

OUR PASSOVER

Our celebration of the death of "Christ our Passover" on its anniversary, the 14th of April, announced in last paper, was, as the occasion has always been, a "blessed season:" a time for remembering our Lord's agony for our sins, and also of our "redemption through His blood." As we looked at the acceptableness of our ransom we realized the completeness of our forgiveness, and said with Paul: If God be for us who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. [God by his own arrangement has purged us of sin – who shall say it was not fully and properly done?] Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died. [Who says we are yet sinners? Let him remember who it was that paid our debt – it was Christ, and surely his was an acceptable sacrifice.] (Rom. 8:31-34.)

Seeing our justification, we reflected on what Paul said to all justified persons: "I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God [His daily mercies and especially his mercy in providing Jesus as your ransom and thus justifying you] that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service." We looked at the significance of the memorials of his death which Jesus had provided – the bread and the wine – and found that they taught the same lesson – consecration and sacrifice. First the body was broken and the blood shed for our sin – to justify us – then the bread (truth – "I am the truth") is offered us to give strength for the sacrifice which we are asked to make. God first gives the exceeding great and precious promises of becoming joint heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord to the "Divine nature" and kingdom, and then tells us how we may claim and attain those promises, viz: "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Rom. 8:17. This is all expressed

[R226 : page 6] in the symbol, as Jesus first handed the "bread," and after supper the "cup" (wine), so during this age to all that come to him as disciples he offers first the nourishment and preparation of truth, and when they have eaten it and discerned the prize of their high calling, he offers them the cup of – death. Wine is a symbol of two things – first, in appearance it is like blood, and is called "the blood of grapes," in this way it symbolizes death; second, it symbolizes the spirit, the effect being to cheer, refresh and enliven.

When we have been enlightened and strengthened by the heavenly food, Jesus passes us each the cup, saying, "Drink ye all of it" – drink unto my death – take up your cross and follow me, and at the same time you will be drinking unto my spirit and have a joy and refreshing which the world can neither give nor take away – and finally with me, inherit all things.

We remembered that we had been thus fed and strengthened by God's promises, and had already covenanted to drink of his cup and become dead with him if we might "reign in life" with him.

We remembered the two disciples who had asked Jesus about their positions in his throne, to whom he answered, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are you able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, [death – "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me."] and to be baptized with the baptism that I shall be baptized with" – death? ["I have a baptism to be baptized with" – water was its symbol – "and how am I straightened until it be accomplished."] The disciples answered him, "We are able," and he said "Ye shall indeed." So we have been begotten to the hope of sitting with him in his throne, and how his words apply to us: "Are you able to drink of my cup?" We asked ourselves, are we willing to share the sufferings as well as the glory? Then we said – Lord by thy word we know that we may have "Grace to help in time of need;" and that "Thy grace is sufficient for us." We have given our all to Thee – "Work in us both to will and to do of thy

good pleasure." Thus having his strength made perfect in our weakness – we are able. Amen.

Brother A. D. Jones reports a very interesting and profitable meeting at Newark, New Jersey, among the friends there and some from neighboring towns, with whom he celebrated "Our Passover" – between fifty and sixty taking part.

A number of letters received seem to indicate that the occasion was very generally celebrated among the scattered "twos and threes" "of this way." We presume that it was celebrated in about twenty places. All who wrote expressed the feeling of solemnity and appropriateness, attaching to the celebration on the anniversary, rather than at any other time.

One or two brethren questioned the date announced – suggesting that by the almanac it would fall on the 12th instead of the 14th of April. To these we reply that the calendars in most almanacs are arranged upon astronomical calculations and are seldom exactly in harmony with the Jewish methods, which seem to be based on the eyesight. Some almanacs publish the Jewish calendar, and we used it in ascertaining when the "14th day of the first month," Jewish time, would come.

The moon is used to symbolize The Law or Jewish nation, which reached its full at the time of Jesus' presence, but began to wane when he gave them up and died. The moon was at its full on the 14th of April and began to wane; this seems to agree with the Jewish calendars and therefore we observed that time.

One sister wrote expressing disapproval, and asks, Why not go back to the Law in everything as well as [R226 : page 7] in keeping the Passover? Our sister is in haste; we did not suggest the observance of the Passover as instituted by The Law, but the observance of "The Lord's Supper" instead of it. Nor did we suggest this as a law, believing

that "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. 10:4, and 7:6). But who will say that we may not celebrate the death of our Lamb on the anniversary, for, "as often as ye do this, ye do show forth the Lord's death."
