

GOLGOTHA AND THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

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(Continued from p. 293.)

THE advocates of the view that the sites now shown as Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre are authentic support their opinion by the following arguments :—

1. It is obvious from the Bible narrative that the positions of Golgotha and the Tomb were known to the friends and enemies of Jesus who were at Jerusalem at the time of the Crucifixion, and it is certain that many of those persons were alive when, ten years later, Herod Agrippa (A.D. 42–44) built the *third* or outer wall of defence on the north side of the city.

2. The construction of Agrippa's wall brought the two sites within the limits of the walled city, but, as the Jews regarded tombs¹ as unclean, no houses were built above them. Moreover, the existence of buildings in such close proximity to the *second* wall would have been prejudicial to its defence, and their erection would not have been permitted. The holy places thus remained bare and unoccupied, and could not have been forgotten before the city was besieged by Titus.

3. In obedience to the warning of Jesus (Matt. xxiv, 15, 16) the members of the Christian community fled from Jerusalem (*circa* 67–68) before the siege commenced, and established themselves at Pella. When Titus, whose destruction of the city was not complete, left for Rome most of the Christians returned, and settled down amongst the ruins, after having been absent three or four years. The altitude of the holy places being slightly greater than that of the ground upon which the *second* wall stood, and their distance from the third wall being appreciable, they could not have been materially altered in appearance during the progress of the siege. Even supposing that they had been covered by one of the mounds of the besiegers, the sites would not have been lost. The Christians during their short absence could not have completely forgotten the

¹ Golgotha being the reputed tomb of Adam.

exact positions of places so intimately connected with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Many of them, men and women, had passed their lives at Jerusalem; some had probably witnessed the Crucifixion; and one, at least, Simeon, son of Clopas, a cousin of the Lord's, suffered martyrdom in the reign of Trajan, *circ.* A.D. 108, at the reputed age of 120 years. Further, the unaltered nature of the ground after the siege is indicated by the circumstance that Hadrian, when he erected a Temple of Venus on the spot, *circ.* 135-136, carried out no demolition, and removed no rubbish, but was obliged to fill up hollows, and obtain a level platform by bringing the necessary material from a distance.

4. Nothing is known to have occurred during the interval that elapsed between the return from Pella and the suppression of the revolt of the Jews in the reign of Hadrian, which would justify the belief that all trace of the holy places had been obliterated, or that the Christians, whose numbers were steadily increasing, had forgotten their position. Simeon, son of Clopas, a contemporary of the death and resurrection of Jesus, who succeeded the Apostle James as Bishop of Jerusalem, lived to the first decade of the second century, and he was followed by 13 bishops of Hebrew origin, who would not have allowed a knowledge of the position of the holy places to die out.

5. The tradition with regard to the positions of Golgotha and the Tomb was thus continuous from the date of the Crucifixion to the time when Hadrian founded the Roman colony of *Ælia* on the ruins of Jerusalem, and a temple of Venus was built above the Sepulchre of Christ. By the erection of the temple,—an act of profanation which in itself shows that the two places were then honoured by Christians,—the holy places were completely concealed, but their position was definitely marked for all time, and they were preserved from injury.

6. After the foundation of *Ælia* the city was visited by pilgrims from all parts of the world, and it became a matter of common knowledge that the holy places lay beneath the paved platform upon which the temple of Venus stood. When, therefore, Constantine decided to recover the sites, and build churches in their honour, it was only necessary to demolish the temple and clear away the made ground beneath it. Eusebius, a contemporary, expresses no surprise at the recovery of the sites in his account of the circumstance: his remark (*Vit. Const.*, iii, 28) that “contrary

to all expectation" the "venerable and hallowed monument of Our Lord's resurrection" was rendered visible by the clearance of the superincumbent soil, is a natural expression of astonishment at the preservation of the Tomb during so many years, and has no reference to a miraculous discovery.

It will be observed that the above arguments involve the assumption that Golgotha and the Tomb were objects of reverence, or at least of interest to the Christians from the date of the Resurrection to the time of Constantine; that the tradition with regard to their position was continuous throughout that period; and that the ground now occupied by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was outside the *second* wall. This assumption raises three questions, each of which requires separate discussion—the possibility, or otherwise, of a continuous tradition; the attitude of the early Christians towards the holy places; and the course of the second wall. The last question is in the main topographical and archæological, the first two are for the most part historical, and it is necessary to inquire what light is thrown upon them by the history of Jerusalem and its Church during the period A.D. 33–326, so far as it is known.

The Possibility or otherwise of a continuous tradition.

1. In A.D. 41 Herod Agrippa I was appointed by the Emperor Claudius king of the territory over which Herod the Great had reigned, and during his reign the *third* or outer wall of defence was commenced (Jos. *B.J.*, v, 4, § 2). Its course is not certainly known, but there can be no doubt that the traditional sites of Golgotha and the Tomb were enclosed by it. Those sites evidently formed part of an ancient Jewish cemetery, and there is every reason to believe that, in view of the state of Jewish feeling at that period, they were not utilised for building purposes.

On the death of Herod the government was resumed by Rome, and Cuspius Fadus was appointed procurator. He was followed by a succession of governors whose mal-administration and cruelty gave rise to the disorders and popular tumults¹ that culminated in the war with Rome and the destruction of Jerusalem. The

¹ The Christians must have suffered as much as the Jews from the brutality of the governors, but Christianity played no part in the disorders and tumults.

war broke out in A.D. 66, and, during its progress,¹ some time before the commencement of the siege of Jerusalem (April, 70), the Christians fled to Pella, a city of Decapolis with a mixed population in which the Greek element preponderated. Only 35 years had elapsed since the Crucifixion, and it seems certain that several of the refugees, and possible that every Christian of mature age, knew the positions of Golgotha and the Tomb.

2. Whilst the Christians were at Pella, Jerusalem was taken by Titus (August, 70), who is said to have ordered its complete destruction, with the exception of the three great towers connected with Herod's palace and a portion of the west wall (Jos., *B.J.*, vii, 1, § 1). How far this order was carried out is uncertain. Josephus writes as if all the walls and houses, with the exception mentioned, were razed to the ground (*B.J.* vi, 9, §§ 1, 4; vii, 1, § 1); but Eusebius is perhaps nearer the truth when he states² that only half the city was destroyed. Those portions of the city which lay north of the first wall, and those which lay on the eastern spur, Mount Moriah, and in the Tyropœon Valley, were the scene of much street fighting, and must have been practically destroyed during the progress of the siege. But the "Upper City," on the western spur, was not carried by assault. The Romans entered without striking a blow, and though the place was sacked and fired by the soldiers (*B.J.*, vi, 8, §§ 4, 5) many houses must have remained intact. The military requirements of the Roman garrison probably necessitated much demolition; but there is no evidence that a plough was passed over the ruins, or that Titus ever intended that the city should never be rebuilt.

After the capture of the capital, Judæa became an independent province, which was occupied by one legion, the celebrated Legio X Fretensis, and a body of "auxiliary troops of foreign origin drawn in part from the farthest lands of the west." The legion was quartered in the north-west corner of the "Upper City," and, until the reign of Hadrian, Jerusalem was neither a colony nor a *municipium*, but a Roman camp. During this period (A.D. 70-116) there was no attempt at reconstruction, and no large buildings were erected. The walls of the fortifications, of the palaces, and of

¹ Probably during the winter of 67-68, soon after the arrival in Jerusalem of John of Gischala (Nov., 67); cf. Matt. xxiv, 20, "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter."

² *Dem. Ev.*, vi, 18.

the houses lay as they had been left by Titus. A few heaps of ruins may have been overgrown by rank vegetation ; but there was nothing to prevent anyone who had known the city before the siege from recognising any particular spot or street within the walls. The physical features underwent no change ; but here and there they may have been concealed by the *débris* of the city.

The camp¹ was protected on the north and west by Herod's towers and portions of the *first* wall ; but of its limits on the south and east, and of its defences on those sides nothing is known. The garrison must have consisted, at first, of the whole or the greater part of the tenth legion, with a due proportion of auxiliaries, forming together a force of about 6,000 or 7,000 men. By the side of this force, but living apart from it in separate quarters, there must have been a large miscellaneous population, possibly amounting to 3,000 or 4,000, which consisted of the wives and families of married officers and men, camp followers, merchants, small traders, and others, who were attracted by the presence of a large permanent garrison. The total military and civil population a few years after the siege would thus be from 8,000 to 10,000. The quarter of the city inhabited by the latter is unknown, but it was probably that part of the "Upper City" which was not occupied by the legion—a broad space being left between the fortifications of the camp and the nearest houses. Here would be allowed to dwell those poverty-stricken Jews who had not been deported or sold by Titus, and those who had not compromised themselves by taking part in the war.² And here, too, amidst soldiers and civilians drawn from all parts of the known world, the Christians probably settled down on their return from Pella, making many converts and worshipping in a small building³ which, in happier times, was to become the "Mother Church of Zion," the "mother of all the Churches." The

¹ The camp would be a *castra stativa*, round which, according to Roman custom, peaceful natives and Roman and foreign merchants would settle down outside the fortifications.

² After the complete suppression of the rebellion, the Jews were not unkindly treated, possibly owing to the fact that Judæa had become Imperial property and to the relations between Titus and Berenike. No attempt was made to interfere with the great Rabbinical school at Jamnia, and no edict was issued forbidding Jews to visit or reside in Jerusalem.

³ According to Epiphanius (*De Mens. et Pond.*, xv), there was a church on Mount Zion in Hadrian's time, on the spot where the disciples partook of the Supper after the Ascension.

fact of the return from Pella is undoubted, the date is unknown. Dr. Robinson, following Münter,¹ places it after the suppression of the revolt in Hadrian's reign, and the foundation of Ælia (*B.R.* i, p. 371, edition of 1856). Renan considers it most probable that part of the Church returned after the complete pacification of Judæa (*circa* A.D. 73), but that the date may possibly have been as late as A.D. 122, when, according to him, Hadrian decided to rebuild Jerusalem as Ælia (*Les Évangiles*, pp. 39, 56). The earlier date would seem the more probable and the more natural. There was nothing in the political condition of the country to prevent the return, and the Christians would hardly have neglected such a favourable field for missionary enterprise as that presented by the camp and its entourage. Assuming that a small Christian community, with Simeon as Bishop, settled down amidst the ruins of the city about A.D. 72-75, the absence would have been at most seven years—a period far too short to blot out all remembrance of the positions of Golgotha and the Tomb. Even supposing that the Jerusalem Church did not exist, as a body, until 122, it is impossible to believe that the city was never visited between A.D. 72 and 122 by individual Christians who were well acquainted with the holy places, and fully capable, had they so wished, of imparting their knowledge to others, and so perpetuating the tradition.² On the whole, it seems to be a fair conclusion that the circumstances connected with the siege and with the residence of the Christians at Pella were not such as would have rendered a continuous tradition with regard to Golgotha and the Tomb, either amongst the Jews or the Christians, impossible.

3. After the capture of Jerusalem, every Jew over 20 years of age who wished to retain his religion was compelled to pay to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus at Rome the tax of two drachmæ (half a shekel), which formerly had been paid to the Temple of the Lord. The annual collection of this tax, rendered intolerable by the coins, bearing the head of the emperor, with which it was paid, must have kept alive a deep feeling of resentment amongst the Jews. Some alleviation, possibly in the method of collection, was granted by Nerva, but the country seems to have remained in an unsettled

¹ In Robinson's *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1843, p. 448.

² The quotation of Eusebius from Hegesippus (*H.E.*, ii, 23), that the "monument" (*ἡ στήλη*) of James "still remains by the Temple," implies a knowledge of Jerusalem after the siege by the Christians.

state throughout the reign of Trajan. Some minor outbreaks were suppressed, and order was completely restored in the first year of Hadrian, A.D. 117. The Jews subsequently remained quiet until 132, when they broke out in open revolt, under the leadership of Bar Koziba (Cozeba), or Bar Kokba (Cocheba).¹

According to Dio Cassius (LXIX, 12), the cause of the rebellion was Hadrian's decision to rebuild Jerusalem as a heathen city, and to erect a temple of Jupiter Capitolinus on the site of the Jewish Temple. Spartianus, on the other hand (*in Hadr.*, c. 14), gives as the reason the issue of Hadrian's edict forbidding the practice of circumcision. Eusebius says (*H.E.* iv, 6) that the colony was established after the suppression of the insurrection. This statement may be reconciled with that of Dio Cassius by supposing that the founding of the colony was interrupted by the revolt, and completed after its suppression. Hadrian was a great builder and restorer of cities: he had seen the ruins of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the old capital of the Jews to its former magnificence may well have appealed to his imagination.

The insurgent Jews, animated by the belief that the Messiah had appeared in the person of Bar Koziba,² at first carried everything before them. Jerusalem was taken, and 50 fortified places and 955 open towns and villages are said to have fallen into their hands. Coins were struck,³ and an attempt was made to rebuild the Temple.⁴ Little is known of the incidents connected with the

¹ The name probably comes from the town of Chezib, or Chozeba. Bar Kokba, "son of a star," which appears in Christian writers, has reference to Balaam's prophecy in Num. xxiv, 17. For the Jewish traditions see *Jewish Encyclopædia*, Art. "Bar Kokba."

² The destruction of the Temple, and consequent cessation of the sacrifices, gave fresh strength to the Messianic hope of the Jews, whose aspirations, partly political, were of sufficient importance to attract the notice of the emperors.

³ Madden (*The Coins of the Jews*), describes coins of Vespasian, Domitian, and Trajan, which are super-struck on the obverse with the name *Simon* and some device such as a wreath, a cluster of grapes, a tetrastyle temple, &c., and on the reverse with the legend, *the deliverance of Jerusalem*. There are also coins of Vespasian and Trajan which are super-struck with the legend, *second year of the deliverance of Israel*.

⁴ The attempt to rebuild the Temple may be inferred from Chrysostom (*Orat. Adv. Judæos*, v. 10, Migne, Pat. Gr., xlviii, col. 899); *Chron. Pasch.*, 119 (Migne, xcii, col. 613); G. Cedrenus (*Hist. Comp.*, Migne, cxxi, col. 477); and Niceph. Callistus (*H.E.*, iii, 24, Migne, cxlv, col. 944). According to Jewish tradition, Hadrian granted the Jews permission to rebuild the Temple,

progress of the war,¹ and the capture and recapture of Jerusalem are nowhere described. Tineius Rufus,² the procurator, and Marcellus, the governor of Syria, who was sent to his assistance, were unable to quell the rising, and it was not until the arrival of Severus from Britain, in 135, that the war was brought to a close by the capture of Bether (*Bittir*), after it had lasted three and a half years. The date of the recapture³ of Jerusalem is uncertain, but the city would appear, from the coins, to have been in the hands of the Jews for more than a year. According to the Mishna (*Taanith* iv, 6), Jerusalem was levelled down with the plough; but according to Maimonides and Jerome the plough was only passed over the site of the Temple.⁴

The position of the Church at Jerusalem, and the attitude of the governors towards it and towards the Judæo-Christians, are obscure. When the Church re-formed round Simeon it had lost its pre-eminence. Christianity had passed beyond Judaism and entered a wider field; but those Christians who had carried with them to Pella an unabated reverence for the Law, apparently returned unchanged. Titus, at the time of the siege, seems to have regarded the Christians as a Jewish sect, and at first the governors, probably, saw little difference between the Judæo-Christian and the outcast Jew. Simeon and the bishops who succeeded him were of the circumcision,⁵ and it was only gradually

but withdrew it, after work had been commenced, in consequence of the representations of the Samaritans (*Jewish Encyc., l.c.*).

¹ Jewish tradition relates that the Romans fought 52 battles, not always with success.

² Called Tinnius Rufus by Syncellus; Tynius Rufus (*Chron.*), Timus Rufus (*in Dan. ix*), and Titus Annius Rufus (*in Zach. viii*) by Jerome; and Turnus Rufus and Tyrannus Rufus by the Rabbis.

³ The fact of the recapture of Jerusalem is stated by Appian (*De Reb. Syr.*, 1) and the Samaritan Book of Joshua. It may also be inferred from Eusebius (*Dem. Ev.*, vi, 18), Chrysostom (*Orat. v, Adv. Judæos*), Jerome (*in Hab. ii, in Ezek. v, 1*), the *Paschal Chronicle*, &c.

⁴ Maim., as quoted by Münter; Jerome, *in Zach. viii*. If the plough had been passed over Jerusalem, Hadrian could not have rebuilt the city. The tradition may refer either to the ceremony of initiation when a new city was founded (*see* Schürer, *H.J.P.*, p. 308), or to the exauguration of the site of the Temple, as an intimation to the Jews that no emperor would ever permit their place of worship to be rebuilt.

⁵ There seems no reason to doubt the succession of Judæo-Christian bishops as given by Eusebius (*H.E.* iv, 5), on the authority of writings (*ἱεὶ ἐγγράφων*).

that all attempt to conform to the Mosaic Law was abandoned. The alienation from Judaism became complete when Bar Koziba was openly received as the Messiah. The Christians, who were expecting the second coming of Christ, could take no part in a movement of which the Messianic character was so pronounced. They were consequently persecuted with peculiar violence by the insurgent Jews (Just. Mart., *Apol.* i, 31; Eusebius, *H.E.* iv, 6). During the period A.D. 73–135 there appears to have been no formal law forbidding Christianity, and no express edict ordering its suppression. The only event that need be noticed is the martyrdom of Simeon, who was put to death because, as a relation of Christ, he was regarded as a descendant of David and one of the royal race.

It would appear from the above that nothing occurred prior to the rebellion which would render the transmission of a tradition, brought back from Pella, impossible; and it cannot be supposed that every Christian, of Jewish or Gentile descent, who knew the positions of Golgotha and the Tomb, perished during the revolt.

N.B.—It has been pointed out to me that the statement on pp. 290, 291, that according to the Bible "Christ was crucified in a garden," is not strictly accurate. This is nowhere distinctly stated. John records (xix, 17) that the place (*ὁ τόπος*) where He was crucified was called Golgotha, and that in the place (*ἐν τῷ τόπῳ*) where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a tomb. This may mean that the garden was a comparatively small enclosure¹ within the larger area of the *τόπος* called Golgotha. The view which I have taken is that the crosses were erected on one of the terraced gardens or orchards in the vicinity of the city, and that the garden was a part of the terrace close to the spot called Golgotha.

(To be continued.)

¹ An enclosed garden (*κῆπος κεκλεισμένος*) is mentioned in the Song of Solomon, iv, 12. The word Golgotha is used by some early writers to denote the actual spot on which the cross was erected, and a larger area round that spot, including the place where the crosses were found.