

MORNING WATCH

A HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE, AS BRIDEGROOM, REAPER AND KING!

April 2009

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"DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME." 1 Cor. 5:7; 10:16

These are among the last words that our Lord uttered and may be considered a part of His dying message. The Apostle Paul later, adds, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." For more than nineteen centuries the Christian Church has gathered at the table of the Lord in observance and commemoration of this the greatest and most significant event of all time—the sacrificial death of the Son of God.

And as we have now approached another season that calls us to this solemn supper with Christ, it is fitting that we join in earnest contemplation of these sacred things. Though we have often considered them and they are familiar to us, yet it is but reasonable that, to faithful Disciples of Christ, growth in grace and Christian knowledge should result in the Passover Supper becoming increasingly impressive and significant. More than this, we recall that as a part of the clarified message for the last days, the truth bearing upon the Passover Supper has been set in beautiful order and simplicity, and constitutes one of the most adorning features of the Harvest message.

To the renewed and Spirit-enlightened Christian, our blessed Lord's last night on earth gathers about it the rarest, the holiest, the most sacred of

memories. But in nothing was that night rendered more memorable than by that act of love and mercy, which gave us the Holy observance of the Supper. So important has the Church ever regarded this sacred institution of our precious faith, that she has, from that time until now, devoted this day of the anniversary of the Lord's death, to the commemoration of the giving of it. Both the Gospel and

Epistles refer directly to it. In Paul's first letter to the Corinthian brethren, it is especially set out for our contemplation, with directions for its use and admonitions against its abuse. Nor can we better prepare ourselves for a profitable celebration of it than by prayerfully refreshing the mind with what has been written in these inspired words.

It would be difficult to conceive anything more plain and simple than



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this memorial instituted by Christ. It is so unpretentious and so severely unadorned that men have

ever shown a superstitious and unwholesome itching to invest it with showy demonstrations and loud ritualism, such as the Lord never appointed, and which is foreign to the whole nature of the observance itself.

We observe its great sacredness. It is Christ's own Institution, to which above all other things He committed the continuance of His memory among men as the supreme memorial of Himself and His death to the end of this Dispensation. He has identified Himself with it, as He has not with any other appointment, and rested on it for the living memorial of Himself on earth after He was gone. The precise character of its institution He caused to be specifically recorded by three of the Evangelists, and afterward made a special revelation of the same, to Paul with respects its details.

The ceremony as originally instituted is described in Exodus 12. Jehovah God commanded the Hebrews to commemorate the Passover and their deliverance from Egyptian bondage every year.

The Israelite saw only the letter of this ceremony and not its typical significance. So, too, might we have been in similar darkness had not God given us the key to its meaning by inspiring the Apostle to write: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." (1 Cor. 5:7). Our attention being thus called to the matter, we find other Scriptures which clearly show that Jesus, the Lamb of God, was the anti-type of the Passover lamb, and that His death was as essential to the deliverance of the Church of the First-born from death as was the death of the typical lamb to the first-born of Israel. That led of the Spirit we come to the words and acts of Jesus at the last Passover which He ate with His disciples. Jesus knew the import of the Passover, but the disciples did not. He was alone, no one could sympathize, no one could encourage Him. Even if he had explained it to the disciples, they could not have understood or appreciated the explanation, because they were not yet illuminated of the Spirit. Nor could they be enlightened until redeemed from Adamic sin—passed over, or counted free from sin by virtue of the slain Lamb whose shed blood ransomed them from the power of death. That alone, treading the narrow way, which none before had trod and in which He is our Forerunner and Leader, what wonder that His heart at times was exceedingly sorrowful, even

unto death.

When the hour had come they sat down to eat the Passover, and Jesus said unto the disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God." (Luke 22: 15, 16.) No doubt He longed to have them understand how it would begin to be fulfilled a little later on, in that very day by the slaying of the real Lamb.

Probably one reason He especially desired to eat this Passover with them was that He there designed breaking the truth of its significance to them, to the extent that they could receive it; for, "As they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is My body." (Mark 14:22.) "This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me." "And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: This cup is the New Covenant in my blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22: 17, 20.) We cannot doubt that the design of the Master was to call their minds from the typical lamb, to Himself, the Antitype, and to show them that it would be no longer proper to observe a feature of the Law which He was about to fulfil. And the bread and wine were to be to them thereafter, elements which as remembrancers of Him, would take the place of the typical lamb. That considered, there is force in the words, "This do in remembrance of Me," "—no longer kill a literal lamb in remembrance of a typical deliverance, but instead, use the bread and wine, representative of My flesh and life, the basis of the real deliverance, the real passing over. Therefore let as many as receive Me and My words henceforth, "do this in remembrance of Me."

This is such an impressive and profound spiritual lesson! That the Lord, after they had partaken of the Jewish passover supper, introduced this new ordinance, which was to be not only a memorial of His death, but significant also of the participation of the disciples in that death; and intended to be a remembrance throughout the entire Age—"until He come"! That is why Luke says that it was "after the supper" that Jesus instituted His memorial. (Luke 22:20.) In presenting the unleavened bread, saying, "This is My body," the evident meaning is

that it was the emblem or representation of His body. The bread was not actually His body; for in no sense had His body yet been broken. The picture is complete when we recognize that the unleaven (pure, unfermented) bread represented our Lord's sinless flesh—leaven being a symbol of sin under the law, and especially commanded to be put away at the Passover season. On another occasion, Jesus gave a lesson which interprets to us the symbol; He said, "The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."—John 6:33, 51.

It is this that Jesus laid down in sacrifice, that we "eat" —by faith accept and appropriate to ourselves, thereby receiving the gift of the Atonement, justification. The participation of the unleavened bread at the Lord's table then, represents to us primarily the appropriation to ourselves, by faith, of justification to human life—right—a right to human life, with all its privileges, which our Lord at His own cost procured for us. Likewise, the fruit of the vine symbolized primarily our Savior's life given for us, His human life, His being, His soul, poured out unto death on our behalf; and our drinking of the cup portrays our appropriation by faith, of the benefits of that death, and our acceptance of the privileges and rights to life secured by our Redeemer's sacrifice.

Under the direction of the Holy Spirit later on, there came to the Church still deeper and more profound unfoldings of truth, embodied in this memorial supper of Christ. That deeper truth is realized in what Paul calls the "mystery" (Eph. 1:9, 11; 5:27, 32), explaining in that connection that it is the Christ composed of many members, Jesus the Head, and all of His faithful followers throughout the Age, comprising His Body. Thus these body members were definitely admonished to present themselves a living sacrifice, and in God's accounting, to have part with Christ in the Sin-offering as members of His Body. This deeper meaning of the memorial our Lord did not expound particularly on that last night with His disciples. It was doubtless one of the things to which He referred when He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the

Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: . . . and He will shew you things to come."—John 16:12, 13.

In confirmation of all this, the Apostle Paul assures us that to eat of this blessed bread, is the communion of the Body of Christ; and to drink of this blessed cup is the communion of the blood of Christ. By the direction of the Spirit of God, this Apostle writing to the consecrated Church says, "The cup of blessing for which we give thanks, is it not the participation of the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not the participation of the Body of Christ?" —the sharing with Christ as joint-sacrificers with Him even unto death, that thereby we may be counted in with Him as sharers of the glory which He has received as the reward of His faithfulness?—'For we being many, are one loaf and one body.'—1 Cor. 10:16, 17.

Truly the Lord said upon that night of the first memorial, "This cup is My blood of the New Covenant." Here again there is embraced a deeper truth in the memorial cup than the Lord took occasion to explain at that time. In the fuller light of the Spirit that came later, it is recognized that the Lord is saying that His blood which the cup represented, was intended for the sealing of the New Covenant that should be inaugurated when all the members of His Body shall have been sacrificed with Him—shall have partaken of the cup of sacrifice and death. Then the Christ will be complete in glory, and the blood which in this Age has been the foundation of the Church's justification and righteousness (the merit of Christ's sacrificed life being imputed to His Body members), shall be applied for the sealing of the New Covenant for the restitution and uplift through the Millennial Reign, of all the willing and obedient of Adam's race.

Both phases of this Passover-ordinance mentioned, our justification, and sacrificial death, are very important. It is essential, first of all, that we should see our justification through our Lord's sacrifice. It is proper then that we should realize that the entire Christ, the entire anointed company is, from the divine standpoint, a composite Body of many members, of which Jesus is the Head (1 Cor. 12:12-14), and that this Body, this Church, as a whole, must be broken—that each member of it must become a copy of the Lord Jesus and must walk in the footsteps of His sacrifice.

It only remains for us, then, to note the preparation requisite to a right communion to which the Apostle alludes. So solemn and sacred an ordinance plainly calls for great sobriety and humbleness of mind, in approaching it. A service in remembrance of Christ and instituted to proclaim His sacrificial death (as also our participation with Him in that death), requires the prayerful collection and concentration of our thoughts and hearts upon the subject of the commemoration and the nature of its proclamation. In other words, each one must test, judge, disseminate, and discern, himself, whether or not he is such a believer in what he here proposes to do and receive, and whether his mind and belief are thus in accord with the nature, meaning, and office of the Passover Supper.

When a man has thus judged himself, and is thus in heart and mind adjusted to the ceremony which he proposes to celebrate, the way is clear and open, and he can come with every liberty and confidence of an approved and welcomed guest. There is nothing, then, to deter anyone from coming—no judgment to fear, no condemnation to apprehend. Yet many hearts tremble as they contemplate the spread table of the Lord, and timidly shrink in questioning whether they can venture in safety. But the Word of the Lord here, as in so many other cases is, “Fear not: only believe”; “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me”; “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.”

Our unbelief and unfaithfulness in time past may deserve that we should feel these trials of doubt and perplexity. It may be God’s just chastening for our lack of earnestness and devotion. Certainly, we have all merited worse than we have received. But it is not meant to condemn us and drive us away, that we are thus thrown under cloud and scruple.

It is mercifully meant to set us right, that we may not be condemned with the unbelieving world. It is not to keep us back, but to bring us forward in fitter condition to eat and drink of these precious provisions for those who humbly confess their sins, and hunger and thirst after righteousness, and fellowship with Christ.

By all that is dear and precious then, let the message and blessed influences of this sacred season urge upon us to regain our spiritual strength—to our closets and to our prayers that we may not be overtaken in our faithfulness in these trying days so near to our glorious deliverance. Behold the days in which we live! There have not been such since the beginning of time. Truly the end of all things is at hand! All the earth today is in great confusion. And the remnant of the Church still lingering on this side feels the pressure of many bitter sorrows and tribulations. Yes, there are more than the usual fiery trials of faith. Is it not therefore fitting that we realize the observance of the Passover! Such an inspiring and sacred occasion with all faithful brethren at this time, which call for remembrance of our Lord’s great anguish, from which we derive our only hopes of the blessed heavenly home. Though our discipleship leads us through the bitterest trials and to the cross, if we faithfully persevere it will not fail to bring us to the glorious City of God and to the rewards and blessedness of an unfading crown and immortality.

Thus at this holy Supper to which the Apostolic admonition is keeping “the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (1 Cor. 5:8.) Let it be with renewed hearts and humble spirits that, coming to the table of the Lord, we answer His tender offer of these emblems, saying, We come, Lord Jesus, with all our heart’s deep devotion, to do thy will.

2009 Memorial Supper Date

The proper date and time for the annual observance of the Lord’s Memorial Supper will be Tuesday, April 7, 2009, after 6:00 p.m.