

## THE MEMORIAL OF OUR LORD'S DEATH.

FEW and simple are the memorials of the true Church in contrast with those of heathendom and formalistic nominal Christendom. Instead of the numerous fast and feast days and weeks, we have only three memorials:

(1) Baptism, the symbol of the death and burial of the already justified human will into the will of God in Christ.

(2) The Memorial Supper, emblemizing the literal breaking of our Lord's body and shedding of his blood (his death as "the *man* Christ Jesus" at Calvary), – and reviving our covenant to "be dead with him" that we may also live with him," to "suffer with him" that we may also be glorified together."

(3) The memorial of our Lord's resurrection on the First-day of the week, now commonly called Sunday.

Our Lord instituted all three beautiful, yet simple, memorials. His baptism was different from the baptism of John, preached to Jews only, a "baptism unto repentance;" for he had no sins to repent of. His was the first baptism of the new order, symbolizing the death of the will of a justified human being, already acceptable to the Father, and full submission to God's will, a full surrender, complete consecration. It took the place of "John's baptism." – Acts 19:3-5.

\*See TOWER for June 15, '93, – "Baptism and Its Import."\*

Our Lord instituted the observance of the first day of the week, in the same manner that he instituted the Memorial Supper and Baptism; namely, not by command, but by *example*. He met with the disciples on the first day of the week, immediately after his resurrection; with Mary near the Sepulchre, with Simon Peter, with the two who went to

Emmaus, and with the ten disciples in the upper room. (John 20:1,14,19; Luke 24:13-31,34,36.) Then he waited another week, and again appeared to them on the eighth day, probably meaning the day after the seventh, the first day of the week. (John 20:26.) The disciples seem to have expected something of the kind and had come together, and thereafter remembering the opening of their eyes of understanding to know him, that it was in connection with the "breaking of bread," they afterward not only met regularly on the first day, but regularly had a simple meal together, called "breaking of bread." This some in our day have mistaken for a commemoration of the Last Supper. The two, however, were totally different; – the one commemorating the death, and the other celebrating with joy the resurrection. The first day of the week was not only honored as the memorial of our Lord's resurrection and manifestation and communion, but was again marked by divine favor at Pentecost, and became the memorial of the outpouring of the holy Spirit. – Acts 2:1; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2.

Our Lord instituted the Memorial Supper after, and to take the place of, the Jewish Passover supper. The killing of the Passover lamb was to be done on the fourteenth day of the first month of each Jewish year, in commemoration of the deliverance of Israel's firstborn from the last plague of Egypt, and subsequently the deliverance of the entire nation from slavery. Our Lord was himself the antitype of the Lamb. His Church is the antitype of the spared firstborn of Israel; and the near approaching "restitution," in which all who love God will be delivered from the slavery of Sin and Death under Satan, will be the antitype of the deliverance of the nation.

The Memorial Supper, with its unleavened bread and wine, representing the flesh and blood of the Lamb of God, whose sacrifice takes away the sin of the world, making reconciliation for iniquity, was intended to keep fresh before the memory of the Church of the firstborn the remembrance of her purchase price, and to pledge her to fellowship in the sufferings of Christ. (1 Cor. 10:16,17; 11:26.) It was instituted, therefore, in the same night in which our Lord was betrayed, in the same

day in which he was crucified (the Hebrew day counting from six p.m. until six p.m.).

It was not the intention of our Lord to commemorate the *feast* of Passover, which began on the 15th of Nisan and lasted for an entire week, but merely to give us a [R1943 : page 42] memorial of *his death* on the 14th of Nisan. So far from being a feast of rejoicing, it was an occasion of sorrow and perplexity to the early Church. Jesus himself was "exceeding sorrowful."

Seeing that this Memorial celebrates the antitype of the killing of the Passover lamb, we can see that it is properly celebrated on its anniversary, – not monthly, quarterly, weekly nor daily, but *yearly*, – and properly at the same time of the year at which our Lord died, and at which he instituted the memorial. This was the custom of the early Church, which reckoned its date according to the Jewish method of reckoning time. The first deviation from this was by the churches represented by the Bishop of Rome, which substituted, appointed and observed the nearest Friday, when the 14th of Nisan fell on some other day, as it most frequently did. This was the origin of "Good Friday," and the third day following was known as Passover Sunday, and later as "Easter Sunday." Later, by the decree of the Council of Nice (A.D. 325), and still later under the revision of the calendar by Pope Gregory XIII., the so-called Catholic churches have been brought into practical agreement, and annually fix dates for "Good Friday" and "Easter Sunday."

For the past twenty years we who are seeking the "old paths" (Jer. 6:16) have celebrated the Memorial Supper upon its anniversary, as reckoned according to the Hebrew usage, which was recognized by our Lord and the Apostles. Theirs is an easy and simple method. They begin their year (Nisan being their first month) with the new [R1943 : page 43] moon at the Spring Equinox and on the night of the 14th, at six p.m., commences the 15th, which is the first day of their Passover *feast*. – Exod. 12:2.

This year the Equinoxial moon, or month Nisan, begins March 15th; hence its 15th day or the beginning of the Hebrew Passover week will be on the 29th. The 14th of Nisan, on which they killed the Paschal lamb, the anniversary of the death of our Lord, "the Lamb of God," will be March 28th, beginning, according to Hebrew reckoning, on the 27th at sundown. Since our Lord instituted the Memorial on the evening preceeding, we celebrate it correspondingly.

Following this honored custom, therefore, the Church at Allegheny will meet on the evening of March 27th, at 8.00 o'clock, to commemorate the greatest transaction known to mankind. As heretofore our services will be very simple, consisting of praise, prayer, a review of the significance of the emblems and the realities celebrated, partaking of the emblems, "Passover-bread" (*i.e.*, unleavened bread), and "fruit of the vine." (For "fruit of the vine" we *prefer* unfermented grape juice or raisin juice rather than wine, because if the liquor habit has a hold upon any one we would avoid the temptation to such – adding a spoonful of wine for the sake of those who consider that nothing but wine would fill the prescription, "fruit of the vine." As for the unleavened bread, what is needed can readily be purchased from almost any Hebrew family; if not, "soda crackers" or "water crackers" are an unleavened bread, and will serve every purpose.)

The special feature of the occasion is the heart *communion* with the Lord, facilitated by the appreciation of the *significance* of the emblems revealed in the Word. They are to be appreciated, not only as representing our Redeemer's sacrifice, but also as representing our privilege of fellowship with him in suffering for righteousness' sake, as members of his body, the Church, – our individual share in it. The cup of blessing for which we bless God, – is it not a participation of the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, – is it not a participation of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16,17.) Concluding with an appropriate hymn of praise we seek to avoid conversation, and to perpetuate the "communion" by thoughts respecting the great event just commemorated, and to follow our Lord reflectively to Gethsemane, and

the day following to Calvary, thinking meanwhile of how little we are able to do to show our love for him, and resolving to be more jealously careful in the use of every hour and every mite of influence in his service.

Any friends who trust in the "precious blood" will be cordially welcome to meet with us. We advise, however, that brethren and sisters, so far as possible, should not desert little groups at home to enjoy the privileges of meeting with a larger company. Where two or three meet in the Lord's name he blesses them. Let each one be thoroughly willing to sacrifice his own preferences in the interest of the fellow-members of the body of Christ. This is being broken for others, as set forth in the preceding quotation, and the results are always blessed.

Remember all the dear flock of the Lord, not forgetting us, here, at Allegheny, in your prayers, and we will remember you all.

Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation.

Let each one be on guard against the wiles of the devil. Remember that we near the anniversary not only of our Lord's sufferings, but also of Judas' treachery and false kiss, and question "Is it I?" Let each one examine his heart and see that it is in such an attitude of love and devotion to the Lord, and to every member of "his body," that he can have communion with the Lord and all who are truly his. In any other attitude there is danger that Satan "enter in." (Luke 22:3.) "The last state of that man is worse than the first." – Matt. 12:45; Luke 11:26.

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