

OUR "PASSEVER" MEMORIAL.

EVERY year this celebration of our Redeemer's death seems more full of meaning and more impressive. The very fact that the date changes, and must be reckoned after the Jewish method of calculation, adds to the impressiveness, and brings afresh to our minds the various details of the Passover type and their fulfilment in the death of the Lamb of God – "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." – 1 Cor. 5:7.

The severe bondage of Israel under Pharaoh, the god or ruler of Egypt, calls to mind the bondage of corruption under which "the whole creation groans," being burdened under the reign of Sin and Death; and Pharaoh fitly typified Satan, "the god of this world." In the deliverance of all Israel under the leadership of Moses we see the deliverance, the liberation, of all who reverence God and his Laws under the leadership of the greater than Moses, – Christ, head and body, during the Millennium. In the overthrow of Pharaoh and his hosts we see the type of the destruction, in the Second Death, of Satan and all who follow his course. These anti-typical blessings are all the pictured results of the anti-typical Passover, of which Christ is the central figure.

THE LAMB SLAIN.

The Scripture which refers to our Lord as the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world indicates to us that all the details of this Passover were clearly in the mind and plan of God, not only since the Fall of Adam under the death sentence, but from long before Adam's creation. It thus assures us that although the Justice of God only was manifested for centuries, although divine Love was not "*manifested*" until the first advent of Jesus, nevertheless Love was in God's heart toward his creatures, – from the beginning.

As the Passover *deliverance* represented the Millennial blessing, so the Passover *night* represented this Gospel Age, in which all who trust in God wait for his salvation; – in which the entire "household of faith" feeds on the unleavened bread of Truth, mingled with the bitter herbs of trial and testing, waiting for the Morning; – in which the Church "of the first-born," under the protection of "the blood of the Lamb," is *passed over* from condemnation to justification, from death to life. Ah! there it is! For that reason we keep a continual feast of rejoicing in the Lord, feeding on our Lamb and unleavened bread and herbs. For this reason, also, we keep the annual Memorial of all this, "for even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast." – 1 Cor. 5:7.

It was *this* that our Master enjoined upon all his disciples, saying, "As often as ye do *this*, [as, year by year, ye shall frequently, before my second coming, *do this*] do it in remembrance of me; – and no longer in remembrance of the typical lamb and the typical passing over of the typical first-born of typical Israel.

For centuries the Adversary blinded the Lord's people to this simple custom of the early Church, persuading them first of all that the Romish Mass was the same thing, and later that the quarterly, monthly and weekly celebrations of Protestants would do as well. How much we were losing under those delusions [R3526 : page 86] we never knew until graciously brought to see the truth respecting "Christ our Passover, sacrificed for us," on whose account we, "first born," celebrate.

We will no longer be defrauded of the blessing our Lord designed for us. We will "keep the feast." And so surely as the consecrated believers of this age are the "Church of the first-born," so surely will there be a deliverance later of all of the household under the lead of the first-born (Christ), even as the type showed. And that the after-born delivered by Moses will ultimately consist only of the obedient the Apostle clearly shows. – Acts 3:23.

"IN THE SAME NIGHT."

How much more impressive and inspiring it is to celebrate an important matter on its anniversary; – to recall the deeds and words and looks, and place ourselves with the chief actors of that greatest of all dramas which over eighteen centuries ago ended at Calvary. It even strengthens our general faith in divine providence to note that the very day, the very hour, as well as the very year of this tragedy God had predetermined, so that although previously the Jews sought to take him to put him to death, no man laid hands on him, because [R3526 : page 87] "*his hour was not yet come.*" The precise time of this great event had not only been typified for centuries with careful precision as to the very day, but our Lord with equal exactness declared "Mine hour is come," and when instituting the bread and wine Memorial of his own death as the antitypical lamb he waited, "and when *the hour was come* he sat down" with his disciples to eat the Passover Supper, saying, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." – Luke 22:15.

"LET US KEEP THE FEAST."

With equal carefulness to that shown by our Lord and his apostles, let us keep the feast, the Memorial of his death, as he directed – not at any time, morning, noon or night, but only as a Supper – not any day, but only on its anniversary – if we would "*do this,*" rather than commemorate something else, on some other date.

This year, Monday, April 17th, will correspond to the day on which our Lord was crucified, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. when he died, crying, "It is finished." He was laid in Joseph's new tomb before 6 p.m., and the next day (beginning at that hour) was the first day of the Feast of Passover celebrated by the Jews, corresponding this year to Tuesday, April 18th. We celebrate nothing in common with our Hebrew friends, but refer to their date by way of making clear the date on which we locate our Lord's death and its Memorial Supper of the preceding evening.

Our Lord instituted the Memorial Supper, which he requested his followers to celebrate, after six o'clock on the evening before he was crucified, "in the same night in which he was betrayed." This, however, as we have previously shown, was on the 14th of Nisan, the very same day on which he died – God having provided the Jews a custom for counting their days from 6 p.m. to 6 p.m., from sundown to sundown.

WASHING ONE ANOTHER'S FEET.

Jesus and his disciples, being Jews, were obligated to keep the Jewish Passover Supper, and ate together a literal lamb, with herbs and unleavened bread, and wine; but we are no longer interested in those typical matters, which have forever passed away by being fulfilled in Christ. It was *after* the Jewish Passover Supper that our Lord instituted the new, the Memorial Supper, commemorative of his own sacrifice for the first-borns, and of their joint-sacrifice with him, as we shall show.

Whether the washing of his disciples' feet by our Lord was after the Passover Supper and before the Memorial Supper or after the latter, we can not be too positive, but apparently it was the latter (Matt. 26:26); and was intended as an example in humility and a lesson to the apostles who seem still to have had a spirit of rivalry for preeminence. In any event the feet washing was not a part of the Memorial, nor do we understand it to have been enjoined as a custom amongst our Lord's disciples, though we have no quarrel with those who think differently and choose to wash each other's feet literally. To our understanding, the lesson was that our Lord's followers were not to shun any service, however menial, that would enable them to assist or comfort one another. Performing this service to-day is usually far from a convenience to those who practice it, whereas other comforting services are often neglected.

"THIS IS MY BODY."

Apparently it was just when the regular Jewish Passover Supper was ended that our Lord took some of the left-over unleavened bread, blessed it, broke it into pieces, and gave them to his disciples saying, "Take, eat; this is my body given for you; this do in remembrance of me." – Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19.

These words "This is my body" have caused endless disputes for centuries amongst the Lord's people, the basis for the dispute being the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Mass, which claims that under the priest's blessing the bread is changed into the actual flesh of Jesus, which the priest then adores and proceeds to *bread* (a fresh *sacrifice*) for the sins of those for whom the Mass is said. To have this procedure resemble that of our Lord, great stress is laid on the words, "This is my body," thereby to prove the body in the bread and the possibility of its sacrifice. But the whole matter is very quickly settled when we remember that our Lord had not yet died when he said these words. Hence he must have meant, "This bread *represents* my body," for any other interpretation or meaning would have been untrue, – for he was still flesh, his change not having yet come in any sense.

Taking our Lord's words in their simple obvious sense, how beautiful is their lesson. Unleavened (pure) bread henceforth would at this Memorial represent our Lord, the bread from heaven, of which we may eat and have everlasting life. The next thought is that this heaven-supplied "bread" must be "broken" in order to be appropriated. And so we see that it was necessary not only for our Lord to come from heaven as the "bread;" but necessary also that he be broken in death – sacrificed for our sins – ere we could appropriate his merit and enjoy everlasting life.

"THE BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT."

The "fruit of the vine" was next introduced as a part of this Memorial of our Lord's loving sacrifice. He explained that it represented his blood – "The blood of the New Covenant, shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. 26:28.) What a reminder this is of the *ransom-price* necessary and paid on behalf of the sins of the world. The broken bread taught a part of the lesson, the "cup" taught the remainder of it. We not only need nourishment, strength, assistance to come back to God and his favor, but we need the precious blood – the life of our Lord as our redemption price to release us from the condemnation of Justice.

The Lord's disciples must, by faith partake of (appropriate) both the "bread" and the "cup," or they cannot be one with him. More than this: the Apostle shows that there is another subsequent view of this Memorial. We who thus eat and drink – who thus partake of our **[R3526 : page 88]** Savior's merits – are reckoned in with him as his "members," as his "body," being broken; and our lives sacrificed in his service under his direction are counted as a part of his sacrifice. The Apostle's words are: The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion [common-union] of the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not the common-union of the body of Christ? For we being many are one loaf, and one body, because we are all partakers of that one loaf [Christ]." – 1 Cor. 10:16,17.

Ah, yes! How deep are the Lord's lessons! and the deeper we look the more beauty we see, the eyes of our understanding opening more and more as we appreciate and heartily obey. "Let us keep the feast" in both senses, then: (1) Appropriating and feasting on the great work done for us by our Redeemer and the riches of grace granted us through him; and (2) Appreciating our privilege of joint-sacrifice with our Redeemer – laying down our lives in his service, for the brethren, etc., and thus "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." – Col. 1:24.

Left behind, not because our Lord could not suffer enough for all, nor because his sufferings were not sufficient for all, but because he wished to have us with him to share his nature and his glory, and only by suffering with him and as his *members* could we be allowed to share his glory, honor and immortality.

"SHOW FORTH THE LORD'S DEATH."

We exhort all the Lord's brethren everywhere to join us in observing the Lord's Memorial on its proper anniversary, as above stated. Gather with as many as profess faith and consecration – urge not others. Let us meet in twos and threes and larger groups as opportunity permits. Take a day or two off if necessary to assemble with brethren nearest you. Do not let monetary considerations decide everything. One spiritual feast with the Lord and those who celebrate his Memorial in sincerity is worth more to us than several meals of natural food. Man shall not live by earthly bread alone, but specially by the bread from heaven.

Even the solitary ones who *cannot possibly* meet with even one more should celebrate. "Soda biscuits" are unleavened bread and will do very well – though if you live near a Hebrew family they will be pleased to sell you an unleavened loaf (cracker) for a cent or two. As for "fruit of the vine:" it is advisable to put away a bottle of grape juice every summer; but if you have none you can stem raisins and use the juice, which will be "fruit of the vine" as truly as any other.

But do not let us allow *preparations* for the Memorial to so fill our thoughts that the real meaning of the emblems will be forgotten. On the contrary, let us give as much of the preceding and the succeeding days as **[R3527 : page 88]** possible to prayer, and to meditation on the stupendous events memorialized, and feed upon the Living Bread in our hearts with thankful joy.

We again recommend that after the season of communion, while partaking of the symbolic bread and cup, the meetings all close as

did the one our Lord conducted as an example. "They sang a hymn and went out." Let us do the same. Omitting our usual greetings, etc., let us keep our thoughts with the Lord in Gethsemane, at the High Priest's Court, before Pilate, before Herod, before Pilate again – beaten, condemned to death, carrying his cross, crucified – for our sins. These thoughts are sure to make us appreciate our Lord the more and to hate sin the more, and thus will help us to realize better "what manner of persons we ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness."

We would like to have a postal card from each little company thus celebrating, stating the number present and participating. Please *appoint* some one, for what is everybody's business is not attended to properly. But have the appointment made a week or more before, so that it will not disturb the proper closing of the meeting.

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