NOTES ON OUR LORD'S TOMB.

1. Nature of the tomb. All accounts concur in describing it as an excavated sepulchre, a new and recently finished work, and not as yet used for purposes of burial.

The general idea concerning the tomb is that it was single-celled. When constructing it, Joseph could never have had any idea of the sacred use to which it would be applied, and must have had in view a multi-, not uni-locular family sepulchre. The narratives uphold the idea of a multi-locular tomb; had it been otherwise, the angel's invitation, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. xxviii. 6), would have been unnecessary, for a glance would have revealed the interior to the two Marys. St. Mark's narrative is more clear; he describes evidently an antechamber, from which the loculi branch off, and in this case there were apparently only two rows, right and left. On entering this chamber, the Marys find the angel "sitting on the right side" (lit. \(\epsilon\ ν \tauοίς διτώς;\) right what, if not row of loculi?), probably at the entrance of the lately tenanted loculus, which he points out to the affrighted women, "Behold the place where they laid him" (xvi. 6).

According to St. Luke it was only on entering the chamber that the women found not the Lord's body (xxiv. 3); if it had been a one-celled tomb a glance from the entrance would have revealed its emptiness; again, the presence of a loculus branching off from the chamber would necessitate the stooping of Peter to see the grave-clothes laid by themselves (xxiv. 12).

So with St. John—the chamber of the sepulchre admits both Peter...
and John (xx. 8), from whence they view the vacant cell and carefully-arranged grave-clothes.

The tomb was closed by a great stone rolled to the entrance. How was this done? Here again the general idea is very vague, and refers to the laborious rolling of a huge spherical mass of rock (for only such could roll) to the door of the tomb, no attention being paid to fact that such a mass could not accurately fit the upright entrance, much less receive the protection seal. How was it then done? The radical verb κυλίνδεω implies to roll, but not necessarily a spherical object. The Rev. J. L. Porter describes a Jewish tomb which was accurately closed by a millstone-like slab which was rolled down an inclined plane, at the bottom of which was the circular entrance to the sepulchre. Some such arrangement would be necessary to meet the requirements of St. Matthew's narrative, where the angel rolls away, ἀπεκδόσε (not back) the stone and then sits upon it (xxviii. 2).

2. How was the tomb situated? According to St. Matthew's narrative, we are, I think, driven to the conclusion that at the scene of the burial there were two hillsides, with a valley between them, for he describes the two Marys as "sitting over against the sepulchre" (ἐπὶ παρὰ τῷ τάφῳ) xxvii. 61; as if, supposing the tomb had been in the side of Olivet, the Marys had been looking on from the opposite side of the valley, beneath the city walls, but yet in full view, the distance being about 150 yards. If this position be allowed, then in no possible way, at least as far as my reading goes, can the present site of the Holy Sepulchre answer the requirement of St. Matthew's expression, ἀπεκδόσε τῷ τάφῳ.

3. Where was the tomb situated? St. John minutely describes the locality: "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden (κήπος, literally an orchard, παραδείσου being garden in our sense of the word); and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There they laid Jesus" (xix. 41-2).

St. John alone tells us that our Lord's agony also occurred in a garden (κήπος), xviii. 1, which St. Matthew and St. Mark describe as near a place (χώριον), estate, or hamlet, called Gethsemane (lit. Gath, winepress; σκεύης, oil).

Now was the κήπος of the agony identical with the κήπος of the burial? If not, why does St. John use the same word to describe two localities?

If they were, then we can understand why our Lord "oft-times resorted" to the κήπος which witnessed his agony, and was to be the scene of his burial, and in its gloomy shade he trod in solitude the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God.

Gethsemane witnessed the agony and burial; if this is allowed, then it witnessed also the crucifixion, for the κήπος was ἐν τῷ τόπῳ (ἐν τῷ τόπῳ) where he was crucified.

If my position be at all allowed, then let us inquire—
1. Does the name Gathshemen in any way linger upon the hillside?
2. Are there any stone presses lying about?
3. Can any tomb be identified as facing the city, and clearly visible from its walls, and likely to have been in an orchard?
4. Does the monkish garden of Gethsemane meet our requirements?
5. Does the monkish site of the Holy Sepulchre?

These questions have of course a close bearing upon the site of the crucifixion; the notices of it all convey the idea of an intervening gorge or valley.

The women watched "beholding afar off" (ἤπειρον ἀπόρρητον), Matt. xxvii. 55.

St. Mark describes the centurion in command as standing "over against him" (ἐπί συντρίβετον), xv. 39; and he and St. Luke also describe the women as "watching afar off" (ἠπείρον ἀπόρρητον).

I should fancy that the site of the crucifixion must be sought along the Bethany road, on the eastern side of the valley of Jehoshaphat.

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POSITIONS OF PLACES EAST OF JORDAN.

The distances are very roughly approximate:

Jebel 'Ajlūn.................. N.W. of Jerash
Aljabāyyahāt.................. 3 miles N. of Aman
Talāt al 'Ali.................. 4 miles N. of Aman
Albēt..................... W. of Aman
Jebel Umm 'Awwyeh............. Near Wady Sha'ib
Wady al Ārnab............... 2 miles W. of Aman
Belāl Ajhār.................. 3 miles W. of Aman
Bābdh Āmār.................. ? a doubtful name
Wady Deir 'Abār.............. Ruin W. of Aman (Akbar?)
Albikrah.................... 4 miles W. of Aman
Almārkhāb................... W. of Aman
Al'Awatayeh............... Perhaps Alawālāb
Aljahār.................... Probably Ajhāx
Annawabālābeyt................ W. of Aman
Wady Adydzalāmeh......... Near head of Wady Seir
Wady al Āshtā................. Called Wady Eshteh on Van de Velde
K. al Alwālāyeh.............. Probably Alawālāb
Tell al 'arýmeh.............. At junction of Ashtā and Bahār
Arkīb al Khīlāl................ E. of Wady Sha'ib
Wady umm Ādsīs............... To Wady Kafrein
Wady Aflheil................ To Wady Heslan
Wady abu 'Ainein............. To Wady Kafrein
Wady Am'alākāh................
Wady 'Abyān..................
Wady Kabr Amāhmed...........
Umm al 'Amād................ A mound on Belka Plain
Jebel 'Atūd.................. Jebel Atarūs, high point to E. of Dead Sea
Zimlēf al 'Ālāyāt.............. On Belka
Al'Aāl....................... Elcet (?) N.E. by E. of Heslan
Kabr Abū Tālāh.............. Ruin S.W. of Heslan