

ous hint in 10: 29). In the land of Egypt—The rest of the law was given at Sinai (Lev. 26: 46), or in the plains of Moab (Num. 36: 13). The Passover is celebrated before the event which it commemorates just as the Lord's Supper before the death which it was to "show forth." (Lange). 2. **This month—Abib** (ch. 13: 4; Deut. 16: 1), or Nisan (Neh. 2: 1). (See table). Up to this time the Hebrew year began with Ethanim, or Tisri (Exod. 23: 16), the feast of ingathering is held "at the end of the year," the time we know to have been the 15th of Ethanim. (See 1 Kings 8: 2; Lev. 23: 34). This continued to be the beginning of the civil year, while the sacred calendar began with Abib. A similar arrangement prevails among ourselves. The civil year begins on January 1st, the anniversary of our Saviour's circumcision or coming under the law, while the ecclesiastical year dates from the fourth Sunday before Christmas, being the first Sunday in Advent. Although the Scottish reformers rejected the church calendar altogether, for good and sufficient reasons, yet it is followed by our sister churches of the Presbyterian Alliance on the continent of Europe, the church of England, and the Greek and Roman communions. The Hebrew months were determined by the changes of the moon, and were therefore 28 days long. Some of our modern critics assert that the year did not begin in Spring until after the captivity, but see 2 Sam. 11: 1; 1 Kings 20: 22, 26; Jer. 36: 22. This feast became a "monumental evidence," fixed in the calendar, of the historical truth of the narrative here given. 3. **The congregation of Israel**—The nation was divided into 12 tribes, these into families (Deut. 29: 17; Judg. 18: 19; 21: 24), and these again into ancestral houses (Num. 1: 2). By communicating with the elders or heads of families (verse 21) Moses could easily make these announcements to the whole people in a very short time. **The tenth day**—The lamb was not slain until the fourteenth. According to some, this regulation, like that requiring the people to be equipped as for a journey, pertained to the first passover only, and was necessitated by the difficulty of procuring lambs at a very short notice, and amid the confusion of preparing to set out. In any case, the solemn suspense was a fitting preparation of heart for the service and kept in the minds of the people that they should sanctify themselves. (2 Chr. 35: 6). The four days may have been typical of the four generations of bondage (Gen. 15: 16). **A lamb—Marg.** "or kid." Both were used as late as the time of Josiah (2 Chr. 35: 7), but in our Saviour's time lambs only were offered. The "herd" mentioned in Deut. 16: 2 refers to the oxen required for other sacrifices connected with the feast (2 Chr. 35: 7-9). Only "prerverse ingenuity" could infer from this passage a contradiction of the law laid down in our lesson. There seems to be a reference to the passover in Rev. 15: 3. **According to their fathers' houses** (R. V.)—It was to be a family festival. Here, as everywhere, the religion of the Bible makes the family the centre of all tender, loving, and holy influences. Its most sacred services aim at making the home, with its parental and filial relations, the chief means of grace. "Family religion is the foundation of a nation's life." (Macgregor). 4. It was necessary that the whole lamb should be consumed (verse 10) and therefore two or more small families might unite in the celebration. The number who were to partake would be carefully considered. Later tradition fixed upon ten as the minimum, but twenty frequently assembled around one table. The portion to be eaten by each was also fixed by custom as the size of an olive, or small plum. No one might partake of the passover alone. 5. **Without blemish**—This was required of all victims offered in sacrifice (Ex. 12: 27, Lev. 22: 20-24). Only one who was absolutely free from sin could be a substitute for sinners, so only an animal whose physical perfection was unmarred could be a fitting type of the sinless One. (Heb. 9: 14; 1 Pet. 1: 19). "That the lamb, as free from blemish, was designed to represent the moral integrity of the offerer is a very doubtful proposition, since moral integrity needs no expiating blood." (Lange). If the true meaning as setting forth Christ was not fully perceived, at least all could understand that God was fittingly served only with the best. (Mal. 1: 8, 14). **A male**—"In harmony with the general notion of antiquity that the males are superior to the females." (Kalisch). Rather, in accordance with the universal view of the male as the representative sex. It would also be the larger and finer animal. Females were also offered in sacrifice (Lev. 3: 1, 6; 4: 28). Some regard the paschal lamb as representing the firstborn sons who were spared through its blood. (Keil). **Of the first year**—Marg. "a son of a year," i. e. a year old, having attained the full perfection of youthful vigor, in its prime. (The view that "a son of a year" means any age under a year is clearly refuted in the note on this verse by Dr. Mead in Lange's commentary). "Lambs might be offered in sacrifice after the eighth day. (Ex. 22: 30; Lev. 22: 27), but they were not used for the passover until they had completed their first year" (Dr. Green). **Sheep or goats**—A lamb was more valuable and more appropriate than a kid and so came eventually to be exclusively used. Theodore explains the clause, "He that hath a sheep let him slay it, and he who has no sheep let him take a goat."

**II. THE FEAST.** 6. **Keep it up.** Keep it with great care. It was customary to tie the lamb to the bed post. (Trapp.) **Fourteenth Day**—The middle of the lunar month and therefore full moon. Some suppose these were the days of the plague of darkness. **The whole assembly of the Congregation**—This does not mean that all came together to one place for the purpose, but that all lambs were to be slain at one hour. This was afterwards done only in the place which the Lord had chosen to place his name in (Deut. 16: 6). **In the evening**—Marg. "between the two evenings," Deut. 16: 6, "at even, at the going down of the sun." The same phrase is used of the time of the daily evening sacrifice.