

THE DAY OF OUR LORD'S DEATH.

THE precise day of the month on which our Lord was crucified is a vexed question among Biblical critics, the solution of which has not yet been discovered. The point of dispute is whether the day of our Lord's death was the 14th Nisan, that is the preparation day before the Passover, or the 15th Nisan, the Paschal day itself. On this point there is a real or a supposed difference between the accounts given us in the Synoptical Gospels and the account given us in the Gospel of John. It would appear that, according to the Synoptists, the last supper of our Lord and His Apostles was identical with the Paschal supper; whereas, according to St. John, it was partaken of on the day before the Passover.

Before entering upon a discussion of this subject, in order to understand the various notices of time mentioned by the Evangelists, it is desirable to make a few remarks on the time at which the Passover was observed in the days of our Lord. This great festival, instituted in commemoration of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, commenced on the evening of the 14th Nisan or Abib, which was the anniversary of that deliverance. According to the original institution, as given in Exod. xii. 1-20, it was to last for seven days, during which period the children of Israel were commanded to eat unleavened bread. It would, however, appear from a statement in Josephus that in the days of our Lord the period of observance was extended to eight days, the day of preparation or 14th Nisan being added to the original seven. It must also be remembered that the Jews reckoned their days from evening to evening, or rather from sunset to sunset. Hence the evening of 14th Nisan is a somewhat ambiguous term, but it is evident from the Mosaic account of the institution that it denotes the close of the 14th, that is, according to our reckoning, from three to sunset. On the 14th Nisan the work of preparation began; the heads of families searched for and