

SACRED GEOGRAPHY.
VALLEYS.

Of the valleys of Palestine, mentioned in the sacred writings, the following are the principal;

1. The Valley of Hinnom, or, as it is sometimes called, the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, lies at the foot of Mount Sion, and is memorable on account of the inhuman and barbarous, as well as idolatrous worship offered to Moloch; parents making their children to "pass through the fire," as sacrifices to that idol. (See 2 Kings, xxiii. 10, 2 Chron. xxviii. 3.) To drown the lamentable shrieks of the children thus immolated, it was usual to have musical instruments playing the while; whence the particular spot where the sacrifices were burned, was called Tophet. From the same circumstances Gehinnom, which in Hebrew is the Valley of Hinnom, and from which the Greek word Gehenna is derived, is used in Scripture to denote hell, or hell fire. To render this valley truly detestable, the bodies of persons executed for flagitious crimes, and of animals that died of disease, were cast into it; and that the pestilential exhalations which filled the air might not endanger the surrounding country, fires were almost constantly kept burning there. On the south side of this valley, near where it meets with the valley of Jehosaphat, is shown the spot of ground, formerly called the Potter's Field, but afterwards Aceldama, or the field of blood.

2. The Valley of Jehosaphat, also called the Valley of Kedron, lies between the foot of Mount Moriah as a continuation or Sion on the west, where the temple of Solomon once stood, and on which the eastern front of the city walls now lead along, and the foot of the Mount of Olives on the east. Through this valley runs the brook Kedron; except during the winter, its channel is generally dry, but when swollen by torrents, it flows with great impetuosity. In the valley of Jehosaphat, says Mr. Maundrell, the first thing you are carried to is the well of Nehemiah; so called because reputed to be the place from which that restorer of Israel recovered the fire of the altar, after the Babylonish captivity. A little farther in the valley, on the left, is a tree supposed to mark out the place where the evangelical prophet was sawn asunder. Independently of the celebrity of this valley as the scene of other important and interesting events, the prophet Joel has chosen it for the place of a pleading between God and the enemies of the Jews. (Joel iii. 1, 2.) Those spiritualizing Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans, who wrest this passage, like a thousand others of the Scriptures, from the literal to a mystical sense, insist on its applying to the resurrection of the dead on the last great day. From this belief, the modern Jews, whose fathers are thought by the most learned to have no idea of the resurrection, have their bones deposited in the valley of Jehosaphat. From the same hope, the Mohammedans have left a stone jutting out of the eastern wall of Jerusalem, for the accommodation of their prophet, who, they insist, is to sit on it here, and call the whole world from below to judgment. And a late traveller, journeying with the staff of a Christian pilgrim, after summoning up all the images of desolation which the place presents, but without once thinking of the contemptible size of the theatre for so grand a display, says, "One might say that the trumpet of judgment had already sounded, and that the dead were about to rise in the valley of Jehosaphat." Here are a great number of grave-stones, with inscriptions in Hebrew characters. Among the rest are two noble antiquities, reputed to be the Tomb of Zacharias and the Pillar of Absalom. The tomb of the prophet is a square mass of rock, hewn down into form, and isolated from the quarry out of which it is cut, by a passage of twelve or fifteen feet wide on three of its sides; the fourth or western front, being open towards the valley and to Mount Moriah, the foot of which is only a few yards distant. This square mass is eight paces in length on each side, and about twenty feet high in the front, and ten, at the back, the hill on which it stands having a steep ascent. The architecture is after the Egyptian manner. The tomb, if such it be presents no appearance of an entrance into it, and its sides are covered with names inscribed in Hebrew characters, evidently of recent execution. The Pillar of Absalom presents a strange mixture of style and ornament; its base nearly resembles in the size, form, and decoration, the Tomb of Zacharias; except

that it is sculptured with the ropes and tangles of the abric order. This base is surmounted by a sharp conical dome, of the form used in our modern parades, having large mouldings to embellish the summit round its base, and on the summit something like an imitation of flame. It is probable that this monument really occupies the place of that mentioned to have been set up by him whose name it bears. (2 Sam. xviii. 18.) Josephus fixes its distance at two furlongs from Jerusalem, and says it was named "Absalom's Hand." Close by the Tomb of Zacharias, on the north, is a cavern called the Grotto of the Disciples, from an idea that they came frequently hither to be taught by their divine Master; by others it is called the Tomb of Jehosaphat, and is supposed to give its name to the valley below.

3. The Vale of Siddim is the spot upon which stood the five cities of the plain—Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Bela, which were destroyed by fire from heaven on account of the impiety of the inhabitants. It appears evident from the description given by the inspired writer of this valley, as well as from the circumstance of Lot's choosing it for the pasture of his cattle, that it was a delightful and fruitful spot. (Gen. xiii. 10, 11.) This fruitful vale was, after the destruction of the cities, turned into the Salt Sea. (Gen. xiv. 3.)

4. The Vale of Rephaim, or the Giant's Valley, is celebrated as the theatre of David's victories over the Philistines. It was situated on the confines of the territories allotted to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Mr. Buckingham says, "Like all the country about Jerusalem, it is stony, and scantily furnished with patches of light red soil;" although it appears to have been formerly distinguished for its abundant harvests. (Isa. xvii. 5.)

5. The Valley of Mamre, is celebrated in sacred history for Abraham's entertaining there three angels under an oak. (Gen. xviii.) It was situated about two miles from Hebron, southward; and was a fertile and pleasant valley, as may be inferred from Abraham's making choice of it to sojourn in.

6. The Valley of Elah, or the Terebinthine vale, was situated south-west of Canaan, and about three miles from Bethlehem, on the road of Jaffa, or Joppa. This valley is renowned as the field of victory of the youthful David over the uncircumcised champion of the Philistines, who had "defied the armies of the living God." (1 Sam. xvii. 2-54.) "Nothing has ever occurred," says Dr. Clarke, "to alter the appearance of the country. The very brook, whence David chose him 'five smooth stones,' has been noticed by many a thirsty pilgrim, journeying from Jaffa to Jerusalem; all of whom must pass it in their way. The ruins of goodly edifices attest the religious veneration entertained in later periods for the hallowed spot; but even these are now become so insignificant that they are scarcely discernable; and nothing can be said to interrupt the native dignity of this memorable scene."

YOUTH'S DEPARTMENT.

COPY OF A LETTER TO A BROTHER.

Waterford, October, 1828.

DEAR BROTHER:—Deprived as I am of the privilege of communicating with you orally, I am thankful there is a mode still left, namely, writing; and as, according to the time of life, you are about to go forth an adventurer into a fascinating but illusive world, and that, too, without experience to guide you, I feel it my duty to make a tender of my advice to you.

I do not know that I need say any thing to you respecting the sacred duties you owe to your parents while they live, except it be to continue to show them the most profound respect. Believing, also, that you are, in common with the rest of us, impressed with the importance of cultivating kindly, tender, and affectionate feelings towards your brothers and sisters, I will add nothing on that subject. But as you have principles yet to form, which must be the basis and measure both of your happiness and usefulness, I wish just to throw a few thoughts in your way which may assist you. And,

First, While you are anxious to excel in that which is good and honourable, remember that God alone can give success to your enterprises. Therefore do nothing against his word. Whatever temptations may assail you, avoid; sedulously avoid; "presumptuous sin" and "secret fault." Impress your

mind deeply with that awful thought, "Thou God, scoot me." Never trifle with religion, nor ever mock the weakest of God's people: they are the apple of his eye. Think it no disgrace, but rather an honour to you, to reverence and respect the Bible and religion in all companies.

Secondly, Be just. Pay the most exact and scrupulous regard to the rights of all others on all occasions. Let every trust reposed in you be preserved sacred and inviolate. Remember the gain of injustice is a canker to human happiness. Connected with justice is the love and practice of,

Thirdly, Truth. Truth, as it is an attribute of the Deity, so it is both the defence and ornament of man. Without it there is neither safety, honor, nor happiness among men. To violate the truth, therefore, is to throw down the sanctuary of innocence, to wage war with ourselves, with our fellow-beings, and with our God! Believe me, in but adherence to truth we can never be too scrupulous. Put away, therefore, that silly, that dangerous notion, that to tell a lie in jest is no harm.

Fourthly, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." This you have been taught from your infancy. The low, ill bred dirty practice of swearing is degrading to the lowest class of human beings. How abominable, how shocking to hear a person, either young or old, venting his spleen, or displaying his wit, by blaspheming the eternal name! His tongue is set on fire of hell, and his breath, like the pestilence, poisons the very air he breathes! So, also, for very good reasons, a well bred, sensible man should avoid and detest all low, vulgar, and obscene words and actions. Not only should these be avoided in company, but at home, and in private, for that to which we accustom ourselves in private will not be easily laid aside in company and before the world.

Fifthly, Learn to restrain and govern your passions, for whatever advantages a man may enjoy, he can be neither good, nor wise, nor happy, while he is a slave to his passions. Especially should he guard against pride and anger. If a man "think more highly of himself than he ought to think," he will be mortified to find that others who claim less are preferred before him, and that few can perceive the merit of which he thinks himself possessed. Nay he will find many who think it no wrong to mortify a proud man. To profess more than one really knows, or to exhibit on every occasion all he does know, is alike disgusting to the sensible and the well bred. Therefore never be afraid that modesty will render you obscure. Be not soon angry. "The passionate man puts it in the power of the most worthless wretch to become his tormentor." Thus he not only suffers the wrong, but, with his own consent, the punishment also. The old adage should never be forgotten, namely—

"At every trifle scorn to take offence;
That always shows great pride or little sense;
Good nature and good sense should always join;
To err is human; to forgive divine."

Sixthly, Forget not the claims of old age. If you can contribute a mite to the happiness of age by listening respectfully to their counsels, or by performing for them a kind office, or by respectful behaviour towards them, regard it as a privilege to do so:—it will afford you satisfaction ever after. But on no occasion willfully afflict the feelings of an aged person.

Seventhly, Be courteous to strangers. Never sport with the feelings of a stranger. Remember Jesus says, "I was a stranger." Perhaps the stranger has a home, and friends as kind as thine; if not, he needs thy pity, not thy scorn.

Eighthly, cultivate a tender, sympathetic feeling towards thy suffering fellow creatures. No doubt you will meet with many pitiable objects: never refuse to hear the tale of sorrow. Never refuse your sympathies and your aid. The individual who can look upon the afflictions, and hear the groans of the sufferer, and not feel, may wear the form, but is destitute of the spirit of a man. O may you never be cursed with insensibility.

Finally, Would you be happy, would you be honorable? Then "fear God and keep his commandments." Read carefully the word of God; read it regularly, by course. You will find much in the book of Proverbs to assist you in forming your character on a solid basis. May God grant you wisdom, happiness, and life eternal. Your affectionate brother, H. S. D.