

THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING OF THE PASSOVER

THE Passover season draws near its beginning, as celebrated by the Jews, on the 29th of this month; but the interest of Christians centers especially in the slaying of the lamb, which preceded the Passover feast, and their celebration, therefore, properly begins on the evening of March 28th. We greatly regret, however, that while millions of Christians and Jews will in some formal ceremonies and in a perfunctory manner celebrate this great event of history, but few of either religion discern the real signification of the celebration.

THE PASSOVER INSTITUTED

Could their minds be awakened thoroughly to its true significance it would start a religious revival such as the world has never yet known. But, alas! as the Apostle declares, the god of this world has blinded the minds of many, and even some whose eyes of understanding are partially opened he describes as being blind and unable to see afar off, or holden and unable to see the deep things of God in respect to these ceremonies, which have been celebrated in the world for now more than 3300 years. And, by the way, it must be admitted even by the higher critics and agnostics in general that an event so prominently marked, so widely observed for so long a time, must have a foundation in fact. There must have been just such an occurrence in Egypt: the first-born of Egypt must have perished in that tenth plague, and the first-born of Israel must have been preserved free from it – all that observed the rule to remain under the blood – else this widespread celebration of the event would have been inexplicable.

We need not remind you of the particulars connected with the institution – that the Israelites were held in a measure of

serfdom by the Egyptians, and that when the time, in the Lord's providence, arrived for their deliverance, their masters sought selfishly to maintain their bondage and refused to let them go forth to the land of Canaan. One after another the Lord sent during the year nine different plagues upon the people of the land of Egypt, relieving them one after another when their king craved mercy and made promises which he afterwards broke. Finally the servant of the Lord, Moses, announced a great crowning disaster – that the first-born in every family of Egypt would die in one night, and that in the home of the humblest peasant as well as in the home of the king there should be a mourning, as a result of which they would be glad finally to yield and let the Israelites go – yea, urge them to go, and in haste, lest the Lord should ultimately bring death upon the entire people if their king continued to harden his heart and resist the divine mandate.

The first three plagues were common to all in Egypt, including the district in which the Israelites resided: the next six plagues affected not the district occupied by the Israelites; and the last, the tenth plague, was declared to be common to the entire land of Egypt, including the land of the Israelites, except as the latter should show faith and obedience by providing a sacrificial lamb, whose blood was to be sprinkled upon the sides and lintels of their doorways, and whose flesh was to be eaten in the same night, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, the eaters standing staff in hand and girded ready for the journey – with full expectancy that the Lord would smite the first-born of the Egyptians with death and make them willing to let the Israelites go, and with full faith also that they would share in this calamity were it not for the blood upon their door-posts and lintels.

"WHEN HE SEETH THE BLOOD THE LORD WILL PASS OVER THE DOOR AND NOT SUFFER THE DESTROYER TO SMITE YOU." – EXODUS 12:23

The Israelites were commanded to celebrate this as the first feature of the Jewish Law and one of their greatest memorials as a nation. As a matter of fact, we find that in some degree the Passover is celebrated by Jews in all parts of the world – even by those who claim to be agnostics and infidels. They still have a measure of respect for it as an ancient custom. But is it not strange that, with the bright minds which many of them possess, our Jewish friends have never thought it worth while to inquire the meaning of this celebration? Why was the lamb slain and eaten? Why was its blood sprinkled upon the door-posts and lintels? Because God so commanded, of course; but what reason, motive, object or lesson was there behind the divine command? Truly a reasonable God has reasonable commands, and in due time will be willing that his faithful people should understand the significance of every requirement. Why are the Hebrews indifferent to this subject? Why does prejudice hold their minds? It is for them to answer, and, answering, to get light and joy from the knowledge.

Although Christianity has the answer to this question we regret that the majority of Christians, because of carelessness, would be unable to give a reason and **[R3959 : page 86]** ground for any hope in connection with this matter. If the Jew can realize that his Sabbath day is a type or foreshadowing of a coming epoch of rest and blessing and release from toil, sorrow and death, why can he not see that similarly all the features of the Mosaic Law institution were intended by the Lord to be foreshadowings of various blessings, to be bestowed in due time? Why can it not be discerned by all that the Passover lamb typified, represented, the Lamb of God? that its death represented the death of Jesus, the Just for the unjust? and that the application of its blood symbolizes, represents, the application of the merit of the death of Jesus to the entire household of faith? Blessed are those whose eyes see that Jesus was indeed "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the

world" – that the cancellation of the world's sin is effected by the payment of man's penalty – that as the whole world lost divine favor and came under divine sentence of death, with its concomitants of sorrow and pain, it was necessary before this sentence or curse could be removed that a satisfaction of justice should be made, and that therefore, as the Apostle declares, Christ died for our sins – the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us back to God. Thus he opened up a new and living way – a new way to life everlasting.

"A KIND OF FIRST-FRUITS"

Those familiar with the Bible have noticed that therein the Church of Christ is called the Church of the First-born, and again a kind of first-fruits unto God of his creatures. (Heb. 12:23; Jas. 1:18.) This implies others ultimately of God's family later born; it implies after-fruits. Christian people seem to have overlooked these Scriptures so far as making application of them is concerned, and have generally come to believe that only those who are of the first-fruits will ever be saved and that there will be no after-fruits. But let us look at this type of the Passover – let us notice that it was God's intention to save all Israelites, and that as a nation they represented all mankind that will ever come into harmony with God and be granted eternal life in the land of promise. Let us notice that there were two passovers: a great one, when the whole nation by divine power was miraculously delivered by the Lord and led by a sandbar across the channel of the Red Sea especially prepared for them by the accentuation of winds and tides.

That picture or type shows the ultimate deliverance from the power of sin and Satan of every creature who will ultimately come into accord with the Lord and desire to render him worship – not an Israelite was left **[R3960 : page 86]** behind. But that passover at the Red Sea is not the one we are discussing

particularly on this occasion – not the one we are about to celebrate. No, the event which we celebrate was merely the passing over or sparing of the first-borns of Israel. Only the first-born were endangered, though the deliverance of all depended upon the salvation of the first-born. Applying this in harmony with all the Scriptures we see that the little flock, the first-fruits unto God of his creatures, the Church of the first-born alone, is being spared at the present time – being passed over, provided they are under the blood. We see that the remainder of mankind who may desire to enlist and to follow the great antitypical Moses when he shall ultimately lead the people forth from the bondage of sin and death are not now endangered – merely the first-born.

"THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST-BORNS"

The first-born – the "Church of the First-Born" – are those of mankind who in advance of the remainder have had the eyes of their understanding opened to a realization of their condition of bondage and their need of deliverance and to God's willingness to fulfil to them his good promises. More than this, they are such as have responded to the grace of God, have made a consecration of themselves to him and his service, and in return have been begotten again by the holy Spirit. With these first-born ones it is a matter of life and death whether or not they remain in the household of faith – behind the blood of sprinkling. For these to go forth would imply a disregard of divine mercy. It would signify that they would do despite to divine goodness, and that, having enjoyed their share of the mercy of God as represented in the blood of the Lamb, they were not appreciative of it. For such the Scriptures declare, "There remaineth no more a sacrifice for their sins"; they are to be esteemed as adversaries of God, whose fate was symbolized in the destruction of the first-born of Egypt.

We do not mean to say that the first-born of Egypt who died in that night and any of the first-born of the Israelites who departed from their homes contrary to command and who died therefor, have gone into the Second Death. Quite to the contrary: we understand that all these matters were types, figures, illustrations, foreshadowings of matters on a higher plane, and that the realities belong to the Church of Christ during this Gospel age since Pentecost. If we sin wilfully after that we have received a knowledge of the truth, after that we have tasted of the good Word of God, after that we have been made partakers of the holy Spirit and thus members of the Church of the First-born, if we should fall away – it would be impossible to renew us again to repentance – God would have nothing further for us, our disregard of his mercy would mean that we would die the Second Death. From this standpoint the Church of the First-born, through the begetting of the holy Spirit and the greater knowledge and privileges they enjoy everyway, have a greater responsibility in the world, for they are the only ones as yet in danger of the Second Death. This is the lesson of the type and applies to Christians only.

By and by the night will have passed, the glorious morn of deliverance will have come, and the Christ, the antitypical Moses, will lead forth, will deliver all Israel – all the people of God – all who when they shall know shall be glad to reverence, honor and obey the **[R3960 : page 87]** will of God. That day of deliverance will be the entire Millennial age, at the close of which all evil and evil doers, symbolized by the hosts of Egypt, will be utterly cut off in the Second Death.

"AS OFT AS YE DO THIS"

The Apostle clearly and positively identifies the Passover lamb with our Lord Jesus, saying, "Christ our Passover is slain for us; therefore let us keep the feast." (1 Cor. 5:7,8.) He informs

us that we all need the blood of sprinkling, not upon our houses but upon our hearts. (Heb. 12:24; I Pet. 1:2.) We are also to eat the unleavened bread of truth if we would be strong and prepared for the deliverance in the morning of the new dispensation. We also must eat the Lamb, must appropriate Christ, his merit, the value that was in him, to ourselves. Thus we put on Christ, not merely by faith, but more and more to the extent of our ability we put on his character and are transformed day by day to his glorious image in our hearts. We are to feed upon him as the Jews fed upon the literal lamb. Instead of the bitter herbs, which aided and whetted their appetites, we have bitter experiences and trials which the Lord provides for us, and which help to wean our affections from earthly things and give us increasing appetite to feed upon the Lamb and the unleavened bread of truth. We, too, are to remember that we have no continuing city, but are *en route* as pilgrims, strangers, travelers, staff in hand, girded for the journey, that we may ultimately reach the heavenly Canaan and all the glorious things which God hath in reservation for the Church of the First-born, in association with their Redeemer as kings and priests unto God.

Our Lord Jesus also fully identified himself with the Passover Lamb. On the same night that he was betrayed, and just preceding his crucifixion, he gathered his disciples in the upper room, saying, "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." It was necessary that as Jews they should celebrate the Passover Supper on that night – the saving of the typical first-born from the typical prince of this world – but as soon as the requirements of the type had been fulfilled our Lord instituted a new Memorial upon the old foundation, saying, "As often as ye do this [celebrate the Passover – annually] do it in remembrance of me! (I Cor. 11:24,25.) Your Jewish neighbors, whose eyes of understanding have not been opened, will not appreciate the matter in its true antitypical sense, but you – who recognize me as the Lamb of God, who in God's purpose

has been slain from the foundation of the world – you who recognize that I am about to give my life as the world's redemption price, you will note this Passover with peculiar and sacred significance, different from all others. Henceforth you will not celebrate any longer the type but memorialize the antitype, for I am about to die as the Lamb of God, and thus to provide the blood of sprinkling for the Church of the First-born and meat indeed for the entire household of faith.

"THIS IS MY BODY, BROKEN FOR YOU"

That the Lord's followers should no longer gather as the Jews had done previously to eat the literal lamb supper in commemoration of the deliverance in Egypt our Lord shows by choosing new emblems – "unleavened bread" and the "fruit of the vine" – to represent him as the Lamb. Thenceforth his followers, in accord with his injunction, celebrated his death as their Passover Lamb every year until after the apostles had fallen asleep in death, and a great falling away had confused the faith of nominal Christendom, producing the epoch known as the "dark ages." Even during the "dark ages" the teaching that Christ was the antitypical Passover Lamb persisted, though the celebration of his death in the Passover supper which Jesus instituted fell into disuse. It was crowded out by that most terrible blasphemy which has deceived and confused so many millions of Christendom – the Mass, introduced by Roman Catholicism. This in the Scriptures is called "the abomination of desolation," because of the disastrous influence it has had upon the faith and practice of the Lord's people. Although Protestants in general have repudiated the Mass, as being wholly contrary to the teachings of Christ and the apostles, nevertheless the practices of Protestants are largely influenced yet by that terrible error, from which they have only partially escaped.

THE MASS IS NOT THE EUCHARIST

Many Protestants will innocently ask, Is not the Mass merely the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, under another name? O, no! we answer – it is wholly different. The Lord's Supper celebrates the death of Christ accomplished at Calvary; the Mass represents a new sacrifice for sins made every time it is performed. Our Roman Catholic friends believe that when the priest blesses the wafer it becomes the actual body of Christ in his hands for the very purpose of sacrificing him afresh. High Mass is a particular sacrifice of Christ for a particular sin by a particular individual. Low Mass is a sacrifice of Christ for the general sins of a congregation. Roman Catholics claim to believe in the merit of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary – that it covered original sin, general sins that are past; but they claim also that the daily sins, shortcomings, blemishes of every individual, require to be cleansed by fresh sacrifices of Christ from time to time. Thus, from their standpoint, as represented in the Mass, and as practised by the Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics and high Church Episcopalians, Christ is being sacrificed afresh all the world over every day. This in the Scriptures is called an "abomination" in God's sight, because it disregards, sets at naught, the statement of the Scriptures that Christ dieth no more, that by one sacrifice he hath perfected forever all who come unto the Father through him. – Rom. 6:9.

It will be readily seen that the repeated sacrifices represented in the Mass would have the general effect of nullifying and minimizing the value of the great sacrifice at Calvary represented in the Passover and its Memorial Supper. How could those who had come to **[R3961 : page 88]** look especially to the Mass for the cancellation of their sins be expected to look with as deep concern and as high an appreciation as otherwise, back to the antitypical Passover? While, therefore, the celebration of Good Friday has continued,

the celebrations of the Memorial Supper preceding it fell into disuse long ago.

As for Protestants, repudiating the dogma of the Mass as wholly unscriptural, they have abandoned it and returned to a celebration of the Lord's Supper. Meantime, however, accustomed to the frequency of the Mass, they have considered it merely a matter of expediency how often the Lord's Supper should be celebrated; hence we find some celebrating it every four months, some every three months, some every month, and some every Sunday. This general laxity and failure to reach a common ground of conformity is due to two things: **(1)** Because Christian people generally have overlooked the fact that our Lord's death was as the antitypical Passover Lamb, and that its celebration is the antitypical Passover Supper; **(2)** Because they have misunderstood our Lord's words, "As oft as ye do this," to mean, Do this as often as you please, whereas the words really signify, As often as you, my disciples (all of whom are Jews and accustomed to keeping the Passover), keep this Passover Supper, keep it in remembrance of me – not in remembrance of the literal lamb and the typical deliverance from typical Egypt and its bondage through the passing over of the typical first-born.

Those who celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly consider that they have Scriptural precedent for so doing, because in the Bible we read that the early Church met together on the first day of the week and on such occasions had the "breaking of bread." It is a great mistake, however, to confound such breaking of bread with the Memorial Supper, for the former was merely an ordinary meal. There is absolutely nothing whatever in the record to indicate otherwise; the wine, the fruit of the vine, is not mentioned in connection with it, and it is never said to represent the broken body of our Lord. It was a cheerful social custom in the early Church to celebrate our Lord's resurrection on the first day of the week, and this common social custom helped to unite

the bonds of brotherhood and fellowship. In many places the Lord's people follow this custom still. The Bible House congregation at Allegheny has such a breaking of bread every Lord's Day between the afternoon and the evening services – as a convenience for those living at a distance, especially as a desirable opportunity for extending fellowship amongst the Lord's people.

THE DATE OF THE MEMORIAL SUPPER

As we all know, the Jews used the moon more than we do in the reckoning of their time. Each new moon represented the beginning of a new month. The new moon which *came closest to* the spring equinox was reckoned the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, and beginning the fifteenth day of that month the Feast of Passover lasting a week was celebrated. That week of seven days represents the joy, the peace, the blessing, which result from the passing over, and typified the complete joy, peace and blessing which every true Christian experiences through a realization of the passing over of his sins through the merit of Christ's redemptive sacrifice. All true Christians, therefore, in their hearts have a celebration of this feast of Passover continually – the completeness of the matter being represented in the seven days, seven being a symbol of completeness. Not seeing the matter from the same standpoint, the Jew thought less of the killing of the Passover lamb and the eating of that supper than he did of the week following it; but our Lord emphasized the importance of the killing of the Passover lamb when he announced himself as its antitype and when he invited us to celebrate his death on its anniversary until, at his second coming, our entrance into the Kingdom would signify the complete fulfilment of all blessings.

It would be a great blessing, doubtless, to many Christians if they could see this subject in its true light, lay more weight

upon the value of the death of Christ, and join more heartily in its celebration on its anniversary, instead of at various other times and seasons, irregularly and without special significance. However, there have sprung up all over the civilized world little groups of the Lord's people who are taking heed to this subject, and whose delight it is to celebrate the Master's death according to his request – "As often as ye do this" – annually – "do it in remembrance of me." We believe that such a celebration brings special blessing to both heart and head. The nearer we come to the divine requirements the greater is the measure of our blessing, the more closely are we drawn to our Master and Head, and to each other as members of his body. The date of this celebration this year will fall on March 28 after 6 p.m., because at that hour begins the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, according to the Jewish reckoning. We urge upon all of the Lord's people everywhere to gather as may best suit their convenience in little groups or families to do this in remembrance of our Lord's great sacrifice. The fact that it is the anniversary makes the matter more impressive.

"LORD IS IT I?"

We recall the circumstances of the first Memorial, the blessing of the bread and of the cup, the fruit of the vine, of our Lord's exhortation that these represented his broken body and shed blood, and that those who are his followers should participate – not only feeding upon him but being broken with him, not only partaking of the merit of his blood, his sacrifice, but also in laying down their lives in his service, in cooperating with him in every and any manner. How precious these thoughts are to those who are rightly in tune with the Lord. Following this they may think of the course of Judas, who, though highly favored, loved filthy lucre to the extent that he was willing to sell his Master, but who was bold enough even while his treachery was being exposed toward the Lord to cry, "Is it I?" **[R3961 :**

page 89] The very thought that any who had companied with the Lord could thus deny him and betray him to his enemies causes a proper loathing of such conduct, and should properly fill us with caution if not with fear lest in any sense of the word we should for the sake of honor or wealth or any other matter sell the Truth or any of its servants, the members of the body of Christ.

Let our minds, then, follow the Redeemer to Gethsemane's Garden, and behold him with strong cryings and tears praying to him who was able to save him out of death – expressive of the Master's fear of death lest in some particular he might have failed to follow out the Father's plan and therefore be thought unworthy of a resurrection. We notice how our Lord was comforted by the Father through the angel with the assurance that he had faithfully kept his consecration vow and that he would surely have a resurrection as foretold. We behold how calm he was thereafter, when, before the High Priest and Pilate, and Herod and Pilate again – as a lamb before her shearers is dumb so he opened not his mouth in self defence. We see him faithful, courageous to the very last, and we have his assurance that he could have asked of the Father and had more than twelve legions of angels for his protection; but instead of petitioning for aid to escape his sacrifice, his petition was for aid to endure it faithfully. What a lesson for all who are his footstep followers!

On the other hand we remember that even amongst his loyal disciples the most courageous forsook the Lord and fled, and that one of them even in his timidity denied his Master! What an occasion is this for examining our own hearts as respects the degree of our faith and courage and willingness to suffer with him who redeemed us! What an opportunity is thus afforded for us to buttress the mind with resolutions that we will not deny our Master under any circumstances and conditions – that we will confess him not only with our lips but also by our conduct. Next

we are shocked with the thought that it was the Lord's professed people, the Jews, who crucified the Prince of Life! Not only so, but that it was the leaders of their religious thought, the chief priests, scribes, Pharisees and Doctors of the Law rather than the common people. We hearken to the Master's words saying, Marvel not if the world hate you, for ye know that it hated me before it hated you; and we see that he meant the religious world in our case.

DRINK YE OF THE SAME CUP

The lesson to us, then, will be that we shall not be surprised if the opposition to the Truth and the persecutions to the light-bearers in the footsteps of Jesus should come from the most prominent exponents of Christianity. This, however, should neither cause us to hate our opponents nor those who persecuted our Lord to the death: rather we are to remember the words of the Apostle respecting this matter – "I wot that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." Ah, yes! ignorance, blindness of heart and mind, are at the bottom of all the sufferings of Christ – Head and body. And the Father permits it to be so now, until the members of the body of Christ shall have filled up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. With the completion of the membership of the body, the very elect, and the completion of their testing as to faithfulness unto death, will come the conclusion of this Gospel age, the resurrection change of the Church to be with and like her Lord. Then, as our Master declared, those who now partake of his broken body and are broken with him in the service of the Truth, those who now participate in his cup of suffering and self-denial, will by and by with him drink the new wine of joy in the Kingdom – beyond the vail.

With that glorious morning will begin the great work of the world's release from the bonds of sin and death – the great work

of uplifting, or, as the Apostle calls that great epoch, "The times of restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:19-21.) The thought [R3962 : page 89] before the minds of those who participate in this Memorial should be the Apostle's words, "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him"; "If we be dead with him we shall also live with him"; "for the trials of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:17; Rom. 6:8.) With these thoughts respecting the passing over of our sins of the First-born through the merit of the precious blood we may indeed keep the Feast of the Passover with joy notwithstanding trials and difficulties. So doing, continuing faithful as his followers, very soon we shall have the great privilege of leading forth the Lord's hosts – all who ultimately shall hear and know and obey the great King – out of the dominion of sin and death, out of Egypt into Canaan. Yes, dear brethren, in the language of the Apostle, "Christ our Passover is slain, therefore let us keep the Feast."
