

THE VALLEY GATE.

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

IN *Quarterly Statement*, 1896, p. 172, Professor Wright places this gate on the south side of the Upper City, and thinks it is an error to place it near the Jaffa Gate (1879, p. 178).

Let me give the evidence fixing its general position. In the expressions "valley gate" and "valley of Hinnom," the Hebrew word for *valley* is *gai*, thus showing that the two localities were connected. It has been proved that the valley of Hinnom was not the south-west valley as supposed by Professor Wright, but the valley passing through Jerusalem from near the Jaffa gate to Siloam (1878, p. 180; 1882, p. 56; 1889, p. 38). To restate the case briefly—The border between Judah and Benjamin passed through Hinnom (*Joshua xv* and *xviii*). Jerusalem is assigned to Benjamin in *Joshua xviii*, 28, and regarded as theirs in *Judges i*, 21; but is also regarded as Judah's in *Joshua xv*, 63; *Judges i*, 3, 8.

(1) The popular line for the tribal boundary through the south-west valley, *i.e.*, Wady Rababeh, places Jerusalem wholly in Benjamin, and so is evidently wrong; while the line through the Tyropœon, or central valley, dividing the city, gives a portion to both tribes, obviates all difficulties, and is, therefore, manifestly right. The line ingeniously drawn by General Gordon (letter, 1883) and Dr. Schick (*Quarterly Statement*, 1884, p. 184), both gives to either tribe a part of Jerusalem, and accepts the south-west valley as Hinnom; nevertheless, the scheme fails for the following reason:—

(2) Tophet was part of Hinnom, and (so far as I can see) has been proved to have been within Jerusalem (1897, p. 72). But Wady Rababeh was wholly outside Jerusalem, therefore it could not possibly be the valley of Hinnom.

(3) A third reason is that Jeremiah (xxxii, 38–40), after foretelling the rebuilding of the city, gives an orderly description of its environs (1878, p. 180; 1882, p. 58; 1889, p. 43), mentioning "the whole valley (N.B., *emek* not *gai*) of the dead bodies and of the ashes and all the fields unto the brook (*nachal*) Kidron," &c. Why is the south-west valley here called *emek* and not *gai*? Why is no mention whatever made of the famous valley (*gai*) of Hinnom? As no one will answer my questions, let me do so. Because the south-west valley was not Hinnom. Because Hinnom was *inside* Jerusalem, and, therefore, could not be named as outside of it (1897, p. 72).

These three straight blows would suffice to kill the Hinnom myth, if it were mortal; but, unhappily, topographical error can only be stunned for a little. If it suits some to revive it, it suits me also to refute it. When the central valley has thus been proved to be the valley of Hinnom,

it follows naturally that the valley gate must have been in a position near to, or leading into, that valley, and also affording egress to the western exterior of the Upper City. Professor Wright's site leads neither into the *gai* nor to Tophet (1897, p. 73), but into the *emek*.

It might be added that with the valley gate near the north-west corner of the Upper City—the expression (*Neh. xii, 31*) *on the right hand*—precisely describes the southern march of the Ezra procession.

The theory of Robertson Smith and Professor Sayce (1884, p. 73) entirely excluded the south-west hill from praexilic Jerusalem, and so, of course, did not locate the valley gate near the Jaffa gate. Neither of these writers, however, made good his theory in these pages. I have pointed out (1889, p. 209) how absurd it would have been for the Jews to have made a pool (and fortified it) at the foot of the south-west hill at Siloam, if that hill had been left outside Jerusalem for the enemy to occupy it. What fun the Chaldaeans would have had in rolling big stones down hill into the water or against a wall so remarkably illplaced!

NOTE ON MIZPEH AND SHEN.

By Lieut.-Colonel CONDER, LL.D., R.E.

THE site of Mizpah of Benjamin has long been sought in vain. That it was somewhere near Geba (*Jeb'a*) seems to be indicated by 1 Kings xv, 22, which indicates also a frontier fortress near Ramah (*er Rám*). In Joshua (xviii, 26) it comes next to Beeroth (*Bireh*). It occurs again with Gibeath and Bethel (*Judges xx, 1*), the latter being mentioned in verses 26, 31, though not in the authorised version (*see also xxi, 18*), and it was celebrated in connection with Samuel's victory (1 Sam. vii). It was still known in the second century B.C. (1 Macc. iii, 46).

It has never before occurred to me, nor have I seen it suggested by any other writer, that the conspicuous site called *Tell Nasbeh* occupies just the proper position on the watershed south of Bireh. The change of M into N so often occurs that this name might well represent Mizpah. The identification leads us to seek for Shen and Ebenezer in the same vicinity; the former may be *Kefr Shiydn*, a ruin west of Ramallah and east of 'Ain 'Arik (Archii); and Ebenezer must have been a monument on the highest part of the watershed between these two (*see 1 Sam. vii, 12*).

May 5th, 1898.