

THE MEMORIAL SUPPER.

We believe and teach that the most proper occasion for the celebration of our Lord's death is its anniversary. This was the custom of the early Church, and it is still observed in a fashion by some denominations on Good Friday – although, in order to have the observance come upon the same day of the week, the exactness of the date is disregarded. We, like the early Church, prefer to observe the memorial upon its exact anniversary – which we reckon as they and the Jews reckoned it – by lunar time – the day before the beginning of the Jewish Passover.

Furthermore, we believe and teach that the only proper manner for the celebration of this memorial is that which our Lord introduced and which the early Church followed, and not as Good Friday is now celebrated by some.

On the same night in which he was betrayed – after 6 o'clock P.M. of what we now would call the 13th day of the Hebrew month *Nisan*, but which the Jews called the beginning of the 14th day of the month (their 24-hour day beginning [R1382 : page 88] with the evening); and therefore, in Jewish reckoning, in the same day in which he was crucified (the day before their Passover week began) – our Lord celebrated the Passover *supper* with his disciples. (The lamb supper, which always *preceded* the feast-week of Passover, was not, and is not now, termed the Feast of Passover by the Jews.) And after having thus complied with the Law (which was still in force over every Jew until our Lord's death on the cross), Jesus instituted a memorial of his own death, bread and "the fruit of the vine" being used as emblems of his flesh and blood.

He instructed his followers that thus they should commemorate his sacrifice for sins, saying,

"THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."

And to us it appears that the *time* is no less a part of the institution than the bread and the juice of the grape. We should as soon think of substituting *another time* than that of the institution – especially in view of the particularity of our Lord in the matter; for although he declared, "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer," yet, according to the Law, it could not be eaten until the anniversary of the killing of the typical lamb preceding the passing over of Israel's first-born in Egypt; which was to be the anniversary also of the killing of the true "Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world" and by whom the Church of the first-born is first to be spared or delivered. Our Lord waited, therefore, and "when the *hour* was come [the earliest hour possible according to the Law] he sat down." – Luke 22:14-20.

The words of the Apostle "As oft as ye *do this*, ye do show forth the Lord's death until he come" (1 Cor. 11:26 – particularly explained in March '91 *Tower*), are understood by many to give license to the observing of any hour, any day and any month; but not so to those who read critically; for the words "*do this*" have special weight. It would not be *this* if done at another time: just as if a command were given to celebrate the Independence of the United States on the fourth day of July, it would not be a fulfilment of *this* command, nor a celebration of *this* event, but something else, if another day were celebrated.

But let no one suppose that we teach that God's people are under the Law on this or on any other subject. The only law of our new covenant is the law of love. We love our Master, we love to celebrate his great sacrifice for our sins, and we love to do it as he was pleased to show us, as nearly as we can.

Some of the Lord's people celebrate his death every first day of the week, supposing that in so doing they have the sanction of

the custom of the apostles and the early Church, as recorded in Acts 2:46; 20:7. We hold, however, that they err in this application of the words "breaking of bread," and that it was not the Memorial Supper, but an ordinary meal customary in the early Church for two reasons, (1) being few and scattered, when they gathered for a meeting they brought a luncheon; and (2) probably for the same reason that they met on the first day of the week, they ate a meal together, viz.: because it was on the first day of the week that our Lord arose from the dead, and because on that day he expounded unto them the fulfilment of the Scriptures applicable to himself and was known to them in the breaking of bread, *i.e.*, in the eating of supper. No wonder that afterward they loved to celebrate both the day and the meal which brought them so much joy and blessing. – Luke 24:25-32.

Those who have confounded these luncheons, celebrating the *resurrection* on the first day of the week, with the Memorial of our Lord's *death* have erred greatly if not seriously. They should notice, too, that the fruit of the vine is not mentioned in connection with these luncheons, while it is never omitted when the Memorial Supper is referred to, being no less important than the bread. The same expression, "breaking of bread," from the same Greek words, is used in Acts 27:35 where there can be no doubt that it refers to an ordinary repast for the satisfying of hunger and not as a memorial or symbol.

We treat this subject but briefly here. As to who should celebrate the Memorial, and [R1382 : page 89] how, and many other interesting points, our regular readers are referred to our issue of March, 1891. While our supply lasts, we will be pleased to send a copy of that issue *free* to *new readers* who desire to study the subject further.

Let us urge upon all who recognize that value of Christ's death as their *ransom-sacrifice*, to surely "*do this*," as the Master

enjoined, in remembrance of that great event which is the basis of our present joy in the Lord as well as of those which we shall enter upon as the fulfilment of this Memorial – when we shall partake of the joys of our Lord in glory, in the Kingdom. But those who trust to forgiveness aside from this sacrifice for sins, or who are trusting that they can *crucify their own sins*, and thus *render themselves* acceptable to God (as some claim), should not celebrate this Memorial; for in so doing they would be eating and drinking condemnation to themselves – not discerning the value of the Lord's broken body and shed blood as the one and only sin-offering which can take away sin and make the *believer* acceptable before God.

The proper time for celebrating the Supper this year will be after 6 o'clock of Sunday, April 10th – that hour being the beginning of the 14th day of the Hebrew month Nisan.

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"HE CARETH FOR YOU."

"Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you."

– 1 Pet. 5:7.

"What can it mean? Is it aught to him
That the nights are long and the days are dim?
Can he be touched by the griefs I bear,
Which sadden the heart and whiten the hair?
Around his throne are eternal calms,
And strong, glad music of happy psalms,
And bliss unruffled by any strife.
How can he care for my poor life?

"And yet I want him to care for me,
While I live in this world where the sorrows be;
When the lights die down on the path I take;

When strength is feeble, and friends forsake;
When love and music, that once did bless,
Have left me to silence and loneliness;
And life-song changes to sobbing prayers –
Then my heart cries out for a God who cares.

"When shadows hang o'er me the whole day long,
And my spirit is bowed with shame and wrong;
When I am not good, and the deeper shade
Of conscious sin makes my heart afraid;
And the busy world has too much to do
To stay in its course to help me through,
And I long for a Savior – can it be
That the God of the universe cares for me?

"O wonderful story of deathless love!
Each child is dear to that heart above:
He fights for me when I can not fight;
He comforts me in the gloom of night;
He lifts the burden, for he is strong;
He stills the sigh, and awakens the song;
The sorrow that bowed me down he bears,
And loves and pardons, because he cares.

"Let all who are sad take heart again.
We are not alone in our hours of pain;
Our Father stoops from his throne above
To soothe and quiet us with his love.
He leaves us not when the storm is high,
And we have safety, for he is nigh.
Can that be trouble which he doth share?
Oh! rest in peace, for the Lord does care."

– *Sel.*

