

Bible speaks of a valley, therefore we want a Wâdy, not Khurbet. This, we have seen, Captain Conder professes to have found too. Still I hold that an identification in order in any degree to accomplish the aim of his identification, viz., to render that remarkable LXX reading unnecessary, ought to have some stronger certainty about it than the unmapped Wâdy Safieh has; and the affinity or kinship of its name ought to be more real and substantial than that which exists between צפת (ה) and צאפיה (ה). For though in the history of names these and greater changes may in some unaccountable way happen to take place, yet it is not a usual thing at least that a פ should turn into a ו.

But, finally, when we also consider that no identification can smooth the language of the text, then we see that the Hebrew cannot by such means be satisfactorily established, nor the Greek really proved to be in error. The question, therefore, resolves itself of necessity into one between the two readings. Perhaps another visit to the place itself will do much to clear up matters concerning the valley. But, with regard to the two readings, I do not wish to be positive in my opinion about them, but am content to say that there will probably be no assurance upon the question between them until the day when this time of uncertainty shall have passed away, and we shall know even as we are known.

E. FLECKER.

Durham, May, 1886.

ZION, THE CITY OF DAVID, OR ACRA, SOUTH OF THE TEMPLE—*continued.*

I OBSERVE that Sir Charles Warren makes no attempt to defend his site for Zion. Perhaps he is too busy, or rather, too wary to reply to my arguments.

He claimed the *link* in support of his site, and in the last statement Captain Conder has appealed to the *chain* in opposition to mine. Our rival theories can be submitted to no better test. Accordingly, though it may seem presumption in me to contend against these professional surveyors, I venture to try their theories by the *link and chain*.

Sir Charles Warren (Temple or Tomb, 22) admits that Zion = the city of David = the Macedonian Akra = the Akra of Josephus, and observes, "Therefore we have a connecting link throughout." Precisely so. But I have proved (*supra* 26) that the Acra of Josephus was south and not west of the temple. Therefore the *link* gives its support to my theory, not to his.

On the other hand, Captain Conder appeals to the *chain*, and after

measuring up my plan, says (p. 82), "Mr. Birch's 'City of David' now occupies an area of 200×600 feet, or $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres. I do not consider this large enough for a city, or even for a country house and grounds."

I stated (p. 34) that I had made the area at least three acres, but it seems that my reduced plan is a twelfth of an inch too narrow, representing about 25 feet on the ground. It must therefore, to remove the discrepancy, be made a *line* wider, or *three* altered to $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres. The error no doubt arose from my being neither a draughtsman nor a surveyor.

As Captain Conder observes that my city of David *now* occupies this small area, I must remind him that this is the only estimate I have given. When I mentioned 10 or 15 acres (1884, 78) I was quoting *his* estimate of the area of Ophel (1883, 195), which he pronounced absurdly insufficient for the City of David; but I never intended to trench on his generosity to any such extent.

In thinking 200×600 acres too little for the castle of Zion, Captain Conder must have forgotten that in the "Memoirs" (Vol. I., 130) his plan represents the castle of Belfort (Kulat es Shukif) as still smaller. Sir Charles Warren's measurement of it was 400×230 feet at the most. That castle held out against Saladin for a whole year. Why should the Jebusites want more room than the Crusaders? It may, however, be that Captain Conder means that a castle less than three acres in extent, would never have been entitled "the City of David." There is little to guide one on this point, but in 2 Kings x, 25, "the city of the house of Baal" has been taken to describe merely the place where Baal's priests lived in or near Samaria; and Patrick (2 Samuel v, 9) observes, "The fort (*i.e.*, of Zion) was not wide enough to contain the whole court and all his guards and others that had occasion to come hither, and therefore David built round about it." I assert as a fact that Zion was solely on Ophel (so called), but its area is at present purely a matter of conjecture. I think 3 acres, or even $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres, sufficient; still there would be some advantages in its having reached nearer to the pool of Siloam.

In the *chain* Captain Conder has provided me with an effective weapon for destroying his own Acra theory.

A. He identifies ("Handbook," p. 333) "the Acra of Josephus with the knoll of the present Sepulchre Church," and (p. 354) says, "In the Lower City also, not far above Siloam, was the palace of the royal family of Adiabene (5 "Wars," 6, 1; 6 "Wars," 6, 3)." It will be seen on reference that Josephus says this palace was *in the midst of Akra*. As therefore Captain Conder admits that Akra was a hill and places "not far above Siloam" a palace situated in the midst of Akra, it necessarily follows that Ophel (so called) must be Akra, for the Upper City certainly was not Akra (being distinguished from it by Josephus. "Wars," V, iv, 1), and the only other hill within Jerusalem "not far above Siloam" was Ophel (so called), south of the Temple. Therefore Captain Conder himself becomes a witness to Akra being south of the Temple. If he still claims that his site for Akra, west of the Temple, is correct, I reply that it can hardly be described as "not far above Siloam," being according to his plan (p. 235)

not the twelfth of an inch, but *three inches* distant from Siloam; representing on his scale not merely 25 feet, but 2,500 feet.

I have already pointed out (p. 29) that the levelling of the Acra mentioned by Josephus is unsupported by and contrary to 1 Maccabees.

When Prof. Olshausen placed Acra south of the Temple, Dr. Robinson rejected this site because

(a) One of the western gates of the Temple ("Ant.," XV, xi, 5) led to the *other* city, which he took to be Acra.

(b) Acra was over against the Temple ("Wars," V, iv, 1).

(c) Acra was naturally higher than the Temple hill, and Ophel could not have been so (*id.*).

(d) Acra used to be separated from the Temple by a broad valley which the Asmonœans filled up, but no valley apparently ever separated Ophel from the Temple.

And (e) Thrupp afterwards added that the space on Ophel was too small to have contained the Lower City or Acra.

The Doctor ("Biblical Researches") deemed his objections unanswerable, and gathered that the Professor had resigned the game. Yet the Professor might have checkmated the Doctor in four moves, by replying thus :

(a) The *other* city was the Upper City.

(b) Ophel so called was over against the Temple, just as the tower ("Wars," IV, ix, 12) near the south-west corner of the Temple was over against the Lower City.

(c, d) The tale of Josephus about levelling the Acra is simply nonsense, and contrary to 1 Maccabees (p. 29), and so too with the valley.

As to (e) Josephus says nothing whatever about the area of Acra, while Thrupp and Lewin admitted that the part south of the Temple was "at the time of the siege the most important part of the Lower City." They allowed that Acra took in this southern part, but did not perceive that Acra was confined to it.

Some, however, are so fascinated with Josephus' story about Akra being levelled that they seem blind to its absurdity. Let me then by means of the *chain* test show the *impossibility* of Captain Conder's site for Acra.

B (1.) According to Josephus, Akra (the fortress) was razed, and the hill on which it stood reduced to a lower elevation than the Temple. Yet notwithstanding this, Captain Conder gives the level of the rock near the Sepulchre Church at about 2,480 feet, and puts the Sakhrah (the highest part of the Temple hill) at 2,440 feet, or 40 feet *lower* (!) instead of higher. No doubt his figures are correct, but his theory is obviously wrong.

(2.) Captain Conder considered 10 or 15 acres insufficient for my city of David, which was the Akra of the Maccabees and of Josephus. Therefore I grant to him *one* acre more, hoping he will consider 16 acres sufficient for his own Acra.

(3.) He says (1880, 81), "The amount of the hill lowered is about 30 feet on the average . . . and if, as seems not improbable . . . yet greater."

Multiplying 16 acres by 30 feet (I hope some R.E. or C.E. will check my figures), one learns, with no little amazement, that the Jews must have removed $16 \times 43,560 \times 30$ or 20,908,800 cubic feet of rock in carrying out Josephus' fancy.

A cubic inch of Jerusalem rock weighs (I believe) slightly more than one ounce, which gives quite 1 cwt. per cubic foot. Therefore, in leveling the Acra hill, more than 1,000,000 tons of rock (not to count the old material of the Acra Fort) must have been moved from its bed. Josephus states that the Jews were busy at the work day and night, for three years, but allowing them rest on some Sabbaths and feast days, we will reckon that they worked only for 1,000 days, so that the daily output would be 1,000 tons.

Cui bono? Was the game worth the candle? Captain Conder ("Hand-book," 347) says, "The object was to make it impossible for any fortress built on Akra again to command a view of the interior of the Temple courts."

What! A Jew persuading his countryman to lift 1,000 tons daily for 1,000 days and earning gratitude thereby, and all only to prevent a view of the Temple being gained from the west, which any day might be gained from the north or east! Impossible. Gentile eloquence has cajoled many into foolish acts, but nothing like this. Why not without any fuss have raised the wall on the western side of the Temple? Or, if an eighth wonder of the world was indispensable, without more rock being quarried, a gigantic dry ditch might have been hewn out (as a northern defence to this troublesome Acra and Jerusalem), 2,000 feet in length and 100 feet in breadth and depth. And, as to fame, Simon would then have gone down to posterity, not as "a remover of mountains," but as "the Father of the Abyss." *Dulce est desipere in loco.* I have trifled enough. Let me now thank Captain Conder for the help of the *chain* in unmasking the outrageous absurdity of Josephus' most popular fiction.

In the anonymous paper on the Herodian Temple (p. 96), the writer seems to me to have forgotten that the excavations of Sir C. Warren amply *confirmed* Josephus' statements about the depth of the Tyropean Valley.

That writer also falls into another error when he says "Josephus *incorrectly* assigned the position of the Acra." He indeed located it quite correctly, but his interpreters misunderstand him (p. 26). Again the "two gates" (Ant. XV., xi., 5) on the western side of the Temple did not lead into the Acra at all, but into the suburb, while two gates (and not one only) led to the Upper City, for one led to the royal palace in the Upper City and the other to the *other city*—i.e., *the upper city*, as rightly observed by that writer on p. 96.

If any one still remains eager to emulate the prowess of Joab, let him attack Zion on Ophel (so called).

W. F. BIRCH.