

CORRESPONDENCE OF THE JOURNAL
AND LUMINARY.

JAFFA, SYRIA, Sept. 30, 1836.

[CONTINUED.]

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

One of the first objects that we visited after our arrival, was the church of the Holy Sepulchre. It so fell out that the day after our arrival was one of the many days, which for some reason, I know not what, is called a festa, on which this church was open. It fell out as we would have wished it. We went to see it. It is not accessible at all times.

This church, as you no doubt know, is said to be built over the place where our Lord was buried; and it also includes the place where he was crucified—that is, it includes that part of Mount Calvary on which the crosses of our Lord, and the others who were crucified with him were fixed—and the garden in which Joseph's tomb was placed. It ought therefore to have been *without the city*, as our Lord was crucified without the city, and interred without the city. The excuse for its being in the city is, that the city does not now occupy the same ground that it did at that time,—that its walls were farther west and north—or continue some how to take in what the old walls, when those transactions took place, left out. It appears to me, however very manifest, that the place now shown as the place of crucifixion and interment, must have always been within the city. A wall so run as to leave it out, would be located in a way that no wise builders would ever think of running a wall, to defend a city situated as Jerusalem is.

These places are not on a hill, but rather in a hollow or a low place, and the wall in passing to the east of it, would leave so much higher and better ground close to them to the west, and would so straighten the space between it and the ground occupied by the temple, and have to take so irregular and winding a route, to enclose sufficient ground to hold the city, that I must believe that a wrong place has been fixed on as the spot where those memorable things were done. It is however a matter of trifling importance; we know they took place near Jerusalem. There is no virtue in the spot where they took place, more than in any other. But the poor blind and superstitious people believe, and are taught to believe, that there is great, yea, saving virtue obtained in visiting those places.

The church of the holy sepulchre is a large, and in some respects a good looking building, especially the large dome over the holy sepulchre, as seen from the inside,—for it is so surrounded with other buildings, and so connected with them without, that it makes but a feeble impression. It needs to be large, as it contains a chapel for each of the christian sects which prevail in the east, as the Greeks, Latins, Arminians, Copts, Syrians, &c.

We entered the church at the south side. There is a small open space before the door, which once belonged to the church, but the pillars are most of them removed. The doors of the church are large and exceedingly showy. There is usually some Turk or Turks there as doorkeepers, and having some kind of charge of it. As there are always some monks and priests in the church to take care of it, attend to the lamps, perform the sacred offices, &c. there is a small opening through the door, by means of which food and other necessaries are passed to them, at those times when the door is kept shut. Some monks and priests, it is said, at times spend weeks, and it may be months, in the church, without once going out of it. They no doubt think this a most meritorious matter.

The Stone of Unction.

Immediately on passing the door of the church, we came to a large flat marble slab, a little elevated from the floor, and having some small marble pillars at the corners, and a kind of ornamental covering high above it. This is called the stone of unction. It is pretended that the body of our Lord was laid on it while he was anointed; or rather when he was taken from the cross, and rolled up in linen with the spices by Joseph and Nicodemus.