

[R3706 : page 20]

## **THE PASSOVER MEMORIAL, APRIL 8, 1906**

FOR the benefit of our readers in foreign lands we make early announcement of the date for the celebration of the death of our Passover Lamb. Again we have the choice of two dates. All almanacs to which we have access show the date for the new moon after the spring equinox to be March 24th. If we calculate from that date, the Memorial night of the 13th of Nisan would fall on April 6th. On the other hand all the almanacs, so far as we are aware, show that the moon will not reach its full until April 9th. As we have already pointed out, the moon in the Scriptures is the symbol of the Jewish nation, and the intention evidently was to represent that the full measure of Israel's opportunity and test was reached at the time of our Lord's crucifixion, and that from that time the light of that nation began to wane.

Unable to account for the discrepancy, or to see how it would require sixteen days for a new moon to reach its full, we made inquiry of the Allegheny Observatory astronomers, who seemed unable to account for the matter and merely confirmed the facts as given in the almanacs. They in turn referred us to the United States Naval Observatory at Washington, D.C., from whom also we received confirmation of the almanac dates, but they could give no explanation of the peculiarity of the discrepancy – why on this occasion it requires sixteen days for the moon to reach its full, while ordinarily it requires fourteen days.

U.S. Naval Observatory,

MR. C. T. RUSSELL, Washington, D.C.

SIR, – I am in receipt of your communication of the 31st ult. in which you state that you find in some 1906 almanacs the statement made that a new moon appears March 24, 6.52 p.m.,

and that it fulls April 9, 1.12 a.m., and also that it occurs to you that there must be some discrepancy in this, as the time would amount to 15 days and six hours.

In reply I beg to advise you that the data given above are [R3706 : page 22] correct, the time being given in eastern standard time. By reason of the great eccentricity of the moon's orbit *it not infrequently occurs that the time between the two above-mentioned lunations exceeds 15 days.*

Very respectfully,

WALTER S. HARSHMAN,

Professor of Mathematics, U.S.N., Director Nautical Almanac.

Although we went to so much particularity to ascertain exactly the proper date for the celebration of the Memorial we do not wish to give the impression that the exact date is of importance. We are not under the Law, but under grace. Our observation of the Memorial Supper is a privilege and opportunity rather than an obligatory command. The principal thing would seem to be that we have a uniform time for its celebration and that we celebrate it with the right thought in mind, viz., as a memorial of the fulfilment of the type of the Passover lamb with the death of Jesus, the Lamb of God, the ransom price for the world. Christ our Passover is slain for us, therefore let us keep the feast. This and not something else we do in remembrance of him, and in confirmation of our covenant to be broken with him and to give our lives with his in the sacrificial services open to us as members of his body in the present time. We conclude that the most appropriate time for the celebration of the Memorial will be Sunday night, April 8th. The Jews adopt this same reckoning, celebrating Tuesday, April 10th, as the beginning of the Passover feast or fifteenth of Nisan. On this same reckoning the fourteenth

of Nisan would be Monday, April 9th, and according to Jewish reckoning that day begins the previous evening, namely, Sunday evening, April 8th. On this date, therefore, let us unitedly celebrate the Memorial Supper.

-----