

THE PASSOVER.

This was and yet is among Israelites one of the most important of their religious observances. It was the first feature of "the Law" given them as a typical people.

The ceremony, as originally instituted, is described in Exod. 12. A lamb without blemish was slain, its blood was sprinkled on the doorposts and lintels of the house, while the family within ate the flesh of the lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. On that night (the fourteenth of the first month, Jewish time), because of the sprinkled blood and the eaten lamb the first-born children of Israel were passed over, or spared from the plague of death which visited the first-born of the Egyptians. On this account, and because on the next day Israel marched out from Egyptian bondage – free – therefore, by God's command (Exod. 12:14), they commemorated it every year on its anniversary.

The Israelite saw only the letter of this ceremony, and not its typical significance. So, too, might we have been in similar darkness had not the Holy Spirit of God given us the key to its meaning by inspiring the Apostle to write the words (1 Corinthians 5:7): "CHRIST OUR PASSOVER IS SACRIFICED FOR US; THEREFORE LET US KEEP THE FEAST."

Our attention being thus called to the matter by the Spirit, we find other Scriptures which clearly show that Jesus, "the Lamb of God," was the antitype of the Passover lamb, and that his death was as essential to the deliverance of "the Church of the first-borns" from death, as was the death of the typical lamb to the first-borns of Israel. Thus, led of the Spirit, we come to the words and acts of Jesus at the last Passover which he ate with his disciples.

God is very exact, and the slaying of the typical lamb, on the fourteenth day of the first month, foreshadowed or typified the fact that in God's plan Jesus was to die at that time. And, it is remarkable, that God so arranged the reckoning of time among the Jews that it was possible for Jesus to commemorate the Passover with the disciples, and himself be slain as the real "Lamb" on the same day. [The Jewish day, instead of reckoning from midnight to midnight as usually reckoned now, commenced at six o'clock in the evening and ended at six the next evening.] Thus Jesus and the disciples, by eating the Passover, probably about eight o'clock, ate it "the same night in which he was betrayed," and the same day in which he died – thus every jot and tittle should be and was fulfilled.

Just five days before his crucifixion Jesus presented himself before them, to be received or rejected – when he rode to the city on the ass, fulfilling the prophecy, "Behold, thy king cometh unto thee" (Matt. 21:5), and fulfilling, at the same time, that feature of the Passover type which provides that the lamb must be received into the houses five days before the time of its killing (Exod. 12:2). Thus Jesus made his last presentation to Israel as a nation, or house, five days before the Passover, as we read: "Then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany.... On the next day [five days before] much people that were come to the feast, when they heard Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,...went forth to meet him (John 12:1,12,13). Then it was that their king came unto them – sitting upon an ass's colt." Then it was that he wept over them and declared, "Your house is left unto you desolate." "Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:38,39).

Jesus knew the import of the Passover, but the disciples knew not. He was alone; none could sympathize, none could encourage him. Even had he explained to the disciples, they could not have

understood, or appreciated his explanation, because they were not yet begotten of the Spirit. Nor could they be thus begotten until justified from Adamic sin – passed over, or reckoned free from sin by virtue of the slain Lamb, whose shed blood ransomed them from the power of the destroyer – death.

Thus alone – treading the narrow way which none before had trod, and in which he is our Fore-runner and Leader – what wonder that His heart at times was exceeding sorrowful even unto death. When the time had come they sat down to eat the Passover, and Jesus said unto the disciples: "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:15,16). Doubtless he longed to have them understand how it would BEGIN to be fulfilled, a little later on in that very day, by the slaying of the real Lamb.

Probably one reason he specially desired to eat this Passover with them was, that he there designed breaking the truth of its significance to them to the extent they could receive it; for, "As they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take (eat), this is my body" (Mark 14:22). "This is my body, which is given for you: THIS DO in remembrance of ME." "And he took the cup and gave thanks and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves. **[R466 : page 3]** ...This cup is the new covenant, in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:17-20).

We cannot doubt that the design of the Master was to call their minds from the typical lamb to himself, the antitype, and to show them that it would be no longer proper to observe a feature of the Law which he was about to fulfill. And the bread and wine were to be to them thereafter the elements which, as remembrancers of him, would take the place of the lamb. Thus considered, there is force in his words, "This do in remembrance of ME" – no longer kill a literal

lamb in remembrance of a typical deliverance; but, instead, use the bread and wine, representatives of my flesh and life – the basis of the real deliverance – the real passing over. "Hence, let as many as receive me and my words henceforth do THIS in remembrance of me."

Thus our Lord instituted his Supper as the remembrancer of his death, and as a substitute for the Passover as observed by the Jews. Is it asked why Jesus ate of the typical lamb first? We answer that he was born under the dominion of the Law, and must observe its every requirement. Since he made an end of the Law, nailing it to his cross, we are free from Law, as relates to either the Passover or the Lord's Supper – its substitute – but we are of those who esteem it a privilege to celebrate each year the anniversary of our Lord's death; to DO THIS in remembrance of him – "for even Christ our Passover is slain, therefore LET US keep the feast."

It would be difficult to determine just when or why this impressive season for the commemoration of our Lord's death was ignored, but it was, doubtless, as an "expediency." Doubtless zealous teachers thought that the great Teacher had made a mistake, and that it was "expedient" to have it oftener than once a year; and all seem to have understood Paul to teach that it made no difference how often it was observed when he said: "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26). But a careful study of all Paul said on the subject should convince all that this was not the case. In the context he tells them (verse 23) that he delivered to them that which he also received of the Lord: "That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread," etc. Here notice not only that the time selected by Jesus seemed the most appropriate, but that it was so appropriate that Paul was informed, by a special revelation from the Lord, that this was instituted the night he was betrayed.

How often could the Church break that bread and drink that cup as a proper memorial of the Lord's death? Surely only on its anniversary. In the same way, when American independence is celebrated, it is on its anniversary – the Fourth of July. It would be considered peculiar, at least, if some should neglect July fourth and celebrate it at sundry inappropriate times. And if speaking of the fourth of July, we should say, as often as ye thus celebrate ye do show forth the nation's birth, who would understand us to mean several times a year? Likewise, also, the Lord's Supper is only properly a celebration on its anniversary.

Some think that they find records in Scripture which indicate that the early Church ate the Lord's Supper every First-day. To this we answer, that if this were true we should have no more to say on the subject; but where is the record? We are referred to Acts 20:7: "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them," etc. But is there any evidence that the bread was broken as a remembrancer of the Lord's death? If so, why was it never called the Lord's Supper, and why was the wine omitted? Was the cup not as important an emblem as the bread? Because it is written that Jesus was known to the two disciples at Emmaus (Luke 24:30) in the "breaking of bread," who will claim that that was more than an ordinary meal? Who will claim that they were eating the Lord's Supper? No one.

So far from being an appropriate time for the commemoration of our Lord's death, the first day of the week, or Lord's day, would be most inappropriate. Instead of being set apart or used by the early Church to commemorate Jesus' death and the sorrowful scenes of the Lord's Supper, Gethsemane and Calvary, it was to them a glad day – a day of rejoicing and hosanna's, saying, "THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED." Hence its name and general observance by the Church as a day of worship and praise.

The seeming custom of breaking bread every Lord's day, perhaps had its rise in the fact that disciples were few and came sometimes long distances to meet together on the Lord's day, and socially ate a meal together. Perhaps, too, a blessed association of thought and interest lingered round the breaking of bread on the first day, when they remembered how repeatedly Jesus manifested himself to them on that day – after his resurrection – and how it was while they were eating that he made himself known (Luke 24:35).

Even the faint traces of this once established custom in the Church – of celebrating the anniversary of the Lord's death and resurrection – which the Roman and Episcopal Churches still observe, after an accommodated fashion, on "Good Friday," has been almost lost sight of by the other sects.

It has been the custom of many of the WATCH TOWER readers to DO THIS in remembrance of our Lord's death on its anniversary. Believing that it properly takes the place of the type – the Passover – we reckon it according to Jewish, or lunar time, and hence frequently on a different date from "Good Friday," which is reckoned on solar time. The Passover this year comes on Lord's day, April 22d, at six P.M.; hence the time answering to the hour of Jesus' death would be three o'clock, P.M., of that day, and the time for the eating of the Lord's Supper would be about seven to eight o'clock of the Saturday evening preceding April 21st. It should be remembered that the Lamb was slain the day before the Feast of Passover commenced. It will be celebrated as usual. We should, as heretofore, seek to follow the example of the first Communion service – using unleavened bread* and wine – whilst we talk together of their significance and value.

*Unleavened bread may be procured through any Hebrew family.

THE IMPORT OF THE EMBLEMS.

It might be profitable to some to point out the significance of the broken loaf and the cup.

Of the bread, Jesus said: "It is my flesh" – i.e., it represents his flesh – his humanity which was broken or sacrificed for us. Unless he had sacrificed himself – his humanity for us – we could never have had a resurrection from death – could never have had a future life; as he said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man...ye have no life in you" (John 6:53).

Not only was the breaking of Jesus' body thus the providing of a bread of life, of which if a man eat he shall never die, but it was also the opening of the narrow way to life and the breaking, or unsealing, of truth, as a means of aid to walk the narrow way which leads to life. And thus we see that it was the breaking of him who said, "I am the way, the TRUTH and the LIFE; no man cometh unto the Father but by ME" (John 14:6).

Hence, when we eat of the broken loaf, we should realize that had he not died – been broken for us – we should never have been able to come to the Father, but would have remained forever under the curse of Adamic sin and death, and should never have been made acquainted with the way, the truth, the life, or the Father.

Another thought: the bread was un-leavened – without leaven. [Leaven is corruption, an element of decay or decomposition.] Leaven is a type of sin and the decomposition, decay and death which sin works in mankind; so, then, this type declares that Jesus was free from sin – a lamb without spot or blemish – "holy, harmless, undefiled." Had Jesus been of Adamic stock, had he received the life principle in the usual way from an earthly father, he, too, would have been leavened, as are all other men, by Adamic sin; but his life came direct from God – hence he is called the bread

from heaven. (See John 6:41). Let us, then, appreciate the bread as pure, unleavened, and so let us eat of him; eating and digesting truth, and especially this truth; appropriating by faith his righteousness to ourselves by which we realize him as the way and the life.

The Apostle, by divine revelation, communicates to us a further meaning of the bread, and shows that not only did the loaf represent Jesus, individually, as our head, etc., but that, after we have partaken thus of him, we may, by consecration, be associated with him as parts of one loaf (one body) to be broken for, and become food for, the world. (1 Cor. 10:16). This same thought of our privilege as justified believers, sharing now in the sufferings and death of Christ, and thus becoming joint-heirs with him of future glories, and associates in the work of blessing and giving life to all the families of the earth, is expressed by the Apostle repeatedly and under various figures; but when he compares the Church to the loaf now being broken as a whole, as Jesus was individually, it furnishes a striking and forcible illustration of our union and fellowship with our Head.

He says, "Because there is one loaf we, the many [persons] are one body; for we all partake of the one loaf." "The loaf which we break, is it not a participation of the body of the Anointed one?" (1 Cor. 10:16,17 – Diaglott).

The wine represents the life given – the sacrifice – the death. "This is my blood (symbol of LIFE given up in death) of the new covenant, shed for **[R467 : page 3]** many FOR THE REMISSION of sin;" "Drink ye all of it" (Matt. 26:27,28).

It is by the giving up of his life as a ransom for the life of the Adamic race, **[R467 : page 4]** which sin had forfeited, that a right to LIFE comes to men. (See Rom. 5:18,19). Jesus' shed blood was the "ransom for all," but his act of handing the cup to the disciples, and asking them to drink of it, was an invitation to them to become

partakers of his sufferings, or, as Paul expresses it, to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." (Col. 1:24.) "The cup of blessing, for which we bless God, is it not a participation of the blood [shed blood – death] of the Anointed one?" (1 Cor. 10:16 – Diaglott). Would that all could realize the value of the cup, and could bless God for an opportunity of suffering with Christ that we may be also glorified together." (Rom. 8:17.)

sciples a promise of future glory in his throne, He answered them: "Ye know not what ye ask; are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?" Wine is also a symbol of joy and invigoration: so we will share Jesus' glories, honors and immortality – when we drink it new with him in the kingdom.

Let us then, dearly beloved, as we surround the table to commemorate our Lord's death, call to mind the meaning of what we do, and see to it that we feed on Him; and, when strengthened by the living bread, let us drink with him into his death. "For if we be dead with him we shall live with him; if we suffer we shall also reign with him." (2 Tim. 2:11,12).

WHO MAY COMMUNE?

Every member of Christ – even one alone with the Master may commemorate – but, so far as possible, all members of the one loaf should meet together. Ceremonious formality would be out of place – but, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

Another thought: while it is proper that we should thus commemorate "Our Passover," or its anniversary, yet it should not be forgotten, that in a sense we eat and drink, and have this sacred fellowship with our Lord every day and every hour. The night in which Israel ate of their Passover lamb, with "bitter herbs," typified the entire Gospel Age; and their deliverance from Egypt followed in the morning. So with us, we eat of our Lamb with the bitter trials

and afflictions of evil in the present age – but joy cometh in the morning – our deliverance from earth and the dominion and oppression of evil. The morning already is dawning, let us hasten the more to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ."

The Apostle Paul seems to enforce the ideas we have just presented relative to the meaning of this ordinance, and shows the necessity of a proper appreciation of its meaning. He warns (1 Cor. 11:27-30 – Diaglott), that "whoever may eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord unworthily will be an offender against the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and thus [with an understanding and appreciation of its significance] let him eat of the bread and let him drink of the cup; for he eats and drinks judgment [condemnation] to himself who eats and drinks not discriminating [appreciating] the Lord's body. Through this [lack of a proper appreciation of the true import – that it signifies our sharing in the sufferings and death of Christ – for this reason] many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

The truth of Paul's remarks we can each bear witness to. Many in the Church, not only of the nominal Church, but many members of the true Church, "whose names are written in heaven," are weak and sickly, and many have gone asleep entirely, become dead to spiritual things, and, as dead branches, are cut off from the vine – the overcoming Church (John 15:2).

If, then, we would become strong and full of spiritual vigor, and "not sleep as do others," when we annually ratify our covenant, let us examine ourselves, and thus let us partake of the sufferings and the emblems, that in due time we may partake of His glory also.
