

Himself. It was a magnificent view. It was in the light of it, as we conceive, that he wrote the words we have been considering: "Who was determined to be God's Son in power, in respect of the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead." JAMES MORISON.

BEFORE THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER.¹

ST. JOHN XIII. I.

A WAY of reconciling the accounts of the Last Supper which are contained in the first three Gospels with the statements regarding it in the fourth, has not met, I think, with the attention which it deserves. It is this: St. John in speaking of the Last Supper as occurring "*before* the feast of the passover" means "before the seven days' feast" which succeeded to the Paschal sacrifice and supper.

Eight days of unleavened bread were assigned to the Passover. The first day might, in a sense, be included under the general designation of "the feast." Thus Josephus says (*Ant.* xi. 15. 1), "We keep a feast of eight days, which is called the feast of unleavened bread." He also says (*Ant.* iii. 10. 5), "The feast of unleavened bread *succeeds* that of the Passover." But he speaks more accurately and scripturally when he says (*Ant.* xi. 4. 8), "They offered the sacrifice which is called the Passover on the fourteenth day of the same month, and feasted seven days." St. Paul, I believe, observes this distinction when he says (1 Cor.

¹ The hypothesis suggested in the following pages by a clergyman who, for the present, would prefer to remain unnamed, appears to me to be worthy of careful consideration: nor has it yet, so far as I know, obtained the consideration it deserves. —ED.

v. 7), "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast."

According to Josephus (*B. J.* vi. 9. 3), the Paschal Lamb was slain from the ninth to the eleventh hour on the 14th Nisan; the supper then began "at even," and lasted into the night following, which belonged to the 15th Nisan, the first day of the feast. But the supper was not considered a part of the feast. I may quote here a note in Whiston's Josephus (*Ant.* iii. 9. 3). He writes, "What Reland well observes here out of Josephus, as compared with the Law of Moses, Leviticus vii. 15 (that the eating of the sacrifice the same day it was offered seems to mean only before the morning of the next, although the latter part, *i.e.*, the night, be in strictness part of the next day, according to the Jewish reckoning), is greatly to be observed upon other occasions also. The Jewish maxim in such cases, it seems, is this: That the day goes before the night; and this appears to me to be the language both of the Old and the New Testament."

Now, St. John may have meant by "*the feast of the passover*" the seven days' feast of unleavened bread connected with and succeeding the Passover. In such case, what he says took place at the Last Supper would belong to the 14th Nisan and the Paschal Supper, *i.e.*, to the first day of unleavened bread. And I think it can be shewn that the seven days' feast of unleavened bread which *followed* upon the Paschal sacrifice and supper was known as "the feast of the Passover."

If the 14th Nisan had been included in the days of the feast, eight days would have belonged to it, not seven; for it lasted until the 21st Nisan at even. As

the Paschal Lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread, there were eight days of unleavened bread, and the 14th Nisan was "the first day of unleavened bread" (Matt. xxvi. 17), "when they killed the passover" (Mark xiv. 12). But, in Exodus xii. 14, the Israelites are commanded to keep the Passover a feast of seven days, "until the one and twentieth day of the month at even" (Verse 18).

And in Leviticus xxiii. 5, 6, it is said, "In the fourteenth day of the first month, at even, is the Lord's passover. *And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread* unto the Lord; seven days ye must eat unleavened bread."

The distinction is clear between the day of the Lord's Passover with its supper and the seven days' feast, the seven days on which the Passover was to be celebrated by a feast. And I hold that St. John is correct in speaking of the Last Supper as taking place "*before the feast.*" This distinction is to be found in other scriptures. In Numbers xxviii. 16-18, the Lord's Passover is to be observed on the fourteenth day of the month, and the feast of seven days to begin on the fifteenth day: "And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the passover of the Lord. *And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast,*" &c.

In Joshua v. 10, 11, the children of Israel keep the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month, and "*on the morrow*" eat unleavened cakes.

In Deuteronomy xvi. 6, 8, it is said, "Thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, . . . and *in the morning* go unto thy tents. Six days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly."

In 2 Chronicles xxx. 15 the Passover is killed on the fourteenth day of the second month, and (Ver. 21) the feast of unleavened bread kept seven days.

In Ezekiel xlv. 21 we read, "In the fourteenth day of the month ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days." And the distinction between the fourteenth day and the seven days' feast is clearly to be seen in Verses 22, 23.

In like manner in the apocryphal book, 1 Esdras i. 19, the children of Israel are said to hold a Passover on the fourteenth day, and (in addition) the feast of sweet bread seven days. Again, in Chapter vii. 10, they hold the Passover on the fourteenth day; and then (Ver. 14) keep "the feast of unleavened bread seven days, making merry before the Lord."

But it may be asked, Can the feast of seven days be spoken of by St. John as the feast of the Passover?

That it should be so called might be inferred from the command in Exodus xii. to keep it (the day of the sacrifice) a feast of seven days until the one and twentieth day at even. This inference is confirmed by the mention made in Exodus xxxiv. 25 of "the sacrifice of the feast of the Passover."

And St. Luke expressly says, "The feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the passover." St. John himself writes (Chap. xviii. 39), "Ye have a custom . . . at the passover," that is, at the feast, according to the first three Evangelists, who have spoken of the day preceding that on which Pilate complied with Jewish custom as the day on which the Passover was killed. I add that Josephus (*Ant.* xvii. 9. 3), speaking of the feast of unleavened bread, says, "which feast is called the passover." And again (in

B. 7. ii. 1. 3) writes, "The feast of unleavened bread . . . was now at hand, and is by the Jews called the passover." St. John might, therefore, have so spoken of it.

It may be, and is, further objected that St. John would not speak of eating the offerings made during the feast of seven days (the peace offerings) as an eating of the Passover (Chap. xviii. 28). But it has many times been remarked that, in Deuteronomy xii. 21, the sacrifices of the Passover are said to be of the flock and of *the herd*; that in 2 Chronicles xxxv. 8, 13, oxen and other "passover offerings" are spoken of as being "sodden" and divided amongst the people; and that in 1 Esdras i. 8, 9, *calves* and sheep are given for "the passover;" both the Paschal Lamb and the other sacrifices being evidently included under that one designation.

Another statement of St. John's (Chap. xix. 14), "It was the preparation of the passover," has also been supposed to favour the opinion that the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb had not at that time been celebrated. But it is fairly urged in reply, that later in the same Chapter, whilst speaking of the same day, St. John uses the word "preparation" of preparation for the sabbath; and again, in Verse 42, says, "There laid they Jesus because of the Jews' preparation." The day might have been known as "the preparation" of the Passover because it was the preparation of the sabbath which fell on one of the seven days belonging to the feast of the Passover. Certainly the same day is called "the preparation," that is, the day before the sabbath—"the preparation and the sabbath drew on"—by the first three Evangelists.

I propose, therefore, that the words "before *the feast*

of the Passover" in St. John xiii. 1, should be understood of the seven days' feast following upon the sacrifice of the Passover, the days on which it was celebrated by a feast. Nothing of "that sacrifice" was to be left (Exod. xxxiv. 25) until the morning of the 15th Nisan; and on the fifteenth, in the morning, the seven days' feast began. What St. John speaks of as happening at the Last Supper, he is quite correct in saying took place "before *the feast*," if, as related by the other three Evangelists, it occurred on the 14th Nisan, when the Passover must be killed, the first of the eight days of unleavened bread.

And if, it must be conceded, that St. John when he wrote his Gospel had not seen the first three canonical Gospels, he knew well, nevertheless, what was the oral teaching of his brethren and other Evangelists, and would not, we may believe, in his account of the Last Supper, say that it did not take place on "the first day of unleavened bread." Indeed, how can that be what he meant by "before the feast of the passover," when St. Polycarp (Eusebius, *H. E.* v. 24) affirms that St. John, with the other Apostles, taught the Asiatic Churches to keep their Christian Passover on the 14th Nisan at even?

A CLERGYMAN.

BRIEF NOTICE.

Mr. Beet, who is now well known to the readers of the EXPOSITOR, has published a brief dissertation *On Holiness as understood by the Writers of the Bible* (London: Hodder and Stoughton), in which, with his usual exactness and care, he traces the several senses imported into the Hebrew and Greek words employed by the inspired authors to convey the conception of holiness, determines the idea which is common to them all, and arrives at the full and broad significance of the word as used and moulded by the quickening Spirit of Christ. It is a very useful little treatise to place in the hands of students and teachers, and may well serve to suggest to them even more than it teaches.