

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

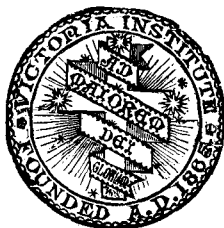
<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php

JOURNAL OF
THE TRANSACTIONS
OF
The Victoria Institute,
OR,
Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

VOL. LVII.



LONDON:

(Published by the Institute, 1, Central Buildings, Westminster, S.W.1.)

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

1925

670TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W., ON MONDAY, JANUARY 5TH, 1925,
AT 4.30 P.M.

LIEUT.-COLONEL F. A. MOLONY, O.B.E., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed, and the Honorary Secretary announced the election of the following:— As a Life Member, Major Lewis Merson Davies, R.A., F.G.S.; as a Member, Gerald W. J. Cole, Esq.; and as an Associate, Mrs. H. Norton Johnson.

The CHAIRMAN then introduced Brigadier-General Sir Wyndham Deedes, C.M.G., D.S.O., to give his lecture on "Great Britain and the Palestine Mandate."

GREAT BRITAIN AND THE PALESTINE MANDATE.

By BRIGADIER-GENERAL SIR WYNDHAM DEEDES, C.M.G., D.S.O.

IT has ever been to me a matter of surprise and significance that the occupation in 1917 and the administration since that time of Palestine and Jerusalem, better known to hundreds of millions of people throughout the world as the Holy Land and the Holy City, evoked so little interest amongst the public in this country and in other parts of the world. It would have been reasonable to expect that the occupation of a country, about the history of which we read week in week out, year in year out, and out of which such great events have issued, would have attracted more than ordinary attention. It is true that, at the time when what I may call the spirit of exaltation evoked by the war reigned in this and in other countries, some attention was aroused by allied victories in Palestine; but this spirit of exaltation was very soon dissipated by the fog of materialism which obscured men's vision before the war, and which seems to have rolled up again since the peace.

It is not as though the manner of the occupation was unworthy of the occasion. It will be remembered that the commanders of the two opposing forces mutually agreed that no conflict should take place within the precincts of the Holy City, and that no shells should fall therein. This agreement was strictly adhered to by both parties. The Commander of the Allied Forces refrained from emulating the example of a certain European

Potentate (who a few years before in making his entry into the Holy City had caused a portion of the ancient wall to be demolished for his greater facility) and elected rather to follow in the footsteps of a still greater One who, 2,000 years before, had made a triumphal entry in more humble circumstances.

But it must be admitted that there were certain reasons for the apathy and indifference displayed by the public of this country. Three of these reasons may be cited :—

First, Arab apprehensions ; second, Jewish “ affirmations ” or, as they might in some cases more truly be described, “ exaggerations ” ; third, the stony silence observed by H.M. Government, who were responsible for the Balfour Declaration, but who took no steps to explain its meaning and implications.

With regard to Arab apprehensions which caused people in this country to think that an injustice was being done to that community, it is well, in the first place, to remember that the anticipations raised in the minds of all ex-Ottoman subjects of the blessings to follow from a British occupation were exceedingly high. It would probably be true to say that if any subject of the Ottoman Empire—be he Turk, Armenian or Greek—had been offered his choice of, on the one hand, the prospective enjoyment of the Paradise promised him by his religious leaders in the next life, or, on the other, the immediate enjoyment of a British administration in this, he would without hesitation have chosen the latter.

When, however, it was found that a British administration, though a great improvement on the Turkish, did not immediately introduce the millennium, elation gave way to disappointment and complainings.

Further, it is well to remember that there was great confusion in the minds of the Arabs regarding the political situation. They were aware that conversations had taken place between Sir Henry McMahon on the one hand, and King Hussein on the other. They maintained that H.M. Government had promised to establish an Arab kingdom, and that Palestine was to form one part of it. In point of fact, as is known, H.M. Government merely promised to support an Arab kingdom if King Hussein on his side could bring together the elements which were necessary for its establishment ; and subsequent events have shown us how difficult this has been to accomplish. As to Palestine, it was specifically excluded from the boundaries of the prospective Arab kingdom.

Finally, while considering the Arab case, it is well to remember that the contribution made by Palestinians during the war was an extremely small one. It would be fairly true to say that their rôle was one of spectators rather than one of participants.

As to the Jewish affirmations—or, as I have said, they might in some cases be called exaggerations—can anyone blame the Jews if they displayed some enthusiasm at the prospect of realizing the hopes and ambitions entertained during 2,000 years?

As to the silence of H.M. Government, we must remember what is widely believed, and what I should be the last to deny, that H.M. Government were, in point of fact, as ignorant as other people as to the meaning of the Declaration they had made.

To come now to the subject of my lecture, namely, Great Britain and the Palestine Mandate, I do not propose to read to you the Articles of that document, which would be boring to you and tedious to me; I propose rather to spend, with your permission, a quiet half-hour in what not long ago I heard Lord Balfour describe as “the dignified seclusion of the preamble.” In the dignified seclusion of the preamble will be found the spirit of the Mandate, and you will agree with me that the spirit of a document is of greater importance than the letter.

The first part of the preamble reads as follows:—

(A) “Whereas the Principal and Allied Powers have agreed that the Mandatory shall be responsible for putting into effect the Declaration originally made on November 2, 1917, by the Government of His Britannic Majesty and adopted by the said Powers in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish People.”

As you will see, this sentence which I have just read out immediately and acutely raises the question of the meaning of those extremely elusive words “nationality,” “nationalism,” “national home,” regarding which, were we to inaugurate a discussion, we should be forced to remain here till the clock struck nine.

I do not propose to give you my own interpretation of those terms, but rather to read you extracts from the writings of some more competent than I to express an opinion about them.

The first extract that I will give you is from Professor Zimmern: “It is clear that there is a fundamental difference between nationality and statehood. Nationality, like religion, is subjective—statehood is objective. Nationality is psychological—state-

hood is political. Nationality is a condition of mind—statehood is a condition of law. Nationality is a spiritual possession—statehood is an enforceable obligation.”

I would call your attention to the words “subjective,” “psychological,” “condition of mind,” “spiritual possession,” which, as being descriptive of nationality, he contrasts with those other words descriptive of statehood; and it is with the former we are concerned, not the latter.

He goes on to say: “How shall we define nationality? A body of people united by a corporate sentiment of peculiar intensity, intimacy and dignity related to a definite home country. Every nation has a home, though some nations, as the Jews, the Irish and the Poles (not now, of course), live for the greater part in exile. If the Jews ceased to feel a peculiar affection for Palestine, or an individual Irishman ceases to feel affection for Ireland, he ceases to be a Jew or an Irishman.”

And he concludes by saying: “It is primarily and essentially a spiritual question,” and he believes in nationality “because he believes that the alternative thereto in the modern world is not governmental oppression, but spiritual atrophy.”

He is here reminding us that that which we should wish to bring about in the world is not “cosmopolitanism,” which is “uniformity,” but “internationalism,” which is “unity from diversity.”

Finally, there is one more quotation which is so striking that I must give it you: “It is for this problem of the man without roots, the ‘*déraciné*,’ that nationality provides a solution. Nationality is the one social force capable of maintaining—for these people—their links with the past, and keeping alive in them that spark of the higher life and the irreplaceable sentiment of self-respect without which all professions of fine ideals are but as ‘sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.’”

Now you can judge for yourselves how far all that is here said about nationality applies to the case of the Jews. And on this subject let my last word be this—that, if you feel any doubt as to the existence of nationalism as a force operative amongst large numbers of the Jewish people, go and ask any of the Jewish pioneers in Palestine (or, as they are called, the “Haluzim”) what it was that urged them to go and make their homes in that country. There were in many cases no doubt two forces—there was the desire to escape from the adverse conditions in which they

were living, where self-expression as individuals, or as a national community, was impossible. This was the force of "propulsion," but in every case, I feel sure, there was a second and stronger force, namely, that of "attraction"—the call of Palestine to Jews to return to their "national" home.

So much for the theory. What is its practical application in present circumstances in Palestine?

In the first place, it is clear that a Jewish State, as such, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, is to-day impracticable. You have not a Jewish majority in the country—you cannot have a Jewish Government.

In the second place, even had it been practicable I am doubtful whether it would have been desirable. The Jews in Palestine are building, not only for those who will reside there, but for the millions resident in other countries. If time, money and energy were solely devoted to a Jewish "State," objective, political, institutional, and so on, for those in Palestine, how much would be left for the development of a Jewish national ideal for those outside it?

Furthermore, might it not raise "political" difficulties for those Jews not members of the State? The national home as at present understood need raise no such difficulty.

But in the third place, in my opinion, a Jewish national home, in the sense assigned to the word "national" in the above quotations, can well be established within the four corners of Palestine, and give to all Jews that which they expect to derive from it.

We do not want an "almshouse," that is, a place of refuge for destitute Jews. We do not want a "museum," an exhibition in which shall be shown the various cultural, scientific, social and other activities in which Jews engage, and to which they make so large a contribution throughout the world. But what we do want is a "home" in the English sense of the term. Some place to which a man instinctively feels he has a contribution to make, and from which he can derive an inspiration no matter where he be situated.

So much for the theory, so much for the application, and now for the practical results achieved. I have insufficient time to do justice to this side of the question. I can but mention one or two of the results:—

In the first place, what of the people who are achieving these results—the Jewish pioneers? Of them it may be said that they

have shown that they have been able to rise to the full height of the occasion. They combine in a unique manner the practical sense that is necessary for the execution of the "means," together with the idealism which is necessary for the attainment of the "end." They have proved themselves good farmers, reclaiming waste and marshy lands ; they are introducing scientific farming ; they are reviving the moribund small industries of Palestine.

They are establishing a new form of society, which has no counterpart elsewhere in the world ; they are showing that there is such a thing as the "dignity of labour," and that hard, physical work in adverse conditions is not prejudicial to, not incompatible with, the development of the intellect.

On the purely educational side they have achieved a very high standard, the crowning of which will be the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus, the formal opening of which takes place this year.

Over 90 per cent. of the population speak Hebrew ; they have revived their national language. Once again the Jews are able to sing their own songs in their own land and in their own language ; not by the waters of Babylon, but by the waters of Jordan.

These Jewish pioneers are setting up a norm, a standard to be a guide to the whole of their nation. In future, metaphorically speaking, every Jew will set his watch to the time kept in Palestine, and light his torch at the hearth of the home fires.

This is what they are doing, but in so doing they are acting without prejudice to the interests of the other members of the community, which brings me to the second part of the preamble, which I will now read to you :—

"It being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."

The Mandate contains certain articles specifically dealing with this question. There is an article, for example, that deals with the Christian holy places ; another with the Moslem holy places, with the question of education and language, and with the different days of rest and fast days observed by each of the three communities.

But I would rather call your attention to the spirit of the administration rather than to the letter of the Mandate. H.M. Government and the High Commissioner for Palestine have frequently stated that they regard this part of the Mandate

as being of as great importance as that part with which I have already dealt. The prosperity of the Arabs is no less important than that of the Jews.

As an earnest of the Government's good intentions in this matter, the following few examples may be cited :—

Within a very short time of the establishment of the civil administration in the country a Supreme Moslem council was set up, charged with the direction of Moslem religious affairs, and exercising control over the expenditure of the revenues of the "Awkaf." In other words, the Moslem community has self-government in religious affairs—a benefit conferred by a Christian administration, never enjoyed under a Moslem one.

Then as regards education. Recognizing that if the Moslems were to compete on fair terms with other members of the community it was essential to place greater educational facilities at the disposal of Moslem children, the whole of the revenue allotted in the budget for education was devoted to the Moslem community, with the exception of a small sum of a few thousand pounds given as grants-in-aid to the Christian and Jewish communities. As a result of this policy the administration began to open Moslem village schools at the rate of one a week.

Then take the all-important question of land. The administration laid it down as a fundamental principle that in every case of land transfer from Moslem to Jews, whether by private purchase or by concession, such transfer should only take place if alternative and adequate provision had been made for the maintenance of the Moslem population displaced.

There is the well-known case of the Beisan lands, some of the richest in the country, which, if treated scientifically, as they would have been by Jewish farmers, would have yielded larger returns than is possible under its present owners. The Arab claim to them was most obscure, but, in spite of this fact, the Government supported what was no more than a moral claim, and made over the lands to the Arabs.

When considering the general position of Arabs and Jews in the country, it is well to remember that the former enjoy many advantages not possessed by the latter ; they are natives of the country, acclimatized, speaking the language of the majority of the population, accustomed to local conditions, and have (or should have) the reins of commerce and industry in their own

hands ; whereas the Jews come to the country strangers, unacquainted with the local conditions or the prevailing language, unacclimatized, obliged to build up their lives from the very beginning.

Fortunately, it is now possible to report that the political situation is much better, and the agitation against the policy of the national home has greatly diminished.

Time does not permit of an examination of the reasons for this change of feeling. Briefly, it may be said that all along it has been with the Arabs much more a case of "apprehensions" than of "realities." They feared the worst, but the worst has not come about.

And now it only remains to deal with the third part of the preamble :—

(It being clearly understood that nothing shall be done) "which might prejudice the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

This aspect of the question has always been a stumbling block to some Jews as well as to other people. It is the question of the so-called "dual allegiance." The fear is expressed lest the loyalty and allegiance due to the different States of which Jews are citizens be impaired by reason of the loyalty and allegiance which will be paid to the national home in Palestine. All turns on the meaning to be attached to the term "national home in Palestine." If this term be interpreted in the sense expressed at the commencement of this lecture, it will be seen that the loyalty due to the national home in Palestine does not in any way detract from the loyalty due elsewhere. The two allegiances are not competitive, for they are exercised in different spheres.

Finally, with regard to the rôle of H.M. Government. Briefly, this would appear to be to devise such political, administrative and economic machinery as shall induce each community to make a maximum contribution to the welfare of the whole country, while assuring to each the right to maintain, and the opportunity to enjoy, its own distinctive religious, cultural and social practices and traditions—thus giving to the world an example of variety in unity and harmony built up from diversity.

The task is no ordinary one, but it has been allotted, I believe, to no ordinary people.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN proposed a vote of thanks to the Lecturer, which was carried by acclamation.

Dr. M. GASTER said : I am sure I am expressing the feeling of all present when I say that we are deeply grateful to Sir Wyndham Deedes for his lucid and impartial statement of the conditions now prevailing in Palestine. He has endeavoured to keep the balance even, nay, he has been very sympathetic to what he believes to be Jewish aspirations. But whilst appreciating this sympathy, I am forced to state that the point of view which I hold differs fundamentally from that expounded by the speaker. He has tried to define the new "nationalism" and "national home," two most elusive terms, and the real cause of all the trouble that has since arisen. It is a new idol that has been erected and, I venture to say, is not what we aimed at when we worked for close upon a quarter of a century for the realization of Zionism. With all humility, I may say that I have taken a share, and perhaps a large share, in the development of this movement, into which I introduced the cultural side and for which I have borne the brunt for so many years in defending the principles for which Zionism stood. One thing is certain. It neither meant a slow infiltration of a handful of people specially selected, who were expected to pass through the eye of the needle before admittance and then just tolerated, nor was our aim to realize material prosperity for the few thus favoured. Nor was it a question of merely rearing a spiritual home, a conception which cannot easily be understood or defined. If this meant the highest spiritual development of which a nation is capable, then to all intents and purposes Spain was that ideal national home. For close upon one thousand years the Jews lived and flourished in that country, and there lived and worked the greatest men of which Jewry can boast. The greatest poets, the greatest scholars, the greatest men of science, nay, even the greatest mystics, were all of Spanish origin, and yet no Jew has ever dreamed of calling Spain his national home. Worse still if this new nationalism is to be divorced from the national faith ! One does not hear much of the Voice of God or of that fervent adherence to the ancient tradition which alone would mark the true return of the Jew to the Holy

Land. For let there be no misunderstanding : our claim to Palestine rests solely and exclusively on the Word of God, on the utterances of His Prophets and on His promise given to our forefathers. Without that we would only be a horde or a people scattered throughout the world, wandering aimlessly from place to place, and seeking justification for this dispersion in the wisdom and love of God. Aye, some of the old circumstances connected with the return of the Jews from the Babylonian Exile seem to have been repeated in our days. The casual inhabitants of old Judea did not hesitate to denounce the activity of the Jews who had returned as fraught with danger to the sovereign power. They even sent a petition to the king and thus frustrated for a time the rebuilding of the wall and of the Temple. In the same manner some of those who are now inhabiting Palestine sent a petition to the League of Nations also denouncing the activity of the Jews. They did not scruple to pervert the facts which action was stigmatized as untrue by the highest authority of the land. But then—and therein lies the profound difference between the times of old and the times of to-day—the Prophets stood up, and Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi spoke in the Name of the Lord words of encouragement and words of hope. Where are the Prophets to-day ? Who turns his eyes towards the Temple ? Who listens to the inspiration of Holy Writ ? It is not by any material prosperity that the grave Jewish problem which is haunting the conscience of the civilized world can be solved. So long as a Gentile power holds absolute sway over the land, so long can also the old prophecies not come true. The genius of a nation cannot thrive under the shadow of foreign rule ; it must be able to soar aloft unhampered and untrammelled. We are no doubt for the time being most happy to be under the protection of the great Bible-loving English nation, but the future must lie in the hearty co-operation of all the members of a commonwealth, the character of which is not determined by numbers but by common interests and common aspirations. The ideal which Zionism had set itself to realize was to enable the Jew to bring the civilization of the West, and the Arab the poetic imagination of the East, blend them together, and so work out the problem of salvation for themselves and the world at large from the highest human plane.

The Rev. PAUL P. LEVERTOFF said: It is continually being argued by the Arabs in Palestine that, if the Jews come there, there will not be room for both peoples to live in the land, and so they, the Arabs, will be ousted from their country which they have occupied so long by a people who claim it because they used to own it thousands of years ago.

First of all, it must be taken into consideration that it was the *Jews*, and not the Arabs, who "made" Palestine. *Their* unique history has turned the eyes of all mankind to that one small country, and so the Jewish claim to the land is a higher one than that of the Arabs. Secondly, there are certain scientific facts about Palestine which make the whole Arab argument fall to the ground. These facts were discovered by an agronomist, who was sent specially by the German Government to prosecute a scientific research in Palestine before the war. He told me personally all these facts, which were as follows:—The soil which underlies the barren rockiness (which makes those who come to Palestine for the first time wonder how it could ever have been described as "a land overflowing with milk and honey") is really *most* fruitful, one of the richest soils imaginable. Drought is, however, Palestine's great enemy, and no fruitful soil can use its virtues without life-giving water. But it was discovered that, if in this lower soil a tree were planted, the evening breezes from the sea brought moisture in such quantities that it was all-sufficient to supply, not only the tree on which it deposited itself, but watered the ground beneath to an extent which caused any plants there situated to grow and flourish. This expert came to the certain conclusion that, if trees were planted extensively in this fashion, a sufficient dew deposit would accrue which would then turn the land again into "a land of milk and honey." The Arabs knew this, and when trees were planted they stole them or, if too firmly rooted for that, cut them down under cover of darkness. This they had done systematically for centuries, since a cultivated land would not be in accordance with their own nomadic habits, and also, they were not eager to see the land become useful and fruitful, because then the Turkish Government would raise taxes on the land the which they were not disposed to pay! According to that expert's reckoning, which was published in a German Government report, the land, if treated as he suggested would hold comfortably a population of fifteen millions.

As Brigadier-General Sir Wyndham Deedes is intimately connected with the Zionist movement, I would like to ask him if he could tell what was the attitude that would be taken towards those Jews who were still more truly Jews because they believed in the Messiahship of Jesus? To some of us that was the most acute problem in regard to the Mandate.

Mr. SIDNEY COLLETT said: We are, I am sure, all very grateful to the lecturer for the illuminating and lucid way in which he has dealt with the subject of Great Britain and the Palestine Mandate, whereby it is hoped that the Jew, the Mohammedan and the Greek will agree to share the Holy City.

But we have to remember that "the Jews" are *God's people*, and the land is *God's land*, and, therefore, the best plans that the British or any other Government can make with the best intentions for the settlement of the Jewish problem, if those plans are not based on the declarations of *God's Word* they must inevitably fail of their object.

Under the British Mandate the City of Jerusalem at the present time is divided into three parts: The *North-Eastern* part, containing Mount Moriah, on which the Temple once stood, has been given to the *Mohammedans*; the *South-Eastern* part has been given to the *Jews*; while the *Western* part has been allocated to the *so-called Christians*—the Greeks.

Now, seeing that Mount Moriah is to-day surmounted by a heathen mosque—the Mosque of Omar; and that that mountain, of hallowed memories and the surrounding district are now in the possession of the Mohammedans; and having regard to the many Scripture declarations concerning that land—that the Jew is to "*have it in possession*" and "*to dwell there*" (Ps. lxxix, 35), "every bit of it" (Deut. xi, 24), I ask: Is it conceivable that the Jews will now really settle down contented while the most sacred spot to them in that land, and, indeed, in all the world, is thus desecrated?

It would be interesting if the lecturer would give us some idea as to how the Government view this aspect of the matter.

Mr. THEODORE ROBERTS contrasted the death-beds of two Jewish Prime Ministers. It is recorded of the one, Joseph, that he preferred, to the Pyramid in which he could have been buried in Egypt, that his bones should be carried to the promised land according to the

faith which doubtless his parents had taught him in his childhood, for he left home at seventeen. As regards the other, Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, his physician, Dr. Joseph Kidd, relates that, when departing, he spoke rather of the redemptive work of Christ, which gave him a heavenly place.

It was this contrast between the hope of the Christian Jew and that of the unpersuaded Israelite, who had each taken part in the present discussion, which would, he believed, prevent any difficulty arising in their respective confraternities living side by side in Palestine. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews sought to detach the affections of his readers from the country of their race by pointing out that we Christians are seeking after a country of our own and desiring a better country, that is, a heavenly (Heb. xi, 14, 16, R.V.).

The CHAIRMAN said: We recognize the unselfishness of the conduct of those Jews who have subscribed to enable other Jews to settle in Palestine, and the good work of the settlers. I am told that they have succeeded in rendering wholesome districts which were found to be too unhealthy for any Arab to work in. Also that they are raising fine crops on land which was reckoned hopelessly barren, and that they are introducing a good educational system and so providing helpers for Government offices.

By these examples of success the Arabs ought to benefit greatly; but we all need to remember that the Zionists did not accomplish these things for the sake of the Arabs, and that few people like others to show them, unasked, how to do things.

The Arab dislike of the Zionist may have no logical basis, but it has a psychological basis, and both Zionist and Britisher will do well to remember the fact: the Zionist, that he may learn to be very conciliatory in all his dealings with the Arabs; the Britisher, that he may be ready to stop war between the two nations—an ugly possibility: but who would venture to call it unthinkable?

Great Britain is father of many pairs of children whose prejudices, and sometimes also whose interests, clash. The Mahometan and Hindu in India, the Arab and Jew in Palestine, the African and East Indian in Kenya. These are not fighting just now, because we won't let them: but how if we disarm? Eli was blamed for not

restraining his sons : is it really a Christian duty to render ourselves unable to keep the peace among our sons ? Britain's justice is admired in the East : is it not well that there should be physical force at the back of our judges in the future as in the past ?

We wish prosperity to both Jew and Arab. It seems clear that our duty as a Power recognizing the Government of Almighty God, is rather to see that justice is done all round, than to try to force the fulfilment of prophecy.