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1930

734TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,  
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, APRIL 14TH, 1930,

AT 4.30 P.M.

WILLIAM C. EDWARDS, ESQ., IN THE CHAIR.

After the Minutes of the previous Meeting had been read and signed, the CHAIRMAN announced the decease of Mr. Martin H. F. Sutton, a Trustee of the Institute, whose family was so well known and so long associated with the work of the Victoria Institute. Those present were asked to stand as a sign of respect to the deceased.

The HON. SECRETARY then announced the following elections:—The Rev. Pierre Bernard Hill, A.B., D.D., as a Member, and A. J. Vereker, Esq., as an Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then introduced Lt.-Col. A. H. C. Kenney-Herbert to read his paper on "The Last Days of Our Lord's Ministry."

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*THE LAST DAYS OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY.*

By LIEUT.-COLONEL A. H. C. KENNEY-HERBERT.

IN October last the Council invited me to read a paper on "The Last Days of Our Lord's Ministry," *dealing with the dates, days, and hours*. I accepted the invitation with diffidence, for the chronologic aspect, vital as it is, does not interest the majority of Bible students; on the other hand, every detail affords, to those who are interested, ground for contentious argument.

The reconstruction of this culminating week of our Lord's life is obstructed by the debris of the past—questionable interpretations, conflicting traditions, rabbinical customs, the hearsay evidence of Josephus, etc. To clear the site needs a revaluation of the human records, and a reconsideration of axioms more

suiting to the Bible class than to the debates of a philosophical society. I trust that you will bear with me in this.

In fact, our study will fall naturally into four sections:—

- (1) The inaccuracy of ordinary history.
- (2) The axioms which control the right handling of revelation.
- (3) The spiritual clues of the Paschal Lamb and the Wave Offering.
- (4) The story of the last days of our Lord's ministry in dated narrative.

After acceptance I was offered the choice of three dates, and happened to notice that one of them would be the 14th of the month Abib, or Nisan, by the Mosaic reckoning of Exod. xii. To-day, if my conclusions be correct, is the anniversary of the sacrifice of Christ our passover, who died for us on the 3rd April, A.D. 33, just 1897 soli-lunar years ago.

If my conclusions be correct, it is surprising that there can be any doubt about so important an event, which had been foreordained from before the foundation of the world, 1 Pet. i, 20, and foreshadowed in type fifteen hundred years before it actually took place. The word "foreordained" implies a plan, and a carefully dated type implies that a time scheme is an essential factor of the plan. Surely God meant us to understand the things which He has revealed, and how can we measure His facts until the central fact has been properly marked off in the scheme of time?

Nevertheless the doubt is there, see the XIth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. 3, p. 891, in the article which deals with this subject. Its concluding paragraph contains the following words (my italics): "the various dates and intervals to the *approximate* determination of which this article has been devoted, do not claim separately more than a *tentative and probable* value."

### 1.—THE INACCURACY OF ORDINARY HISTORY.

It can be shown that the Bible contains a complete chain of time-measured facts from the creation of Adam to the Pentecost following the Crucifixion. This fact implies that God has provided for the insufficiency and inaccuracy of the available

human data, and has, therefore, given us a revealed chronology ; and the fact that this chronology ceases at the Crucifixion further implies that, from this point onwards, we must turn to ordinary secular history. But unless we can connect the Bible dating with our modern dating, not approximately but exactly, we shall not be able to place the days in which we live in their true time relationship to God's chronology. The date of the Crucifixion should furnish such a point of contact, for it may be determined with the accuracy of a known new moon. The article quoted above proves that human records, human research, and human intelligence cannot tell us what we need to know.

But it may be argued that the Bible itself has supplied two points of synchronization :—

1. "The fourth year of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon." (Jer. xxv, 1.)
2. "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius . . . Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age." (Luke iii, 1, 23.)

Therefore if the accepted history be really accurate, either of these points would serve and the other would be superfluous.

Now the prophecy of the seventy weeks of Dan. ix is an essential link in the chain of revealed chronology, but if we interpret it in the light of Isa. xlv, 26-28, which to the impartial mind would seem to be the reasonable thing to do, we find that the revealed interval between these two points of time is much shorter than the same period as measured by accepted history and the Royal Canon of Ptolemy. Moreover no interpretation can be placed on the prophecy which would make up the deficiency.

As there is nothing superfluous in revealed truth, I suggest that God has given us these two synchronizations, not to help us to construct a chronology with additional data from human records, but to prove to us that these records are inaccurate, and the effort to combine the exact and the inexact will only produce a misfit. To do so is as though we inserted into the delicate mechanism of a perfect chronometer some of the roughly stamped wheels of a common clock. Again, it may be urged that although the two synchronizations in combination have but proved the inaccuracy of the accepted history of that

epoch, nevertheless the later point should suffice. Unfortunately the value of this connection has been somewhat discounted, for it has been suggested that the fifteenth year of Tiberius of the text is not reckoned from that emperor's accession, in A.D. 14, but from some earlier date, probably A.D. 12, when the consuls passed a law that he should govern the provinces jointly with Augustus.

As history has proved a broken reed, we can only turn to revelation.

## 2.—THE AXIOMS OF THE BIBLE CLASS.

There are certain axioms which every teacher of the Bible seeks to impress upon the members of the class. Probably all of us in this gathering in principle accept these axioms, but unfortunately we often disregard them in our own private studies. Will you bear with me if I remind you of them, for I feel sure that they will make all the difference between success or failure when we search His Word :—

1. Revelation is God's gift to teach us necessary things which could never be found out by the unaided intellect of man. (1 Cor. ii, 11.)
2. Every word of this revelation is Spirit-given. (2 Tim. iii, 16.)
3. Every word has been purified to God's satisfaction. (Ps. xii, 6.)
4. God honours His Word even more than His Name. (Ps. cxxxviii, 2.)
5. Being complete, there is not a word too much or too little.
6. Therefore God means all that He has said, exactly as He said it, within the purest meaning of the words.
7. Therefore anything which God has not said is not necessary.
8. Therefore, also, no two passages can disagree—if they apparently do, then either our translation or interpretation is at fault.
9. We need not depend on any man ; He alone can guide us into all truth. (John xvi, 16.)
10. It is *almost* a corollary that God has safeguarded the text which He has put into our hands—if so we may

abide by the *Textus Receptus*, and simplify the matter by rejecting all critical readings. I think that this statement can be proved by numerics. But I would not press this point.

It is indicative of the great apostasy of the last days that these axioms should be regarded as childish out of date. But it is to the child-faith that God grants the illumination which He may withhold from the wisdom and prudence of the trained investigator. I am being forced to believe that our advance in true spiritual knowledge is to be measured more by what we have consented to unlearn than by the new truths we may have been directly taught.

It is surprising how the strict application of these axioms will remove all the difficulties which the research of centuries has accumulated for our discouragement.

For instance, as we have already said, revealed chronology ceases at the Pentecost following the Crucifixion. If axiom 1 is true, the implication is that up to this point revelation was necessary; but from this point onwards it is no longer necessary in this particular; therefore we shall find the histories available sufficiently accurate for any reasonable requirements.

Again from axiom 6 we may conclude that when God says new moon He means new moon, not in the astronomic, but in the commonly accepted sense of the term. The root meaning of *chodesh*, as a rule translated "month," is to make new, hence "new moon," and all the subsequent days belonged to that new moon, and were known as the second to the new moon, the third to the new moon, etc., until the next new moon was seen, when the count began again.

This arrangement is a tangible embodiment of the spiritual need for watchfulness—and, as the new moon was the occasion of a special offering (Num. xxviii, 11), this watchfulness was combined with prayer and worship, inculcating our Lord's own command, "Watch and Pray."

Although God was providing for the needs of a small community occupying a limited territory, nevertheless the same system is in force in Mohammedan countries to-day. *What is* affords proof of what was, of perhaps what always was, in the unchanging East.

If we know the year, it is not a difficult matter to calculate the time of any true new moon, either past or future, with sufficient accuracy to determine the Julian date of the sunset at

which it would first become visible. If we know the year and this date, we can easily find out the week-day, thus every accurately recorded new moon becomes an exact synchronization between revealed chronology and modern dating, once the true connection has been found. If we would shirk the labour of the arithmetic involved, Grattan Guinness has published tables of new moons for over 3,500 years; and these tables can serve as ready reckoners.

In spite of the fact that the present confirms the past, and ignoring the usefulness and accuracy of this simple arrangement of regulating dates by the visible new moon, there are students who would persuade us that in reality the time records of the Bible must be read in the light of some unrecorded cycle-calendar. After the Jewish nation was scattered all over the world, a calendar was devised to regulate the observance of the sacred feasts, but there is no hint that any such cycle was in use before the dispersion, nor was it necessary.

Axiom 7 will settle this point. If the Bible datings refer to a calendar, they mean nothing without the key—the full detailed calendar itself; therefore God would have supplied the key. As He has not done so, we can only take His words at their simple face value.

We must not forget that a cycle based on human calculations encourages reliance on human wisdom, and defeats the spiritual lesson, as well as the scientific accuracy, of the system which God's Word has adopted, for no calendar can be compiled to show the real dates of the visible new moon; sooner or later error arises. Therefore these calendars, invented to help us, introduce an element of inaccuracy, for any particular calendar moon might be in error some few days. This point has a very important bearing on our subject.

Another advantage accruing from a logical adherence to our axioms is that we need no longer be exercised by the disagreements of the standard authorities. Having no need that any should teach us, we may put them on one side and begin the search on our own account, forgetting, as far as may be, the problems which they have created for our confusion. Good concordances and dictionaries are all we need. It may be that we shall discover after weeks of labour what we might have learned in a few hours' reading; but books which really help are few, while those which mislead are many.

We have nothing to learn from rabbinical custom and



tradition. We can reject the false scents of history such as Phlegon and his impossible eclipse of the sun at full moon. We can ignore the nice calculations necessary to prove whether the facts of Herod's illness can be fitted into the period between an eclipse of the moon and the passover of a month later. His journey to Callirrhoe, his treatment there, his hurried return to Jerusalem to execute his son Antipater, and his own death five days later.

God's silence on these things rules them out of court; true or untrue, their evidence is of no value to us.

### 3.—CHRIST OUR PASSOVER: THE FIRSTFRUIT CHRIST.

Having narrowed the issue, the problem is simple. We shall recognize no authority outside Revelation, and we shall take its words at their face value, in their most ordinary meaning. If we do this, we shall find a straightforward and consistent solution.

The clue lies in two spiritual truths—"Christ our Passover" (1 Cor. v, 7), and "The firstfruit Christ" (1 Cor. xv, 20, 23). If these are true, they are true to the smallest detail, with that minuteness of accuracy which marks the difference between the mind and ways of God and the mind and ways of man. This means that if we set the law of the types side by side with the gospel account of the fulfilment of the types, we shall find the true meaning of the one and the true facts of the other. If there is any doubtful point in the law, the fulfilment will put the doubt at rest. If the story can be read in two ways, the law should show which of the two was the better reading. At the outset we must remind ourselves that the day began at sunset. Lev. xxiii, 32, will substantiate this. As a consequence, a Bible date is best represented by a double date in our phraseology.

We will take the evidence of the law first.

1. The lamb, and therefore the Lord, must die on the 14th of the 1st month, called Abib or Nisan (Exod. xii, 6). We note that this is a *fixed lunar date*, which would fall on a *different week-day* according to the year.

2. On this day at even the seven days of unleavened bread were to be observed, ending on the 21st day at even. Between these two dates there was bound to be a sabbath. On the day

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER: THE FIRSTFRUIT CHRIST.

Moses.	Prophecy in Type.	Nisan.		Facts of Fulfilment.	Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.	John.
		9th		Arrival Bethany—six (inclusive) days before Passover.	....	....	....	xii, 1
Exod. xii, 3	In the 10th of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb.	10th	Sun. 6 p.m.	Triumphal Entry. The Lamb of God offered. Knew not the day of visitation. Who is this? <i>Jesus of Nazareth</i> . Looked round Temple—eventide goes to Bethany.	xxi, 1-9 .... xxi, 10-11 ....	xi, 1-10 .... .... xi, 11	xix, 29-38 xix, 39-44 .... ....	xii, 12-15 .... .... ....
		11th	Mon. 6 p.m.	Morrow curses fig tree. Cleanses Temple. At even leaves city for Bethany.	.... xxi, 12-13 xxi, 17	xi, 12-14 xi, 15 xi, 19	.... xix, 45-46 ....	.... .... ....
Exod. xii, 6	And ye shall keep it up until the 14th day of the same month.	12th	Tues. 6 p.m.	Morning fig tree withered away. By what authority? The Judge sums up in Questions and Parables. Sentence pronounced on Jerusalem . . . until. Prophetic history of the interval . . . until . . .	xxi, 19-20 xxi, 23 xxi, 24 xxiii, 35 xxiii, 36-39 xxiv, xxv	xi, 20-26 xi, 27 xi, 29 xii, 44 .... xiii	.... .... xx, 1 xxi, 4 xiii, 35-39 xxi, 5-36	.... .... .... ....
		13th	Wed. 6 p.m.	After 2 days (inclusive), 13th and 14th, the Son of the Man is betrayed to be crucified. Priests decide not to arrest Him on the feast day, that is, 15th. Supper at Simon's House. Judas agrees to betray Him.	xxvi, 1 .... xxvi, 3-5 xxvi, 6-13 xxvi, 14-16	xiv, 1 .... xiv, 2 xiv, 3-9 xiv, 10-11	xxii, 1 .... .... xxii, 3-6	.... .... xii, 2-8 ....
Exod. xii, 6 Exod. xii, 15-18	And the whole assembly shall kill it. } At even. Ye shall put away leaven }	14th	Thurs. 6 p.m. Thursday.	The day of unleavened bread when the Passover must be killed. 6 p.m. Two disciples sent to prepare supper. 9 p.m. ? At even the supper—1 Cor. xi, 23-26. Not the feast of passover. After supper to Mt. Olives and Gethsemane . . . Midnight ? The Arrest. Dawn ? Rejected by the assembly. 9 a.m. ? Crucified. <i>Jesus of Nazareth</i> . Noon—3 p.m. Darkness. 3 p.m. It is finished. "CHRIST OUR PASSOVER IS SACRIFICED FOR US." 3 p.m.—6 p.m. The burial. Those who buried Him defiled.	xxvi, 17 xxvi, 17-19 xxvi, 20-29 xxvi, 30-46 xxvi, 47 xxvii, 22-26 xxvii, 27-44 xxvii, 45 xxvii, 50 xxvii, 57-61	xiv, 12 xiv, 12-16 xiv, 17-31 xiv, 32-42 xiv, 43 xv, 13-15 xv, 25 xv, 33 xv, 37 xv, 43-47	xxii, 7 xxii, 8-13 xxii, 14-38 xxii, 39-46 xxii, 47 xxiii, 13-24 xxiii, 33 xxiii, 44 xxiii, 46 xxiii, 50-55	.... .... xiii, 1 xiv, xvii. xviii, 3 xix, 14-16 xix, 18 .... xix, 30 xix, 38-42
Gen. ii, 2 Exod. xii, 8 Exod. xii, 11 Exod. xii, 14 Exod. xii, 16	God rested the 7th day. Shall eat the flesh in <i>that night</i> . } It (the lamb, Rev. xiii, 8) the Lord's Passover } This day shall be unto you a feast for ever. } It is a holy convocation. }	15th	Friday. 6 p.m.	The sabbath—The grave—God rested the seventh day. } The paschal supper. } A high day. A holy convocation—The 1st day of the Feast. } From 6 p.m. onwards. The True Paschal Supper. The Feast, or 1st day unleavened bread. Therefore an arrest, trial and crucifixion on this day would be a legal impossibility. The women rested this day according to the commandment (Sabbath). They set a watch (not of "you") of Roman Soldiers.	.... .... .... .... xxvii, 62-66	.... .... .... .... ....	.... .... .... xxiii, 56 ....	xix, 31 .... .... .... ....
Lev. xxiii, 10	On the morrow after the Sabbath. . To be accepted for you. . . . A sheaf of the firstfruits. . . .	16th	Sat. 6 p.m.	Jesus was risen early the first day of the week. "Now is Christ risen . . . and become the firstfruits"—1 Cor. xv, 20.	xxviii, 1 xxviii, 6	xvi, 1 xvi, 6	xxiv, 1 xxiv, 6	xx, 1 xx, 17
		24th	Sun. 6 p.m.	After 8 days. . . Thomas saith, MY LORD AND MY GOD. At the Supper on Sunday night.	....	....	....	xx, 26-28

following this sabbath, the law ordained the offering of the Wave Sheaf of the Firstfruits. We note that this is a *fixed week-day*, which would fall on a *different lunar date* according to the year (Exod. xii, 18; Lev. xxiii, 10, etc.).

If the 14th Nisan happened to fall on the day *before* the sabbath, then the 15th Nisan was the sabbath, and the Wave Sheaf would be offered next day, on the 16th Nisan. This was the shortest possible interval between the two events—three inclusive days. But if the 14th Nisan fell on a sabbath (and there was nothing in the law to prevent it doing so), then the sabbath in that week would fall on the last day of unleavened bread, and the day following would be “the day of the Wave Offering.” In this case the inclusive interval between the two events would be nine days.

3. We note, then, that the inclusive interval might be anything from three to nine days according to the week-day of the 14th Nisan.

Given a lunar date, a week-day, and the inclusive interval, we have a reliable astronomical observation, from which we can fix the possible years with accuracy.

The law has supplied two of the necessary facts—we must turn to the Gospels for the third. The Spirit has recognized the importance of this third fact, and has given it to us in nine different texts, in words which need no interpretation.

“The Son of Man must suffer, and rise again the third day.” It can be shown that this phrase must be understood inclusively, and that any part of a day counted as a whole day. This method of reckoning is commonly used in the Old and New Testaments. This being so, as the Lord was our Wave Offering, to fulfil the law He had to rise on “the morrow after the sabbath,” *i.e.* on the first day of the week.

Mark xvi, 9, will corroborate this: “Now having risen early on the first day of the week.” This is confirmed by Matt. xxviii, 1, translated in the light of Mark xvi, 1; Luke xxiv, 1; and John xx, 1.

As He rose again on the day *after* the sabbath, and as the inclusive interval was three days, He must have died on the day *before* the sabbath. Again, Mark xv, 42, verifies these deductions. “It was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath” (*prosabbaton*), and Luke confirms that “that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on” (Luke xxiii, 54).

If we may understand God's words in their simplicity, then

the Bible authorizes us to believe that our Lord died on the 14th Nisan, the sixth day of the week, and that He rose from the dead early on the first day of the week. As the year of the Crucifixion fell within the period of Pilate's term of office, a connection with history authorized by Luke iii, 1, the astronomic data fix the year as either A.D. 29 or A.D. 33.

When God measures time by the life or reign of a man, the official birthday or the official accession is the datum-point. This is the consistent usage of Scripture, and when it is departed from, as in the overlapping of joint-reigning, the fact is indicated. There is no indication that the fifteenth year of the hegemony of Tiberius is an exception to the rule. Augustus died on the 19th August, A.D. 14. Therefore Tiberius' fifteenth year began in August, A.D. 28, and ended in August, A.D. 29. In this year our Lord was baptized. Now the date of the Crucifixion, supported by the greater weight of authority, is A.D. 29, but we must reject it as inconsistent with the facts of the ministry, for after His baptism, John records three passovers, and possibly a fourth (John v, 1). This shuts us up to the alternative date, *viz.* A.D. 33.

I conclude, therefore, that the Lord died on the 14th Nisan, A.D. 33. The lunar tables show us that this day was the 2/3 April (Julian reckoning). If this conclusion be correct, the Spirit has so dated the Crucifixion that this event serves as a perfect connection, easily calculated and easily verified, between sacred and profane history.

These two ordinances, of the slaughter of the lamb and of unleavened bread, date the day of Matt. xxvi, 17, "the first day of unleavened bread"; of Mark xiv, 12, who adds "when they killed the passover"; and of Luke xxii, 7, "the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed." No day in the gospel story is so fully described from its commencement on Thursday at sunset, up to the following afternoon at 3 o'clock, when the Lord yielded up His Spirit (Matt. xxvii, 46; Mark xv, 34-37; Luke xxiii, 44-46).

His death at about 3 p.m. decides the meaning of the phrase "between the evenings" (Exod. xii, 6). (*See also* Deut. xvi, 6). Obviously it was impossible for the priests to kill all the lambs for a nation's passover at the same moment, therefore the law allowed from 3 p.m. to sunset. If the solution is as simple as we have suggested, why is it that this all-important date is still a debatable point?

In the first place, many students of God's chronology have sought to supply from profane history the apparent gaps in the sacred record. In so doing they have brought themselves into condemnation: "they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the clean and the unclean" (Ezek. xxii, 26). Consequently they have been led out of the true path by statements of doubtful accuracy, such as those found in Josephus and in the writings of the Fathers.

In the second place, they have overlooked the warning of the Lord, "making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition" (Matt. xv, 6, and Mark vii, 8-13), and have sought in rabbinical custom the true interpretation of the law. "Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind."

Most chronologists have accepted without question the rabbinical custom which reckoned the 15th Nisan to be a sabbath extraordinary, whether it fell on a true seventh day or not. By so doing they have deprived themselves of one of the factors essential to the astronomical solution of the problem, for according to this custom the Wave Sheaf would always be offered on the 16th Nisan in all years alike.

This paper is intended to be constructive, not argumentative, but the point is so important that we must turn to revelation to decide it for us. What saith the law?

The word *Shabbath* occurs 110 times: 96 times it refers to the seventh day of the week; 3 times to God's only sabbath extraordinary, the day of atonement; 11 times to the seventh year (the sabbath of the land), and never to any other feast.

The two other feasts of the seventh month were *Shabbathon*, days of rest, but not *Shabbath*.

*Shabbathon* is a kindred word, used 11 times. The student of number will note the *elevens*.

Sabbath (96 + 3)	..	..	..	99 times.
Sabbatic year	..	..	..	11 times.
Shabbathon	..	..	..	11 times.

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Total .. 121 = 11 × 11.

No feast of the first month was either *Shabbath* or *Shabbathon*. The feasts of the Lord embody prophecy in type. All feasts were Holy Convocations. The difference between Holy Con-

vocation and Sabbath was the amount of work permitted. In Holy Convocations only servile work was forbidden. The feasts of the first month have a personal application; in this aspect they typify the only basis of the true Christian life, and the holiness which should follow. I take it that our labour should consist of the co-operation of a loving heart of gratitude. Servile work is not what the Father wants, and is therefore forbidden (John xv, 15).

The Wave Offering and Pentecost have a connected significance which does not concern us now.

The feasts of the seventh day, the seventh month, and the seventh year represent in the one aspect the millennial rest, in the other, the anticipation of that rest which the believer may enjoy now, when he ceases from his own work (Heb. iv, 10). But the seventh day and the Day of Atonement picture to us our enjoyment of God's work on our behalf, in which we had no hand whatever. On these days all work of any kind whatever was forbidden. Any such work would spoil the picture. I submit that the law did not ordain that the 15th Nisan be observed as a sabbath extraordinary, and that custom has erred spiritually in appointing an observance which God did not direct.

We must now justify our interpretation of *tē tritē hēmera*, the third day. Souter, in his pocket dictionary of the colloquial Greek of the New Testament, under *tritos* says *tē tritē hēmera* means the third day "according to the ancient method of reckoning . . . *the day after to-morrow*" (my italics). Luke xiii, 32, confirms this: "Behold I cast out devils, and do cures to-day and to-morrow, and on the day following (*tē tritē*) I am perfected."

In nine texts the Resurrection is placed on the third day (Matt. xvi, 21; xvii, 23; xx, 19; Mark ix, 31; x, 34; Luke ix, 22; xviii, 33; xxiv, 7; 1 Cor. xv, 4). But Mark viii, 31, says, "After three days." In Hebrew usage (1 Kings xii, 5, 12) this means after the third day had begun. So the Pharisees understood it. "Sir, we remember that this deceiver said while he was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day." Had they understood these words as we would understand them, they would have asked for a guard up to the end of the fourth day.

We ought to notice that Matt. xii, 40, has confused the issue (Prov. xxv, 2), for this text is generally interpreted to cover

the period from the Crucifixion to the Resurrection. Now, as the day began at sunset, three days and three nights are parts of four days: day—night—day—night—day—night. Therefore this interpretation cannot be correct, *for if it were, it would contradict the nine texts we have enumerated*, statements so plainly worded that their meaning cannot be questioned. The probable interpretation of Matt. xii, 40, is not within the scope of this paper.

#### 4.—THE STORY OF THE LAST WEEK.

*The 9th Nisan (Saturday-Sunday): The 1st day of the week.*

John xii, 1, supplies a note of time not found elsewhere. "Six days before the passover." This apparently simple expression needs comment. The Bible calls the killing of the lamb "keeping the passover," or simply "the passover." Eating the lamb was called "the feast of the passover" (John xiii, 1; xviii, 28). We have shown that the Crucifixion was on the sixth day of the week; as time is reckoned inclusively, these six days carry us back to the 9th Nisan, the first day of the week.

On this day our Lord passed through Jericho on His way to Bethany. As He neared Jerusalem (Luke xix, 11) He spake a parable which sets the keynote of the week. He was going to a far country, there to receive a kingdom (a heavenly kingdom), and when He had received it, He would return. "But His citizens" (of the earthly kingdom) "hated Him, and sent a message after Him—saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." The type foretold that "the whole assembly shall kill it at even" (Exod. xii, 6).

Toward the end of this day He reached Bethany, and lodged there on the nights of the 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th of Nisan, probably in the home of Martha. John then tells us of the supper at Simon's house. We might assume that it took place that evening but for Matthew and Mark, who both place the event on Wednesday evening. The three accounts could hardly apply to two different suppers. Some might call this a discrepancy. We are so impressed with the necessity of relating facts in their time-sequence that we assume that God must tell His story as we would have told it. But if we search the Scriptures under the guidance of the Spirit, I think we shall find that God, in His revelation, groups facts. If there is no stress laid on the time-sequence, then He has some other sequence

of thought in mind. The time-note, if necessary, will be found elsewhere, as in this case. John had told us of the sorrow which had fallen on the house of Martha and Mary, and of the raising of Lazarus. He carries the story on to its logical conclusion without breaking the thread of the narrative. "The chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death, because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus" (John xii, 10, 11).

This told, the account goes back to the time-note of xii, 1, and then tells of what happened next day.

*The 10th Nisan (Sunday-Monday) : The 2nd day of the week.*

But this detail of the supper is not the only apparent discrepancy. They arise naturally if a series of events, recorded by four different writers, are first dissected and then grouped by each from their own point of view. Yet it is not difficult to present the facts in chronologic sequence, once we recognize that the Spirit has furnished us with the necessary time-sequence in the Gospel of Mark.

I would suggest that this Gospel be regarded as the skeleton which may be clothed with the detail found in Matthew, who is concerned with the universal Kingdom of the Heavens, one day to become the Kingdom of God, when Christ is King ; with the detail found in Luke, who is concerned with the throne of this earth to be vested in the Son of *the Man*, at His coming again ; and with the detail found in John, who is concerned to prove that this Jesus is the very Son of God, into whom believing, we receive His life.

Bearing this in mind, it will suffice if we record the events as placed in their time-order by Mark. On this 10th Nisan, the second day of the week, the Lord having slept at Bethany, presented Himself at the Temple. He was there accepted of the Father to be the fulfilment of the Paschal lamb. This lamb was to be kept four days. This detail was fulfilled exactly. In spite of their urgent hatred, the authorities could not act until their hour came. The Lord was immune during the four days, the 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th Nisan. On the 13th the plot was hatched—"not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people"—but there was to be no delay, so on the 14th the blow fell.

"And Jesus entered into . . . the Temple, and when He had



looked round about upon all things, and now eventide was come, he went to Bethany with the disciples" (Mark xi, 11). So ended the 10th Nisan.

*The 11th Nisan (Monday-Tuesday) : The 3rd day of the week.*

Having slept at Bethany the Monday night, on the Tuesday He went into Jerusalem. As He neared the city He cursed the fig-tree, which was to bring forth no fruit until the end of the age. We can see that this very fig-tree is now putting forth leaves. It is the sign He gave us; our redemption is drawing nigh.

When he arrived at the Temple He cleansed it for the last time. There is a last time in the long-suffering of God, for on this afternoon he called it "My house," yet within twenty-four hours He had repudiated it—"Your house is left unto you desolate." Empty, swept and garnished, ready for the occupation of devils. "And the last state of that man was worse than the first; even so shall it be unto this wicked generation" (Matt. xii, 45). "And when even was come, He went out of the city" (Mark xi, 19).

*The 12th Nisan (Tuesday-Wednesday) : The 4th day of the week.*

Having slept the night of Tuesday at Bethany, He returned to Jerusalem. This day was the climax in the history of Israel. They had refused the kingdom of the Heavens and its law set forth in the Sermon on the Mount. In refusing the greater, they had thrown away the less, their own earthly kingdom.

We can now realize that the time had come for the hidden things of Deut. xxix, 29, to be more fully revealed, for the law had not brought them to Christ (Gal. iii, 24). "Israel after the flesh" was to be cast away, that "Israel after the Spirit" might be brought in. The decree was to run until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

In various parables the Judge justifies the impending doom. In warning to us, He sums up the mockery of righteousness, consequent upon the withdrawal of the Spirit, when man is left to his own resources, even when those resources include promise and covenant and the guidance of the infallible Word. This done He closed His public ministry. "*Ye would not*" . . . "*Ye shall not see Me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.*" "*Your house is left unto you desolate.*" In these words our Lord fulfilled the

threat of 2 Chron. vii, 20 ; cancelling the promise of 2 Chron. vii, 12, and formally repudiating the place which God had chosen to put His Name there.

From that moment, until He comes again, there was no longer any "house of sacrifice" where the requirements of the ceremonial law could be observed (Deut. xii, 10-14), and in consequence the passovers, the burnt-offerings, and the sin-offerings of the law could no longer be acceptable in His sight.

As He left the Temple, He warned His disciples of the coming events, carrying the immediate future through the days of vengeance down to the end of the age. But it is outside the scope of this paper to attempt to harmonize these three accounts. Suffice it to say, they constitute the key which unlocks the Revelation, and also, as far as may be, the Book of Daniel.

*The 13th Nisan (Wednesday-Thursday) : The 5th day of the week.*

On the Wednesday evening the supper was given in Simon's house. Only one mind dimly foresaw the impending death, and, doubtless urged to do so by the Spirit of Love, anointed the Lord's body for burial.

Of the daylight hours of this 13th Nisan the Scripture is silent. It must have been a time of preparation in communion with His Father, and in meditation over the Scriptures which foretold His sufferings.

*The 14th Nisan (Thursday-Friday) : The 6th day of the week.*

This day is fully described. At or about sunset the Lord sent two of His disciples to prepare the passover. The question whether He intended the supper which followed to be His official observance of the Mosaic passover, or whether He regarded it as the institution of "the passover" of the new covenant, is one which does not affect the date of His Crucifixion nor of the sequence of events in this final week of His life. Space also forbids reference to other minor points in the four accounts of this week which some have found to be points of difficulty. I would refer you to "A Combined Analysis of the Four Gospels," by A. G. Secrett (Thynne and Jarvis)—it will be found suggestive.

We can pass on to 3 p.m. of the Friday. God's secret, hidden from all creation, was revealed at last. Too late, the

rulers of this age discovered that they had overreached themselves, and had forfeited all their powers. Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. If Satan holds his throne to-day, it is the tenure of a usurper, waiting until the stronger than he shall claim all the fruits of the victory of Calvary.

\* \* \* \* \*

I would close by drawing your attention to the prophetic aspect of this week. We have seen that it divides into two parts, four days during which the lamb was held up, and three days, one of suffering, one of rest and one of resurrection. From the promise of Gen. iii, 15, to Calvary was four of God's days of one thousand years each. As man was created on the sixth day, so God deemed it to be spiritually right that man should be reconciled to Him on the sixth day. Man's number is 6, man's day is the sixth day. Man's day is not yet over (1 Cor. iv, 3), it has lasted nearly 2,000 years. How can this be explained?

At the Crucifixion the material gives place to the spiritual. "Israel after the flesh" makes way for "Israel after the Spirit." God's revelation of measured time ceases—to be strictly accurate at the Pentecost following. The period needed for the development of the Church which is His Body is unrevealed, for God has retained all times and seasons within His own power. We cannot penetrate this secret, but if we would know our place in time, we can connect our accepted history with revealed chronology at the Crucifixion point. There is no other synchronization accurate enough.

Man's day has been long drawn out in God's longsuffering (2 Pet. iii, 9). But it will end when He finishes the mystery, in the days of the seventh trumpet, when "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ." After a brief period of wrath poured out, the Lord will bring in His seventh day of millennial rest. There remains the final resurrection morning. The eighth day of the old reckoning, but the first of the new, when Christ, having put down every enemy, will hand over the kingdom to His Father, that God may be all in all.

It is to the glory of God to conceal a matter (Prov. xxv, 2). The very simplicity of the truth often hides God's thoughts from our mentality. Can we say, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes?"

## DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. W. C. Edwards) said : Our lecturer has given us a delightful paper. One may well envy his facile pen and wonderful grasp of a subject which he has made his own. Although I agree with most of it, I cannot see my way to give up the dates A.D. 26 for A.D. 29. Luke iii, 1, 2, is, I think, one of the most wonderfully dated passages in all history. You have seven contemporaneous persons mentioned. We have yet to be sure from what date the *hegemonia* ("reign") of Tiberius is to be reckoned, whether from the death of Augustus or the date (uncertain, I believe) when he became his father-in-law's colleague and the recognized heir to the Imperial Government. We may hope some day to learn something of Lysanias, mentioned by Luke. This part of our Lord's ministry is more fully reported than any other, and this by all four of the Evangelists. On the third day of the week, which we call Tuesday, we have the following : Our Lord is in the Temple walking in the Porches ; the Scribes and Pharisees and their spies have conspired for His death, and are seeking to catch Him in His words. One of their questions is that of the tribute money ; sitting in the Temple, He sees the widow give her two mites : the Greeks come to Him, and a voice from heaven speaks ; He discoursed upon the grain of wheat falling into the ground, and dying it does not abide alone ; He speaks of David's Son ; of the Resurrection ; and the great Commandment. Further, He denounces the Pharisees ; He gave the parables of the labourers ; of the two sons ; of the wicked husbandmen ; of the marriage of the king's son ; the wedding garment ; and a final discourse on the coming doom and the consummation of the age.

What a day of labour ! Multiply this day with those since His baptism. What a trying, super-human ministry it was ! On scrutinizing a chart that I had made, I was almost electrified to find that possibly our Lord's earthly ministry was exactly twelve hundred and ninety days—thus from *Nitzabim* Sabbath to the New Year, say five days, *plus* three hundred and fifty-four, *plus* three hundred and fifty-three, and one embolismic year (if then known) of three hundred and eighty-five days ; and from Tishri 1 to Nisan 15, a hundred and

ninety-three days. In other words, 1,290 days out of about twelve thousand of His entire life.

At the call of the Chairman, the Colonel was thanked for his interesting and learned paper.

MR. G. WILSON HEATH said: With what the paper states as to a "reevaluation of human records and reconsideration of axioms," I am in full agreement. I also agree that "an advance in true spiritual knowledge is to be measured more by what we may have consented to unlearn than by the new truths we may have been directly taught."

From p. 186 and onwards, I am compelled to dissent, somewhat. It is not my intention to discuss the year of our Lord's crucifixion; I believe A.D. 29 or 30 to be fairly correct. In Lev. xxiii, 1-8, we have the record of the weekly and annual feasts, or "appointed seasons" of Jehovah. 1st.—The seventh day of each week set apart as a Sabbath of rest and "holy convocation." 2nd.—The fourteenth day of the first month Abib, later called Nisan, when the passover lambs were killed and the passover feast prepared, called "preparation" (Matt. xxvii, 62; Mark xv, 42; Luke xxiii, 54; John xix, 14, 31, 42). 3rd.—The fifteenth day of the same month Abib, the first day of the seven days of "unleavened bread," which also was a *Sabbath*, an "holy convocation," in which no laborious work was to be done. 4th.—The last, or the seventh day of the feast of "unleavened bread," the twenty-first of this month (Abib or Nisan) which was also set apart as a Sabbath or "holy convocation."

Thus, as the paper indicates, there would, of necessity, be two Sabbaths in the beginning of the seven days of the feast, and there might also be two at the end of this week of unleavened bread, the seventh day, which was also to be held as a "holy convocation" as well as the usual weekly sabbath.

Further, three fixed dates for this period are stated definitely in the Bible record. 1st.—The "passover period," commencing on the fourteenth day of the first month Nisan. A fixed date, in a fixed month, the day in the week varying, of course, from year to year. "Passover" covered the whole period of "unleavened bread," and a little before and after. 2nd.—The passover feast (the Pascha) consisting of the roasted lamb and unleavened bread,

etc., eaten at the opening, say after 6 p.m. or sunset, of the 15th Nisan, the first day of unleavened bread. 3rd.—Our Lord was crucified and slain whilst the lambs were being slain for the “Pascha” feast—type and antitype thus meeting—on the 14th Nisan “preparation,” and arose from the tomb on the “first (day) of the Sabbaths” (John xx, 1), translated in our Bibles “the first day of the week,” the day after the ordinary weekly Sabbath, that is to say, some time after 6 p.m. on our Saturday, and the day called the “first fruits” (Lev. xxiii, 16), from which 50 days, “nights and days,” were to be counted to Pentecost.”

The serious question raised in the paper is: How long was our Lord in the tomb? The “three-day” theory—quite an ancient one—adopted in the paper read to us (p. 190) I cannot accept. In the past this theory opened the way for serious error, and may easily do so again. Practically 26 hours would cover the “three-day” theory, one hour before the 15th, the whole of the 15th, and one hour (the first hour) of the 16th, or 26 hours in all. The error which crept in was, that our Lord did not actually die, that He only fainted, or fell into a kind of trance, out of which He awoke in 26 hours, and was then spirited away by His disciples.

To meet Jewish incredulity it was necessary for our Lord to be in the tomb “three nights and three days,” *i.e.*, 72 hours. The Jews had a kind of belief that the spirit had not really left the body finally until after three days. Hence “three nights and three days” were necessary to produce certainty of conviction in the mind of friend or foe. Colloquially the period would be called “three days,” exactly as the Pentecost period is called “50 days” in Lev. xxiii, 16; and it is so called again and again, “three days” or “after three days.” But one scripture to define the “days” is enough, and Matt. xii, 40, distinctly states, “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” In this St. Matthew states the fact prophetically; St. Luke speaks of it as a “sign” and the only “sign” given to that generation; whilst in Jonah i, 17, we have the definite historical fact stated, “Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale,” *i.e.*, 72 hours. I am old-fashioned enough to believe this, and that it typified the 72 hours that our Lord was in the tomb.

I do not agree with the paper that the six days—of course, 24-hour days—before the passover (John xii, 1) the 9th of Nisan was the 1st day of the week. As I understand, the Chagigah supper (John xiii; Luke xxii, etc.) opened the day of “preparation,” the 14th Nisan, and was the one at which our Lord instituted what we call “the Lord’s supper.” This was before the lambs were slain, and there was no roasted lamb at this supper, but unleavened bread and wine, etc. The “Pascha” feast, or passover feast, opened the 15th Nisan, and was after the lambs had been killed, roasted and prepared for it; and at that time our Lord had been hurriedly buried in the new tomb, that the feast might not be defiled. The paper we have heard read carefully differentiates between the “preparation” supper and the “Pascha Feast of Jehovah.”

Jewish calendars do not help us. The Jewish method of calculating four weeks to the month left a gap which had to be filled in by an extra month every few years; this extra month was added to the end of any selected year; confusion resulted. Further astronomy does not help us. Astronomers can easily calculate back 1900 years, of course, and they can tell the day and hour when the thin crescent of a new moon should or might be seen for a few moments above the horizon from the heights of Jerusalem, or elsewhere, but they cannot determine the conditions of the sky or state of the horizon on any particular day, and if or when first of all the new moon was actually visible and seen; and the date in the month depended on this point in those far-off days.

Therefore—1st.—Our calculations of the period must rest on what the scriptures state alone. 2nd.—On the two Sabbaths in the week of seven days of “unleavened bread.” 3rd.—On the “three nights and three days,” or 72-hour period, our Lord was in the tomb. 4th.—We have in the Scriptures three consecutive “night-day” periods, *i.e.*, “six days before passover” (John xii, 1); “seven days of unleavened bread” (Lev. xxiii, 6); “the morrow after sabbath . . . fifty days” (Lev. xxiii, 16) = Pentecost. This last period opened with our Lord’s resurrection, “the first-fruit” on “the first (day) of the weeks” (John xx, 1); this was an index-day from which we can count the three days and three nights backwards until we reach Wednesday, 6 p.m., covering the first three days of unleavened bread, to 14th Nisan, the “preparation.”

Dr. NORMAN S. DENHAM said : May I ask where in the Law it was allowed to slay the passover lambs at 3 p.m.? The time denoted by the phrase "between the two evenings" is given us precisely in Exod. xxx, 8 : "And when Aaron lighteth the lamps between the two evenings." This passage, among others, explains Exod. xii, 6. Lamps are lit at sunset, not at 3 p.m. We learn, however, that the lambs were slain in our Lord's time at about 3 p.m. and onwards, from Josephus (*Wars* VI, ix, 3), and by inference from Luke xxii, 7. It has been generally overlooked that the passover was never eaten in the evening commencing 15th Nisan, but was ordained to be slain and eaten in the night of 14th Nisan. The Jews so celebrate their passover to this day, as also do the Karaite sect and the Samaritans.

Our lecturer asks us to believe that after sunset of the 13th Nisan our Lord sent Peter and John to prepare the passover ; that they followed the man with the pitcher, came to the Upper Room and prepared the passover, and that in the evening Jesus came with the Twelve. This is unacceptable. He has to conclude that at this momentous passover, so carefully arranged by Divine prevision, there was no passover lamb upon the board, though the lamb was the essential feature of the supper.

Exod. xii, 6, commands that the lamb be kept *until* the 14th day, and then slain between the two evenings, *i.e.*, at sunset, commencing 14th Nisan. The paper omits all reference to John xiii, 1, 2 : "Now before the feast of the passover. . . supper being ended." Here John distinguishes between the feast of unleavened bread on the 15th Nisan and the Paschal supper of 14th Nisan. Connecting Luke xxii with John xiii, we see perfect harmony : our Lord and the Jews ate the supper at the right time, on the right day, 14th Nisan. John presents us with the distinguishing mark of the sabbath immediately following the crucifixion. "That sabbath day was an high day" (xix, 31). To my mind there can be no doubt that the seven days of holy convocation were sabbaths of rest, and that John is careful to differentiate between the Paschal Sabbath and the weekly sabbath. When John says that the Jews refrained from entering the judgment hall that they might eat the passover, he refers to the well-known festal offerings commanded to be eaten on the 14th Nisan (Exod. xxxiii, 15, and Deut. xvi, 17).



At p. 185 the lecturer says, "We have nothing to learn from rabbinical custom and tradition," yet he obtains his observations for the new moon wholly from Talmudic tradition, and not from the Scriptures. The calendar rules on which we are asked to rely, for all Bible dates, are really founded on the Jewish calendar, established in the 4th century A.D. by Rabbis Samuel and Hillel II. They took the length of a lunation from the computations of Hipparchus and adopted Meton's 19-year cycle. As a matter of fact, the word *chodesh* is used both for the month and for the first day of the month, showing that *chodesh* had lost its primary signification. If the lecturer is correct that "new moon" means the literal new moon, then can he explain how there were two new moons in one month in 1 Sam. xx, 17? The words *yarēach* or *lebhanah* are always used for the moon itself, and I suggest that for "new moon" we should be perfectly correct to read "new month," in the sense of "the first day of the month."

A regrettable phrase appears on p. 190, that "Matt. xii, 40, has confused the issue." It has only, and rightly, confounded tradition, the sole authority for a Friday crucifixion. Far otherwise; it has made assurance doubly sure that Christ expired at about 3 p.m. on the Wednesday, was buried at sunset of the same day, and rose again near sunset on Saturday, the 17th Nisan, as the first day of the week drew on (*see* Matt. xxviii, 1, and Luke xxiii, 54). Our Lord did not say He would be dead three days and three nights, but that He would be during that time in the heart of the earth. In exact accord with His solemn sign and prophecy to the Jews, He lay in the grave precisely three days and three nights.

Mr. GEORGE BREWER said: I should like to join in thanking Col. Kenney-Herbert for his very interesting and instructive paper, and especially for his statement that God has given us sufficient data in the Scriptures to construct a revealed chronology. With reference to Mark xvi, 9, I would suggest that this passage should read: "Now when Jesus was risen, He appeared early the first day of the week to Mary Magdalene," as I take it that the time refers, not to the rising, but to His appearance.

With regard to the statement that Matt. xii, 40, has "confused the issue," I should say that the actual wording of this passage has

made the meaning very explicit: that "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, so the Son of Man shall be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." If three days only had been stated, we might have concluded that a period of one day and part of two nights only was intended; but the emphatic and precise way in which our Lord's own words are recorded renders it impossible for them to mean anything less than three whole days of twenty-four hours each—that is a period of seventy-two hours during which His body was to remain in the tomb.

This necessitates the conclusion that 14th Nisan in that year fell on the fourth day of the week, from sunset, Tuesday, to sunset, Wednesday, during which the passover was kept by our Lord and His Apostles; the Lord's Supper instituted; His betrayal, mock trial, crucifixion and burial taking place during these twenty-four hours. This date is confirmed by the Hebrew Calendar Cycle, and corresponds with our Wednesday, April 12th, A.D. 30.

The other events then follow in orderly sequence, the 5th day being the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a holy convocation, upon which no work could be done; the 6th, the day when the women prepared spices and ointment; the 7th, or regular sabbath, when they "rested according to the commandment"; the Resurrection taking place at the close of the day, and exactly seventy-two hours from the time of burial, this being the 17th of Nisan, the anniversary of the day upon which the ark rested on Mount Ararat.

Lt.-Colonel A. G. SHORTT said: It is difficult to agree with Col. Kenney-Herbert's view, expressed in the table attached to his lecture, that the Last Supper was not the Passover. I think the accounts, in all the Synoptic Gospels at least, are so clear that no more need be said.

The Colonel's attitude to secular evidence is, I think, unjustified. I do not think we can afford to neglect *any* light which can be thrown on Scripture. And really, as regards the subject of the lecture, I submit it is unnecessary, for it can now, within the last few years, be shown that his main dates are verified abundantly. Confusion has arisen from the persistent habit of ignoring Luke as a witness, and accepting Josephus at his face value.

But the evidence of coins is clear, that the 15th year of Tiberius

was the year A.D. 28-29, beginning September; and, not only can it be no other, but it was an official Roman method of reckoning used throughout Syria. The coins referred to were minted at Antioch. On the other hand, Josephus' date of 4 B.C. for Herod's death conflicts with every other piece of evidence, whether in Scripture or out of it. It can be shown by critical analysis of his own writings that Herod did not die in 4 B.C., or even 3 B.C., and that he was probably alive in A.D. 2, or 3, or 4.

Mr. W. HOSTE said: I think we are much indebted to the lecturer for thus boldly stating the ten "axioms" on p. 183, which are so despised in certain obscurantist quarters, that some of us hardly like to state them so fearlessly, though we believe them, except the tenth, for my part. I think all that is meant by the words "Matt. xii, 40, confuse the issue" is that the "nescience" of the ordinary English reader as to the Hebrew idiom confuses the issue. It is as though some ancient Hebrew *redivivus* came across the phrase—"a week-end." Not knowing the British idiom, he would insist on its excluding every day but Saturday. His ignorance would "confuse the issue." Such a passage as I Kings, xii, 5—"Depart yet for three days" and v, 12, "As the King had appointed, saying 'come to me again the third day,'" illustrate the Hebrew idiom. See also Esther iv, 16, "Neither eat nor drink three days, night or day" and v, 1, "It came to pass on the third day."

I confess I find a great difficulty in accepting the lecturer's suggestion on p. 194, that possibly our Lord did not intend the passover He observed to be "His official observance of the Mosaic passover." The question of the disciples, as recorded in Mark, was (not "When," but) "Where wilt Thou that we prepare the passover?" As pious Jews they, of course, knew the correct day for the passover. What would have been their astonishment had the Lord predated the observance? There is no hint of such a thing in the text, and it seems to me unthinkable that such a change was ever contemplated. How could our Lord have used such words as "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer?"

It is said that when the passover fell on the Sabbath, as on this occasion, there was a difference of opinion between the Sadducees and the Pharisees: the former stuck to the exact directions of the

Law, whereas the latter did so on the Thursday to avoid possible infringement of the Sabbath by work involved. If that be so, the Lord may have adopted the custom of the Pharisees in keeping the feast on the Thursday, but in any case it would be the true passover. (See *Encyclop. Brit.*, 11th edition.)

#### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Brig.-General HARRY BIDDULPH wrote: On p. 188 the lecturer states, "Tiberius' fifteenth year began in August, A.D. 28," and from this conclusion he is led irresistibly to date the Crucifixion in A.D. 33. It must be remembered, however, that Tiberius was joint Emperor with Augustus for nearly three years before the latter's death, and the reckoning is more likely to start from the earlier and *de facto* date. Sir William Ramsay, in his book *Was Christ born in Bethlehem?* dates the fifteenth year of Tiberius as being most likely A.D. 25; and he says, further, that the recorded statement of the Jews to our Lord, that the Temple had been forty-six years in building, would indicate the date of the passover in question as A.D. 26. Further, Lt.-Colonel Mackinlay, in his book *The Magi*, gives very cogent arguments from Scripture that the date of the Nativity was 8 B.C., and this date Sir William Ramsay was disposed to accept as correct, although previously he had suggested the date 6 B.C. Moreover, 8 B.C. agrees with Tertullian's statement as to the date of the Nativity. These dates, combined with record that our Lord was about 30 years old shortly before He began His ministry, take us up to A.D. 29 as being the date of the Crucifixion.

With regard to the actual day of the Crucifixion: Sir Robert Anderson, in *The Bible and Modern Criticism*, discusses this point in some fullness, and his arguments (derived from the Scriptures, and which harmonize John xviii, 28, with the Synoptists) appear to me to be valid, and to prove that the Lord "was crucified on a Friday, and that it was on the first day of the feast of the passover, viz., on the 15th Nisan." Consequently, the Resurrection was on the 17th Nisan (*c.f.* Gen. viii, 4). See chap. xviii of Sir Robert Anderson's book for the argument.

A minor point is the phrase "after eight days" (John xx, 26). Surely this is an idiomatic phrase meaning "one week later," and not what we English would call eight days later, as shown on the lecturer's chart.

Mr. L. W. KERN wrote: I am glad to be able to endorse the 8th axiom of the lecturer, viz., that "no two (Scriptural) passages can disagree"; but I fear that he does not himself abide by it, for although "the probable interpretation of Matt. xii, 40, is not within the scope of this paper" (p. 191) [and here again I agree], the specific statement of our Lord is highly relevant. For myself I feel that Matt. xii, 40, gives the true key to the correct chronology of the last week. Seeing that even in the Bible the term "day" is of a dual meaning, representing either the period of light or the complete cycle of darkness and light (Gen. i, 5, contains it in both senses), I would concentrate investigation upon the "three nights," which are less ambiguous, and which must find fulfilment if our Lord's prediction was true. As regards the Resurrection, I submit that the keyword is "toward" in Matt. xxviii, 1, which signifies approach and not arrival. In other words, our Lord was already risen prior to sunset on Saturday evening, as, otherwise, the women could not have found an empty grave "in the end of (R.V. late on) the sabbath." The glorious fact, however, is that He *did* rise.

Major R. B. WITHERS, R.A., wrote: The real point at issue is the meaning of the word "sabbath." In the Old Testament it occurs in both singular and plural (thirty-one times plural). In the New Testament it also occurs similarly; but although it is twenty-four or twenty-five times in the plural, it is never once so translated. In Matthew it is five times in the plural (Matt. xii, 1, 10, 12, 28; verse 1, twice), and the last two occurrences are a glaring example of traditional mistranslation. The verse reads, literally ". . . Now it is the evening of the sabbaths. At the lighting up into one of the sabbaths. . ."

The Jewish day is from evening to evening, so the end of the sabbath would be evening. "The first day of the week" is entirely wrong; the words "first," "day," and "week" are absent. The phrase is *mian sabbatón* simply; in English "one of the sabbaths." Every occurrence of this (Matt. xxviii, 1; Mark xvi, 2:

Luke xxiv, 1 ; John xx, 1, 19 ; Acts xx, 7 ; and 1 Cor. xvi, 2) refers to one of the seven special sabbaths from first-fruits to Pentecost (Lev. xxiii, 15). The "first sabbath" (Mark xvi, 9) was the first of these seven, the Resurrection sabbath. Here the Greek word is *protē*, of which "first" is the correct equivalent. One of the seven sabbaths must sometimes coincide with a weekly sabbath. Such a double sabbath is called "the day of the sabbaths" (Luke iv, 16 ; Acts xiii, 14 ; xvi, 13). At other times it will come between two weekly sabbaths, and so be an "intervening sabbath" (Acts xiii, 42). The previous sabbath was "the day of the sabbaths" (Acts xiii, 14). This coincidence could only be possible on one occasion, the Day of Atonement (Acts xiii, 14) followed by the festival of Ingathering (Lev. xxiii, 38) five days later (Acts xiii, 42).

Where two sabbaths are on consecutive days, they have an evening in common, "the evening of the sabbaths" (Matt. xxviii, 1). This is the only occurrence and is the key to the problem. The sentence, "Now it is the evening of the sabbaths," clearly belongs to the previous verse, and marks the division in the account between the events of two *consecutive* sabbaths. Our time-table thus becomes simple and clear, and runs as follows :—Thursday, 14th Nisan—The first of unleavened bread ; Friday, 15th Nisan—The great sabbath, the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread ; Saturday, 16th Nisan—A weekly sabbath.

#### LECTURER'S REPLY.

I have to thank Brig.-General Biddulph for pointing out that the second par. on p. 195 is badly worded. I intended to suggest that six, being man's number, is markedly reflected in his history. Many spiritual events can be traced to the sixth day of the week. Probably the duration of "man's day" is limited to six days (of 1,000 years each). Four of such days had expired at the Crucifixion ; the fifth and sixth days have nearly run out.

I must also thank Mr. Hoste for correcting the quotation from Souter's dictionary. It should read "on the day after to-morrow." His suggestion, that the lamb might be slain at any time between the two sunsets which marked the beginning and ending of the 14th

Nisan, would seem to me to be negated by the wording of Deut. xvi, 6. Compare this passage with the time notes of the death of Ahab and the dismissal of the army (1 Kings xxii, 35, 36).

The discussion has mainly been occupied with the interpretation of Matt. xii, 40, and with the meaning of the last Supper. I submit that Matt. xii, 40, may not be isolated from the context, and that the whole passage was prophetic, and was fulfilled when He cleansed the House for the last time, and then left it "desolate" twenty-four hours later. Space forbids the elaboration of this point.

But the true significance of this passage and of the last Supper must be in the spiritual rather than in the natural order of things (1 Cor. ii, 11). Obviously, therefore, we cannot expect to convince others on these points. In any case they do not affect the date of the Crucifixion. May I re-state the case simply :—

Our Lord died on the afternoon of the day when the lamb *must* be slain. Note the reference of Luke xxii, 7, is to "Law" not "Custom." This was the 14th Nisan.

That 14th Nisan was "prosabbaton," *i.e.*, the day before the Sabbath—the Sixth day of the week.

As our wave offering the Lord was due to rise again on the first day of the week. All the gospels endorse this fact. The inclusive interval was, therefore, three days. The Holy Spirit agrees in nine different texts, expressed in the simplest possible language.

Dare we reject His evidence in order to suit an interpretation of Matt. xii, 40, which is not necessarily the real significance of the passage ?

I think we ought to be grateful to Col. Shortt for telling us that there are coins extant which were minted at Antioch, and current in Syria, which by their double dating show that in Antioch (where Luke lived) Tiberius' reign was counted from the end of August A.D. 14. Though without this corroboration the simplest meaning of Luke iii, 1, should suffice for those who have no personal axe to grind.