

## The Two Main Problems of the Passion Week.

In a careful examination of the Gospel records with a view to the drawing up of a Harmony of the Passion Week two main problems soon obtrude themselves, namely: (a) Did our Lord eat the correct legal Passover Supper with His disciples on the 15th of Nisan, that is, during the evening which followed the sunset marking the close of the 14th of that month, in fulfillment of Exodus xii.8, and Leviticus xxiii.6? Or did He partake of an anticipatory Passover Supper on the 14th of that month, that is, during the evening which followed the sunset marking the close of the 13th of that month? And (b), On what day of the week was our Lord crucified? These two questions are really independent of one another, and should be considered separately. We shall take them in order.

(N.B. It is essential to remember that according to the general usage of the O.T., and that of the Synoptic Gospels, the Jewish day ended at sunset.<sup>1</sup> Unless this borne in mind the following discussion will be unintelligible. The reader is advised to refer constantly to the suggested chronological order of the Holy Week which appears in Appendix B, at the end of this paper. Quotations are taken from the English Revised Version.)

(a) Did our Lord partake of the regular legal Passover Supper with His disciples on the 15th of Nisan in fulfillment of the Passover Type?

Before dealing with this question it will be advisable to consider the O.T. ceremonial regulations concerning the Passover. There was the original Passover instituted in Egypt at the time of the Exodus (Pesach Mitzraim), and there were the commemorative Passovers to be celebrated annually, especially in the Land of Promise. The former is described in Exodus xii.1-13; 21-23; while the latter are spoken of in the same chapter in verses 14-21; 24-27; 43-48; and are referred to later in the Pentateuch, viz., Leviticus xxiii.5-8; Numbers ix.1-5; xxviii.16-25; Deuteronomy xvi.1-8.

From an examination of the foregoing passages it will be seen that the institution of the original Passover was as follows:— Each family, or group of persons,<sup>2</sup> were to choose, on the 10th day of the first month (Abib, or Nisan, cf. Deut.xvi.1 and Esth.iii.7), a lamb without blemish, a male of the first year; this lamb was to be "kept up" (kept in custody) under inspection (against possible blemish appearing in the mean time) until the 14th day, when it was to be killed "between the evenings" (Exod.xii.3-6, lit. Hebrew).<sup>3</sup> Apparently the lamb was to be sacrificed by the head of the house, acting as family priest; and it was to be killed on the threshold of the house,<sup>4</sup> and its blood was to be applied to the lintel and the two side posts of the door (ver.22). If this was done God promised that He would "pass over the door" of that house, and "not suffer the destroyer to come in ... to smite" the inmates (ver.25). During the evening (now the 15th day of the month, the day commencing at sunset) the Passover Supper was to be observed, the lamb after being roasted with fire was eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (ver.8), no bone of which was to be broken (ver.46; Numb.ix.12). The people were to eat this Supper with their loins girded, their feet shod, and their staffs in their hands, "in haste" ready for instant departure (ver.11). All remains of the lamb were to be burnt with fire so that nothing of it should remain until the morning (ver.10); "it is the Lord's passover" (ver.11; Lev. xxiii.5).

The commemorative Passover Suppers were quite similar, but with a few modifications. The lamb was to be killed on the 14th day of Nisan as before; but this was to be done in the presence of the priests or Levites, presumably at the brazen altar of the Tabernacle, "in the place which the Lord shall choose to cause His name to dwell" (Deut.xvi.2), the blood of the lamb being sprinkled by the priests at the foot of the altar (Deut.xvi.1-6; 2 Chron.xv.10-12; Ezra vi.20). The Supper which followed after sunset (on the 15th) was, however, inseparably connected with the "Feast of Unleavened Bread," a festival lasting from the 15th to the 21st days of the month, all leaven having been carefully got rid of beforehand from the people's dwellings. Of this "feast of unleavened bread" the 15th and 21st days of the month were "holy convocations" on which "no servile work" (i.e. "no manner of work ... save that which every man must eat," cf. Exod.xii.15-17 with Lev.xxiii.6-8) could be done; these two days were therefore of a sabbatical character. During this seven day festival there were, beside the usual burnt offerings laid down in the Law for each day, the special offerings detailed in Numbers xxviii.19-24, and referred to in 2 Chronicles xxxv.6-9. But in later days there were also, as we learn from extra-biblical Jewish sources, various voluntary peace offerings known as the Chagigah, or festival offerings, usually offered and eaten on the 15th of the month, to which we shall have occasion to refer later. Lastly, after the nation had entered the Land, and had been able to reap the harvest of corn in it, the sheaf of first-fruits of the harvest had to be "waved" before the Lord during this seven day festival "on the morrow after the sabbath" (Lev.xxiii.10-12); of which we shall have to speak more particularly later on.

1. The Apostle John, writing towards the close of the first century to people not well acquainted with Jewish customs, apparently uses Roman time, and the Roman method of dividing the days of the week at midnight, see John xix.14, and xx.19. 2. According to Jewish sources a "group" consisted of from 10 to 20 persons. 3. The Pharisees and the Rabbinites understood the words "between the evenings" to mean between the declining and the setting of the sun. Josephus took this view (Wars vi.9,3; Antiqq. xiv.4,3). 4. In Exod.xii.22 we read that hyssop was to be dipped "in the blood that is in the bason," which was then to be struck upon the lintel and two side posts of the door. But the word saph, here rendered "bason," also means a threshold (many times so rendered in the O.T.), and it is so



In both of the above Passovers it was laid down that there was to be no leaven whatever in the houses of those who partook of the Passover Supper and the ensuing festival. To ensure the absence of leaven the Jews were accustomed to cease from labour at or before noon on the 14th of Nisan, and make a strict search for any trace of leaven in order that it might be entirely eliminated from their dwellings. This day, the 14th, being in this respect a day of preparation, was often popularly called the "first day of unleavened bread" (Matt.xxvi.17; Mark xiv.12; Luke xxii.7), though strictly the 15th of Nisan was the "first day" of the "feast of unleavened bread" (Lev.xxiii.6,7). It was for this reason that Josephus sometimes speaks of the Feast of Unleavened Bread starting on the 14th of Nisan (Wars v.3,1), and sometimes on the 15th (Antiqq. iii.10,5).

There is one other thing needful before we deal with the question forming the caption to this section, namely, we must try to discover the meanings of the expressions, as used in Scripture, of "the passover," "the feast of the passover," "the feast of unleavened bread," for much will depend upon an accurate understanding of these terms.<sup>1</sup> The noun "passover" (Hob., pesach, Gr., pascha) applies normally to the passover lamb which was to be sacrificed annually in commemoration of the fact that Jehovah had "passed over" the Children of Israel when they sheltered under the blood of the lamb sacrificed on the 14th day of the 1st month during their exodus from Egypt (Exod.xii.21; Deut.xvi.2; Mark xiv.12; Luke xxii.7). This "passover" was to be "roasted with fire" (Exod.xii.9; 2 Chron.xxxv.13), and "eaten" (Exod.xii.11; 2 Chron.xxx.18; John xviii.28). And so the term "passover" was applied by the Apostle Paul directly to our Lord: "Our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ" (1 Cor.v.7). By metonymy the term "passover" is also used of the act of sacrificing the lamb on the 14th of the month (Lev.xxiii.5, marg.; Numb.xxviii.16; xxxiii.3). The term "passover" is also used once in each Synoptic Gospel for the meal which our Lord told His disciples Peter and John to "make ready," during which He instituted His new Supper of Remembrance (Matt.xxvi.19; Mark xiv.16; Luke xxii.13); and the word "passover," in another sense, covered the whole period of the seven day festival from the 15th to the 21st of Nisan, which is otherwise called the "feast of unleavened bread," thus we read: "the feast of unleavened bread, which is called the passover, drew nigh" (Luke xxii.1); in this way was derived the phrase "the feast of the passover" (Exod.xxxiv.25; Luke ii.41; John xiii.1); and the two are combined in Mark xiv.1, "Now after two days was the feast of the passover and the unleavened bread."

With these preliminary explanations in mind we may now examine the question whether our Lord partook of the regular legal commemorative Passover Supper with His disciples on the night on which He was betrayed, or whether He partook of an anticipatory Passover Supper that night. Our Lord said: "Think not that I come to destroy the law or the prophets: I come not to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt.v.17). Now the sacrifice of the passover lamb is admittedly one of the most striking and perfect types in "the law" of the Sacrifice of our Lord as the Lamb of God, and of His redemption of sinners from spiritual slavery into the freedom of children of God under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, of whom Moses was a type. As we have seen, an unblemished lamb was chosen on the 10th of Nisan, a male of the first year, in the prime of life; and this lamb was to be kept in custody under scrutiny against any possible flaw manifesting itself up to the 14th day, when it was to be put to death during the afternoon towards the going down of the sun. The blood of this lamb, sacrificed on the threshold, was applied to the lintel above, and to the two side posts of the door; and all who sheltered "under the blood" were safe. And was not our Lord, the God-man, without any blemish, and in the prime of life, chosen publicly by the people on the day of His triumphant entry into Jerusalem? And was He not subjected to continual scrutiny and examination, first by the religious leaders of the people, who failed to find any fault in Him despite their traps to ensnare Him, and then by both Pilate and Herod, the representatives of the Roman Government, who also could "find no fault in Him," and was He not audibly authenticated "from on high" in the presence of the people (John xii.28,29)? And yet He was put to death, and His precious blood flowed from His head, His hands, and His feet, prefigured by the blood of the Passover lamb on the lintel above, the two side posts, and on the threshold below, of the house wherein the inmates took shelter. And in fulfilment of all this did not our Lord say: "I am the door, by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved? Furthermore, when we read that the soldiers broke the bones of the two malefactors who were crucified with our Lord, but not His bones, was not this a fulfilment of the command that no bone of the typical lamb was to be broken?

Now it is quite obvious that our Lord, as the Archetypical Lamb of God, could not, in fulfilment of the type of Exodus xii.6, have been crucified on the 14th of Nisan, and Himself have also partaken of the legal Passover Supper after His death, a Supper which was always eaten during the ensuing evening, that is, on the 15th of the month (Exod.xii.8). In other words, our Lord could not as the Lamb of God die at the time when, in God's sight, He ought to die, namely, at the time for the typical lambs to be sacrificed, and also eat the Supper which followed the slaying of these lambs. If our Lord partook of the legal Passover Supper on the 15th of Nisan after the slaying of the typical lambs in the Temple area, and was crucified the next daylight, then He was put to death one day too late, and in this respect failed to fulfil the Passover type. But if He died on the Cross at the same time that the typical lambs were being sacrificed, then the Passover Supper at which He presided must have been an anticipatory one, and the legal Passover Supper was held on the next evening when He was in the grave.

1. The reader is advised to test these references for his own satisfaction.



But most harmonists urge that our Lord kept the ceremonial law by partaking of the regular legal Passover Supper with His disciples. But they generally fail to draw attention to the fact that if so He must have been crucified on a day which did not fulfil the type, on a day when, in God's appointment, the typical lambs were not, and ought not, to be sacrificed. But the writer asks whether it was far more important for our Lord to have fulfilled the inspired type of Exodus xii.6,8, by being crucified on the day in which the typical passover lambs were killed, than for Him to observe the legal Passover Supper, a Supper about to be superceded. He could not do both. And the writer proposes to show that our Lord did accurately fulfil the type by dying at the very time when God had appointed the typical lambs to be sacrificed in the Temple area, and in this way "our Passover hath been sacrificed, even Christ" (1 Cor.v.7). And he hopes also to show that the legal Passover Supper was observed by the majority of the Jews with their recognised leaders during the evening after our Lord was buried. The late Bishop Westcott took this view; though he did not quite satisfactorily explain the reference in Mark xiv.12 to the "first day of unleavened bread," on which, as Luke tells us, "the passover must be sacrificed" (Luke xxii.7). With the evidence at his disposal he left the matter open.

Now if we possessed the Synoptic Gospels only, most people would probably conclude from them that our Lord did partake of the legal Passover Supper during the evening on which He was betrayed, and which preceded His arrest. For we read:

"When Jesus had finished all these words [the Olivet discourse], He said unto His disciples, Ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified" (Matt.xxvi.1,2).

"Now after two days was (the feast) of the passover and the unleavened bread" (Mark xiv.1).

"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the passover" (Luke xxii.1).

"Now on the first day of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus saying, Where wilt Thou that we make ready for Thee to eat the passover," (Matt.xxvi.17)

"And on the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the passover, His disciples say unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we go and make ready that Thou mayest eat the passover?" (Mark xiv.12)

"And the day of unleavened bread came, on which the passover must be sacrificed" (Luke xxii.7).

"And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with My disciples" (Matt.xxvi.18).

"And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and make ready for the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we make ready? And He said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house wherein he goeth. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber where I shall eat the passover with My disciples? And he will show unto you a large upper room furnished: there make ready" (Luke xxii.10-12; Mark xiv.13-15).

"And the disciples did as Jesus appointed them: and they made ready the passover" (Matt.xxvi.19).

"And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the apostles with Him. And He said unto them, with desire I have desired<sup>1</sup> to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii.14,15).

The cumulative force of these passages is considerable. The "supper" eaten was without question a passover supper. Moreover there are incidental details which confirm this conclusion. For we read of the drinking of the first of the four cups normally drunk during the Supper in Luke xxii.17.<sup>2</sup> Also there is a distinct reference to the "sop" or "mortar,"<sup>3</sup> used in the regular Passover, in John xiii.26. Lastly, we have a reference to the singing of the last part of the Hallel in Matthew xxvi.30. All these suggest the regular legal Passover Supper.

A reading of these passages seems, at first sight, to show that the 14th of Nisan, otherwise known by popular usage as "the first day of unleavened bread," had arrived; and that during the afternoon of this 14th day the disciples were sent by our Lord from Bethany to obtain a passover lamb from the Temple area, and to take it to the passover chamber already agreed upon, and there make ready for the Passover Supper with all its accessories, which was to be eaten by our Lord and His disciples after sunset, that is, on the commencement of the 15th day, according to the Law. It would seem then that our Lord was crucified a day too late to fulfil the inspired type, namely, on the 15th instead of the 14th of Nisan, a serious matter to those who believe in the inspiration of Scripture. But do not the words "with desire I have desired [I have specially desired] to eat this supper with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii.15) suggest another view, namely, an anticipatory Passover Supper, held in order that our Lord might be able to fulfil the Passover type of Exodus xii.6, by dying at the very time when the typical passover lambs were being sacrificed in the Temple area? And a more careful reading of the foregoing

1. A Hebraism for "I have specially desired." 2. See Appendix B. 3. This "mortar" consisted of two pieces of unleavened bread between which bitter herbs had been sandwiched, the whole being then dipped in a dish containing a mixture of raisins, nuts, and spices, which was called the charoseth; this "sop" or "mortar" was then passed round for all to eat.



passages shows that this is possible. Bearing in mind that according to the common Jewish reckoning the day commenced at sunset, these passages may be explained as follows: Let us assume that the 13th day of Nisan had just ended by the setting of the sun, and the 14th day had arrived, and that the disciples had then (that evening, not the next afternoon) come to the Lord with their question, "Where wilt Thou that we make ready for Thee to eat the passover?" and let us assume that it was our Lord's special desire to have His Passover Supper that same evening (not the evening terminating the next period of daylight), and that with this purpose in view He said to Peter and John, "Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with My disciples" (Matt.xxvi.18); then the directions given by our Lord would seem to show that He had a previous arrangement with the "goodman" of the house; for they were to go into the city, and there they would meet a man carrying a water-pot,<sup>1</sup> and they were to go with him to a certain house where they were to say to the owner, "The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber where I shall eat the passover with My disciples?" and he would show them an upper room already furnished for the purpose, here they were to make ready. But, it may be asked, why this secrecy? and why this delay in despatching Peter and John to "make ready" until the last moment? Surely because our Lord knew that Judas was on the watch for an opportunity to betray Him "in the absence of the multitude" (Luke xxii.3-6), and it was essential that he should not know the place of the Passover chamber until the last possible moment. It was only during this Supper that he was able to depart and give information to the Jewish authorities which led to our Lord's arrest.

But one difficulty remains. How about the lamb for the Passover Supper? It would have been quite impossible for the two disciples to have obtained a lamb for the Supper after sunset, because the Passover lambs were released from the Temple area only during the afternoon preceding the Supper, and on the above hypothesis the disciples did not leave Bethany until after sunset. This seemed an insoluble difficulty to the writer until, early in 1936, he met Dr. W.M. Christie at Haifa, in Palestine, and he was able to remove the difficulty in a complete manner by pointing out that at our Lord's Passover Supper there was no lamb on the table; for was not our Lord, the Lamb of God, present in person, ready to be sacrificed on the morrow when the typical lambs were being slain in the Temple area? And Dr. Christie produced evidence from the Talmud to show that for some considerable time before our Lord's day there had been bitter controversy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees over the matter of the Passover Feast, concerning the day on which it ought to be held. This bitterness was so acute that when the Sadducees were in control of the Temple services (as they were in our Lord's day, both Annas and Caiaphas being Sadducees), the Pharisees used to have their Passover Supper one day earlier without any lamb, while the Sadducees had their Supper the following day with lambs.<sup>2</sup> Some of this evidence will be given later. In view of what has just been stated, we can now understand how the statements in Mark and Luke about the arrival, after sunset, of the "first day of unleavened bread," "when they sacrificed the passover," or, "on which the passover must be sacrificed," were strictly accurate, for these statements had in view the sacrificing of the typical lambs by the Sadducean authorities during the next afternoon, namely, the afternoon on which our Lord was put to death on the Cross, and that He had His anticipatory Passover Supper the preceding evening "before He suffered."

We may now turn to the passages in the Gospel of John which seem to show that the legal Passover Supper took place after our Lord's death and burial, which passages have proved such a source of difficulty to those harmonists who hold that our Lord partook of the legal Passover Supper:

"Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus, knowing that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hand, and that He came from God, and goeth to God, riseth from supper, and layeth aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself" (John xiii.1-4).

"That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what purpose He spake this unto him. For some thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus said unto him, Buy what things we have need of for the feast" (John xiii.27-29).

"They [the Sadducee priests] entered not into the palace [Pilate's], that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover" (John xviii.28).

"Now [at the conclusion of the trial] it was the preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he [Pilate] saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!" (John xix.14).

In the first quotation the words "before the feast of the passover" would seem to indicate that the legal "feast of the passover," which normally began with the Passover Supper, was still future in relation to the "supper" then being observed by our Lord. It is true that some harmonists have explained these words to mean that our Lord, knowing that His hour was come, and having loved His own, continued to love them to the end, this "feast" or "supper" being additional evidence of the fact, thus identifying this "feast" with the "supper" spoken of later in the narrative. But against this is the fact that a 1. May not this water-pot be the same as was used later for the washing of the disciples' feet? 2. This evidence is given in full in Dr. Christie's Palestine Calling, p.139.



little later in the evening (as appears in the second quotation above) the Apostle John tells us that the disciples were imagining that our Lord had dismissed Judas in order that he might "buy what things we have need of for the feast," a "feast" evidently still future, and yet apparently referring to the "feast of the passover" already mentioned by the Apostle at the beginning of the chapter, and being in apparent contrast to the "supper" being then kept by our Lord. To what then can this "feast of the passover" refer? The writer submits that it must refer to the "feast" which was yet to commence after our Lord's death and burial, and which continued throughout the seven days of unleavened bread; for our Lord's disciples at the "supper" did not yet believe that their Lord was to be put to death on the morrow, and they might well have thought that Judas had gone to buy the things needed for the chagigah associated with this "feast."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, when the Apostle John explained in his Gospel that the Sadducean priests "entered not into the palace, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover" (appearing in the third quotation above), this surely implies that they at least had not yet eaten their Passover Supper, also that if they had entered into Pilate's praetorium they would have become so defiled as to prevent them entering the Temple area that afternoon to procure their passover lambs for their Supper, which was held after sunset that evening.<sup>2</sup>

And when the same Apostle says that at the conclusion of our Lord's trial "it was the preparation of the passover," does this not mean, as Bishop Westcott has urged, "the preparation for the passover," a "passover" yet future: in other words, do not the Apostle's words imply that the Crucifixion day was the 14th of Nisan, and it was therefore a "preparation" for the Passover Supper which followed (after sunset) on the 15th of that month?<sup>3</sup> The writer is not unmindful of the fact that the term "the preparation" (Gr., paraskuē) was probably even then used as a technical term for the day before the weekly Sabbath, it is so used in the Didachē, a document written about A.D.100, and it has been so used ever since in the Eastern Church. The reason for this technical use of the term is that on the weekly Sabbath no manner of work, not even the cooking of food, could be done among the Jews; hence all preparation for meals on the Sabbath, and for other things which might be needed for that day, had to be completed on the preceding day. But the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the 15th of Nisan, was also of a sabbatical character, being a day on which "no servile work" might be done, that is, no work "save that which every man must eat" (Exod.xii.16; Lev.xxiii.7)<sup>4</sup>; and it was the first of seven days on which no trace of leaven was to remain in the houses of those who observed the "feast of unleavened bread." It was for this reason that the previous day, the 14th, was rightly called a "day of preparation" also, for on it all work ceased at noon in order that a scrupulous search for leaven might be made for its elimination prior to the "feast of unleavened bread," which began after sunset. But we shall have more to say about this "preparation of the passover" in the second section of this paper.

Now if the day of our Lord's trial and crucifixion was a "day of preparation" for the legal and sabbatical Feast of the Passover to commence after sunset, but not in the eyes of the Sadducean authorities in charge of the Temple services itself a sabbath, we can well understand how it was possible for our Lord's disciples in the Upper Room to imagine that our Lord had dismissed Judas that he might that day buy things for the coming "feast" commencing after sunset on the 15th (John xiii.29), and how it was in fact possible for Nicodemus to buy a linen cloth on the day of the Crucifixion before sunset in which he wrapped the body of our Lord for burial, and how the "women from Galilee" could, after visiting the sepulchre, "prepare spices and ointments" for our Lord's embalment before sunset that day, and then "rest according to the commandment" on the Paschal sabbath which commenced at sunset that day (Luke xxii.55,56); all of which things would have been almost impossible on a sabbath day.<sup>5</sup>

It would seem evident, then, that the Sadducean authorities in control of the Temple did not regard the Crucifixion day as a Paschal sabbath, but the next day, the 15th of the month, was by them so regarded.

The seeming conflict between the statements of the Synoptic Gospels and those of the Apostle John, with respect to the day of the Passover Supper, gave rise to the well known quarto-decimen and quinto-deciman controversy,<sup>6</sup> a dispute as to which day of Nisan (roughly corresponding to our April) the annual memorial Supper (corresponding to our Lord's first

1. See pp.1,2. 2. A defilement due to their entrance into Pilate's praetorium would not, of course, have prevented them from partaking of the Passover Supper, for such defilement ceased at sunset; but it would have barred them from entering the Temple area. 3. See Bishop Westcott's Introduction to the Study of the Gospels, p.340. 4. In the 23rd chapter of Leviticus there are two kinds of sabbaths spoken of: (a) The strict weekly Sabbath (Heb., shabbath), and the still stricter Day of Atonement, on both of which "no manner of work" might be done (verses 3,23-32); and (b) the quasi-sabbaths (Heb., shabbathon, translated "solemn rests" in the R.V.) which were observed on the 15th and 21st days of the first month; the Day of Pentecost (verses 16,21); the Day of Trumpets on the 1st day of the 7th month (verses 24,25); and the 15th and 21st of the 7th month during the Feast of Tabernacles (verses 34,39); on all of which "no servile work" might be done. 5. During the legal Passover sabbath all places for the sale of goods were closed. It has been said, however, that purchases could be made privately that day if the price was not mentioned, nor money taken. But would our Lord's disciples have imagined that our Lord was sending Judas out (not knowing he was a traitor yet) to buy goods in this clandestine manner? 6. I.e. A controversy between the 14th and 15th days.



Memorial Supper, to be observed by the early Church. With regard to this dispute Dr. Christie has written: "The practice in Asia Minor was that the Supper be observed on the eve commencing the 14th of Nisan, that is, after the sunset of the 13th, at which time the new day began according to the Jewish and O.T. usage. Polycarp maintained that he had so kept the feast with the Apostle John. Irenaeus, an Asiatic, and disciple of Polycarp, followed his teacher. On the other hand the Roman practice was that the celebration should take place one day later, that is, on the evening with which the 15th of Nisan commenced ... this disputation went on till the year 325 A.D., after which the Roman practice prevailed throughout the empire."<sup>1</sup> This controversy is quite understandable; there were two points of view; one, that the annual celebration of the Supper should take place on the 14th of Nisan, the day on which our Lord instituted it; and the other, that it should correspond with the legal Passover Supper observed on the 15th of that month. As the annual celebration was in memory of the New Supper instituted by our Lord, rather than in memory of the Jewish Passover Supper, now defunct, the Asiatic practice would seem to have been more appropriate than the Roman, which, alas, forced itself upon many unwilling worshippers.

We see then that there is no real conflict between the testimony of the Synoptic Gospels and that of the Apostle John regarding the Passover Supper. But apart from the Gospel of John, which, as all admit, was written towards the close of the first century as a sort of supplement to the existing Gospels, it would have been difficult to see how our Lord could partake of a Passover Supper, and yet fulfil the type by dying when the typical passover lambs were being sacrificed in the Temple area, and how the legal Passover Supper was observed after His death and burial. Without doubt the Apostle John was acquainted with the Synoptic Gospels since he wrote long after they were completed; so he passes over in silence much of what is contained in them. But being, as it were, a supplement to them, he was able to correct certain false deductions which readers, ignorant at that late date of the Jewish Law and ritual, might be liable to make. That many of his readers were thus ignorant is plain from the various parenthetical "asides" which he makes in his narrative, explaining what would otherwise not be clear to them. And we must ever keep before our minds that one of the Apostle's reasons for writing his Gospel was to present our Lord as the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world by Himself fulfilling the Old Testament sacrificial types.

It was stated above that there is evidence that in our Lord's time there were two Passover Suppers, one following the other, that of the Pharisees observed during the evening which was the commencement of the 14th of Nisan, and that of the Sadducees observed during the evening commencing the 15th of that month. It will be well if we examine this evidence just here.<sup>2</sup> These successive Passover Suppers arose in a rather curious way. It appears that for many years after the return of the Jews from the Exile there had been an acute controversy between the sect of the Pharisees and that of the Sadducees as to which day was meant in the phrase "the morrow after the sabbath" on which the priests were instructed to wave the sheaf of firstfruits unto Jehovah, of Leviticus xxiii.11,15. The Sadducees maintained that these words meant "the morrow after the usual sabbath occurring during the passover week," in other words, it meant "the first day of the week" (which phrase is never used in the O.T. Scriptures). The Pharisees, on the contrary, equally firmly held that the phrase meant "the morrow after the first day of unleavened bread, the 15th of Nisan," since, as we have seen, this "first day" of the "feast of unleavened bread" was quasi-sabbatical in character, and so this "morrow" would always be the 16th of Nisan. Now the 15th of Nisan, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev.xxiii.6,7), had no fixed relation to the week, it might fall on any day of the week, because it was counted from the 1st of Nisan, which in turn might fall on any day of the week, being fixed by the first visible appearance of the new moon in the spring equinox. If, for example, the new moon should happen to become visible on our Sunday evening, then Monday (the Jewish day beginning that day after sunset) would be the 1st of Nisan, and so also the 15th of Nisan would be a Monday; if then the Pharisees happened to be in control of the Temple services, the sheaf of the first-fruits would be waved on the morrow, that is, on Tuesday. But this would not at all suit the Sadducees, who maintained that it must always be waved on the first day of the week in which the Passover fell. Now we are told that the usual custom was that when the Paschal new moon was first seen, the witnesses of its first appearance, before descending from the crests of the mountains where they had seen it, were, before descending, to kindle bon-fires from crest to crest, thus the news of the new moon's first appearance would be conveyed to the authorities in Jerusalem without delay, thus enabling them to arrange the Temple services accordingly.

So it came about that when the Pharisees were in control, the Sadducees, not wishing the waving of the sheaf to take place on any other day than the first day of the week, used

1. See his Palestine Calling, p.130. Dr. Christie was an outstanding missionary to the Jews in Palestine for many years, and a remarkable student of the Talmuds. His statement is borne out by Bishop Westcott: "Early tradition is nearly unanimous in fixing the Crucifixion on the 14th of Nisan, and in distinguishing the last supper from the legal supper. This distinction is expressly made by Appolinarius, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Irenaeus," Introduction to the Study of the Gospels, p.343. 2. This evidence appears in full in Palestine Calling, pp.134-140.



to suborn witnesses to give false evidence as to the appearance of the new moon, so as ensure that the 15th of Nisan should, if possible, coincide with the weekly sabbath, and then of course the waving of the sheaf would take place, as they desired, on the first day of the week. Dr. Christie has written:

"We learn that this party (who are named Minim, Boethusians, and Tzadukim, all designations of the Sadduceean sect) sought to introduce confusion in the reckonings (M. Rosh. ii,1), and that this was for the purpose of deceiving the Chachamim, rabbis of the Pharisaic party. The whole matter is made very clear in the Tosephta parallel to the Mishna, as also in the Gemara comments in both Talmuds (Mishna, Rosh. ii,1, Bab. Rosh. 22b; Jer. Rosh. ii.1, or 10b, in Shit. Edition). All three passages give a full account of the bribing of two witnesses to give false testimony regarding the new moon for this purpose, and the payment of 200 zuz or denars to each of them. One of these belonging to the Pharisee sect revealed the whole matter, and gave details concerning his evidence of having seen the new moon from the neighbourhood of the Good Samaritan Inn (Ma'ale Adummim)."<sup>1</sup>

He wrote also:

"The Jerusalem Talmud tells us that the deception in the reckoning 'was known to the rabbis,' and the result was that 'these were sitting down (reclining) to-day, and those were sitting down on the morrow' (Jer. Rosh. 10b)."<sup>2</sup>

Here is positive evidence of the keeping of two successive Passover Suppers in our Lord's time, the first by the Pharisees (the unofficial one), and the second by the Sadducees (the official one), the Sadducees being then in authority. And does not all this explain how it was possible for the disciples to imagine that Judas could have made purchases on the day of the Crucifixion, and that such were actually made by Joseph of Arimathea? And it explains how there would be no difficulty in the fact that the servants of the High Priest carried weapons that day (John xviii.3), which were forbidden on a sabbath (M. Shab. vi, 1), and how there would be nothing irregular in holding courts of law like that of our Lord's trial on that day (forbidden on the sabbath, M. Betzah v,2; B. Sanhed. 63a), and that all the acts implied in the Crucifixion were possible that day (forbidden on a sabbath, Sanhed. 39a).

Now in this dispute as to the meaning of the phrase "the morrow after the sabbath" (Lev. xxiii.11,15) Dr. Christie thought that the Pharisees happened to be in the right, and the Sadducees wrong. But the present writer is inclined to question this view. Let us examine the evidence before making up our minds. We read:

"When ye come into the land which I will give unto you, and reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring the sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it" (Lev.xxiii.11,12).

In fulfilment of this direction we read that when Israel came into the Land under Joshua, they "did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened bread and parched corn, in the self same day" (Josh.v.11). Apparently the eating of the "old corn of the land" followed the waving of the first-fruits of this corn earlier in the day. It would seem then that "the morrow after the sabbath" and "the morrow after the passover" here correspond. It was on this passage that the Pharisees based their interpretation of the phrase under consideration. But the conclusion that "the morrow after the sabbath" always corresponds to "the morrow after the passover" does not necessarily follow, though at first sight it seems natural; for it may be that in this particular instance the appearance of the new moon so happened that it caused the day of the passover to coincide with the weekly sabbath at that time. But let us turn back again to the twenty third chapter of Leviticus, for we shall discover in it evidence which seems conclusive on the other side. We read:

"And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day when ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall there be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days: and ye shall offer a new meal offering unto the Lord" (Lev.xxiii.15,16).

Now of what nature were these seven intervening sabbaths in this passage? They can only be weekly sabbaths, no other sabbaths are recurrent in this way. But the "fifty days" were to be counted from "the morrow after the sabbath" unto "the morrow after the seventh sabbath," this counting being plainly inclusive.<sup>3</sup> Then if the "seventh sabbath" (the last of the recurrent sabbaths) was a weekly sabbath, so must also the first sabbath, from which it is counted, be a weekly sabbath; thus "the morrow after the sabbath," under consideration, must be the first day of the week. The following diagram will make this clear:

1	8	15	22	29	36	43	50
datum	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th sabbath
sabbath							

1. Palestine Calling, p.136. 2. Idem, p.136. 3. If the counting was exclusive, "from the morrow after the sabbath" to "the morrow after the seventh sabbath" would be 49 days, not fifty, as mentioned in verse 16.



And this conclusion is confirmed by the general context of the chapter. The mention of the word "sabbath" in verse 11 ("on the morrow after the sabbath"), preceded as it is by the article, surely refers to the sabbath already mentioned, namely the weekly sabbath of verse 3, for to what other "sabbath" can it refer? It is here submitted that it cannot refer to the first day of unleavened bread, the Paschal Supper, of verses 6 and 7, which, though of a quasi-sabbatical character, is not called a "sabbath." The only other day in this chapter beside the weekly sabbath which is called a "sabbath" is the Day of Atonement, mentioned later in verses 27-32, and this has nothing whatever to do with "the morrow after the sabbath" of verse 11.<sup>1</sup>

There is then no evidence in this chapter to show that the word "sabbath" in the phrase under discussion refers to any other day than the weekly Sabbath, none whatever. It would seem then that the Sadducees were right in their interpretation of the phrase, not the Pharisees.<sup>2</sup> This conclusion is important. For if the Sadducees were right in their interpretation of the phrase in question, they were probably right also in their choice of the day for the Passover Supper, and right in their sacrificing of the passover lambs the previous afternoon; and our Lord put His seal on the rightness of this latter act by Himself dying on the Cross at the same time. From this it follows that the Passover Supper eaten by our Lord and His disciples was the Passover Supper of the Pharisees, both Suppers, our Lord's and the Pharisees,' being without any lambs on the table since no lambs were available until the Sadducean authorities released them from the Temple area the following afternoon. Indeed the Pharisees had learned, we are told, to keep the Passover without lambs in Maccabean times; and it would also seem that our Lord and His disciples had kept the Passover in this way at Capernaum on the previous year. There is therefore nothing extraordinary in the fact that in the Gospel records there is no allusion to the eating of a passover lamb by our Lord's disciples in the Upper Chamber during the evening in which He was betrayed.

Our first question is now answered—Our Lord and His disciples partook of an anticipatory Passover Supper by special desire "before He suffered," a Supper held during the evening which commenced the 14th of Nisan, and the Sadducees kept the regular legal Passover Supper in the following evening after our Lord's burial.

(b) On what Day of the Week was our Lord Crucified?

WESTERN TRADITION (followed even by the majority of Protestants who disown the authority of Tradition) is practically unanimous in the belief that our Lord was crucified on the Friday of the Passion Week. On the other hand Eastern Tradition (as represented by the Greek, Russian, and other members of the Orthodox Church) is in agreement with the belief that our Lord was crucified on the Thursday of that Week, and in some Eastern Churches it is the practice to have a representation of the dead body of our Lord in a coffin displayed on the Thursday night of the "Holy Week," as a reminder of His death that day.

But what does Scripture say on the matter? Does it uphold the Friday date, or does it indicate that our Lord was crucified on the Thursday? Many able expositors maintain that Scripture supports Friday as the Day of the Crucifixion; but an important minority have grave doubts about this view. The matter is of some importance, because on the assumption that our Lord was crucified on the Friday depends the present extreme reverence given by a section of the Church to "Good Friday" as being the "holiest day of the year." Among those who have questioned whether our Lord was crucified on Friday may be mentioned such a scholar as the late Bishop Westcott, and he has been followed by certain scholars of the present day. Bishop Westcott laid great stress upon our Lord's words, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. xii. 40), as being proof to the contrary. He wrote as follows: "Admitting that parts of the days of the Burial, and the Resurrection, are to be counted as days, yet even thus the period from Friday to Sunday is only three days and two nights. Are we then to conclude that the separate enumeration of days and nights is without special force, and strictly speaking inaccurate?" It was for this reason that he held that our Lord was crucified on the Thursday.<sup>3</sup> The present writer had long been dissatisfied with the usual explanation of the words of our Lord just quoted, which attempts to harmonise them with the Friday date, and had been much attracted by the possibility of the Crucifixion having taken place on the Thursday. But

1. The "sabbaths" appearing in the A.V. of verses 24 and 39 are mistranslations, see the R.V. 2. There is another reason why "the morrow after the sabbath" cannot mean the day after the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the 15th of Nisan, namely, this "morrow after the sabbath" was a day when the sickle had to be put to the corn in the field at the reaping of the harvest, which means it was necessarily a work-day. But if this "morrow after the sabbath" meant merely "the morrow after the Paschal sabbath (the 15th of Nisan), it might happen to fall on the weekly Sabbath on which "no manner of work" could be done; so the sheaf could not be cut, nor the harvest gathered, nor the sheaf waved before the Lord, because the Paschal sabbath, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread depended upon the first visible appearance of the new moon in the Spring Equinox, and this had no fixed relation to the week. But if "the morrow after the sabbath" meant the day after the weekly Sabbath of that occasion, then such work could be done. 3. Introduction to the Study of the Gospels, pp. 344, 345.



the great probability of this latter view has been growing of late, especially since a more careful examination of the Scripture records, and of the arguments advanced by both sides, has been made. And it is with some satisfaction that the writer has discovered that the same arrangement of the events of the Passion Week, as is here submitted, appears in an article under the caption of Dates, written by Mr. F.R. Montgomery Hitchcock in Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, though the present writer only became aware of this article long after he had formulated his own opinions on the matter.

(The reader will find it more advisable than ever to refer continually to the suggested chronological order of the Passion Week appearing in Appendix B., at the end of this paper).

#### The Probability of the Thursday Date.

The great probability of the Thursday date for the Crucifixion of our Lord is that it seems to fit in so wonderfully with the details of the type appearing in Exodus xii.3-8. For in this passage we read:

"In the tenth day of this month [Nisan] they shall take to them every man a lamb ... your lambs shall be without blemish, a male of the first year ... ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at even ... and they shall eat the flesh in that night."

In fulfilment of this type it would seem that our Lord, the Archetype, was chosen by popular acclamation on "Palm Sunday," the 10th of Nisan, when the people said: "Hosanna, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel" (John xii. 11,12). Our Lord was in the prime of life, and in His three and a half years of ministry He had shown Himself without blemish in any way, moral or physical. In the passage from Exodus, just quoted, the words "ye shall keep it up" mean in effect "ye shall have it in custody,"<sup>1</sup> that is, under constant scrutiny against possible blemish developing in the mean time. In fulfilment of this our Lord was under constant scrutiny from "Palm Sunday" right up to the time when He was delivered to be crucified; during which period no fault could be found in Him. On the Sunday He made His triumphant Entry into Jerusalem, and "all the city was stirred, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is the Prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee" (Matt.xxi.10,11); and after showing Himself publicly in the Temple He returned to Bethany. On Monday He again entered into the Temple, and purified it, healing the blind and lame there, and so again vindicated Himself, upon which the children cried, Hosanna to the Son of David," and the religious leaders were unable to gainsay Him. On Tuesday our Lord had His great day of controversy with these Jewish leaders, who were unable to "ensnare Him in His talk," or to "answer Him a word" when He questioned them, for He was without fault. On Wednesday our Lord again entered Jerusalem, and certain Greeks enquired after Him,<sup>2</sup> and a "voice out of heaven" vindicated Him in the presence of the multitude; and after answering further criticism our Lord "departed and hid Himself," presumably to avoid premature arrest by the priests who were that day plotting His death (John xii.28-36). That evening, now the 14th of Nisan, our Lord instituted His New Supper of Remembrance, and later was betrayed, arrested, tried before the religious leaders of the people, who were unable to substantiate any charge against Him, tried by Pilate, by Herod, by Pilate again, and repeatedly pronounced not guilty. But in spite of His proved innocence He was finally condemned to death by the almost unanimous clamour of the Jews, crying, "Let Him be crucified." And significantly this day was the 14th of Nisan. If, on the other hand, our Lord was crucified on the Friday, the 15th of Nisan, then the type in Exodus is proved to be incorrect in a most important particular.

Furthermore, those who hold that our Lord was crucified on Friday, and yet believe that He made His Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem on "Palm Sunday," are forced to predicate that He spent two days, Wednesday and Thursday, in retirement at Bethany, not under public scrutiny, that is, two days out of the five demanded by the type, another serious failure in its fulfilment. Now, with respect to such a period of retirement from public view, it is true that when the Synoptic Gospels come to speak of the "first day of unleavened bread on which the passover must be killed," there does seem to be a break in the continuity of the narratives, thus marking a new beginning (Matt.xxvi.17; Mark xiv.12; Luke xxii.7), which break might allow for a period of retirement at that point, a retirement passed over in silence. But the context, before and after this break, certainly gives no impression of a two day period of inactivity on our Lord's part, as is so often assumed. Indeed such a retirement seems to be expressly contradicted by Luke's summing up of our Lord's ministry of the period, when, just before his account of the Paschal Supper, he says: "every day He was teaching in the temple, and every night He went out, and lodged in the mount that is called the mount of Olives; and all the people came early in the morning to Him in the temple, to hear Him" (Luke xxi.37,38). The writer is aware that some Harmonists have urged that, according to the Apostle John, it was on Tuesday afternoon that our Lord, after replying to the request of the Greeks for an interview, departed from the Temple, and "hid Himself." It is here submitted, on the contrary, that there is nothing in the Apostle John's Gospel narrative to fix the time when our Lord hid Himself from the people,

1. See Bishop Ellicott's Bible Commentary, Vol.I, p.228.  
Gospel Monogram, places the enquiry of these Greeks, and our Lord's reply, on the Wednesday morning.

2. Sir W.J. Herschell, in his



and it seems tolerably certain, in view of Luke's express testimony just quoted, that our Lord's reply to the enquiry of the Greeks, and His subsequent departure from Jerusalem to avoid premature arrest, took place on Wednesday morning; and it seems that it was during the coming evening that our Lord kept His Passover Supper with the disciples in the Upper Room, and instituted His New Supper of Remembrance.

It appears then that our Lord accurately fulfilled the type by being chosen on the 10th of Nisan, and by being under constant scrutiny before the public (with the exception of a few hours on Wednesday afternoon) until the 14th day of that month, namely, Thursday, on which He was crucified and died "between the evenings," after being publicly condemned to death "by the whole assembly of the congregation" of the Jews.

Can this conclusion be confirmed? Yes, abundantly so. In the first place we have a definite note of time in John xii.1, which seems to fit in exactly with the Thursday date for the Crucifixion. For we read: "Jesus therefore six days before the passover came to Bethany," after ascending from Jericho. Now what does the Apostle John mean here by "the passover"? In some contexts it refers to the sacrificing of the passover lambs during the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan; but here it more probably refers to the Paschal Supper and following festival which commenced after the sunset of the 14th, that is, on the 15th of Nisan (for John, as we have seen elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> speaks of the legal Passover Supper which was held after our Lord's death, by this title). Now let us assume that this legal Passover commenced on the Thursday evening after our Lord's death, then one day before this passover would be Wednesday evening, two days before the passover Tuesday evening, three days, Monday evening, four days, Sunday evening, five days, Saturday evening, and six days before the passover, Friday evening (which was the commencement of the Sabbath). Thus our Lord undertook the long and tiring ascent from Jericho on Friday, and arrived at Bethany just after sunset; and He apparently had His supper with Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, in Simon's house during the Saturday evening. On the above assumption then the chronology fits perfectly. But if the Crucifixion took place on the Friday, then working backwards in this way would bring our Lord's arrival at Bethany from Jericho on Saturday, or Saturday evening; but this is most improbable because the distance up from Jericho to Bethany is far greater than a Sabbath day's journey, and Saturday was the Sabbath.<sup>2</sup>

In the second place, the Thursday date for the Crucifixion, as pointed out by Bishop Westcott, exactly fulfils our Lord's prediction that He would be "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt.xii.40). For the short period between our Lord's death and burial and the sunset of Thursday may be reckoned for one day,<sup>3</sup> the night following, one night; Friday, two days; Friday night, two nights; Saturday, three days; Saturday night, three nights; and our Lord rose from the dead before daybreak on Sunday morning.

But against all this such an authority as Prof. Turner, speaking of the Day of the Resurrection as being "the third day" from the day of the Crucifixion, has urged:

"The most common New Testament phrase for the day of the Resurrection in comparison with the Crucifixion is tē tritē [lit. "on the third day"], which occurs in the Gospels eight times, beside 1 Corinthians xv.4, which in Greek never did or could mean anything but 'on the second day,' whether 'the day after to-morrow,' or 'the day before yesterday,' cf. Luke xiii.32; Acts xxvii.18,19; Exod.xix.10,11; 1 Macc.ix.44. Even the apparently stronger phrases 'after three days' (Mark viii.31; Matt.xxvii.63,64), and 'three days and three nights' (Matt.xii.40) mean the same thing; cf. Gen.xlii.17,18; Esth.iv.16."<sup>4</sup>

According to Prof. Turner, then, all the above phrases are to be reckoned inclusively. This dogmatic position taken by Prof. Turner sounds most formidable; and if it is indeed a fact that the words tē tritē (lit. "on the third day"), when referring to the future, always mean in our English reckoning "the day after to-morrow," or "the day after the morrow," then this is most damaging to the view that the Crucifixion took place on the Thursday. For this reason Prof. Turner rejected the view of Bishop Westcott, and insisted that our Lord was crucified on the Friday. But on the other hand we may note that Mr. F.R. Hitchcock, writing at a later date, and aware of Prof. Turner's article, and fully conversant with the latter's argument based on the phrase "on the third day" meaning "the day after the morrow," has taken the same view as Bishop Westcott, and places the day of the Crucifixion on the Thursday. Now when authorities disagree what are we to do? Let us examine the evidence afresh. Now without doubt the phrase "on the third day" does in some contexts mean "on the day after the morrow," as the following passage cited by Prof. Turner shows quite plainly: "Behold I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected" (Luke xiii.32); also: "As we laboured exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began to throw the freight overboard, and the third day they cast out the tackling of the ship" (Acts xxvii.18,19). Again: "Fast for me, and eat not and drink not for three days, night and day ... and it came to pass on the third day &c." (Esth.iv.16, LXX). Lastly: "And he put them in prison three days; and he said to them on the third day &c" (Gen.xlii.17,18, LXX). But it is to be noted that in these examples quoted by Prof. Turner a set of three days is in view, to which the

1. See pp.5,6. 2. The ascent from Jericho to Bethany is about 15 miles, and would take foot-travellers at least 6 hours. 3. Our Lord's burial (and descent "into the heart of the earth") took place before sunset (the word opsia, used in Mark xv.42, does not always mean after sunset, see the Thayer-Grimm Lexicon). 4. Art. "Chronology of the New Testament," Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible.



phrase "the third day" is related. In such cases the reckoning is plainly inclusive. By the same mode of reckoning "on the second day" ought to mean "on the morrow." But does it? Consider the following example: "We ... arrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli" (Acts xxviii.13). Here the arrival at Puteoli "on the second day" after the previous arrival at Rhegium was plainly on the day after the morrow after the arrival at Rhegium, the reckoning being exclusive, not inclusive. This is in direct disagreement with Prof. Turner's dictum above. Evidently then there are both modes of reckoning in the New Testament, inclusive and exclusive. In English we have the same thing. When we say "on the third day from now," we mean, not the day after the morrow, but the next day after that, the reckoning being exclusive. But if we have a set of three periods commencing with to-day in view, "on the third day" of such a set would be the day after the morrow, for example: "We remained here three days, and on the third day we departed," in which the day of departure was the day after the morrow after the first mentioned day, the reckoning being inclusive.

Now all expositors insist, as Prof. Turner has done above, that the phrases "on the third day," "after three days," and the "three days and three nights," are equivalent to one another, all denoting the period between our Lord's death and His resurrection. This being so, those who believe that our Lord was put to death on Friday afternoon seek by various expedients to shorten, or compress, the apparently longer phrases to agree with the meaning which they assign to the phrase "on the third day," making all to mean "on the day after the morrow." Thus Jewish authorities are quoted to the effect that a day and a night are the equivalent of the Hebrew onah (a period of 24 hours, like the Greek nuchthēmeron, a "night-day"), and it is said further that any part of an onah is to be reckoned for one onah. This being so, the remainder of the Friday between our Lord's burial and sunset is reckoned as one onah, from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday makes a second onah, and from sunset on Saturday to early Sunday morning makes a third onah, three onoth altogether. In this way, they urge, our Lord's prediction was fulfilled. This is a possible explanation; but it has always seemed to the writer a very laboured one. If such were our Lord's meaning, why did He not say plainly, "As Jonah was three nuchthēmera in the heart of the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three nuchthēmera (night-days) in the heart of the earth"? But, reversing the usual Jewish order of night and then day, our Lord said that He would be "three daylights<sup>1</sup> and three nights in the heart of the earth," which was precisely the case if He was crucified on the Thursday.

But let us now examine the remaining equivalent of the phrase "on the third day," viz., "after three days," appearing in Matthew xxvii.63: "That deceiver said while He was yet alive, After three days I rise again," see also Mark viii.31; ix.31 R.V.; x.34 R.V. Let us first assume that our Lord was crucified on Friday, and see what this assumption leads to. On this hypothesis the phrase "after three days," reckoned inclusively, reaches forward to Sunday morning, that is, it means "the day after the morrow," then by the same method of reckoning "after two days" must mean "on the morrow," and "after one day" must mean "to-day"; but this is manifestly absurd. Let us look again at Acts xxviii.13: "We ... arrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli"; here unquestionably "after one day" means "on the morrow," therefore by the same mode of reckoning "after two days" must mean "on the day after the morrow." Can we confirm this meaning in connection with the chronological data of the Passion Week? Yes, we can; for it so happens that our Lord (as reported by both Matthew and Mark) used this very phrase early in the Passion Week, and His use of it sheds clear light on its meaning. It is generally admitted by expositors who hold to the Friday date for the Crucifixion that it was on Tuesday that our Lord had His great day of controversy with the religious leaders of the Jews in the precincts of the Temple.<sup>2</sup> When this controversy came to an end our Lord departed from the Temple and the city, thereupon His disciples showed Him the Temple buildings which were in plain view on their road to Bethany. This implies that it was still daylight. Our Lord replied that the time was coming when not one stone of these same buildings would be left standing upon another. And He sat down on the Mount of Olives, and went on to speak of His Second Advent, and of the apocalyptic judgements connected therewith. The delivery of our Lord's discourse would not take more than a quarter of an hour (the longer record appearing in Matthew xxiv.4 to xxv.46 may be read through audibly in the English translation in about twelve minutes); then we read: "When Jesus had finished all these words, He said unto His disciples, Ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified" (Matt. xxvi.1,2), or, as it is in Mark: "After two days was the feast of the passover and of the unleavened bread" (Mark xiv.1).<sup>3</sup> It would appear then that these words were spoken by our Lord just before sunset, late on Tuesday afternoon. Very well then, if "after two days" means "on the morrow" (as it must, if the longer phrase "after three days" means "the day after the morrow," as argued by Prof. Turner), this would mean that during the evening after that sunset our Lord kept His Passover with His disciples, and He was crucified on the next day, Wednesday. But this was certainly not so.<sup>4</sup> By this mode of reckoning

1. The word hēmera, used here for "day," often refers to daylight as contrasted with night. 2. No harmonist has, to the writer's knowledge, ever placed this controversy on the Wednesday. 3. I.e. according to the reckoning of this feast by the Pharisees, to which the Synoptics refer. 4. See Appendix F.



the phrases under consideration Thursday would be "after three days," and Friday, on which, according to this hypothesis, our Lord was crucified, would be "after four days," contradicting our Lord's own words.<sup>1</sup> It is evident then that an inclusive reckoning of the phrases "after three days" and "after two days" leads to an impasse, and something must be wrong. It appears then that the phrase "after two days" does not mean "on the morrow," nor does "after three days" mean "on the day after the morrow," nor does its equivalent "on the third day" have this meaning.

Now let us assume that the Crucifixion took place on the Thursday, and see how these phrases work out. Reckoning exclusively from late Thursday afternoon, "after one day" brings us to Friday, "after two days" to Saturday, and "after three days" to Sunday morning. By the same mode of reckoning, and starting from late on Tuesday afternoon, "after one day" brings us to Wednesday, and "after two days" to Thursday, on which our Lord was put to death on the Cross. This method of reckoning of the phrases, then, leads to a consistent result, and the chronology fits perfectly.

So instead of trying to compress the phrases "after three days" and "three days and three nights" to mean "the day after the morrow," which leads to an impasse, a consistent chronological result is obtained by taking the phrase "on the third day" to mean the same thing as the apparently longer phrase "after three days," both meaning two days after the morrow, the reckoning being exclusive.<sup>2</sup>

#### "The Preparation."

The last problem to be considered is what bearing, if any, have the various references to "the preparation," and "the sabbath," which appear after the accounts of the Crucifixion, on the latter. If we possessed the Synoptic Gospels only it must be admitted that most readers would conclude that the day of the Crucifixion was followed immediately by the weekly Sabbath, which, if true, would mean that our Lord was crucified on Friday. It has been urged that the references to "the preparation" lead to the same result. Consider the following passages from the Synoptics:

"And when even was now come, because it was the preparation, that is the day before the sabbath, there came Joseph of Arimathea ... unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus" (Mark xv.42,43).

"This man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb that was hewn in stone, where never man had lain. And it was the day of the preparation, and the sabbath drew on" (Luke xxiii.52-54).

"And the women, which had come with Him out of Galilee, followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how the body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. And on the sabbath they rested according to the commandment" (Luke xxiii.55,56).

"Now on the morrow, which is the day of the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was alive, After three days I rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day ... so they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them" (Matt.xxvii.62-66).

"And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him" (Mark xvi.1).

At first sight the references to the "sabbath" in these verses seem to speak of the weekly Sabbath as apparently following after the day of the Crucifixion. Also the term

1. It is just possible (though unlikely) that our Lord spoke the words "after two days the passover cometh, on which the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified" after sunset on Tuesday. But even then, according to an inclusive reckoning, Friday would be "after three days," not after two, as foretold by our Lord. 2. The writer is not unmindful of the fact the Apostle John, when speaking of the second meeting of our Lord with the Eleven after His resurrection, said: "And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them" (John xx.26), in which the phrase "after eight days again" plainly mean "week later," or, as we would say in English, "after seven days." But, as has already been pointed out, the Jews were accustomed, when speaking of a set of days, to reckon inclusively; and without doubt the week was one of the most conspicuous examples of such a set of days. Idiom is a peculiar thing; compare the French expression "dans huit jours" (in eight days) for "in a week's time." But this Jewish use of "after eight days" for "in a week's time" does not prove that all such expressions must be reckoned inclusively. Another proof to the contrary (in addition to the passage of Acts xxviii.13) appears when we compare Matthew xvii.1 with Luke ix.28; in the former passage we read: "And after six days Jesus taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and bringeth them into a high mountain apart"; while Luke, speaking of the same incident, says more loosely: "And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, He took with Him Peter and James and John, and went up into the mountain to pray"; here the words "after six days" cannot be an inclusive phrase for our after five days," for it is equivalent to Luke's looser period "about eight days after," which must mean "about a week later." We see again that the New Testament uses both inclusive and exclusive modes of reckoning periods of days



"the Preparation" was, as has already been observed, a technical term for the day before the weekly Sabbath, it was certainly so used at the end of the first century (and maybe at that time also), and has continued to be so ever since in the East. But the Apostle John, well acquainted with the above passages, seems to suggest another view, namely, that the "sabbath" in question was, not the weekly Sabbath, but a "high day" sabbath, that is to say, the sabbatical first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread on which the Paschal Supper was eaten; and he seems to indicate that the "preparation" spoken of was, not the preparation for the weekly Sabbath, but for this Paschal sabbath just alluded to. For, referring to the day of the Crucifixion, he says:

"Now it was the Preparation of the passover" (John xix.14).

"The Jews, therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken" (John xix.31).

"There then because of the Jews' Preparation (for the tomb was nigh at hand) they laid Jesus" (John xix.41).

In the second of these quotations we have one of the Apostle John's explanatory asides which so often appear in his Gospel. How is this explanatory parenthesis to be understood? Not a few harmonists take the Apostle to mean here that the particular "sabbath" (a weekly sabbath) was a "high day" because it fell in the Paschal week. But if so, what is the point of the parenthesis? What does it explain? How does it bear upon the preceding statement? The answer to these questions is not clear. But if, on the contrary, the parenthesis means that the "day," or nature, of that sabbath was not the weekly Sabbath, but a "high day" sabbath, namely, the sabbatical first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread—the Paschal sabbath, then the parenthesis has an important bearing upon the whole statement. In this case there were two sabbaths following one another, the Paschal sabbath, and the weekly sabbath on the next day. Then Thursday would be the day of the Crucifixion, Friday the Paschal sabbath, and Saturday the weekly sabbath, and our Lord rose from the dead on the first day of the week.

Furthermore, the Apostle John, when he wrote his Gospel toward the end of the first century, must have been quite well aware of the fact that the day before the weekly sabbath was often called "the preparation,"<sup>1</sup> and knowing this, he was careful to call the day of the Crucifixion "the preparation of the passover," which, as Bishop Westcott has observed, "cannot mean anything but the preparation for the passover," but not for the weekly sabbath.<sup>2</sup> Does not the Apostle John then correct the impression that readers of the Synoptic Gospels, in their ignorance of the Jewish ceremonial of the Passover, might falsely draw concerning "the preparation, that is the day before the sabbath" (Mark xv.42)?

Lastly, we have some indirect evidence about the meaning of the term "the preparation" in Matthew xxvii.62,63, which seems to bear out what we have been saying. Matthew says: "Now on the morrow, which is the day after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, that deceiver said ... after three days I rise again."<sup>3</sup> If Matthew was referring here to the weekly sabbath, why did He not write plainly: "Now on the morrow, that is the sabbath, the chief priests and the Pharisees came &c."? Bishop Westcott, referring to this phrase, has remarked: "Such a circumlocution seems most unnatural if the weekly sabbath were intended; but if it were the first day of unleavened bread, then, as the proper title of that day had been already used to describe the commencement of the preparation day, no characteristic term remained for it."<sup>4</sup> To understand the Bishop's comment we need to remember that, strictly speaking, the day of the Paschal Supper, the 15th of Nisan, was "the first day of (the feast of) unleavened bread" (Lev.xxiii.6,7), for only unleavened bread could be eaten from the 15th to the 21st of that month; nevertheless, following popular usage, both Matthew and Mark had already called the 14th of that month "the first day of unleavened bread" (Matt.xxvi.17; Mark xiv.12),<sup>5</sup> for it was the day when all trace of leaven had to be searched for that it might be eliminated from the dwellings of the Jews, so Matthew could not very well use the same words "the first day of unleavened bread" for the next day, the 15th of the month. It was for this reason that he found it necessary to use the round about phrase "the day after the preparation" to describe the day after the Crucifixion on which the chief priests asked Pilate to secure the sepulchre "until the third day." Thus the day of the Crucifixion was also "the preparation" for the 15th of Nisan, the sabbatical "first day of unleavened bread," not for the weekly Sabbath. With regard to the two day interval between the day of the Crucifixion and the day of the Resurrection, Bishop Westcott has observed: "The whole sabbatic period extending from the beginning of the 15th of Nisan to the dawn of the first day of the week might perhaps without violence be called a sabbath, or at least the rest of the 15th might be implied in the statement of the rest observed on the sabbath,"<sup>6</sup> for the word "sabbath" simply means a "cessation," here a cessation from secular activity on the Friday and the Saturday.

It appears therefore from our study of the Gospel records that the Eastern Tradition is very probably correct in holding that our Lord was crucified on the Thursday of the

1. It was so called in the Didachē, about the end of the first century. 2. Introduction to the Study of the Gospels, p.340. 3. See Appendix C. 4. Idem, p.345.  
5. Appendix C. 6. Idem, p.345.



Passion Week, and the Roman tradition is wrong. This conclusion has a bearing upon the present practice in some quarters to give to what is called "Good Friday" an especial honour as being the holiest day of the year. If any day may be supposed to have such an honour in this connection it should be the Thursday of that Week. It has also a bearing upon the practice of the Church of Rome in restricting the diet of members of that Church on the Friday, this practice is evidently a mere "tradition of men," without any divine sanction whatever.

It is doubtful, of course, whether such a long established custom as the observance of "Good Friday" amongst the Western Churches could be upset by a realisation that our Lord was really crucified on a Thursday; and as long as the observance of "Good Friday" is regarded as a convenient occasion for the special remembrance of our Lord's Passion on the Cross, without any intrinsic holiness of itself, just as Christmas (though not being actually the day of our Lord's birth) is observed to celebrate this great event, no vital principle is involved, and Christians can, in love, respect the feelings of those who, having been brought up to revere the day, observe it as a special opportunity for the remembrance of our Lord's death on the Cross for the sin of mankind. But such should not, on the other hand, judge their brethren who have scruples about the observance of the day.

#### Appendix A. The Passover Supper in the Time of our Lord.

According to Dr. Alfred Edersheim, a great Anglican authority on Jewish customs, the observance of the Paschal Supper in our Lord's time took place substantially according to the following ritual:

(1) Each particular family, or company, wishing to keep the Passover, obtained their Passover lamb from the Temple area, where it had been sacrificed. They gathered together in a room set apart for the purpose, from which every trace of leaven had been most scrupulously eliminated. They took their places at a table, reclining upon a couch around it. The head of the company began the ceremony by taking the first cup in his hands, a cup filled with wine mixed with water. He then "gave thanks" according to a formula beginning with the words, "Blessed art Thou our Lord God, who hath created the fruit of the vine." The cup, after this "blessing," was then passed round that each might thereof.

(2) The whole company then rose, and after prayer to Jehovah, washed their hands.

(3) They then resumed their places at the table. The head then dipped bitter herbs into vinegar, and having pronounced a blessing, partook thereof, and passed the bitter herbs round that each might partake.

(4) The head then broke one of the unleavened cakes on the table in half, and after putting aside one half for the "after-dish" (the aphiqomen), lifted up the dish in which the other half was contained, and said: "This is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt; all that are hungry come and eat, all that are needy come and keep the passover."

(5) The second cup was now filled, and the youngest member of the company made a formal enquiry as to the meaning of the ceremony. The cup was then elevated, and after the singing of the first part of the "hallel," was drunk by those present.

(6) The company then rose again and washed their hands. After resuming their places at the table the "sop" (consisting of pieces of unleavened bread between which bitter herbs had been sandwiched, the whole being dipped into a mixture of raisins, nuts, and spices, called the charoseth) was passed round that all might partake.

(7) The Passover Lamb was then eaten by those present.

(8) At this point, especially in after days, the "after-dish" (the aphiqomen) was eaten.

(9) The third cup, the "cup of blessing," was then filled, and after thanksgiving, was drunk by all present.

(10) Last of all the ceremony concluded by the drinking of the fourth cup with the singing of the rest of the "hallel," and after prayer all dispersed.

#### Appendix B. Suggested Chronological Order of the Passion Week.

##### Nisan

8	Friday	Ascent by our Lord from Jericho to Bethany.
9	Friday evening to Saty. sunset	Jesus arrives at Bethany "six days before the passover." Weekly Sabbath.
10	Saty. evening to Sund. sunset	Supper at Bethany, Lazarus present. <u>Triumphant Entry</u> into Jerusalem, "Palm Sunday."
11	Sund. evening to Mond. sunset	Purification of the Temple.
12	Mond. evening to Tues. sunset	Our Lord's Controversy with Jewish Leaders, "after two days ... the Son of man ... crucified."



(Nisan)

13	Tues, evening to	Greeks ask to see Jesus. "He departed and hid Himself."
	Wed. sunset	
	Wed. evening to	<u>Anticipatory Paschal Supper. The Lord's Supper. Betrayal.</u>
14	Thur. sunset	<u>Trial. Crucifixion</u> (from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M.)
	Thur. evening to	<u>Typical lambs slain. Burial.</u> (1st daylight)
15	Frid. sunset	<u>Legal Paschal Supper of Sadducees.</u> (1st night)
	Frid. evening to	<u>Passover Sabbath.</u> (2nd daylight)
16	Sat. sunset	(2nd night)
	Sat. evening to	Weekly Sabbath (3rd daylight)
17	Sund. sunset	(3rd night)
	Sund. evening to	<u>Resurrection</u> (before daylight)
	Sund. evening	Sheaf of First-fruits waved before the Lord.

"As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt.xii.40).

"After three days I will rise again" (Matt.xxvii.63).

#### Appendix C. Scriptures dealing with the Period from the 14th to the 17th of Nisan.

##### 14th of NISAN (Wednesday evening to Thursday sunset)

"Now on the first day of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt Thou that we make ready for Thee to eat the passover?" (Matt.xxvi.17).

"And on the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the passover, His disciples say unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we go and make ready that Thou mayest eat the passover?" (Mark xiv.12).

"And the day of unleavened bread came, on which the passover must be sacrificed" (Luke xxii.7).

"Go into the city ... I will keep the passover at thy house with My disciples" (Matt. xxvi.18).

"Go and make ready for us the passover ... the Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber where I shall eat the passover with My disciples?" (Luke xxii.10-12; and Mark xiv.13-15).

"With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15).  
(From sunrise onward)

"Now it was the Preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour [Roman reckoning] ... Behold your King! Away with Him ... crucify Him" (John xix.14,15).

"And it was the third hour [Jewish reckoning], and they crucified Him" (Mark xv.25).

"The Jews, therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day), asked of Pilate ... that He might be taken away" (John xix.31).

"And when even [here before sunset] was now come, because it was the Preparation, that is the day before the sabbath, there came Joseph of Arimathea ... unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus ... he bought a linen cloth, and taking Him down, wound Him in the linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb. And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Jesus, beheld where He was laid" (Mark xv.42-47).

"There then because of the Jews' Preparation (for the tomb was nigh at hand) they laid Jesus" (John xix.42).

"And it was the Preparation, and (the) sabbath drew on,<sup>1</sup> and the women which had come with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how His body was laid. And they prepared spices and ointments" (Luke xxiii.54-56).

##### 15th of NISAN (Thursday evening to Friday sunset).

"And on the sabbath day they rested according to the commandment" (Luke xxiii.56; see the Commandment in Exodus xii.16 and Leviticus xxiii.7).

"Now on the morrow, which is the day after the Preparation, the chief priests ... gathered together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, that deceiver said ... after three days I rise again. Command therefore the sepulchre be made sure until the third day ... so they went, and made the sepulchre sure" (Matt.xxvii.62-66).

##### 16th of NISAN (Friday evening to Saturday sunset)

The Weekly Sabbath.

##### 17th of NISAN (Saturday evening to Sunday sunset)

"And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him" (Mark xvi.1) [over

1. Gr., *epiphōskēn*, lit. began to dawn. "It was sundown, not sunrise, when the Jewish sabbath (twenty-four hour day) began. The confusion is to us, not to the Jews, or the readers of the Greek New Testament," Prof. A.T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.ii, p.289. The so-called Gospel of Peter has this verb *epiphōskō* in this sense of "drew on," as does a late papyrus, see again Prof. Robertson, Idem, Vol.i, p.240.



(Just before Sunrise)

"Now late on [better, "after"]<sup>1</sup> the sabbath day, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre" (Matt. xxviii.1).

"Now when He was risen early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene" (Mark xvi.9).

#### Appendix D. The Supper at which our Lord was present in Simon's House.

One of the minor problems of the Passion Week is the relation between the supper spoken of in John xii.1-8, and that described in Matthew xxvi.6-13 and Mark xiv.3-9. These suppers have so much in common that most harmonists took upon them as being one and the same. The present writer is inclined to take the same view. It is true that in the supper described by John the ointment was poured upon the feet of our Lord, while in the supper described in Matthew and Mark the ointment was poured upon His head. But may it not be true that the ointment was poured (by Mary the sister of Lazarus, cf. John xi.2 with xii.3) upon both the head and feet of our Lord? The house in which the supper was held was, according to Matthew and Mark, that of Simon the leper, and John does not contradict this, but merely says that Lazarus was present, and that Martha served; He does not say that the house belonged to Lazarus, as some have assumed. Matthew and Mark indicate that some of the disciples were indignant at the apparent waste of valuable ointment, and John singles out Judas as the probable source of the murmuring, infecting the others. Both Matthew and John mention the ground of the objection, namely, that the ointment might have been sold for 300 "pence," and the proceeds given to the poor; and all three Gospels reply to this charge. It would seem very probable indeed that the two suppers were really one.

But if we have to do with one supper, how is it that John seems to place the supper at the end of the sabbath which preceded our Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, while both Matthew and Mark seem to place it during the evening which followed the day of controversy between our Lord and the Jewish religious leaders on Tuesday? Before deciding the matter, let us first examine the setting of the supper as given by John:

"Jesus therefore six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus raised from the dead. So they made Him a supper there ... the common people therefore of the Jews learned that He was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also ... but the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus. On the morrow a great multitude ... when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of the palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried out, Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel" (John xii.1-13).

Our Lord came up from Jericho to Bethany on the Friday, probably arriving just after sunset, that is, on the commencement of the Sabbath. The multitude of pilgrims which accompanied Him on the road went on to Jerusalem. It was plainly they who brought the news of His arrival at Bethany to those who were in Jerusalem, and the "common people therefore ... learned that He was there" at Bethany; and they came out on the Sabbath to see Him and Lazarus also, probably seeing Him at the supper. This supper, then, could not have been held during Friday evening, because in that case the news of our Lord's arrival would not have time to reach the people in Jerusalem that they might go out to see our Lord and Lazarus at Bethany that evening. The supper must therefore have occurred late on the Sabbath, or more probably during the evening which brought the Sabbath to a close. And it was on the morrow that the multitude, hearing of our Lord's intention to enter Jerusalem, took the palm leaves and met Him on the road as He approached the city.

But when we examine the records of the supper which appears in Matthew and Mark, it seems plain that in both these Gospels the account of the supper comes in parenthetically. Note Matthew's account: "Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper &c.," the word "now" is here a case of the "de resumptive," so often used to mark a new beginning in a narrative. But do we not read, it may be asked, that at the close of Matthew's account: "Then (Gr. tote) one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, and said, What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?" Yes, we do. But this word "then" may just as well refer to the council of the chief priests and elders of the Jews as to how they might "take Jesus by subtilty, and kill Him," mentioned in verses 3-5, which precede Matthew's account of the supper (cf. Matt.xxvi.3-5 with verses 6-13). It may be asked, then, why did both Matthew and Mark interpose the supper between this council of the chief priests and the action of Judas in seeking them out to betray the Lord Jesus? May it not be that the insertion of the supper here (already held during the Saturday evening) was for the purpose of explaining Judas' action; for, being a thief, he had been indignant that so much money was, from his point of view, wasted in the anointing of our Lord, he being one of the limited number of the disciples who were offended at Mary's action. Of course, if the word "then" is to be taken to show that Judas' action in going to the chief priests followed immediately after

1. "Opse sabbatōn (Matt.xxviii.1) may be either 'late on the sabbath,' or 'after the sabbath.' Either has good support," Prof. A.T. Robertson, Grammar of the New Testament in the Light of Historical Research, p.646.



the supper appearing in Matthew and Mark, then we must conclude that there were two suppers, in which different women anointed our Lord, Mary anointing His feet, and another woman (unnamed) anointing His head. But the writer greatly prefers the view that there was only one supper, and this supper was held during the Saturday evening which preceded our Lord's entry into Jerusalem.

#### Appendix E.

#### The Day of the Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem.

In his book Palestine Calling, Dr. W.M. Christie, holding that our Lord was crucified on the Friday, and believing that He accurately fulfilled the type in that He was publicly chosen on the 10th of Nisan, is forced to conclude that our Lord's Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem took place on the Monday, not Sunday. Reckoning then from Monday, the 10th, he holds that our Lord was put to death on Friday the 14th of the month. But this arrangement of the Passion Week involves two difficulties. In the first place it seems to conflict with the definite time note given by the Apostle John that "six days before the passover" our Lord "came to Bethany" (John xii.1), for he is forced to place the ascent to Bethany on the Sunday (it could not have occurred on the Sabbath, as the distance was more than a sabbath day's journey), and "six days" from Sunday would place the Passover on Saturday evening, and the Crucifixion on the Saturday, though apparently Dr. Christie overlooked this fact. Secondly, in bringing our Lord up from Jericho on the Sunday, with the supper that evening, Dr. Christie creates another difficulty. The long and tiring ascent to Bethany would take our Lord and His disciples (with the women accompanying Him) at least six hours, probably more. Supposing then that our Lord left Jericho in the morning, His arrival at Bethany could not well have been before 2 P.M., possibly later. Then there would not have been sufficient time for the news of our Lord's arrival at Bethany to reach Jerusalem to enable the "common people" to "learn" of it that they might go out the same day to see Him and Lazarus, and for the chief priests to hear of their visit to Bethany for this purpose, and "take counsel" that night "that they might put Lazarus also to death." All this would have taken considerable time.

But if, as suggested by the present writer, our Lord arrived at Bethany just after sunset on Friday, and the subsequent supper was held in Simon's house on Saturday evening, there would have been ample time for all this to happen, and John's comment becomes luminous: "Jesus therefore six days before the passover came to Bethany ... they made Him a supper there ... the common people therefore ... learned that He was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also ... but the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus."

#### Appendix F.

#### Could our Lord have been crucified on Wednesday?

In the March number of The Evangelical Christian for 1923, the late Editor, Dr. Bingham, defended the view held by a few students of Scripture that our Lord was crucified on the Wednesday of the Passion Week. In his article Dr. Bingham urged that only on this hypothesis can our Lord's words "so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" be literally fulfilled. In support of this contention he urged:

"In the so-called 'Holy Week' there must have been two sabbaths with a secular day in between, which necessitates the placing of the Crucifixion on the Wednesday, and the Burial that evening (which would be the beginning of the Thursday of the Jews, and the passover sabbath or first day of unleavened bread). Then between this and the weekly sabbath was a clear secular day, Friday, and at the close of the weekly sabbath Christ arose."

In this way, urged Dr. Bingham, were the "three days and three nights" fulfilled—Wednesday night, Thursday; Thursday night, Friday; Friday night, and Saturday; and Christ rose at the end of the Sabbath (Matt.xxviii.1). In support of this view Dr. Bingham urged that there are two passages in Mark and Luke, having to do with the visit of the women to the tomb, "that absolutely demand this arrangement to reconcile them, viz., Mark says that the women, who had watched Joseph and Nicodemus make a hasty embalment of the body of Jesus, and beheld where He was laid (John xix.39,40; Mark xv.47), bought spices 'when the sabbath was past' that they might come and anoint Him (Mark xvi.1). But Luke commences at this point, and after telling of their return from the tomb, says that 'they prepared spices and ointments, and on the sabbath day they rested according to the commandment' (Luke xxiii.56). Dr. Bingham urged, therefore, that it is "utterly impossible to reconcile these two divergent accounts on the basis of the popular theory that Christ was only in the grave during the Jewish sabbath." He held therefore that "there were two sabbaths that week with a secular day between, and it was on this latter day that the women made their great preparation for the permanent embalment of the Body."

While the present writer is in agreement with Dr. Bingham in questioning whether our Lord was crucified on the Friday, he nevertheless submits that Dr. Bingham's argument in favour of the Wednesday date is based upon a misunderstanding of the evidence. In the first place, our Lord's descent into "the heart of the earth" surely refers to His descent in spirit to Hades at the point of death during the afternoon of the day of the Crucifixion, rather than to the mere burial of His body (which in all probability also took place before sunset, see note 3, p.10). There is therefore a short period on Wednesday (on Dr. Bingham's hypothesis) which must be reckoned in the counting. Furthermore, most



expositors agree that our Lord rose from the dead early on Sunday morning, not at sunset on Saturday (at the end of the Sabbath), as predicated by Dr. Bingham, for Mark says: "Now when Jesus was risen early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene" (Mark xvi.9), in which the word "early" (Gr., prōi), according to the Thayer-Grimm Lexicon, is used of the "fourth watch of the night, i.e. from 3 o'clock in the morning till 6, according to our reckoning." Dr. Bingham seems to have been led astray by the A.V. rendering of Matthew xxviii.1, which runs, "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene ... to see the sepulchre," which has puzzled many; but, as Prof. A.T. Robertson has pointed out, the Greek opse sabbatōn may well be translated "after the sabbath," which makes the meaning quite clear. Then if, as urged by Dr. Bingham, our Lord was crucified on the Wednesday, He would have been four days and four nights in the heart of the earth, thus: part of Wednesday afternoon, and Wednesday night; Thursday, and Thursday night; Friday, and Friday night; Saturday, and Saturday night.

Indeed Dr. Bingham's argument for two sabbaths with a secular day in between is based upon his failure to distinguish between the two different parties of women who visited the tomb. One party consisted of Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and Salome, who bought the spices on Saturday evening "when the sabbath was past"; the other part consisted of Joanna and "the women that followed with Him from Galilee" (Luke xxiii. 49), who had "prepared spices and ointments" on Thursday afternoon before sunset (Luke xxiii.59; xxiv.1,2). The former party of women arrived first at the tomb on Sunday morning, and they were followed soon after by the second party. Apparently Mary Magdalene and the other two women of the first party saw our Lord that morning, but not the women of the second party.

Some of the Books consulted:

- The Life of our Lord, Samuel Andrews, D.D.
- A Harmony of the Gospels, A.T. Robertson, D.D.
- A Gospel Monogram, Sir W.J. Herschel, M.A.
- A Harmony of the Gospels, B. Davies, Ph.D.
- An Introduction to the Study of the Gospels, Bishop Westcott, D.D.
- Palestine Calling, W.M. Christie, D.D.
- The Feast of the Passover, L. Abraovitch.
- Article "Chronology," Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, Prof. Turner.
- Article "Dates," Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, F.R. Montgomery Hitchcock, D.D.