

## THE MEMORIAL SUPPER.

AS instituted by our Lord, and perpetuated by the apostles and the early Church, the Memorial Supper took the place of the Passover Supper – on the fourteenth day of the Jewish first month Nisan. This custom of the early Church is still preserved in the English, Roman, Greek, Armenian and other so-called "Catholic" churches and by Lutherans. But soon after the death of the apostles, ceremonialism gradually crept in and very greatly altered the original simple Memorial services. Then, too, the idea of the Mass was evolved – a *fresh sacrifice of Christ* as the basis for forgiveness of special sins. Masses are not figurative sacrifices, remembrancers of the great sacrifice at Calvary, but meant as *new* and *real* sacrifices. The priest is specially commissioned to turn plain ingredients of bread and wine into the *actual body and blood of Christ* in order that the priest may make a *fresh* sacrifice of Christ, with fresh efficacy for the forgiveness of the special sins for which the Mass (sacrifice) is performed. These Masses appear in many respects to merely elaborate the Lord's blessing and breaking of the bread and wine at the institution of the Memorial Supper, only that they may be and are celebrated at any hour of any day or night.

It is not surprising that after a thousand years of false teaching and false practice along these lines, Protestants, when awaking and seeking to find the old paths, failed to discern all of the Papal error on this and other subjects. Accordingly, while discarding the Papal Mass (called in Scripture "the abomination that maketh desolate") as *additional sacrifices* for sins, and properly holding and teaching that "by *one* offering he [Christ] hath *perfected for ever* them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14), they overlooked the fact that the added [R2115 : page 69] times for what they term "Communion" were added for Masses, and that the anniversary of our Lord's death is the only appropriate and the only appointed time for its commemoration.

Accordingly, some celebrate three times a year, some four and some weekly. If the contention, "the oftener the better," be correct, why should they not celebrate it every day? While we cannot say that done in sincerity it is at any time a sinful abomination like the Mass, we may be sure that men of to-day are not wiser than our Lord and the inspired teachers of the Church – the Apostles – and that any change from the original institution must result unfavorably. The occasion loses its weight and impressiveness by repetitions disconnected with the fact memorialized. How national memorials would lose their intended significance if repeated three to fifty times a year! The fourth of July, for instance, celebrates a great event, the institution of the United States Government, and it is generally celebrated. But suppose instead it were celebrated weekly or quarterly – would not this deprive the celebration of weight and influence? Assuredly; and so with the Memorial of our Lord's death – its anniversary is its only proper or designated occasion for celebration. But once the origin was lost sight of, general carelessness and indifference prevailed, so that although always mentioned in the Scriptures as a "Supper," it is now generally observed at dinner time; and rarely or never as a supper or evening meal, like its pattern.

The expression, "As oft as ye do *this*, ye do show forth the Lord's death, till he come," has been misinterpreted by many to mean, – Do this as often as ye choose. But the emphasis should be put upon *this* – As oft as ye celebrate *this* annual Memorial, instituted by our Lord, ye are showing forth his death, and are to so do until his second coming – *until* the establishment of his Kingdom and your glorification therein will fulfill or complete all that is symbolized in the Memorial.

As the people of God "seek for the old paths" (Jer. 16:6), the light of present truth spreads and the number who celebrate the central fact of redemption (the great Sin-offering) on its anniversary increases; and this year probably more than ever before, since the fifth century, will "Do *this*" in remembrance of their Redeemer, on the anniversary of his death.

The "Catholic" churches slightly changed the method of reckoning the anniversary so that they always celebrate a Friday for our Lord's death (Good Friday) and, on the Sunday following, his resurrection (Easter Sunday). The early Church, however, followed the Jewish custom of counting, regardless of the days of the week, and so we do. In fact, it is claimed by some that, as the Jews had an abrupt beginning of months every Spring, with the appearance of the new moon at or after the vernal equinox, so they had an abrupt beginning of weeks with the beginning of Passover, which was always counted a Sabbath and the new start of the cycle. However this may be, their Passover week always began with the fifteenth day of Nisan by divine direction. – Exod. 12; Num. 28:16,17.

We Christians, however, do not celebrate the Passover week. That will find its anti-type by and by, when the glory of the Kingdom shall be enjoyed. We celebrate the fourteenth; a day of which the Jew takes little or no account. It would appear that the fourteenth of Nisan should have been generally observed, but that the Jews seemed to begrudge the time, and generally crowded the supper over onto the fifteenth day, to gain one more day for business. Certain it is that it was proper to both kill and eat the Passover lamb on the fourteenth, for our Lord and the twelve apostles so did, and our Lord was crucified on the *same day*; this being provided for in the Jewish arrangement of time, which began each day at six P.M. – Lev. 23:5,6.

Reckoning according to the Jewish rule, the fourteenth of Nisan will this year commence Thursday, April 15, at six P.M. At 8 P.M. a few earnest Christians all over the world, including a little company in Allegheny, will break the memorial bread and taste the memorial fruit of the vine, in grateful remembrance of him who loved us and gave himself for us; and in pledge of our fellowship with him and all who are his, in the sufferings and trials of this present time; and in testimony of our hopes of fellowship by and by in his glory. Reader, will you not join with us at that hour? Whether alone, or as little groups, hundreds of miles asunder, we will surely have a special blessing; and, if we seek

it, no doubt we will be welcomed specially *near* to our Heavenly Bridegroom, and be specially strengthened to share his cross, and to withstand the wiles of the devil.

We do not invite a general convocation to Allegheny as formerly, for two special reasons: (1) we are so situated as to be unable to entertain as formerly; and (2) we believe that the cause in general is benefited by having all of each little group meet together on this occasion. Every family together, was the law for the Jews; and it seems appropriate and profitable for us.

As we have heretofore pointed out, anyone of the Lord's people, the choice of the company, may serve the emblems of our Master's broken body and shed blood. The distinctions of "clergy" and "laity" are not of God, but of mistaken men. All who are true "disciples" are invited to take, eat, drink and distribute the emblems. It would surely require a great amount of authority and ordaining to qualify any man to "*create God*" out of bread and wine, as it is claimed [R2115 : page 70] the Catholic priests do; but it requires only a fully consecrated, humble believer to do any and every thing commanded by our Lord in respect to this beautiful Memorial. Let us, therefore, – all who are his and who see the beauty of his arrangement – obey, and "do this" in remembrance of him. *Unleavened* bread is [R2116 : page 70] best to use, as an emblem of our Lord's purity, his freedom from sin, which leaven symbolizes. Fruit of the vine may be wine or (preferably, we think) unfermented grape-juice, or the juice from stewed raisins; – "fruit of the vine" is quite a broad term.

### **MAKE DUE PREPARATION.**

In the type only the circumcised were allowed to eat of the Passover supper. Circumcision of the heart is the antitype, as the Apostle explains, and signifies a full consecration to the Lord and a separation from the filth of the flesh and sin in general. Let us note, also, that none but those consecrated to be broken with him, and to

share his cup of suffering and self-denial, are truly "disciples," and invited to "do *this*." – See Matt. 20:22,23.

Note, also, that even the "circumcised" were to cleanse their dwellings and put away sin, symbolized by leaven. And faith in the *blood* must be publicly confessed as symbolized by its being sprinkled on the front of their houses. All these things represented Christian life during this Gospel age. The eaters are to be Pilgrims who seek a heavenly country; our "bitter herbs" are the trials and persecutions and revilings and disappointments, incident to our faithfulness to the Lord; – they will only sharpen our appetites for more of our Lamb – Christ our Passover (lamb) slain for us. (Exod. 12:8,11,12; 1 Cor. 5:7.) And, inasmuch as the law provided that none of the lamb must remain over to be eaten on the morrow, it seems to signify, typically, that the privilege of participation in the Lord's sacrifice is meant by the eating; and that this fellowship or *communion in sufferings* is confined to this Gospel age. This is intimated also by the Apostle. – 1 Cor. 10:16,17.

Let all of the Lord's people examine themselves to see that their hearts are circumcised, separated from the will of the flesh and fully subjected to the will of God in Christ. Let us see to it that we purge out any of the old leaven of malice, envy and strife (1 Cor. 5:8), that the thoughts and intents of our hearts are pure and sweet and clean, and that unavoidable weaknesses are under cover of the precious blood. Although the Lord and the Apostles gave no command to fast forty days, as is the custom of the "lenten season" with many, and although we deprecate such formal commands of men, nevertheless, we believe that those who as a preparation voluntarily do some fasting, as well as praying, will be blest according to their faith and love and devotion.

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