

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF JERUSALEM.

A SHORT sketch of the topography of Jerusalem may aid those who are not familiar with the subject in understanding the accompanying Report. Jerusalem is a mountain city. It was pre-eminently so to the Jew; for, with the exception of Samaria and Hebron, the other great cities within his ken, those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, Damascus, Tyre, Gaza, Jczreel, Jericho, were emphatically cities of the plain. The Temple pavement stood some 2,400ft. above the Mediterranean, distant 25 miles as the crow flies; some 3,700ft. above the Dead Sea, distant 12 miles. The Bible, indeed, teems with allusions to this local peculiarity of its site as a mountain city. The plateau on which the city stands is of tertiary limestone; the strata are usually nearly horizontal, and the landscape shows generally a succession of plateaux and flat-topped hills, broken here and there by deep narrow gullies, and generally a marked resemblance can be traced to the characteristic scenery of parts of the limestone districts of our own country.

At the point where the city stands a tongue of land is enclosed between two of these ravines, and on this the modern, like the ancient city, is built. The easternmost of these ravines, the valley of Jehoshaphat or of the Kedron, has a course nearly north and south; the westernmost, the valley of Hinnom, after running a short distance to the southward, makes a bold sweep to the east, and forming the southern limit to the tongue of land above-mentioned, joins the valley of the Kedron, not far from the Beer Eyub, or Well of Joab. Both ravines commence as a mere depression of the ground, but their floor sinks rapidly, and their sides, encumbered as they are now with the accumulated *débris* of centuries, and the ruins of buildings thrown down by successive invaders or domestic factions, are still steep and difficult of access. In ancient times the bare rock must have shown itself in many places, and in more than one place the researches of Mr. Warren have shown that the natural difficulties of the ground were artificially increased in ancient times by the scarping of the rock surface. Hence, we find Jerusalem to have been at all times, before the invention of gunpowder, looked upon as a fortress of great strength; on three sides, the east, the south, and the west, the encircling ravines formed an impregnable obstacle to an assailant; the attack could only be directed against the northern face of the city, where, as we are informed by Josephus, the absence of natural defences was at the time of the famous siege by Titus supplied by three distinct lines of wall. To determine the actual course of these walls is, notwithstanding the

detailed description of them in Josephus, one of the most difficult problems before us.

Besides these two principal ravines a third ravine of less importance splits the tongue of land into two unequal portions. This is the Tyropœon valley, the valley of the cheesemakers, or as some would have it, of the Tyrian merchants. A marked depression of the ground runs from north to south through the midst of the modern city from the Damascus gate to a point in the Kedron valley somewhat north of its junction with the valley of Hinnom, forming in its course the boundary between the Mahometan, and the Christian and Jewish quarters of the modern city. At one part of its course it forms the western boundary of the Haram es-Shereef. This depression has generally been identified in its whole course with the Tyropœon valley of Josephus, though Dr. Robinson and others would place this latter along the line of a depression of the ground running between the western or Jaffa gate and the Haram es-Shereef. All, however, are agreed in identifying the lower portion which runs under the west wall of the Haram, and thence to the Kedron, with the Tyropœon; and Mr. Warren's researches have shown that in ancient times this valley was much deeper than at present, and that its ancient course was to the eastward of its present course. It is filled up with *débris* 30ft., 50ft., and even 85ft. in depth.

The city being thus split in the midst into two ridges by this valley, it may be observed, by a reference to the Ordnance Map of Jerusalem, that the western ridge is the most elevated and most important. Most authorities are agreed in placing on some portion of this ridge the original city of Jebus, captured by King David, and the Upper City of Josephus. All again are agreed in fixing Ophel on the end of the tongue of land on which stands the Haram es-Shereef, and in making the site of the Temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel, and Herod, and of the castle of Antonia, either coincide with or occupy some portion of the Haram itself.

But here all agreement may be said to stop. There are differences of opinion whether we should fix the Mount Zion of the Bible and the Mount Zion of the writers of Christian times on the same or on opposite hills, whether the name is to be identified with the eastern or the western ridge. The exact position of the Temple is matter of controversy; the site of the Acra of Josephus, and the Acra of the Book of Maccabees, of Bezetha, the fourth quarter and last added suburb of the city; the position of the Towers Hippicus, Phasaelus, and Mariamne, and of the Tower Psephinus, which if determined would go far to settle the disputed question of the course of the second and third walls of Josephus; the exact extent of the city in the

time of our Saviour; are matters of keen dispute, which can only be settled by patient and systematic burrowing into the *débris* produced by many successive demolitions of the [city at those points where the absence of inhabited houses renders it possible to excavate at all. And upon the decision eventually arrived at on these points depends the settlement of what is the most difficult, as it must be by far the most interesting, problem to us all—viz., whether the present Church of the Holy Sepulchre does or does not cover the true sepulchre of our Saviour; if not, whether the true site can yet be recovered; and if so, in what quarter we should look for it. The manner in which the settlement of the points in dispute affects this last question, and the various opinions which have been advanced as to them, is too large a question to be entered upon now. Our subscribers will find most of the opinions held noticed in Dr. Robinson's "Biblical Researches," the Rev. G. Williams's "Holy City," and Mr. Fergusson's paper on the "Topography of Jerusalem," in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."

Suffice it to say, that Mr. Williams and his followers regard the present site of the Holy Sepulchre as genuine; Mr. Fergusson considers the octagonal-domed building in the middle of the Haram, known as the Kubbet es-Sacra, to be the Church of the Anastasis, built by Constantine, over what he believed to be the site of the Sepulchre; while Dr. Robinson, agreeing with Mr. Fergusson in discrediting the present traditional site, is not prepared to point out a substitute. Again, the Temple of Herod is identified by Monsieur de Vogüé with the whole of the present Haram enclosure, the castle of Antonia being placed to the north, where the modern Turkish barracks stand; Mr. Williams places the Temple around the Kubbet es-Sacra, which he considers to be the site of the high altar, regarding the southern portion of the enclosure as of later date. Mr. Fergusson places the Temple on a square of 600ft., of which the southern and western sides respectively would be formed by a length of wall extending for 600ft. east and north of the present south-west angle of the Haram, and Antonia immediately to the north of it. Amidst all these conflicting theories on these and other points systematic inquiry into facts by competent and independent parties is urgently needed, and such are the agents and such the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund.