

6 THE UNDER-WORLD OF THE DEAD

Hebrew Scriptures was a deep gorge in the vicinity of Jerusalem, on the south side, forming the continuation of the valley of Gihon and where the Tyropean and Kedron valleys meet, separating the Hill Zion from the Hill of the Evil Council. This gorge is now known as the Wady-er Rebabi and is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament. From the days of Joshua, three stages especially mark this memorable place. Originally Josephus says that it was the most beautiful spot on earth, a veritable paradise. Solomon spent much money and time in beautifying this valley with groves, parks, drives, walks, fountains, in which sweet music was heard and which rose to the royal palace on Mount Zion just above. During this period this valley was called "Tophet," a name used for it ten times in the Old Testament, which means Tabret Grove.

But Israel sinned in the days of their first glory in the land. Solomon, their representative head, fell away, and did much evil in the sight of the Lord; he built high places, planted groves and sacrificed to the idols of the surrounding nations whence he selected