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**THE THREE PROPHETIC DAYS.**

A HARMONY OF THE APPARENT DISCREPANCIES IN THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES ABOUT THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

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When Jesus Christ was on earth, he was sharply challenged by the Scribes and Pharisees. They were the legal guardians of religious teaching. From them came the authority to teach publicly. Jesus was teaching without their authority, and was disregarding the traditions of the fathers; and to them, he seemed to be utterly disregarding the sabbath, their most sacred day. They came to Jesus and demanded to know by what authority he did these things. In response to their challenge, he said, in Matt. 12:39, 40:

“An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and no sign shall be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: for, as Jonah was three days and three night in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

His right to teach and work miracles was challenged by those who had a right to inquire into his career. He replies, naming one sign. Upon this one sign he would rest his claim to be divinely appointed. Upon it, he would rest his claim to be the Messiah. He chose a sign which he could not perform, if he were a mere man, and which no man could perform for him. Only God could perform it. That sign was his resurrection from the dead, three days after his death and burial. By this one work of his Father would be established his claim to be the Son of God. Afterwards he, as well as the inspired writers of the New Testament, added one mark of time or circumstance after another, and safeguarded it by one incident after another, till they threw around it every possible limitation so as to prevent its being mistaken, simulated, duplicated or misunderstood. This was a sign which none but God could perform. He would die and lie in the heart of the

earth for three days and three nights, and then rise to life again. Nothing less than the most exact fulfillment could possibly meet the requirements. We must conclude, therefore, that he regarded this as the supreme test of his Divinity. Learned interpreters of the Word seem to us to have treated his words—crucial words—in such a way as to give to them the most uncertain and ambiguous meaning. These words were spoken under circumstances and about such a matter as to lead one to expect the most exact and explicit statement possible. But they have been treated as if they might mean almost anything.

We have read after a great many authors and have heard a great many preachers speak about the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. A very great majority of them say, with the utmost assurance, that he was crucified on a Friday (when reckoning time after our manner), and that he was buried on Friday afternoon, and that he rose from the dead on Sunday morning. All these things are said, although the New Testament nowhere asserts any one of them. Neither could these statements be true, it seems to us, if his own words are to be made good. And there are a number of other words in the New Testament which appear wholly inexplicable upon this theory that he was crucified on Friday and rose on Sunday morning. Now, if the words of Jesus Christ and the words of the inspired New Testament are not exactly true when speaking of the supreme fact of Christianity, what assurance can we have that they are true about anything else? The matter calls for the most thoughtful consideration.

To have been buried late on Friday afternoon and to have risen early Sunday morning, would not have allowed him to have been "in the heart of the earth three days and three nights" by any possible count. Three days and three nights, when full, require seventy-two hours. And certainly there must needs be three periods of light and three periods of darkness in order to make "three days and three nights." But the Friday-Sunday, theory would not allow him to have been in the grave more than thirty-six hours, at the most. And there could be but two periods of darkness, at all. For how could

we find a "night" when there was neither darkness nor night-time? Instead of "three days and three nights" there could have been only one whole day, small parts of two other days, and two nights. It does not seem proper to treat our Savior's test words in that manner. Some other explanation must be found. Fortunately it can be found, and fully established. Those who hold to the Friday-Sunday theory all show that they are not satisfied with their explanations. So they resort to various and sundry devices in order to show how their supposition may be true. Thus, have they treated the Savior's one appeal for the establishment of his Divinity. It was an appeal to a test which he put wholly beyond his own power, referring it to his Father. It was given to silence all doubt. It has been treated so as to make it the source of very great doubt. "For," says the sceptic, "if his words may not be taken in their plain meaning when he would assure us of his own Divinity, how shall we believe him when he promises us eternal life? There must be some explanation that will take proper account of all Scriptures, and at the same time allow them to have their plain and manifest meaning. Let us see if we can find such an explanation. It is hoped that we can.

#### WHENCE ALL THIS CONFUSION.

It will help us in this search, perhaps, if we shall first inquire as to the origin of all this confusion. Whence arises the trouble about explaining the Scriptures concerning the Resurrection? Three or four sources may be named.

1. Overlooking the fact that the day which followed the Passover was, under the law of Moses, always and invariably a sabbath, no matter on what day of the week it might fall.

2. Overlooking the fact that the day before any sacred festival, including the sabbath and the Passover, was a "day of preparation," or simply "The Preparation." If it occurred before the Passover sabbath, it was called by both phrases "The preparation of the sabbath," and "The preparation of the Passover."

It was supposed that the "Preparation" spoken of in connection with the crucifixion was the "Preparation" before the

regular weekly sabbath, which fell on Saturday. Hence the supposition that he was crucified on Friday.

3. Overlooking certain adverbs of time, and certain adverbial phrases, as expressed in the Greek; especially such as these, viz.: ὄψέ, which refers to the first or evening watch, πρωί, which refers to the fourth or morning watch, πρωὶ σκοτίας ἔτι οὔσης, which means in the morning watch, while it was yet dark, ὄρθρου βαθύς which means the deep twilight, λίαν πρωί which means early in the morning, and ἀνατείλαντος τοῦ ἡλίου, which means when the sun was risen.

4. Overlooking the fact that the Greek verb ἐπι-φώσκω as used in Luke 23:54 and in Matt. 28:1 are the same word and both refer to the beginning of the day, which began with the evening and not with the morning as we are accustomed to use it.

We have a feeling that if these things had been observed, we should never have had this confusion about the resurrection.

#### A POSTULATE.

The facts concerning the trial, crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ were such that every statement made in the New Testament about them is true, and happened just as the New Testament says they happened. We are willing to go further and say that every statement in the Bible about them must be taken in its plain and manifest meaning. This is the very citadel of Christianity. If we may not plead the plain meaning of the Word of God at this point, then we have a very unsatisfactory appeal when we wish to plead its plain meaning at any other point of its teaching. Then, remembering that this is God's highest appeal to the confidence of men, it does not seem consistent with his wisdom, love and mercy, for him to have hedged it about with such inexplicable statements as to leave us in confusion and uncertainty. We should naturally expect him to use words in their simplest meaning. In so understanding them, we shall most probably find the easiest, if not the only possible explanation. The trouble has been that students have been following precedent and tradition to such a degree that they have been estopped from seeing the

truth or, seeing it, have not been bold enough to follow it. We must not object if it requires prolonged and careful study in order to see the truth at this point. We ought the rather to expect this. For thus would God's Spirit hold us close to the cross, and make us linger about the tomb, till we really see that Jesus of Nazareth was and is truly the Son of God.

#### THE TEST OF A THEORY.

The ultimate test of any theory lies in this fact: It will answer all proper questions that may be propounded to it. It will take account of all the facts. If a theory will not take account of all the facts, then, the theory must be modified. So, any theory of the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, must take account of all that is said in the New Testament about them, and be able to show that all that is said there is true, and in harmony with all the other parts. This, the theory that Christ was crucified on Friday and rose Sunday morning, has never done satisfactorily. So, whatever is the truth, that theory must not be the true one. For it is easily possible to propound numerous questions to that theory which are wholly unanswerable, except by such suppositions as both betray weakness and awaken doubt.

#### WHAT MUST BE EXPLAINED.

Whoever fully explains the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, must take account of the following facts, circumstances and incidents, and show that each is true and in harmony with all the others:

1. The Passover which Jesus ate with his disciples, "the same night in which he was betrayed," must be the regular Passover supper, and partaken of at the regular time, on the fourteenth of Nisan, at evening.

2. The crucifixion must take place on a day of "preparation" which was at the same time "the Preparation of the Passover" and "the Preparation of the sabbath," which immediately followed, which same sabbath was a "high day." It must also be such a day that if the Jews entered Pilate's judgment hall, they would be so defiled that they "could not eat the Passover."

3. The burial must take place just as "A sabbath began to

dawn." This sabbath must have one working day between it and the regular weekly sabbath. The weekly sabbath then must end just before the resurrection, and exactly "three days and three nights after the burial." Two sabbaths must occur between the burial and the resurrection, and the latter must be the regular weekly sabbath, because the "first day of the week" immediately followed.

4. The resurrection must occur so that the tomb shall be empty "late on the sabbath, as it began to dawn into the first day of the week." That is, on Saturday evening, immediately after six o'clock.

5. Certain women from Galilee must be able to see the sepulchre while they were burying him, "as a sabbath began to dawn", wait till that sabbath was past, and then buy spices and ointments, and "rest on the sabbath, according to the commandment", and then come to the tomb "early in the morning of the first day of the week".

6. Certain women must be able to visit the empty tomb "late on the Sabbath, as it began to dawn into the first day of the week," that is in the evening, and yet "early in the morning, while it was yet dark." And still "when the sun was risen."

7. Certain women must be able in the evening to see "an angel in shining garments, sitting upon the stone" which had been rolled away from the door of the tomb, and yet see one "angel, in white, sitting on the right side, after sunrise"; see two angels standing by them, having on "shining raiment", in the deep twilight of the morning, and yet after sunrise see two angels "in white," sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet of the place where the body of Jesus lay.

8. Certain women must be able to see Jesus "in the evening" just after his resurrection, and "lay hold of his feet and worship him," and yet certain women who come to the tomb in the morning "find not the body"; while Mary, in the morning, after sunrise, shall see him and talk with him, but is not allowed to touch him.

9. He must explain how the guard happened to leave the tomb in the evening and report that his disciples had come and stolen his body away in the night.

10. He must explain all these things so as to harmonize them with certain scripture statements about the resurrection; such as, "in three days," "on the third day," "after three days," and "this is the third day since all these things came to pass."

It will thus be seen that the resurrection of Jesus Christ has more marks of time and incident thrown round it than any other fact of scripture revelation. This is as we should expect it. God would guard this one test in every way possible to keep it from being simulated or misunderstood. God would put himself to the severest test, when he would avouch his Son to the world. Thus would he seek to remove all possible doubt. It becomes us to study it with the profoundest reverence, and a most earnest desire to know the truth. We may not lightly explain away what God has fixed with so much particularity.

#### A PROPOSED THEORY.

The following is submitted as the order and sequence of the facts and incidents concerning the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. On the afternoon of the thirteenth of Nisan (Mk. 14:17), which we would call Tuesday, Jesus and his disciples came in from Bethany into the city of Jerusalem to eat the Passover supper which two of his disciples had previously made ready (Lu. 22:14). On the night of the fourteenth, which was the beginning of the fourteenth, in the early part of the night, being the beginning of the day, Jesus and his disciples ate the regular Passover (Lu. 22:15, 16). At this time Jesus instituted the Memorial supper (Lu. 22:19, 20), and discoursed to the disciples, and prayed with them. Towards midnight, they went out to the garden of Gethsemane where the mob arrested him, and led him away to Annas and then to Caiaphas.

On the morning of the fourteenth (Jo. 18:28), the same day in which the Passover was eaten, and which according to our mode of reckoning, we would call Wednesday, early in the morning, the Jews led Jesus to Pilate in order to secure his sentence of death upon him. Because the next day was the beginning of "the feast of unleavened bread" (Jo. 18:28), which

Luke and John often include in their term "the Passover" (Jo. 2:23), the Jews would not enter the Judgment hall, lest they should be defiled and so prevented from eating the "feast of unleavened bread" which followed the Passover supper, and began that night at six o'clock (Lu. 23:5, 6).

At nine o'clock on the morning of the fourteenth (Mk. 15:25), Wednesday, according to our count, the same day which began the evening before at six o'clock, they crucified him. This was the same day of the Passover, but in the morning which followed, still a part of the day in which they ate the Passover.

The next day, which would begin that same evening at six o'clock, was a sabbath (Ex. 12:16), but it was not the regular weekly sabbath. It was the Passover sabbath, which always came the next day after the Passover supper (Lu. 23:7). The morrow being a sabbath, this day, the fourteenth, would be a day of Preparation (Jo. 19:31, Lu. 23:54), "the Preparation of the sabbath" (Mk. 15:42). Always, the day before any sabbath was a day of Preparation (Matt. 27:62, Mk. 15:42, Jos. Ant. 16, 6, 2). But, because this was the Passover sabbath, this day was called the "Preparation of the Passover" also (Jo. 19:14). The next day, the fifteenth, was a sabbath, and because it was within the Passover week, it was called a great day or "high day" (Jo. 19:31). And because the next day was a sabbath when it would be for two reasons unlawful for the bodies to hang on the crosses, the Jews besought Pilate to break their legs. But Jesus expired at three o'clock (Mk. 15:34, Lu. 23:44). Then Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus obtain permission to bury the body. The burial took place on Wednesday afternoon and evening, the fourteenth and fifteenth, beginning the same day on which they ate the Passover and ending in the evening or beginning of the Passover sabbath. While they were burying him, the Passover sabbath "began to dawn", as Luke tells us in 23:54. The fifteenth day, which was the Passover sabbath, began at six o'clock, just as they were burying him. That sabbath extended from six o'clock Wednesday evening, according to our count, to six o'clock Thursday evening, the fifteenth. Since it was a sab-

bath, and a Passover sabbath, it was "a high day" with the Jews. They would be sure to keep it and do no servile work on that day. The women who came with him from Galilee watched them bury him, and were at the tomb when the Passover sabbath began. They also kept this day, as Mark tells us (16:1). They could not have bought and prepared spices until the sabbath was passed. The next day, Friday, was an ordinary secular day. On this day, the women could buy and prepare the spices (Lu. 23:56), and did so. But they rested on the next day after buying and preparing the spices. It was the regular weekly sabbath, and they rested as Luke says (23:56).

Jesus lay in the tomb from just after six o'clock Wednesday evening, till just after six o'clock on Saturday evening, which brought the time a little past the close of the regular weekly sabbath, as it "turned into the first day of the week." At that time, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, came to see the sepulchre (Matt. 28:1). At that time, a great earthquake occurred. An angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning. He said to the women, "He is not here; for he has been raised up, as he said. Go quickly and tell his disciples that he has been raised from the dead" (Matt. 28:2-7). As they were going from the tomb, Jesus met them and said, "All hail." They worshipped him, "laying hold of his feet" (28:9). The watch which had been overwhelmed by the appearance of the angel, now go into the city and report what had happened, and were told to say that his disciples came while they slept and stole the body away in the night (28:11, 12). These things all took place in the evening, as we would say, Saturday evening, but really in the beginning of Sunday, for Sunday began at sunset, or six o'clock Saturday night.

At that time the tomb was empty, for Jesus was risen and appeared to the women. None of the other visits of the women to the tomb have anything to do with the hour of his resurrection, but with the fact, for all of them occurred in the morning hours of Sunday, the Sunday that dawned at six o'clock the evening before, while the two Marys were going to the tomb. Early on Sunday morning then,

“while it was yet dark”, Mary Magdalene came alone to see the sepulchre and finds the stone rolled away (Jo. 20:1), but sees no angels. She ran to tell Peter and John that “they have taken away the Lord out of the tomb” (Jo. 20:2). Then came the women from Galilee with their spices to anoint the body. They came in the deep twilight of the morning (Lu. 24:1). They found the stone rolled away and entered the tomb but found not the body. They saw two angels “in shining garments”, standing by them, who said: “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here; he has been raised up” Lu. 24:2-6). They returned from the sepulchre and confirmed what Mary had said to the apostles (Lu. 24:9, 10). Then Peter and John ran to the tomb, entered, saw the linen clothes lying in order and believed, and went away (Jo. 20:3-9, Lu. 24:12). After this Mary Magdalene and the others come to the tomb with spices, when the sun was up. They find the stone rolled away, and enter the tomb. They see one angel, “in white, sitting on the right side.” He says to them: “Ye are seeking Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has been raised up; he is not here.” In trembling, fear and astonishment, they fled from the tomb, and told no one what had happened (Mk. 16:2-8). But Mary Magdalene lingers at the tomb, and as she weeps, stoops down to look into the tomb and “sees two angels in white, sitting the one at the head and the other at the foot, where the body of Jesus lay.” The angels ask why she weeps and she tells them (Jo. 20:10-13). Then Jesus appears to her and discovers his identity by calling her name. As she seeks to worship him, he forbids her to touch him, but sends her to tell his disciples that he is about to ascend to his Father (Jo. 20:14-17). This takes account of all the visits of the women to the sepulchre, and shows the order of their occurrence.

#### ARGUMENTS.

The following reasons are given for believing the theory here propounded:

1. It was the regular Passover supper which Jesus and his disciples ate, and it occurred in the evening of the fourteenth

of Nisan, while the other Jews were eating the Passover. This Passover is frequently spoken of in the New Testament as if it was the regular Passover: "Ye know that after two days comes the feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified" (Matt. 26:2). Compare, also, Mk. 14:1, 2 and Lu. 22:1, 2. This was evidently the regular Passover feast, and, unless scripture or reason requires that it should occur at some other hour, it must be concluded that it was the regular time. Neither scripture nor reason requires any other hour. Jesus scrupulously observed the ceremonial law of Moses. There were only two reasons which justified a Jew in eating the Passover at an irregular time; either being defiled, or being on a journey. Neither of these would apply to Jesus. It is, at least, suggestive that many harmonists, in order to account for the days between his arrival at Bethany, six days before the feast (Jo. 12:1), and the crucifixion, find it necessary to assign one day to idleness in the midst of this the most intense week of his earthly career. The harmony here suggested is not embarrassed with any such necessity. It is marvelous that the very day of the crucifixion should be said to have no record.

The Passover, which was partaken of by Jesus and his disciples, occurred in the evening of the fourteenth of Nisan, at the very beginning of the day, in other words, in the early part of the night. Every day with the Jews, at that time, began in the evening. The time was determined by the appearance of certain stars. The hour of this Passover may be learned from Num. 9:2, 3, as well as from various other scriptures, and also from Josephus, Ant. 3, 10, 5.

2. The crucifixion took place next morning, or in the latter half of the fourteenth of Nisan, the day which began at six o'clock the evening before, just previous to the eating of the Passover supper. Let it be constantly borne in mind that Jesus was crucified on the same day in which he ate the Passover. This day is called "The Preparation," and is spoken of as both "the preparation of the sabbath" (Mk. 15:42), and "preparation of the Passover" (Jo. 19:14). Geikie, Vol. 2, pages 213-214, says: "The fourteenth day, which began at sunset of the thir-

teenth, was the first of unleavened bread, and was hence known as 'the preparation day.'" And on page 217, in speaking of the Passover, says: "The whole week was full of interest. The fifteenth was kept like a sabbath." The next day after the Passover was always a sabbath. I could give numerous quotations, but content myself with the following: Num. 28:16-18: "And in the fourteenth day of the first month, is the Passover of the Lord. And in the fifteenth of this month is the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. In the first day shall be a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work therein." In Smith's Bible Dictionary, Art, Festivals, note: "The law always speaks of the days of Holy Convocation as sabbaths." Art. Passover: "On the sixteenth day of the month, the morrow after the sabbath (that is, the day of Holy Convocation, etc.). The phrase in Jo. 19:14 may thus be understood as the preparation of the sabbath which fell in Passover week." Jacobus, on Mk. 16:1, says: "A day that was not the seventh day sabbath, was called the sabbath. The first day of the feast of unleavened bread was called a sabbath." Because the fifteenth, the feast of unleavened bread, was a sabbath, the fourteenth was a "day of preparation". Bloomfield says on Matt. 27:62: "The Preparation denoted the day preceding the sabbath or any festival, as being that on which preparation was made for its observance." And because this was a preparation for both, it was called "the preparation of the sabbath" and "the preparation of the passover." The whole feast was frequently spoken of under the general term "Passover." For examples of this, see Lu. 2:41; 22:1; Jo. 2:13, 26; 6:4; 11:15; 12:1; 13:1. Hence, it is claimed that Jesus was crucified on the fourteenth day of Nisan, that is towards the end of the day on which he ate the regular Passover, namely, on the evening before. And because the next day was both a sabbath and the beginning of the feast of unleavened bread, which is called "the Passover," this day was called the preparation. There were but two days which could possibly fulfill the conditions of this day; that would be either the fourteenth or the twentieth of the month. These would be days which immediately

precede a sabbath, and fell in the Passover week. But we are not left in doubt as to which one is meant, for the Passover supper was eaten the night preceding. Then, just three days later is the first day of the week, when the resurrection must occur. It is worthy of remark, in passing, that the phrase "first day of the week" does not occur till after the crucifixion, and in reference to the resurrection.

3. The day following the Passover was a sabbath. It was not the regular weekly sabbath, because it had but one working day between it and the regular weekly sabbath, as previously shown. This Passover sabbath was the fifteenth, and began at six o'clock in the evening of the day on which Jesus was crucified and extended to six o'clock the next evening. Because it came in the Passover week and introduced the feast of unleavened bread, it was with the Jews "a high day." Dr. Hovey says on Jo. 19:31: "Its greatness was due to the fact that it was a sabbath of the Passover festival." Numerous quotations are at hand, but it is supposed that this will be sufficient. There were, then, two important reasons why they might not allow the bodies to remain on the crosses; both the prohibition of Deut. 21:23, and the sacredness of the Passover sabbath.

4. The burial, as all agree, took place about six o'clock on the evening of the fourteenth, the day of the crucifixion. It was at the beginning of a sabbath (Lu. 23:54). The sabbath then began at six o'clock. Geikie, Vol. 2, page 575, says: "It was the eve of the great Passover sabbath, and no corpse could be left unburied to defile the ceremonial purity of the Holy City, on that day. It was necessary, therefore, that our Lord be buried without a moment's delay, for sunset, when the sabbath began, was rapidly approaching." Page 96, referring to the sabbath: "The holy day began with sunset on Friday and ended with sunset on Saturday." The sabbath, then, began at six o'clock in the evening. But the word describing the hour of the burial is the same word which occurs in Matt. 28:1, describing the hour of his resurrection. This, then, becomes a very important word for us to study. It is the Greek word *ἐπιφώσκειν*. The Canterbury Revision renders

it, in the margin, "began to dawn." Bloomfield renders it, "was just dawning, just drawing on, just commencing." Meyer, "here, the legal daybreak, which began at sunset." Alford, "a natural word, used of the conventional (Jewish) day beginning at sunset." Plummer, "an inaccurate expression, because the sabbath began, not at dawn but at sunset. But 'it was drawing on' easily comes to mean 'it was beginning' and is transferred to things which could not dawn." We shall examine it further when we study Matt. 28:1. Thus, the burial took place about six o'clock on Wednesday, the fourteenth, the day of the Passover on which he was crucified. Then, to keep his words, and have his Messiahship established, he must rise just "three days and three nights" later, and so that it shall be at the "dawning of the first day of the week." It will be of the utmost importance for us to see if this was true. He was buried just as the Passover sabbath began, that is, the hour struck while they were burying him. So in fact, the entombment was not fully completed till just after six o'clock, when the sabbath was beginning to dawn. Since this is both a sabbath and a "high day," no servile work may be done on that day. The women cannot buy spices, now, till that sabbath is past. Mark and Luke tell us what they did. They waited till that sabbath was past (Mk. 16:1), and then bought spices and ointments and prepared them "and rested on the sabbath, according to the commandment." (Lu. 23:55-24:1). Friday, the working day which followed the Passover sabbath, they could buy the spices, but the regular weekly sabbath came on before they could complete this preparation of the spices. So they had to rest during that weekly sabbath before coming to the tomb. We know that this was the regular weekly sabbath, because, when it ends, the "first day of the week" will begin. at which time the resurrection should have taken place. There must be exactly three days and three nights between his burial and his resurrection, according to his own words. That will allow two sabbaths, Thursday and Saturday, with a working day, Friday, between them. This will bring the beginning of the first day of the week, just "three days and three nights" from his burial, the very measure which he himself set. This

supposition exactly fills every requirement, and brings the time of the resurrection at the beginning of the first day of the week, Saturday evening, just after six o'clock. The "three days and three night" are full, and no time left over. Neither do they fall short. Two sabbaths are accounted for, which will bring the dawn of the first day of the week just as the second one ends. The Friday-Sunday theory cannot possibly do that.

5. Again, the tomb must be empty in the evening, immediately after the close of the regular weekly sabbath, which occurred at six o'clock. That is what "three days and three nights" will require, if he was buried on Wednesday evening, as "the sabbath began to dawn." All the authorities agree that he was buried at that hour, if not on that day. The New Testament narrative requires that the resurrection should occur so as to leave an empty tomb in the evening, just after the close of the sabbath, and "early on the first day of the week"; but not in the morning. Take what Matthew says, in 28:1, "Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." At that time, there is no suggestion that they have come to anoint his body. At that time they saw an angel who said, "He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said." Then, the tomb was empty. If we can only be sure when that occurred, the case is clearly made out. Fortunately there are two words in that one verse that fix the time unmistakably. How it begins to look as if God was supplying all that the most exacting inquiry could demand! He has put two words into this crucial verse which mark, not only the day of the week, but the very hour of the day. How could he do more. The two words are *ὄψε* and *ἐπιφωσκούση*. The former means, as we shall see, the evening watch, or from six o'clock to nine o'clock in the evening. The latter is a verb which indicates the very beginning of the day. When we know the hour the day began, we know the hour of the resurrection. But we have shown that the day began at six o'clock in the evening. It is important to see if these two time words in this verse will sustain that view. *ὄψέ* is defined by Thayer, thus: "Late in the day, i. e., at even-

ing. *ὄψε σαββάτων* the sabbath having just passed, after the sabbath, i. e., at the early dawn of the first day of the week— (an interpretation absolutely demanded by the added specification *τῇ ἐπιφωσκουσῇ κτλ.*)” We have the Savior’s own use of the word, in connection with another word, which will throw great light on our study. In Mk. 13:35, he used these words: “Watch ye, therefore; for we know not when the master of the house cometh, at even (*ὄψε*) or at midnight, *μεσονύκτιον* or at cock-crowing (*ἀλεκτροφωνίας*), or in the morning (*πρωί*).” The two words especially interesting to us now, are *ὄπέ* and *πρωί*. “*Opse*” is here translated “evening”, and by consulting authorities in Greek, it can be easily ascertained that such is the correct translation. It means the first or evening watch, from six to nine o’clock at night. It was within that limit when the two Marys first went to the tomb. But we are able to determine the time yet more accurately. The verb *ἐπιφωσκούση* marks the very beginning of that period. It was just as “it began to dawn towards the first day of the week.” This, we have already seen, took place at six o’clock. Thus the hour is definitely placed for us by these two words. The resurrection took place on Saturday evening, just as it turned into the next day, or “the first day of the week.” That would be exactly three days and three nights after his burial, which we have seen took place on Wednesday evening, just as it turned into Thursday, the great Passover sabbath. This is exactly what is required to make good his own words, in the one and only test to which he referred his claim to the Divine Messiahship. It really looks as if this must be the correct theory.

But that it may appear that we are not claiming too much, we will appeal to the scholars on the question. Meyer says, on Lu. 23:54, when rendering this word *ἐπιφωσκούση*, “Legal daybreak, which began with the sunset.” Jacobus on Matt. 28:1, says: “Literally, in the evening of the sabbath. And as in Jewish reckoning, the day ended at six o’clock p. m., this means opening of the subsequent day.” Alford says: “There is some little difficulty here, because the end of the sabbath was at sunset, the night before.” Keim, as quoted by Meyer:

“The evening is intended, since according to the Jewish mode of reckoning, the day began with the rising of the stars, or the lighting of the lamps, so the meaning of our passage would be as follows: ‘In the evening, after six o’clock, just when the stars are beginning to twinkle.’” George Campbell: “This could be spoken only of Saturday evening; for the sabbath ended at sunset.” Broadus, on Matt. 28:1, says: “This opening expression is not easy to interpret. ‘Late on the sabbath day’ is the only natural and well supported meaning. But the Jewish sabbath ended at sunset, while Matthew’s account indicates, and the other Gospels distinctly declare, that our Lord’s resurrection occurred in the early morning.” It is respectfully suggested that “Matthew’s account” does not indicate that the resurrection occurred in the morning. On the contrary, it distinctly says that it occurred in the evening. Again, most respectfully, it is denied that the “other Gospels distinctly declare that our Lord’s resurrection occurred in the early morning.” If any one thinks so, it will be quite in order for him to name the place where it is so declared. Matthew is the only writer of the New Testament that undertakes to name the hour of our Lord’s resurrection, and he “distinctly declares that it occurred in the evening.” I have been at pains to give these numerous quotations, which could be greatly extended, in order to show that our text in Matt. 28:1 requires that Jesus should rise in the evening, whenever he was buried. But it has been shown that he was buried in the evening, at the same hour in which he rose from the dead. It was shown that the burial took place on Wednesday evening. It has also been shown that the resurrection took place on Saturday evening, at the same hour in which he was buried on Wednesday evening. From Wednesday evening, say just after six o’clock, to Saturday evening, just after six o’clock is exactly “three days and three nights,” the very length of time which Jesus said he would be “in the heart of the earth.”

Thus, it has been shown that Jesus Christ was not crucified on Friday, and rose on Sunday morning, but that he was crucified on Wednesday, and rose on Saturday evening. And that he was in the tomb exactly “three days and three nights,” or

seventy-two hours. He kept his words fully, and we are not under the necessity of throwing discredit on his one supreme appeal.

In a subsequent paper, the apparent discrepancies in the visits of the women to the tomb can all be removed as successfully as the hour of his resurrection has been fixed. Then every statement made in the scriptures limiting the time of his being in the grave, can be shown, not only to be in harmony with these views, but really shown to be a strong confirmation of them.