

The prompt mention in our list of "Books of the Week" will be considered by us an equivalent to their publishers for all volumes received. The interests of our readers will guide us in the selection of works for further notice.

## LEBANON, DAMASCUS, AND BEYOND JORDAN.\*

THE venerable Dr. Thomson's revision of *The Land and the Book* is now complete. The old edition sold remarkably. It was the cheapest source of information concerning biblical places and peoples in our own day, as illustrating ancient times. It was essential, not only to ministers, but to all students of things divine.

It is to be feared that this popularity has turned the heads of both author and publishers. The former seems to have dreamed of a new and larger edition which should surpass the old; while the latter appears to have concluded that the work would justify an enlargement to two and a half times the original size, and a lavish expense in the direction of numerous superior woodcuts, tinted paper, and artistic binding. The result is before us. The author has fulfilled his dream; the publishers have invested a large amount of capital; and the reader is offered between thirteen and fourteen pounds of stock at eighteen dollars. In other words, a revision that might have been made to advantage, and still wider public acceptance, has been overdone to great disadvantage, and placed beyond popular reach.

Nevertheless, taking the publication "as it is," it is one of the most elegant in the wide library of biblical literature, the page being agreeable to the eye, the press work clean, the type the popular "old-style," and the abundant illustrations approaching the perfection of modern workmanship. Wherever the latter are drawn from photographs they possess that highest of qualifications—accuracy and fidelity to the scene; but wherever they are taken from what may be considered *genre* (mostly borrowed from French originals) drawings or paintings, they are not uniformly happy; Riou's "Syrian Gentlemen," facing p. 84, being eminently successful, while the same artist's "Syrian Ladies," facing p. 88, is wholly due to the imagination, and such a sketch as "El'Ain—the Fountain," (p. 84) is about as untrue to life as possible.

Dr. Thomson's special scope may be best conveyed in his own words:

"Where he has been he proposes to guide his reader, through that 'good land' of mountain and vale and lake and river: to the shepherd's tent, the peasant's hut, the palace of kings, the hermit's cave, the temple of the gods—to the haunts of the living and the sepulchres of the dead—to muse on what *has been* and converse with what *is*, and learn from all what they teach concerning the oracles of God."

And his special excellence lies in reconnecting certain passages of Scripture, either well-known or obscure, topically with facts, events, or places, constantly passing under the eye of a dweller in Palestine. In this direction Dr. Thomson surpasses all others who have endeavored to place things familiar in the East directly under our Western eyes. We call attention to two or three characteristic examples, such as the "Shepherd and Sheep," on pp. 25, 26; wine *vs.* "the pure juice of the grape," on pp. 236, 237; the "Bruised Reed and the Smoking Flax" on pp. 472, 473.

As this third and last volume was the main object in view for enlarging the work, we are inquisitive to examine the result. And it is useless to deny we are greatly disappointed. Nearly half the volume—317 pages—is devoted to the Lebanon range, which is extra limital to the Holy Land, of no concern to a scriptural student, and is inserted into the work merely because Dr. Thomson happens to be at home there; after Damascus, altogether too much space is given to the dreary *Lejah*, also non-biblical, and, so far from being newly described on the part of the author, it is rehashed from Porter, Wetzstein, and, worst of all, most largely from Burckhardt, whose narrative is now three-quarters of a century

old; undue attention is paid to the *Hauran*; and, finally, a very scanty treatment of the land beyond Jordan proper, from *Jerash* to the Fords of the Jordan, in 126 pages, is given us, the very region, and the only portion, the biblical student desires to be freshly informed about. This, it will be observed, wholly leaves out the Land of Moab, south of Nebo and Baal-meon; whereas the public demands the accounts of an eye-witness of places on the Other Side no more than of Machærus, the prison house of John the Baptist, of Dibon—the home of the Moabite Stone, and of Bezer, the refuge-city of Reuben. It omits the Arnon, together with all Moab to the south thereof; whereas, public attention has only been excited by the little reported of *Kerak* or *Kir*, and should be gratified. It ignores Edom and Petra, concerning which we know too little and long to learn more—all of which are biblical grounds, and ought to have been included in any work professing to cover or throw light on its Land; for some, even brief, delineations of these, all the Lebanon, the whole of the *Lejah*, and much of the *Hauran*, may well have been spared.

This suggests a query. A great portion of the Land of the Bible has been left out, and a great deal not the Land of the Bible has been overrun. To an ordinary mind such a title as *The Land and the Book* simply means that the Land, when intimately examined and understood, strikingly explains the records of the Bible. But no; this is by no means all the author's idea. According to him;

"Palestine, both east and west of the Jordan, may be fairly regarded as the divinely prepared tablet whereon God's messages to men have been graven in ever-living characters."

This Land "was created and prepared as an appropriate home for the Nation of Abraham." "It was fashioned and furnished by the Creator's hand as the arena for the Hebrew people."

"That Land, we repeat, has had an all-prevailing influence upon the costume and character of the Bible: without the former, the latter, as we now have it, could not have been produced. . . . Let us, therefore, deal reverently with it, walk softly over those acres once trodden by patriarchs, prophets, and poets, and even by the sacred feet of the Son of God himself. Let us put off the soiled sandal of worldliness and sin as we enter this consecrated domain. There is design in this peculiar grouping of mountains and plains, hills and valleys, lakes and rivers, the desert and the sea, all in intimate association with the marvelous and miraculous incidents and phenomena recorded in the Bible. *The Land and the Book* constitute the all-perfect text of the Word of God, and can be best studied together."

Now, in the first place, we are tempted to ask, how does Dr. Thomson know all this so positively, inasmuch as it appears from his own pages that he has not personally inspected a large portion of the Holy Land, and is unable to describe it to others? In the second place, it is scientifically false. There is nothing remarkable about the land of Palestine in a geological, topographical, or geographical point of view, except the depression of the Jordan and Dead Sea; and so far as this "fault" is concerned, the scene of biblical events may just as well have lain in the vicinity of the Caspian Sea, or the Salt Lake of Utah. The truth is, the sea-coast of Palestine is featureless; Western Palestine is a simple limestone range; and Eastern Palestine is a plateau, furrowed at its western edge by four or five cañons cutting their way down into the great gulf; all in no way unnatural or extraordinary. In the physical character or contour of the country there is not the shadow of a trace of special divine molding for any historical purpose whatever. In the third place, it is Providentially untrue. Speaking with all reverence, the Lord himself does not regard the soil of Palestine as any the more sacred because holy men have trodden it, than the soil of Patagonia. He did not mark out the manger in Bethlehem, nor preserve the carpenter-shop in Nazareth, nor save the site of Capernaum; he permitted the Romans to desecrate and destroy the Temple; allows human bloodshed about his supposed tomb, and animal bloodshed about the probable truer one; and places no restraint upon a beer saloon on the Mount of Olives. Natives of the country, yea.

\*THE LAND AND THE BOOK; OR, BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATIONS DRAWN FROM THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS, THE SCENES AND SCENERY OF THE HOLY LAND. Vol. III. By WILLIAM M. THOMSON, D.D. New York: Harper & Brothers.

even residents of Dr. Thomson's own city, scoff at the claim of sanctity for the Holy Land; and we have known of such a thing as Christians, indeed ministers of the Gospel, having their faith shaken by the shock the realism of the country gave their preconceived supernatural conception. Nothing can be more injurious to the cause of truth than to set up such an extravagant fiction of physical foreordination and peculiar sanctification for the land of Palestine as Dr. Thomson's. It has not a trace of foundation. In fact, that land in itself has far less to commend it for the scene of the history of redemption than many others. The fair vales and isles of Greece, the central position of the lovely region round the Sea of Marmora, the charming shores of Southern Italy, the attractive suburbs of Rome, and, above all, the beautiful lake-region of Northern Italy, would, to all human view, afford more appropriate conditions for the revelation of the Divine on earth. But God had other reasons for selecting Palestine than its territorial configuration. The Land does not enter into the text of the Word of God to the extent of one infinitesimal iota.

The statement, on p. 88, that the sarcophagi of *Khan Khulda* are "without inscriptions" is incorrect. They carry Greek inscriptions, their lids particularly—a few of them of some length—showing their age to fall in the flourishing Byzantine period, between the Emperors Constantine and Justinian. On p. 144 Dr. Thomson distinguishes between the sarcophagus of Eshmunazer, King of the Sidonians, and the tomb in which it was placed, which "tomb," he says, "was evidently of Egyptian origin." This is a riddle; for the tomb was a rock-cut chamber surmounted by a built vault, which could not have been toted from Egypt. If, however, the sarcophagus be referred to as having originated in Egypt, the entire absence of hieroglyphics and the presence of admirable Phœnician epigraphy are to be accounted for. The stone, moreover, is not "silente" (*see* Vol. II, p. 643), from up the Nile, but is amphibolite, obtained apparently from the Sannitic peninsula or the quarries at Hammamat. The national type of the head is not Egyptian. The arrangement of the thick hair, falling upon the shoulders and breast, is characteristically Phœnician; while the style, as Lenormant expresses it, is "*sui generis*, and allied to that of the primitive Greek states." Perrot and Chipiez admit that the anthropoid sarcophagi, of which this is one, are peculiar to Phœnician art and to Phœnicia.

The German historian Niebuhr is written "Niebuhr" on p. 220. The Phœnician town Antarakus is written "Antaridus" on p. 279. We find, on p. 209, the world-renowned Leipzig professor, Georg Ebers, spoken of as "M. Ebers," as though by any possibility he could be considered a fellow-countryman with M. Renan.

At *Ba'albek* Dr. Thomson minutely describes the eagle sculptured on the under side of the key-stone of the entrance to a temple, and adds:

"Similar eagles have been found upon the ruins of some of the most ancient temples in this country, as at *Rukhleh*, and especially the one on the portal of the Temple of the Sun at Palmyra. They are all supposed to be of Assyrian origin" (p. 331);

this page, also, being headed, "Assyrian Eagle—Emblem of the Sun." So far as we are aware, Captain Warren is the only one who has ever broached such an idea, and then an essentially different one. Speaking of the aquiline fragment at *Rukhleh*, he inadvertently remarks: "To me it appears to be of a type essentially Assyrian."—*Quart. Statement*, P. E. F., 1870, p. 200. This remark, expressed hastily in a communication from the field, Dr. Thomson changes from *type* to *origin*, and then generalizes it over the others at *Ba'albek* and Palmyra! How inexcusably absurd! The Roman date and building and character of Palmyra and *Ba'albek*, together with everything they contain, are well known. That they could embrace anything of Assyrian origin is chronologically impossible. Could an eagle "of Assyrian origin" clutched in its talons a winged caduceus—the heraldic staff of Hermes, or the Roman Mercury—whose white ribbons are transferred to the back of the eagle? To the right of this portal, between peristyle and cells, the

celling of the long side is ornamented with hexagonal panels, sculptured in high relief, representing familiar subjects in classical mythology—*e. g.*, Diana, with crescent, quiver, bow and bound; Ganymedes, borne to heaven on the eagle's back; Leda and the swan. May these also be of "Assyrian origin"? At Palmyra the Roman eagle clutches in its talons, instead of the caduceus-wand, the sacred branch, or emblem of peace, the substitute always employed by the *Fetiales*, or college of Roman priests, whose sanction was necessary to a conclusion of peace or declaration of war. This, too, is what the Roman eagle at *Rukhleh* grasped, judging from Burchardt's narrative and sketch ("Travels in Syria," p. 49). At any rate, it is accompanied by Greek inscriptions of the Roman or Byzantine period, and the edifice served in the end as a church. Another Roman eagle survives at *Capitolias*, *Beit er-Ras*, in Decapolis. Was this also of "Assyrian origin"? Such eagles as these are totally wanting, wholly foreign, to Assyrian art.

Throughout the work, and even in the index, Anti-Lebanon is turned into "Ante-Lebanon." Petra is said to be "the Sellah, probably, of the Bible," on p. 538—a name which is correctly written *Sela* in the A. V. of Isaiah xvi, 1, for the Hebrew שֵׁלָא; and on the next page we read: "The Ghassanide were of Arabian origin," instead of "the Ghassanides," etc. In treating of Jerash the truth is recognized that at least some of the elegant public buildings were constructed during the reign of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus; but immediately after the Propyleum of the Great Temple of the city is styled "Propyleum of the Temple of the Sun." The notion that this sanctuary was dedicated to the Sun is an old error, arising from the fact that a fragment of the soffit of the porch in this very Propyleum, lying on the ground beneath, bore the letters ΗΑΙΟΥ hastily read "of the Sun"; whereas a careful joining together of these fragments reveals the entire word to have been ΑΥΡΗΑΙΟΥ, "of Aurelius," the Roman Emperor above alluded to; and still at this late day, 1880, Dr. Thomson is perpetuating the antiquated mistake.

Strangest of all is the course pursued with the Cufic inscription at *Busrah*. After unnecessarily quoting Burchardt on the subject, he adds: "An excellent photograph of that inscription was secured by the gentlemen of the American Palestine Exploration Society when at *el Busrah* in the autumn of 1875; but I am not aware that any attempt has been made to ascertain its purport." And this is followed by a *fac simile* of the inscription. From the above statement the reader would inevitably make two inferences: one, that the *fac simile* following was a copy of the photograph taken by the American party; and two, that to this day the inscription remains a mystery; for if Dr. Thomson does not know of its having been read, it must be that it never has. Now, as to the facts. One, the *fac simile* turns out not to be a reproduction from the photograph of the American party, because it contains tracings of lines or letters suggested to be supplied, not existing on the stone (and, hence, not existing in the photograph), but entered on the *fac simile* published long ago by Rey, in his "Atlas." The question naturally arises, Rey's "Atlas" being the source of the *fac simile* as emended, why did not our author give the credit to Rey's "Atlas" rather than suppress this and speak of the American photograph in such a way as to imply the latter for the source? Two, Rey's "Atlas" being the source of the *fac simile* as emended, and as it appears on p. 520, how could Dr. Thomson be ignorant of the fact that M. Rey reproduces in the text of his work, "*Voyage dans le Haouran*," pp. 197–199, the entire inscription turned into Arabic and a translation by M. Reinaud? Or, if he is going to treat the matter at all, how can he be uninformed of the fact that more recently Professor Karabacek has published two readings and translations, the last in the *Zeitschrift D. M. G.*, for 1877, pp. 186, 187, where it is accompanied by a lithographic *fac simile*, supplied by Professor Fleischer, taken from the photograph of the American party (which, also, by the way, does not present the worthless emendations found in

Rey and Dr. Thomson)? The most favorable answer we can give these questions is, that both the French and the German are sealed languages to our author. If so, he ought not to mention an inscription he cannot tackle. It is always a good rule not to raise a ghost one cannot lay. We lose all patience with him, in like manner, when he tells us "From isolated blocks and columns [at *Rutad*. Arrad] mostly of basalt, I copied seven Greek inscriptions containing forty-two lines, in a fair state of preservation." This, and nothing more! Why on earth does he not pass them over to us, with the information they convey?—the very points his readers are most intensely interested in, and for which they would most heartily thank him. The reason appears to be indicated in the fact that, for example, he is dependent on Dr. Robinson to inform him that a Greek inscription "over the entrance of the tower at *el-Fukra*," p. 224, "contains 'the name of the Emperor Tiberius Claudius,'" an inscription plainly running Αἰὶνὸς πατρὸς Τιβέριος Κλαυδίου Καλαρὶ Σεβαστοῦ καὶ κ. τ. λ., as recognized by Seetzen, Otto von Richter, Gesenius, and the *Corpus Inscr. Græc.* No. 4520.

By all odds the most important portion of his pages devoted to *Perca*, is that pertaining to the mounts of Nebo and Pisgah. This proves to be a complete confirmation of the work done by the first expedition of our Palestine Exploration Society. That there should have arisen any question as to the identification of Mount Pisgah in *Jebel Siaghah* and the definite restriction of Mount Nebo to *Jebel Neba*, can be explained only by the jealousy of depraved human nature. It will be remembered that the Duc de Luynes was the first, in the year 1804, to observe that the western end of the promontory on the south of *Ayun Mûsa* was double, and called *Jebel Mûsa*, the first of whose summits, nearest *Ayun Mûsa* and the site of ruins he left behind, in order to proceed onward to the second or final summit, on the southwest of the first and more remote, which he regarded as the point where Moses stood in his survey of the Land of Promise. It will also be recalled that the archaeologist of the first expedition of our Society, Prof. J. A. Paine, in May, 1873, was the first to find *Shafa Zîra*, "the Crest of Nebo," on the brink of the plateau; *Jebel Neba*, "Mount Nebo," the elevation next in order westward; and *Jebel Siaghah*, "Mount Pisgah," as applied to the two summits at the end of the promontory, especially the final one (which two summits together the Duc de Luynes had called *Jebel Mûsa*), and to identify all accordingly. In 1875 the archaeologist of the second expedition of our Society followed upon the same ground, and strongly depreciated the work of his predecessor. Still later, in 1879, the recently deceased Dr. Samuel Wolcott tried his best to invalidate in our columns Professor Paine's identifications and arguments; but to no effect. However, in 1882, Captain Conder, of the English Fund Survey, visited the locality, and fully corroborated and sustained the data and conclusions of Professor Paine, adding merely the name *Tafal es-Sufa* to the very slope where the latter placed the field of Zophim (*Ueth and Mond*, p. 129). But the verdict of one of our own countrymen would naturally be of more interest to us; and we have watched for it not without care. Dr. Thomson bears out and indorses the investigations of the archaeologist of our first expedition in every particular.