

CHRIST, OUR PASSOVER

BY REBECCA FAIR DONEY

In the dark night, when Egypt lay asleep,
Forth went the angel, God's command to keep:
Slay all the first-born, even from the throne,
Down through the realm to the humblest home.

Swift was his work; and on the midnight air,
Oh, what a cry of anguish, and despair
Rose, from the hearts of those in every home:
God's word was sure; the last great plague had come.

But in the homes of Israel, what a sight!
Darkness without, in every dwelling, light.
Clad for a journey; shoes upon their feet;
With staff in hand, a solemn feast they eat.

Their father's God had heard their cries at last:
His time had come; their bondage now was past;
So in that night while Egypt mourned her dead,
They ate the lamb with bitter herbs and bread.

But why this blood we see on every door?
Why does the angel, seeing, pass it o'er?
Israel's first-born in Egypt's danger shared;
And only through that blood could they be spared.

Centuries passed; and still by God's command,
Each year they slew, and ate the paschal lamb.
Not that its blood could for their sins atone,
But as a type of one that yet should come.

*

*

*

That sinless one, who, hanging on a tree,
Bore all earth's sins, to set the prisoners free;
That Righteous One, that perfect Lamb of God,
Who for the world gave his most precious blood.

Our blessed Lord, with those whom he loved best,
On that last night, sat down to keep the feast.
"With great desire," he told his chosen few,
"Have I desired to eat this feast with you."

[R4359 : page 92]

"My heart is grieved; for I betrayed shall be
By one of you, my chosen company."
"Lord is it I?" each asked in trembling tone,
"Nay, Lord, we'll die with thee! cried every one."
But in great sorrow, still our Lord did say,
"One shall deny; another shall betray;
All be offended, and flee unto their own –
But for my Father, I should be alone."

After the feast, he took the Cup, and said
"Drink ye of it; for you my blood was shed.
I drink no more, until I drink with you,
In that glad day, when we shall drink it new."

Then blessed the bread, and as each one did take,
"This is my body, broken for your sake."

Oft as ye drink this wine, and eat this bread
Ye do show forth the suffering of your Head.

Bearing the whole world's load of guilt and shame,
Knowing his own would soon deny his name;
Knowing, by God, he would forsaken be,
Thus our Lord went to his Gethsemane.

And still that sacred feast down through the years,
Thy saints commemorate with holy tears.
Keeping the words of him, who said, "This do
In mem'ry of my dying love for you."

In this dark night, Lord, we, thy first-borns meet,
With staff in hand and shoes upon our feet.
Thy precious blood is sprinkled on our hearts;
Thy broken body life to us imparts.

Come, dearest Lord, and bless us while we feast;
Around this board, be thou our honored Guest.
We eat, and drink, and here our vows renew;
Oh to our vows, Lord, keep us ever true!

All earthly hopes and joys, behind us lay;
Lord, we would walk with thee, the narrow way.
What is earth's joys and what its glittering dross?
We gladly leave it all for thy dear cross.

Thy matchless sacrifice doth us afford,
A chance to share thy sufferings, dearest Lord.
Broken with thee, we claim this privilege rare,
That in thy joys we may obtain a share.

On this Atonement Day, we would lay down
Upon the altar, Lord, beside thine own,

Our sacrifice; it is so very small;
Take, Lord, and offer it; it is our all.
Day after day, our testings, Lord, increase:
This side the veil, we know they must not cease.
Scourging, or sword, or flames, whate'er it be,
Help us, dear Lord, in our Gethsemane.

[R4359 : page 93]

The bitter cup that to thy lips was pressed,
We, too, would drain, nor shrink at bitterness.
These marks of sonship share with our dear Head;
To live with thee, we must with thee be dead.

We'll take the cup tho' filled with grief and pain;
Drink the last drop, and, dying, drink again;
Oh wondrous joy! this time, the cup shall be
The cup of life, and immortality.

Lord, we have had a blessed feast with thee;
Now we go forth that we may tested be.
Help us, that we do not our Lord betray;
When Satan tries to sift, Lord, for us pray.

*

*

*

Some solemn night, mid scenes of dread, and woe,
While the fierce winds from every quarter blow;
While passions rage, and tempests onward sweep,
Their last memorial, thy saints shall keep.

They may be few who gather round the board;
Many, be entered into their reward.
Praising the One who led them safely home;
Waiting, until the marriage hour shall come.

Some, weary grew, before the fight was o'er;
Some, through offence, would walk this way no more.
Zealous awhile, methinks, they did run well,
But at the test of Love, they stumbled – fell.

Those who are left, the last of thy dear "feet,"
Keep the last feast before the mercy seat;
Gathering strength for what before them lies,
When they complete in death, their sacrifice.

Some glorious morn the angelic host shall sing!
Some glorious morn the bells of heaven ring!
The Church of Christ has passed her trial stage;
Eternal bliss is hers from age to age.

Before his Father's throne, with love and pride,
Christ shall present his perfect, spotless Bride.
The feast begins; the marriage hour has come;
Christ and his faithful, are forever One.

On that blest day, the Bridegroom shall sit down,
With his dear Bride beside him, on the throne.
To share his joys; to see his blessed face;
In that blest throng, oh Lord, give us a place.

February 21, 1909.

=====