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ARTICLE IX.

EXPLORATIONS IN PALESTINE.

COMMUNICATED BY PROF. H. B. HACKETT, D.D., THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
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Meeting of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

THE annual meeting of this important Association was held on the afternoon of Monday, May 16, at the Royal Institution, Albermarle street, London. The attendance was large, filling the spacious hall with a highly intelligent and interested audience. The Archbishop of York, Rev. Dr. Thompson, presided on the occasion; and among others present were the Bishop of London, Dr. Stanley, Dean of Westminster, Sir Henry Rawlinson, the celebrated Assyrian scholar and traveller, Professor Donaldson, Mr. George Grove, and Captains Wilson and Warren, well known for their labors and discoveries in the Holy Land. Reports were read by Rev. F. W. Holland, one of the Secretaries of the Society, and by Captain Warren, and speeches were delivered by the Archbishop, by Sir H. Rawlinson, by Dr. Stanley, and others. At the close of the meeting a collection was taken up in aid of the funds of the Association.

Report of the Doings of the Year.

By the courtesy of Mr. Holland we are enabled to present to the readers of the Bibliotheca an outline of the labors of the agents of the society for the past year.

In addition to the excavations at Jerusalem, which have not been unfruitful in results, some interesting explorations have been made during the past year in the north of Palestine. Captain Warren found it necessary to withdraw his men from Jerusalem during the summer months, in consequence of the prevalence of fever, from which they had already suffered much; and the whole of the exploring party removed to the Lebanon until the cooler weather set in. While there they occupied themselves in investigating the ruined temples of Coele-Syria and Mount Hermon. The temples of Coele-Syria appear to date from Roman times, and the inscriptions found in them are mostly Greek.

The small temples about Hermon appear to be somewhat of more ancient date, their architecture being of the Ionic order.

On the summit of Mount Hermon stand the ruins of a sacellum, which has nothing in its construction in common with the temples on the west below. This probably had to do with a different and more ancient

form of worship. All these temples have been sketched and accurately described.

On his journey northwards Captain Warren visited Saida, the ancient Sidon, and discovered there on the stones of the ancient walls undoubted Phœnician masons' marks, somewhat similar in character to those which he had found in his excavations at Jerusalem. He also procured from excavations which had been made at Sidon some specimens of ancient pottery.

Another portion of Captain Warren's work deserves also to be especially mentioned, viz. his labors in connection with the Moabite stone.

That stone was actually discovered by the Rev. Mr. Klein, a Prussian gentleman connected with the Church Missionary Society in Jerusalem, in August, 1868, and the Prussian Government, to whom the discovery was reported, proceeded to take steps to obtain possession of the stone.

As long as others were in the field, and the safety of the inscription would have been endangered by his interference in the matter, Captain Warren very properly abstained from any action. But when, owing to an unfortunate quarrel between two parties of Arabs, it had been broken into pieces by cold water having been thrown upon it after it had been heated by fire, he very promptly came to the rescue; and it was owing to his exertions that the excellent squeezes of the remaining portions were obtained which have been the means of the interpretation of the inscription.

Another important work which has been undertaken during the past year by the Palestine Exploration Fund has been the exploration of the Tih desert—the wilderness of the forty years' wanderings of the children of Israel. The services of Mr. E. H. Palmer, who was previously connected with the Ordnance Survey of the Peninsula of Sinai, were secured for this purpose; and, in company with Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake, he is now engaged in exploring that vast tract, a large portion of which has never before been visited by travellers.

Mr. Palmer's first work was to examine all passes of the range of mountains which forms the northern boundary of the Peninsula of Sinai, and which must have been crossed by the children of Israel on their march northwards from Mount Sinai. He then visited the mountainous district of the Negeb, or "Son of the Country," of the Bible, and investigated the ancient ruins and wells that abound in that country, which, though now a desert, bears traces of having once sustained a considerable population. Correspondence with that remote region is difficult, and the reports which have reached us from Mr. Palmer were too scanty for us to give any accurate description of the work which he has accomplished. But he appears to have made some interesting discoveries with regard to the fixing of the site of Kadesh, and the maps which he has sent home prove that he is accomplishing with great accuracy the work which he has undertaken.

When we last heard from him he was just starting south again, after a short visit to Jerusalem, to explore the southeast of the Negeb, and after he had accomplished this he proposed to make his way round the east of the Dead Sea to Jerusalem. He will thus pass through the country of Moab, and if any other inscriptions are to be found he will doubtless secure them. His knowledge of Arabic and the Arab character renders him the fittest person to undertake so difficult and dangerous a journey, and the results of his exploration may be looked forward to with great interest.

Report of Captain Warren.

We have space only for a meagre notice of this gentleman's interesting statement, to which reference has been made. He said that two years ago they had brought sufficient to light to cause several very curious questions to be raised with regard to the ancient topography of the Holy City, but not sufficient to settle any of the disputed points as to the situation of the Temple; but they had since made such further progress that, although they were not able to state where the Temple actually stood, yet they could say to some extent where the Temple was not, so far as concerned parts about which there had hitherto been utter uncertainty. There were two points of paramount interest in the Holy City, around which all other interests centred—first, the Temple, in which the Jews and first Christians worshipped; and second, the Tombs of the kings of Judah, including the sepulchre of him who was styled “the King of the Jews.” They had been able to lay down a plan of the city as it existed of old, and had made investigations round two thirds of the Haram wall on the outside, part of which was acknowledged to have formed a portion of the outer court of Herod's Temple. He could not, however, lay out the old city to his entire satisfaction, as there was a portion of ground where the rock had not yet been found. A valley appeared running down from the Jaffa Gate to near Wilson's Arch, and his impression was that the Pool of Hezekiah would prove to be the Gihon in the valley where Solomon was anointed king. Captain Warren then described the discoveries he had made in the Haram area of Jerusalem, and said there was no question but that within that area the Temple of Herod once stood, and that some part of the wall was a portion of the old wall of the outer court, and on that account his working party had made that its centre. Although there was no doubt that the Temple once stood within the Haram area, there were many theories as to the particular spot it occupied; but all had some portion to reject of the account of Josephus, of the Talmud, or even of the Bible itself. But his impression was that if read in a proper light, all the topographical accounts would be found to coincide. After entering into a great many details, Captain Warren said the whole question of the topography was rather one of years than of days, but, with regard to the so-called Pool of Bethesda, he believed the present

high walls to be the work of the Saracens. He could not find that they were any nearer the solution of the difficulties about finding the tomb of David and other kings of Judah; and it was premature to speculate upon the matter until they knew the direction of the valley from the Damascus gate. Besides the excavations at Jerusalem, he had been occupied in making reconnoissances outside between Jerusalem and Gaza.

The Moabite Stone.

The credit of discovering this stone belongs, undoubtedly, as already stated, to the Rev. F. Klein, of the Church Missionary Society in Jerusalem, during an excursion on the east of the Dead Sea, in 1868. But we are mainly indebted to Captain Warren and the French vice-consul at Jerusalem, M. Ganneau, for our copies of the writing on the stone, obtained from the rock, or its fragments, after it had been so unfortunately broken to pieces. The dimensions of the entire stone, it may be mentioned here, as taken by Mr. Klein, show it to have been about three feet and nine inches long, two feet and four inches in breadth, and one foot and two inches in thickness. This stone, on his first examination of it, was in almost perfect preservation, lying with the inscription uppermost, and was a basaltic stone, exceedingly heavy. The copies or *squeezes* obtained by Messrs. Warren and Ganneau exhibit (in diagrams drawn from them) the shape of the stone when entire, with the relative positions of the two fragments preserved; the upper fragment with the part of the inscription upon it; the lower fragment, containing many letters which were uncertain, and which are marked with a pencil on the tracing paper by a horizontal line above them. From Mr. Klein's sketch an engraving has been prepared which represents the monument in its unbroken condition.

Value of the Discovery.

It should be stated that some pieces of the stone (if still existing) remain to be recovered; that some of the words and lines of the inscription are too illegible to be deciphered with confidence; and that interpreters are not fully agreed in their rendering of parts of the text where the characters are still comparatively distinct. The results which have been reached in the present stage of the investigation, and are regarded as reasonably certain, are such as the following: (1) The stone is undoubtedly the oldest Semitic monument yet found. (2) It is stated by Mr. Deutsch, of the British Museum, that the characters appear older "than many of the Assyrian bi-lingual cylinders in the British Museum, the date of which is, at the very least, as old as the ninth century, B.C." (3) The stone chronicles the achievements of one Mesha, King of the Moabites. It was near about this period, viz. 900 B.C., that the Mesha lived against whom Jehoram and Jehoshaphat fought (2 Kings iii. 4sq.). (4) The inscription is full of well-known biblical names, such as Beth-Bamoth, Beth-Baal, Meon, Horonaim,

and Dibon. (5) Mention is frequently made of Israel, a rival power, and of "Chemosh," the national god of Moab. (6) It is invaluable to the student of alphabets. "Nearly the whole of the Greek alphabet," says Mr. Deutsch, "is found here, not merely similar to the Phœnician shape, but as identical with it as can well be."

Commemorative Records.

Sir H. Rawlinson expressed a doubt, in his remarks, whether the Hebrews were in the habit of erecting monumental records on great occasions; though this was a common practice among the Egyptians and the Assyrians. The discovery of the Moabite stone furnishes, at least, one example of this usage among a kindred race in the land of Palestine; and it encourages the hope that by perseverance other monuments may be found, affording other and similar corroboration of intimations (not to use stronger language) of this practice among the early Hebrews, of which we read in 1 Sam. vii. 12 and xv. 12.

ARTICLE X.

NOTICES OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

A. GERMAN WORKS.

COMMENTARIES ON THE BOOK OF JUDGES.¹—The volume before us is a further portion of the Commentary noticed in a previous Number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*. It embraces the fourth and fifth chapters of Judges—a very small space to be traversed in a volume of three hundred pages, many of our readers will think. Professor Bachmann's intention, obviously, is to exhaust the subject as far as possible. The two chapters are certainly important ones; they treat of the war between Jabin, King of Canaan, and Israel; of the killing of Sisera, Jabin's general, by Jael, the wife of Heber; and of the song of triumph sung after the defeat and death of Sisera by Deborah and Barak. There is scarcely a greater crux in the Bible for theorists on inspiration than the conduct of Jael and the subsequent praise of her act by Deborah. There is no doubt that we Christians should condemn Jael's act as a treacherous assassination. Looked at, however, in the spirit of the time at which she lived, one might find her, if not it, excusable. But if Deborah were inspired by God to utter her song, how could she praise such an act? We can understand Jael; but we cannot understand Deborah. Jael causes no

¹ Das Buch des Richter. Erklärt von Dr. J. Bachmann. Berlin: Wiegandt und Grieben. 1869.