

## THE LORD'S SUPPER.

**"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast." – 1 Cor. 5:7,8.**

Each year as the anniversary of our Lord's death recurs, it seems necessary to re-state the propriety of its commemoration, not only for the sake of new readers, but also to refresh the memory of all, by calling these precious truths to mind.

The Passover 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 door-posts 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 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.

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 God given us the key to its meaning by inspiring the Apostle to write (1st Cor. 5:7): "CHRIST OUR PASSOVER IS SACRIFICED FOR US."

Our attention being thus called to the matter, 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-born" from death, as was the death of the typical lamb to the first-born 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 an exact time-keeper 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 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 to Israel as their king, 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. 12:3). Thus Jesus made his last and formal 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 unreceived, 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 exceedingly sorrowful even unto death. When the hour 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 that 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. ...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 typical 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 typical Passover Supper as observed by the Jews. Is it asked why Jesus ate of the typical lamb first? We answer that he was born under the Law, and must observe its every requirement. Since he at Calvary fulfilled the Law, that "Covenant" is no longer in force even, upon Hebrews.

It would be difficult to determine just when or why, this impressive season for the commemoration of our Lord's death began to be ignored, but it was, doubtless, as a matter of expediency, resulting from that compromising spirit which early began to mark the great falling away, which Paul foretold. Christian people generally, judging mostly from the varied practice of the Nominal Churches with regard to it, suppose that it really makes little or no difference when the Lord's Supper is celebrated. And under this impression, without much thought or examination, they interpret the words of Paul in 1 Cor. 11:26 ("as often") to mean an indefinite time. It reads, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." But a careful study of the context gives conclusive evidence that this was not the case, but that a definite time was referred to. 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. 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 that day 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, and once a year would be "*as often*" as this could be done.

Some think that they find records in Scripture which indicate that the early Church ate the Lord's Supper every First day of the week. 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? Take a similar expression: Jesus was known to the two disciples at Emmaus in the "breaking of bread" (Luke 24:35). 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 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, reminding them of the fact that "THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED." Hence the appropriateness of the name Lord's Day, and of its observance by the Church as a day of worship and praise.

The seeming custom of breaking bread on the First day, perhaps, had its rise in the fact that the disciples were few, and came sometimes long distances [R840 : page 7] to meet together, and socially ate their

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 24:35,43; John 20:19; 21:12.

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 Catholic and Episcopal Churches still observe, after an accommodated fashion, on Good Friday and Easter Sunday, has been almost lost sight of by others.

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. Since it properly takes the place of the Jewish type, we reckon it according to the Jewish, or lunar time; and hence generally on a different date from "Good Friday" and Easter, which, following the same method of reckoning, but not exactly, commemorates the Friday and Sunday near the actual lunar date. The Lord's Supper anniversary this year will be on Sunday evening, April 18th, about 8 o'clock; Monday afternoon following being the anniversary of the crucifixion; and the Passover festival week as observed by Hebrews commencing at 6 P.M. of that day.

The teaching of Paul, in 1 Cor. 11:26, is not that we should discontinue this simple and impressive ordinance which commemorates the death of our Paschal Lamb, and symbolizes also our share in his death, as soon as we learn of his glorious advent. Since it is a calling to mind of these facts, and an annual reminder and renewal of our covenant to sacrifice with him, it is proper that it should be observed until, in this time of his presence, we are changed to his glorious likeness – *until* we drink the new wine of joy with him in the kingdom. Matt. 26:29.

## 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;" that is, it represents his flesh, his humanity which was broken or sacrificed for us. Unless he had sacrificed himself for us, we could never have had a resurrection from death, to 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 to provide bread of *life*, of which if a man eat he shall never die, but it also opened the "narrow way" to life, and broke or unsealed and gave us access to the *truth*, as an 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 in the bondage of death.

Another thought: the bread was unleavened. Leaven is corruption, an element of decay, hence a type of sin, and the decay and death which sin works in mankind. So, then, this symbol 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 unblemished from a higher, heavenly nature, *changed* to earthly conditions, hence he is called the bread from heaven. 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 we realize him as both the *way* and the *life*.

The Apostle, by divine revelation, communicates to us a further meaning in this remembrancer. He shows that not only did the loaf represent Jesus, individually, but that after we have partaken thus of him, (after we have been justified by appropriating his righteousness), we may, by consecration, be associated with him as parts of one loaf (one body) to be broken for, and in a like manner to become food for the world (1 Cor. 10:16). This same thought, of our privilege as justified believers to share now in the sufferings and death of Christ, and thus become 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, as a whole to the "*one loaf*" now being broken, 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 by Jesus the sacrifice – the death. "This is my blood (symbol of LIFE given up in death, of the new covenant, shed for many, FOR THE REMISSION of sins;" "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, which sin had forfeited, that a *right to* LIFE comes to men. (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 **[R840 : page 8]** God for an opportunity, sharing it with Christ that we may be also glorified together." – Rom. 8:17.

Jesus attaches this significance to the cup elsewhere, indicating that it is the cup of sacrifice, the *death* of our humanity. For instance, when asked by two disciples 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?" On their hearty avowal he answered, "Ye shall indeed drink of my cup." Wine is also a symbol of joy and invigoration: so we share Jesus' joys in doing the Father's will now, and shall share also his 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 being invigorated with his life, and strengthened by the living bread, let us drink with him into his death and be broken in feeding others. "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 PARTAKE.**

It is left open for each to decide for himself whether he has or has not the right to partake of this bread and this cup. If he professes to be a disciple, his fellow disciples may not attempt to judge his heart – God alone reads that with positiveness. And though the Master knew beforehand, who would betray him, nevertheless one who had "a devil" was with the twelve.

Because of its symbolism of the death of Christ, therefore let all beware of partaking of it ignorantly, unworthily, improperly – not recognizing through it "the Lord's body" as our ransom, else the breaking of it in his case would be as though he were one of those who

murdered the Lord and he in symbol would "be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." – 1 Cor. 11:27-29.

"But let a man examine himself," let him see to it that in partaking of the emblems he realizes them as the ransom price of his life and privileges; and furthermore that he by partaking of them is pledging himself to share in the sufferings of Christ and be broken for others; else, otherwise, his act of commemoration will be a condemnation to his daily life before his own conscience – "condemnation to himself."

Through lack of proper appreciation of this remembrancer which symbolizes not only our justification, but also our consecration to share in the sufferings and death of Christ, the Apostle says "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (1 Cor. 11:30.) The truth of this remark is evident; a failure to appreciate and a losing sight of the truths represented in this supper are the cause of the weak, sickly, and sleepy condition of the church. Nothing so fully awakens and strengthens the saints as a clear appreciation of the ransom sacrifice and of their share with their Lord in his sufferings and sacrifice for the world. "Let a man *examine* himself and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup."

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