

ARTICLE III.

THE DATE OF THE PASSION OF OUR LORD.¹

§ I. THE right understanding of the history of the passion, even in a chronological respect, depends greatly on a proper view being taken of the order of the Jewish Passover. In Ex. xii. 1-18 we read: "Let the month Abib (Nisan) be for you the first month. On the tenth of this month let every one take a lamb for a house, without blemish, a male of the first year. On the fourteenth of this month shall they slaughter it, the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel, between the two evenings (בין הערבים), and ye shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and ye shall eat *mazzoth* (unleavened bread) in [something] bitter. Seven days shall ye eat *mazzoth*; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses. On the first day and on the seventh day there shall be holy convocation; no work shall be done, save the preparation of what is to be eaten. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even (בערב), ye shall eat *mazzoth*, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even." With slight variations, this order is repeated in Lev. xxiii. 5-14; Num. xxviii. 16-25; Deut. xvi. 1-8. Taken as a whole, it is clear; and as our design is simply to see how it was understood and observed by the Jews at the time of Christ, we may here pass over the exegetical and harmonistic difficulties presented by the various accounts just alluded to.

The current designation of the fourteenth of Nisan in the

¹ The following Article is a translation (by Rev. Dr. D. W. Simon of Spring Hill College, England), from an able treatise by Chas. Ed. Caspari, entitled "Chronologisch-geographische Einleitung in das Leben Jesu Christi," published in Hamburg in 1869. Permission to translate this portion for the pages of the Bibliotheca Sacra was expressly given by the publishers in the name of the author. We can commend the whole work as a very valuable contribution to the literature of Apologetics.

Talmud is ערב המסח "evening of the Passover"; in the same sense in which ערב השבוע denotes the sixth Jewish Feria preceding the Sabbath. In the New Testament the fourteenth of Nisan is termed παρασκευή τοῦ πάσχα, "preparation of the Passover." On the evening of this fourteenth, that is, at its commencement, — for the Jewish day begins with the evening, and "evening and morning" constitute a day (Gen. i. 5), — they began to eat *mazzoth* (Ex. xii. 18). Nor could it be otherwise; for in the night of the fourteenth of Nisan all leaven had to be put away by light.¹ This day of preparation, the fourteenth of Nisan, like the day of Passover itself, i.e. the fifteenth, and like the day of convocation, i.e. the twenty-first, was a holy day.² Only the practice differed slightly in the different provinces. In Judea work was permitted on the day of preparation till dawn; in Galilee, the whole day, evening, night, and morning, was regarded as a holy day.³

Along with the putting away of the leaven and the commencement of the eating of the *mazzoth*, the chief business of the fourteenth of Nisan was the sacrifice of the paschal lamb in the holy place. Now, the sacrificing of the lamb consisted in its being slaughtered, not, as many exegetes assert, in its being eaten, in the holy place. This was to take place "between the two evenings," בין הערבים. We need not inquire what meaning this expression had in the Mosaic writings; we have only to do with its force at the time of Christ. According to Ex. xxix. 38, 39; xii. 6; Num. xxviii. 3, 4, the *thamid*, or evening sacrifice, was to be presented between the two evenings. Now, we read in Mishna: "*Thamid* was slaughtered at the half-ninth hour ($8\frac{1}{2}$), and sacrificed at the half-tenth ($9\frac{1}{2}$). On the day of preparation of the Passover it was slaughtered at the half-eighth ($7\frac{1}{2}$), and sacrificed at the half-ninth hour ($8\frac{1}{2}$). When, however, the day of pre-

¹ Mishna Pesachim, i. to iii.

² Jerus. Chagiga iii. 7: ערב המסח כמסח יום טוב כעצרת.

³ Pesachim iv. 5: ביחודה היו עושין מלאכה בערבי מסחים עד הצות יבגליל: לא היו עושין כל עיקר.

paration of the Passover fell on a Sabbath, *thamid* was slain at the half-seventh ($6\frac{1}{2}$), and sacrificed at the half-eighth hour ($7\frac{1}{2}$). Thereupon the Passover."¹

Here we have the explanation of the expression "between the two evenings"—it was the time during which the *thamid* and the Passover were sacrificed, that is, between the half-seventh ($6\frac{1}{2}$) and twelfth hour; in other words, between half-past twelve P.M. and six P.M., or, rather, sunset. On the fourteenth of Nisan, when it did not fall on a Sabbath, the evening sacrifice was slain about half-past one, offered about half-past two o'clock; and then, about half-past three o'clock, the Passover began to be slain. The sacrifice of the Passover consisted in burning the fat and pouring out the blood of the lamb at the foot of the altar of burnt-offering. Josephus says² that the paschal lamb was sacrificed or slain between the ninth and eleventh hours, or between three and five P.M. Thereupon it was skinned, prepared, and roasted.

§ II. The fifteenth of Nisan was a "day of convocation," like the twenty-first, and bore the name "Sabbath," whatever day of the week it might be (Lev. xxiii. 6, 7, 11). During the night with which the day began the Easter lamb was eaten. That this eating did and must take place in the night is plain from Ex. xii. 8, 10. It did not, therefore, take place on the fourteenth of Nisan, which ended at sunset. Indeed, it was impossible for a lamb which was not slain till five o'clock P.M. to be roasted ready for eating before the close of the night-day. We must, accordingly, pronounce it incorrect to say that the Easter lamb was eaten at the close of the fourteenth of Nisan. The fifteenth of Nisan was celebrated strictly as a Sabbath. The following days, from the sixteenth to the twentieth of Nisan, were work-days, only

¹ Pesachim v. 1 : חמיר נשחט בשמינה ומחצו וקרב בחשנה ומחצו בערבי פסחים נשחט בשבת בשבע ומחצו וקרב בשמנה ומחצו בין בחול בין בשבת הלערב פסח לחיות בערב שבת נשחט בשש ומחצו וקרב בשבע ומחצו וחפסח אחרי.

² De Bell. Jud. vi. 9, 3.

that unleavened bread was not permitted to be eaten on them. On the sixteenth, however, the feast of ingathering and of offering the Easter-sheaf took place.¹ The sheaf of barley was gathered immediately after sunset, that is, at the commencement of the sixteenth of Nisan, by deputies of the Sanhedrim. For this purpose a field in the Valley of Kedron, near Jerusalem, was selected, because the corn ripened there much earlier than in the rest of Palestine.² It was offered at the time of the morning sacrifice, and the ceremony opened the harvest of the year. In accordance with the sixteenth of Nisan the Feast of Pentecost was determined, that is, it fell seven weeks later, or fifty days later than the fifteenth of Nisan, on the same day of the week. If the fifteenth were a Sabbath, as was the case in A.D. 30, the day of Pentecost was also a Sabbath.³ The twenty-first of Nisan was, again, a "day of convocation," which held the rank of Sabbath and terminated the feast of *mazzoth*.

§ III. In the modern Jewish calendar the new moon, and accordingly the first of Nisan, is no longer settled by observation of the moon's actual phases, but by astronomical calculations, and, indeed, in such wise that the fifteenth never falls on Feria 2d, 4th, and 6th, that is, on a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, in the Jewish sense. That there was no such limitation, however, in early times, as, for example, in the age of Christ, can be clearly proved from the Talmud. In Mishna,⁴ we read that the remains, i.e. the bones, etc., of the paschal lamb, were burned on the sixteenth of Nisan; but if the sixteenth were a Sabbath, on the seventeenth. From which it follows that the sixteenth might be Feria 7th, and the fifteenth Feria 6th, or Friday. So, also, in Mishna⁵ is the case discussed in which the day of Pentecost would fall on a Sabbath; but as this feast occurred on the same day of the week as the sixteenth of Nisan, this latter must then have been a Saturday, and accordingly the

¹ Exod. xxiii, 10 seq.; Joseph. Antiq. iii. 10, 5. ² Tqsaphtha Menachoth, x. 10.

³ Lev. xxiii. 15 seq.; Joseph. Antiq. iii. 10, 6. ⁴ Pesachim, vii. 10.

⁵ Chagiga, ii. 4.

fifteenth a Friday. We might have passed over this circumstance, had it not been maintained that in the year of Christ's death the fifteenth of Nisan could not have been a Friday, but must have been a Sabbath, because, as is commonly assumed, the fifteenth of Nisan could not in any case fall on a Friday. We also believe that in the said year the day of Passover was a Sabbath-day; but we felt it right to say why we can make no use of this argument—it cannot be used in reference to the age of Christ.

THE DATE OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST ACCORDING TO THE SEVERAL EVANGELISTS.

§ IV. *The Gospel of John.*—1. The all-important question is: On what day of the Jewish week and month was Christ crucified? In John xix. 14, we are told: ἦν δὲ παρασκευὴ τοῦ πάσχα—“It was the day of preparation of the Passover.” There is no explaining away the fact that the rabbinical כִּרְבַּ הַסֵּפֶר, the fourteenth of Nisan, is here meant. Unless we are ready to charge the evangelist with using expressions which could not but lead his readers astray, we must assume that he placed the crucifixion on the fourteenth of Nisan. John xviii. 28, where we read: “Then they (the Jews) led Jesus from Caiaphas unto the praetorium; but they themselves went not into the praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover,” ἵνα μὴ μιανθῶσιν, ἀλλ' ἵνα φάγωσι τὸ πάσχα, leads to the same conclusion. That the words “eat the Passover” do not necessarily refer to the paschal lamb, we allow; nay, more, we postulate it; but it must also be allowed that they may refer thereto. The *mazzoth* were a paschal meal, in the strict sense; but the partaking of it did not depend on Levitical purity; for the impure not only might, but even must, eat unleavened bread during these days. To eat other bread was forbidden, on pain of being destroyed from among the people. In the words quoted the Jews mean an Easter meal, which was allowed only to the pure, and that could be no other than the Easter lamb.

Some commentators have asserted that the festal thank-offering, *Chagiga*, is referred to, and the sacrificial meal that succeeded. In Deut. xvi. 16, 17, we read: "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the face of Jehovah thy God, in the place which I shall choose, namely, in the feast of unleavened bread (*mazzoth*), and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles. But no one shall appear before the Lord empty, according as his hand can give, and according to the blessing which Jehovah hath given to every one." The not appearing empty was applied by the Jews to the thank-offering and the following sacrificial meal, called *Chagiga*, which was usually offered on the fifteenth of Nisan, but might also be sacrificed at the same time as the paschal lamb, on the fourteenth.¹ The flesh of the sacrifice, however, might be preserved two days and a night.² Now, as the entering the house of a Gentile only defiled till evening, the Jews would have had time to eat the sacrificial meal a day later, if they had gone into the praetorium. The chief reason, however, why we cannot regard the meal for which they wished to remain pure as the *Chagiga* is, that it bore no special paschal character, seeing that it might be offered at every festival, and must be offered at the feasts of Pentecost (weeks) and Tabernacles. Hence it could not fairly be described as "eating the Passover." The Jews avoided the praetorium, in order that they might be able to eat the paschal lamb in the approaching night, which began the fifteenth of Nisan. Consequently the day on which they observed such precaution was the fourteenth — the day of the crucifixion of Christ.

2. According to John, Jesus was condemned (xviii. 29), crucified (xix. 14), and buried (xix. 31, 42) on the fourteenth of Nisan. This must have been a Friday (*Feria 6th*); for, according to xx. 1, Jesus rose again on a Sunday, τῇ μιᾷ τῶν Σαββάτων, after having lain in the grave over the Sabbath, which was a high one (xix. 31), i.e. both an ordinary Sabbath and the high day of Passover; having been buried at the

¹ Mishna Pesachim, vi. 3, 4.

² Ibid. vi. 4.

close of the day of preparation (xix. 31). In the year 30 era Dion., 783 u.c., the fifteenth of Nisan was actually a Sabbath; and accordingly the fourteenth, a Friday (or Feria 6th). The Gospel of John thus agrees perfectly with the Jewish tradition, which reports that Jesus was crucified on the day of preparation for the Passover, בכורב המספה ס.

3. It is clear, that if Jesus was crucified on the fourteenth of Nisan, the meal which he ate with his disciples, must also have taken place on the fourteenth. But the fact can also be directly established. In John xiii. 1, 2 we read: "before the feast of Passover when supper was at an end, Jesus rose from supper" (πρὸ δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα καὶ δεῖπνου γενομένου). The feast of Passover was celebrated on the fifteenth of Nisan; before the feast, therefore, was on the fourteenth. That the meal took place at night is clear from xiii. 30. This night, during which, after the meal, Jesus was in Gethsemane, belonged to the fourteenth of Nisan, which began at sunset, that is, in the latter part of our Thursday. The following scheme will make our meaning clear:

JULIAN DAY.		JEWISH NIGHT-DAY.	
6th April, Thursday,	Evening till midnight,	} 13th Nisan, Feria V. {	{
	Midnight till morning,		
	Forenoon,		{ The Supper. Commence- ment of the Mazzoth Gethsemane. Putting away of the leaven. Condemnation, Sacrifice of Crucifixion, paschal and burial. lamb.
	Afternoon,		
	Evening till midnight,		
7th April, Friday,	Midnight till morning,	} 14th Nisan, Feria VI. {	
	Forenoon,		
	Afternoon,		
	Evening till midnight,		
8th April, Saturday,	Midnight till morning,	} 15th Nisan, Sabbath, {	{ Eating of paschal lamb. Jesus in the sepulchre. The Passover.
	Forenoon,		
	Afternoon,		
	Evening till midnight,		
9th April, Sunday,	Midnight till morning,	} 16th Nisan, Feria I. {	{ Jesus in the sepulchre. Gathering of the Sheaf. Resurrection of Jesus.
	Forenoon,		
	Afternoon,		
	Evening till midnight,		

4. Every unprejudiced reader must now be convinced, that John puts the crucifixion of Christ on the day of preparation, or on the fourteenth of Nisan, and not on the fifteenth, or the high day of Passover. Further proof is unnecessary; but still we will quote John xiii. 29. After supper, it being night, Jesus had said to Judas: "That thou doest, do quickly." "Some thought, because Judas had the bag, Jesus had said to him, buy that we have need of against the feast." The feast is the fifteenth of Nisan. Had Jesus been crucified on the fifteenth, the meal would have taken place on the same afternoon; but on the fifteenth, the high Sabbath, it was impossible to *buy* anything; consequently what was required, must have been procured on the fourteenth. Hence Jesus spoke the words in question on the fourteenth, at the beginning of the night-day, in whose latter half he was crucified.

The efforts made by commentators to show that according to John the crucifixion fell on the fifteenth of Nisan, have been dictated by a desire to establish agreement between him and the Synoptics, who are supposed to put it on the same high day. We now come to the Synoptics.

§ V. *The Gospel of Luke.* — 1. In Luke xxii. 7, 8 we read: "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat." What this Passover was we will leave for the moment undetermined, only remarking, that as no mention is made of a lamb, we are not absolutely compelled to suppose it to be the paschal lamb. The day of sweet bread, on which the Passover was to be slain, that is, the lamb was to be killed, its blood to be poured on the altar and its fat to be burned, was the fourteenth of Nisan; the fifteenth alone was the day of eating. Luke says expressly that when Jesus ordered the meal, the day of unleavened bread and of killing the Passover had not yet begun; it approached, ἤλθε δὲ ἡ ἡμέρα. He must therefore have given his order towards the close of the thirteenth of Nisan, in order that it might be ready by sun-

set, i.e. at the beginning of the fourteenth. The order was given on Thursday, the sixth of April, in the afternoon; the eating took place at the same date, on Thursday after sunset, accordingly on the fourteenth of Nisan (the Jewish Feria 6th). If, as is commonly assumed, Jesus had given command at the close of the fourteenth of Nisan, so that the meal was eaten at the beginning of the fifteenth, Luke could not have said, *ἦλθε ἡ ἡμέρα* on which the Passover must be killed; but would have said, "the day on which the Passover was killed drew towards its close"; for at that time of the afternoon the killing would either have been finished or, at all events, been in full operation.

2. If the meal which Jesus took with his disciples had been the eating of the paschal lamb, it must have been done proleptically, and in opposition to the rule; for, according to Luke, it was taken on the fourteenth of Nisan. It would be necessary then to explain how the priests came to permit the disciples of Jesus to slaughter their lamb in the sanctuary proleptically, a day earlier than others. Besides, in this case, it would follow that the crucifixion also happened on the fourteenth. For after they had eaten, Jesus said to Peter: "I tell thee Peter, the cock shall not crow *this day* (*σήμερον*) before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me" (xxii. 34), which involves that Peter's denial took place on the same night-day on which they ate supper together. Another passage (Luke xxiii. 26) shows that the fifteenth of Nisan could not have been our Lord's death-day: we read there, namely, that Simon, the Cyrenian, was coming out of the field, (*ἀπ' ἀγροῦ*,) when he was forced to bear the cross. Now, a man returning from a walk is not said to be coming *ἀπ' ἀγροῦ*; the expression means rather, "coming from his labor," and no one ventured to perform field-labor on the high Sabbath of the Passover; though, in case of necessity, he might do so on the day of preparation.

3. After Jesus had given up the ghost on the cross, Joseph of Arimathea buried the body, "and that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew nigh" (xxiii. 54). The term

παρασκευή, "day of preparation," might mean either the day before the Passover or the day before the weekly Sabbath. It is taken in the latter sense by those interpreters who assume that Jesus was crucified on the fifteenth of Nisan, i.e. on a Friday. But would it not be strange if the highest and most sacred festival-Sabbath in the entire year were simply termed "day of preparation" like any other Friday? On the contrary, the fifteenth of Nisan was so exceptionally sacred, that the ordinary Sabbath might be turned for it into a day of preparation. When the fifteenth of Nisan fell on the Jewish Feria 1st, and, accordingly, the fourteenth of Nisan was a Sabbath, the latter might be broken, so far as preparations were necessary for the feast;¹ from which it follows that the Passover was more sacred than the Sabbath, and therefore, could not serve as a day of preparation for it. The *παρασκευή* in Luke, as in John, must therefore have been the day of preparation for Easter, the fourteenth of Nisan. From which it further follows that Luke represents Jesus as having taken the supper at the beginning of the fourteenth of Nisan, i.e. Thursday after sunset; and that he was condemned, crucified, and buried on the same Jewish night-day, the fourteenth of Nisan, that is, on our Friday. Meanwhile, at sunset on Friday, the Sabbath commenced — being at once the usual weekly Sabbath, Feria 7th, and the high Easter Sabbath. During the same they remained quiet, according to the law (xxiii. 56); on the following Sunday (*τῇ δὲ μῆ τῶν σαββάτων*) Jesus rose from the tomb (xxiv. 1). The chronology of Luke thus harmonizes completely with that of John.

§ VI. *The Paschal Meal.* — That the words "eating the Passover," may denote eating the paschal lamb, is unquestionable: this is clear from John xviii. 28. Our business is now to show that this is not exclusively their force. That the last supper, as reported by John, was not the eating of the paschal lamb, is obvious. If, as reported by Luke, it were the paschal lamb, we should have a glaring contradic-

¹ Mishna Pesachim, iii. 6; vi. 1; Jerns. Pesachim, fol. 33, 1.

tion between the two evangelists. The opinion that Luke describes the fifteenth of Nisan as the day of the meal and crucifixion is based solely on his styling it "Passover"; for the remaining chronological hints point, as we have seen, to the fourteenth of Nisan. If he had anywhere expressly stated that the lamb was eaten at the supper, our case would be hopeless; but the word "lamb" nowhere occurs. In xxii. 14-23 he gives a detailed and careful description of the meal: Jesus gave the disciples the cup to drink (xxii. 17, 18); then the bread to eat (xxii. 19), which was his body, and (xxii. 20) the cup of the New Testament, which was his blood, to drink; but there is no allusion to a lamb. If anywhere, the *argumentum e silentio* must here be valid. What, then, was this Passover meal? Jewish tradition can alone help us here. This meal is described, with full details, in Mishna: ¹ from it, then, we must learn when the Passover meal was taken, and wherein it consisted. It commenced with the head of the family sending round the first cup of wine (x. 2); then came the eating (x. 3). Thereupon followed a second cup (x. 4); the son asking the father, and the father instructing all present, as to the meaning of the festival (x. 5, 6). Then the great Hallel was struck up (Ps. cxiii.-cxviii.). Afterwards came the third cup, which the rabbins called the cup of blessing (נסא רברכא; x. 7; cf. 1 Cor. x. 26); and the further singing of the Hallel. It being closed, the meal was terminated by circulating the fourth cup (x. 7). What the meal consisted of, we are told in x. 3: "They place before him (the head of the family) lettuce for dipping, till the dessert (*Nachtisch*) comes. There are put before him, unleavened bread, lettuce, and sweet porridge (*Brei*) and the two cooked dishes. Rabbi Eliezer bar-Zadok says: *Mazzoth!* and in the holy place they lay before him the body of the Passover."²

¹ Pesachim, x.

² חביאו לפניו מטבל בחזרת עד שנגיע לפרפרת דפת הביאו לפניו מצח וחזרת וחרוסת ושני חבטילין אפ על פי שאין חרוסת מצות רבי אליעזר בר צדק אוטר מצות ובמקדש היו מביאים לפניו גופי של פסח:

The body of the Passover was the Easter lamb. This is the only mention of the lamb in the whole long account given by the Mishna of the paschal meal. Rabbi Eliezer's observation was plainly meant to say: In the eating of the Passover the *mazzoth* are the obligatory portion; furthermore, but only for such as observe the feast in the holy place, the eating of the lamb. The description given by the Mishna applies to all Israelites without distinction, whether they lived at Jerusalem or not: the *mazzoth* were the obligatory part of the meal. It did not imply a personal presence in the holy place; it did not even imply the existence of the temple. The custom was, and still is, observed in exile, although there is neither temple, altar, nor sacrifice. But even while the sanctuary still existed, it was observed by Israelites who could not, or might not, or would not appear therein. It is therefore an error to maintain that φαγεῖν τὸ πάσχα necessarily means to eat the paschal lamb; for, as the oldest Jewish traditions teach, the *mazzoth* meal solemnly taken in every Israelitish house was a φαγεῖν τὸ πάσχα. We have now to ask, *when* the meal was taken? In Pesachim x. 1 we read: "In the evenings of the Passover, it is the custom to eat first about the time of the prayer *mincha*, when it has become dark; they then eat in Israel the bread of tribulation." What are we to understand by ערבי מסות, "evenings of the Passover"? If the expression be synonymous with ערב המסות it signifies the fourteenth of Nisan, the day of παρασκευή; but it may also denote the evening with which the fifteenth of Nisan commenced. In the former case the Jews would be represented as taking the meal, which they took at home, at the beginning of the day of preparation; in the latter case, on the fifteenth of Nisan. We pass over this philological inquiry, because it has no special bearing on the point before us. If the paschal meal were taken as a rule on the fourteenth, then our Lord's last supper coincided with it; but if it were generally taken on the fifteenth, then the Lord's supper, which was held on the fourteenth, was an anticipation — an impossibility as regards the paschal lamb,

though easily possible, if there were sufficient reasons, as regards the *mazzoth* meal. A ground of this kind is assigned by our Lord in Luke xxii. 15: "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you *before I suffer.*" The anticipation of the *mazzoth* meal caused no difficulty, for it was not dependent, like the eating of the lamb, on a priestly ceremony performed in the sanctuary; but depended altogether on the will of the head of the household. In any case, too, the fourteenth of Nisan was the day of *mazzoth*. To our mind, however, the supposition of such an anticipation seems to be unnecessary. The expression עֶרְבַי מַסְחֵה appears to us to be used in the ordinary sense of עֶרֶב הַמַּסָּח "day of preparation." The moment the night fell with which the fourteenth of Nisan commenced, the leavened bread was destroyed, and all leaven put away; accordingly, the supper taken at the beginning of this night-day could not but consist in part of *mazzoth*. Now it lies in the very nature of the case that the first partaking of this festal food should be accompanied by certain formalities—the formalities, to wit, which are described in the Mishna. Neither Luke nor John says that the supper consisted of the paschal lamb; and so soon as the erroneous idea that this must have been the case is set aside, the report of the first-named evangelist offers not the least support to the hypothesis in question. Not only so, but if that meal had been the paschal lamb, one must surely feel surprise that the evangelist who communicates so many details, should not even allude to the chief point—neither to the purchase, nor the slaying, nor the sacrifice, nor the eating of the lamb.

§ VII. *The Gospel of Mark.*—1. "After two days was the feast of the Passover and of the unleavened bread; and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. But they said, Not on the feast-day lest there be an uproar of the people" (Mark xiv. 1, 2). If the wish of the chief priests, that it should not fall "*on the feast-day*" had not been fulfilled, and Jesus had been taken prisoner on the fifteenth of Nisan,

why should Mark mention it at all? In that case, he would surely either have passed it over altogether, or have stated that it was not fulfilled. If, on the contrary, it were fulfilled, as the evangelist plainly means us to understand, then Jesus was not taken prisoner, and therefore not crucified, on the fifteenth of Nisan; for even according to Mark, he was crucified on the same day on which he was taken prisoner. This passage from Mark, therefore, is decidedly in the way of our regarding the fifteenth of Nisan as the day of the crucifixion. At the time referred to, that is, two days before the Passover, or on the thirteenth of Nisan, Jesus was in Bethany, where, according to this evangelist, he was anointed. Thereupon, that is, during the same "night-day," Judas went to the chief priests to betray Jesus, and "he sought how he might betray him at a good time" (or "at the right time," not "conveniently," as our English version has it). "At a good time" or "at the right time" would plainly seem to mean, at the time desired by the Sanhedrim, to wit, "not on the feast-day."

2. "On the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the Passover?" (Mark xiv. 12). That the eating of the paschal lamb on the fifteenth of Nisan cannot here be meant, is clear, from the words, "not on the feast-day." That Jesus did not eat the paschal lamb proleptically, on the fourteenth of Nisan, we may judge from the circumstance that the thought of the paschal meal was suggested by the disciples to the Lord, who foresaw his own speedy death, not by our Lord to the disciples; for the latter asked, not *whether* they should make preparations, for that was taken for granted, but *where*? It will scarcely, therefore, need any further evidence, that we have to do here, as in the case of Luke, solely with the meal described above (§ VI.), namely, the *mazzoth* meal taken in the evening, i.e. at the *commencement* of the fourteenth of Nisan. Mark also describes this last meal as a supper (xiv. 17); he, too, omits all mention of the lamb (xiv. 18 seq.); he

too tells us that Simon the Cyrenian, who was compelled to bear the cross, had just "come from the field" (not "part of the country," xv. 21); he designates the day of the crucifixion "the preparation, or fore-sabbath" (xv. 42); further, he lets fall not the slightest hint that the day on which the Lord was crucified was a sacred festival of the Jews; and, lastly, he represents Jesus as rising from the dead on a Sunday (xvi. 1). Thus this evangelist also agrees with John and Luke in assigning the supper and the crucifixion to the fourteenth of Nisan.

§ VIII. *The Gospel of Matthew.*—1. Matthew's account of the events of the passion week is less distinct than that of the two other Synoptics: but still it agrees entirely with theirs. Like Mark, he mentions the resolution of the Sanhedrim to take Jesus prisoner, and the anxiety felt that it should not happen "on the feast-day" (Matt. xxvi. 2-4). Judas pledges himself to make known to them where the Lord was to be found, "at the right time" (ἐξήτει εὐκαιρίαν):¹ a circumstance which prevents our supposing the fifteenth of Nisan to be the day of his arrest. The account of the supper (xxvi. 17), and the declaration of the Lord that "in this night" Peter would betray him (xxvi. 34), agree also with Mark, and prove that the meal and the crucifixion took place on the same "night-day." In xxvii. 62 we are told that the "day of crucifixion" was "the day of preparation," and in xxviii. 1, that the day of resurrection was a Sunday. From xxvii. 62 it is specially clear that the παρασκευή denotes the "day of preparation" for Easter, and not merely the day of preparation for the weekly Sabbath. We read there, "on the next day, which followed the παρασκευή, the chief priests came to Pilate." If this "next day" had been an ordinary Sabbath, Matthew would certainly not have described it by this strange expression: the παρασκευή from which he started in describing the following day, must have

¹ The word used in the English version "opportunity" is an exact rendering of εὐκαιρία; but it no longer possesses its original force. The adjective *opportunity* represents its original force.

had a distinctive character of its own, one that did not return every Friday, that is, it must have been the *παρασκευή* for Easter, and have been a feast-day itself. According to Matthew the day of resurrection was a Sunday, the day on which Jesus lay in the tomb, a Sabbath; the day of the crucifixion was the *παρασκευή* for Easter; hence the fifteenth of Nisan must have been the Sabbath during which Christ lay in the tomb.

2. As soon as the difficulty with the paschal meal is set aside and it is allowed that this same paschal meal is not the eating of the lamb, but the solemn eating of the *mazzoth*, which took place in every Jewish house in the evening, that is, at the *beginning*, of the fourteenth of Nisan, the appearance of contradiction between John and the Synoptics, and of inconsistency in the individual synoptic accounts themselves, vanishes at once. We say "the inconsistency in the synoptic accounts themselves"; for if they had regarded the supper as the eating of the paschal lamb, which could only take place on the evening of the fifteenth of Nisan, the arrest of Jesus would have fallen on the feast-day — in opposition to the words, "not on the feast-day," to the statement that Judas betrayed Jesus "opportunely," "at the right time," and to the notice that Simon the Cyrenian "came from the field." According to all the four Gospels, the day of the Lord's death was the *παρασκευή*, the fourteenth of Nisan, a Friday. With this too harmonizes not only the calculation of the Easter moon, which shows that in the year 30 the fifteenth of Nisan fell on a Sabbath; but also Jewish tradition, which assigns the "day of preparation" for the Passover as the day of the crucifixion.