

## THE CITY OF DAVID.

*(Continued.)*

## I. ZION, SOUTH AND NOT WEST OF THE TEMPLE.

IN his Handbook Captain Conder places "Acra or Millo" and the "Tomb of David" further west than Sir Charles Warren's site, and (p. 333) has "little hesitation in identifying that hill (Acra) with the knoll of the present Sepulchre Church." He concludes that the term, the City of David, was applied to this part because (as he urges) Millo was in the City of David, and Millo is rendered by *Acra* in the LXX, and next because Josephus (p. 338) seems by Millo to understand the Lower City ("Ant.," VII, iii, 2), which he identifies with *Acra* ("Wars," V, vi, 1); and, as already stated, Captain Conder takes Josephus to place his *Acra* west of the Temple. It will be seen that the argument is this: Where *Acra* was, there was also the City of David. But it has been proved above that *Acra* was *south*, not west, of the Temple. Therefore the City of David was not on Captain Conder's site, near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Another point may be noticed. As Captain Conder is ready to identify the *Acra* of the LXX with the *Acra* of Josephus, and the Lower City in the "Antiquities" with the *Acra* in the "Wars," he cannot fairly refuse to identify the Lower City and the *Acra* of the "Antiquities" with the Lower City and *Acra* of the "Wars," while the expression in "Ant.," XII, v, 4, he "built the *Acra* in the Lower City," shows that sometimes the *Acra* only means a part of the latter. Now in "Ant.," VII, iii, 1, Josephus says that David *took first the lower city and next the Acra*, and so captured the whole of Jerusalem. Now it is obvious that the *Upper City* on the south-western hill could not be either the *Lower City* or the *Acra* within it. Therefore, according to the "Antiquities," the *Upper City* was not the City of David.

Accordingly, when Captain Conder ("Handbook," 336) wants to show that the *Upper City* was Zion, or the City of David, he appeals to "Wars," V, iv, 1, where Josephus says that the *Upper City* was called *φρούριον* (the citadel) by David, evidently as equivalent to "the fort" (Heb. Metzad) of Zion, which was afterwards called the City of David (2 Sam. v, 7).

Josephus wrote the "Antiquities" after the "Wars," and was of course at liberty to correct his own mistakes as far as he could. Since then, in his later and fuller account, Josephus speaks of David taking the *Lower City* and the *Acra*, and after the expulsion of the Jebusites from the *Acra*, of his rebuilding Jerusalem and calling it the City of David, it is obvious that the casual remark in the "Wars" is set aside as worthless by Josephus himself. After this exposure I hope no one will maintain that the abandoned statement of "Wars," V, iv, 1, proves that the *Upper City* was ever the stronghold of Zion, or the site of the City of David. For myself I decline to depend on the conjecture in the "Wars"

or the paraphrase in the "Antiquities," as one can go directly to 2 Sam. v, where the Biblical account says nothing whatever about an *Upper* or *Lower* City, but simply mentions the fort of Zion.

Thrupp (Jerusalem, 56) thinks that Acra in "Ant.," VII, iii, 1, may and does mean the Upper City because (1) the Acra in that passage is "not to be identified with the Lower City, the Acra of later times," and (2) because Josephus in "Ant.," XII, x, 4, speaks of an Acra which Thrupp takes to have been in the Upper City.

The answer to (1) is, that the later Acra (as already pointed out) sometimes means only a part of the Lower City, and therefore, in "Ant.," VII, both the Acra and Lower City, without being identical, may be named, just as both are mentioned in "Ant.," XII, v, 4; and to (2) that the passage in Josephus is corrupt, and that a reference to the parallel account in 1 Macc. vii, 32, shows that the Acra named was not in the Upper City, but was the one commonly so called.

Further, in attempting to prove that the Acra of Josephus was west of the Temple, Captain Conder shows but little respect for the statements of his great authority.

In "Wars," V, iv, 1, 2, Josephus says, "Over against this (Acra) there was a *third* hill (obviously the Temple hill), but naturally lower than Acra, and formerly parted from it by another *broad* valley. . . . The Hasmoneans filled up the valley, wishing to join the City to the Temple; and they levelled the summit of Acra and reduced its elevation in order that the Temple might be seen above it in this direction, . . . a *fourth* hill which is called Bezetha (*i.e.*, the new city)."

Compare with this Captain Conder's statements. He says ("Handbook," 332, 3) the "*third* hill was covered by the new city," (!) or Bezetha. The third hill (Bezetha !) was separated from Acra by a *deep* valley afterwards filled up by the Hasmoneans. But if they had wished to join the city (Acra) to the Temple, why should they have filled up the valley between Acra and a different hill, Bezetha, north of the Temple (333)? And, lastly, Captain Conder tells us that his Acra (contrary to the statement of Josephus) is still *above* (instead of lower than) the highest point on the Temple ridge.

Sir Charles Warren's site at any rate satisfies this requirement, and so, of course, does the true site for Acra south of the Temple.

It is one thing for Josephus to have made a mistake about a height being lowered and a valley filled up two hundred years before his day, when in his time neither existed to be seen; and quite a different thing for him not to have known which of two hills was the higher, when he had probably observed both of them daily during the siege. It seems to me, however, that Josephus may have meant that the *Upper City* was joined to the Temple in the line of Wilson's Arch.

Having thus cleared of all obstructions the ground north of the Upper City, the way is now open for me to attack the traditional site.

## II. ZION NOT ON THE SOUTH-WESTERN HILL.

The defenders of the Upper City are many and mighty. They are further agreed that their site is the true one, but hopelessly at variance as to the way of proving it. Nehemiah ii, iii, and xii is to them a crucial test.

One (Mr. Tenz) thinks that the words (*supra* 122) "from the dung gate to the fountain gate" give an order from east to west; another (Captain Conder) from west to east; another changes his mind within ten pages ("Murray's Handbook," 172, 181); another protests against thinking about it at all. He writes to me: "I won't consider it any longer, as I nearly went off my head a dozen years ago over it. Of all the subjects I know, there is none more bewildering. I cannot understand how Sion can be anywhere but on the western (*i.e.*, S.W.) hill, and yet your arguments are very strong."

Mr. Tenz, the constructor of a most interesting model of Jerusalem, objects to the Ophel site on page 121 above, and thus defends the traditional one:—

1. He both says he "may justify the remarks made by Captain Conder against the Ophel site" (*Quarterly Statement*, 1883, p. 194), and adds that Josephus "is yet the most reliable authority." Captain Conder there asks, "If David and Solomon did not build a wall round the Upper City, why does Josephus say ('Wars,' V, iv, 1) that *the old wall built by David and Solomon began on the north at Hippicus?* Is this another false statement, or is Hippicus on the Temple spur, and is the Upper City *post Herodian*. And if they did, why should the 'City of David' be applied to a hill which was only walled in by later kings?" I have no objection to the idea that David and Solomon had to do with the wall here spoken of. I would, however, point out that while Captain Conder says Ophel "was only walled in by the *later* kings," Josephus himself in this passage says that the old wall built by David and Solomon and the later kings not only began at Hippicus, but also "had a *bend above Siloam, reached to Solomon's pool and Ophlas, and ended at the eastern cloister of the Temple.*" Thus, according to Josephus, David and Solomon had as much to do with the wall in Ophel as that on the hill of the Upper City, and so Captain Conder's notion about the later kings is wrong. Surely Mr. Tenz, as an admirer of Josephus, ought to have justified him and me and not deserted both of us for Captain Conder.

2. Next, he thinks that the towers, bulwarks, palaces in Psalms xlvi were too many to have been on Ophel, and that therefore Zion must mean the Upper City. The question, however, is not what Zion or Mount Zion may mean in the Psalms (where they sometimes seem to be equivalent to Jerusalem), but what in *historical* passages is meant by *Zion* and the *City of David*. (*Quarterly Statement*, 1881, p. 94.)

3. He thinks the Upper City must have been Zion, because the valley of Hinnom went up on the south side of it. I have shown, however, that the Tyropœon was the valley of Hinnom, and as it is not south of the

Upper City, this very argument shows that the Upper City was not the stronghold of Jebus, *i.e.*, Zion.

4. He thinks Nehemiah went out near the Virgin's Fount, by the valley (*ge*) gate leading to the brook (*nachal*) Kidron, and that when he went up by the brook (*nachal*), he went up *his* (Mr. Tenz's) valley (*ge*) of Hinnom. Here once more *ge* and *nachal* (see 101 *supra*) are confused, and so a hopeless chaos ensues, as will be seen in the next point.

5. By placing the valley gate near the Virgin's Fount, and David's tomb at or near the present traditional site, it will be seen on reference to Nehemiah iii, and xii, 31-40, that Mr. Tenz sends one procession almost round Jerusalem, first south, then west, next north, afterwards east, and finally south, until Ophel and the Horse Gate are passed in the *wrong* order, a distance of about 10,000 feet, and the other party only march a ridiculously short distance, about 500 feet, and into this short distance he has further to cram the sheep gate, the fish gate, the old gate, the Ephraim gate, and the valley gate—five gates in about five hundred feet, which is of course absurd, but inevitable with his theory.

The argument from military considerations, too hastily supposed to show that Zion was the Upper City, really points to a contrary conclusion.

It is said that as the south-western hill was by nature the strongest position, it must have been chosen for the site of the fort of Zion. But when Antiochus Epiphanes had the whole of Jerusalem in his possession, fortifying the Upper City is just what he did *not* do. He deliberately (1 Macc. i, 33) placed his garrison in the City of David, in the Acra, in the Lower City, where it held its own for twenty-six years, and was at last only reduced by famine. It is clear that what was taken to be the best position by Antiochus might well have been chosen by others before him.

I have shown above how Captain Conder's defence of the Upper City fails, but I must also show how his attack on my Ophel site ends in smoke. He does not admit with Sir Charles Warren that Nehemiah actually places the stairs of the City of David, and the Sepulchres of David, and the House of David, on Ophel, and so is put to great straits in order to avoid this concession.

(a) He draws ("Handbook," p. 345) the stairs either on the side of the Upper City or up the Tyropæon, though the natural course for the procession at the dedication of the wall would be as at other points, along the wall, which confessedly was on Ophel.

(b) He admits that the sepulchres of David are placed by Nehemiah on Ophel, but pleads that the expression means the sepulchres of (some of) the sons (or descendants) of David who were not buried in the City of David.

(c) He also admits that "the House of David" is placed by Nehemiah (xii, 37) on Ophel, but contends that the expression means the sepulchre, &c., as in (b).

This is certainly using the *lucus a non lucendo* principle with a

vengeance. But a new idea! Why not argue that the tomb was Saul's and that "the House of David" simply means "the tomb of the *father-in-law* (!) of David. For was not Saul buried in Zelah? and by some, I believe, "Zelah, Eleph" has been connected (*Quarterly Statement*, 1881, p. 147) with the eastern hill at Jerusalem.

I now claim to have disposed of the myth that the Upper City was Zion. Jerome seems to have been the publisher of this greatest work of fiction ever produced, for it has had a run of fifteen centuries, and is still in demand. It has not only imposed too long on unsuspecting folk, like myself, of cramped imagination, but it has also bewitched the writer of an impossible story whom I used to think too shrewd ever to mistake such fiction for fact. A few perhaps will be thankful for the dispelling of this patriotic concoction; most, however, will probably choose to believe an error rather than weary themselves in investigating the truth.

If any one wishes to defend either of the pseudo-Zions that I claim to have annihilated, let him do so.

"Vive, vale. Si quid novisti rectius istis  
Candidus imperti; si non his utere mecum."

W. F. BIRCH.

## THE DEAD SEA.

SOME observations which seemed to point to one conclusion claiming my interest in the autumn of 1854, when I was twice at the southern end of the Dead Sea for the purposes of my Art, have since remained in my mind as indications of peculiar features in its geological formation, and as I have never met with references to them, I will now beg your permission to invite the attention of Mr. Hull, or of any future investigator of the district, in order to have the truth on the point raised satisfactorily explained.

I will tell the facts as they came to my notice. My first journey to the district was made from Jerusalem with Mr. W. Beamont, of Warrington, who wrote a very interesting diary of his visit to the Holy Land, entitled "Journey in the East." A third friend was his son, the Rev. W. J. Beamont, of Trinity College, Cambridge, since deceased. We arrived and pitched our tent on the plain amid the trees, which, as the lake widens two miles or so northward of Usdûm, are thick and about 20 feet or more in height. As there was still enough daylight remaining, we set off to the border of the sea for a bathe. On approaching the coast it was noticeable that the trees on the north-eastern curve of the bay stood closer to the margin of the water than they could have been when first they emerged from the soil, and that into the water itself the whole of the once living forest of tamarisks, junipers, acacias, &c., descended, leafless, dead, and stark. But although the engulfment had