

BITTER HERBS**NO. 2727**

**A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 19, 1901
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*“With bitter herbs they shall eat it.”
Exodus 12:8*

PERHAPS, before I come to the consideration of this sentence, it may be profitable, especially to the younger folk amongst us, if we think of the many points in which the passover was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul tells us that “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us,” and hence he informs us, by inspiration—and therefore it is not a matter of conjecture or fancy—that the passover was instituted to be a type of Jesus Christ who is the Lamb of God, the one appointed sacrifice for the sins of all His people.

In our reading, we have already noticed that great care was to be taken in the selection of the paschal lamb. It was to be without blemish, even as Jesus Christ, our Savior, had no sin in Him. The prince of this world watched Him narrowly, but he found nothing of evil in Him. All His enemies, as well as His friends, agreed that He was without fault.

The paschal lamb was to be in the fullness of its strength, “a male of the first year,” even as our Lord Jesus Christ was offered as a sacrifice in the fullness of His manhood. He was perfect both as God and man, and hence was fit to become the sacrifice for the sins of men. Admire and adore your perfect Savior, who, though He had no sin of His own, took upon Himself your sin, that you might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

The most important parts of the passover celebration were the killing of the lamb and the sprinkling of the side posts of the door and the lintel with its blood. That was the ordained method by which the safety of those who dwelt within the house was secured. God looked with angry eyes on Egypt and bade His destroying angel avenge Him of His adversaries.

“At midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon.” There was no exception—every house was filled with lamentation, except where the blood-mark was over and beside the door. The angel passed over that house, smiting none there, and we are expressly told that it was God’s sight of the sprinkled blood by which the firstborn in Israel were preserved from destruction. This is the main type of Christ’s atonement.

Christ Jesus died as the Substitute for all who believe in Him and because He bore the punishment of sin for them, God righteously withholds it from them. How could He twice demand payment of sin’s debt, first at the bleeding Surety’s hand, and then again at the hand of those for whom He stood as Surety?

Christ is the Substitute for all His elect. His elect are all those who believe in Him and by this sign you may know them—they are sheltering beneath His sprinkled blood—and when God sees the blood, He passes over them. So, let each one of us ask himself, “Am I hiding behind the blood of Jesus? Is my confidence entirely fixed in the great reconciliation and propitiation which Christ has made? If so, I shall live—no destroyer can ever smite me—God Himself must pass over me in the day of judgment and I shall be ‘accepted in the beloved.’”

There was in Egypt, that night, a saved Israel—saved because of the blood sprinkled outside their houses—and I hope we have here many members of a saved nation—saved not because of anything they are or ever will be in themselves, but because Jesus has suffered in their stead and His blood interposes between God and them.

After this followed the feeding upon the lamb. The lamb, which had been slain, was to be roasted and eaten. And you who are saved by Christ's death must continue to live upon Christ, as He said to the Jews, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." This is, of course, a figure, meaning that Christ must be food to your minds and nutriment to your hearts. You must love Him, and trust Him, and endeavor to know more and more concerning Him. Your hearts must stay themselves upon Him as your Brother, having taken your nature, and as your Savior, having put away your sin.

This feeding upon the lamb was to be upon a roasted lamb—not raw, nor sodden, "but roast with fire." Christ is food for our hearts as having suffered for us—as having passed through the fire of God's wrath against sin. I rejoice in Christ as He is now exalted at the right hand of the Father, but first of all, I must know Him as despised and rejected of men.

Christ's second advent is proper and lawful ground for joy, but not until you understand His first advent and see Him in His humiliation on Calvary. Christ on the cross is to be the one object of your faith—you must look to Him there even as the Israelite was to look upon and feed upon the lamb roasted in the fire.

Think what Christ has endured for you, beloved. I tried, this morning, [Sermon #1550, The Gift Unspeakable] to speak about His griefs, but I know that I failed to set them forth at all adequately. Oh, what a fire was that through which our Lord Jesus Christ passed that He might become food for our souls!

Notice, next, that the Israelites were to eat the whole lamb, and you who want to have Christ must have the whole of Him or none of Him. There are some who are willing to take His example, but not His doctrine—they cannot have Him. Others wish to take His doctrine, but not His precepts—they cannot have Him. Nothing of Him must be left, for there is no more in Christ than sinners absolutely need.

You cannot satisfy your soul's craving with half a Christ—neither will God allow you to insinuate that there is anything superfluous about His Son. The Jews had to eat all the lamb and he who would have Christ must have the whole of Christ—not only Christ as your Substitute, but Christ as your King. Not merely Christ to trust, but Christ to obey. He must be to you all that God sets Him forth to be or else He will be nothing at all. Dear Hearer, are you willing thus to accept Christ as the Lamb of God? Are you willing to have Him altogether, to leave nothing of Him and to set aside nothing that appertains to Him? Then, you may freely take Him as your own.

The paschal lamb was to be eaten that very night, nothing of it was to remain till the morning. The whole lamb was to be eaten at once or to be consumed by fire. Now, dear friends, I put the question to you—Are you willing to have Christ tonight? If there is anyone who wants to have Him tomorrow, I cannot promise that he shall have Him. But he who wants Christ tonight, is welcome to have Him.

If you can truly say, "I am willing, at this moment, to take the whole of Christ to be mine, and to accept Him just as God gives Him," you have Him already. Wherefore, be of good cheer, for God denies this Lamb to none who are willing unreservedly to receive Him. If you will have Him, that will of yours is given you of His grace, so take Him freely.

As when one comes to a river and asks no leave to drink, but quenches his thirst at once, so come to Christ and freely take what God has provided on purpose for every willing soul. If you will have the whole of Christ to save you from living in sin as well as from dying in sin, then you may have Him and have Him now. Only delay not to take Him, lest you should even die while hearing about Him.

Remember that solemn injunction, which we united in singing only a few minutes ago,—

"Hasten, sinner, to be blest,

*Stay not for the morrow's sun,
Lest perdition thee arrest
Ere the morrow is begun."*

Another instruction which was given to the Israelites concerning this paschal feast was that they were to eat it with unleavened bread. Leaven, you know, is usually regarded in Scripture as the type of hypocrisy and other evils, so, in accordance with this symbol, Christ is to be received sincerely. He who wishes to know the value of Christ must not play at receiving Him—he must not say that he has Him when he has Him not. No, dear friend, your whole heart must be yielded to Christ and you must take a whole Christ to yourself, or else He can never be yours.

I seem to think that there must be some here who are saying, “Yes, the Lord is drawing us to Himself and we are willing enough to be drawn to Him.” Come along, then, look not back, but yield to the gentle pressure of His sacred love and do it thoroughly. Be out and out in your surrender to Christ—have no leavened cake of hypocrisy to mar the paschal feast—do not try to be other than you honestly mean to be.

I beseech you, trifle not with my Lord and Master. If you must play the fool, do it with something else, but not with religion. If you will gamble, play with halfpence, as bad boys do—your immortal soul is too precious to be thrown away in a game of pitch and toss. Be in earnest in dealing with the Lord Jesus Christ. Put away all leaven out of your house and out of your heart—and let it be with the unleavened bread of real sincerity of heart that you do partake of the Lamb of God.

I have thus hurriedly gone over these instructions concerning the passover in order to lead up to this one, which is to be the special theme of my discourse—“With bitter herbs they shall eat it.”

I. My first remark with regard to this command is, that JESUS CHRIST, WHO IS THE LAMB OF GOD, IS ALWAYS RECEIVED IN THIS FASHION AT THE FIRST.

Those bitter herbs were a kind of salad or condiment to be eaten with the lamb, and are generally thought to have been lettuce, and endive, and chicory, and such-like greens, as we call them—not nauseously bitter, but having a sufficient degree of bitterness to add a relish to the lamb. Now, when souls come to Christ, they carry out spiritually what is here set forth in metaphor—“with bitter herbs they shall eat it.”

That is to say, whenever anyone really believes in Jesus Christ, there is always mingled with the joyful belief, *a measure of sorrowful repentance*. “Yes,” says the truthful heart, “Jesus Christ died for me, but how grieved I am that I should ever have lived such a life as to need that He should die for me! I read about His terrible agonies and I perceive that I was the cause of them. It was all for love of me that He came from heaven to earth, because He knew how guilty I should be, therefore was He nailed up to the cross and put to death.”

So the penitent soul does not know whether to rejoice or to sorrow. There is a mixture of emotions—there is a bitter sweet and a sweet bitter. I rejoice that Christ has put away my sin, but I sorrow that He should ever have had to do it.

*“Alas! and did my Savior bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?”*

I do not believe in that faith which has not a tear in its eye when it looks to Jesus. Dry-eyed faith seems to me to be bastard faith, not born of the Spirit of God. With our joy over pardoned guilt, we must mourn that we pierced the Lord. We think of our past sins—perhaps some of them were very black ones—and as they come up before our recollection, we wish that they could be blotted out of all remembrance.

We mourn over the many times in which we resisted the Spirit of God and rejected the Savior, and while we know that all these sins are now forgiven, we cannot help being grieved because of them. And we sorrowfully sing,—

***“I know they are forgiven,
But still their pain to me
Is all the grief and anguish
They laid, my Lord, on Thee.”***

There is another set of bitter herbs that we eat at the time of our conversion, when *there comes a distaste for the things in which we once took pleasure*. As soon as a man knows that he is saved by the shedding of Christ’s blood, he begins to dislike the things he once enjoyed. Pleasures and amusements of a polluting character, nay, even those of a doubtful sort, at once lose all their former charm. Of course, worldlings say, “The man is a fool. He has turned Puritan. He has gone mad.”

These are some of the bitter herbs which you will have to eat—things that once seemed quite sweet will appear utterly loathsome and you will turn away from them with disgust. Your tastes will completely change. Your desires will alter. You will not always be able to understand yourself and oftentimes, your mouth will be filled with bitter herbs on this account.

It may be that *some of you will have to eat more bitter herbs than others have*. For instance, a man who has been a thief, one who has secretly plundered his employer, must make restitution when he is converted—and that is often a very bitter herb. I have known some who did not like eating it, but there was no rest to their conscience until that was done.

Friend, if you have anything which belongs to another, restore it, and restore it speedily—how can you expect God’s blessing to rest upon you while you do retain that which you have stolen? Let him that stole steal no more, and let him, as far as he can, make amends for the wrong that he has done. If you have been engaged in an evil trade while unconverted, as soon as you find Christ, you must clear out of that bad business. And if you have gained your livelihood in questionable ways, you must end all that sort of thing and come right straight out from it, if you would be a follower of Christ.

I have known a man, who felt that he must go to one with whom he had been at enmity, and say to him, “I am a Christian, now, so let us be friends.” I have known some go and humble themselves very much, and eat a lot of their own words—they had a proud spirit, so they would never have acted as they have done if Christ had not changed them by His grace—but when He has met with them, they are ready to do anything that He wished if they might but glorify His holy name.

They found that in eating the Lamb, they had also to eat the bitter herbs, yet, surely, none of us need be unwilling to eat the bitter herbs if he may but have the privilege of eating the Lamb. If I may but feed on Jesus, I will seek to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and so let Him see that I do not follow Him in name only, but in deed and in truth.

There are other bitter herbs, too, which we eat when we first come to Christ. They may be called *the herbs of holy anxiety*. When first you find the Lord, you are half afraid to put one foot before the other, lest you should tread where you ought not. I know that, in my early Christian life, I used to be afraid to speak lest I should say anything amiss. And I was continually on the watch lest I should grieve my blessed Master.

I wish we all had this holy tenderness—it is a very proper thing to keep up all your life long. But we always begin with it if we begin aright—we are very tender and sensitive in spirit at first. Perhaps, afterwards, we learn to mix more confidence in God with our proper doubtfulness of ourselves, but at the beginning of our Christian career, not having as much confidence as we ought to have in the promises of God, our anxieties are very real, so that while we eat the Lamb, we take a mouthful of bitter herbs at the same time.

If any of you are feeling sad just now, and are afraid that you may not come to Christ because you are so sad, let me tell you that is the very reason why you may come to Him. You have the bitter herbs—

now come and eat the Lamb. Your heart is sorrowful, so come and have it made glad. Come with your burden of sin, come with your brokenness of heart, come with your despair, come just as you are, and partake of the rich provision which God has prepared for you in Christ—and then go on your way with rejoicing.

Thus, I hope I have made it clear to you that Jesus is received at the first as the paschal lamb had to be eaten, that is, with bitter herbs.

II. Now, secondly, IT IS THE SAME WHENEVER WE FEED UPON HIM AFTERWARDS.

At least, I find it to be so in my own case. I confess that *my Lord Jesus is never so sweet to me as when I am thoroughly bowed down under a sense of my own unworthiness*. I often feel far more unworthy than any of you can feel, for the Lord's grace and mercy towards me make me tremble and feel ashamed that I am not more earnest about your souls, and not more anxious to bring sinners to Christ. Yet I say again that He is a precious Christ to me and He is never so precious as when I am most vile in my own sight.

Is it not so with you also, beloved? When you are very great in your own esteem, Christ appears little to you. But when you are very little, then Christ becomes all the greater to you—is it not so? When you feel that you are poor, guilty sinners, Christ is regarded by you as a glorious Savior, but if any of you have begun to spread out the fine peacock feathers of perfectionism, Christ must seem very insignificant to you.

It is a bad sign whenever you feel that you do not need to confess sin, or to look to Christ as you did at the first when you said,—

*“I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my All-in-all.”*

Even after you have known Christ for thirty years or more, there is no feeding upon Him like feeding upon Him with the bitter herbs—with a sense of continued unworthiness pressing upon you—and then does Christ become exceedingly sweet unto your taste.

And I believe, brethren, that it is a blessed thing to feed upon Christ *with a soft subduedness of spirit*. Full assurance is a grand thing, but I think I have known a kind of full assurance that I would never covet, though it speaks very glibly as though its warfare were accomplished and its victory were perfectly secure.

It is a good thing to be able to read your title clear “to mansions in the skies” and happy is the man who can always do it. But it is a safe thing to feel the tears of repentance in your eyes through a deep sense of your unfitness for the skies at present, and to have your heart burdened because you do not feel heaven within you, and you are therefore afraid lest you should not be fit to be within heaven.

Cowper wisely wrote,—

*“He has no hope who never had a fear;
And he that never doubted of his state,
He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late.”*

I would sooner shiver in dread anxiety, with the poorest sincere soul who ever trembled before God than I would stand in an unwarrantable confidence as to my own security, and boast and brag of my wonderful attainments. God deliver us from that sort of spirit! A quiet, peaceful frame of mind—a gentle, humble, tender walk with God, seems to me to be the thing that is specially to be desired.

When you fear and tremble for all the goodness that God makes to pass before you—not because you doubt, but because you believe—you become anxious after a holy and gracious fashion. You think I am talking paradoxes, but I know what I mean, even if I cannot make you understand it. You know that you are a child of God and you realize that you are favored of the Most High—and therefore you are afraid to do anything that would be derogatory to His divine dignity.

I believe that there is no way of eating the Lamb acceptably and that there is no possibility of enjoying Christ to the full without such bitter herbs as these. I know that I never yet had a single

mouthful of this paschal supper, which my heart did really digest and assimilate, without having at the same time a bowed and broken spirit to be as a bitter herb to help the digestion of the heavenly meat.

III. Now, thirdly, dear friends, as our text is true in relation to Christ, who is the blessed gift of God, “His unspeakable gift,” I think you will not at all wonder if I say that THIS RULE RUNS THROUGH ALL OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS—AY, AND OUR TEMPORAL ONES, TOO.

God may give us many temporal blessings, but if we are His children, this principle will hold good, that *bitter herbs will be mingled with all the sweets of life*. If any of you are favored with great success, you will find that our text is true in your case. God sends bountiful harvests, but not without the oppressive heat that makes the laborer sweat and faint as he gathers in the golden grain. God up lifts men in His gracious providence, as He did David, but David had to eat any quantity of bitter herbs before he reached the throne, and even after he became king, with bitter herbs did he eat his royal dainties.

And his son Solomon, who had fewer trials, found so many bitter herbs that he cried out, “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.” God never intends that there shall be any sweet in this world without something sour to go with it. The rose must have its thorn and amongst the wheat, the poppies must still continue to grow.

You child of God, especially, will find it so, for *what if your Heavenly Father gave you all sweet and no bitter?* You would soon grow sick—eating nothing but honey would cause you many a qualm and pain. God does not mean us to build our nests here, so He sends a high wind that makes the trees rock to and fro, that we may look for a more secure place of abode.

If we had all that we wanted here, we should never wish to be up and away to that better world which is the goal of all our desires. If the bread was always plentiful upon the table, and the fruits were always abundant in the garden, and the sky was always blue, and the fleece was always ready for the garment, and the brain was always clear, and the feet were always nimble, should we not then forget our God? I am afraid that we should, and therefore He sends us these bitter herbs that nothing on earth may content us, and that we may cry with the psalmist, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.”

Go on, young man, get your degree and call your friends together to a festival. But “with bitter herbs shall they eat it.” And you, young woman, your marriage feast draws nigh, but with bitter herbs shall you eat it. Push on, good sir, with that business of yours—you shall enjoy prosperity, but with bitter herbs shall you eat it. Whatever there is, here below, that is the object of lawful desire, you may seek—but always know that if you gain it, there will come some salutary medicine with it.

Else, if it be not so, you may question whether you are really a child of God. If there be no stone in your road, and no cloud in your sky, and if there has never been such a thing, but you have had unbroken prosperity, I tremble for you and I say, with David, “I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.”

IV. I will not now dwell upon many other points which I might mention, but will just briefly show you that our text also applies to us IN LIVING A GODLY LIFE.

It may be fulfilled to us *through persecution from the world*. You who have fed upon Christ and now wish to serve the Lord with your whole heart, must not reckon that you will be able to do it without paying a heavy price for the privilege. You will have many bitter herbs to eat, whoever may be allowed to go without them.

A man who tries to be honest will find many people who will give him bitter herbs to eat. If you speak the truth wherever you are, you will often have bitter herbs handed to you. Try to do that which is right, either amongst working men or among merchant princes. Try to lead a really gracious, separated life, and see whether the seed of the serpent does not hiss at you, and try to bite and sting you.

There is no need for you to try to grow your own bitter herbs—your enemies will supply them to you for nothing—and you shall have them often when you would rather be without them. If you tuck about

and shift your course with every wind, perhaps you may curry favor with your foes and they may allow you to eat your lamb without any bitter herbs. But if you are straight as a pikestaff and clear as the light, you shall soon have bitter herbs to eat, depend upon it.

If nobody should give you any, *you will find some growing in your own garden*, for, even beside that sweet flower called heartsease, there will grow in our breast many herbs that are anything but sweet. For instance, if a man wishes to be downright true, he will sometimes detect himself in being false—his very love of truth will make him see that fault, and it will be a bitter herb for him to eat.

One who wishes never to exaggerate in speaking, may himself discover that he has done so—he must eat that herb, bitter as it is. One who wishes to be scrupulously correct in all his business transactions may find that he has made a mistake across the counter—he may easily be entrapped into a dishonest action and then he will have many bitter herbs to eat.

We cannot gain a victory over the natural tendencies of our corrupt nature, even through divine grace, without having some bitter herbs to eat. Then eat them like men—they will help to cleanse you, they will be a blessing to you, and they will make the struggle after righteousness, and honor, and virtue, for God's sake, and for Christ's sake, to be all the easier to you. May the Lord graciously enable you, in that struggle, to come off more than conquerors through Him who has loved you!

V. The next point is, THAT EVEN IN TRYING TO WIN SOULS FOR CHRIST, you will have to eat some bitter herbs.

I am very thankful that I am addressing so large a company of dear Christian friends who help to bring others to Christ. I wish that I could say that of all of you who are members of the church, but I can truly say it of most of you. You are our glory and our crown of rejoicing, because you live to bless others.

Now, I believe that you will join with me in confessing that, *this holy work has been accompanied by much soul-humbling*. If ever you have brought a soul to Christ, there have been bitter herbs in your feast of joy over it. I mean, that you have never brought anyone to Christ without a great deal of trouble. Does anybody think that our sermons and our Sunday school teaching cost us nothing?

“Oh!” says one, “I can preach off-hand.” Yes, I daresay you can, but I never heard of an off-hand farm that brought forth an off-hand crop. “Oh! I have nothing to do but to sit down, and when the Bible is opened, just explain it to the boys and girls gathered around me—and I keep good order among them.” Yes, perhaps you do, but the best order that could be given to you would be an order to go home. If you go to your class with no agony of spirit, no anguish of heart, what good can come of your teaching?

Dear brothers and sisters, I am certain that, if God has ever honored you by making you the means of the conversion of any of your fellow sinners, you have rejoiced greatly, but you have known that it was, under God, the result of much previous agony of spirit on their behalf.

Yes, and often, at the very time when God has blessed you, you have had a bitter disappointment. You thought that dear girl really was brought to Christ, yet she turns out, before long, to be a giddy chit. And there is that bright boy—you did believe that he was saved. So he is, perhaps, yet you see grave faults in him and you are very much grieved about him. Yes, that will always be the case with our work here, and it is only another illustration of our text—“with bitter herbs shall they eat it.”

Possibly, *if God gives you very great success, He will take away from you, to a large extent, the power to rejoice in it*. I know one who seldom lives through a day without hearing of many who have been brought to Christ by him, but who, nevertheless, has long been incapable of taking any delight in anything he does, and who is obliged to live out of himself entirely, and on God alone.

And I think, brothers and sisters, that in proportion as you know the truth about this matter, you will agree with me that it is so with you as well, and that, somehow or other, if God means to bless you, He takes care to break the neck of your pride, lest you should be lifted up with conceit and fall into the snare of the devil. It is a high honor to be used by God as His instrument in blessing the poorest chimney-sweep or the humblest child—but you may depend upon it that, if He honors you in public, He will whip you behind the door and He will make you feel that you are nothing when He gets you by yourself.

VI. I expect that the rule of our text will hold good with us to the last and that it will be applied IN MAKING US MEET FOR HEAVEN.

Some of us will, within a very short time, eat our passover supper in another sense, for we shall pass over Jordan and enter the heavenly Canaan. We shall go to the top of Pisgah, not to view the landscape, and go down again, but to fall asleep there and so spiritually to pass over the Jordan of death, into the land of the blessed, where God will reveal Himself fully to us.

You will stand before long, dear brother or sister, with your staff in your hand, just as the Israelites did, and with your loins girt—and those who see you will say to you, “Where are you going? Where are you going?” And you will answer, “We are going to our own country—to the Promised Land above.” It may be that you will have bitter herbs to eat at that time. Do not, however, think any more of them than you do of those which you eat at your own table.

Nobody ever turns away from the lamb because the sauce that goes with it seems sharp. You say, “No, it gives a relish to the meat.” So, when you and I come to die, it may be painful to bid farewell to dear ones here below, but that will be like eating bitter herbs. They will only give the greater zest to that last supper on earth which will melt into a blessed breaking of the fast in heaven.

You have often seen the sun go down, have you not? What a fine sight it is! He often seems to look far larger in the setting than he ever did before—and if the clouds come round about him, are they not often the very glory of the sunset? And have you not seen his departing rays brighten them all up? No painter could ever have put together such charming colors.

The mighty Artist of heaven has Himself displayed His skill, but how did He make all that splendor? It was out of clouds—they were the canvas which was bespattered with the hues of heaven by the sublime Artist. So shall it be with you, dear friend, at last. Your old age, your pains, your groans shall only be a part of the splendor which God gives to His people when they set at the last like the sun.

Be of good courage, then, and fear not. Nobody stays away from a feast because of the salad that is served with the viands, so let nobody stop away from Christ, or away from heaven, because of the little griefs he may have to bear, the light afflictions, which are but for a moment, which work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

God bless you, beloved, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

EXODUS 12:1-20

Verses 1-2. *And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.*

God thinks a great deal of the redemption of His people. When He redeemed them out of their Egyptian bondage, He took care that the mighty deed should be worthily commemorated. Thenceforth, the Jewish year was to begin with the celebration of the national deliverance, and now, when any of us are converted to God, and so are set free from the slavery of sin, we should reckon that then we really begin to live. All the previous part of our life has been wasted, but when we are brought truly to know God, through faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, then have we realized, indeed, what life is. The month of our conversion should be to us the beginning of months, the first month of the year to us.

3-4. *Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house and if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.*

The worship of God must be rendered in an orderly manner, with due thoughtfulness and preparation. This paschal supper was not to be celebrated in any fashion that the people might choose, but they were to take time to have the lamb properly examined, that it might be found perfect in every

respect, and that everything might be set in order so that the feast should be observed with due reverence and solemnity.

Let us take care that we act thus in all our devotions. Let us never rush to prayer or hasten to praise, but let us pause awhile, and think what we are about to do, lest we offer the sacrifice of fools, and so cause the Lord to bid us take back that which we have brought to put upon His altar without due thoughtfulness.

5. *Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:*

It was to be a type of Christ and therefore it must be the best that they had. It must be in the prime of its strength, otherwise it would not be a fit emblem of the “strong Son of God” whose mighty love moved Him to give Himself to death for us.

6-10. *And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.*

Everything was to be done exactly according to God’s order. The alteration of the slightest detail would have spoiled it all. I wish that all Christians would remember this rule with regard to the ordinances of God’s house. They are not for us to make, or for us to alter, but for us to keep.

11. *And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover.*

They were thus to exercise an act of faith. Why were they to eat in haste, but that they expected soon to be gone? They were to stand like travelers who are starting upon a journey, believing that God was about to set them free. Oh, that we would always exercise faith in all our devotions, for without faith it must always be impossible to please God.

12-13. *For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you,*

What a grand Gospel statement that is! When the sinner sees the blood, it is for his comfort—but it is God’s sight of the blood that is, after all, the grand thing—and when is it that He does not see it?

13-20. *And the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. 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 for ever. 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 for ever. 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.*

Thus we see God instituting a commemoration of the deliverance of His people out of Egypt. How much more ought you and I, with joyful gladness, to remember the deliverance of our soul from the

slavery of sin and Satan! Let us never forget it. I should like to refresh the memories of bygone times with you who know the Lord. The Lord help you, now, with deepest gratitude, to recollect the day when first you saw your Savior, and the yoke was taken from your neck, and the burden from your shoulder, glory be to the delivering Lord!

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—728, 561, 520

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