

THE ENTRANCE TO THE TOMB OF DAVID.

THE Sepulchres of David are mentioned in Nehemiah iii, 16, in such a manner that in *Quarterly Statement*, 1877, p. 199, it seemed to me certain that they were excavated on Ophel (so called). I have never since that time doubted this point.

It was desirable, however, to point out their probable position on that hill, and this was a difficult question, as it depended upon the position of the *Pool of Siloah*, and the pool that was made, between which two Nehemiah iii, 16, obviously places them.

In *Quarterly Statement*, 1877, p. 202, I gave the reasons which seemed to compel me to identify these two pools with the two Pools of Siloam of the present day. This conclusion required me to place the Sepulchres of David on the southern extremity of Ophel. I afterwards (1879, p. 178) *distinctly abandoned* this position for the following reason. Accidentally it became clear to me that the City of David was solely and entirely on Ophel and that for Isaiah viii, 6, to have any meaning the waters of Shiloah (1878, p. 188) must have had to do with the Virgin's Fount. As, however, I rightly failed to see that the rock-cut tunnel to 'Ain Silwân existed in the time of Ahaz, it seemed impossible to apply to the same locality *all* the various passages where Shiloah, Siloah, and Siloam occur in the Bible and Josephus. In pardonable ignorance of the true explanation (*supra* 106), I was forced to disunite these names, and *assumed* a position for the Pool of Shiloah a little south of Robinson's Arch, and to avoid some difficulties, which need not now be specified, I placed *the pool that was made* at the present upper Pool of Siloam. On the further *assumption* that the Sepulchres of David were in the *malaki*, it was shown on a plan (1881, p. 99) where they ought to be looked for.

The true solution of the Siloam difficulty at once upset this my *second* position. Baffled, but not disheartened, I have at once to begin afresh. Experience and time have, however, taught me something. One may be certain now that 'Ain Silwân very fairly represents the position of Siloah; the city of David was on Ophel; the watergate (Neh. iii, 26) need not have been near the Virgin's Fountain; while either here or more to the south on Ophel, but certainly not at the lower Pool of Siloam, we *must* fix "the pool that was made." The King's pool was, in all probability, the present lower Pool of Siloam. I venture now on a *third* site for the entrance to the Tomb of David. It seems to me to be within an area 450 feet long, by 50 broad, one longer side coinciding with the track along the ridge of Ophel, and its breadth reaching about 40 feet down its eastern side. The southern end of the area is about halfway between the Virgin's Fountain and 'Ain Silwân. Good reasons for this position I hope to give in the next number.

W. F. BIRCH.