

TOPHETH AND THE KING'S GARDEN.

By Rev. W. F. BIRCH, M.A.

THE current excavations are flashing fresh light on Jerusalem. Let it be used.

The above were, I believe, quite distinct localities according to the Bible; for Topheth (Jer. vii, 31) is said to be in the Valley (Heb. *gai*) of the son of Hinnom, while the indications given in the Old Testament require the King's Garden to have been in the *nachal*, i.e., brook Kidron, in its wider part reaching to Joab's well, close to En-rogel.

Since topographically important questions are affected by Topheth and the King's Garden being correctly laid down, these two positions must be proved.

TOPHETH.

It has already been proved (*Quarterly Statement*, 1882, 55; 1889, 38; 1893, 330) that the Valley of Hinnom was the central valley at Jerusalem, the Tyropœon which reached to Siloam being part of the said valley.

Ahaz (2 Chron. xxviii, 3) used Hinnom for cruel, idolatrous worship, and Jer. xxxii, 35, states: "They built the high places of Baal, which are in the Valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech." As the Old Testament in regard to Jerusalem is precise and consistent in always applying to Hinnom no other term than *gai*, and never applying *gai* to the *nachal* Kidron, or to the south-west valley (called the King's Dale, *emek*), i.e., Wady Rabábeh, it is most satisfactory to find that Jeremiah, when previously he alludes to the worship of Baal, connects it with Hinnom by using *gai* for the valley which he names in ii, 23: "How canst thou say I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? see thy way in the valley." He also predicts (xxxii, 40) that certain polluted places, both outside and near Jerusalem on the west, south, and east, should become holy, and yet he makes no mention whatever of Hinnom, which had already been polluted. Why this omission? The reason clearly is that the Valley of Hinnom passed through and was inside his Jerusalem. Obviously a valley within the city could not be treated as outside it.

This last passage requires the whole Valley of Hinnom to be practically within the city, and therefore Topheth, a part of it, must also be within the city. Now the prophet, in foretelling the miseries of the siege and capture of Jerusalem, says (vii, 32; xix, 6-11): "The days come that it (Topheth) shall no more be called Topheth nor the Valley of the son of Hinnom, but The Valley of Slaughter: for they shall bury in Topheth, till there be no place to bury," or (better in margin R.V.) "because there shall be no place else." If Topheth had been outside the city during the siege of Zedekiah, how could the Jews bury there at all while the Chaldeans were round about it? But with Topheth and the Valley of

Hinnom *inside* the wall of the city, all is clear and intelligible. In order to enclose these two localities, there must, however, have been a wall stretching across the *gai* of Hinnom at its *opening* into the *nachal* Kidron, and this (be it noted) is the very place where an embankment across the *gai* now exists (*see* plan, 1896, p. 298), and where Dr. Bliss, in May, 1895, reported, or actually discovered (and partly traced), a wall running (practically) parallel to and near the embankment. This find is a splendid gain; since Jer. vii, 32, requires, as we saw, a transverse wall at the mouth of the Valley of Hinnom, and excavation shows the remains of it still existing. I am most thankful for this discovery, even though it makes such havoc of some of my notions that Neh. iv, 10, aptly describes the result.

I may observe, in passing, that Josephus never names Topheth or the Valley of Hinnom, in strict agreement with the prediction that such names would cease to cling to the place, which would be known instead as The Valley of Slaughter (הַרְגָה, *haregah*). It is curious that in "Ant." IX, x, 4, he speaks with Oriental additions of a place before the city called Ερωγη (*eroge*), which was blocked by a falling rock in Uzziah's reign. Such an obstruction might easily occur in the narrow Tyropœon just north of Ain Silwân, but not so well anywhere much further south. Topheth seems to me to be proved not to have extended outside the transverse wall in the Valley of Hinnom.

THE KING'S GARDEN.

Without examination I assumed (1884, 77), and have since thought, that this was in the Valley of Hinnom. Now I see the error.

To Solomon the Magnificent the more open Kidron Valley presented a far more desirable position than did the smaller Hinnom, wherein he might delight himself with the charm of an Oriental, viz., a garden planted with trees and provided with water. True: Jerusalem had no brimming Abana in which to glory, but when from En-rogel (1889, 41) the gushing brook overflowed through the midst of the land, the inhabitants of the Holy City, then as now, could keep festive time and enjoy their holiday in the King's Garden (placed here also by Josephus) on a scale that was quite impracticable in the Valley of Hinnom.

To the Song of Songs we owe the unique passage that distinctly locates the garden of (Solomon) the King in the *nachal* Kidron, viz., vi, 11: "I went down into the garden of (wal) nuts, to see the green plants of the valley (*nachal*)." In this book the mention of daughters of Jerusalem and Zion and the watchmen in the *city* beyond question places the scene at Jerusalem, and therefore the *nachal* must be the *Kidron*. Most suitably also is the comparison to "a spring shut up (or barred), a fountain sealed," introduced at this place (iv, 12), as if it had been suggested by the *genius loci*; for close to Joab's Well, in the descent to the sources of the overflowing brook of En-rogel,

Sir Charles Warren discovered a concealed entrance still "shut up," and the staircase below walled up, with the stone plug in its proper place (Sir Charles Warren's Letters, pp. 141-153, 1869, "Recovery of Jerusalem," 1871, p. 260, *Quarterly Statement*, 1889, pp. 41, 47). Then, too, the invitation to the north and south winds to blow upon my garden (iv, 16), most appropriately fits in with the Kidron Valley lying north and south (Bonar's "Land of Promise," 162).

It has thus been proved conclusively (so far as I see), not from guessing Josephus or erring Jerome, but from Biblical evidence, that in the time of Jeremiah Topheth was in the central or Tyropœon Valley within the outer wall of Jerusalem, and the King's Garden in the eastern valley, *i.e.*, the Kidron, outside that wall. Also it is clear that the city wall crossed Hinnom near the said embankment.

Now let us turn this fresh light upon the obscure questions of the right position of the Fountain Gate, the Wall of the Pool of Siloah by the King's Garden, the Stairs that go down from the City of David, the Sepulchres of David, and the Pool that was made (Neh. iii, 15, 16). From what I have read, I am now driven to the following view. As we must accept a wall alongside the embankment in Jeremiah's time, it is obviously straining out the gnat to demur to Nehemiah's Wall having enclosed the site of the gate near the tower on the plan (p. 298).

The Fountain Gate.—This may fitly be located at the said gate, at the south-east corner of Jerusalem, so named from leading to En-rogel.

The Wall of the Pool of Siloah by the King's Garden.—No other words could better describe the transverse wall across Hinnom, if the Old Pool on plan be identified with the Pool of Siloah, for the King's Garden begins immediately east of the wall. This agreement is most encouraging. In 1890 (p. 200) I took Nehemiah's Wall across the Tyropœon to be 100 yards higher up the valley.

The stairs that go down from the city of David.—Neh. xii, 37, adds, "They went up by the stairs of the city of David at the going up of the wall." The transverse wall takes us across the Valley of Hinnom to the south-east extremity of the Ophel Hill (so called). Here I expect Dr. Bliss will discover both ascending stairs and an ascending wall. Such would be a strong argument that we are on the right track.

Over against the sepulchres of David to (יך) = right up to) the pool that was made.—The sepulchres are now covered up, but I believe they were within (1879, 179) Hezekiah's wall and on the left hand of the stairs, if these kept close to the wall. Here is a most delicate piece of excavation, requiring much judgment. No doubt Dr. Bliss will prove equal to the occasion and finally discover the sepulchres. But we were on the way to the pool that was made. Where was this pool? It seems to me, after nineteen years' tedious search and repeated failures, that it must have occupied the site of the present upper Pool of Siloam south of Ain Silwân, only it was more extensive. In Isaiah xxii, 11, it is called the ditch.

Strangely these intricate points turn out to be much simpler than I

anticipated, and Note B in *Quarterly Statement*, 1877, p. 204, appears to be (so far as I can see) the right solution of the question, though I then only named an alternative course for the wall as possible, but did not see my way to accept it.

After this the King's Pool (Neh. ii, 14) easily slips into its proper place south of the Virgin's Fount (Gihon), getting its name from Solomon being there anointed. The ruins in this narrow part of the *nachal* apparently necessitated Nehemiah's dismounting.

Hezekiah's tomb was apparently near the stairs named above, though at a lower level than David's sepulchres; for 2 Chron. xxxiii, 33, says they buried him in the ascent of (? to) the sepulchres of the sons of David.

I hope the reader will do his utmost to further these most interesting excavations, so that the Palestine Exploration Fund may obtain data for a correct plan of Zion, besides photographs of the various chambers in the royal catacombs.

Note B. "*Quarterly Statement*," 1877, p. 204.

Even on the admission (Note A) that the *pool that was made* was in the Tyropœon Valley, it might still be urged that the *lower* Pool of Siloam was the Pool of Siloah, and the *upper* Pool of Siloam was the Pool made by Hezekiah.

Such a view may possibly be consistent with the LXX rendering of Neh. xii, 37, Isa. xxii, 11, though the objections to it on other grounds seem to me very strong. If it could be maintained, then the line of the wall and stairs would have to be drawn from the north end of the embankment up the Ophel Hill, and the position of the Tomb of David altered accordingly.

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THE TEMPLE, THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION, AND THE FINDING OF THE CROSS.

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IN view of the approach of an important day of the year¹ in regard to Jerusalem, will you allow me to suggest through the *Quarterly Statement* the possibility of a connection between the Temple and the Ascension Church? The day I speak of is that of the Dedication of the Holy Sepulchre, September 15th.

The Temple was built round about the rock summit of Mount Moriah—"the mountain of the house," and it is generally admitted that the rock now covered by the Arab Dome ("the Temple of the Lord" in the

¹ Written September 1st, 1896.