/articles/08/08-00494.html](http://www.anb.org/articles/08/08-00494.html) (accessed May 17, 2004).
112. Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land*, 7.
113. Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land*, 18.
114. Talmage, *From Manger to Throne*, 2.
115. Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, 9.
116. Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, 20.
117. Fosdick, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, 240.
118. Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land*, xi.
119. Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land*, xxi.
120. Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land*, 233.
121. Babcock, *Letters From Egypt and Palestine*, 82.
122. Moody, *Recollections of Dwight L. Moody*, 271.
123. Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land*, 11.
124. Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land*, 25.

## *Chapter Six*

# Concluding Thoughts

When American Protestants had begun to focus upon the Holy Land by the end of the nineteenth century, they viewed a carefully crafted Christian view of the “mystery of the East”—a baptized, Protestant Orientalism. No longer an Ottoman backwater, Palestine was the Holy Land, a new revelation or “fifth gospel.” Protestants saw a potential future home for the Jews that would fulfill many of their religious expectations for the prophetic age of fulfillment to come. These expectations had been shaped in part by the Scofield interpretations of the prophecies of the Bible itself and their popularized interpretation in the broader prevailing field of premillennial Dispensationalism. In addition, in the view of many Protestants, the Arabs were benighted and lacking in the benefits of progress: they were in need of the benevolent protection and oversight of the West. Overcrowding and poverty in urban ghettos in the West had led to the discussion and consideration of various Jewish resettlement solutions, and Palestine seemed to be the perfect creative solution to the problem. These perspectives fed into what would become a widely accepted belief in the early twentieth century—the idea that Ottoman Palestine was rightly a Jewish homeland.

Though American Catholics have largely favored pilgrimages to Rome over those to Palestine, American Protestants have flocked to the Holy Land in droves since the middle of the nineteenth century. Many early Protestant travel writers attempted to create a new form of biblicism, a “fifth gospel,” in addition to the four in the New Testament. This new gospel adds to the revelation already present in the Bible through the analysis of such concrete, material phenomena as rocks, hills, and flowers in the geographical Palestine. This analysis sometimes echoed the commitments of Romanticism by celebrating the presence of the divine in nature in the East, but would emphasize prophecy and ultimately support Zionism.

Wide Protestant reading audiences in the United States were fascinated with this new emerging frontier to explore and understand, just as the West Coast of America had been attained and was finally being settled. They anticipated travel narratives of Palestine, appreciating the unique confirmation of prophecy, faith, and religious experience that the Holy Land afforded their ministers. The nagging uncertainties created by Modernism seemed soothed by the historical “proof” provided by pilgrimage narratives written by contemporaries. Protestants believed that one could not argue with the stones and the hills of Palestine. They simply stood there as silent testimonials—irrefutable monuments to Christian history. Protestant readers were also able to make a vicarious pilgrimage through narratives provided by their ministers, who each created a somewhat personal Holy Land based upon subjective experience, denominational emphases, and shared views. Nevertheless, there were distinct commonalities in the Protestant Holy Land tour genre, exhibiting common traits of the new movement of American geopiety.

Some of the views that were shared by these figures were polarized. Arabs were often either idealized as modern representations of biblical figures as they went about their lives, or pitied for their lack of civilization and progress. In addition, the Holy Land was seen as either over-civilized by the influence of Eastern Christians or excessively primitive due to its lack of technological advancement. The tension between the Protestant commitment to a religion of spirituality or heart rather than of place caused preachers to defend their idea of a holy site and of pilgrimage. Finally, the idea of a biblical curse upon the land of Palestine and its residents called its special holy nature into question and created a need for a prophetic and spiritual interpretation of the negative phenomena of the misery and poverty of the area—a massive undertaking, finding holiness in a place they found so miserable. Protestants had to turn to an inward interpretive and creative place to conform their pilgrimage to their beliefs and expectations. It necessitated a literary transformation of the raw personal knowledge of pilgrimage.

Protestant ministers brought home an interpretation of the gospel as an out-of-doors phenomenon, connecting Jesus to the wind, sky, and flowers of the Holy Land. Next, the idea of Jews on Arab lands was cast as a spiritual event rather than a political or colonialist one. As Palestine was presented to them, most Protestants believed that it was in the best interest of the Arabs to be colonized by the Jews in agricultural ventures in keeping with the latest popular Protestant millennial trends.

There was a striking difference between the Bible lands, characters, and scenes depicted in nineteenth-century parlor Bibles and the dirty, poor Ottoman backwater that pilgrim writers saw. A difficult to resolve confusion was the result—necessitating the adoption of new attitudes and frameworks towards Palestine. New Protestant parallel shrines quickly sprang up to serve

American Protestant religious needs. Writers constructed new, coherent meanings from the raw jumbles of sensory experiences found in Palestine.

Local Arabs (and sometimes Jews) often provided enhanced scenery—a living Bible diorama—as they stood about in tribal clothing in less populated areas. Photographs of these locals became new Bible illustrations for American Protestants—sometimes labeled “Jacob with his flocks,” or something of that nature. Americans assented so readily to a Holy Land populated by Jews, not Muslims, because they had already seen photographs labeled in this way (e.g., Muslim shepherds labeled as Old Testament heroes). Suddenly, with the advent of pilgrimage narratives in the second half of the nineteenth century, maps and photographs of the Holy Land begin to appear in nearly every Protestant Bible. The Holy Land had become almost a Scripture unto itself, and it was smoothly and easily grafted into Protestant Bibles, enhancing its scientific credentials through the prestige of sciences such as geography and historical photography.

The lack of development of the local Palestinian culture combined with the treatment of women caused American Protestant pilgrims to treat Holy Land locals with indifference or even disdain. It was undecided as to whether the primitiveness of Palestine was pathetic mismanagement or picturesque historical scenery. In the end, as I have shown, the answer was “both.” The lack of development was thought to preserve the land of the Bible as frozen in time and available for study, while it also aroused benevolent societies and colonialist impulses.

In the new Christian Zionist view of the Holy Land, contemporary Jews became important players in a newly created premillennialist salvation drama, as Christians sought to usher in a new millennial era. The return of the Jews to Palestine through political Zionism would signal the final victory of Christ on the stage of human history. A massive political effort was under way by the 1880s—a Christian colonial project that would people the Middle Eastern remote corner of Palestine with Diaspora Jews. This project would transform Palestine into something more biblical and holy.

As Protestants recoiled from the ceremonial aspects of the well-established ancient Christian shrines already to be found in Palestine, they sought out new modes of Protestant worship in places where there were none. Following their Protestant heritage, they sought to purify and educate—they saw the shrines as corrupted and encumbered with centuries of foreign tradition that had departed from the true historical essence of the Bible. Hence they created their own parallel sites—sites that reflected American Protestant expectations and augmented the holiness of the area. When this was not possible, they sought Christ in the outdoors, in the wild untamed wilderness areas of Palestine. Since these places were pristine, they were thought to link directly to biblical times. In this sense, their writings suggested (even if they were unaware of it) that history had been stationary. Progress had not yet



begun. New vistas of scientific inquiry presented themselves—the raw materials for a new academic fields of biblical geography and archaeology were announced and discussed in Western universities. The fertile shores lay waiting for the ambush of eager students and teachers, full of dreams and adventure.

The nineteenth-century Holy Land craze was the beginning of modern-day Protestant pilgrimage. It was the epoch when the broader Protestant public began to form opinions about Palestine where they previously had none, in line with some of their millennial hopes and expectations, and to look eastward for the beautiful, utopian Promised Land pictured in their Bible illustrations. As John Davis writes of Palestine Park at Chautauqua, the Holy City at the St. Louis World's Fair, and the popular parlor pictographs of the Holy Land, "miniature worlds are dominated worlds."<sup>1</sup> Travel narratives were likewise small worlds unto themselves, crafted by religious leadership for widespread consumption that exerted a tremendous influence upon politics and culture in America for decades to come. Over time, the natives of the land were thought to make up a pleasant, historical, and biblical backdrop that served to enhance what became the modern tourist experience. By the twentieth century, enduring patterns for visiting and viewing the East were established by these early pilgrims, and their influence endured for decades.

## NOTE

1. John Davis, *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century Art and Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 92.

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## About the Author

**Stephanie Stidham Rogers** studied archaeology in the Holy Land as an undergraduate in 1990 and became interested in the power of tourism and pilgrimage to shape perception, thought, and policy in the history of Jerusalem. Later, she returned there as a graduate student to volunteer for a Palestinian peace initiative. She has previously published and presented on the topic of American Protestant Palestine pilgrimage, while also teaching and lecturing on the topic. She has undergraduate and advanced degrees in American Literature, Divinity, and American Church History from Westmont College and Princeton Theological Seminary. She has traveled extensively throughout the Middle East, Europe, and Asia and worked on the faculty of the International School in Manila, Philippines. She is a member of the American Historical Association and the American Society of Church History, where she has also served on the membership and program committees. Currently, she is an independent scholar and historian residing on the Gulf Coast.



