

### THE ORDINANCE OF THE PASSOVER: THE PURITY

*And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day [there shall be] an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save [that] which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe [the feast of] unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever. In the first [month], on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread. . . . And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. . . . And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual. . . . And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this [place]: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. . . . Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day [shall be] a feast to the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all the quarters. (Exodus 12:14-20,34,39; 13:3,6-7)*

*. . . This is the ordinance of the passover . . . (Exodus 12:43). All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. (Exodus 12:47) One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. (Exodus 12:49)*

The Old Testament Passover foreshadows Christ our Passover (I Cor. 5:7). A person's "passover" is his hope that his sins will be passed over, that when God comes to execute vengeance and judgment on this earth, he will be exempted from external punishment. Whatever flimsy grounds of hope others may have, ours rest firmly on Jesus Christ - His Person and His Work.

Christ is not only our Passover, but the real Passover of the Old Covenant saints as well, these feasts and rituals simply being a shadow of the Lamb of God, Who alone is qualified and able to take away the sin of the world. These types and shadows, however, do set forth a true picture of the full salvation that is wrought by God in Christ in these last days; that there should be no mistake about who the true Redeemer is, and that the true gospel should stand out conspicuously and distinctly, when the flood of false Christs, false gospels, and false churches flow out of the dragon's mouth. God has given us the immutable law of the Passover. We have identified the *participants* as to their status with the world (they are outsiders), their exclusiveness (who may not partake), and their inclusiveness (universality). Now we want to take up their *purity*.

He who believes on Jesus Christ has eternal life, but the principal characteristic of that life is not its duration but its holiness. The new man is created according to God in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24). We have been called out of darkness (Egypt) into His marvelous light (I Peter 2:9). Any representation of salvation which does not bear this mark is fraudulent (I John 2:7-9). Deliverance from the penalty of sin is inseparable from deliverance from its power. This is echoed in the struggle the Apostle sets forth in Romans seven and eight. The regenerated man, the one to whom this new life has come, does not rest in any certainty of his salvation until he can cry, "The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:2)

Holiness in this new life is typified in the Law of the Passover by the absence of leaven, a consistent biblical type of sin. Paul affirms this in I Corinthians 5:7-8: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth." Leaven typifies sin, not just in its outward acts, but in the inward corrupt principle of life. As Christ in the believer is a holy principle of life that

will not permit the regenerate person to draw back into sin, so is sin an evil life principle which, if left in the person in any dominance, will ultimately drag him back into apostasy. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." This is *not* the false Perfectionism that is taught by holiness groups. In such teachings, all sin is said to be eradicated from the whole person, body, soul, and spirit. The Bible plainly declares that sin still abides in the believer's body, his mortal members. The believer's *life*, however, is not in his mortal body, his flesh, but in Christ, in the spirit (Romans 8:8-13, Col. 3:1-3). The Christian lives, therefore, in a continual struggle between the spirit (wherein our true life resides) and the flesh, which is yet contaminated with sin (Gal. 5:17). The Law of the Passover mandates a constant vigil to keep out the leaven.

### Leaven

*Its Contagion.* As in all scriptural types, leaven is eminently suited to represent its antitype, sin. It is contagious. It corrupts all it touches. The touched then corrupts all it touches until it has totally spoiled everything in its environment. As with the woman and the leaven in Matthew 13:33, the whole is leavened. There are those who interpret leaven in this parable as the Holy Spirit, or the good influence of the Church: but a fungus is inappropriate to illustrate the spread of life and good. The Holy Spirit is not contagious. You cannot get Him from someone else who has Him. It is Christ alone Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit (John 1:33). The foolish virgins found they could get no oil from the wise ones but were obliged to go to the one Source of oil - the Holy Spirit. God has no grandchildren. All get their life directly from Him. The soul-winner cannot beget life; he may only point the sinner to the Life-Giver. A dead man cannot catch life from living people. On the other hand, healthy, living people may catch death from a corpse. That is why the law requires the dead to be buried forthwith. Disease, death, corruption, sin spread simply by contact. Life, righteousness, purity, on the other hand, have only one source - God!

*Its Continuity.* Particular fungi that constitute yeast used in bread-making survive basically unchanged for centuries. It reproduces itself identically and is passed down from mother to daughter through succeeding generations so that a woman's bread is caused to rise by the same organism her forebear used a thousand years earlier.

Contrary to widespread opinions, there are no new sins on earth since the Fall. They may take ten thousand different forms, but will all be found to be of the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. Sins may be further particularized by violation of principles laid down in the Decalogue, or they may be reduced to failures in the two basic duties of man: supreme love of God and selfless love of neighbor. All sin succeeds in violating these fundamental divine precepts.

Neither is there any new false doctrine or false religion. What may appear to be a modern heresy, when examined closely, will prove to be a resurfacing of some ancient religious lie clothed in contemporary garb with a new nomenclature. The devil hit the early church with everything he had to throw at it early on. The Great Whore has no new leaven, but she is always getting a new, naive and gullible generation among whom she can hide her leaven to do its ruinous work.

This is why religious tradition ought not *ever* to be revered or accepted unquestionably. For like the woman's leaven, it is handed down, not by the Scriptures or Holy Spirit-inspiration, but by men from one generation to another. There is no surer means for a person to lock himself up to spiritual deception and death than to take his doctrine, faith and principles of life from his church's creed and tradition rather than from the Word of God.

Like the woman's leaven, these lies and sins eventually corrupt the whole. If anyone doubts that this leaven can get into his particular church, movement, school, or institution, let him find the Christian institution that has survived over one or two centuries without apostatizing. And this is in the face of the fact that those very institutions, now apostate, were originally brought forth to *replace* ones that had already fallen under the power of the devil. Despite all the man-made rules, constitutions, by-laws, and safeguards, new ones also are too soon corrupted. Many efforts will be made to reform it, to revive it, to clean it up, to bring it back to the faith of its founders. They are all futile. Once apostasy sets into a church or denomination, it never recovers, but only waxes worse and worse until, hopefully, it dies completely. Once leaven gets into bread, you cannot get it out. The only way to have an unleavened lump is to start all over with uncontaminated dough. That is why there must be a continual confessing and breaking with the sins of our fathers and a restarting with the bare truth of God's Word, uncluttered with the unbelief and traditions of our ancestors.

This is not to imply that we may learn nothing from our spiritual fathers. Those who have preceded us have blazed many a good path through mazes of error and heresy. We should be fools indeed to ignore these beaten and proven paths and attack the jungle anew. Such arrogance will earn for us many bruises and pitfalls needlessly. But we must not *blindly* follow the old paths. That is the easy, lazy course. It is easier to follow men than to follow God. It relieves us of personal responsibility to search the Scriptures ourselves, and gives us the smug confidence that we are in the company of "great men" who have gone before us. But no matter how old or honored the path be, it is not free of leaven unless it be the course set by Scripture alone. Even the Reformers were laden with the leaven of Rome. The Puritans gave us a rich heritage, but they were not free of error. How much less confidence we should have in these modern denominations and theologians clamoring for our loyalty!

*Its Corruption.* Leaven comes down to us from a number of varieties. God's providence in rushing Israel out of Egypt before the women had time to leaven their dough tells us He wanted them to leave the *leaven of Egypt* behind. The life principles of this world have no place in the Christian. The entire philosophy, thinking and mindset of it must be utterly abandoned - the *love* of the world itself, the *pull* of it, the *bondage* of it. How deadly is this leaven in its seductive assault on lives, homes, and churches! All may remain doctrinally orthodox, morally upright, assiduously correct in form, the only problem being that hearts are being drawn out after the "good and finer things" in this life.

The quest for a "higher standard of living" demands that trinkets, claptrap, and gadgets be furiously invented and produced to save us labor and time and to make us happy, as well as to create more jobs and keep the economy rolling. Both parents must work night and day to buy them, pay interest on money to finance them, retain insurance to protect them, keep them repaired, or update with new models. What a fraud! Children just want to participate in all the "wholesome activities" their peers do. Nobody wants to miss anything the whole world is clamoring for. Social and political issues distract us and steal our loyalties. Our minds, souls, strength, and hearts thus are soon as fast in the fist of the king of Egypt as before.

It must all be left behind, otherwise we will never get rid of it. We are new-born babes with *no* history, nothing to look back to, desiring only the pure milk of God's truth, building our spiritual lives on brand new life principles entirely opposed to those of the world about us.

The disciples misunderstood Jesus' warning of Matthew 16:6, ". . . beware of the leaven of the Pharisees." They thought He was making reference to their failure to bring bread, superstitiously literalizing a figure of speech. After he explained that he was not speaking of literal leaven but the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, they understood that He was warning them against the *leaven of false doctrine*.

False doctrine never occurs in a vacuum, and it is never objective. It always has an evil root. "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3:10-11). His false doctrine has arisen out of his commitment to a wicked lifestyle. Nor will false doctrine fail to yield bad fruit. "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Cor. 15:33). Bad theology begets bad living. Make no mistake about it. We sin out of the lies which we have devoutly believed. So we are told that if we would keep the leaven out of our lives we must beware of all false doctrine.

The Pharisees and Sadducees did not have the same doctrine. On some points they were diametrically opposed to one another. But they were both in error. Jesus warns us to avoid both of them.

The Sadducees were the broad-minded, enlightened liberals of that day. They believed in an up-to-date world, and they freely mingled their religion with modern culture, politics, and lifestyle. They were rationalists, "debunking" the Scripture of all "myths," denying all supernatural phenomena, including angels, demons, and the resurrection. While giving lip service to believing *generally* in the Scriptures, they rejected any particular application of them. They were, thusly, practical antinomians. Never accused of hypocrisy, as were the Pharisees, they did not hesitate to flaunt their fleshy and worldly minds with open, loose and dissolute living.

Pharisees, on the other hand, were the ultra-conservative "fighting fundamentalists" of that day. They were legalistic observers of the letter of the law. Utterly missing the spirit of supreme love to God and equal love of neighbor, they were gnat-straining nit-pickers. They so literalized the spirituality of the Scriptures and sacred objects that their faith sagged down to the level of magic and superstition. They were severe, intolerant, bigoted, ungracious hypocrites, affecting an outward impeccable behaviour (particularly of their own traditions), yet inwardly corrupt and unregenerate.

Jesus singles out this particular evil of the Pharisees for special contempt. ". . . Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Luke 12:1). His tirade against this *leaven of hypocrisy* together with imprecations upon those who practice it is unsurpassed anywhere in the Scriptures. See Matthew 23:27-39.

Leaven strikingly typifies hypocrisy in the manner and purposes of its use. Leaven is *hidden* inside the bread. It is covered up and works secretly, unseen. This beneath-the-surface working is designed and expected to give a deceptive outward appearance. The action of the fungus produces gasses which puff up the loaf, making it softer, more pliable, and giving the appearance of much more bread than actually exists . . . a false beauty and a false growth.

Bare, pure, true Christianity, like the unleavened biscuit, doesn't look like much to the world; and it is an unbearable embarrassment to worldly-minded men sensitive to the success-oriented philosophy of sensual competition. Natural men's love of the world, on the one hand, and the offense of the Cross, on the other hand, assure that the Christian community, the true unleavened loaf of God, will always be an unimpressive, contemptible, rag-tag remnant in the eyes of both established religion and the secular world. Few, our Saviour tells us, find the strait, narrow gate.

Clever, gifted men, however, have learned to "Christianize" what is popular with the crowd they wish to enlist. Sports, fun and games, parties, clubs, societies, pop-music, psychology, health and wealth teachings, all sorts of circuses, hoot-nannies, humbug, and hayrides are employed to draw a crowd. After feeding and energizing all this flesh, it is stupidly

imagined that an imperceptible immediate transition may be made to spiritual realities and that this wanton mass of bloated sensuality will worship the true and living God in spirit and truth. The gospel is gutted of its call to repentance; Christ is robbed of His Crown; and salvation is put on sale at cut-rate prices. Pride, lust, greed, and self-centeredness are all unashamedly used as motivations to get someone to "make a decision" for Christ. The trick is to find the leaven that works. Worship of the true and living God in sober, sound, serious preaching of the Word and joyous singing of the grand old hymns is replaced with a light, silly, street-rap style "sermonette" and the jumping, hand-clapping, jivey choruses borrowed from charismatics. On the other hand, culture and tradition may make more successful a format of high-church formalism, liturgies, and rituals. Both have this in common - they are rotten with sin and godlessness. The whole thing is a fraud, a lie, appearing beautiful outwardly, but inside nothing but white-washed carrion!

#### **The Unleavened Bread**

Again the apostle Paul employs the Lord's metaphor in his rebuke of the Corinthian church. "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5:8). It ought not need be said that Christians should be above reproach morally and ethically. But the sober truth of the matter is that we underestimate the deceitfulness of the human heart and the power of the devil to blind us to our sin. If we are not vigilant against the *leaven of wickedness* we will be found lying, stealing, cheating, lusting, and fornicating. Sinful flesh will have us hating and hateful. We will lapse into self-righteous intolerance and gracelessness in dealing with others. The Passover that is Christ demands holy and righteous behaviour, the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

*Holiness is Immediate to Justification.* Sin (leaven) is to be put away *the first day* (Exodus 12:15). God saw to it that the Hebrews left Egypt without leaven in order to demonstrate to us that no one brings his sin along when he comes to Christ (Exodus 12:34). We may not continue in sin for a while as a "Carnal Christian." No period of time is envisioned wherein a second work of grace accomplishes sanctification. There is only one class of Christians, i.e., saved people. They are called saints (holy ones), not sinners. Such doctrines as multi-stage salvation, Carnal and Spiritual Christians, Salvation by empty faith (no repentance or Lordship or obedience), and Justification Only, are all inventions of men who want to puff up the loaf with a sin-laden counterfeit of salvation. The Bible will have none of it. The Christian is done with sin in his heart and in his will the same hour in which he believes upon Christ.

Holiness is never an option. The feast is to last seven days. It typifies our entire lifetime, and we are told that we shall eat unleavened bread all seven of those days. Whoever does not abide in the unleavened Christ from the first to the seventh day is "cut off from Israel" (Exodus 12:15). Apostasy is not merely hypothetical. Such threats as found in Hebrews 6:6, "If they shall fall away . . . "; Hebrews 10:26, "For if we sin willfully . . . "; as well as our Lord's words in John 15:6, "If a man abide not in me . . ." are not idle theological suppositions. They are intended to reveal a people of faith who hate sin and who spend their entire lives thrusting it away.

Everything about the Christian is holy unto God. Not only is his worship sacred and pure, but his home, his business, work and recreation, both private and public as well. ". . . in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread." (Exodus 12:20).

The believer also avoids company with evil or any appearance of evil. "Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses . . ." (Exodus 12:19). He marks those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to true doctrines and avoids them (Romans 16:17). He shuns profane and vain babblings which increase unto more ungodliness, purging himself from such dishonorable vessels that he might be sanctified and suitable for the master's use (II Tim. 2:16, 21). Lest a little leaven be permitted to leaven the whole lump, the church of the Living God will sorrowfully, but firmly, put away from itself "that wicked person" who refuses to put away his overt sin (I Cor. 5:6-13).

Unhappily, when this much is said about holiness, righteousness, putting away sin, repentance, and obedience, the charge of legalism and works is hurled. We are paying too much attention to the law to which we ought be dead, we are told. We have fallen from grace and become narrow, intolerant, unreasonable. By insisting that true faith in Christ includes putting away sin, we are accused of making the gracious work of Christ of none effect.

While it is true that legalism is the religion of the *unconverted moralist*, law-keeping and sinlessness is *never* the hope of the genuinely justified child of grace. He knows himself to have been brought out of Egypt by the blood of an innocent Lamb Who died in his place. The danger to this genuinely regenerate saint of trusting in his own conformity to the law is absurdly non-existent. It is only false professors who "fall from grace" and trust in self-righteousness. On the other hand, the possibility of the Christian falling into sin, of being seduced into a loose and lawless life-style by grace-spouting antinomians, is quite real. We live in a sinful body that is only too ready to be indulged by this worldly church's cry for "balance," not to be "overly righteous," to moderate our battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

It is not Christian liberty that is threatened by today's decadent, watered-down theology. Rather, it is Christian holiness that is under assault. The real threat comes from liberalism's zeal to obscure truth and error, good and evil, sin from righteousness, to absorb Christendom into the putrid leaven of this world so that no distinction may be made between the believer and the unbeliever.

So that God's people may be preserved distinct, peculiar, separated until this age ends, our God has given us this precept. Put away all sin; purge out the leaven of malice and wickedness that we may keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (I Cor. 5:8)

- C. M.