

ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

THE Forty-Second Annual General Meeting of the above Fund was held at the Royal Institution, Albemarle Street, W., on Wednesday, June 26th, 1907. The Rt. Rev. The Lord Bishop of Winchester presided. There was a large attendance.

THE CHAIRMAN.—I will ask the Honorary Secretary to read the letters.

THE Hon. SECRETARY read letters of regret at inability to be present from the following:—The Rev. Dr. Horton, Prof. Petrie, Mr. Pollard, the Rev. Dr. William Henry Rogers, Mr. MacDonald, Mr. James Melrose, the Dean of Ely, the Rev. Dr. Montague Butler, Dr. Löwy, Sir Charles Warren, Prof. George Adam Smith, Mr. Morrison, the Rev. Dr. Buchanan Grey, and the Rev. Prof. Sayce.

THE CHAIRMAN.—The first business is a resolution which I have pleasure in proposing:—That the Report and Accounts already printed and in the hands of subscribers be taken as read, and that they be received and adopted.

DR. ALDIS WRIGHT.—I have great pleasure in seconding that.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

THE Hon. SECRETARY.—I regret to have to announce that since the last Meeting the General Committee has suffered loss by the death of Mr. John Dickson, the Rev. Canon Tristram, and the Earl of Cranbrook.

REV. Canon DALTON.—I have to propose that the following gentlemen be added to the General Committee: The Rev. Canon Duckworth, C.V.O.; Colonel Sir Henry Trotter, K.C.M.G., C.B., R.E.; the Rev. Prof. Francis Brown; Peter Gellatly, Esq.

The resolution was seconded by Colonel PHILPOTTS, R.E., and carried unanimously.

REV. H. G. MUNRO.—Ladies and Gentlemen,—I beg to move: That the Executive Committee be re-elected, and that Colonel Sir Henry Trotter be invited to serve thereon. I have very great

pleasure in moving this resolution, and I have no doubt it will be carried.

The resolution was seconded by the Rev. WILLOUGHBY CARTER, and carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN.—Now I have very great pleasure in calling upon Sir Charles Watson to give us a description of the recent excavations, which he will illustrate for us by means of lantern slides.

Sir CHARLES WATSON.—My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen,—The majority of people here understand fully the objects of the Palestine Exploration Fund, which was founded just forty-two years ago last Saturday. It was initiated at a Meeting held in London that year (1865) under the Presidency of the Archbishop of York, and its special object was to elucidate our knowledge of the Bible. Up to that time, though the Bible had been read for so many hundreds of years, very little was really known of the scientific history, geography, and natural history of Palestine, and this Society was started with the intention of throwing light upon those very important subjects. The principles upon which it was based were threefold. First, that everything that was done by the Society was to be done in a perfectly scientific manner, so that no one might query the reports; secondly, that it should be in no sense a religious Society; and thirdly, that the Committee of the Society should have no ideas of their own, so to speak; their object was simply to find hard facts in Palestine for other people to criticise and for other people to form theories upon; and I am thankful to say that for the whole of these forty-two years those principles have been rigidly adhered to. It is not necessary for me to refer to past explorations, those magnificent excavations at Jerusalem conducted by Sir Charles Warren, the work of Sir Charles Wilson, the great Survey conducted by Colonel Conder and Lord Kitchener, and many other investigations into the antiquities of the country. All I can do to-day is very briefly to tell you a little of the site which we are now exploring, and in the first place I think it would be advisable to make it clear where Gezer is. I am sometimes asked, "Where is Gezer?" "Why do you explore there?" "What interest has it for anybody?" And I would just like, my lord, to make a few remarks to explain why we went to Gezer, and why it is one of the most interesting sites that we could have selected for exploration.

To show you where it is I will begin with the map of Palestine. No doubt all of you are acquainted with the physical features of the country, how it lies between the Valley of the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, and how it consists of a ridge of hills running from north to south, then a ridge of lower hills, and finally the plains that border on the Mediterranean Sea. It is a country with a very long history, and our explorations have taken that history further back even than was thought. From time immemorial it has been inhabited; the original inhabitants were not a Semitic tribe, but, according to the investigations of Mr. Macalister, they were a cave-dwelling people, and they seem to have lived throughout this country until they were driven out by a Semitic invasion. The Semitic invasion seemed to be followed by several others. There are no less than three, if not four, different periods during which the Semites occupied this country. And besides that, there was another great invasion from the south. The Egyptians from at least the year 2000 B.C., if not before, were in the habit of passing along the western side of Palestine on their expeditions into Asia. Therefore, this country has been the scene of conflicts for many thousands of years. It is covered with a number of little hills or, as they are called, "tels," many of which have been the site of a city or town for a very long period. At present some of these, in fact a great many, cannot be explored because the existing village is on the top of the hill; but in certain cases the hills are separate from the modern village, so that the Palestine Exploration Fund has been able to dig into and unearth some of these tels. Two of these you will see marked on the map: one is a place called Tel el-Hesi, which is most probably the Lachish of the Book of Joshua, and the other is Gezer, which is the place where we are exploring at the present day. It is easy to see that this must have been a most important town. I think the first mention that we have of it is in a hieroglyphic inscription on the great Temple of Karnak. That part of the temple was built by Thothmes III.—about 1600 B.C.—who was a great conqueror and a great general, and who invaded Mesopotamia and passed along by this road, and he in this inscription mentions the town of Gezer. Then it is mentioned afterwards in those most interesting documents, the Tel el-Amarna letters, which date from about 1450 B.C., and which are the correspondence from certain people in Asia and Palestine written to the officers of the kings of Egypt, who were their superior officers.

A number of those letters mention the town of Gezer, showing that at that time it was of very considerable importance. Then there is another reason why Gezer should be an interesting place to explore, and it is this, that it is one of the few places, if not the only one, in Palestine which is actually labelled with its name. Gezer was one of the Levitical cities, and probably from time immemorial the boundaries of those cities were marked so that people should know them. And in the case of the town of Gezer, Prof. Clermont-Ganneau was so fortunate as to find two inscriptions on the rocks on which the name of Gezer was definitely mentioned in ancient Hebrew characters. So that this was a place which was not only known historically from the documents, but which was also fixed accurately by the people who lived there at the time.

Sir Charles then proceeded to explain a series of lantern slides, illustrative of the recent explorations at Gezer, and concluded with the following remarks :

I would like to impress upon you the great importance of pushing on rapidly with the excavations at Gezer. The permit which his Majesty the Sultan has been good enough to grant us has a duration of two years only, and during these two years we ought to complete the exploration of this Tel. But whether we shall be able to do this depends upon the generosity of the British public. Work of this kind is necessarily costly on account of the number of men who have to be employed, and we want a sum of at least £1,000.

I hope that all who are present to-day will do what they can to assist us in raising this sum as soon as possible.

The CHAIRMAN, after thanking Sir Charles Watson for his interesting lecture, and for the lucid and admirable explanation of the slides, announced the following resolution : "That this Meeting offers its hearty encouragement to Mr. Stewart Macalister in the arduous work of excavation in which he is engaged." This he introduced with the following prefatory remarks upon the work of excavation in Palestine :—

"We have seen, from the slides, the kind of work in which Mr. Macalister is at present engaged. We have been told the great need there is that this work should be carried through, and we have also been told that there are only two more years to run. We are well aware that it is not very easy to obtain a permit from the Ottoman Government, and I am quite sure that all of us who are interested

in the Palestine Exploration Fund will hope that Mr. Macalister will be able to obtain the necessary support which will enable him to complete the most interesting and valuable work in which he is engaged. When I hear Mr. Macalister's name mentioned it takes me back, in my mind, to five-and-twenty years ago, when he was a little boy and lived in a house on the other side of the road where I lived at Cambridge. I had the honour of knowing his distinguished father, and one rejoices to feel that his son is adding distinction to a name already distinguished in the paths of science. But even in his early days, when quite a little lad, he was distinguished for his deep study in all matters of history and antiquarian research. Quite as a little lad he was a collector and classifier of objects of interest, and he has well fulfilled the promise which he then showed.

Well, now, let us in our thoughts go back for one moment to this work which has been already touched upon. I believe that as we look upon the nineteenth century and review the great works of science that were carried out in that century, we shall have good reason for regarding the work done by the Palestine Exploration Fund as one of the most creditable of the scientific researches carried on during that century, for its patience, its thoroughness, and for its exactitude. As was so well told by Sir Charles Watson, the principles of the Exploration Fund have been strictly scientific from the very first, and the great men who have carried out these principles have carried them out in the most patient and scientific spirit. Well, science can only be carried on by the most deliberate patience, by accuracy, and by the accumulation of minute details. Without being in any sort of hurry to draw conclusions, the minute results have been collected in different parts all over Palestine, and inferences have been slowly and perseveringly drawn, and it is those inferences which, to our delighted minds, are conveying so much illustration to our study of Holy Scripture. We feel that the Palestine Exploration Fund is benefiting the cause of science all round, promoting the study of history, throwing light upon the study of geography, and, above all, throwing light upon the study of Holy Scripture, and, therefore, it makes a special appeal to the sympathy and support of all those to whom the study of Holy Scripture is dear.

Well, I think that no Annual Meeting ought to take place without a reference to the great men whose lives have been spent

in connection with this most interesting work. I suppose that many of us, as we look back upon former years, can say that amongst the most honoured and distinguished names in the field of literature and of science will rank the names of those who have been connected with Palestine exploration; the names of Warren, and of Wilson, and of Clermont-Ganneau will always take a most leading position in our recollections of intensely interesting literature from the point of view of Biblical study. Those of us who have read the Reports that have been issued by the Fund know also what familiar names are the names of those who have been the regular and patient and most interesting contributors to the Journal: names like those of Bliss and Schumacher and that very scientific and careful observer, Mr. Glaisher, and also Mr. Post. In more recent times we have had the contributions of distinguished men like Prof. Petrie and Mr. Dickie, and, more recently, Mr. Macalister; and we hope that the names of Petrie and Macalister are not going to terminate the list of great explorers and excavators. I suppose that one of the questions which the friends of the Fund sometimes ask themselves is: Will there be found in the twentieth century men as distinguished, as zealous, as keen in this cause as the men of the nineteenth century? Enthusiasm for such a purpose in the interests of the Fund and of Biblical research ought not to die down in the twentieth century. When we have so much upon which to stand, and so much excavation and patient work in the nineteenth century, there is good reason for the students of the twentieth century to continue and to promote the interests of this most valuable department of work.

Now I have been privileged to see Mr. Macalister's recently published *Bible Side-Lights from the Mound of Gezer*, and if anyone were wise enough to make themselves possessors of this book, they will be able to read at leisure the full account of the excavations of this marvellous ancient Mound, the description of which, in summary and detail, has been given in such eloquent and interesting terms by Sir Charles Watson. The book is most readable and most luxuriously got up, and it is very easy to read. My opportunities of reading, leisurely, books of this kind are very few, but I read this in the train during the last two days in going about in my diocese, and I can recommend it as a book written in a delightfully easy style, with brief descriptions, and in a most interesting manner and abundantly illustrated, so that we can look

from the letterpress to the illustrations and find our curiosity satisfied. Some of the pictures upon which you have feasted your eyes are to be found in this book, and there are several other pictures besides. Therefore, I suggest to you that, as your curiosity has been whetted, you had better take the opportunity of satiating it by studying this book. In this book you have an account of these cave-dwellers. To me this discovery of the cave-dwellers has been enormously interesting, throwing light upon the prehistoric dwellers in Palestine, about whom many guesses have been made. Of course scholars are bound to make guesses when they have no material to work upon; sometimes they are correct, sometimes incorrect, and it is a very good thing that every now and then the guesses of the scholars should prove incorrect, and they should feel a little humility when they make another guess. Here you are told of the Horites, who have always been supposed to be the troglodites, and we found them under a town of Palestine. We also supposed they lived rather to the south, but it is interesting to find that the cave-dwellers had their dwellings in towns quite far to the north of what has been supposed. I daresay when we come to investigate in future days other towns and tels and mounds, we shall find at the bottom of these three or four stages of city-dwellings, and on the native rock more remains of these cave-dwellers. Then it is very interesting to have this succession of towns; we have become accustomed to find succession of towns in antiquity. When Troy was excavated people were amazed first of all to hear that there had been something like ten different towns piled one on the other. Here we have these three or four one on top of another in a comparatively small place like Gezer. But you will find here in the book why it is these stones are piled one on the top of the other. The houses were composed of loosely put together stones, cemented together by mud and clay, and when the house fell into ruin through assault or from heavy storms, the stones collapsed and the earth fell in and made a little mound where there had been a house. The next man did not want the trouble of excavating foundations, so he built his house on the former one. So you very often get one street piled upon another. You have heard an account of what the towns were like, how very narrow their streets were; in fact there were hardly any streets in the strict sense, but simply a rabbit warren of small houses and habitations in close contiguity. The houses were put together without any order at all. Therefore,

when one house fell, another fell, and heaps of ruins were quickly produced at the time of any great political overthrow. Next, what struck me as being of such great interest was this reference to the iniquity of the Amorites, namely, the child murders, the massacres of a religious kind that were perpetuated in High Places, and probably in close connection with those upright pillars of which we have this most interesting and unique example. These stone pillars, I suppose, were always to be found in those early times, in the days of the Israelites, in close vicinity to the place of sacrifice. At Gezer, however, we have this splendid instance of an example of undisturbed pillars with the remains of the old sacrifices; the ashes and the bones have been discovered in heaps in the immediate neighbourhood. I do not suppose that any description that has been obtained, throwing light on the iniquity of the polytheism and idolatry of those early times, has ever been found to compare with that which has been laid bare by Mr. Macalister in his researches at Gezer. Now, I must not protract what I have to say, but I should like to point out one short chapter—the chapters are so short, you can read through them very quickly—in which he refers to the dying deed of Samson. We have all wondered how Samson could have been able by the effort of his enormous muscular power to overthrow the temple of the Philistines. Mr. Macalister points out how it was possible, and how the temples in those days were constructed; that the columns were not as we have supposed—and of course our suppositions are based upon those pictures upon which we fed our eager eyes when we were children—and that the temples were not in those days made, like Ionic or Doric temples, with huge stone columns, but were made with columns of wood which rested on little stumps of stone. Well, the stumps of stone are found in his temple, and upon those stumps of stone stood the high wooden columns which supported first of all the portico. Then there was the main temple behind, and poor Samson was made to show forth his strength and play his antics in the front, and when they had wearied him out, they brought him forward to rest himself against the wooden columns which held up the portico, behind which stood or sat all the nobles of Philistia. Above the portico were the common people who, in that position, had a good view of the big man as he was performing his feats of strength, but were exposed to all the heat of the sun in a less favoured position than the nobles who were sitting under the

portico. And so the great man was able to rest both his arms upon these two columns and by an immense effort of strength he pulled the two wooden columns together, and, of course, as soon as they were moved off their stone stump on which they rested, down would come the portico with all the weight of the people overhead. You will find all this fully described in Mr. Macalister's chapter. Certainly it throws light upon the way in which the writer of the story supposed that Samson was able to perpetrate his wonderful dying feat of strength. Now I have said more than enough to excite your interest in this book, and, if possible, to stimulate your interest in the most valuable work that is being done at Gezer by the Palestine Exploration Fund; and I am sure what we have seen to-day and what we have heard from Sir Charles Watson will persuade you all to support me in this resolution I am proposing that this Meeting offers its hearty encouragement to Mr. Macalister. We are delighted that he has been able to find so much, and we feel certain if he is able to continue the work there remains much more which will throw still further light on the pages of Scripture and on the records of ancient history."

The resolution was carried by acclamation.

Dr. GINSBURG.—My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen,—The resolution I have to propose is that a Vote of Thanks be given to the Institution for affording us this noble edifice in which to hold our Meeting. We have held our Meetings here several times, and a more comfortable place we could hardly have to listen to such remarkable results of our excavations in Palestine.

The resolution was seconded by Mr. DICKIE, and carried unanimously.

Sir CHARLES WATSON.—My Lord, I would ask your leave to propose a resolution that I am sure will be received with the greatest unanimity by everybody present. It is to thank your Lordship for having been so good, notwithstanding your numerous engagements, as to come and preside over us on this occasion. I beg to move a sincere Vote of Thanks to the Lord Bishop of Winchester for having taken the chair.

The HON. SECRETARY.—Perhaps I may be allowed to second that resolution, which requires no addition.

The resolution was carried unanimously and the proceedings then terminated.