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HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

OF THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT:

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

EDWARD WELLS, D. D.

RECTOR OF COTESBACH IN LEICESTERSHIRE.

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AN
HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY
OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT.

PART III.

AN
HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY
OF THE
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CHAP. I.

Of the Places mentioned in the first Book of Samuel, and not spoken of before.

THAT the reader may the more easily apprehend, how the series of this geographical treatise answers to the series of the sacred History, I judge it best to comprehend all the places, mentioned in the first book of Samuel, under one chapter, dividing the same into two several sections, as follows.

The introduction.

SECT. I.

Of the Places mentioned from the Birth of Samuel, to his anointing Saul to be King over Israel.

IN the first chapter of the book commonly called by us, *the first book of Samuel*, we are informed ver. 19, 20. that Samuel was born at Ramah, otherwise called (as appears from ver. 1.) Ramathaim-Zophim, probably to distinguish it from other places in the Holy Land, which were also called by the name of Ramah. One place of this name

1.
Of Ramah, or Ramathaim-Zophim, the birth-place of the prophet Samuel.

PART III. was spoken of in the last section but one of the last chapter of Vol. I. viz. chap. vi. §. 25. And chap. v. §. 36. of Vol. I. Part II. we have taken notice of another place of the like name, lying in the land of Gilead, or Mizpeh, and thence called Ramoth-Gilead, and Ramath-Mizpeh. The Ramah we are here speaking of seems to be called Ramathaim-Zophim on a like occasion, namely, from its being situated in a tract called Zuph, or Zophim, and (as the text, ver. i. tells us) in mount Ephraim; and, according to Eusebius and Jeroni, in the (then) district of Timnath near Diospolis or Lydda, being the very same that is called Arimathea in the history of the Gospel.

2.
The present
state of
Hama.

From this account of its situation, it is not to be doubted, but that this is the place which to this day goes under the name of Rama, and lies in the usual road taken by pilgrims from Jaffa, or Joppe, to Jerusalem, and is accordingly taken notice of by Thevenot ^a and Le Bruyn. From these we learn, that whereas this Rama was anciently a city, it is now no more than an open town, under the government of the Bassa of Gaza. It is still pretty large, and looks well enough on the outside, as may be seen by the draught which Le Bruyn has given of it. Hard by the place where stood part of the ancient city, is still to be seen a large square tower, much like to a steeple. They say, that formerly it was as high again as it is at present, and was erected in honour of the forty martyrs that suffered death in Armenia. It joins on to a church, and is by Thevenot represented as the steeple to that church, built in honour of the forementioned martyrs. At this tower are likewise to be seen some ruins, which seem to be the remains of a monastery. Thevenot expressly says, that heretofore there was a stately large convent here, of which the cloister seems to be still very entire, by what could be observed in passing by the gate, for he was told, that Christians were not permitted to enter into it. The Latin monks have a convent or monastery at

^a Thevenot, Part I. chap. xxxvi. Le Bruyn, chap. xlvi.

present in Rama, where there commonly resides a father superior with two monks. The pilgrims usually lodge there till they go to Jerusalem. This convent, which hath a very neat church, was built, as they say, in the very place where the house of Nicodemus anciently stood. The inhabitants, as far as Le Bruyn could guess, amounted to about three thousand souls, as well Christians as Turks. All the caravans, which go from Cairo in Egypt to Damascus, Aleppo, and Constantinople, pass by this Rama. All the doors in this town are very low, not three feet high, says Thevenot, to hinder the Arabs from riding into their houses. There is in Rama another church, besides that above mentioned, dedicated to the honour of St. George.

All round about Rama one meets with a great many wells, which served, as they say, to keep wheat and oats. We threw, says Le Bruyn, into one of them, which was very deep, a great many stones, which, in falling to the bottom, made a very extraordinary and hollow noise at top.

Hard by Rama is also a very fine cistern, made with a great deal of art upon two rows of piazzas. It certainly served, says Le Bruyn, to supply the town with water, as several for the same use are to be seen in Italy.

Le Bruyn adds, that, whilst he stayed at Rama, he walked as far as Lydda, which lies on one side of Rama, about three miles from it: which confirms the opinion, that this Rama is the same called Arimathea in the New Testament, and so the same with Ramah, the birth-place of the prophet Samuel; forasmuch as Eusebius and Jerom expressly tell us, that this lay near to Lydda.

I shall conclude what relates to Ramah with a particular taken notice of by Le Bruyn. It is, says he, no extraordinary matter for men to take a journey to Jerusalem; but that women should have such wandering heads, may seem somewhat strange. However, there are instances of it. A little before I arrived at Rama, an English middle-aged gentlewoman was come thither, at-

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