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By *Whom*, all things; for *Whom*, all things.

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## DISPUTED SCRIPTURE LOCALITIES.

**O**URS is emphatically an age of discovery and invention, which opens a new epoch in the onward march of civilization. It resembles in this respect the latter part of the fifteenth century, when the art of printing was invented and America discovered, to prepare the way for the great work of the Reformation under the banner of freedom in its westward course of empire. Alexander the Great carried the language and learning of Greece to Asia and Egypt on his march of conquest. So Napoleon, by his Egyptian expedition, opened the access to the hidden treasures of the East, which the patient industry and research of scholars have ever since been digging from the dust of the past. Egypt, the Sinaitic Peninsula, Palestine, Assyria, have been traversed, examined, and re-examined, and brought to our very doors. Hieroglyphic and cuneiform inscriptions are a sealed book no longer, and have added vastly to our stock of knowledge of antiquity. A lonely convent in the desert at the foot of Mount Sinai has furnished the oldest and most complete copy of the Greek Bible, which is of the greatest service in determining the original text of the New Testament. The temple of Ephesus brought to light may now be studied from its massive ruins on the spot, and in the British Museum. Cyprus has given up its works of art, which enrich the Metropolitan Museum of New York. The heroes of Troy and Mycenæ have risen from the dead to bear witness to the facts which underlie the immortal poems of Homer. Olympia is just now yielding its contributions to the masterpieces of Greek sculpture, from the days of the Olympian games. Even in Rome we have only by recent investigations acquired a full knowledge of the Palace of the Cæsars, the Forum, the Coliseum, and the Christianity of the cataconibs.

The effect of these modern researches and discoveries upon the proper interpretation of the Scriptures is incalculable. Palestine has not improperly been called by Renan "the fifth Gospel" ("un cinquième évangile, lacéré, mais lisible encore"). It is the framework of the canonical Gospels, and greatly facilitates their historical understanding.

The first scientific explorer of Palestine was the late Dr. Edward Robinson, of the Union Theological Seminary in New York, and his "Biblical Researches" are still the highest authority, as is acknowledged even by Germans<sup>1</sup> and by Englishmen.<sup>2</sup> Enterprising and enthusiastic travellers, like Carson,

<sup>1</sup> See Ritter's high estimate of Robinson in his classical "Erdkunde," vol. xv. p. 73: "Die Verbindung der schärfsten Beobachtung topographischer und Ortsverhältnisse, wie bei Burckhardt, mit vielen Vorstudien, zumal dem gelehrten Bibelstudium, philologischer und historischer Kritik, wie der Landessprache durch den Reisegefährten, den viele Jahre in Syrien practisch einheimisch gewordenen Eli Smith als Missionar, zeichnet diese auf das gewissenhafteste, mit grosser Körper- und Geisteskraft durch geführte Arbeit von allen früheren aus, wodurch die wissenschaftliche Behandlung des Gegenstandes erst einen sichern Boden gewonnen hat, auf dem die folgende Zeit mit mehr Glück als zuvor weiter fortzubauen im Stande sein wird. Kein früheres Reisewerk hat einen grössern Schatz neuer und wichtiger Beobachtungen und (historisch-kritischer) Untersuchungen über Palästina an das Licht gefördert, sagt der competente J. Olshausen; die darin entwickelten und befolgten trefflichen Grundsätze der Forschung werden ein Leitstern für alle künftigen Reisenden bleiben die im heiligen Lande selbst die Kunde des biblischen Alterthums zu vervollständigen unternehmen wollen, weshalb dieses Werk Epoche macht in der biblischen Geographie." Dr. Titus Tobler, likewise a very competent judge, says that Robinson's work surpasses all the performances on the geography of Palestine, from Eusebius and Jerome to the present time ("Topographie von Jerusalem," vol. i. p. 75).

<sup>2</sup> The Editing Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, in "Our Work in Palestine" (London, 1873), pp. 7 and 8, say: "The first real impulse, because the first successful impulse, towards scientific examination of the Holy Land is due to the American traveller, Dr. Robinson. He it was who first conceived the idea of making a work on biblical geography, to be based, not on the accounts of others, but on his own observations and discoveries. He fitted himself for his ambitious undertaking by the special studies of fifteen years, mastering the whole literature of the subject, and, above all, clearing the way for his own researches by noticing the deficiencies and weak points of his predecessors. He went, therefore, *knowing what to look for*, and what had been already found. . . . We shall not go into the question here of his theories, and his reconstruction of the old city, on which he has had both followers and opponents. Let it, however, be distinctly remembered that Dr. Robinson is

Niebuhr, Burckhardt, Robinson, Cesnola, Schliemann, Bahrddt, Livingstone, and Stanley, have accomplished more than many geographical societies. Faith and enthusiasm are the pioneers in every great undertaking. Dr. Robinson, accompanied by his friend and countryman, Dr. Eli Smith, a worthy American missionary and excellent Arabic scholar, visited the East twice, in 1838 and 1852. He travelled through the Sinaitic Peninsula and the Holy Land with an independent, critical, and judicial mind and a devout heart. He was a full believer in the truth of the Scriptures as the divinely revealed record of revelation and the way of salvation, but thoroughly skeptical in regard to monastic legends and traditions. He followed the principle "that all ecclesiastical tradition respecting the sacred places in and around Jerusalem and throughout Palestine is of no value, except so far as it is supported by circumstances known to us from the Scriptures or from other contemporary history." The soundness of this principle cannot be disputed by Protestants, whatever may be thought of its application in detail. The Bible is unquestionably the best guide-book in Bible lands, and whenever tradition, however ancient and venerable, comes into conflict with its statements, it must be abandoned. Moreover, these monastic traditions can seldom be traced beyond the fourth century, which was an utterly uncritical age, and already too far removed from the time of the occurrence of the events to be of any decisive value. Not a few of them date from the time of the Crusades. And finally, they are often contradictory; the Greek tradition neutralizes the Latin; the Latin tradition neutralizes the Greek; so that a skeptical Protestant, in rejecting the Latin version, is supported by the Greek Church, and in rejecting the Greek version, has the support of the Latin Church. The most that can be said is that the traditional site, especially when confirmed by the biblical name of the place or its equivalent in modern Arabic, has a presumptive claim to be genuine, unless disproved by valid objections from the Scriptures or the nature of the locality.

the *first* of scientific travellers. His travels took him over a very large extent of ground, covering a large part of the whole country from Sinai north, and his books are still, after thirty years, the most valuable works which we possess on the geography of Palestine."

Since Dr. Robinson's first visit, a number of works on Palestine have appeared, of more or less value to the biblical student, from travellers, as G. H. von Schubert (1840), E. G. Schultz (1847), Dr. Wilson ("The Lands of the Bible Visited," 1847, 2 vols.), G. Williams ("The Holy City," 1849, 2 vols.), W. H. Bartlett (1853), Titus Tobler (monographs on "Bethlehem," "Nazareth," "Jerusalem," 1845-1867), C. Tischendorf (1846), W. F. Lynch (on the "Dead Sea Expedition," 1848), Van de Velde ("Syria and Palestine," 1854, 2 vols., with a valuable map), Dean Stanley (who was twice in the East, in 1852, and with the Prince of Wales in 1862, and whose "Sinai and Palestine" is the most readable of all books on Palestine), W. M. Thomson ("The Land and the Book," 1859, 2d ed., 2 vols.; 3d ed., in 3 vols., now nearly ready for publication in New York and Edinburgh), F. Bovet (1864), K. Furrer (1865), H. B. Tristram (1865, etc.).<sup>1</sup>

A new period in the history of biblical geography and archæology began with the labors of the English Palestine Exploration Fund, established in 1865, and the cognate American Palestine Exploration Society, founded in 1870. Robinson and his successors till 1865 knew only the over-ground Jerusalem, while the city of the days of Christ lies buried under the rubbish of ages. The Palestine Exploration Fund has, at great labor and expense, uncovered some parts of Jerusalem, explored the Lake of Galilee and the Sinaitic Peninsula, and prepared a map of Palestine west of the Jordan, which will soon be issued. Its labors are published, in quarterly statements, in the illustrated volume "The Recovery of Jerusalem," with an introduction by Dean Stanley (1872), in Palmer's "The Desert of the Exodus" (1872), and in a convenient summary under the title "Our Work in Palestine" (1873).

The American Society has confined itself to the exploration of the East-Jordanic country. It embraces the part of Palestine which is the least known, and is in territorial extent three times as great as the country surveyed by the English. It

<sup>1</sup>The most careful and complete lists of books on Palestine are given by Ritter, till 1850, in the 15th volume of his "Geography;" by Robinson, till 1856, in Appendix i. to vol. ii. of his "Biblical Researches," pp. 533-555; and by Tobler, till 1866, in his "Bibliotheca Geographica Palestinæ" (Leipzig, 1867), pp. 265. Tobler enumerates more than one thousand writers on Palestine from A.D. 333 to 1866.

abounds in Roman ruins, inscriptions, and objects of great interest, and its exploration, if vigorously pursued, will throw much light upon biblical history and the history of the whole country lying midway between ancient Assyria and Egypt. It was here that the Moabite stone was found, the interest of which was not only the record of long past events inscribed upon it, but the fact that it sheds light upon the invention and history of the art of alphabetic and syllabic writing. It is to be hoped that the Society may soon be able to resume its researches, and to complete the promised map of Palestine east of the Jordan.

But, much as has been done by the combined labors of individual scholars and exploration societies, a good deal more remains to be done. Dr. Porter, in the last edition of his valuable "Hand-book for Travellers in Syria and Palestine" (London, 1875), pp. 611-616, gives a list of no less than five hundred and two Scripture localities which are not yet identified. Of course the vast majority of them are insignificant. The list of sites mentioned in the New Testament is much smaller. The report of the English Palestine Exploration Fund for October, 1876, enumerates twenty-two New Testament sites. To these my colleague, Dr. Hitchcock, the President of the American Exploration Society, has added thirteen, and kindly furnishes me with the following completed list :

## NEW TESTAMENT SITES.

- |                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| *1. Aenon.             | 14. Chorazin.           |
| *2. Antipatris.        | 15. Dalmanutha.         |
| *3. Arotus.            | 16. Emmaus.             |
| 4. Bethabara.          | *17. Ephraim.           |
| *5. Bethany.           | *18. Gaza.              |
| *6. Bethlehem.         | *19. Gergesa.           |
| 7. Bethphage.          | *20. Jericho.           |
| 8. Bethsaida.          | *21. Jerusalem.         |
| *9. Bethsaida-Julias.  | *22. Joppa.             |
| *10. Cæsarea.          | *23. Lydda.             |
| *11. Cæsarea Philippi. | *24. Magdala (Magadan). |
| 12. Cana.              | *25. Nain.              |
| 13. Capernaum.         | *26. Nazareth.          |

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| *27. Salim.   | 31. Sychar.    |
| *28. Sarepta. | *32. Tiberias. |
| *29. Shechem. | *33. Tyre.     |
| *30. Sidon.   |                |

Twenty-four of these sites, marked by a \*, Dr. Hitchcock says are identified, most of them beyond dispute; two of them since Robinson (Gergesa by Thomson, and Aenon by Conder). Five sites are sharply debated, viz.: Bethabara, Bethsaida, Cana, Capernaum, Chorazin. Of Bethphage, Dalmanutha, Emmaus, and Sychar, the neighborhood is known.

But if we include among the holy places the particular spots of an important event, the number of doubtful or uncertain sites is much greater. The Cave of the Nativity, the site of true Calvary, the place of the ascension, are sharply disputed. Very often we must be satisfied with general localities.

It is, of course, impossible in a review article to go over the whole ground. We shall discuss only the most important and most interesting of the unsolved problems in biblical geography and topography as far as we had an opportunity to examine them for ourselves on the spot in a recent visit to Bible lands. We begin with the Sinaitic Peninsula and the route of the Israelites.

#### THE LOCALITY OF THE EXODUS OF THE ISRAELITES.

It is almost unanimously agreed among modern Egyptologists—Bunsen, Lepsius, Ebers, Brugsch, among the Germans; De Rougé, Mariette, Naville, Vigouroux, among the French—that Rameses II., the famous conqueror and master-builder, and altogether the greatest among the tyrants of old Egypt, was the Pharaoh of the oppression who made the Israelites build the treasure cities or fortifications of "Pithom and Raamses" (Exodus 1:11); and that his thirteenth son, Menephtali, was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, who pursued them to the Red Sea, and ran his army into destruction.<sup>1</sup> The monumental pictures rep-

<sup>1</sup> This view has now been adopted also by Reginald Stuart Poole, who formerly advocated the other theory, which puts the oppression and the Exodus earlier in the eighteenth dynasty, under Amosis I. and Thothmes II. Comp. his article, "Egypt," in the eighth and ninth editions of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," vol. vii.

resent Jews as making bricks, and certain papyrus documents from the reign of Rameses II. certify to the delivery of provision to the Aperiu, or Apuriu (the Egyptian name for Hebrews), while engaged in building the fortifications of the city of Rameses, which is probably only a new name for the old capital of Goshen, Tanis, or the biblical and hieroglyphic Zoan (the modern San). Quite recently ruins of brick buildings and of an immense temple with twelve obelisks, also a statue of Rameses II., seated between two gods, have been discovered there.

But no monumental inscription or papyrus roll, as far as we know, mentions the Exodus of the Israelites. Manetho probably alludes to it when he speaks of the expulsion of "the lepers," or "foreigners," in a fragment preserved by Josephus. But we cannot expect from the Egyptians a truthful account of the story of their defeat and disgrace. The hieroglyphic inscriptions usually record only their victories, and are full of fulsome self-laudations of the Pharaohs and their provincial governors. No trace of a chariot of Pharaoh's host has as yet been dug up, or is likely to be dug up, to indicate the spot of its overthrow.

We are, consequently, as far as this most important event is concerned, confined to the narrative of the Book of Exodus, chapter 14, where it is recorded in the following words: "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and Jehovah caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left."

There are three or four theories about the locality and mode of the Exodus:

1. We will begin with the recent theory of the famous Egyptologist Dr. Brugsch<sup>1</sup> (previously suggested by G. H. Richter and Schleiden). It is based upon a thorough knowledge of ancient Egypt, and therefore entitled to respectful consideration; but it is so novel that it excites doubt and suspicion. Brugsch

<sup>1</sup> Henri Brugsch-Bey: *L'exode et les monuments égyptiens*. A paper read before the International Congress of Orientalists in London. Leipzig, 1875. With a map of Lower Egypt, giving the supposed route of the Israelites.



locates the Exodus far north of the Red Sea, on the usual short route from Egypt to Syria, between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sirbonian Lake. This lake was a long and narrow sheet of water, now filled with sand, but well known to the ancients, and is described by Diodorus as being overgrown with seaweeds and papyrus, so as to deceive travellers who might easily mistake the surface for dry land, and perish in it. The Israelites passed safely over the narrow strip of land between the waters of the sea and the waters of the lake, and then suddenly turned, by divine command, southward, and arrived in three days at Marah—*i.e.*, the Bitter Lakes of the Isthmus; while the Egyptians, on their hot pursuit, were overtaken by a sand-storm, lost their way into the Sirbonian Lake, and perished there. Dr. Brugsch supports his theory by the supposed identity of the Hebrew camping stations with supposed old Egyptian localities. He identifies Rameses, from which the Israelites started, with Tanis or Zoan, locates Pihahiroth on the western end of the Sirbonian Lake, and Baal-Zephon at the eastern end of it; he identifies the Sea of Weeds (which in our version is always translated the Red Sea) with the Sirbonian Lake, Marah with the Bitter Lakes, and Elim with Aalim (Fishtown) or Heroopolis, north-east of Suez.

But these identifications are mere conjectures, and inconsistent with a natural interpretation of the Bible. The Mosaic narrative evidently assumes a direct route to the Mount of God. For it is expressly said that "God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near, . . . but through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea" (Ex. 13: 17, 18). Dr. Brugsch's theory dislocates the whole itinerary of the Israelites before and after the Exodus, and does away with the miracle altogether, or resolves it into a mere providence.<sup>1</sup>

2. The Arab tradition (defended by many of the older commentators) locates the Exodus south of Suez, between the promontory of Atakah and the opposite shore of Ayun Mûsa, where the Red Sea is several leagues (Robinson says twelve miles, Porter seven miles) broad. This would best accord with a literal meaning of the narrative, that the waters were *divided*

<sup>1</sup> He says himself (p. 32): "Le miracle, il est vrai cesse d'être un miracle; mais la Providence divine maintient toujours sa place et son autorité."

and stood up like a wall, or like entrenchments, on *both* sides of the passing army. But it seems impossible that 600,000 armed men, with women and children, and their herds of cattle, could have crossed such a distance in one night, without an unnecessary accumulation of miracles. And would the Egyptians have dared to follow the Israelites through the deep sea, and in view of such an amazing and overpowering interposition of God? Could the east wind or any wind have such an effect on the sea so wide as it is here? And if not, why is it mentioned at all as an agent?

3. Dr. Robinson locates the Exodus at the head of the gulf, near or probably some distance north of Suez. The gulf has the shape of a horn, and is a shallow channel less than a mile wide and about four miles long, running from north to south. In it are several small islands and sandbanks, bare when the water is low (J. L. Porter). It once extended further north, perhaps as far as the Bitter Lakes. The crossing took place during the time of an extraordinary ebb, which was hastened and extended by a continuous night-storm blowing from the east (north-east) against the water, and laid bare the whole ford for the passage of the Israelites; after which the sea, in its reflux, returned with double the usual power of the flood tide, and overwhelmed Pharaoh's army. In ordinary times many a caravan crossed the ford at the head of the gulf at low ebb before the Suez Canal was built; and Napoleon, deceived by the tidal wave, attempted to cross it on returning from Ayun Mûsa in 1799, and nearly met the fate of Pharaoh. But a whole army of two millions could, of course, never have crossed it without a miracle. The question is only whether the miracle was immediate or mediate; in other words, whether God suspended the laws of nature, or whether he used them as agencies both for the salvation of his people and the overthrow of his enemies. The express mention of the "strong east wind" which Jehovah caused to "blow all the night" decidedly favors the latter view, which is also supported by an examination of the spot. The tide of Suez, which can be watched from the top of the Suez Hotel, is very strong and rapid, especially under the action of the north-east wind.<sup>1</sup> The north-east wind often prevails there and acts powerfully on the ebb tide, driving out the

waters from the small arm of the sea which runs up by Suez, while the more northern part of the arm would still remain covered with water, so that the waters on both sides served as walls of defence or intrenchments to the passing army of Israel. In no other part of the gulf would the east wind have the effect of driving out the water.

This view is adopted by several modern scholars, including the members of the English Ordnance Survey. It does not diminish the miracle, it only adapts it to the locality and the natural agency which is expressly mentioned by the Bible narrative. Robinson calls it "a miraculous adaptation of the laws of nature to produce a required result." Prof. Palmer says: "From the narrative in Exodus 14, it would seem that the Egyptians came upon them before they had rounded the head of the gulf, so as to compel them either to take to the water or fall into their enemies' hands, equally fatal alternatives, from which nothing but a miracle, such as that recorded, could have saved them. But natural agencies, miraculously accelerated, are mentioned as the means employed by God in working out this signal deliverance, and we need not therefore suppose any thing so contrary to the laws of nature as that the children of Israel crossed between two vertical walls of water in the midst of the deep sea, according to the popular mode of depicting the scene. Some writers have imagined that a great change has taken place in the level of the sea since the time of the Exodus; but recent examination does not at all confirm this hypothesis, while there is abundant evidence that the northern end of the Gulf of Suez has been gradually silted up, and that in consequence the shore line has steadily advanced further and further southwards. It follows from this that, if, according to the view held by many modern authorities, the passage took place at the head of the gulf, as it existed at the time of the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Ebers says ("Durch Gosen zum Sinai," p. 101): "Bei einem starken Nordostwinde der nicht selten weht, werden die Wellen nach Süden zu in den schmalen Meerbusen geradezu hineingepeitscht, so zwar, dass die in horizontaler Linie nördlich von Sues sich hinstreckenden vier Inseln nur durch Lachen getrennt zu sein scheinen, jedoch thatsächlich durch tiefe Wassergraben von dem Festlande und von einander geschieden sind."

Exodus, the Israelites must have crossed at a point several miles north of its present limits."<sup>1</sup>

#### SERBAL OR SINAI?

The route of the Israelites from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai can be identified with tolerable certainty; but the Sinai question is still sharply disputed. There are two claimants to the honor of being the Mount of God, which witnessed one of the greatest theophanies in the history of religion and the proclamation of the most influential code of morals in the history of legislation. These are Mount Serbâl and the traditional or monastic Sinai, called *Jebel Mûsa*, or the Mount of Moses, in the southern part of the Sinaitic Peninsula. Serbâl rises above Wady Feirân, Sinai from Wady Er Raha, about forty miles further south-east. Burckhardt, Lepsius,<sup>2</sup> Ebers,<sup>3</sup> and Sharpe<sup>4</sup> (author of the "History of Egypt") strongly plead for Serbâl; Robinson, Ritter, Tischendorf, and the members of the English Ordnance Survey, for Sinai, with a slight difference as to its precise peak.

The Bible calls the mountain of legislation "the Mount of God" (Ex. 18 : 5), or "the Mount of the Lord" (Num. 10 : 33), or simply "the Mount" (Ex. 19 : 12, 14; Deut. 9 : 15), or "Mount Sinai," and "Sinai" (Ex. 18 : 18; 24 : 16; 31 : 18; Deut. 33 : 2; Judg. 5 : 5; Ps. 68 : 8, 17). It is agreed that Mount Horeb, which Elijah visited, and which is also called "the Mount of God" (1 Kings, 19 : 8), is identical with the scriptural Sinai (Ex. 3 : 1; 17 : 6; 33 : 6; Deut. 1 : 6, "the Lord spoke to us in Horeb;" 5 : 2, "the Lord made a covenant with us in Horeb"). Even now the names are used synonymously, with the difference that the one signifies the whole

<sup>1</sup> "The Desert of the Exodus" (1871), vol. i., p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> "Briefe aus Aegypten," etc., 1852, and "Reise nach der Halbinsel des Sinai," 1876.

<sup>3</sup> "Durch Gosen zum Sinai," Leipz., 1872, pp. 380-426. See also Bâdeker's "Aegypten" (1877), vol. i., p. 522, where Ebers defends the same view. He accounts for the transfer of the sacred traditions from Serbâl to *Jebel Mûsa*, by the bad repute of Pharan for heresy in the fifth century.

<sup>4</sup> "Hebrew Inscriptions from the Valleys between Egypt and Mount Sinai," London, 1875, p. 4.

mountain, the other a part. The question is, whether the mountain which at present bears the name of Sinai (Jebel Mûsa) is the Sinai or Horeb of the Bible. The question must be decided by the essential requirements of the Mosaic narrative. These requirements are the following :

1. A sufficient supply of water and pasturage to accommodate and support two millions of human beings for many months.

2. The Mount of God must be a prominent mountain, rising abruptly from the plain, and easy of approach ; for the people came near and "stood under the mountain" (Deut. 4 : 11), and the mountain could be touched "at the nether part" (Ex. 19 : 12, 17).

3. It must have been surrounded by a plain or wady large enough to enable the whole people of Israel, amounting to two millions, to see and hear the giving of the law. For the Lord came down "in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai" (Ex. 19 : 11, 20) ; and "all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking ; and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear" (20 : 18, 19).

In favor of Mount Serbâl much may be said. Mount Serbâl answers the first requirement fully, the second in part, but fails entirely in the third. However much it may be suited for the *giving* of the law, it was impossible for the people to *receive* it there in the manner described by the Mosaic record. Sinai answers all these requirements completely.

But let us examine the matter in detail. Serbâl has the requisite water and pasture in the neighboring Wady Feirân, which is several miles long and contains the largest and most fertile oasis in the whole Peninsula, with fountains, running streams, and an abundance of palm-trees, tamarisks, acacias or shittim-wood (of which the tabernacle was built), and plots of wheat and barley. Moreover, Serbâl equals Jebel Mûsa in boldness of feature and rugged outline. It is not as high, being only 6734 feet above the level of the sea, while Jebel Mûsa is 7359, and Jebel Catharine 8526 feet high, but it looks as imposing, if seen from one of the neighboring hills, and presents a

most extensive and magnificent view from its five lofty peaks. And finally, it must have had a certain sacredness from very early times, and is supported by strong tradition. It is identified with Sinai by Eusebius, Jerome, and the monk Kosmas, who was there himself in 535; but the tradition for *Jebel Mûsa*, after all, seems to be stronger.<sup>1</sup> It is full of Sinaitic inscriptions, but these are found also in *Wady Mokatteb* (the Sculptured Valley), on the Pass of the Wind, round *Jebel Mûsa*, in the *Wady Leja*, and other remoter parts of the Peninsula, and have not yet been satisfactorily deciphered. Lenormant traces them to post-Christian origin; Beer, Tuch, and Ebers, mostly to heathen Nabatheans who worshipped the sun and the stars on *Serbâl* and other high mountain-tops; Sharpe (in a monograph of 1875), to Egyptian Jews before and after Christ. Sharpe finds in many of them the name *Jao* (*Jehovah*) and lamentations over the destruction of Jerusalem. There is no doubt that *Serbâl* was early regarded as a sacred mountain. It attracted a large number of pilgrims and anchorites, who settled in the neighboring caves; and an episcopal city and convent of *Paran*, or *Feirân*, was built at its feet before the date of the convent of *St. Catharine*; but these early settlements are very natural in view of the fertility of the district. It seems strange, moreover, that this mountain should not be mentioned in the *Exodus*, if it is not the Mount of God, since the Israelites reached it first; but the route of the Israelites from their encampment "by the Red Sea" (*Num.* 33 : 10) is not certain. Several scholars besides *Lepsius* and *Ebers*, namely, *Stanley* and all the members of the English Ordnance Survey (except *Rev. Mr. Holland*) identify *Feirân* with the *Rephidim* of the Scriptures, where the battle was fought with the *Amalekites*, who would naturally defend so fertile a district against intruding strangers (*Ex.* 17 : 8, 16; *Num.* 33 : 14, 15). But granting this identity, it does not prove the claims of *Serbâl*, since this is only two miles off from the alleged field of battle; and yet it is said that there was a day's march from *Rephidim* to *Sinai* (*Ex.* 19 : 1). *Rephidim*, however, was

<sup>1</sup> *Palmer* (p. 5) came to the conclusion "that the claims of *Serbâl* are comparatively modern, and that tradition points to the neighborhood of that mountain rather as a site of *Rephidim* than of *Sinai*, and that the true traditional *Sinai* is *Jebel Mûsa*."

probably situated further east and nearer Sinai, as Mr. Holland assumes; in the Wady esh Sheikh, where the Arabs point to a detached rock as the seat of the Nebi Mûsa (the Prophet Moses), which he may have occupied during the battle with the Amalekites.

The conclusive argument against Serbâl is the unsurmountable geographical objection, namely, the entire absence of any open space below and around Serbâl, where the people could assemble so as to stand "under the mountain," and to touch the "nether part" (Deut. 4: 2; Ex. 19: 12, 17). Its magnificent peaks can be seen only from one of the neighboring hills, or in glimpses from a few spots of Wady Feirân.

The traditional Mount Sinai, certainly its northern peak, meets this geographical necessity, and is equally appropriate in every other respect. Mount Sinai consists of two peaks; the southern peak is called Jebel Mûsa (the Mount of Moses), the northern peak Ras Sufsâfeh (the Head of the Willow, so called from a willow-tree below the summit). The southern summit is the traditional Mount of God, and its claims are defended by De Laborde, Ritter, and Tischendorf. It is suited in every respect, except the want of accommodation at its base; for the Wady Sebaijeh below is narrow, broken, and uneven, and does not run up close to the foot of Jebel Mûsa, so that this might be touched and surrounded by the people. On the other hand, Ras Sufsâfeh is surrounded by the vast Wady Er Raha (Valley of Rest), which can accommodate, as ascertained by actual measurement, more than three millions of people in such a manner that they could approach and touch the mountain, look up to its summit and behold the wonderful theophany which accompanied the giving of the law.<sup>1</sup> This space is nearly doubled by the broad and level area of Wady esh Sheikh on the east. For this reason, chiefly, Dr. Robinson, who first

<sup>1</sup> "A calculation made by Captain Palmer, from the actual measurements taken on the spot, proves that the space extending from the base of the mountain to the watershed, or rest of the plain, is large enough to have accommodated the entire host of the Israelites, estimated at two million souls, with an allowance of about a square yard for each individual."—*The Desert of the Exodus*, vol. i., p. 117. Robinson likewise measured Er Raha and found it to be two geographical miles long, and from one third to two thirds of a mile broad ("Biblical Researches," vol. i., p. 95).

ascended Ras Sufsâfeh, suggested it as the true spot of the giving of the law. He gives the following description of his ascent and impression ("Biblical Researches," vol. i., pp. 106, 107): "While the monks were here employed in lighting tapers and burning incense, we determined to scale the almost inaccessible peak of es-Sufsâfeh before us, in order to look out upon the plain and judge for ourselves as to the adaptedness of this part of the mount to the circumstances of the scriptural history. This cliff rises some five hundred feet above the basin; and the distance to the summit is more than half a mile. We first attempted to climb the side in a direct course, but found the rock so smooth and precipitous that after some falls and more exposures we were obliged to give it up, and clamber upwards along a steep ravine by a more northern and circuitous course. From the head of this ravine we were able to climb around the face of the northern precipice and reach the top, along the deep hollows worn in the granite by the weather during the lapse of ages, which give to this part, as seen from below, the appearance of architectural ornament.

"The extreme difficulty and even danger of the ascent was well rewarded by the prospect that now opened before us. The whole plain er-Râhah lay spread out beneath our feet, with the adjacent wadys and mountains; while Wady esh-Sheikh on the right, and the recess on the left, both connected with and opening broadly from er-Râhah, presented an area which serves nearly to double that of the plain. Our conviction was strengthened that here or on some one of the adjacent cliffs was the spot where the Lord 'descended in fire' and proclaimed the law. Here lay the plain where the whole congregation might be assembled; here was the mount that could be approached and touched, if not forbidden; and here the mountain brow, where alone the lightnings and the thick cloud would be visible, and the thunders and the voice of the trumpet be heard, when the Lord 'came down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai.' We gave ourselves up to the impressions of the awful scene; and read, with a feeling that will never be forgotten, the sublime account of the transaction and the commandments here promulgated, in the original words



as recorded by the great Hebrew legislator (Ex. 19:9-25; 20:1-18)."

The same view is adopted by Dean Stanley,<sup>1</sup> Professor Porter,<sup>2</sup> and by all the members of the English Ordnance Survey Expedition of 1868-1869, including Captains Wilson and Palmer.<sup>3</sup>

It was my privilege a few months ago to visit the memorable spot. I ascended *Jebel Mûsa* and *Ras Sufsâfeh*, which are separated from each other by deep ravines, and I fully satisfied my mind that *Ras Sufsâfeh* is the best pulpit in the world for the proclamation and the hearing of the law, which threatens death and damnation. It answers all the conditions of the description in the book of Exodus. Such a scene of awful beauty and solemnity I never saw before, nor expect to see again. The view from *Jebel Mûsa* is more extensive, though obstructed towards the south by the neighboring peak of *Jebel Catharine* (the highest mountain in the Peninsula), but the view from *Ras Sufsâfeh* is equally sublime and impressive. I wish I could describe this unrivalled panorama of death and desolation. No sound breaks the stillness unless it be the voice of storm and thunder when heavy clouds gather around the summit and the lightning flashes leap down into the darkness; no lake nor brook nor waterfall, no meadow nor forest, no snow nor glacier delights the eye as on the Swiss Alps, but only rocks, rocks, rocks, from nature's primitive foundery, each standing out in its rugged outline and distinctive color—now yellow, now purple, now black—in the dazzling brightness of the sunlight; and right beneath the fearful precipice is stretched out the *Wady Er Raha*, like a gigantic encampment, the adjoining *Wadys of Leja* and *esh Sheikh*, and beyond the amphitheatre of barren mountains which wall them in. As I

"*Sinai and Palestine*," p. 76 (Am. ed.): "I am sure that if the monks of Justinian had fixed the traditional scene on the *Ras Sufsâfeh*, no one would for an instant have doubted that this only could be the spot."

<sup>2</sup> "*Hand-book for Travellers in Sinai and Palestine*," p. 71 (ed. of 1875): "The mountain, the plain, the streamlet, and the whole topography correspond in every respect to the historical narrative of Moses."

<sup>3</sup> "See the Report of Rev. F. W. Holland in "*Recovery of Jerusalem*," London and New York, 1871, and Professor E. H. Palmer's "*Desert of the Exodus*," Cambridge and New York, 1871, part i., pp. 112 *sqq.* Holland visited Sinai four times, and Palmer travelled on foot over the Sinaitic Peninsula for eleven months.

sat on that majestic peak, which stands up like "a huge altar unto heaven," and is visible from every point in the large plain below, I read as I never read before those Ten Commandments which still rule the public and private morals of the civilized world, and imagined the details of that wonderful theophany, "the thunders and lightnings, and the thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, and the mount quaking, and the smoke ascending from it as from a furnace, and the people in the camp trembling, and the infinite Jehovah talking with Israel face to face out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the darkness, with a great voice, through Moses his servant." But at the same time I felt more thankful than ever before that we are born, not under the mount of legislation, which reflects the terrible justice and majesty of God, but under the mount of beatitudes, in the sunshine of his goodness and mercy. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

A visit to the Sinaitic Peninsula goes far to strengthen one's faith in the truthfulness of the Mosaic narrative against the attacks of skeptical critics who have never been there. A recent explorer, who accompanied the English Ordnance Survey Expedition, closes his account with the statement that "not a single member of the Expedition returned home without feeling more firmly convinced than ever of the truth of that sacred history which he found illustrated and confirmed by the natural features of the desert. The mountains and valleys, the very rocks, barren and sun-scorched as they now are, seem to furnish evidences which none who behold them can gainsay, that this was 'that great and terrible wilderness' through which Moses, under God's direction, led his people."<sup>1</sup>

From 'Ayûn Mûsa to Mount Sinai we can verify the account of Exodus and the invaluable itinerary of the thirty-third chapter of Numbers in every essential feature. We find them supported and illustrated by the striking correspondence of the present localities with the biblical descriptions and the character of the events which took place there. The wild Arab traditions, too, are full of 'recollections of the great Nabi

<sup>1</sup> Rev. T. W. Holland, in "The Recovery of Jerusalem," p. 429.

Mûsa, and testify to the indelible impression which the leader of Israel made upon the inhabitants of the Peninsula and their descendants to this day.

After their departure from Sinai followed a long period of uncertain wanderings, murmurings and punishment of the children of Israel, which is devoid of mighty events, such as took place during the first year in the western and southern part of the Peninsula. It is impossible to identify all the camping-stations of Numb. 33: 17-48, with the exception of Hazeroth (which is no doubt identical with Ain Hudherah), Mount Hor, Edom and Moab. The recent exploration of a great portion of the Desert Et Tih, Idumea and Moab, by E. H. Palmer and Tyrwhitt Drake in 1869 and 1870, has shed some light on this part of the itinerary, but leaves much to be done yet by future explorers.

We now leave "the great and terrible wilderness," and enter the Holy Land, once flowing with milk and honey, and stop at the chief places of interest, beginning with Hebron.

#### THE MACHPELAH.

There is no doubt about the identity of the present Hebron (El-Khalil, "The Friend," namely of Allah, as it is called by the Moslems in honor of Abraham, "the friend of God") with the city of that name so often mentioned in the Old Testament (though nowhere in the New). It is the most ancient in Palestine, seven years older than Zoan or Tanis in Egypt (Num. 13: 22), and as old as Damascus. It is the city where Abraham communed with God, where he buried Sarah his wife, where he himself was buried, where Isaac and Jacob spent a great part of their lives and were buried with their wives, where David reigned seven years and a half before he transferred his residence to Jerusalem. It is one of the most certain localities in all Palestine, and the surrounding luxuriant vineyards, olive groves, pomegranates and fig-trees even now call vividly to mind the report of the spies which they brought from the valley of Eshcol (The Valley of Grapes) to the camp of Israel in Kadesh-Barnea. The famous Oak of Abraham—about half an hour's ride west of Hebron, one of the most majestic and venerable trees in the world—whether it be on the precise spot or not where Abraham received and entertained his celestial guests,

testifies to the mighty impress which the father of the faithful left upon the place of his sojourn and upon the memory of Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians alike.

But the most interesting spot in Hebron, and one of the most sacred spots on earth, is still concealed from the eyes of Christians and Jews, and perhaps even from the Mohammedans. We mean of course the Machpelah,<sup>1</sup> or double cave, which Abraham bought from Ephron, one of the sons of Heth, as a burial-place for his family, and which was the only piece of ground which legally belonged to him in the Land of Promise. The story of the purchase is told in the twenty-third chapter of Genesis, with all the solemnity, carefulness, and minuteness of an important legal transaction, and in remarkable conformity to Oriental habits as they prevail to the present day on such occasions. In this venerable tomb Sarah was first buried, then Abraham, then Isaac and Rebekah, then Leah, and at last Jacob, whose body was brought from Egypt at his own dying request, in these words of touching simplicity (Gen. 49: 29-32): "And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying-place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. The purchase of the field and of the cave that *is* therein was from the children of Heth."

Since that time Machpelah is no more mentioned in the Bible. Josephus, however, speaks of admirably wrought marble monuments of the patriarchs as existing at Hebron,<sup>2</sup> and it is universally believed by the followers of the three monotheistic religions that the patriarchal tomb is within the precinct of the

<sup>1</sup> Always with the article הַמַּכְפֵּלָה, Sept. τὸ διπλοῦν, τὸ σπηλαιον τὸ διπλοῦν, Vulg. *duplex, spelunca duplex*.

<sup>2</sup> "Bell. Jud.," l. iv. c. 9, § 7 (ed. Oberthür III., 778): τὰ μνημεῖα μέχρι τοῦ νῦν ἐν τῇδε τῇ πόλει δέκνυται, πάνυ καλῆς μαρμύρου καὶ φιλοτίμως εἰρχαθμένα. Josephus mentions also Abraham's Oak, or Terebinth, which was supposed to be as old as the creation (δείκνυται δὲ ἀπὸ σταδίων ἕξ τοῦ ἄστεως Τερέβινθος μεγίστη, καὶ φασὶ τὸ δένδρον ἀπὸ τῆς κτίσεως μέχρι νῦν διαμένειν).

great mosque of Hebron, which was originally a Byzantine church with a massive wall dating probably from the time of David or Solomon. This mosque, one of the four most sacred mosques (the others being those of Mecca, Jerusalem, and Damascus), was rigidly closed against foreign intrusion till January 1862, when it was opened by a special firman and as an extraordinary favor to the Prince of Wales and his party, including Dean Stanley and the Prussian Consul, Dr. Rosen, a distinguished archæologist. Dean Stanley gives an interesting account of this memorable visit, in his "Sermons on the East" (pp. 141 *sqq.*), and in a second appendix to the first volume of his "History of the Jewish Church" (New York ed., pp. 535 *sqq.*).<sup>1</sup> Since that time the Marquis of Bute was also admitted to the mosque in 1866, and the Crown Prince of Germany in 1869.

But none of these distinguished visitors were allowed to enter the subterranean Machpelah. The sarcophagi of the patriarchs and their wives, which they saw, are merely empty monuments, like similar monuments in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's. Their mortal remains sleep beneath the pavement. "One indication alone," says Dean Stanley, "of the cavern beneath was visible. In the interior of the mosque, at the corner of the shrine of Abraham, was a small circular hole, about eight inches across, of which one foot above the pavement was built of strong masonry, but of which the lower part, as far as we could see and feel, was of the living rock. This cavity appeared to open into a dark space beneath, and that space (which the guardians of the mosque believed to extend under the whole platform) can hardly be any thing else than the ancient cavern of Machpelah. This was the only aperture which the guardians recognized. Once, they said, 2500 years ago, a servant of a great king had penetrated through some other entrance. He descended in full possession of his faculties, and of remarkable corpulence; he returned, blind, deaf, withered, and crippled. Since then the entrance was closed, and this aperture alone was left, partly for the sake of suffering the holy air of the cave to escape into the mosque, and be

<sup>1</sup>Compare also Fergusson's account in "The Holy Sepulchre and the Temple of Jerusalem," London, 1865.

scented by the faithful; partly for the sake of allowing a lamp to be let down by a chain, which we saw suspended at the mouth, to burn upon the sacred grave. We asked whether it could not be lighted now. 'No,' they said; 'the saint likes to have a lamp at night, but not in full daylight.' With that glimpse into the dark void we and the world without must for the present be satisfied. Whether any other entrance is known to the Mussulmans themselves, must be a matter of doubt. The original entrance to the cave, if it is now to be found at all, must probably be on the southern face of the hill, between the mosque and the gallery containing the shrine of Joseph, and entirely obstructed by the ancient Jewish wall, probably built across it for this very purpose."

On a visit to the Mosque of Hebron, a few months ago, I only ventured to the threshold and looked through a hole in the wall; but even this was deemed a desecration by a number of fanatical Moslems who just came out from evening devotions, and threatened and actually committed violence, while the children began to curse the "Christian dogs" and to throw stones at us. The governor of the place, on being informed of the insult by our dragoman, promptly put the offenders in chains, sent his secretary and a detachment of soldiers to our camp, and offered us every honorable satisfaction. I regret now that it did not occur to us at the time that we might have asked permission to visit the interior of the holy mosque, and to peep at least through the hole to the tombs of the patriarchs. Perhaps at no distant future the embalmed body of Jacob will be found there in a good state of preservation. The body of Joseph is also said to rest there, having been removed hither from Shechem, near Jacob's well, where it was originally deposited and where a monument still marks the spot.

#### BETHLEHEM.

Bethlehem is the first place in southern Palestine which blends the memories of the Old and the New Testaments. It figures in the history of Rachel, who there gave birth to the son of her sorrow and died on the road, still marked by a white mosque; in the charming idyl of Ruth, who, returning with

Naomi, gleaned after the reapers in the grain-field of Boaz, and became the ancestress of David and of David's greater Son and Lord; in the history of David, who was born and raised there, watching his father's flock and musing over the Good Shepherd who "maketh us lie down in green pastures, who leadeth us beside the still waters;" and in the infancy of our Lord, whose birth in the humble manger made Bethlehem a household word all over the Christian world. It is generally conceded that the modern town of Beitlahm ("House of Flesh"), seven miles south of Jerusalem, and inhabited entirely by Christians (mostly Greeks), is the biblical Bethlehem ("House of Bread"). Its fertility, its location and surroundings answer all the conditions of the descriptions and sacred events attached to the place.

But this does not settle the question of the exact spot of the nativity of our Lord, which marks the turning-point in the chronology and history of the race—the close of the old era and the beginning of the new. Monastic tradition, both Greek and Roman, points to the cave beneath the Church of the Nativity, which is illuminated by thirty-two lamps, and bears the simple but pregnant inscription, "*Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est.*" Dr. Robinson, as usual, is skeptical; while William Hepworth Dixon, on the other hand, constructs an ingenious argument not only in favor of the identity of the cave with the stable where Christ was born, but also for the identity of the inn in which his parents found no room with the former mansion of Ruth and Boaz and of King David.<sup>1</sup> Without going to this extent, we think there is no good reason to doubt the tradition. St. Luke, it is true, says nothing of a cave, but only of a manger, in which Mary laid her first-born son, "because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). A manger presupposes a stable. In Palestine, grottos, which are very frequent, are even now used for stables, as they afford easy shelter and protection, and man and beast are not so widely separated in the East as in the West; you find them often, especially in Egypt, dwelling in democratic equality and friendship under the same roof. In Bethlehem there was no doubt only one inn, or khan, for inns are rare and far apart in a country where trav-

<sup>1</sup> "The Holy Land," chapters xii.-xv. (Tauchnitz ed., 1865, vol. i., p. 99 sqq.)

ellers live mostly in tents. Joseph and Mary, finding the inn overcrowded, sought temporary shelter in the adjoining stable in the cave, but soon afterwards they must have moved to the inn, for the Magi visited them "in the house" (Matthew 2 : 11).

So far, then, there is nothing intrinsically improbable in the monastic tradition. But in addition to this it has a claim to our respect by its antiquity. It can be traced two hundred years beyond the age of Helena and Constantine, when most of the other traditions of holy places originated. Justin Martyr, who was himself a native of Palestine, and knew the localities and habits of the country, before the middle of the second century, distinctly locates our Saviour's birth in a grotto (*ἐν σπηλαίῳ*) near Bethlehem ("*Dial. cum Tryph. Jud.*," 78). Origen, a century later, speaks of this as a matter well known to the heathen as well as the Christians ("*Contra Celsum*," i., § 1) Eusebius mentions the same fact several years before the journey of Helena; and Jerome, the best biblical scholar among the Latin fathers, in this belief took up his abode in an adjoining cell, where he finished his Latin version of the Scriptures and died (419). The cell of Jerome, which is still shown, is no doubt genuine. But all other surroundings of the Cave of the Nativity—the Chapel of the Manger (an imitation in marble of the "genuine" manger which was found by Helena and carried to Rome), the Altar of the Adoration of the Magi, the Chapel of the Slaughtered Innocents (whose number is swelled by the monks to the incredible number of 20,000)—are of course fabrications of pious fancy and fraud.

#### JERUSALEM—THE TRUE CALVARY.

Jerusalem, the religious metropolis of the Jewish and Christian world, the witness of the greatest events that ever happened or ever can happen to the end of time, is also the centre of superstitions, which cluster around its sacred spots since the days of St. Helena and her son Constantine the Great. For many centuries superstition had undisturbed possession of the supposed sites of Mount Zion, Mount Moriah, Gethsemane, Calvary, and it would have been considered irreverent and impious to call any one in question. They are still held to be



authentic by Greek and Latin Catholics. I do not know a single Catholic scholar of repute, with the exception of Professor Scholz, of Bonn, who disputes the claims of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to be the true Calvary. Many Protestants share the same feeling, especially among Episcopalians, and Rev. George Williams could not conceal his holy indignation at what he deemed to be the profanity of Dr. Robinson's treatment of ecclesiastical tradition; so much so that in the preface to the second edition of his "Holy City" he felt constrained to apologize for it.

The first doubt about the accuracy of the tradition was uttered by a German bookseller, Korte, A.D. 1738. But it was the independent American research of Dr. Robinson, in 1838, which revolutionized the opinion of archæologists and biblical scholars on the true site of Calvary, by denying with solid arguments the claims of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (in his "Biblical Researches," vol. i., 407-418; iii., 254-263, Boston ed. of 1856; and in "Bibliotheca Sacra," for Aug. and Nov., 1847). He came to this conclusion reluctantly, by calm topographical investigation on the spot; for he went to Jerusalem, as he says, with a strong prejudice in favor of the traditional view, and impressed with the plausible argument of Chateaubriand. He was followed by Dr. Titus Tobler (a practical physician of Switzerland and a most accurate archæologist, who visited Palestine four times, 1835, 1845, 1857, and 1865, and wrote separate works on Jerusalem, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Palestine Bibliography, etc.), Herm. Hupfeld (1861), Fr. Arnold (1864), John Wilson, Barclay, Bonar, Meyer, Ewald, Sam. J. Andrews, and other Protestant scholars.

On the other hand, the old tradition was defended with great learning and zeal by George Williams, for several years Anglican chaplain of Bishop Alexander in Jerusalem ("The Holy City, or Historical and Topographical Notices of Jerusalem," London, 2d ed., 1849, 2 vols.; see vol. ii., chs. 1-3), Dr. E. G. Schultz, Prussian Consul in Jerusalem ("Jerusalem," Berlin, 1845), W. Krafft, Professor in Bonn ("Die Topographie Jerusalem's," Bonn, 1847, a very able discussion, with maps, plans, and inscriptions), Ritter ("Die Erdkunde," vol. xvi., 1852, pp. 297-508), Raumer ("Palästina," Leipzig, 4th ed., 1860,

pp. 285-360, 421-446), Dr. Rosen, Prussian Consul in Jerusalem (1858 and 1863), De Vogué and De Saulcy, both French Catholics (1853 and 1863), Prof. Sepp, a German Roman Catholic (1863), Konrad Furrer, a Swiss scholar who travelled through Palestine on foot ("Wanderungen durch Palästina," Zurich, 1865), von Schubert, Tischendorf, Olin, Lewin, and others. The scholars of the Palestine Exploration Fund have likewise thrown their influence in favor of the traditional site. The champions of this view are just now more numerous than those of Robinson's theory.

We do not intend here to enter into the argument. It has been pretty well exhausted already, by Robinson against, and by Williams in favor of, the traditional view. It turns chiefly on the course of the second wall of Josephus, whether it ran west or east of the present Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in other words, whether it included or excluded it. The evangelists distinctly put the crucifixion outside of the city; but the Church of the Holy Sepulchre lies inside the present city, which is much smaller than it was at the time of Christ; consequently the defendents of the traditional site must prove that the second wall, which began at the gate of Gennath, near the tower of Hippicus, and ran to the fortress Antonia, on the north of the Temple, excluded the church, but this has not been satisfactorily done. It is not impossible, but it is very improbable.

In other respects the traditional topography of Jerusalem is now in a more unsettled state than ever before. Of the eight topographical points of Robinson, only one is now generally admitted, namely, that Mount Moriah is the site of the Jewish temple. Even the site of Zion is disputed. Fergusson locates Calvary on Mount Moriah, near the Golden Gate, but has found no followers.

Mr. Schick, a German architect, and superintendent of an industrial school connected with the Anglo-Prussian Mission, who from about thirty years' residence in Jerusalem is perfectly familiar with its topography, and who constructed the best models of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, of the Tabernacle, and of Jerusalem (shown near the Protestant Church on Zion), locates Calvary about ten minutes' walk north-west of the Damascus Gate, near the Grotto of Jeremiah. He kindly

showed me the spot, and I must confess that it answers all the conditions of the biblical narratives: it is outside of the city (John 19 : 17; Matt. 28 : 11; Heb. 13 : 12); yet near the city (John 19 : 20); near a thoroughfare and exposed to the gaze of the passing multitude (comp. Mark 15 : 29 and John 19 : 20); on an elevation (hence the name "Skull," or "Place of a Skull"), and surrounded by rocks and caves well suited for tombs (comp. Matt. 27 : 60; John 19 : 41). A sarcophagus was dug up there (as he informed me) a short time ago in building a Moslem house. Rev. Mr. Heffter of Christ Church, likewise a long resident of Jerusalem, who was with us, and Bishop Gobat are of the same opinion.

But after all this is merely a conjecture. God buried his servant Moses out of the sight of men and the reach of idolatry. So it may be best that the real locality of the crucifixion and resurrection is unknown, and thus kept from desecration by idolatrous superstitions and monkish impostures and quarrels, such as from the age of Constantine to this day have disgraced the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, to the delight of the Saracens and Turks and to the shame and grief of Christians. The apostles and evangelists evidently made little account of the earthly spot; they fixed their eyes of faith upon the great facts and upon the ever-living Christ in heaven. The Crusaders sought him among the dead, and thousands of pilgrims do so now. But the voice from heaven declares, "He is not here, he is risen."

#### NAZARETH.<sup>1</sup>

The holy places of Nazareth, the residence of our Lord for thirty years, are even more doubtful than the site of Calvary.

The Mount of Precipitation, from which the Nazarenes attempted to cast Jesus down headlong, when, emerging from the obscurity of a carpenter's shop, he first preached unto them the glad tidings, is shown two miles off from the town, in flat contradiction to the narrative of Luke (4 : 29), who says that it was "the brow of the hill whereon their city was built." There is

<sup>1</sup> The best book on Nazareth is by the indefatigable Palestine explorer, Dr. Titus Tobler, "Nazareth in Palästina," Berlin, 1868, 344 pages, with a topographical map drawn by Rev. Mr. Zeller, a son-in-law of Bishop Gobat of Jerusalem, and for some time evangelical missionary in Nazareth.

a steep rock behind the Maronite church which answers the description, and as I visited the spot in company with a German Protestant missionary of Nazareth (Mr. Huber), we came to the conclusion that this was in all probability the true rock of precipitation.

We are shown in Nazareth two Chapels of the Annunciation, one Latin and one Greek; the kitchen of the Virgin Mary (the house was transferred by angels to Loretto in Italy centuries ago); the suspended column above the spot where Mary received the angel's message, according to the Latin tradition; the workshop of Joseph and Jesus; the synagogue in which Jesus taught, and the stone table on which Jesus often reclined at meal before and after the resurrection. But there is not the slightest foundation for their genuineness. The traditions are neutralized by the conflicting claims of the Greeks and Latins. Everybody knows that most incredible of legends (first mentioned in 1518 in a bull of Leo X.), the miraculous removal of Mary's house by angels through the air from Nazareth to Greece, and then to Italy. It has its pendant in the Greek legend of the transportation of the body of St. Catharine from Alexandria to the top of Mount Catharine in the Sinaitic wilderness. The Protestant may be safely allowed to reject both, as in one case he is supported by the Greeks, in the other by the Latins. Dean Stanley ("Sinai and Palestine," p. 436, Lond. ed. of 1868) gives from actual measurement the plan of the Holy House of Loretto, and the plan of the Grotto of Nazareth,<sup>1</sup> from which the former is said to have been removed. A comparison proves the utter impossibility of their original congruity or fitness. "The position of the grotto," says Stanley (p. 447), "is, and must always have been, absolutely incompatible with any such adjacent building as that at Loretto."

There is but one spot in Nazareth which we may safely connect with the life of the holy family: it is the famous "Fountain of the Virgin," or, as it is also called, Gabriel's Spring, and Jesus' Spring, where the women of Nazareth, still celebrated for their beauty, like their sisters in Bethlehem, gather in the

<sup>1</sup> The plans of this edition are superior to the rough sketches of the earlier editions, and are drawn with much care by the late W. H. Hutchison, a Roman Catholic priest of the Oratory.

morning and evening, gossiping and quarrelling, and filling their large water-jars, gracefully poised on their heads or shoulders. As it is the only fountain in Nazareth (excepting a very little one in another part of the town), it is quite likely that Mary, with the infant Jesus, may often have resorted to it for her supply of water. The modest retirement and beautiful surroundings of Nazareth are, of course, the same as in the time of our Saviour, and were favorable to his quiet training, away from libraries, colleges, the commotion of commerce, yet within sight of some of the most interesting scenes in the history of Israel.

The view from the hill above the town is one of the most extensive and charming in Palestine. Towards the south we see the fertile plain of Esdraelon, the historic battle-field of Israel; towards the north, the snow-crowned Mount Hermon; towards the east, Mount Tabor and Mount Gilboa, where Saul and Jonathan fell; towards the west, Mount Carmel, where Elijah triumphed over the false prophets; and in the far distance beyond, the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, which was to become the highway of the Gospel of peace to all mankind. These associations may have afforded natural advantages even to Him who—though neither man-taught, nor self-taught, nor God-taught in the usual sense, but coming out from God, and revealing God's secrets from his personal communion with the Father—"grew and waxed strong in spirit," and "increased in wisdom and stature."

#### TABOR OR HERMON ?

These are the two claimants for the scene of the transfiguration, which marks the height of the public ministry of Christ and the introduction to his passion. Tabor is the traditional, Hermon probably the real site. The former is the Rigi, the latter the Mont Blanc of Palestine.

The place mentioned by the evangelists is an high mountain (*ὄρος ὑψηλόν*). Peter calls it "the holy mountain" (*ἐν τῷ ὄρει τῷ ἁγίῳ*, 2 Pet. 1 : 18), from which we may infer that it was well known, and had acquired a halo of glory from the event. The Lord was wont to withdraw to a mountain for prayer (Matt. 24 : 13; Luke 21 : 37; John 6 : 15), and several of the

greatest events in the history of revelation, from the legislation on Mount Sinai to the ascension from Mount Olivet, took place on mountains. But as the mount of transfiguration is not named, we have to infer it from the surrounding circumstances, and geographical and chronological considerations.

1. Mount Olivet has the oldest tradition in its favor; but is entirely out of the question, since Christ was in Galilee before and after the event, and a journey to Judea in the intervening time could not have been left unnoticed. The mountain must be sought in the province of Galilee.

2. Mount Tabor (the Itabyrion of the Septuagint, the *Jebel et-Tûr* of the Arabs), an isolated, beautiful, dome-shaped mountain, wholly of limestone, on the southern border of Galilee, on the plain of Esdraelon about 1800 feet above the sea.<sup>1</sup> Owing to its isolation it looks twice as large as it really is. It rises gracefully like a truncated cone or hemisphere from the plain. It is six or eight miles east of Nazareth, and can be easily ascended on foot or on horseback in an hour. It is often mentioned in the Old Testament (Judges 4: 6, 14; 8: 18; Ps. 89: 12; Jer. 46: 18), though nowhere in the New. The tradition that Tabor is the mount of transfiguration dates from Jerome in the fourth century, and gained almost universal acceptance. It gave rise to the building of churches and monasteries on the summit of Tabor, which should correspond to the three tents which Peter desired to build—one for his Lord, one for Moses, one for Elijah—forgetting himself and the other two disciples, and “not knowing what he said” in his dreamy state of mind. It also gave the name *τό θαβώριον* to the festival of the transfiguration in the Greek Church. There is a poetic fitness in this tradition. No mountain in Palestine was by nature better suited for the event than Tabor. It lies in the very centre of the country, and commands from its flattened summit one of the finest views over many historic scenes of sacred history: the hills of Nazareth and Mount Carmel in the west, the lake of Tiberias and Mount Lebanon in the north, the mountains of Moab and

<sup>1</sup> According to Ritter (vol. ii., p. 311, Eng. ed.), Tabor is 1750 Paris feet above the sea; according to Tristram (“Land of Israel,” second ed., p. 125, and “Topography of the Holy Land,” second ed., p. 232), it is 1400 feet from the base, and the base about 500 above the sea.

Bashan in the east, beyond the Jordan, and the Little Hermon and Gilboa where Jonathan fell, and the plain of Esdraelon, or Jezreel, in the south.

But two arguments may be urged against this view, which make it at least very doubtful. (*a*) The fact that the summit of Tabor was employed without intermission between the times of Antiochus the Great, 218 B. C., to the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70, as a fortification, and hence was unfit for quiet seclusion and meditation. See Polybius, v., 70, 6; Josephus, "Ant.," xiv., 6, 3; "Bell. Jud.," i., 8, 7; ii., 20, 6; iv., 18. (*b*) The time of the transfiguration, which occurred only "six days" (Matt. 17: 1; Mark 9: 2; or more indefinitely, "about eight days," Luke 9: 28) after the confession of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi, on the northern border of Palestine. After the transfiguration and the healing of the lunatic it is said that Jesus went to Capernaum (Matt. 17: 24; Mark 9: 33). Now it is barely possible, but not probable, that he should in a few days have gone from Cæsarea Philippi to Mount Tabor, passing Capernaum on the way, and gone back from Mount Tabor to Capernaum. Dr. Lange ("Com. on Matt.," 17: 1, p. 306, Am. ed.) remarks that "it is exceedingly improbable that Christ should so suddenly have left his retreat in the highlands of Gaulonitis and transferred the scene of one of his most secret revelations to Galilee, where he was everywhere persecuted."

3. Mount Hermon (now called Jebel esh-Sheikh, *i.e.*, "the chief mountain"), the highest peak of the Lebanon range. It rises in three summits very majestically to a height of ten thousand feet above the Mediterranean, is covered with eternal snow, and can be seen for many miles in every direction. I saw it from Gerizim and Tabor, from Damascus, from the northern heights of the Antilebanon and Lebanon, and the plain of Cölesyria. Moses could see it from the top of Pisga in Moab, when "the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan" (Deut. 34: 1). It reaches down to the northern borders of Galilee. Cæsarea Philippi or Banias lies at its base. The way from Banias to Damascus leads over it and presents magnificent views. In favor of Hermon as the mountain of transfiguration are (*a*) its location at the very place where Christ was a few days before; and (*b*) its retirement

from the busy crowd. "There are several retired platforms on Mount Hermon," says Tristram, "behind the last recess of Palestine, where the scene of transfiguration may have occurred, with the disciples apart by themselves."

It is worthy of note that this event, as well as the confession of Peter, and Christ's great prophecy concerning his Church, which the powers of Hades cannot overthrow, should be attached to the border region between the Jews and the Gentiles, as indicating the point when the Gospel left Palestine to become the religion of the whole world.<sup>1</sup>

#### KHAN MINYEH OR TELL HUM?

The question of the true site of Capernaum, the flourishing city on the Lake of Gennezareth, the home of Christ's manhood, where he spent the greater part of his public ministry, taught his parables and performed many miracles, is still unsettled. In this case we have no ecclesiastical tradition to guide or to confuse us. We are left to pure conjecture from geographical and topographical considerations, Arab names, and ancient ruins. Bethsaida and Chorazin are closely connected with Capernaum and involved in the same uncertainty.

It is not strange that it should be so. The fearful prophecy of Christ has been literally fulfilled (Matt. 11: 20-24), and the fate of those three cities which witnessed his mighty works has been more terrible than that of Tyre and Sidon. They have utterly disappeared from the face of the earth.

There are chiefly two claimants for the site of Capernaum, the chief of those three cities, *Khan Minyeh* and *Tell Hum*. Robinson, Porter, Macgregor, Selah Merrill, plead for the former; Ritter, Thomson, Captain Wilson, Bädeler, for the latter. A third place, Ain Mudawarah, or the Round Fountain, near the south end of the plain of Gennezareth, a mile and a half from the lake, has found an advocate in Tristram, but he has recently given it up.

<sup>1</sup> The leading modern writers on Palestine have pronounced in favor of Hermon and against Tabor. So Ritter, "Comparative Geography of Palestine," ii., 312, English translation; Robinson, "Biblical Researches," vol. ii., 330, 358 (Am. ed.), and his "Physical Geography of the Holy Land," p. 26; Stanley, "Sinai and Palestine," p. 351 (Eng. ed. of 1868); Trench, "Studies in the Gospels," p. 192; Tristram, "Topography of the Holy Land," pp. 233, 280.



The arguments for Khan Minyeh are chiefly geographical. It is situated close by the sea-shore (which corresponds to Matt. 4: 13), at the head of the triangular plain of Gennezareth (now called El-Ghuweir; comp. Matt. 14: 34; John 6: 17, 21, 26), and on the highway to Damascus—a good place for a custom's station where taxes might be gathered (Matt. 9: 9; Mark 2: 14; Luke 5: 27). The "Spring of the Fig-tree" (Ain et-Tin) is supposed, by Robinson, to be the same with the spring of Capernaum mentioned by Josephus (who, however, says nothing of the town), though this is more probably to be sought in the much larger fountain Et Tabigah (as Captain Wilson has shown). The considerable remains of an aqueduct above the khan, which carried the water down to the plain, seem to indicate that there was formerly a large town there. But there are no ruins of any account in Khan Minyeh, except the large caravansary from which it has its name, and which is of Saracen origin. Robinson accounts for this by the neighborhood of Tiberias, to which the ruins may have been removed by water. But a synagogue and a large town are not so easily transported. The excavations of the English Exploring Expedition in 1866 have brought nothing to light except some fragments of comparatively modern masonry and pottery.

Tell Hum has in its favor the name and the ruins, two very important arguments. It means the same as Capernaum, viz., the town of *Nahum*, except that *Caphar*, village, is exchanged for *Tell*, hill. The ruins discovered then, and more carefully examined by Captain Wilson in 1866, are certainly very remarkable, especially those of a large and elegant synagogue, called the "White Synagogue," which, at all events, betokens the presence of a considerable city. If Tell Hum be Capernaum, then this synagogue was in all probability the same which the Roman centurion built (Luke 7: 18; Matt. 8: 8), and in which our Lord frequently taught and delivered the wonderful discourse on the bread of life (Mark 1: 21; Luke 4: 33, 38; John 6: 59). The broken columns lie in confusion a little beneath the surface of the soil. I was so fortunate as to secure the capital of a column for the Biblical Museum in the Union Theological Seminary.

Wilson's description of the synagogue in "The Recovery of

Jerusalem" is as follows (p. 268): "The synagogue, built entirely of white limestone, must once have been a conspicuous object, standing out from the dark basaltic background; it is now nearly level with the surface, and its capitals and columns have been for the most part carried away or turned into lime. The original building is 74 feet 9 inches long by 56 feet 9 inches wide; it is built north and south, and at the southern end has three entrances. In the interior we found many of the pedestals of the columns in their original positions, and several capitals of the Corinthian order buried in the rubbish; there were also blocks of stone which had evidently rested on the columns and supported wooden rafters. Outside the synagogue proper, but connected with it, we uncovered the remains of a later building, which may be those of the church which Epiphanius says was built at Capernaum, and was described by Antonius, A.D. 600, as a basilica, enclosing the house of Peter. It may be asked what reason there is for believing the original building to have been a Jewish synagogue, and not a temple or church. Seen alone, there might have been some doubt as to its character, but, compared with the number of ruins of the same character which have lately been brought to notice in Galilee, there can be none. Two of these buildings have inscriptions in Hebrew over their main entrances; one in connection with a seven-branched candlestick, the others with figures of the paschal lamb, and all without exception are constructed after a fixed plan, which is totally different from that of any church, temple, or mosque in Palestine."

If Tell Hum be not Capernaum, it must have been Chorazin; but there is still a site of the name of "Kerazeh," two and a half miles north of Tell Hum, where the ruins of a synagogue of black basalt and several dwelling-houses are found. "The ruins of Kerazeh," says Captain Wilson, who has no doubt of its identity with Chorazin ("Recovery of Jerusalem," p. 270), "are as large, if not larger, than the ruins of Capernaum (Tell Hum). . . Many of the dwelling-houses are in a tolerably perfect state, the walls being in some cases six feet high. . . On the north, we found traces of the paved road which connected Chorazin with the great caravan road to Damascus."

It is quite possible that future excavations may bring to light

an archæological argument for Khan Minyeh ; but till then we must give the preference to Tell Hum.

Tell Hum is three miles north-east of Khan Minyeh, and there miles from the Jordan at its entrance into the lake. It lies on elevated rocky ground, half a mile from the sea-shore, to which it may have extended in the days of its prosperity. We had to make our way through thickets of thorns and briers, and tore our clothes badly. There we spent about an hour on the ruins, lost in sad reflections on the terrible results of neglected opportunities and abused privileges. Even in its ruins and fearful desolation the land is a striking commentary on the Book which has nothing to fear from the attacks of unbelief, but comes out stronger from every conflict.

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