

There remain only two passages more where the term occurs, and these are in the account of the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the exile, viz., in Nehemiah iii, 15, and xii, 37.

In none of these cases is there any question of size involved, and certainly nothing to show that any more was ever included in the term than the *Fort*, which originally received the name. Moreover, as C. R. C. will hardly need to be reminded, the Hebrew word for city in this phrase does not imply a *walled* city, so that no argument for its extent can be found in the name itself (as seems to underlie the English word), though of course, as a *fortress*, it would have ramparts and walls, as we are expressly told that it had.

In conclusion, I trust that we shall soon find the idea exploded that the "City of David" of the Bible was either identical with Jerusalem at large or was necessarily of larger area than could be located on the hill now known as Ophel, where every topographical reference combines to place it.

H. B. S. W.

August, 1886.

THE "ROCK ALTAR" OF ZORAH.

HAVING read Captain Conder's note on the "Rock Altar" of Zorah (*Quarterly Statement*, October, 1886, p. 166), I shall feel obliged if you would permit the following description of it extracted and translated from a paper by Mr. Schick on "The Home of Samson" in the German Magazine, "Neueste Nachrichten aus dem Morgenlande," No. 2, Berlin, 1886, to appear in the pages of the next *Quarterly Statement*. I forward likewise by this mail a copy of the number of the above-named German periodical containing Mr. Schick's paper, p. 89-107.

On pp. 100 and 101, Mr. Schick says:—"On the declivity of the north-western hills, about 700 metres distant from and below the village of Surah" (Zorah), "there exists a regular rock altar within the bounds of the Artouf lands. It is in die-form, but decreasing in size towards the top in steps; the length and the breadth are each $3\frac{1}{4}$ metres. It rises about 2 metres out of the ground, and was hewn out of the rock in such a manner that its four corners point exactly to the four points of the compass. "On two" opposite "sides steps led up to a small platform, on which rises the altar table" (or slab) "in length and also in breadth 1.48 metres and 0.25 in height, but which has a portion 0.90 metre long and 0.37 broad cut away, probably for the standing place of the priest. The upper surface" (of the altar slab) "is horizontal, and furnished with round hollows of various sizes cut into the surface and connected by grooves.

"Only the upper steps have been preserved, the others have fallen off and lie in fragments near the altar in the ground. The altar stands in the

open field, but near a rocky ridge out of which it and the surrounding area have been hewn."

I would here take the liberty of interrupting Mr. Schick's description in order to remark that the result of the excavations round the base seem to show that the altar was not "hewn out of the rocky ridge," but that it is simply a huge limestone boulder, resting on a stratum of white marly rock, and does not appear to have been connected with the adjoining rocky ridge when hewn into altar-shape.

Since Captain Conder first suggested that it was the remnant of a quarry, I have frequently visited the spot, and though I have searched carefully I have not succeeded in finding any traces of the supposed quarry. I do not even think with Mr. Schick that the area surrounding the altar was "hewn out of the rocky ridge." That it may have been *broken* out I am willing to allow, but not that it was *hewn* in the sense of hewing with pick or chisel. But it is time to return to Mr. Schick's description.

He continues: "As we know from Judges xiii, 19, that Manoah actually offered his sacrifice upon a rock, one cannot go far astray if one supposes that this altar is the very same, either that it then existed as such, or, which appears more probable, that having in a certain measure become hallowed and consecrated by this event it was later on hewn into a formal altar to serve thereafter as a place of worship. It is certain that at the time of the apostasy, when the worship of high places was in its bloom, sacrificial feasts were often held here where the ascending smoke could be seen in the whole southern district at a distance of several hours."

Thus far Mr. Schick, at whose expense the stones and soil round the monument were cleared away and the base laid bare by excavations.

I am glad that he as well as Dr. Chaplin agree with me in supposing it to be an altar, and I hope that some day not very far in the future Captain Conder will return to Palestine, and on visiting the spot be relieved of the "great difficulty he now feels in accepting it."

JAMES EDWARD HANAUER.

JERUSALEM, November 27th, 1886.
