SEPULCHRE, THE HOLY, the tomb in which, after His crucifixion, the body of Jesus Christ was laid. Although the facts of the crucifixion and of the interment of the body of Christ in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea are related in the New Testament with considerable detail, sufficient indications are not supplied to locate the actual position of the tomb with reference to the city of Jerusalem. It would appear that Golgotha, the place of crucifixion, was outside the city, near a public thoroughfare leading to one of the gates, and visible from some distance. There is, however, no reason for supposing that it was a hill, and the expression “ Mount Golgotha ” was not used until some centuries later. Adjoining the place Gol- gotha was a garden, in which was a new rock-cut tomb, the property of Joseph of Arimathea. Rock-cut tombs were common in the vicinity of Jerusalem, as, in consequence of the geological

formation, the faces of the hills are frequently broken by low cliffs with terraces between. The comparatively level terraces were used for cultivation while the tombs were excavated in the rock faces. Many instances of tombs so situated can be seen on the hillsides near Jerusalem, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that the tomb of Joseph was of a similar character. As it was outside the city, the question of the validity of the traditional site, upon which the church of the Holy Sepulchre now stands, necessarily depends, to a great extent, upon whether this place was within or without the walls at the date of the crucifixion. At that time, it is clear, judging from the care­ful description written by Josephus a few years later, that Jerusalem was defended by two walls, as the third wall was not begun by King Herod Agrippa until a.d. 41. Of these, the first, or old wall, ran from the palace of Herod the Great, which was situated at the N.W. corner of the city, and, following an easterly direction, crossed the Tyropoeon Valley and terminated at the west wall of the Temple enclosure. On the other hand, going south from Herod's palace, it encircled the city on the west

and south, and then turning at Siloam it followed the direction of the Kidron Valley and ended at the east wall of the Temple enclosure.

The second wall, which was built at some period between the return of the Jews from Babylon and the reign of Herod the Great, was on the north, and in front of the old wall. According to Josephus, it started “ from the Gate Genath in the first wall, and, enclosing only the northern quarter of the city, went up to the fortress of Antonia.” The site of the Antonia, which was situated on the rising ground north of the Temple, is known with tolerable certainty, but the position of the Gate Genath has not been fixed, and, as no certain traces of the second wall have hitherto been found, the line it followed is purely a matter of conjecture. Various theories on the subject are maintained by different authorities. Some of these are indicated on the plan. One suggestion is that the second wall started from a point in the first wall near the palace of Herod, and that some remains of an old wall, situated at the point A, formed part of it. The wall is then supposed to have been carried in a direction slightly west of north, up to the line of the existing city wall, to have followed this line to the Damascus gate, and then turned south­east to the Antonia. If this theory were correct, it is clear that the traditional site of the Holy Sepulchre would be impossible, as it would be some way within the city wall. The arguments against the proposal are, that, according to the account of the siege of Jerusalem given by Josephus, it is improbable that the second wall started from a point so near to Herod’s paIace, that the line of the present city wall is more likely to be that of the third wall, and that Josephus states that the second wall went “ up to ” and not “ down to ” the fortress of Antonia. Another theory is that the Gate Genath was at a point marked B on plan, and that some ancient masonry which lies east of the so-called Pool of Hezekiah, and over which the houses on the west side of Christian Street are built, represents a portion of the second wall. The wall is then supposed to have been carried north to the point C, and either to have turned east to D, and again north to F, and from this to the Antonia; or to have continued north to E, and thence east to the Antonia. The first supposition excludes the site of the Holy Sepulchre, while the second includes it within the wall. A third theory is that the Gate Genath was at the point G, and that the second wall ran north to F, and thence to the Antonia. This proposal places the site of the Holy Sepulchre outside the wall, but it makes the part of the city protected by the latter smaller than is probable. Speaking generally, it may be stated that there is no certain evidence as to the line followed by the second wall, and it is impossible to say whether the traditional site lies inside or outside this wall. From the description in the Gospels of the burial of Jesus, it is not clear whether the tomb of Joseph was intended to be the final resting-place, or whether the body was only placed in it temporarily because the feast of the Passover was at hand and the disciples intended to remove it to some other place after the Passover. But whatever may have been proposed, the Resur­rection of Jesus Christ on the first day of the week, leaving the tomb empty, turned the attention of the disciples from the sepulchre to the living presence of their Master. After He had risen from the dead, the place of His burial does not appear to have had any attraction for His followers, and there is nothing in the writings of the first three centuries to lead us to suppose that the actual rock-cut tomb was regarded with any special feelings of veneration. Whether even a recollection of the site was preserved traditionally is doubtful. There have been many who consider that the early Christians could not have forgotten the exact locality of so important a place; on the contrary, others maintain that to the followers of Jesus Christ it was the fact of the Resurrection that was important and not the empty tomb; and that knowledge of the latter was lost during the vicissitudes from which Jerusalem suffered in the years succeeding the crucifixion. About forty years after the crucifixion, the great revolt of the Jewish people against the Romans took place, and ended with the siege and capture of Jerusalem by Titus. Prior to the siege, the Christians, following the orders of their Master,