

GOLGOTHA AND THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

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THE Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund have done an important public service to archæology by publishing the late Sir Charles Wilson's valuable notes on *Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre*, a work which was left unfinished at the time of his death. The editing of this work was entrusted to his friend and successor, Col. Sir Charles Watson, R.E., now Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Exploration Fund. The case for and against the traditional sites is set out in this work with a fullness of literary knowledge which has never been equalled, and the following judicial and cautious summing up is likely to find general acceptance on the main issue. "There is no decisive evidence historical, traditional, or topographical for placing Golgotha and the Tomb where they are now shown. At the same time there is no direct evidence that they were not so situated" (p. 120).

If we may accept this finding as the last word on a burning controversy, we shall be in a position to appreciate all the better "the views of those earnest Christians who, for various reasons, find themselves unable to accept the traditional sites as genuine."

These views are well set forth in Chapter X, which many persons will consider one of the most interesting—though perhaps not the most convincing—portion of the book. There are many indications that the writer viewed with strong disfavour all the alternative theories discussed. But the chief fact of public importance to be derived from this chapter is the persistent growth through many centuries of a critical and sceptical spirit regarding the traditional "holy places." This spirit was manifested as early at least as the 8th century, and has continued at intervals down to our own day.

Sir Charles Wilson notices what he terms the "quaint" statement of Willibald, that Calvary was formerly outside Jerusalem, "but Helena, when she found the Cross, arranged that place so as to

be within the City." (Palestine Pilgrims' Text. Hodæporicon, No. XVIII, p. 19.) This statement is, at any rate, remarkable for its very explicit character. It supports the views of those who believe that the traditional or memorial site of the Holy Sepulchre has been *transferred* from some place outside the walls to the place where it is now shown.

And when it is remembered that scientific criticism by competent explorers did not even commence until towards the middle of the 19th century, it is very remarkable that so many pilgrims and travellers before that time should have shown by their published works that they entirely disbelieved the truth of the traditional Holy Sepulchre. The rejection of the traditional sites led naturally to speculation regarding the true position of Golgotha; and Sir Charles Wilson has well summarised the views of the numerous writers, commencing with Otto Thenius (A.D. 1842), who have identified the hill above Jeremiah's Grotto, called by Gen. Gordon "Skull Hill," as the real scene of the Crucifixion. Whatever may be thought of the writer's criticism, the consensus of modern opinion in favour of this site is very remarkable; and attention may well be invited to the long list of travellers and learned writers who have all expressed their general belief in the identification of this site. The list given by Sir Charles Wilson is by no means complete, and might perhaps have included such well known names and recognised authorities as the Rev. J. E. Hanauer, Dr. Chaplin, Prof. Hull, F.R.S., Mr. Henry A. Harper, Laurence Oliphant, and many others, all of whom have expressed the same opinion. There are, in fact, few spots in Jerusalem connected with the life of Christ which appear to command anything like this consensus of opinion, or on which so much continuous study has been expended; and though Sir Charles Wilson's remarks on the subject are deserving of the utmost respect, it is doubtful whether they will convince any impartial person that what is sometimes called the "green hill theory," or the "Gordon myth," is unworthy of serious attention.

The arguments urged in favour of the "Skull Hill" are thus summarised on p. 115. (1) Its elevation and conspicuous position. (2) Its resemblance to a human skull. (3) Its proximity to the City and to the great road to the North. (4) The Jewish tradition which identifies it with the "Place of Stoning." (5) The tradition relating to the martyrdom of Stephen. (6) The evidence of tombs

in the vicinity—one of which is described “as recalling very nearly the probable appearance of the new tomb of Joseph.” There has, no doubt, been much confusion (1) regarding the origin of the name “place of a skull,” and (2) regarding the supposed resemblance to a human skull of the hill above Jeremiah’s Grotto. Sir Charles Wilson points out with much force that the whole appearance and physical features of this hill have been altogether changed by extensive quarrying during many centuries, and that any imaginary resemblance to a skull in our own day could not possibly have existed at the time of the Crucifixion, or satisfactorily account for the name translated in the Gospel “place of a skull.” Dr. Schick suggests that the name “kranion,” Calvary, or skull—was probably derived, not from the form of a hill, but from the discovery of a human skull in the place. Some writers say that the skull of Adam was found there. Dr. Schick suggests that the skull found was the skull of Goliath, which David brought to Jerusalem (1 Sam. xvii, 54, xxi, 9). *P.E.F. Quarterly Statement*, 1901, p. 403.

Gen. Gordon called the hill “Skull Hill” *not* from any resemblance in relief or profile to a human skull, but from the form of the ground as represented by a contour on the Ordnance Survey Plan of Jerusalem. These reasons are altogether different from the popular view which connects the name “Skull Hill” with the extraordinary appearance of the rock face shown in the illustration facing p. 115 of Sir Charles Wilson’s book. Popular photographs of this limestone cliff taken from one aspect exhibit in a very striking way the resemblance to a human skull. The illustration in Sir Charles Wilson’s book, p. 115, hardly conveys any idea of a skull at all. It is quite possible that other causes besides that of ordinary quarrying may have affected the appearance of the “Skull Hill,” and contributed to produce the remarkable appearance which it now bears. In Dr. Schick’s article, entitled *Hill of Jeremiah’s Grotto, called by Gen. Gordon “Skull Hill”* (*P.E.F., Quarterly Statement*, Oct. 1901, pp. 402–5), he expressly refers to the possible effects of *Earthquake*, “perhaps that in the reign of Uzziah” (Amos. i, 1; Zechariah xiv, 5.). Dr. Schick appears to have forgotten that Abbot Daniel (A.D. 1106–7) described this very hill as “a flat rocky mountain which split up at the time of Christ’s crucifixion: the place is called Gehenna.” (*Palestine Pilgrims’ Texts*, Vol. IV.) Whether the name was originally El-Edhemiyeh, as given by Mejr-ed-din, or El-Heidemiyeh “the rent,” is uncertain; but the second

derivation shows that the idea of a rent or fracture, caused by earthquake, was popularly associated with this spot, and Abbot Daniel's very striking statement shows that this tradition was current at the time that he wrote, *circa* 1106-7. The crucifixion earthquake seems quite as likely to have produced the fracture referred to as the earthquake which is said to have taken place in the time of Uzziah.

The Garden Tomb is pronounced by Sir Charles Wilson to be "one of the most insignificant in the great necropolis which surrounds Jerusalem, and does not resemble the class of sepulchre which a man of Joseph's rank and position is likely to have had hewn out for himself. Some of the details of the tomb are certainly Christian" (p. 117).

The late Dr. Schick wrote a full account of "Gordon's Tomb," with illustration and plans in a paper dated November 17th, 1891, which was published in the *P.E.F. Journal* of April, 1892, pp. 120-4. He writes "The tomb was originally a rather small rock-cut *Jewish* tomb, but became afterwards a *Christian* tomb, not only by its being used again, but by being greatly altered." These alterations and the existence in the interior of Christian symbols necessarily give rise to questions of great difficulty. Reasonable supporters of the Garden Tomb have never denied that some of its present details are "certainly Christian"; but if the tomb be of Jewish origin, *i.e.*, constructed by Jewish hands for Jewish burial, who can now say with any certainty what its original form was, or when the conversion to Christian purposes took place? Gen. Gordon's followers are impressed with the remarkable position and general character of the tomb, which (for those who accept the Skull Hill as the real site of Calvary) exactly meets all the conditions of the gospel narrative, and which is *the only tomb yet discovered which fulfils this fundamental condition*. They are also struck (a) with its unfinished condition which is plainly visible; (b) its general character and fitness for a private family tomb in a garden; (c) its external surroundings, and comparative isolation from the adjoining necropolis. These points may be mere accidental coincidences, but their cumulative effect has impressed the popular imagination, and no one can deny that they are very striking. The tomb which Col. Conder suggested in 1881 as the real tomb of Christ is pronounced by Sir Charles Wilson to be "certainly Jewish, but its position 600 feet from the assumed site of Calvary

on the knoll, is greater than the narrative of John xix, 17, seems to indicate." In other words, the tomb commonly known as "Conder's Tomb," is *not* situated "in the place where he was crucified," and this objection seems fatal to Col. Conder's theory about the tomb, though he is the chief authority in favour of "Skull Hill" as the place of crucifixion. Gen. Gordon's opinion of the Garden Tomb was accepted by the late Canon Tristram, D.D., F.R.S., of Durham, the late Dr. Maurice Day, Bishop of Cashel and Waterford, the late Rev. Haskett Smith, editor of Murray's *Handbook of Palestine and Syria*, 1891, and by numerous living writers who have studied the question on the spot, and published their own opinions for what they are worth. The well-known hymn "There is a green hill far away, without a city wall," by the late Mrs. C. F. Alexander, wife of the Primate of all Ireland, gave expression to the idea which has made the New Calvary famous throughout the world. That hymn, set to music by Gounod, has been translated into many languages, and has contributed to foster the popular view, which though first made famous by Gen. Gordon, was originated by experts like Col. Conder, Dr. Chaplin, Dr. Selah Merrill, and others, before his time. Distinguished modern artists like Mr. Herbert Schmalz,¹ and Mr. W. Hole, R.S.A., R.E.,² have accepted the "green hill" and the Garden Tomb as the most appropriate setting for their well-known pictures, and travellers from all parts of the world have for many years past shown increasing interest in the "Skull Hill" and the rock-cut sepulchre at its foot.

So great was considered the religious and archæological importance of this tomb, that steps were taken in 1894 to purchase by subscription both the tomb and the land immediately surrounding it. The late Archbishop E. W. Benson supported the purchase; and his example was followed by His Grace the present Archbishop Randall Davidson, then Bishop of Rochester, and by the following Bishops whose names alone are a guarantee of soundness of judgment on a most difficult and controversial

¹ Painter of *The Return from Calvary*; *The Resurrection Morn*; *Rabboni*; and other celebrated works.

² Painter of the series entitled "The Life of Jesus of Nazareth," as set forth in 80 pictures, shown in the Rooms of the Fine Art Society, 148, New Bond Street, April, 1906.

subject:—Foss Westcott and Handley Moule of Durham, Hon. and Rev. E. Carr Glynn, Bishop of Peterborough; Bishops of Ripon, Salisbury, Cashel and Waterford, and Newcastle (Australia). Amongst minor dignitaries of the Church who supported the purchase, may be mentioned the late Canon Tristram, D.D., F.R.S., Canons Appleton, Hobson, Lowe, Phillipps, Rev. Preb. Webb Peploe, Rev. Stuart A. Donaldson, Master of Magdalen College, Cambridge, and the Archdeacons of London and Middlesex (1893-4).

The subscribers, donors, trustees and patrons of the Garden Tomb property include many scholars, authors, artists and men of affairs representative of all phases of modern religious thought. The support thus shown does not, of course, imply any belief in the identification of the tomb, or any acceptance of Gen. Gordon's mystical views; but it may be taken for granted that few would have supported the purchase had it not been considered to be of public importance. Apart, moreover, from any question of identification, the Garden Tomb property is considered by many as well worth preservation both as a Jerusalem memorial of Gen. Gordon, and as a site full of archæological remains of great interest. Gen. Gordon has left on record his belief, "I have still a strong opinion that we shall find the Constantine sepulchre is close to the St. Stephen's Church, outside the Damascus Gate where the cisterns are" (p. 199). This opinion apparently refers to the Garden Tomb site; and whether it be well founded or not, it is surely a matter of public concern that a spot so interesting and so important to archæologists should be preserved in friendly hands for the use and enjoyment of visitors, and for future study and investigation.

THE DATE OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

BY SIR CHARLES WATSON, K.C.M.G., C.B., R.E., M.A.

MR. DAVISON'S paper dealing with the question of the week-day upon which the Crucifixion took place, which was published in the *Quarterly Statement* of last April, refers to a subject which has frequently been discussed since very early times. Much useful information respecting it is given in the two following books: *Ordo Saeculorum*, by the Rev. Henry Browne, published in 1844; and