

ing travellers, such as the late Dr. Robinson, have explored the whole line, and furnished ample data for determining the entire boundary, their ascertained facts have been rejected by certain popular writers, and a preference given to the opinions of men who had never been on the ground.—Thus popular works lag behind, gross errors are indelibly stereotyped, and we meet with opposition where we are entitled to expect assistance.

Within these few years, three large and valuable Bible Dictionaries have been published in our language, Dr. Kitto's *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, Dr. William Smith's very voluminous work on the same subject, and Dr Fairbairn's, now in the press, which though not the largest is decidedly the best. The settlement of the northern boundary of the promised land comes fairly within the scope of such works, and they have all tried their hand on it, yet have all left it worse confounded. Good old Kitto, with all his characteristic simplicity, draws the line from the sea, "not far south from Sidon," over the top of Lebanon, and right across to Mount Hermon; and then adds: "This arrangement of the northern line of boundary seems to us to meet all the difficulties arising from deficient knowledge, which have hung like a dense mist over the northern boundary of Palestine."

Then with regard to Dr. Fairbairn's view of the subject, as given in his work in the article "Hamath." He says: "The entering in of Hamath is often mentioned as the boundary on the north of the dominion of Israel. There is some difference of opinion as to the point indicated by this expression. Robinson would place it on the western approach to Hamath, consequently farther off than Hamath itself. But this is improbable, and is not concurred in by Van de Velde, Stanley and others. The entering in to Hamath is more naturally understood as given from the Palestinian point of view, therefore on the south of the land of Hamath, probably about Riblah, as Van de Velde thinks." It is freely admitted that the phrase entering into Hamath, so called, implies in several passages an approach from the south up the great valley of el Bukaa,

and that it refers to some particular point in that valley. But what of that? 1. The point indicated is fifteen or twenty miles north from Riblah, according to the best judges. Dr. Thomson fixes it at the northern termination of the Lebanon ranges, on both sides of the valley. 2. That ascertainment only one point in the northern boundary line. That line runs some 80 miles at least, east and west, and what avail is it to ascertain one single point in it. 3. Dr. Fairbairn overlooks the important fact, that the Scriptures, in precisely the same phraseology, recognize an approach to Hamath from the sea board on the west, as well as from the south, just as indicated by Dr. Robinson, and as will presently be pointed out.

With respect to the view given on this subject in Dr. Smith's Dictionary, the article contributed by the Oxford divine, is infinitely less satisfactory. He makes Mount Lebanon the boundary, and therefore places it on the wrong side of the line, and cuts it off from Israel entirely. Kitto cuts off for Israel a very small slice, about six miles from the south end of "the goodly mountain"; but the Oxford divine, Colenso-like takes it all away. The same view exactly is given in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, even in the recent edition.

Such then is all the light cast on this subject in particular, and all the aid furnished by these large and costly works, that have been written on purpose to advance and extend our acquaintance with biblical literature. The northern boundary of Palestine has indeed been always a great puzzle to geographers. But this is not owing to any inherent difficulty in the subject itself. Nothing has been after all laid down with greater precision in the Bible. The difficulty of solving the question has arisen from the too common practice of disregarding the word:—adopting the far more philosophical method, of casting away the light and working in the dark.

The northern boundary of the promised land is laid down in Scripture in more places than one. We shall take that given by Moses in Num. xxxiv. 7-11: "This shall be your north border: from the great sea ye