

ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΟΝ ΤΟΥ
ΑΓΙΟΥ ΚΗΡΥΚΟΥ

A few yards N.W. of the Shaykh's dwelling is a fragment of ruin, to all appearance of Crusading date.

An English gentleman, a civil engineer, is now engaged, at his own expense, in making many alterations and improvements in the Bishop's School on Zion. The run of this scarped rock, which he has laid bare in many places, is curious, but one point in his work is especially worth noticing. In the scarp he has found several water channels, some small excavated caves with steps across them, and some cisterns constructed against the face of the rock, which undoubtedly formed part of a system of baths. In confirmation of this idea it is curious to find that this point is called by the natives Hammam Tabariyeh (or Hammam Daoud)—the Baths of Tiberius (or David), the latter name is probably due to the neighbourhood of the so-called Tomb of David. The former name is given by Dr. Schultz in his map, *ed.* 1845.

ON THE SITE OF NOB AND THE HIGH PLACES.

BY LIEUTENANT CONDER, R.E.

THE wanderings of the ark, and the positions of the great religious centres in Palestine previous to the final settlement at Jerusalem, are questions not so easily understood from the Bible accounts as might at first be supposed, and the identification of one principal site connected with this question, namely, the city of the priests, to which David fled from Saul, has remained hitherto a moot point.

After the conquest of the hill country by Joshua, the ark and the tabernacle were removed to Shiloh, where they remained until the disastrous days of the high-priesthood of Eli. It was thence that the defeated Israelites brought the great palladium of their nation to the camp at Eben Ezer. It is not stated whether or not the ark was unprotected by any proper covering or tent, but the general impression produced by the description is, that the tabernacle remained stationary, and the ark only was moved. On the defeat of Israel it was carried to Ashdod (Esdúð), where it was lodged in the house of Dagon, another indication that the ark alone was taken. On the destruction of Dagon's statue, it was sent to Gath (a site yet to be identified), and thence to Ekron ('Akír), in the valley of Soreg (Wady Serár). From Ekron the kine brought it in the cart to Beth Shemesh ('Ain Shemis), and hence the men of Kirjath Jearim (Kariet el 'Anab) fetched it up to their own village, where it rested until the time of David. When finally it was decided to bring the ark to Jerusalem, we find that David went down (2 Sam. vi.) to Baalath of Judah and fetched it from Gibeah. It was then left after the death of the unhappy Uzzah in the house of Obed Edom the Gittite, and from thence finally taken to Jerusalem, where it dwelt "within

curtains" until the consecration of Solomon's temple. Baalath was, as we learn from another passage (Joshua xv.), the same place as Kirjath Jearim, but of the site of the house of Obed Edom we have no indication. The word Gibeah is the "hill" of 1 Sam. vii. 1, the higher part of the village of Kirjath Jearim.

It appears, therefore, that from the time of Eli to that of David the ark was wandering, and separated from the great religious centre of the country. It seems also, from the various accounts of its transport on carts from place to place—no mention being made of the transfer of the sanctuary with it, whilst its temporary lodging was a house or a heathen temple—that the ark was, during that period, separated from the tabernacle, for the history of which we are obliged to seek other indications in the books of Samuel. A passage in the second book of Chronicles is conclusive on this point. Solomon, we learn, went to the "great high place of Gibeon" (1 Kings iii. 4), "for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the Lord made in the wilderness." "*But* the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjath Jearim to the place which David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem" (2 Chron. i. 4).

The indications of places in which the tabernacle was pitched are not numerous. We find Israel gathering to Samuel in Mizpeh, where he sacrificed to God (1 Sam. vii. 9). A high place near the boundary of Benjamin is mentioned soon after as one where Samuel was accustomed to sacrifice, and which seems probably to be the same Mizpeh again mentioned as the rendezvous of the nation demanding a king (1 Sam. x. 17). Mizpeh and Bethel were sacred places before Eli's time, but the pouring out of water "before the Lord," together with its being a place of general assembly for all Israel, seems to place it above the rank of the secondary places of worship at one time considered lawful.

The places chosen as sacred, and for judgment of the people by Samuel, were Gilgal (near Jericho), Bethel (Beitin), and Mizpeh, his home being at Ramah (Er Ram). Mizpeh is mentioned in Joshua (xviii. 26), in connection with Gibeon (El Jib), Ramah (Er Ram), Beeroth (Bireh), Chephivah (Kefireh), all in the hill country of Benjamin). In Nehemiah (iii. 7) it appears with Gibeon, and in Jeremiah it is mentioned in connection with the same town as the stronghold of the Jews.

Vague as these intimations are, it seems more than probable that Mizpeh was at one time the religious capital, that it was near Gibeon, and that probably the tabernacle was there erected on its removal from Shiloh. When, however, we advance to rather a late period, we find that the site of the tabernacle is at Nob. Thus, David fleeing from Saul at Ramah (Er Ram), after his interview with Jonathan and on his way to Gath, comes to Nob, where Ahimelech the priest gives him the shewbread, and inquires for him of God; the ephod also is mentioned, and it seems from the passage clear that the tabernacle was at that time

placed at Nob (1 Sam. xxii.) Of the position of this important place we have but little indication, and it has consequently been placed in a variety of sites. In the book of Joshua it does not appear at all, or at all events not under that name. We find it, however, once more in the great descriptive chapter in Isaiah, where its position is indicated with some exactitude. The host has come to Aiath (El Tell), passed to Migron, laid up its carriages at Michmash (Mukhmas), gone over the passage (Wady Suweinit), and lodged at Geba (Jeba). "As yet," says the prophet, "shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand against . . . the hill of Jerusalem" (Isaiah x. 32). It seems, therefore, that Nob was a place of some military importance, as are the others previously mentioned—that it was within sight of Jerusalem, and in the neighbourhood of the Benjamite cities.

It is at once evident that there is a strong parallelism between the two sites of Nob and Mizpeh, and it is remarkably suggestive that, as shown, the two names never occur in one passage. Mizpeh was a high place, at which apparently the tabernacle was for some time erected, a place of military strength and importance, and situate in the hill country of Benjamin, near Gibeon and Rameh. Nob in like manner was the site of the erection of the tabernacle, a place of military importance, and situate in the hill country of Benjamin, near Rameh and Gebim, which is in all probability Gibeon. When, in addition to this parallelism between the Mizpeh of Samuel and the Nob of David, we find the meaning of the name to be nearly the same—Mizpeh being a watchtower, and Nob a high place—the conclusion seems almost irresistible that the two are but varieties of one name, that of the "great high place."

Bold as it may appear, there is yet room for still further identifying these two sites with the high place of Gibeon mentioned in the time of Solomon. It has been already seen that the tabernacle was for some time at least placed at Gibeon, whilst the ark was in Jerusalem, and unless there be good evidence in favour, it should hardly be assumed that the centre of worship underwent continual and unnecessary change; nor is there anything strained or unnatural in the supposition of their identity, since, as already noted, both Nob and Mizpeh are mentioned in various passages in connection with this important royal town.

The full confirmation of the theory depends, however—(1st) on the further information contained in the Talmud; and (2nd) on certain topographical and philological indications existing at the present time.

The account given in the Mishna with reference to the tabernacle is so interesting that it may well be given here in full. It is to be found in the 14th of Zebahim, and may be translated as follows:—

§ 4. "Before the tabernacle was erected high places were lawful after the tabernacle was erected high places were not lawful."

§ 5. "When they came to Gilgal, and the high places were lawful,

the most holy things were eaten within the enclosure, the less holy anywhere."

Maimonides comments on this, quoting Levit. xvii. 3, and explains that there was no permanent structure at Gilgal, but merely the original tabernacle.

§ 6. "When they came to Shiloh, the high places began to be unlawful; but there was no roof there, but a lower structure of stone and an upper tent. And it was a place of rest. Then the most holy things were eaten only within the enclosure, but the less holy and the second tithes wherever the house was visible."

Maimonides says this building was called either "the house" or "the tabernacle;" quoting 1 Sam. i. 24, "the house of the Lord in Shiloh," and Psalm lxxviii. 60, "the tabernacle of Shiloh." As the structure was semi-permanent, he explains, high places were unlawful.

§ 7. "When they came to Nob and Gibeon, the high places were allowed, but they used to eat the most holy things within the enclosure, and the less holy in all the cities of Israel."

Maimonides explains as follows:—

"After the sanctuary erected in Shiloh was destroyed for our sins, they erected the tabernacle which used to be in the desert in Nob, and transferred it to Gibeon, and it was in Nob and Gibeon fifty-seven years. Meantime it was lawful to sacrifice in the high places, for Shiloh was the place of rest and Jerusalem the heritage (as mentioned Deut. xii. 9, "the rest and the inheritance"). He then explains that during the time of rest the high places were temporarily disallowed, but on the establishment of the inheritance they became unlawful for ever, as is also stated in the next verse of the Mishna.

§ 8. "When they came to Jerusalem the high places were prohibited, nor were they ever again lawful. For this was the heritage . . ."

Maimonides and Bartenora both explain precisely that the Divine Majesty abode in Shiloh 369 years; that in Saul's time the site was changed to Nob, and taking Nob and Gibeon together, it remained there fifty-seven years, or until the time of the building of Solomon's temple.

This interesting and exact account fully bears out, as will be seen, the conclusions already deduced from the Bible records. The first period at Gilgal was but a temporary pitching of the tabernacle of the wilderness. The establishment at Shiloh for more than three and a half centuries was a structure of a more permanent character, intended to last only until Jerusalem came into the hands of the Jews by the defeat of the Jebusites, after which the first natural thought of David was to establish permanently the sacred service in the holy city of inheritance. But with the disastrous times of Eli came the great shock of separation between the ark and the tabernacle. The established place of sacrifice at Nob, where the mercy-seat was never present, and where only the desert tabernacle was erected, was felt to be but a temporary arrangement, and the same laws which held good for the wanderers of the

wilderness were resumed. Finally, it must be remarked that the natural interpretation of the account is that Nob and Gibeon were close together, or the removal from one place to another would have constituted a period as distinct as the others mentioned by the Mishna. The word Mizpeh is not used in this passage of the Talmud, and we are therefore led to the conclusion that if Mizpeh were the site of the erection of the tabernacle it must be identical with Nob or Gibeon.

Enough, then, is found to lead to the conclusion that only four sites have to be considered as being at various times the religious centres—Gilgal, Shiloh, the high place (or Nob) of Gibeon, and Jerusalem itself. At the first we should not now expect to find any traces of the site of the tabernacle, though the sand mounds at Birket Jiljulieh, which I mentioned in the report on the establishment of the probable site of Gilgal, may by some be supposed to have some connection with this account. At Shiloh, however, we naturally expect to see traces of the more permanent structure erected, and there can be little doubt that they exist, as already pointed out by Major Wilson, who says,—

“Northward the Tell (at Seilún or Shiloh) slopes down to a broad shoulder, across which a sort of level court, 77 feet wide and 412 long, has been cut. The rock is in places scarped to a height of 5 feet . . . there is no other level space on the Tell sufficiently large to receive a tent of the dimensions of the tabernacle.”—*Quarterly Statement*, Jan., 1873, p. 38.

The tradition of the tabernacle is no doubt recognisable in the unusual title of the principal mosque at Seilún, Jami'a ed Daim (mosque of the Eternal).

The interest attaching to the third site is equal to either of the former.

Dean Stanley has shown that the site of the high place of Gibeon is indisputable, but the position of Nob is not settled in the same satisfactory manner. The simple examination of the original Hebrew leads, however, to an irresistible conclusion, and allows us to reconcile his identification with that commonly given for Mizpeh, and also to fix that of Nob. The Hebrew word Nob, or Neb, contains no vowel, and there is therefore no philological difficulty in connecting it with the Arabic Nebi. We have here the common process of change of meaning which has preserved so many Hebrew names with scarce an alteration beyond that necessary to give them an intelligible meaning in Arabic. As instances, Timnath converted into Tibneh, “strawy;” Sycaminum into Tell el Semak (mound of the fish); and a host of similar cases may be mentioned. Neb having no meaning of “high” in Arabic, is converted into Neby, “a prophet;” and as tradition naturally grows more detailed, so the name of a particular prophet of one who was most intimately connected with the place in question is added, and the Hebrew Nob reappears in the modern unusual title of Nebi Samwil.

The site in question fulfils in a remarkable manner the requisites already explained. As in the case of the Altar of Ed, we here again deal with one of the most remarkable sites in the country. Nebi Samwil is

so close to Gibeon that there can be no doubt as to its being the high place visited by Solomon. It is within sight of Jerusalem, and not far from Michmash and Geba, whilst as a military point it is of the greatest importance. Thus the description of Isaiah applies exactly, and it is, moreover, directly on the way of David's journey from Ramah to Gath. Thus, as Dean Stanley remarks, by its close connection with the most interesting period of Jewish history, "a significance is given to what would otherwise have been a blank and nameless feature in a region where all the less conspicuous hills are distinguished by some historical name."

As generally happens in Palestine, the site still retains its original character. A great high place in Jewish time, it was the site of a beautiful church built by the Crusaders, and this in turn has become a mosque whose minaret is visible from great distances in every direction. The view from Nebi Samwil is splendid, and its steep sides form a picturesque detail, contrasting with the rounder outlines of the Judæan and Benjamite summits.

In a report written during last winter (*Quarterly Statement*, April, 1874), I noticed the curious rock-cut approach to the great church, which we were at the time inclined to attribute to Crusading date; it does not, however, show any very distinctive marks of date, and may very well be older. It is true that no permanent structure was erected at Nob, but a flat court of some kind would be necessary for the outer enclosure; and when we reflect on the discovery by Major Wilson of a similar courtyard at Shiloh, it seems very probable that this cutting was originally intended for the accommodation of the tabernacle. A very curious narrow passage conducts to it; outside are pools carefully hewn; and a great birket, with an aqueduct channel and a number of rock-cut chambers, are found lower down the hill. The plan of the top of the hill we have taken very carefully, though not at the time aware of its probable importance, and thus all the traces indicative of the tabernacle have been properly noted and preserved.

The outcome of the preceding pages amounts, therefore, to this—that at Nebi Samwil we find Nob the high place of Gibeon, and probably, though it is not possible to assert this definitely, the Mizpeh of Samuel, and that traces of the exterior court of the tabernacle in this great high place are yet discoverable on the summit of the hill.

Before leaving this interesting subject, a few words may in conclusion be said as to the high places mentioned in the passage quoted from the Talmud, and of which traces are yet visible in Palestine.

The land, on the invasion by the children of Israel, was full of sites of pagan worship, and we find a special command given (Deut. xii. 2) to destroy all the places of the false gods "upon the high mountains and upon the hills and under every green tree." This tradition of worship was, however, never completely eradicated, and to the present day it is a remarkable feature in Palestine that almost every important hill-top is the seat of a white mazar or tomb-house, a sacred place of prayer,

generally shaded by a great tree, and often no doubt preserving the site of a pagan altar. Every green tree in similar manner is in the more barren part of the hill country held sacred; rags and threads hang from its branches as votive offerings, and the name of a saint or prophet is often connected with the spot.

There are, however, allusions in the Bible to "high places" which do not seem directly connected with idolatrous worship. Thus, in the time of Solomon's accession, "the people sacrificed in high places because there was no house built unto the name of the Lord until those days." Asa, again, though irreproachable in his religious conduct, did not remove the high places, and in the time of Jehoshaphat "the people offered and burnt incense in the high place" (1 Kings xv. 14, and xxii. 43). Still later we find the Cutheans mentioned as fearing the Lord and making priests of the high places.

The Talmudical comments explain how it came to be merely a venial offence that these high places were not removed. Until the building of the temple they had been at alternate periods lawful places of worship and unlawful. On the establishment of the kingdom at Jerusalem they became for ever unlawful, and the danger of their leading to a local perversion of the purity of the religion rendered their destruction of the greatest importance. Their use had, however, become a habit of the people, and was not so easily abolished as would have been the case had Jerusalem fallen in the first attack on the country. The foreseen consequence came quickly, and the worship of golden calves symbolical of Jehovah in the high places made by Jeroboam (1 Kings xii. 32) led soon to the adoption of the original idolatry of the indigenous population with all its paraphernalia of groves, teraphs, images, and pillars.

The site chosen by Jeroboam gives a most remarkable confirmation of this view, for one of the calves was erected in Bethel, a place specially sacred to the true God since the time of Jacob, and one of the three visited yearly by Samuel at a period of the history when, as shown by the Talmud, high places were still lawful.

During our Survey we have met with two sites which seem undoubtedly to bear traces of this worship in high places, but which have been scarce mentioned in our former reports.

The first is situate at Jebel Bir Asúr, on the range north of Samaria; here on the highest point of the shed is a great square structure, some ten feet high, of roughly-hewn blocks. It is evidently of great antiquity, and the size of the stones precludes the possibility of its being erected by the shepherds. It served us instead of a rijn for a trigonometrical point, and we whitewashed it most irreverently. A well exists near, and on the same ridge are no less than three saint-houses all overshadowed with large trees.

The second site of the kind is mentioned in a report of Mr. Drake's. I made a plan of it and careful notes. It is close to the small temple of Abu 'Amr, west of the Plain of Esdraelon. The soil is soft and

marly, and a deep pit has been roughly hewn and still holds water—a narrow flight of steps leads down to it. Immediately above is a solid mass of masonry, the stones of great size and roughly hewn; two or three fine oaks overshadow it; it measures 35ft. by 30ft., and is some 6ft. to 8ft. high. Close by is the tomb-house of Sheikh Selámeh, and a little farther on the same hill is the Roman temple. There is no reason to doubt that we here find an instance of the altars erected “under every green tree.”

In concluding this paper I would remark that there are two methods of studying the subject of identification. The one natural in England is the literary comparison of various passages leading to conclusions which it is sought to verify by aid of the map. In Palestine the process is naturally reversed. The prominent points in the landscape arrest the eye, and the interest of connecting them with Scripture history is far greater than that of the study of obscure Hebrew names. The prosecution of this method must naturally lead to discoveries of the greatest interest, and among these may be mentioned those made lately during the prosecution of the Survey, of which a list is given below.

1. Kh. Semmakah (Ecbatana, a Roman town on Carmel).
2. Kh. Deir Serúr (Sozuza, an early Christian episcopal town).
3. Keráwa (Archelais, a site not as yet described).
4. Tell el Semak (Sycaminum—according to Mr. Drake).
5. Eshu'a (Eshtaol—with the probable tomb of Samson).
6. Jiljúlíeh (Gilgal—a confirmation of former discovery).
7. Wady Suweinit (the Senneh of Jonathan, with the site of Philistine camp).
8. 'Ain Zahrah (Zereth or Zerthan, mentioned in Gideon's history).
9. Tubás (probably the Tabbath of the same passage).
10. 'Ash el Ghoráb (Rock Oreb of the same account).
11. Tuweil el Dhiab (winepress of Zeeb in the same connection).
12. Kurn Surtabeh (the altar of Ed, Josh. 22).
13. Beit 'Atab (Rock Etam of Samson, as suggested by Sergeant Black).
14. Nebi Samwil (the high place of Gibeon and city of Nob).

CLAUDE R. CONDER, Lieutenant R.E.

THE SCENERY OF DAVID'S OUTLAW LIFE.

BY LIEUTENANT CONDER, R.E.

THE extension of the Survey in the hill country of Judah has now enabled us to explain the wanderings of David in his outlaw life, during the latter period of the reign of Saul; a story which, in its romantic incidents, yields in interest to none of the many adventurous histories of the Old Testament. Four new identifications may now be published with a great degree of confidence, and the thorough examination of