

Sacred Places

Is Helidon a sacred Place? That was alleged in a recent letter to the *Chronic/e* (July 1997). Only one passage in the Old Testament refers to Palestine as “the holy land.” The Christian principle is that things are sanctified (made holy) by the Word of God and prayer. No place has inherent holiness. Every place has its prospect spoilt by human sin. Paul said that though people once knew Jesus “according to the flesh” they do not know Him in a human kind of way any more, although, of course, He is a human being, and always will be. Even in church history, there was little interest in Palestine and the “sacred sites” as such until Constantine’s mother Helena tried to identify places like the sites of the Jesus’ birth and crucifixion, and Mount Sinai, and apparently got these three, at least, wrong. To visit the places where Jesus lived, died, rose, and ascended in themselves benefits no one, apart from faith in His redemptive work. The interest of visiting places like a tourist is one thing. To claim spiritual benefit from any place is foolish, and obscures the message of the Gospel.