

## THE MEMORIAL SUPPER.

WITH Christians generally it is customary to celebrate Good Friday as a memorial of our Lord's death, and Easter Sunday as a remembrancer of his resurrection. But with the early Church every Sunday was a remembrancer of our Lord's resurrection, while his death, symbolized in the Last Supper eaten the evening before the crucifixion, but "in the same day," was celebrated annually, as the antitype of the killing of the Jewish Passover lamb, – on the fourteenth day of the first month, lunar time, as reckoned by the Hebrews. Desiring to return to the "old paths," many WATCH TOWER readers, in every quarter of the world, adopt and practice this custom of the Primitive Church. Its appropriateness is beyond question even by those who for one reason or another have seen fit to adopt more modern customs and to celebrate it quarterly or monthly or weekly or daily, – according to human judgment, caprice or theory.

Only two of these theories claim Scriptural authority, and they alone, therefore, require answer.

(1) Those who hold that the Lord's death should be commemorated daily have no other argument than that the Apostle declared, "*As often* as ye do this ye do show forth the Lord's death until he come." They forget that three or four times a day or even hourly would be more "*often*," and therefore more proper, according to their definition of this word "often." The fact is that the stress lay upon the words "do *this*," as our Lord said, – "*This* do ye, as oft as ye drink it [annually], in remembrance of me." (1 Cor. 11:25.) The Lord's disciples as Jews were accustomed to the killing and eating of the Paschal lamb, at a specified time annually, and our Lord wished that henceforth they should recognize him as the antitype of that lamb, – his death as the antitype of its death and the passing over, or justification from death to life, of the Church of the Firstborn (Heb. 12:23) as the antitype of the sparing of the firstborn of Egypt.

To "do *this*," – *i.e.*, to celebrate the Passover, – was the *command* of the Law to the Jew; but our Lord in setting his followers free from the Law Covenant and accepting them under the New Covenant did not *command* them to "do *this*," nor to do anything but "love," – which he declared to be the fulfilling of his law of the New Covenant. But he did say, "As oft as ye do this [yearly – never oftener, **[R1787 : page 71]** and never less often did the Jews celebrate their Passover], do it [henceforth, not in remembrance of the typical Passover and the typical lamb slain and eaten, but] in remembrance of me," – "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," by whose death and blood of sprinkling you are passed over, from death unto life, and by the eating of whose flesh (figuratively speaking) ye shall obtain strength for the journey out of the Kingdom of darkness, sin and oppression, the dominion of Satan (typified by Pharaoh) to the heavenly Canaan under the lead of the Lord's Anointed, whom Moses and Joshua typified.

(2) Those who celebrate the Lord's death every Sunday well know that more appropriately that day commemorates the reverse idea, – the *resurrection* of our Lord from death; but they think that they find justification of their course in the "breaking of bread" every first day of the week, practiced by the early Church. But they hastily draw a wrong inference: those "breakings of bread" were only ordinary lunches or "love-feasts" eaten for a double purpose – to satisfy hunger, but apparently, specially, because they met on that day to celebrate the Lord's *resurrection*; – because it was in the "breaking of bread" that he had twice made himself known to them on that notable day when his communion and expounding of the Scriptures had driven away their fears and enkindled hope and caused their hearts to burn within them with the hope that maketh not ashamed. (Luke 24:32; Rom. 5:5.) It was in connection with the eating of natural food that twice again before his ascension, our Lord made himself known to the disciples and instructed and refreshed them, and probably both were on the first day of the week. – John 20:26; 21:13.

Is it any wonder, then, that the early Church formed the habit of gathering every first day of the week to commune with the Lord in spirit; and is it any wonder that they repeated the "breaking of bread" and any other features that would keep vividly before their minds the scenes and thoughts of their first experience and heart-burning? It is not surprising. But that had nothing whatever to do with the annual Passover, which to the early Christians took on a fresh importance, because "Christ our Passover" had been slain. (1 Cor. 5:7,8.) Christ our Passover represented his sacrifice by both bread and wine, as symbols of his flesh and his blood; but the accounts of the love-feast or "breaking of bread" make no mention of the wine, – and not the slightest hint that these were meant to commemorate the sufferings and death of our Lord, the Head, and the Church, which is his body.

But we, as Christians, do not celebrate the Jewish Passover and its deliverance from Egypt, nor do we kill and eat the typical lamb. With the Jews the lamb, its selection on the 10th day of the month and its killing on the 14th day were separate from the Passover *festival*, which began on the 15th and lasted for a week. The Jews celebrate specially the festival: we memorialize the death of the great Lamb of God, and understand the Jewish seven days *festival* to be only typical of the complete and everlasting joy resulting from our present eating of our Lamb with the bitter herbs of persecution during this Gospel night, waiting for deliverance early in the Millennial morning. Surely when the blindness of fleshly Israel begins to turn away, nothing will appeal to them more forcibly than that Christ is the antitype of the Passover lamb, and that the blessings flowing from his death are the antitypes of the Passover blessings. **[R1787 : page 72]**

We follow the Jewish method of reckoning the date – the same that our Lord and the Primitive Church followed – and it is very simple. The Jewish (ecclesiastical) year begins in the Spring, – with the first appearance of the new moon after the Spring equinox. There they begin to count their month. This year the new moon of Spring will appear on the 26th of March, and consequently the fourteenth day of the first

month will be April 8th. But as in the Hebrew reckoning the day begins at six o'clock of the preceding day, it follows that the fourteenth of Nisan will begin at six P.M., Sunday, April 7th. About 8 o'clock on that evening, therefore, would be the anniversary of the Lord's Supper.

At this hour, in accordance with our usual custom, the Church at Allegheny will celebrate the memorial of the greatest transaction upon the pages of history; – the transaction which means so much to all who *trust in the ransom* given once for all, but which has so little meaning to others. No arrangement is made for a convention or general gathering at the time; but friends passing through the city are always welcome. The same course is recommended to the scattered ones of like mind everywhere: that they meet with brethren residing near them, and celebrate with as nearly as possible the simplicity of the model given us by our Lord over eighteen centuries ago.

Let us each call to mind that the bread and wine not only symbolize our Lord's sacrifice on our behalf, but also that as his Body or Church we are members of the one loaf now being broken for others; – that thus we are to share with our Lord in sacrifice, and by and by share also his glory – "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together." – Rom. 8:17.

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