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## I. LITERARY.

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### DR. LATIMER AS KNOWN BY UNION SEMINARY STUDENTS.

PROFESSOR T. C. JOHNSON.

OUR Seminary has sustained a great loss in the death of Dr. James Fair Latimer. His long illness terminated mortally March 31st. This fact will have ceased to be news to the general public long before this page reaches the reader's eye. And our religious weeklies, as well as daily papers, will have given accounts of the important events in Dr. Latimer's life, as well as various characterizations of him.

Accordingly, we confine ourselves to what *we* saw in the man, as a teacher, as a preacher, as a friend of students, as a member of the community, in his family, and as a man with a life to live for God and man.

In what we shall say of him regarded in these several particulars, we shall try to avoid exaggeration of Dr. Latimer's excellences on the one hand, and failure of appreciation on the other. We shall speak as far as possible, not simply out of the experience of one student, but of many, and those not of any one class, but of five or six classes.

1. *As a teacher* Dr. Latimer was remarkable for power to enthuse the student with love to the branch of study which he taught, for sympathetic adaptability to the individual student's standing-point and ready appreciation of the student's difficulties, for both breadth and depth of acquaintance with the subjects which he treated, for the confidence which he inspired in

## PALESTINE AND THE BIBLE.

PROFESSOR W. W. MOORE.

THE Jew is the miracle of History. The land of the Jew is the marvel of Geography. Palestine is absolutely unique in its location, its structure, and its historical interest. No other country in the world can even dispute this pre-eminence. Other portions of the globe have, indeed, their peculiar claims upon the interest both of explorers for science and of tourists for pleasure. But the chief interest of mankind centers not at the frozen pole, with all its fascination of mystery, nor in the blooming tropics, with their perpetual beauty of summer, nor even in those historic lands of the temperate zone where the genius of man has achieved its most splendid triumphs in government, in letters, and in art, not in the classic soil of Greece, or Italy, or Egypt, but in a narrow and homely strip of mountain land which lies at the eastern end of the Mediterranean sea, whose soil is strewn with ruins, and whose people have groaned for ages under alien oppression.

It is generally recognized that a knowledge of the physical features of this land has for students of Scripture a three-fold value—for Illustration, for Explanation, and for Confirmation :

I. By the value of a knowledge of Sacred Geography for illustration we mean that, as "the history of Israel was fashioned to be typical of the history of redemption," so the scenes of that history have acquired a spiritual significance and are associated the world over with the various phases of Christian experience. Egypt, the Land of Bondage ; Sinai, the Land of Training ; and Canaan, the Land of Promise, are typical to all men of slavery to sin, of the disciplinary journey of life, and of the heavenly inheritance of God's people. Therefore the local features of these lands "have naturally become the household imagery of Christendom," have greatly enriched our religious nomenclature, and have deeply colored our sacred songs. Take for example a single familiar hymn, and observe the constant reference to the incidents of Israel's journey from Egypt to Palestine—the sterile wilderness, the daily

provision of manna, the miraculous supply of water, the pillar of cloud and of fire, the crossing of the Jordan, and the arrival in Canaan :

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,  
 Pilgrim through this barren land;  
 I am weak, but Thou art mighty,  
 Hold me with Thy powerful hand;  
     Bread of heaven,  
 Feed me, till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,  
 Whence the healing streams do flow:  
 Let the fiery, cloudy pillar  
 Lead me all my journey through;  
     Strong Deliverer,  
 Be Thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
 Bid my anxious fears subside;  
 Death of death, and hell's destruction,  
 Land me safe on Canaan's side;  
     Songs of praises  
 I will ever give to Thee.

Some knowledge of Bible lands is so obviously necessary to the understanding of such figures and phrases scattered throughout Christian literature, that, except for the sake of completeness, it would have been unnecessary even to mention this use of sacred Geography.

II. But, besides this value for the Illustration of Christian experience, it has another use scarcely less familiar, viz., the Explanation of the Holy Scriptures. The Bible, like every other genuine book, reflects the character of the country in which it was written and the customs of the people among whom it arose. Therefore to learn the land and life of Palestine, is to apprehend the whole setting of revealed truth, and to appreciate the force of a multitude of metaphors and allusions which would otherwise be without meaning.

How shall we appreciate the faith exercised by Israel in the conquest of Canaan, unless we remember not only that without boats or bridges they were commanded to cross a swift and swollen stream which was then overflowing all its banks, not only that they were commanded to capture an apparently impregnable city without any of the usual appliances for storming such fortifications, but also, that after the fall of Jericho

they were still in a position of great peril, having gained only a narrow strip of indefensible plain, and being confronted on the West with a sheer wall of rock twelve hundred feet high, a veritable Gibraltar, held by their enemies? This mighty rampart of rock is here and there cleft to its base by wild ravines, through which alone the interior was accessible. So that, humanly speaking, the conquest of these uplands was still an impossibility. The task was one which made a heavy demand upon their faith in the Almighty.

How shall we understand that battle of the Gods on Carmel, where Elijah stood single-handed for Jehovah against the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal, unless we remember that this central mountain afforded to the multitudes who that day thronged its sides and summit, a two-fold view which made it the fittest of all stages for such a drama? "As they look westward and northward," says Dr. Stuart Robinson, "they see the Mediterranean dotted with the merchant ships of Tyre and Sidon, outward or inward bound, with the riches of the world; and Tyre and Sidon in all their glory—the grand strongholds of Baal. As they look eastward and southward, yonder may be descried, far off, the Sea of Gallilee, gleaming in the morning sun; and as the eye sweeps round to the southward, the Plain of Jezreel, and Mount Tabor shooting up out of it; and, southward still, Ramoth Gilead, and Mount Ebal and Gerizim and Shecem and Shiloh, and a hundred mountain tops and villages, around which hang a thousand hallowed associations and memories of the marvellous power and loving kindness of Jehovah to their fathers. Thus they stand as with two immense maps unrolled at their feet; on the one side, the map of the kingdom of Baal; on the other side, of the kingdom of Jehovah." This was the place of all places where the contest between these two could be most properly decided.

How shall we understand the suddenness and severity of the storms which, according to the Gospel history, swept the Sea of Gallilee, unless we have read of those ravines on the East, down which the wind is forced like water through the nozzle of a hose, thus smiting the surface of the lake with concentrated and tremendous power?

Even the passing allusions of Scripture are lighted up by a knowledge of the land. We read that, "a certain man went *down* from Jerusalem to Jericho." Although these cities are but seventeen miles apart there is, from one to the other, "the

immense descent of more than three thousand feet," so that all travellers, from the one to the other, did literally and emphatically "go down."

In the account of the Transfiguration, the felicity of the evangelist's comparison of that celestial splendor to the snow is accentuated by a knowledge of the fact that the only place in Palestine where snow could be seen was the mountain on which the Transfiguration occurred.

What scene so suitable as this same Mount Hermon, with its everlasting rocks, to frame the Saviour's great declaration: "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it"?

In the Sermon on the Mount, he said, "A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." Does it not, at least, enhance the vividness of that statement to know that in plain view from where he then sat a city *was* perched conspicuously upon a mountain top, and that this city was unavoidably visible from all that portion of Palestine?

In the same great discourse we read of a man who lost all by building his house upon the sand, and of another who digged deep and laid a foundation upon the rock—"upon the rock," says the *Revised Version*, in accordance with the original, *i. e.*, he digged down to the bed-rock of limestone which underlies all Palestine. Hence his security. No storm could disturb *that* foundation.

And so in a thousand ways the geology and topography of the Holy Land explain and illustrate the histories and discourses and allusions of Scripture.

Even ministers might profitably give this matter a thought. It is a very obtrusive fact that many men of unquestionable ability and ample furniture fail to interest and therefore fail to benefit the people by their preaching. Justin McCarthy, in his *History of Our Own Times*, says of a certain member of the British House of Commons that his declamation was as fluent as the sand in an hour-glass and as stirring as the rattle of a drum, but sometimes as empty as the drum and as dry as the sand. There are scores of preachers who are as fluent and as dry as the sand, but by no means as empty and as stirring as the drum. Doubtless there are different reasons for this in different cases; no one explanation will apply to all. But in many cases one great trouble is the lack of *color* in the treatment. The human mind craves the concrete. As Lord Ma-

caulay says, "Logicians may reason about abstractions, but the great mass of mankind can never feel an interest in them. They must have images." But we want higher authority than that of Lord Macaulay. Is there a divine warrant for the view we present? Has God himself pointed out the way in which we can avoid dull preaching? It would seem so. How else can you explain the fact that by far the greater portion of His revelation to men is in the form of picturesque and vivid narrative? And that supreme teacher, who spake as never man spake, is himself the crowning instance of the value of such a style. He used illustrations more copiously than any other great teacher that ever lived. Nearly all his instructions are cast in the form of parables, likening this or that object or process in the kingdom of grace which is not seen to this or that object or process in the kingdom of nature which *is* seen. And "the common people heard him gladly." Let Him be our model in this as in other things. How then shall we gain vividness and color in the treatment of Scriptural truth? How shall we legitimately interest and entertain the people? Some, finding their sermons uninteresting, endeavor to compel attention by using the tones of a fog-horn. And so there is developed the type of pulpiteer described by Sir. Walter Scott as the Rev. Boanerges Stormheaven. Other some resort to the use of billingsgate, or to the preaching of politics, or to the promulgation of heresy, or to some other reprehensible form of sensationalism, by which they achieve easy notoriety. But these are forbidden to us by our honesty and self respect, to say nothing of reverence. How shall *we* entertain in order to profit the people? One answer is,—Use the divine setting of the truth, expound the environment of the text, master the surroundings of the statement, study the scenes of the history and the customs of the people. By these the imagery of Scripture was determined. Have you never observed this element in the vividness of that marvellous man who stands head and shoulders above any other living preacher of the Gospel? How many articles have been written about "the secret of his power." Of course *the* secret of his power is spiritual. But among the subordinate reasons for his amazing influence over an audience (directly connected, too, be it remembered, with his profound and Christly sympathy with lost men) is one that I have never seen mentioned, viz: The fact that he is a man of very fine imagination. He puts his hearer in the

place of the spectator—he catches the action on the wing, and causes the events to live again before his audience. Then, having secured their attention and their interest, he plunges the awakening and saving truth red hot into their hearts.

Some one has divided all preachers into three classes: (1). Those you can't listen to. (2). Those you can listen to. (3). Those you can't help listening to. Would that every man of us might get into the third class! And, we repeat, one way into it is this use of the Land for the explanation of the Book. Of course there is an extreme to be avoided here. No man should substitute these mere "embellishments of truth" for "its vital and soul subduing certainties." But a man is preserved from this folly of parading geographical information and overlaying the truth with its mere accessories just as he is preserved from every other species of pedantry, viz., by thorough-going earnestness.

This, however, is a digression. We return to our main line and conclude this part of our subject with the following paragraph from Prof. E. C. Mitchell:

"The historical method has come to be generally accepted as essential to a true science of interpretation. To know what writers mean, we must know who they were and what were the circumstances and conditions under which they wrote.

"It is equally true that historical inquiry, to be thorough and trustworthy, must be based upon some geographical knowledge. To comprehend events we must have some idea of localities. To appreciate actions we must accurately conceive of the situation. To estimate character, motives, methods of thought, habits of expression, we must know the surroundings.

"This general principle is especially applicable to the science of Biblical interpretation. So large a part of Sacred Scripture is in its nature historical, and so much of this history is dependent upon geographical conditions, that a prime requisite for obtaining any just idea of the sense is to know the place and the time. Indeed, the very language itself, especially of the Old Testament, has largely a historico-geographical origin. The phraseology and imagery, especially the poetical conceptions of the writers, are derived from peculiarities of physical features in sacred lands, or from historical incidents in the lives of their inhabitants. To lay a sure substructure for the Biblical interpreter, therefore, the first step is thorough topographical investigation."

III. But there is a third use of such a knowledge of Palestine. Not only does it illustrate Christian experience; not only does it explain many incidents and images of Scripture, but it also confirms the truth of the Bible. Sacred geography

has an apologetic value. It throws up an impregnable bulwark against some of the most formidable assaults of modern unbelief. The fact is that much of the slovenly skepticism of our time is made possible by neglect of this study—by failure to learn the facts in regard to the geographical and historical framework of the Gospel. Some young men have so long accustomed themselves to reading the Scriptures as they read heathen mythology, with no attempt to fix the events in place and time, that they have almost insensibly come to regard the Biblical histories as myths also. And thus they have lost the sense of reality. For many of them it can be regained only by a fresh and full investigation of the environment of Biblical persons and events.

Thorough study of the physical features of Palestine will discover to us intimate and supremely important relations between the Land, the People and the Book, will deepen and immovably confirm our conviction that whoever wrote the Book built the Land, and that the God of Israel is the Saviour of the world. When Frederick the Great asked one of his chaplains to give him a proof of Christianity in a single sentence, the answer was, "The Jews, your Majesty." Had he asked for two, the chaplain might well have added that Palestine itself was another. The Land and the People and the Book constitute a trinity of truth, and the testimony of each is strengthened by that of the other two; nor can either be fully understood apart from the others.

Palestine is therefore the unique meeting point of God's threefold revelation of himself in Creation, in Providence and in Scripture; yes, and the scene also of that crowning manifestation of truth, that supreme theophany wherein the Word was made flesh and dwelt among men, full of grace and truth. Jesus spent his life in Palestine, and so intimately are the two associated that no one who does not know the country can thoroughly know the man. It has been well said by the greatest Biblical scholar in America that the Holy Land "is the framework of the canonical gospels, and greatly facilitates their historical understanding." This is no doubt what even Renan meant when he said that the scenery of Palestine was a fifth gospel. "There is a wonderful harmony," says Dr. Schaff, "between the life of our Lord as described by the evangelists and his geographical and historical environment, as known to us from contemporary writers, and illustrated and confirmed by



modern discovery and research. This harmony contributes not a little to the credibility of the gospel history. The more we come to understand the age and country in which Jesus lived, the more we feel, in reading the gospels, that we are treading on the solid ground of real history illuminated by the highest revelation from heaven."

The same opinion is expressed by Dean Stanley :

"It is impossible not to be struck by the constant agreement between the recorded history and the natural geography both of the Old and New Testament. To find a marked correspondence between the scenes of the Sinaitic mountains and the events of the Israelite wanderings is not much perhaps, but it is certainly something towards a proof of the truth of the whole narrative. To meet in the gospels allusions, transient and yet precise, to the localities of Palestine, inevitably suggests the conclusion of their early origin, while Palestine was still familiar and accessible, while the events themselves were still recent in the minds of the writers. The detailed harmony between the life of Joshua and the various scenes of his battles, is a slight but true indication that we are dealing not with shadows but with realities of flesh and blood. Such coincidences are not usually found in fables, least of all in fables of Eastern origin.

"If it is important to find that the poetical imagery of the prophetic books is not to be measured by the rules of prose, it is not less important to find that the historical books do not require the latitude of poetry. Here and there hyperbolic expressions may appear ; but, as a general rule, their sobriety is evidenced by the actual scenes of Palestine as clearly as that of Thucydides by the topography of Greece and Sicily. That the writers of the Old and New Testament should have been preserved from the extravagant statements made on these subjects by their Rabbinical countrymen, or even by Josephus, is, at least, a proof of the comparative calmness and elevation of spirit in which the sacred books were composed. The copyists who, according to Origen, changed the name of 'Bethabara' into 'Bethania,' or 'Gergesa' into 'Gadara,' because they thought only of the names most familiar to their ears, without remembering the actual position of the places, committed (if so be) the error into which the evangelists were almost sure to have been betrayed had they composed their narratives in the second century, in some city of Asia Minor or Egypt. The impossible situations in numerous instances selected by the inventors of so-called traditional sanctuaries or scenes, from the fourth century downwards—at Nazareth, at Tabor, on Olivet, at the Jordan—are so many testimonies to the authenticity of the Evangelical narratives, which have in every case avoided the natural snares into which their successors have fallen."

But these after all are but superficial aspects of the real question in regard to Palestine. What is the *chief* value of the science of Sacred Geography? To define sharply our knowledge of the formal contents of Scripture by giving us

their true physical setting? To enhance the vividness of individual incidents by utilizing the strong local coloring? To silence the subjective critic and caviller by showing that this ancient book and the land of which it speaks "answer to one another like two parts of an indenture"? All these are undoubtedly important. But yet they do not bring us to the heart of the matter. Let us look more closely. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews called this country "the Land of Promise." That is a pregnant phrase. Not only was Palestine promised to the patriarch and his posterity as a covenant possession, but the land itself conditioned that wider Messianic promise which was made to Abraham at the same time. It was through the peculiar characteristics of the country that God effected the fulfillment of the promise that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed. Therefore the geography of Palestine is profoundly significant, and the study of it is not only essential to an intelligent appreciation of the mere surface facts of Biblical history, but also necessary to an understanding of the inner relations of those facts to each other as parts of one divine purpose and stages in one divine revelation, unfolded gradually through hundreds of years and culminating when the fulness of time had come in a universal religion.

It will therefore be our principal endeavor in the next number of this series to prove the general statements made in this and to show that by its location and structure Palestine was adapted as no other country on earth was to God's purpose of preparing a pure religion through centuries of separation and training, and then of publishing that religion to the whole world. After that we shall proceed to the consideration of certain explorations and discoveries recently made in the Holy Land and directly connected with the Holy Scriptures.

