

ARTICLE VII.

PROBLEMS OF THE PASSION WEEK.

BY DEAN ALFRED MARTIN HAGGARD, DES MOINES, IOWA.¹

“WHAT biblical task would you place before them, if you wished to break down the brightest and best students of all the graduating classes in all the schools of theology of the world for fourteen years in succession?”² I might not find a question which would do this, but I would try them out on the problems of the Passion Week. I know of nothing more intricate — nothing closer to the realm of the hopeless. I say this after some years of special study in this particular field, and after many years of hard work upon the most difficult problems in the Bible.

- In a way as brief and plain and simple as possible, allow me to state the results of my work.

I find that Jesus arose from the dead on a First Day of the week — the day so well known to us as Sunday or the Lord's Day. This first Lord's Day differed from its companions of the present time by having both its beginning and its ending determined by the setting of the sun.³ According to Jewish custom, this was true of all their days till the Roman custom of counting from midnight to midnight began to claim a place.⁴

At what hour of this great day was the stone rolled away? At what hour did Jesus come forth from the tomb? The Gospels clearly and certainly call for an early morning hour.

If the resurrection of our Lord took place between three and four o'clock, we would speak of it as the fourth hour of the day. With the Jews it would have been the tenth hour. I know of no hour which more completely meets the demands of all the facts in the case.

At what hour was the crucified body of our Lord placed in the sepulcher by Joseph and Nicodemus? Since the death upon the cross occurred at or near three o'clock in the afternoon, the hour of interment must be fixed later — enough later to give time for several events mentioned in the records. Since the Sabbath began at or near six o'clock and prevented the Galilean women from taking their part in the embalming of the body, though they did have time for some preparation after their return from the burial; and since the embalming conducted by the men must have taken a little time, the hour of interment must be placed an hour, or the larger part of an hour, before six. The time most probable for the interment was at five o'clock.

How many hours did the grave hold the body of Jesus? According to the late Dr. W. J. Beecher,⁵ the answer should be about thirty-six hours. With very, very few exceptions, the world of biblical scholarship answers by that number. During almost a lifetime, as preacher and teacher, I never dreamed of calling this answer in question. I was, however, forced to abandon it not long since. Some argue stoutly and with great ingenuity for seventy-two hours. This position I find absolutely untenable. If I have considered all the facts, — if I have made their induction with proper care and with scientific precision, — the body lay in the grave between fifty-nine and sixty hours.

The day of crucifixion, therefore, was not Friday but Thursday. The Gospel references to the time in the grave

are many and may be classified, forming three types of description. The "three days and three nights" of Matt. xii. 40 is the most exacting type. Thursday, according to a well-known method of Jewish reckoning, satisfies its minutest demands. I have thoroughly examined two very able attempts to show that the crucifixion took place on Wednesday. One of these is so skillfully presented that Dr. R. A. Torrey, of the Moody Bible Institute, has rejected Friday and adopted Wednesday.⁶ To the author of this position, Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman writes: "I greatly appreciate your biblical statements, and while I am not clear as to Wednesday being the day of crucifixion, yet I am intensely interested in all you write." Dr. J. M. Buckley, while editing the *New York Christian Advocate*, spoke of it as "a close argument," and added: "It is really revolutionary, and founded on the most painstaking, careful study." And the editor of the *Philadelphia Episcopal Recorder* says: "We are unable to detect a flaw in his reasoning." Like two or more of these men, I have been compelled to give up Friday; but, unlike them, unlike almost forty others in the same list with them, I find too many flaws to think for a moment of holding for Wednesday crucifixion. If I know how to handle evidence, both Friday and Wednesday must surrender to Thursday.

I find that the Sabbath which fell between the burial and the resurrection of the body of our Lord was double — forty-eight hours in length! These double Sabbaths were frequent, and well known to the Jews, though, as a rule, entirely overlooked by all classes of modern commentators. Such Sabbaths occurred at regular intervals of six or seven years. Aside from the Seventh-day Sabbaths, the Mosaic Law provided seven others, of which the Day of Atonement and the Passover Day⁷ were the most noteworthy. Like our Christ-

mas and New Year's Day, these, in the course of every few years, fell upon any and every day of the week. In the year of Jesus' death and resurrection, the Passover Day, one of the seven annual Sabbaths, Nisan 15th, fell upon Friday — fell so that its closing moment touched the opening moments of Saturday, Nisan 16th, the weekly Sabbath! That this Sabbath was more than ordinary is plainly evident from John xix. 31. It required no great amount of learning to grasp these things. A friend in Denver said to me last summer: "I have always known that this Sabbath was more than ordinary." Thus it is evident that Jesus was crucified upon the 14th, and died at the usual hour for the slaughtering of the lambs.⁸

It therefore follows, unavoidably, that the regular Passover supper, the feast of unleavened bread, was eaten by the inhabitants of Jerusalem hours (from five to seven) after the body was placed in the tomb. It follows just as certainly that Jesus, with his disciples, sat down to a Passover supper (Luke xxii. 8, 11, 13, 15; Mark xiv. 12, 14, 16, 17; Matt. xxvi. 17, 18, 19) about twenty-four hours before the usual time.⁹ Facts do not cease to be facts because they involve difficulties. John xviii. 28 refers, not to the Passover eaten by Jesus and his disciples, but to the regular Passover eaten in the night of Nisan 15th.¹⁰

There are two other feasts recorded, out of which "expert modern scholarship" is striving to make but one. Both these feasts were in Bethany and, in each instance, Jesus was anointed by a woman. But one feast was in the home of Lazarus and his sisters, while the other was in the house of Simon (John xii. 1-11; Matt. xxvi. 6-12; one was served on the evening which ushered in the Sabbath of Nisan 9th, and the other, four days later, in the opening (evening) hours of Wednesday, Nisan 13th.¹¹

Jesus arrived in Bethany (John xii. 1) on Friday, Nisan 8th. His arrival was probably so close to the end of this day that the supper of the 9th followed within less than three hours. The great majority of those who hold that Jesus was crucified upon Friday, claim also that he arrived in Bethany upon the previous Friday! That would be an impossibility. "Six days" (John xii. 1) before one Friday never did, and never can, bring one into the preceding Friday.¹²

Palm Sunday (Nisan 10th) stands, while Good Friday must go.¹³ Tuesday, the 12th, was the last day of Jesus' public ministry. Wednesday, the 13th, was a day of retirement throughout which Judas sought in vain for an opportunity to betray his Lord — an opportunity which never came till after the middle of the night of the 14th. Judas thus sat throughout the Lord's last Passover and through the Lord's Supper. He listened to the last discourses of the Master (John xiii. 36–xvii. 26). He followed to the very gates of Gethsemane, and never left to bring the soldiers till Peter and James and John (Mark xiv. 33) could no longer keep watch of him.

Such are the conclusions offered for the consideration of my readers.

Believing in the truth of the foregoing conclusions, it is the purpose of the author to do all in his power to gain for them a commanding position in the world of biblical thought. The purpose of the BIBLIOTHECA SACRA in giving place to this article is closely allied to that of the writer. First of all, this Quarterly desires the truth upon this vexed question. In the next place, its editors wish that the severest tests known to the scholarly world be applied to these conclusions. If others are better, they are more than glad to get them.

It is doubtful if any set of conclusions ever faced a more formidable array of opposition. If they are correct, the Council of Trent was woefully wrong.¹⁴ But all the millions belonging to the Roman Catholic communion count the decisions of Trent as the wisdom of God. How can Protestants reverse these decisions? Our conclusions are not only blasphemy to the Roman Catholics, but also to the mighty host of Greek Catholics. With most Lutherans and the vast majority of Episcopalians, they are unthinkable. They cut the ground from under orthodox theology in every Protestant communion. So far as the writer knows, no communion, no college or university, no house publishing religious literature or Sunday-school supplies, no cyclopedia or dictionary of the Bible, no religious journal or magazine, stands for these conclusions.

Opposition comes not only from the united orthodoxy of the world, but also from the unbroken ranks of "advanced biblical scholarship." The writer has examined with great care much standard literature upon their side of this question. Among the works consulted are the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, *Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible* and his *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, the *Standard Dictionary of the Bible*, the volumes of the *International Critical Commentary* which have to do with the Gospels, "The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate," by Benjamin Wisner Bacon, of Yale, and others of the kind. If the conclusions presented in these pages are correct, the learned works just named should all be rewritten. From these sources it is seldom that one finds a word favorable, even on a minor matter. To adopt our conclusions is as impossible for them as for our brethren of the Roman Catholic communion. Though not bound by the decrees of Trent, they are just as securely

bound. They are bound by their "dearly bought scientific method." If our conclusions are correct, their method is not scientific.

As if this were not enough, we have that subtle opposition which is causing a number of prominent men to abandon Friday for Wednesday as the day of crucifixion.

To make our success appear impossible, certain facts stand like Gibaltars. For seventeen hundred years¹⁸ the religious world, in all of its antagonistic departments, has fortified itself against our conclusions. Last but not least, greater scholars than the writer have failed in their efforts to break down the prestige of Good Friday — to stay the progress of Wednesday, and to give Thursday its rightful place.

Under these conditions the writer never received a greater compliment in his life than that contained in his commission to prepare this article. On September 26, 1911, one of the editors wrote him as follows: "I shall be glad to do anything that may get the facts upon this vexed question so fairly to the front that no one can henceforth challenge them. This you are able to do," etc. I pray God for help to make good this confidence of my friend. By divine help, he shall never be ashamed of his words, "this you are able to do."

"In the face of such overwhelming odds, upon what do you base your hopes of success?"

Strange to say, not alone upon the truth of our conclusions! They have been true for nearly two thousand years, but have, during most of that time, been rejected as false. You know other truths which are faring the same way? We believe the time has come for them to triumph. God has his strategic moments which are made great by the resurrection of some buried truths. We believe such a moment calls for these truths.

Another ground of hope lies the poles apart from this. Our opposition is divided — hopelessly and fatally divided. In support of Good Friday, the Roman Catholics rely upon one main principle, while the Protestants depend upon another. If one is right, the other is wrong. Conservative Protestant scholars use certain facts in support of Friday. So-called advanced biblical scholars accept Friday and the facts alleged in its support, but use them in a destructive way. The conservatives claim that these facts do not contradict each other, while their opponents deny the claim. Who is right and who is wrong? Or wherein are both wrong? The very effort to unravel these questions should help one out of darkness into light. Furthermore, conservatives are in hopeless confusion in their efforts to support Friday. They are divided into three, if not four, hostile camps. The same is true of “advanced” scholars. No two positions could be more antagonistic or deadly, when applied to each other, than those of Mr. William Fredrick and Mr. Clark Braden in support of Wednesday. Moreover, neither is consistent within itself.¹³ I was driven from the Friday position by the hopeless contradictions of its supporters, together with its self-contradictions. For the same reasons I rejected the Wednesday position. Others have been driven away from those positions by these reasons. Why should not thousands and millions follow?

In these trying experiences I discovered the Thursday position and found it self-consistent. Or, better yet, this position found me — took possession of me and will not let go. Why should it not find others? Why should it not grip them? To the present hour I know nothing of what has been written in its favor, save three or four pages by Westcott. And even these were not read till I had tentatively adopted Thursday as the day. This position came to me,

not by way of authority, but over the highway of scientific induction. It holds me, not by pride of discovery, but by its power to unify all known facts and truths. Either Friday or Wednesday could have held me by this same power, had either been in possession of it. The spirit of our day is thoroughly scientific, and not at all favorable to authority. In such a day anything which unifies the facts and truths of any field of thought makes a powerful appeal to minds which are truly scholarly. One of our hopes is this unifying power — the power of a perfect induction of facts. All authority which does not square with the facts in this case, we believe, will be given up. Then Friday can no longer stand.

It is hoped that the readers of these pages will rightly interpret the positive statements already made and yet to come. They may be dogmatic, but their purposes are legitimate. Nothing is true simply because it is positively stated in these pages. The purpose of our dogmatism is to challenge the opposition and to thoroughly arouse our opponents. While very confident in our conclusions, we do not wish to shield them from the most crucial tests known to this scientific age. We want the opposition to do its best to overthrow them. To insure the fairest treatment of what they say and to produce something distinctly worthy of the attention of the greatest scholars of the age, I have asked the Editors of this Quarterly to coöperate with me and my critics in securing a disinterested commission, before whom and by whose help these problems may be more fully examined and truth thoroughly established. At the close of its investigations and its hearings, a report of its findings should be published. The time is ripe for such a report. Our hope of success lies largely with this commission. Will not scholars in America and England, in Australia and the Orient, in France and in Ger-

many, do all in their power to secure such a report and to make it absolutely thorough and commanding?¹⁷

For the consideration of such a commission our conclusions have been stated, and the chief objections to them will now be considered.

ARGUMENT ON THE DAY OF PREPARATION.

Advocates of Friday crucifixion reason as follows: (1) Jesus was crucified upon the Jewish Day of Preparation. (2) Friday was Preparation Day with the Jews, and no scholar can successfully deny it. (3) Therefore Jesus was crucified upon Friday. In this position they feel as secure as the North Star in its place. They further say, In this light Thursday must be wrong. This objection should be fairly met. Can it be done? We believe so.

We begin by admitting the first premise. There can be no discussion on this point.¹⁸ We follow with another admission, Friday was Preparation Day with the Jews! The evidence for this, both in the Bible and outside of it, is overwhelming.¹⁹ In all our reading, we have found but one writer daring enough to deny this fact.²⁰ Forced into a corner, he made the denial to save himself. He either had to do this or give up his theory of Wednesday crucifixion.

After the two admissions just recorded, how can the conclusion be successfully denied? First, because Friday was not the *only* Preparation Day. To place the conclusion beyond criticism, the word "only" must be written in the second member of the foregoing syllogism. This no scholar can do. Such an insertion converts the truth of the proposition into falsehood, and thus destroys the conclusion. The annual Sabbaths, as well as the weekly Sabbaths, had their Preparation days.²¹ And, what is more to the point, a Preparation Day for an annual Sabbath seldom fell on a Friday. When-

ever the great Passover Sabbath, Nisan 15th, fell on Monday, Sunday was its Preparation Day. In the course of time every day in the week, except the seventh, served as Preparation Day for Nisan 15th.

In the second place, we deny the conclusion on the ground that Friday was not always itself the Preparation Day for the seventh-day Sabbath. Whenever Nisan 15th fell upon Friday, and thus made of it a great Sabbath, it did not and could not serve as Preparation Day. In such a case, which was happening every six or seven years, Thursday became the Preparation Day for the double Sabbath — for the forty-eight hours of Sabbath covered by the annual Sabbath (Friday) and the weekly Sabbath (Saturday). Such was the combination in the year of our Lord's death. To overlook exceptions to rules is often fatal.

ARGUMENT ON THE DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD.

Another syllogism used in support of Good Friday is fallacious. It runs as follows: (1) Jesus was crucified upon the first day of unleavened bread. (2) Nisan 15th is the first day of unleavened bread. (3) Therefore Jesus was crucified, not upon Thursday, the 14th, but upon Friday, the 15th. Again we are able to admit both premises and yet deny the conclusion! Again, the friends of Friday have been misled by the second premise. To fully and conclusively serve their purposes, this premise should read: "The first day of unleavened bread" was never applied by the Jews to any other day than Nisan 15th. So stated it is absolutely false, and the desired conclusion becomes worthless.

It is well known that the Feast of Tabernacles, held in the seventh month, is spoken of both as a seven- and an eight-day period.²² There are different ways of treating such a state-

ment. An easy way is to brand it as absurd and to dismiss it at once. But can it be more absurd than some of our very common and useful statements?

Another way to treat such an expression is to study it seriously, with a desire to discover the reasons which gave it form and currency. In doing this you will find that the Jews used other than solar days, also twenty-four hours in length. From three o'clock on one solar day to the same hour on the next solar day is one day of twenty-four hours, just as truly as is the day from one sunset to another. To get such a day, which we will speak of as non-solar, you must have two solar days from which to carve it. If you want seven non-solar days, you must have eight solar days to contain them. Therefore this feast was properly spoken of as covering eight solar days or seven non-solar days. Furthermore, when seven non-solars are carved out of eight solars, there is no contradiction in calling either of two of the solars the first day of the period, provided the non-solars begin and end late in the solar days! For instance, since the seven non-solar days of this feast begin late on the 14th day (solar) of the seventh month, it (the 14th) may be rightly called "the first day." In which case the feast is and must be considered an eight (solar) day period. Since most of the hours of the first of the seven non-solars fall within the 15th of the seventh month, it (the 15th) may be rightly called "the first day." In which case the feast is considered as a seven (non-solar) day period.

Josephus speaks of the feast of unleavened bread—the Passover feast, both as a seven- and an eight-day affair.²³ There is no contradiction in this, as is often thoughtlessly assumed. It is based upon the principles just stated. In this usage Josephus has Moses back of him.²⁴ The New Testament writers, having the eight-day conception in mind, speak

of the "first day of unleavened bread,"²⁵ meaning Thursday, Nisan 14th. Present-day scholars of all kinds and classes, with hardly an exception, miss their meaning and wrongly claim Friday, Nisan 15th. Such blindness should cease and such misrepresentation of the Gospel writers should end.

ARGUMENT ON MATT. XXVIII. 1.

We will now consider Matt. xxviii. 1. Advocates of Wednesday crucifixion claim this as bed-rock, and build upon it a structure which they believe will never fall. They believe that his passage alone forever bars both Thursday and Friday. They are infallibly certain that it does. In expressing their certainty, they have exhausted the powers of the English language.

Their argument runs as follows: Jewish days began and ended with sunset. Three days and three nights (Matt. xii. 40), seventy-two hours, cover the time during which the body lay in the grave. When did these hours end? Matthew xxviii. 1 puts this question beyond all doubt. Mr. Fredrick says: "There is nothing in Matt. xxviii. 1, that in any way teaches that Christ rose on Sunday morning; . . . The New Testament Interlinear translates this verse: 'Now late on the Sabbath, as 't was getting dusk, toward first of week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.' It gets 'dusk' in the evening, when the sun sets, and night approaches; not in the morning, when the sun rises."²⁶ When did these hours begin? Certainly they began late on Wednesday. Jesus died and was buried upon Wednesday, and not on Thursday. How can any one with common sense deny our conclusion? Such is their argument in brief.

This group of writers includes believers in the Lord's Day, but is made up chiefly of Seventh-day Adventists. First-day

men of this type hold to Sunday, not because Jesus rose then, but because he was first seen in its opening hour!

Upon the theory that their argument is valid, what does it do? (1) It does not adequately account for the rise and triumph of the Lord's Day. As a part of the Ten Commandments, the weekly Sabbath was strongly entrenched. For a new day to spring up and crowd out the old indicates tremendous power. This argument does not adequately account for that power. (2) From the beginning, Christian tradition has been practically unanimous in the belief that Jesus arose on the First Day of the week. The Lord's Supper, a New Testament ordinance, was celebrated upon this day for some reason. The argument leaves these things without any adequate cause or causes. (3) It contradicts all other Gospel statements concerning the time of the resurrection. These demand an early morning hour on Sunday. (4) According to the Gospels, both the friends and enemies of the Master—witnesses—thought that the earthquake which preceded the resurrection was in the night.²⁷ This argument places it in broad daylight—before sunset Saturday! (5) None of this havoc is necessary. There is a disposition of both Matt. xxviii. 1 and xii. 40 which avoids all these troubles. It is rational, simple, and in harmony with all the facts and truths involved. Yet this argument would crowd it out!

“One is on the wrong side,” says Dr. Beecher, “if he prefers interpretations that make Bible statements contradictory . . . rather than equally feasible interpretations that make them true. One is on the wrong side if he needlessly prefers interpretations that bring the statements of the Bible into conflict with facts known by means of evidence from other sources.”²⁸ If this is a true canon of criticism, the argument for Wednesday is discredited, to begin with.

Before rejecting it, however, let us analyze it. It contains two false assumptions. As will be seen hereafter and as shown before, Jewish days did not always begin at sunset. Why assume that they always do? While three days and three nights may be seventy-two hours, they often contain less, according to well-known Jewish usage. Why assume that they must contain just seventy-two, — no more, no less? It contains a very poor translation of the undisputed Greek of Matt. xxviii. 1. It ignores the literary nature of the passage, and fails to grasp the historic setting of the incidents which give it form. This alone is to condemn it.

What are the incidents which gave form to this passage? Briefly, they were these: Taking advantage of the custom which allowed a Sabbath-day's journey, three women, Salome and the two Marys, start for the tomb — start before sunset on the Sabbath, taking with them spices prepared before the double Sabbath began. Wanting more spices, Salome tarried till the shops were opened after sundown — after the Sabbath had come to an end. Having made her purchase, she hurried on to meet the two Marys, for the Galilean women had all planned to meet about that time to complete the embalming of the body. She meets the two Marys, who bring word to her, which compels a change of their plans. The grave is in charge of Roman soldiers, and the embalming cannot be performed till they are gone. Word is passed to the whole company of Galilean women, and all agree to try again in the morning, for the guard will then have completed their watch and will have gone. Next morning all come to the place, but in scattered groups, save Mary Magdalene, who started while it was yet dark, and who made more than one trip on account of the exciting things she discovered and hastened to tell.

What is the literary nature of the passage built upon these incidents? First of all, it is very, very much condensed. In the next place, it contains a time emphasis which is double.²⁹ One point of time emphasized is in the end of the Sabbath, corresponding with the journey begun at that time and soon completed by two of the three who started. The other point of time upon which emphasis is placed, is many hours later, "as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week." This corresponds exactly with the time when the other Mary was returning to the City from the tomb—the time when Mary Magdalene was a second time approaching it. In its emphasis upon separated points of time it is like Mark xvi. 1, 2. Salome is omitted from the first because she never reached the tomb till Sunday morning. She is in the second because she was the buyer of spices for the company. The first opens before sunset, on the Sabbath; the second after sunset, when the Sabbath has past. Differing purposes concerning emphasis demand different openings. The first combines the two Marys because they went together to the tomb and discovered the Roman soldiers in charge. On account of its brevity and its peculiar construction, you infer that the second coming of the two Marys, like the first, was together. In the light of other passages, this inference is wrong. Blame the writer, if you must, for his awkward style; but do not forget that much of it may be due to an original translator. Meyer says: "Matthew is the Greek translation of an original Hebrew (Aramaic) writing." Great anxiety to be faithful to the original may have caused much of the obscurity. A record made at the time of the events—a condensed record made to preserve facts perfectly familiar to writer and readers—would naturally present just the troublesome structure found in this verse.

ARGUMENT UPON THE GREAT ASSUMPTION.

Oftentimes an assumption reigns like a tyrant, and holds in leash slaves by millions. For thousands of years a giant assumption, a Goliath, has dominated our field of thought. Most writers in favor of Friday³⁰ and all who stand for Wednesday, so far as the writer knows, are in abject bondage to this baseless but hoary assumption. Since we, as advocates of Thursday, rebel and refuse to serve, it is held against us as a fatal objection.

One way to word it is as follows: *For Jesus to eat a Pass-over supper twenty-four hours before the usual time is unthinkable.* No one knows who originated this assumption, but for thousands of years it has ruled like a czar. Both conservative and "advanced" critics are loyal to it. A destructive critic holds to it because it destroys the divine authority of the Gospels! At least one conservative holds to it because, as he thinks, Jesus demonstrated his deity by obeying it!

That certain passages (Luke xxii. 8, 11, 13, 15; Mark xiv. 12, 14, 16, 17; Matt. xxvi. 17-19) refer to events before the crucifixion, and that John xviii. 28 refers to events after the crucifixion, is too plain to need comment. One of these Pass-over suppers was eaten in the night of Thursday, Nisan 14th,³¹ and the other in the night of the 15th.³² And between them, on the day of the 14th, Jesus died on the cross. Now notice what obedient slaves of the assumption do. In spite of the plain, strong words of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, one of them denies that the first feast was a passover feast!³³ Why not deny that A is A, or that B is B? He was forced, either to give up his theory of Wednesday crucifixion or to make this pitiful denial. Most others do differently but no better. They rob John xviii. 28 of the meaning given it by the Apostle, and fill it full of something different, thus getting it out of

their way. This leaves but one Passover feast, which they transfer from the night of the 14th to that of the 15th. This transfer makes it also necessary to transfer the death of Jesus from the day of the 14th to the 15th.

This lays a splendid foundation for the "advanced" critic. He says to his conservative brother, "Let us not deny that A is A. Let us treat John xviii. 28 just as we do the passages from the Synoptic writers. Let us admit two Passovers, but by no means let us fail to be loyal to our precious, our valuable assumption." This looks good to the conservative and he consents. But later he is shocked. If Jesus died upon the 14th, and if there is but one Passover feast, the 15th, the Synoptists are wrong; if on the 15th, then John is wrong; in either event the assumption governs, and the Gospel writers contradict each other! And final authority is not with conflicting Gospels, but with the verdict of "modern expert scholarship"!

If Jesus had chosen to die on the 15th, he could have once more eaten the Passover at the usual or regular hour, and thus would have fulfilled that part of the law for the twentieth or twenty-fifth time in his life. But in doing so how could he fulfil the type of the dying lamb? How could he pour out his blood on the 14th, at the typical time — the sacrificial hour, about three o'clock in the afternoon of Nisan 14th — an hour emphasized annually for fifteen hundred years? Since it was absolutely impossible for him to eat the supper at the usual hour and also to fulfil the type of the shed blood, he chose the more important of the two and ate the Passover twenty-four hours out of its usual time.

I am sorry to know that one able conservative scholar, to whom I am greatly indebted, feels that he must surrender the divinity of Jesus the Christ, if he accepts the unusual hour of

our Lord's Passover!³⁴ He is not only loyal to that baseless assumption, but insists that the Son of God was also under the power of its tyranny! In reading his article, published in this *Quarterly* over one year ago,³⁵ I felt the powerful force of another assumption underlying it—the assumption that the Passover law was an unchangeable law and more sacred than the Ten Commandments.³⁶ This also is utterly baseless. Inside of a few months after the Passover law was given, Moses changed it for certain parties a whole month;³⁷ but Jesus loses his divinity if he changes it twenty-four hours! Is Jesus less than Moses? In their later history the Hebrew people made a half-dozen changes in the Passover law in order to adapt it to their central sanctuary; for example slaying the lambs within the Temple walls instead of at the homes of the worshippers. These changes are well known and were made with the sanction of Jehovah; but, according to my friend's last assumption, Jehovah could not give consent for Jesus to make a change of a few hours—a change which would enable him to fulfil the time-type of the Passover blood! With me, conservative blindness is worse for the cause of truth than blindness on the part of a destructive critic. If we are ever worthy to put an end to “higher critical fancies,” we must open our eyes, we must cast out every false assumption, we must see things as they are, we must get together, we must present a perfect induction of all the facts.

ARGUMENT FOR FIFTY-NINE OR SIXTY HOURS.

“How is it possible for any event which happens *on* the third day to be truthfully placed *after* the third day?” By such critics as Dr. Bacon of Yale, this is considered as a hopeless contradiction and is treated accordingly. Most conservatives dodge the issue or confuse it.³⁸

Please turn to a previous page and refresh your memory concerning solar and non-solar days. Jesus died at three o'clock on Thursday. Counting three non-solar days from that hour brings us to the same hour on the following Sunday. Did not Jesus rise from the dead ten or eleven hours before this third day ended? Is it not proper, therefore, to say, he arose *on* the third day?

Now turning to solar days, let me ask a few questions. Jesus arose, probably, between three and four o'clock on Sunday morning. Was not this *on* the fourth day? Was it not after Thursday? And after Friday? And after Saturday? Is it not, therefore, just as proper to say that Jesus arose *after* three days? That both these principles are woven into Old and New Testament literature upon the Passover is a fact, not a theory.³⁹

ASTRONOMICAL ARGUMENT.

We now come to the astronomical phases of our subject. The most fatal objection, in the estimation of some persons, against the conclusions set forth in these pages, is based in astronomy. "Astronomy is against Thursday, making it impossible."

From whom does this objection come? It comes, first, from a champion of Wednesday, and he presses it with tremendous energy. As before noted, some very prominent Christian workers have been convinced by his arguments. But the objection is by no means as strong as it appears. Astronomy has been so badly abused by its friends that it has practically no meaning — no weight in this field of thought. Limited space forbids a catalog of the absurd and contradictory things perpetrated in the name of astronomy and within the field of our investigation. The trouble began in the second

stage of the Easter Controversy, not far from A.D. 200. First one and then another astronomical cycle was followed, only to be abandoned.⁴⁰ That Jesus died on March 25th and rose from the dead on the 27th, A.D. 29, a most absurd position, was long held in the name of astronomy. The Council of Nice is supposed to have wrestled with the astronomy of our problem, and Gregory XIII. put forth his efforts in reforming the calendar. So the trouble has come down to us in a hopeless tangle. In Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, Dr. C. H. Turner builds up a wonderful astronomical argument in favor of Friday.⁴¹ Not one college professor in a hundred can find a flaw in it. It is one of the most remarkable efforts on record. Other advocates of Friday have unwittingly built an astronomical structure which fully satisfies all the demands of Thursday! To cap the climax of confusion, the two stoutest champions of Wednesday known to the writer are hopelessly at war in their astronomy. Astronomy is discredited by its friends and needs redemption. Why not begin here and now?

The facts of the case are that one of the leading schools among astronomers unanimously concede that Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, Nisan 14th to 17th, fell on April 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th, A.D. 30. Dr. Philip Schaff belonged to this school, and so did Professor W. F. Lynn, late of the Royal Observatory of Greenwich.⁴² This kind of astronomy is exactly in accord with the conclusions set forth in this essay — conclusions demanded by each and every one of the four Gospels.

Strange to say, this astronomy was not built for the purpose it is here serving; it was built to support Friday. Laboring under the long-standing mistake that Jesus died on Nisan 15th, believers in Friday crucifixion built up this astronomy. Was it a purely scientific structure, or was it based upon in-

sufficient data and made to serve a partisan purpose? Do not be too much astonished when I record my profound conviction in favor of the latter alternative. The one thing essential to a perfect scientific structure, these astronomers did not have. Such a task was, therefore, beyond their powers. If this astronomy is the only true astronomy, it came by accident or by an overruling providence, not by an induction of all the facts. I want just such astronomy, but this concession is due my readers.

The strongest astronomical argument in favor of Wednesday has never yet been built, so far as the writer knows. The materials for it are as follows: (1) The conjunction, known among the Jews as the "molad" and among us as the astronomical new moon, nearest the spring equinox of A.D. 30, fell within a few minutes of 8 P. M., March 22d. In fixing the 1st of Nisan, this was one of the most indispensable factors. Fortunately for the cause of Wednesday, modern astronomers are agreed upon this fact. And it is one of the only two important facts in this field upon which they are agreed! (2) In the Jewish Encyclopedia there is a rule for fixing the 1st of the seventh month of the Jewish year by the help of the "molad," or conjunction.⁴⁸ Briefly stated, it is as follows: When the conjunction occurs before noon of any Jewish day, that day is counted the 1st of the month; when it occurs after noon, the next day is counted as the 1st. (3) Let us apply this rule to the case in hand. What we speak of as 8 P. M., March 22d, with the Jews would be the second hour of March 23d. This follows because our 22d ends at midnight and their 23d begins at sunset, six hours previous. Again, all astronomers agree that March 23d, A.D. 30, was a Thursday. Therefore, Nisan 1st, which was also the first day of the new year, fell on Thursday, March 23d. If so, the four

Thursdays following were March 30th, April 6th, 13th, and 20th. And the corresponding dates of Nisan were the 8th, 15th, 22d, and 29th. This makes April 6th and Nisan 15th (an annual Sabbath) coincide, and the day of the week is Thursday. According to the New Testament writers, Jesus died and was buried on the 14th of Nisan, and his body rested in the tomb throughout the 15th and 16th. Since the 14th of that Nisan was a Wednesday, both Thursday and Friday crucifixion must be given up!

Compared with this argument, that of Dr. Turner, in support of Friday, is nowhere. This is closely built and almost flawless; that is loosely constructed and has in it nothing conclusive. Why not accept the one above? (1) Because it calls for Wednesday crucifixion while, as has been clearly and fully shown, I trust, the Gospels call for Thursday. The issue is squarely joined and clear cut. If this argument is valid, the Gospels are wrong. I choose to stand by the Gospels. (2) Nevertheless, I would accept it, if it were flawless, and make the best I could of its clash with the New Testament.

What is that flaw? It is in the rule found in the Jewish Encyclopedia. This rule may be in use now, but that it was used in the days of Jesus is very improbable, the writers of this Encyclopedia, themselves being witness. Furthermore, when applied to the astronomic new moon for the seventh month, it has so many exceptions that the rule comes very near being an exception, and the exceptions, near being the rule. In fixing the 1st of Nisan, more than one of these exceptions, applied, would have thrown its first day upon March 24th. In which case there would not have been any conflict between the record and the astronomy.

The truth is that astronomers have not the materials with which to determine the 1st of Nisan, A.D. 30. Without aid

from outside their own science they are absolutely helpless. Upon this point I am especially anxious for the help of the commission into whose hands this article should fall. If they find it well taken, one of the greatest causes of confusion is forever banished. In fixing Nisan 1st, A.D. 30, was the committee of the Jewish Sanhedrin guided by witnesses who observed the new moon or by astronomical calculations, or by both? If they were guided by calculations, did they use the Metonic cycle or another of those well known? If they used the Metonic cycle, as some think, what was the Golden Number of the year A.D. 29? Did the last month in A.D. 29 have in it 29 or 30 days? Was A.D. 29 a leap year? The committee which fixed the 1st of Nisan, A.D. 30, knew perfectly the answers for every one of these questions and of others necessary to their work; no modern astronomer is able to certainly answer one of them!⁴⁴ Furthermore, if some astronomer could answer every one of them he would yet be unable to know how that ancient committee combined the resultant materials in working out their problem.

We may sum up this part of the discussion in various ways. All astronomers are agreed that the astronomical new moon fell close to 8 P. M., upon March 22d, A.D. 30,⁴⁵ which the Jews would have spoken of as March 23d, about the end of its second hour. What were the possibilities of the 14th, under such a condition? It might have fallen upon either one of three days, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday. Why accept Thursday and reject Friday and Wednesday? Because the Gospel records call for Thursday as Nisan 14th.

Another summing up is interesting. The Gospels call for a double Sabbath between the death and resurrection of our Lord. In other words, they call for the Friday nearest the middle of the month to be an annual Sabbath. To be that it

must be the 15th of Nisan. With the 16th of Nisan as the regular weekly Sabbath, we have the double Sabbath required. With a forty-eight-hour Sabbath, covering the 15th and the 16th, Jesus must have died on Thursday, Nisan 14th, and he must have risen from the dead on Sunday, the 17th. How often is such a combination possible? But once in six or seven years. In either the years 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, did the conjunction occur at a time to give this double Sabbath on the 15th and the 16th? Astronomy can answer this question and it says, No! Was its occurrence in A.D. 30 favorable to the combination of the double Sabbath? Astronomy can answer and does say, Yes! Here again Dr. Turner, who holds for A.D. 29 as the crucifixion year, is worsted. No dates in the life of Christ are more certainly known than Nisan 14th to 17th, Thursday to Sunday inclusive, April 6th to 9th, A.D. 30.

CONCLUSION.

The literature on the Passion Week covers a vast area. In this territory there is a miracle of accuracy and a mountain of blunders. "Modern scholarship" is a thousand miles away from that accuracy, and the New Testament writers are farther from those blunders! The "assured results" of modern New Testament criticism come direct from that mountain; the results of valid scientific criticism are only possible by a closer following of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These writers, speaking of Nisan 14th to 17th, cannot be confirmed by modern astronomy; but modern astronomers must appeal their conflicting claims to a non-astronomical court—to that court where the four Gospel writers sit as judges. Concerning the committee of the Sanhedrin which fixed the calendar of that month, Nisan, two questions loom

large, WHAT did they do? And HOW did they do it? No man on earth can answer the second question! Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John do answer the first. What do you think of their answer? Which do you prefer? The miracle of Judeo-Christian accuracy or the mountain of German sophistry? Or will you stand by traditionalism, old in years but blind from its birth?

NOTES.

¹ For ten years the author was Dean of the College of the Bible, Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa. Two years ago he resigned, and now holds the chair of Christian Evidences.

² The writer belonged to one of fourteen classes that fared thus.

³ As a rule, the days throughout this article are of this kind, from sunset to sunset.

⁴ As a rule, the Gospel of John speaks of the day as extending from midnight to midnight. In xix. 14, John follows the Roman method. In xv. 25 Mark follows the Jewish method. There is no conflict, as Sir William Ramsay believes (*Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. ii. p. 634, col. 1).

⁵ See *Dated Events of the Old Testament*, p. 14a.

⁶ For his words, and the quotations which accompany the reference, see William Fredrick's *Was Jesus the Christ*, pp. 114-125.

⁷ This expression, "the Passover Day," is often and appropriately applied to the 14th, the day upon which the lambs were slain. Here it is applied to the day of the feast, the 15th.

⁸ On these points, I am fortunate in having support from Rev. F. R. Montgomery Hitchcock. See *Hastings's Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, vol. i. p. 417, col. 2.

⁹ Mr. Hitchcock says: "The Fourth Gospel gives unqualified support to the opinion that the feast of which our Lord partook had a quasi-Paschal significance, and preceded in order to supersede the Jewish Passover." In support he quotes John xviii. 28; xix. 14, 31 (*op. cit.*, p. 414, col. 1).

¹⁰ See *supra*, note 3.

¹¹ While Mr. Hitchcock is too "advanced" to agree with me on this point, he notes it as a possibility (*op. cit.*, p. 416, col. 1).

¹² This almost universal blindness on the part of those holding for Friday crucifixion is caused by careless and inaccurate use of such prepositions as "before," "after," "since," etc. While Dr.

David Roberts Dungan is dominated by mistaken rules (Outline Studies in the Life of Christ, pp. 75, 81), he is wise enough to see the "impossibility" which is overlooked by every other authority consulted by the writer, unless it be Mr. Hitchcock (*op. cit.*, p. 416, col. 2).

"On this point, the Roman Catholics are wrongly reproved (Dungan, *op. cit.*, p. 75a).

"See art. "Calendar," Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. iii. p. 165.

"That Jesus died on Nisan 14th was a well-known fact among Christians of the first two centuries. See almost any cyclopedia; but beware of the confusion introduced by most writers. The blindness which has made the Passion Week almost hopeless, as a problem, has remade history of the first two or three centuries, and it requires insight to sift the chaff from the wheat. One of the clearest and most faithful treatments is in the arts. "Easter" and "Easter Controversy," Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. v.

"In his Trials and Crucifixion of Christ, Mr. Braden must have failed to read his proofs. His dates are in hopeless confusion. His scheme of events is ingenious, but out of harmony with the facts presented in the Gospels. On p. 19a of his booklet (Was Jesus the Christ?), Mr. Fredrick garbles an astronomical statement, and tries to ride two horses going in opposite directions!

"These pages are already translated into the Japanese language and, with the permission of the Bibliotheca Sacra, will be published soon in the Sunrise Kingdom. Advance copies are in the hands of interested parties in Australia and New Zealand. E. Walter Maunder, F.R.A.S., of the Greenwich Observatory, and author of the Astronomy of the Bible, is in the possession of a copy. His help in the astronomical part of this paper was important. Alfred Seddon, of Paris, may review it in the French language, and Mr. Osterhus, of Ossian, Iowa, will translate it for Scandinavian readers, if my conclusions commend themselves to him. Dr. René Gregory, of Leipsic University, has been personally consulted upon Matt. xxviii. 1 and upon other points discussed in this paper, and has been asked to see that it is reviewed in some leading German periodical. All these are in possession of advance copies.

"Matt. xxvii. 62; Mark xv. 42; Luke xxiii. 54; John xix. 14, 31, 42.

"Read Ex. xvi. 22-31. If verses 22, 29, do not make Friday the Day of Preparation, is the Word clear on any point? Just here most cyclopedias are strong.

"If dogmatism were dynamite, Mr. Braden could carry everything before him (Trials and Crucifixion of Christ, p. 77).

²¹ See 2 Chron. xxxv. 16 (also ver. 4, 6, 10, 11, 14, 15); xxx. 15; Josh. v. 10; Num. ix. 2-5; Ex. xii. 6, 7.

²² A seven-day period (Lev. xxiii. 34, 36, 39, 42; Num. xxix. 12); an eight-day feast (Lev. xxiii. 36, 39; Num. xxix. 35).

²³ So says Barton W. Johnson in *People's New Testament*, vol. i. p. 308, comment on Luke xxii. 7, 8.

²⁴ Period of seven days (Ex. xii. 15; xiii. 6, 7; Num. xxviii. 17); period of eight days (Deut. xvi. 3, 4). Here the feast is twice spoken of as seven days, Nisan 14th not included. Then the 14th is brought in under these words, "the first day." This involves the eight-day conception. I count this discovery one of great importance.

²⁵ Matt. xxvi. 17; Mark xiv. 12; Luke xxii. 7.

²⁶ Was Jesus the Christ, p. 55.

²⁷ Matt. xxviii. 13; xxvii. 64.

²⁸ Reasonable Biblical Criticism, p. 23.

²⁹ Matt. xxviii. 1 is made up from two distinct facts: (1) Late on the Sabbath day, . . . came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. (2) As it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. To allow but one journey for these two is a fatal blunder.

³⁰ In his *People's New Testament*, Barton W. Johnson is the only advocate of Friday who is free, so far as the writer knows. For another who is partly free, see *supra*, note 9. Neither Zahn nor Edersheim escaped. It is to be regretted that neither of these great scholars saw the truths contained in notes 24 and 25.

³¹ See *supra*, note 9.

³² See *supra*, note 3.

³³ Fredrick, Was Jesus the Christ, p. 37.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 90-95.

³⁵ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July, 1911, pp. 503-509.

³⁶ More sacred, because Jesus changed more than one of those; but, according to Mr. Fredrick, he could not change one item of the Passover law!

³⁷ Numbers ix. 6-12. For a greater change, see 2 Chron. xxx. 18.

³⁸ In his chapter upon this matter, in *Jesus and Jonah*, J. W. McGarvey confuses his readers, and fails to prove his point.

³⁹ See *supra*, notes 24 and 25.

⁴⁰ See art. "Easter Controversy," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. v. pp. 227 ff.

" Vol. 1. pp. 412 ff.

" The true position of Mr. Lynn is concealed by Mr. Fredrick, and another is attributed to him. See *supra*, note 16; also Homiletic Review, April, 1900, for Professor Lynn's original article.

" See art. "Calendar," Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. ii. p. 503, col. 2a.

" I am assured by an astronomer of international reputation, D. W. Morehouse, of Drake University, that one problem yet lacking complete solution, is the exact length of time between the conjunction and the earliest moment of visibility.

" Here, again, is a crucial point. Our commission should not pass it too hastily. In the opening years of my special study upon these problems, I labored under a false impression. I supposed that astronomers differed twenty-four hours in fixing the time of the March conjunction for A.D. 30. Within the last year, I have consulted such astronomers as Walter S. Harshman (wrongly spelled, p. 21, Was Jesus the Christ?), of the Annapolis Naval Academy; E. W. Brown, of Yale, "the best authority in America upon all questions concerning the moon" (Moorehouse). For two others, see *supra*, notes 17 and 44. I wrote also to Mr. Lynn, but he died a few days before my letter reached him. If I understand these learned men, all astronomers agree upon the time of the conjunction, within a few minutes; but in using it to fix the 1st of Nisan, they differ one day, or about twenty-four hours. As I show in my closing pages, they differ where they have no astronomical data to guide them—where, also, the theologians have misguided them! May we not also say, where the preceding article comes to them with much needed help?