

to many great and good men. And again, many great and good men, from St. Augustine to Cardinal Newman, have professed a belief in contemporary miracles not their own.

What cannot be matched in history is the foundation of a great and solid movement, and then its promulgation, by deep thinkers and holy and soberminded men, who claimed that they themselves, in carrying forward such a movement, were assisted by the power of working miracles.

This is the claim which Schenkel and Strauss, Renan and Keim, admit that Jesus made, however they minimize its value. It is a claim which cannot be rent away from the writings of His mighty follower. And it stands utterly alone in the annals of the human mind.

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THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE HOLY LAND.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE aim of these papers is to illustrate God's Word and the story of His early Church, by helping others to see, as I myself have seen, their earthly stage and background.

There are many ways of illustrating the Book by the Land, but some are wearisome and some are vain. There is, for instance, that most common and easy way, of taking one's readers along the track of one's own journey through Palestine, reproducing every adventure, scene, social custom or antiquity encountered, and labelling it with a text or story from Scripture. But such a method may easily degenerate into the sheerest showing of waxworks; it does not give a vision of the land as a whole, nor help you to hear through it the sound of running history. What is needed by the reader or teacher of the Bible is some idea

of the main outlines of Palestine—its shape and disposition; its plains, passes and mountains; its winds and temperatures; its colours, lights and shades. Students of the Bible desire to see a background and to feel an atmosphere—to discover from “the lie of the land” why the history took certain lines and the prophecy and gospel were expressed in certain styles—above all to discern between what physical nature contributed to that wonderful religious development and what was the product of purely moral and spiritual forces. On this last point the geography of the Holy Land reaches its highest interest. It is also good to realise the historical influences by which our religion was at first nurtured or exercised, as far as we can do this from the ruins which these have left in the country. To go no farther back than the New Testament—there are the Greek art, the Roman rule, and the industry and pride of Herod. But the remains of Scripture times are not so many as the remains of the centuries since. The Palestine of to-day is more a museum of Church history than of the Bible—a museum full of living as well as ancient specimens of its subject. East of Jordan, in the indestructible basalt of the Hauran, there are monuments of the passage from Paganism to Christianity even more numerous and remarkable than the catacombs or earliest Churches of Rome; there are also what Italy cannot give us—the melancholy wrecks of the passage from Christianity to Mohammedanism. On the west of the Jordan there are the castles and churches of the Crusaders, the impression of their brief kingdom and its ruin. And then, after the long silence and the crumbling, there are the living churches of to-day, and the lines of pilgrims coming up to Jerusalem from the four corners of the world.

Deeper than all this, however, is the need which Christian men have to realise the supreme fact of their religion—that the truth and love of God have come to us in

their highest power, not as a book or a doctrine, not as a whisper in our hearts or vague effluence upon the world, but as a Man, a native and citizen of this land, who during His earthly labours never left its narrow limits, who drew His parables from the fields its sunshine lights, and all the bustle of its daily life, who prayed and agonized for us through its quiet night scenes, and who died for the world upon one of its common places of execution.

Even for our faith in the Incarnation, I believe that a study of the historical geography of Palestine is not without its discipline. Besides helping us to realise the long preparation of history for the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, a vision of the soil and climate in which He grew up and laboured delivers us on the one hand from those abstract views of His manhood, which have so often been the error and curse of Christianity; and on the other hand, from what is a more present danger—the interpretation of Christ (prevalent with many of our preachers) as if He were a son of our own generation and soil. Nor need many words be wasted on those who foolishly imagine that for Christian faith, in general, familiarity with the features of Palestine must mean disappointment. This can happen only where faith is nothing more than sentiment; to mere religious romance a close acquaintance with Palestine will always be a shock. But he who comes with that inward experience of his religion, which no material vision can either diminish or materially increase, who comes soberly, knowing that even round Zion and upon Jordan men must walk by faith and not by sight, and who comes intelligently, with an ordered knowledge of the story of his faith and church—he will never be disillusioned by the Holy Land. Every league of her is a witness to the natural, unaffected accuracy of the Bible.¹ Her barest

¹ This has struck every visitor to the land. Napoleon the Great may be quoted: "En campant sur les ruines de ces anciennes villes, on lisait tous les

features may correct but cannot hurt his faith ; while even those historical mysteries which now darken her fields, once so bright with vision, and depress her people, once so favoured of God—those triumphs of a rude and sensual religion over the Church of Christ on the very scenes of His revelation—are but warnings of the misuse to which Christians have put the “holiness” of the land, and profound motives to labour upon it once more in the true spirit of Christ Himself.

THE FIVE PARALLEL ZONES AND THE CROSSING.

The historical geography of Palestine, so far as its relations with the rest of the world are concerned, may be summed up in a paragraph. Syria lies between two continents, Asia and Africa : between two primeval homes of men, the valley of the Euphrates and the valley of the Nile : between two great centres both of ancient and of modern empire, Western Asia and Egypt. Its long highland range, which runs almost continuously from Mount Taurus, at the north-east corner of the Levant, to the Gulf of Akaba on the Red Sea, has been likened to a bridge connecting the two continents—a bridge with the Great Sea upon its one side, and the Great Desert upon its other. The natural entrances to a bridge are by the ends ; and with two very notable exceptions all the great arrivals or assaults upon Palestine have happened from the north or from the south. The two exceptions forced the Bridge upon its eastern flank ; by this way both Israel and Islam entered upon their long occupations of the land. But for reasons which we shall presently see, no invasion ever came upon the Bridge from the west, from the sea ; even when the

soirs l'écriture sainte à haute voix sous la tente du général en chef. L'analogie et la vérité des descriptions étaient frappantes ; elles conviennent encore à ce pays après tant de siècles et de vicissitudes.”—*Memoires pour servir : the Campaigns of Egypt and Syria, 1798-1799*, dictated by Napoleon himself. Paris, 1847.

nations of Europe sought Palestine, their armies did not enter by its harbours till the littoral was already in their possession.

Nevertheless, it is from the sea that a stranger enjoys the most comprehensive view of the country, and by the coast that he now most frequently approaches it. Before he climbs the long range, which runs down Palestine, from north to south, it is better that he should stand off the land altogether, and survey that central range itself; and the lower hills which buttress it nearly all the way along; and, between them and the sea, the plain of varying dimensions; and the straight line of coast in alternate stretches of cliff and sand. Afterwards climbing the central range, he may look down upon the Jordan Valley, and beyond it on the high tableland of Eastern Palestine.

He will then have seen the five parallel zones into which the Holy Land may be divided: (1) The Coast and Maritime Plain; (2) The Shephelah, or Low Hills; (3) The Central Range; (4) The Jordan Valley; (5) The Land East of Jordan.

For a distance of one hundred miles from the south end of the Dead Sea (a little south of Beersheba) these zones run northward unbroken. But there the first four are crossed or entered by a *sixth* great feature of the land—the wide Plain of Esdraelon or Megiddo. Esdraelon unites the maritime plain with the Jordan Valley by completely interrupting the central ranges of hills, high and low. But to the north of Esdraelon these form again, and with very considerable modification the whole five-zoned system passes out of the limits of the Holy Land—in the strip of Phœnician coast, the highlands of Galilee, and the long masses of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon with Coele-Syria between them.¹

¹ For a general view of the country the following approximate levels to the south of Esdraelon are necessary. The coast is either beach, with low sand-

In this lecture I propose to deal with the first of these parallel zones.

I. *The Coast and the Maritime Plain.*

Every one remembers the shape, on the map, of the east end of the Levant—an almost straight line running from north to south, with a slight inclination westwards: no island off it but Cyprus, some sixty miles away, and upon it almost no harbour or fully-sheltered gulf. From the mouth of the Nile this coast is absolutely devoid of promontory or recess,¹ till the high headland of Carmel comes forth and forms the imperfect Bay of Acre. It is this southern half of the coast-line of Syria—ninety or one hundred miles from Carmel to the border of Egypt, that we are now to look at. No invader, as I have said, has ever disembarked an army upon its rock or sand till the country behind was already in his power. Even invaders from Europe,—Alexander, Pompey, the First Crusaders and Napoleon,—have found their way into Palestine by land, either from Asia Minor or from Egypt.²

hills or cliffs about fifty feet high. The Maritime Plain rises with undulations, some of which are as high as 350 feet, to a general level of about 200 at the foot of the low hills. The low hills rise from 500 feet with a general average of about 800 or 900, to a few summits as high as 1,200 and 1,500 feet. The main Central Range holds a pretty uniform level from 2,000 to 2,500 feet, with summits as high as Ebal, 3,084; Tell Asur, 3,318; near Bireh, 2,900; 2,300 at Jerusalem, and thence an ascent through the hill country of Judæa to 2,700 at Tekoa, and 3,400 at Er-Rameh, near Hebron. This Central Range drops swiftly into the next zone, the Jordan Valley, whose depth varies from 628 feet *below* the sea at the Lake of Galilee, to 1,280 feet at the Dead Sea. The plateau on the East of Jordan varies from 1,500 to 2,500 feet, with summits of over 3,000 feet. Roughly, the Maritime Plain is from eight to nineteen miles broad, the Shephelah varies from five to ten, the Central Range from fifteen to twenty, and the Jordan Valley from occasionally only a mile to eight or twelve miles.

¹ The forward rock of Athlit in Carmel's shadow, the mole at Cæsarea, the mouth of the Nahr Rubin, where the port of Jamnia used to lie; and the shallow mouths of one or two other streams like the Zerka and Anjeh are not large enough to be exceptions.

² In the Third Crusade, the European forces, though assisted sometimes by fleets from sea, won all the coast fortresses from the land.

The inhabitants of the coast have indeed attempted the creation of harbours, but have never succeeded in making one permanent. Gaza and Jaffa are unsheltered roadsteads—the latter with a reef almost more dangerous in storm than it is useful in calm. Ascalon, Ashdod and Jamnia had once small ports, but they have disappeared, and their sites are used only as landing places for small boats. Even the Roman Cæsarea has almost wholly crumbled away. Athlit, the Crusaders' last stronghold on holy soil, was hardly more than an exposed jetty.¹

I have twice sailed along this coast on a summer afternoon with a western sun thoroughly illuminating it, and I remember no break in the long line of foam where land and sea met, no single spot where the land gave way and welcomed the sea to itself. On both occasions the air was quiet, yet all along the line there was disturbance. It seemed as if the land were everywhere saying to the sea: I do not wish you, I do not need you. And that is but the echo of the land's history. Throughout the Old Testament the sea spreads before us for spectacle, for symbol, for music, but never for use—save in the one case when a prophet sought it as an escape from his God. In the Psalms the straight coast serves to illustrate the irremovable limits which the Almighty has set between sea and land. In the Prophets its roar and foam symbolize the futile rage of the heathen beating on Jehovah's steadfast purpose for His own people: *Ah! the booming of the peoples, the multitudes—like the booming of the seas they boom; and the rushing of the nations, like the rushing of*

¹ North of Carmel it is different. Acre has always deserved to some extent the name of a port, and many have been the famous embarkations upon its quays. It was commercially important in very early times (Song of Deborah, v. 17). It was a Roman colony under Claudius; a landing-place for pilgrims and Crusaders; a dépôt for Genoese and Venetian fleets in the early middle ages; and a trading station of some importance, ever since. But that so unsheltered a roadstead should for so long have been so important, is the plainer proof of the bareness of the rest of the coast.

*mighty waters they rush; nations—like the rushing of many waters they rush. But He checketh it, and it fleeth far away, and is chased like chaff on the mountains before the wind, and like swirling dust before a whirlwind.*¹

As in the Psalms and the Prophets, so also in the History the sea was a barrier and not a highway. From the first it was said: *Ye shall have the Great Sea for a border.*² There were three tribes, of whom we have evidence that they reached the maritime frontier appointed for them: Dan, who in Deborah's time was *remaining in ships*,³ but he speedily left them and his bit of coast at Joppa for the far inland sources of Jordan; and Asher and Zebulun, whose territory was not south but north of Carmel. Even in their case no ports are mentioned,—the word translated *haven*, in the blessing of Zebulun and in the blame of Asher,⁴ being but *beach*, land washed by the sea, and the word translated *creeks* meaning no more than just that,—*cracks* or *breaks*. So that the only mention of a real harbour in the Old Testament is in the general picture of the storm in Psalm cvii., where the word used means *refuge*. Of the name or idea of a *port*, gateway in or out, there is no trace; and Major Conder has remarked the interesting fact that in the designation for Cæsarea in the Talmud, *Limineh*, and in the name still given to some landing-places on the Philistine coast, *El-Mineh*, it is no Semitic root, but the Greek *Limen* which appears.⁵ In this inability of their coast-line to furnish the language of Israel with even the suggestion of a port, we have the crowning proof of the peculiar security and seclusion of their land as far as the sea is concerned.

Here I may point out how much truth there is in the common contrast between Palestine and Greece. In respect of security the two lands did not much differ; the physical

Isa. xvii. 12, 13.

² Num. xxxiv. 6.

³ Judges v. 17.

⁴ Gen. xlix. 13; Judges v. 17.

⁵ *Tent Work*, see p. 283.

geography of Greece is even more admirably adapted than that of Palestine for purposes of defence. But in respect of seclusion from the rest of the world, they differed entirely. Upon almost every league of his broken and embayed coast-line, the ancient Greek had an invitation to voyage. The sea came far inland to woo him : by island after island she tempted him across to other continents. She was the ready means to him of commerce, of colonising, and of all that change of his native life, and that adventure with other men, which breed openness, originality and subtlety of mind. But the coast-line of the Jew was very different, and from his high inland station he saw it only afar off—a stiff, stormy line, down the whole length of which as there was nothing to tempt men in, so there was nothing to tempt them out.

The effect of a nation's physical environment upon their temper and ideals is always interesting, but can never be more than vaguely described. Whereas of even greater interest, and capable, too, of exact definition, because abrupt, imperious and supreme, is the manner in which a nation's genius, by sheer moral force and Divine inspiration, dares to look beyond its natural limits, feels at last too great for the conditions in which it was developed, and appropriates regions and peoples, towards which Nature has provided it with no avenue. Such a process is nowhere more evident than in the history of Israel. In the development of Israel's religious consciousness, there came a time when her eyes were lifted beyond that iron coast, and her face, in the words of her great prophet, *became radiant and her heart large with the sparkle of the sea : for there is turned upon thee the sea's flood-tide, and the wealth of the nations is coming unto thee. Who are these like a cloud that fly, and like doves to their windows ? Surely towards Me the isles are stretching, and ships of Tarshish in the van, to bring thy sons from afar, their silver and their gold with*

them, to the name of Jehovah of Hosts and to the Holy of Israel, for He hath glorified thee. Isles here are any maritime lands, but it is admitted that the prophet had chiefly in view those western islands and coasts, of which the Greek enjoyed physical sight, but which to the Hebrew could be the object only of spiritual hope and daring.¹

The isles shall wait for His law : let them give glory to Jehovah, and publish His praise in the isles : unto Me the isles shall hope. It is true that this communication between Judea and the West was not at first fulfilled across the coast of Palestine : the Jewish dispersion took place chiefly from Alexandria and Babylon. But at last even that coast was broken through, and a real port established upon it. It is singular that this should have happened just in time to be of use in Israel's second great dispersion and apostolate. Every one knows the part played by Cæsarea in the early progress of Christianity. (In the same connexion Stanley fitly recalls that Peter's first vision of the Gentile world came upon him at Joppa). Now Cæsarea had just been built by Herod in honour of Augustus. It speedily became and long continued to be the virtual capital of Palestine—the only instance of any coast city which did so. It was the seat of the Roman Procurator, and, through the first Christian centuries, of the Metropolitan of Palestine. So much for the single and very late exception to the impassableness of the coast of the Holy Land. Its appearance, in spite of nature, at "the fulness of the times" is very significant.

¹ Cyprus is not visible from any part of the Holy Land proper. But its peaks are within sight of the mountains of Northern Syria, and at certain seasons of the year even of Lebanon. In midsummer, when the sun sets in the north-west, and between sunset and dark, a summit of Mount Troödos is visible from the hills above Beyrout. In July, 1891, Dr. Carslaw, of Shweir, and I saw the bare mountain-top from a hill in front of Shweir, six hours above Beyrout, and 5,000 feet above the Mediterranean.

Beyond this forbidding coast there stretches as you look east a prospect of plain, the Maritime Plain—on the north cut swiftly down upon by Carmel, whose headland comes within 200 yards of the sea, but at Carmel's other end six miles broad, and thence gradually widening southwards, till at Joppa there are twelve miles, and farther south there are twenty miles between the far blue mountains of Judæa and the sea. The Maritime Plain divides into three portions. The north corner between Carmel and the sea is bounded on the south by the Crocodile River, the modern Nahr-el-Zerka, and is about twenty-one miles long. From the Crocodile River the Plain of Sharon, widening from eight miles to twelve, rolls southward, forty-four miles to the mouth of the Nahr Rubin and a line of low hills on the south of Ramleh. The country is undulating, with groups of hills from 250 to 300 feet high. To the north it is largely wild moor and marsh, with one large oak wood in the extreme north, and groves of the same tree scattering southward—remains, doubtless, of the great forest which Strabo describes in this region. In the southern half of Sharon there is far more cultivation,—cornfields, fields of melons, gardens, orange groves, and groves of palms, with strips of coarse grass and sand, frequent villages on mounds, the once considerable towns of Jaffa, Lydda and Ramleh, and the high road running between them to Jerusalem. To the south of the low hills that bound Sharon, the Plain of Philistia rolls on to the River of Egypt, about forty miles, rising now and again into gentle ranges 300 feet high, and cut here and there by a gully. But Philistia is mostly level, everywhere capable of cultivation and presenting the view of vast seas of corn.

The whole Maritime Plain possesses a quiet but rich beauty. If the contours are gentle the colours are strong and varied. Along almost the whole seaboard runs a strip of links and downs, sometimes of pure drifting sand, some-

times of grass and sand together. Outside this border of broken gold there is the blue sea, with its fringe of foam. Within the soil is a chocolate brown: with breaks and gullies, now bare to their dirty white shingle and stagnant puddles, and now full of rich dark green reeds and rushes that tell of swift and ample water beneath. Over corn and moorland a million flowers are scattered—poppies, pimpernels, anemones, the convolvulus, and the mallow, the narcissus and blue iris—"roses of Sharon and lilies of the valley." Lizards haunt all the sunny banks. The shimmering air is filled with bees and butterflies, and with the twittering of small birds, hushed now and then as the shadow of a great hawk blots the haze. Nor when darkness comes is all a blank. The soft night is sprinkled thick with glittering fireflies.

Such a plain, rising through the heat by dim slopes to the long persistent range of blue hills beyond, presents to-day a prospect of nothing but fruitfulness and peace. And yet it has ever been one of the most famous war-paths of the world. It is not only level, it is open. If its coast-line is so destitute of harbours, both its ends offer wide and easy entrances. The southern rolls off upon the great passage from Syria to Egypt: upon those illustrious, as well as horrible, ten sandy marches from Gaza,—past Rafia, Rhinocoloura, "the Serbonian Bog," and the sands where Pompey was stabbed to death,—to Pelusium and the Nile. Of this historical highway between Asia and Africa, along which Thothmes, Sennacherib, Alexander, Cambyses, Antipater, Titus, Napoleon and many more great generals have led their armies—of this highway the Maritime Plain of Palestine is but the continuation.

Nor is the north end of the Plain shut in by Carmel, as the view from the sea clearly shows. From the sea the skyline of Carmel, running south-east from the coast

at an angle of 45° , is bow-shaped, drooping from the central height to both ends. At the sea, under the headland, a beach of 200 yards is left; but this, though often used by armies, is not the historical passage round Carmel, which lies at the other, or inland end. There the ridge ceases before the central range of the land is reached. A number of low hills with easy passes through them and one great valley, the valley of Dothan, divide Carmel from the high hills of Samaria. By this division the Maritime Plain easily communicates with the Plain of Esdraelon, and the open road from Egypt is continued all the way to Jordan at Beisan, or to the north end of the Lake of Galilee, and so to Damascus.¹

To this issue of Sharon into Esdraelon, which is hardly ever noticed in manuals of sacred geography, too much attention cannot be paid. Its presence is felt by all the history of the land. No pass had more effect upon the direction of campaigns, the sites of great battles, or the limitation of Israel's actual possessions. We shall more fully see the effects of it when we come to study the plain of Esdraelon. Here it is enough to mention such facts as illustrate the easy access between Esdraelon and Sharon.

¹ The headland of Carmel is some 500 feet above the sea; thence the ridge rises in rather over eleven miles to 1,810 feet; thence drops for eight or nine miles to about 700 feet above the sea. Then come, almost at right angles to Carmel, the series of lower ranges (mostly about 600 feet, but with peaks as high as 1,600 feet) among which the easy passes penetrate from Sharon into Esdraelon. The chief pass is from Kh. es Sumrah to Lejjun (one of the sites favoured for Megiddo), a distance of about twelve miles as the crow flies. The level of Sharon at its eastern margin by the foot of the hills is 200 feet above the sea. Esdraelon at Lejjun is about the same; there are no figures as to the pass between, but it cannot be much higher. The other and more used way from Sharon to Esdraelon by Dothan leaves Sharon much farther to the south and goes up the Wady Abu Nar, afterwards W. el Ghamik and W. el Wesa into Dothan, which is some 650 or 700 feet above the sea. From Dothan the way descends north-east to Jenin in Esdraelon, 517 feet. This road from Sharon to Esdraelon is about seventeen miles, but it is much nearer than the Lejjun route for Beisan and the Jordan Valley, and is no doubt the historical road from Egypt and the Mediterranean coast to the east of the Jordan and Damascus.

In ancient Egyptian documents of travel and invasion,¹ the names Gaza, Joppa, Megiddo, Beth-shan have all been identified, and a journey is recorded which was made in a chariot from Egypt to Bethshan. In the Bible, too, both the Philistines and the Egyptians are frequently represented in Esdraelon. It must surprise the reader of the historical books that Saul and Jonathan should have to come so far north as Gilboa to fight with Philistines, whose border was to the south of them, and that king Josiah should meet the Egyptians at Megiddo. The explanation is afforded by the easy passage from Sharon into Esdraelon. There is no such pass from the Maritime Plain into the Judæan hills, and therefore these southern foes of Israel sought the easier entrance to her centre on the north.

We now see why the Maritime Plain was so famous a war-path. It is really not the whole of Palestine which deserves that name of Bridge between Asia and Africa—it is this level and open coast-land along which the embassies and armies of the two continents passed to and fro, not troubling themselves, unless they were provoked, with the barren and awkward highlands to the east. So Thothmes III., for example, passed north by Megiddo to the Hittite frontier and the Euphrates. So Tiglath Pileser and Shalmaneser and Sargon swept south across Jordan and Esdraelon to the cities of the Philistines without troubling Judah. So Napoleon brought up his legions from Egypt to fight the battle of Tabor on Esdraelon's northern slope. From their hills the Jews could watch all the spectacle of war between them and the sea—the burning villages, the swift, long lines of chariots and cavalry—years before Jerusalem herself was threatened.² When Judas Maccabeus

¹ Like *The Travels of an Egyptian Mohar*, *The Annals of Thothmes III.*, Letters from Egyptian Officials in Syria, found at Tel-el-Amarna.

² Isa. v. 10.

burnt the harbour and ships at Jamnia, *the light of the fire was seen at Jerusalem two hundred and fifty furlongs off.*¹ It was on this plain, by a victory at Ascalon over an Egyptian army, that Godfrey won Jerusalem for the Christians for a hundred years; and during that and the subsequent century the plain, down to the borders of Egypt, was the scene of innumerable conflicts and sieges between the Crusaders and the African Moslems; a more constantly contested part of Syria there was not all that time. But perhaps this garden of the Lord was never so violated and made horrible as when in the spring of 1799 Napoleon brought up his great army from Egypt, and the plague followed them, or when in the heat of summer he retreated to Egypt, burning the towns of the plain and abandoning his sick and wounded.²

Two other facts remain to be stated concerning this first zone of the Holy Land, and its openness to north and south.

It has once and perhaps twice given its name to the whole country. The doubtful instance is Canaan, the certain is Palestine. Canaan means the *low* or *sunken* land, in distinction to *Aram*, the *high* or *lifted* land. It was originally given to the coast-land inhabited by the Phœnicians; whether it applied also to Sharon and Philistia is doubtful. More probably it included the deep depression of the Jordan. It must have applied to one or other of the low countries on either side of the Judæan highlands, for it could scarcely have been extended to these latter from Phœnicia. In the Old Testament Pelesheth is still only the Philistine coast, after which also the sea beyond is called.³ In accurate description of the physical shape of the Maritime Plain, the sacred writers

¹ II. Maccabees xii. 10.

² *Campagnes d'Égypte et de Syrie, 1798-1799. Mémoires pour servir, etc. Dictés par Napoléon lui-même et publiés par le Général Bertrand.* Paris, 1847.

³ Exod. xxiii. 31.

twice call it *the shoulder*.¹ But the Egyptians naturally understood by Philistia not only the little strip of coast, but all the country beyond, and with that meaning the name passed from them to the Greeks. Josephus employs Palestina in both senses,² but most ancient writers use it only of the whole land between Jordan and the sea.³

If this "shoulder" was to foreigners their first step into the Holy Land, it was to the natives of that land in periods of expansion their first step into the world. Little of the history of the Jews was transacted upon it; but as soon as the old dispensation has fallen, the sacred story bursts the barrier of the hills and carries us out on the plain of Sharon. With the apostles and evangelists of Christ we are at Ashdod, Lydda, Jaffa, Cæsarea.

The five cities of the Philistines were Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gath. The site of Gath is alone uncertain, and may best be inferred from a consideration of the other four. Three, Gaza, Ashkelon and Ashdod, are on the coast, but stand off the sea as if they felt that their business was not with her. They are just such sites as immigrants like the Philistines would naturally settle upon, and continue to fortify, for they dominate the level coast road. Like Damascus, Gaza has no advantage of position other than the nearness of its fertile fields to the desert. It is not a strong place, but it is an indispensable one,—a harbour of refuge from the wilderness that stretches away to Egypt and to Arabia, a market

¹ שֵׁבֶט, Josh. xv. 11, *the shoulder of Ekron*, and Isa. xi. 14: *Ephraim and Judah shall fly down on the shoulder of the Philistines on the west.*

² In the original sense *Antiq.* I. 6 § 2, etc.: and in the general sense, *Arch.* 8, 4.

³ Palestina, in the second century, was a province of the Roman empire, with Cæsarea as capital. Later on there were three Palestinas. Palestina I., the coast with the most of Judæa and Samaria. Palestina II., to the east with Scythopolis for capital. Palestina III., or the other side of Jordan to Petra. The Arab "jund" or military canton, Filistin, corresponded to Palestina I.

for the Bedouin as far as the Hijjaz, an outpost and garrison of civilisation.

Far more important in military history has been Ashkelon. The site does not look a historical one, but during the Crusades it was the key to south-western Palestine. The Moslems called it the "Bride of Syria," and the "Summit of Syria."¹ The Egyptians held it long after the Crusaders occupied Jerusalem. It faced the Christian outposts at Ramleh, resisted many assaults, and discharged two expeditions right up to the walls of Jerusalem before it was captured by Baldwin III. in 1154. The scene of two more battles, it was retaken by Saladin in 1187, and dismantled by him four years later when he retired upon Jerusalem. The Christians tried to rebuild the fortress, but then came the truce, one of the articles of which was that Ashkelon should be fortified by neither side, and the place was finally demolished in 1270. This fierce contest and jealousy amply certify the strategical importance of the old Philistine site, which in itself has no other explanation of its history than the presence of sweet water and an open road to Egypt. In David's Lamentation over Saul it is not Gath and Gaza, but Gath and Ashkelon which are taken as the two typical cities. *Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon*: the city was always renowned as "opulent and spacious."²

The importance of Ashdod is explained by its position—on water, and at the mouth of the most broad and fertile wady of Philistia; but the site has not even the slight elevation of Ashkelon, and its appearance in military history is only in the records of its capture.³

With these three coast towns of the Philistine League, we may associate Jabneh or Jamnia with its creek at the

¹ Le Strange: *Palestine under the Moslems*, p. 462.

² *Palestine under the Moslems*—Ashkelon.

³ 2 Chron. xxvi. 8; Isaiah xx.

mouth of the Rubin, famous in the history of the Jews for their frequent captures of it, and for the settlement there of the Jewish Sanhedrim, and a school of rabbinic theology after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Inland from the site of Jamnia lay Ekron (modern 'Akir), which won its place in the league by its possession of an oracle of Beelzebub and by its site on the northern frontier of Philistia in the Vale of Sorek, where a pass breaks through the low hills to Ramleh in Sharon.

Now where was Gath? The site of Gath has been fixed on the eastern edge of the plain, along the beginning of the low hills—by some on the isolated height, Tell-es-Safiyeh, which commands the entrance to the Vale of Elah, and looks across Philistia to the sea, a site so important that Richard I. fortified it, and called it Blanchegarde from its white limestone scarps—by others on the south-eastern angle of the plains in a pass leading north between the Shephelah hills on the east, and a region of cross ridges running down towards Gaza.¹ It is certain that Gath lay inland. The ark when taken to Ashdod was *brought about*, i.e. inland again to Gath; Gath was the Philistine city most frequently retaken by the Israelites; after taking Gath a leader could talk of marching against Jerusalem;² it was rebuilt by Rehoboam as a city of Judah. Gath therefore lay inland. I am quite as sure that it lay on the north of Philistia, and not where Mr. Saunders would put it, on the extreme south. It is mentioned between Ashkelon and Ekron;³ with Ekron,⁴ especially in the pursuit of the Philistines from Elah to Ekron;⁵ and in a raid of the inhabitants of the Vale of Ajalon.⁶ In a raid of Uzziah it is coupled with Jamnia and Ashdod.⁷ All this does not

¹ Trelawney Saunders: *Introduction to Survey of Western Palestine.*

² 2 Kings xii. 17.

³ 1 Sam. v. viii.

⁴ *Ib.* vii. 14.

⁵ *Ib.* xviii.

⁶ 1 Chron. viii. 23.

⁷ 2 Chron. v. 8.

prevent its having been at Tell-es-Safiyeh, a site which agrees with Jerome's data; but I am inclined to place it even farther north. It is significant that the Crusaders reckoned it at Jamnia, but it must have been farther inland.

Such were the famous Five Cities, mothers of those mysterious men, who suddenly break out of the darkness of early history to war against the chosen people of God, and in their light have remained through all ages, types of idolatry, impenetrableness and obscurantism.

In the next paper we shall turn to the debatable ground between the Philistines and Israel—the second of the parallel zones—the Shephelah.

GEORGE ADAM SMITH.

BRIEF NOTICES.

Prof. Rendel Harris' *Codex Bezae, A Study of the so-called Western Text of the New Testament*, is a model of original research and felicitous exposition. It forms the first part of the second volume of the series of *Texts and Studies* edited by Mr. Armitage Robinson, and published by the Cambridge University Press, and it is sufficient of itself to win the amplest recognition and a permanent place for this series. The purpose of Prof. Harris' study is to throw light upon the origin of the Western Text by investigating and tracing to their source the anomalous readings and general affinities of Codex Bezae. He finds that the MS. itself is of Gallican origin. This is proved in a most interesting chapter in which the local pronunciation is shown to have affected the orthography of certain words. As Augustus becomes in French Aôût, Lugdunum Lyons and so forth, so in this remarkable MS. AION is found for AEFIQN, AON for AOFON and other similar traces of Gallican pronunciation. But it is in tracing the text represented in Codex D that Prof. Harris breaks into a new field. He adduces evidence to show that the Latin text of this MS. is genealogically contiguous to the Latin translation of Irenæus, that Tatian used a Latin copy of the gospels and a copy whose text was closely related to the Latin of Codex D, and he makes it