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A
JOURNAL
FROM
ALEPPO TO JERUSALEM
AT EASTER, A.D. 1696
BY HENRY MAUNDRELL, M.A.
ALSO
A JOURNAL FROM
GRAND CAIRO TO MOUNT SINAI,
AND BACK AGAIN.
TRANSLATED FROM
A MANUSCRIPT WRITTEN BY THE PREFETTO OF EGYPT,
BY THE
RIGHT REV. ROBERT CLAYTON,
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(p. 97) WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24.

HAVING paid OUT caphar, we set out very early the next morning; and leaving first Arab, and then Rama, (two mountain-villages) on the right hand, we arrived in one hour at a fair fountain call'd Selee, taking its name from an adjacent village. In one hour more we came to Sebasta. Here yon leave the borders of the half tribe of Manasses, and enter into those of the tribe of Ephraim.

Sebasta is the ancient Samaria, the imperial city of the ten tribes after their revolt from the house of David. It lost its former name in the time of Herod the Great, who rais'd it from a ruin'd to a most magnificent state, and call'd it, in honour of Augustus Caesar, Sebasta. It is situate upon a long mount of an oval figure, having first a fruitful valley, and then a ring of hills running round about it. This great city is now wholly converted into gardens; and all the tokens that remain, to testify that there has ever been Such a place, are only, on the north side, a large square piazza, encompass'd with piliars, and on the east some poor remains of a great church, said to have been built by the empress Helena, over the place where St. John Baptist was both imprison'd and beheaded. (p. 98) In the body of the church you go down a staircase, into the very dungeon where that holy blood was shed. The Turks (of whom here are a few poor families) hold this prison in great veneration, and over it have erected a small mosque; but for a little piece of money they suffer you to go in and satisfy your curiosity at pleasure.

Leaving Sebasta, we pass'd in half an hour by Sherack, and in another half hour by Barseba, two villages on the right hand; and then entering into a narrow valley, lying east and west, and water'd with a fine rivulet, we arrived in one hour at Naplosa.

Naplosa is the ancient Sychem, or Sychar, as it is term'd in the New Testament. It stands in a narrow valley between mount Gerizim on the south, and Ebal on the north, being built at the foot of the former; for so the situation both of the city and mountains is laid down by Josephus, *Antiq. Jud. lib. 5. cap. 9.* Gerizim (says he) hangeth over Sychem; and *lib. 4. cap. ult.* Moses commanded to erect an altar toward the east, not far from Sychem, between mount Gerizim on the right hand, (that is, to one looking eastward on the south) and Hebal on the left (that is on the north); which so plainly assigns the position of these two mountains, that it may be wonder'd bow geographers should come to differ so much about it; or for what reason Adrichomius should place (p. 99) them both on the same side of the valley of Sichem. From mount Gerizira it-was that God commanded the blessings to be pronounced upon the children of Israel, and from mount Ebal the curses, Deut. xi. 29. Upon the former, the Samaritans, whose chief residence is here at Sychem, have a small temple or place of worship, to which they are still wont to repair at certain seasons, for performance of the rites of their religion. What these rites are I could not certainly learn; but that their religion consists in the adoration of a calf, as the Jews give out, seems to have more of spite than of truth in it.

Upon one of these mountains also it was that God commanded the children of Israel to set up great stones, plaistered over and inscrib'd with the body of their law; and to erect an altar and to offer sacrifices, feasting, and rejoicing before the Lord, Deut. xxvii. 4. But now whether Gerizim or Ebal was the place appointed for this solemnity, there is sonic cause to doubt. The Hebrew Pentateuch, and ours from it, assigns mount Ebal for this use; but the Samaritan asserts it to be Gerizim.

Our company halting a little while at Naplosa, I had an opportunity to go and visit the chief Priest of the Samaritans, in order to discourse with him, about this and some other difficulties occurring in the Pentateuch, which were recommended to me to be enquir'd about by the learned Monsieur Job Ludclphus, au- (p. 100) thor of the Ethiopic history, when I visited him at Frankfort, in my passage through Germany.

As for the difference between the Hebrew and Samaritan copy, Deut. xxvii. 4. before cited, the priest pretended the Jews had maliciously alter'd their text, out of *odium* to the Samaritans; putting, for Gerizim, Ebal, upon no other account, but only because the Samaritans worshipped in the former mountain, which they would have for that reason not to be the true place appointed by God for his worship and sacrifice. To confirm this, he pleaded that Ebal was the mountain of cursing, Deut. xi. 29. and in its own nature an unpleasant place; but on the contrary Gerizim was the mountain of blessing by God's own appointment, and also in itself fertile and delightful; from whence he inferr'd a probability that this latter must have been the true mountain, appointed for those religious festivals, Deut. xxvii. 4. and not (as the Jews have corruptly written it) *Ilebal*. We observ'd that to be in some measure true which he pleaded concerning the nature of both mountains; for though neither of the mountains has much to boast of as to their pleasantness, yet, as one passes between them, Gerizim seems to discover a somewhat more verdant fruitful aspect than Ebal. The reason of which may be, because fronting towards the north, it is sheltered from the heat (p. 103) of the sun by its own shade; whereas Ebal, looking southward, and receiving (he sun that comes directly upon it, must

by consequence be render'd more scorched and unfruitful. The Samaritan priest could not say that any of those great stones, which God directed Joshua to set up, were now to be seen in mount Gerizim; which, were they now extant, would determine the question clearly on his side.

I enquir'd of him next what sort of animal he thought those selavae might be, which the Children of Israel were so long fed with in the wilderness, Num. xi. He answer'd, they were a sort of fowls; and by the description which he gave of them, I perceiv'd he meant the same kind with our quails. I asked him what he thought of locusts, and whether the history might not be better accounted for, supposing them to be the winged creatures that fell so thick about the camp of Israel? but, by his answer, it appear'd he had never heard of any such hypothesis. Then I demanded of him what sort of plant or fruit the *dudaim* or (as we translate it) *mandrakes* were, which Leah gave to Rachel, for the purchase of her husband's embraces? He said they were plants of a large leaf, bearing a certain sort of fruit, in shape resembling an apple, growing ripe in harvest, but of an ill savour, and not without noisome. But the virtue of them was to help conception, being laid under the genial bed. That the women (p. 104) were often wont so to apply it, at this day, out of an opinion of its prolifick virtue. Of these plants I saw several afterwards in the way to Jerusalem; and if they were so common in Mesopotamia, as we saw them hereabout, one must either conclude that these could not be the true mandrakes (*dudaim*.) or else it would puzzle a good critic to give a reason, why Rachel should purchase such vulgar things at so laved and contested a price.

This priest shew'd me a copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch, but would not be persuaded to part with it upon any consideration. He had likewise the first volume of the English Polyglot, which he seem'd to esteem equally with his own manuscript.

Naplosa is at present in a very mean condition, in comparison of what it is represented to have been anciently. It consists chiefly of two streets lying parallel, under mount Gerizim; but it is full of people, and the seat of a bassa.

Having paid our caphar here, we set forward again in the evening, and proceeding in the same narrow valley, between Gerizim and Ebal (not above a furlong broad) we saw on our right hand just without the city, a small mosque, said to have been built over the sepulchre purchased by Jacob of Emmor, the father of Shechem, Gen. xxxiii. 19. It goes by the name of Joseph's sepulchre, his bones having been here interr'd after their transportation out of Egypt, Josh. xxiv. 32.

(p. 105) At about one third of an hour from Naplosa, we came to Jacob's Well; famous, not only upon account of its author, but much more for that memorable conference, which our blessed Saviour here had with the woman of Samaria, John iv. If it should be question'd whether this be the very well it is pretended for or no, seeing it may be suspected to stand too remote from Sychar, for women to come so far to draw water? it is answer'd, that probably the city extended farther this way in former times than it does now; as may be conjectur'd from some pieces of a very thick wall, still to be seen not far from hence. Over the well there stood formerly a large church, erected by that great and devout patroness of the Holy-Land, the empress Helena. But of this the voracity of time, assisted by the hands of the Turks, has left nothing but a few foundations remaining. The well is covered at present with an old stone vault, into which you are let down through a very strait hole; and then removing a broad flat stone, you discover the mouth of the well itself. It is dug in a firm rock, and contains about three yards in diameter, and thirty five

in depth; five of which we found full of water. This confutes a story commonly told to travellers, who do not take the pains to examine the well, viz. that it is dry all the year round, except on the anniversary of that day on which our blessed Saviour sat upon it, but then bubbles up with abundance of water.

At this well the narrow valley of Sychem ends, opening itself into a wide field, which is probably part of a parcel of ground, given by Jacob to his son Joseph Joh. iv. 5. It is watered with a fresh stream, rising between it and Sychem; which makes it so exceeding verdant and fruitful, that it may be looked upon as a standing token of the tender affection of that good patriarch to the best of sons, Gen. xviii..

From Jacob's Well our road went southward, along a very spacious and fertile valley. Having passed by two villages on the right hand, one called Howar, the other Sawee, we arrived in four hours at Kane Leban, and lodged there. Our whole stage to day was about eight hours; our course variable between- east and south.

Kane Leban stands on the east side of a delicious vale, having a village of the same name standing opposite to it on the other side of the vale. One of these places, either the Kane or the village, is supposed to have been the Lebonah mentioned Judg. xi. 19. To which both the name and situation seem to agree. THURSDAY, MARCH 25.

Comments on this section from the Editor of theSamaritanUpdate.com

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