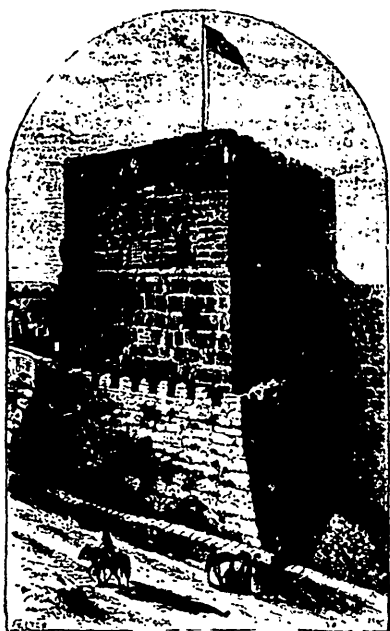


THE LORD'S LAND.

BY V. H. B. RIDGAWAY, D.D.



The Tower of David.

THE City of Jerusalem is situated in lat. 31 deg. 46 min. 43 sec. N., and long. 35 deg. 13 min. E. from Greenwich. Its height above the Mediterranean is about 2,535 feet. The space inclosed by the walls is an irregular quadrilateral, and embraces four hills, called Akra, Zion, Moriah, and Bezetha. On the east, south, and south-east, the valleys of Kedron and Hinnom separate these hills from the surrounding land, causing them to appear as one distinct hill or shoulder of the great central Palestine range. Above and beyond these valleys are the hill Scopus on the north and north-east, mount Olivet on the east, the hill of Offence on the south-east, and the hill of Evil Counsel on the south; while directly to the west, north-west, and north, the ground rolls away with but a slight elevation. I am glad my first approach to the city was not from Jaffa by the usual route of western travellers: by that road there is no view of the walls until they are nearly reached, and then no sight of the city. The walls, two and one-eighth miles in circuit, were built by Sultan Suleiman, in 1542. They are pierced by seven gates, Jaffa Gate on the west, Damascus and Herod's Gates on the north, St. Stephen's and the Golden Gates on the east, and the Zion and Dung Gates on the south. Herod's Gate and the Golden Gate are now walled up. All the others are open only from morning to night, except the Jaffa Gate, which, for the accommodation of travellers, stands open day and night.

We first visited the quarries under the city, which are entered through a narrow doorway on the outside of the wall, a little to the east of Damascus Gate. These Quarries were only discovered twenty years ago. We descended gradually over the shapeless fragments of stone, our way lighted by flaming torches, until we reached a point nearly under the present site of the Austrian Hospice. Here were evidences in the long, deep galleries, with pillars left for the support of the roof, that the natural rock had been removed for building purposes. It is a soft, yellowish limestone, and when exposed to the air, hardens and whitens. By whom and for what special use were these excavations made? Some conjecture, by Solomon for the first temple; others, by Herod for the enlargement of the second temple. It is singular that history sheds no light on this point. The Quarries are remarkable as showing the engineering skill and the fertility of utilising resources possessed at the period when they were worked.

Leaving the Quarries, we continued our walk eastward

along the north wall. Here the wall rises over the hill Bezetha, and presents, in its sombre gray stones, overgrown with tangled shrubbery, a very picturesque appearance. Herod's Gate, filled in by masonry, is near the highest ground level of this portion of the wall. In the side of the hill on the left, and nearly opposite Herod's Gate, is the Grotto of Jeremiah. It is well kept, but possesses little or no interest. Here we had our first view of the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The brook Kedron, which also gives its name to the valley, takes its rise directly north-west of the city, beyond the first swell of ground, about one and a quarter miles away, and running eastward at the foot of the hill Scopus, sweeps around, and then runs southward, cutting the city off from mount Olivet and the hill of Offence and joins the valley of Hinnom from the west at En Rogel, or Joab's Well.

This first walk did not lead us farther than the south-east angle of the wall. After pausing awhile to look over the valley, and to note in the distance on the opposite side, rising above us, the beautiful Olivet, and, at its foot, the Garden of Gethsemane and the tombs of Absalom, St. James, and Zechariah, and beyond, south-east, the hill of Offence, with the village of Siloam (Silwan) clinging to its sides, and still beyond, the hills of the Wilderness of Judea fading in the distance, we returned and entered the city at St. Stephen's Gate. A short distance from the entrance, directly under the north wall of the mosque or Harem inclosure, is Birket Israel, the traditional Pool of Bethesda. (John v. 23.) The size of the pool, its five porches, its evident proximity to the temple, the probability, from the description in Nehemiah, that the Sheep Gate was near the north-east angle of the Temple Area, the name of the adjoining hill, Bezetha, the meaning of the word Bezetha, *washing*, indicating its use in connection with the sacrificial cleansings of the temple, all give weight to the claim of the traditional pool as the real one. The more recent explorers adopt it without dissent. The pool, as it now appears, consists of two parts. The whole length, east and west, is three hundred and fifty feet, and the breadth one hundred and thirty feet. It was evidently of great depth, for, though it has been the common receptacle of the filth of neighbourhood for generations, it is now quite deep in places. Here and there, about its sides, are remains of cement, showing it was once a reservoir of water.

We now followed the street sometimes called the Street of Jehoshaphat, leading directly west from St. Stephen's Gate. We next passed along the walls enclosing the Barracks, and where a stone arch spans the street, called the Arch of Ecce Homo, entered the Church of the Flagellation. The Barracks occupy the site of the north-west angle of the Tower of Antonia, and just here, it is thought, was Pilate's Judgment Hall. It is reasonable to suppose that in its open court, which covered the natural rock, which may still be partially seen, Christ was scourged by the soldiers: and that about the point where the arch is sprung, he, wearing a crown of thorns, and a purple robe, was exposed to the multitude, while Pilate exclaimed, "Behold the man!" Here it was that the great trimmer between conscience and interest—the forerunner of so many rulers from that day to this—inquired of Jesus, "What is truth?" and here, the next moment, he hurried out to the people to make the best bargain with them that he could, and yielding to their clamours, "Away with him! away with him!" "Crucify him!" delivered Jesus over to death. The Street of Jehoshaphat is also called the *Via Dolorosa*, the "Street of Grief." It marks the footsteps of Christ from the "Pavement," where he took his cross, until he reached Calvary, where he was crucified. Like all the streets of Jerusalem, it is very narrow and irregular. It runs through the Mohammedan quarter toward the centre of the city, and terminates near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The court of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was once, undoubtedly, the *atrium* of the church, since the places on which the ancient pillars rested show it was formerly surrounded by cloisters or a colonnade. Under the same general roof are included the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Chapel of Calvary, so that we have in the same building, not more than a few hundred feet apart, the place where Jesus was crucified, and the tomb wherein he was buried. Directly under the dome is the Holy Sepulchre, covered by a building twenty-six feet long and eighteen feet broad. This building is of yellowish marble, with tasteful pilasters, and a rich, heavy cornice, surmounted by a cupola, with a top shaped something like a crown. Except at the west, it is rectangular; there it tapers into a pentagonal form. It is very high for its size, and withal presents a pleasing though somewhat singular