

## The Passover in Egypt.

Exodus 12.

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The Passover celebrated in Egypt is the well-known type of Christ averting from His people the judgement which overtakes the ungodly. The destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt, and smote the firstborn in every house. Israel escaped by the death of the lamb, and by that alone. The blood sprinkled on the door-post told the destroyer that the sentence of death had been already executed, and he therefore passed over. Hence, then, the blood distinguished the houses of the Israelites from those of the Egyptians. This was the grand distinction. When it was a question of life or death, the blood, and the blood *alone*, fixed the line of demarcation: "When *I see the blood*, I will pass over." This was God's record, presented for the obedience of faith. The blood was outside, and Israel were inside, and hence they could not see the blood, nor was that needful. All that was needed was simple faith in God's record, and the more simple the faith the fuller was their peace. It was their privilege to eat the lamb within their houses with tranquillised hearts, while the destroyer passed through with unsheathed sword, inflicting terrible judgement on all who were not sheltered beneath the blood.

How simple is this! How striking! How much we learn from it! Throughout the vast mass of profession around us there are two classes those who have received God's salvation in the accomplished work of Christ, and those who, rejecting Him, build upon the multiplied forms of false or defective religion with which Christendom abounds. God's way of salvation is simple, as simple as it is complete: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. 10: 9.) Christ is God's salvation, and, moreover, it is God's estimate of Christ that forms the basis of the believer's peace. It is very necessary to understand distinctly this latter point. There are many who suffer not a little by looking at their faith, instead of at the Object of faith; in fact, by unwittingly making a kind of saviour of their faith. Now faith is only the hand, as it were, that takes hold of the gift of God, just as the hand of a hungry man takes the proffered bread and conveys it to his mouth. If I have my eye off Christ, and begin to examine the amount of my faith, I must of necessity decline, for He is the *only One* on whom the sinner's eye can rest. Genuine faith never looks at itself, but only at Jesus. A faithful Israelite would not have thought of going out to look at the lintel of his door, nor yet of examining the amount of his faith. No; he simply rested in the fact put before him in those precious words, "When I see the blood, I will pass over." It was not said, When I see your girded loins, your shod feet, your unleavened bread, I will pass over. These things were most needful, yea, essential, but not to save from the sword of the destroyer. To meet this nothing could avail but the blood of the lamb.

It is well that my reader should be clear as to the distinction between the ground of peace and that which is the spring of holiness and devotedness in his daily course; in other words, that he should understand the distinction between the work of Christ for us, and the work of the Spirit in us. The former is illustrated by the blood on the lintel without; the latter by the Israelites' actions within. When any one through grace receives Christ in the divine efficacy of His accomplished work, he is introduced into a position in which God can address him as to his conduct; he becomes the subject of parental care and discipline. But then he must be careful not to confound the question of his walk with the ground of his perfect, his profound peace in the presence of God. Many, I feel persuaded, suffer in this way; they do not understand the fullness of Christ for them, and their everlasting completeness in Him, together

with the settled judgement of God about them. Now while there is any dimness or uncertainty as to this, there can neither be settled peace of conscience nor any intelligent ground of Christian activity. Everything will be referred to the question of peace, rather than to the glory of Christ, which should be our aim, and which will be our aim in proportion as we enter into the divine reality of what we are in Christ through the infinite grace of God. The more we realise the truth that everything has been accomplished by Christ for the perfect establishment of our peace in connection with the holiness of God, the more we shall see how futile is every thought about ourselves. A question as to the believers peace is in reality a question as to the accomplishment of the work of Christ. If you touch one you touch the other, for "Christ is our peace." He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." And not only is He the same always, but God's estimate of Him, and also of us in Him, is also the same: "Ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power." "As he is, so are we in this world." "Wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." (Num. 23. 21.) Not that iniquity and perverseness are not there, for "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." It would not give us any peace to be told that the Lord's people have not perverseness in them, but that *He hath not beheld it* tranquillises the heart most blessedly. It is God's grace that blots out sin, through the precious blood of Jesus. He delights to do this; yea, it is His glory "Thou hast cast *all* my sins behind thy back." This, beloved Christian reader, should banish every fear from your heart. God is not looking at your sin, but at the blood of the Lamb, and in that He sees the exquisite fruit of His own love, and triumphs in it. Now if God is not looking at your sin, why should you keep dwelling upon it? If He graciously triumphs in the fruit of His love, why should you not triumph in it also? The spring of your communion *is* your keeping your eye fixed upon the same object that God is looking at. Now if God is looking at Christ, and you are looking at your sins, of necessity there can be no communion. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" God says by virtue of the blood of Christ, "Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more." Are you calling them to remembrance? How many are anxiously occupied about the question of personal peace, which really stands at the very threshold of the Christian course! This sorrowful state of soul may arise from various causes. It may arise from imperfect or muddy views of the gospel, from not seeing the fullness of Christ, and the absolutely settled character of the forgiveness of sins

But there is another cause, and one of a far more grave and serious nature, namely, a careless and unconscientious walk; and cases of this melancholy kind often run to a great extreme — even to actual despair. Such cases teach the importance of seeking a close and faithful walk with God. "He will keep the feet of his saints ;" but they are exhorted to "keep their hearts with all diligence." The Spirit reveals Christ, and, if not grieved by sin and worldliness, will build up the soul in His fullness, and establish it in the peace of God which passeth all understanding. But, alas! when conscience is tampered with — when we sin against light — when we walk in an indolent and self-indulgent spirit — when we let in the world upon our hearts, then the eye becomes dim, and the understanding darkened; feebleness and langour take the place of energy and vigour; and unless the soul be thoroughly broken down under the sense of its delusion, and restored by the grace of God, in all probability Satan will entangle it in the destructive meshes of carnality and worldliness; or, it may be, will well-nigh drive it into the dread region of infidelity. Should this paper fall into the hands of any one suffering in this way, let me entreat him at once to pause, and having ascertained, by honest self-judgement, the real cause of his low, heavy state, to bring it into the presence of his heavenly Father, and thus confess, judge and put away his evil. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

There is no reason why the believer should continue in a low or impoverished state of soul,

unless he is deliberately trifling with conscience and grieving the Spirit of God. It is his privilege to have Christ, in all His divine fullness, between his soul and everything, no matter what — sins, infirmities, circumstances; and when the eye is steadily fixed upon and filled with Christ, nothing can interfere with his peace. But the secret cause of the low condition of so many of God's dear people is, that they have let slip Christ, and allowed other things to come in and occupy their hearts. *He* has been displaced; they have lost the freshness of the sense of what He is, and have therefore sunk down into a cold, formal condition. Moreover, the affections, feeling the lack of a definite object around which to entwine themselves, have gone out after the world. Nothing keeps the heart so free and peaceful as a single eye to Christ. There may be much to try and depress the heart; still there is peace. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me, peace." The Lord Jesus does not promise us exemption from tribulation; no, but He promises us peace *in* the tribulation, and this is far more gracious. He came into the midst of His poor, terrified disciples, and said, "*Peace* be unto you." He did not take them *out of* their circumstances, but gave them peace in them. This is divine. The believer should, like the Israelite, sit within, in the blessed fixedness of faith, feeding upon Christ, knowing that the blood of sprinkling is between him and all without. The worst that could come was death and judgement; but these had already been executed, and of this the blood on the lintel was the witness. It was impossible that anything could harm those who had taken shelter beneath the blood of the lamb.

It should be remarked, however, that peace of conscience and peace of heart are distinct things. Many have the former who do not enjoy the latter. Settled repose of heart in Christ is a precious fruit of simple communion with Him. It puts an end to all that restless anxiety which so eats up spiritual life. To the heart at rest — fully at rest in Jesus — circumstances are but of small moment. "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, *his heart* is fixed, trusting in the Lord." It is dishonouring to the Lord to see His people giving way to cares and anxieties about present things; and, moreover, adopting the plans and arrangements current amongst the children of this world. Men say, or at least get abundant reason to say, that there is no difference between Christians and other people, inasmuch as all are seen pursuing the same objects, and pursuing them in the same way. When God's sufficiency fills the soul, plans and arrangements are little thought of. It is really wonderful to perceive how easily the soul loses the practical sense of God's presence and God's sufficiency. It is not that one ceases to be a Christian; this is not at all in question; but, alas! how many Christians are there who do not habitually walk with God! And yet the secret of true victory over nature and the world is, to walk with God. Nature is kept down, and the world is shut out; but when the soul is withdrawn from its blessed centre in God, everything becomes a difficulty.

We shall now look a little at the circumstances which accompanied the Passover. The blood on the lintel, as we have seen, formed the simple basis of the Israelite's security. It was an accomplished fact, with which he had nothing to do save to repose in its efficacy. But there were other points of deep interest and solemn moment into which the spiritual mind can enter with much profit.

First, then, *the lamb was eaten "roasted with fire"* No other process could have told out the significant principle with the same emphasis. The action of fire upon the body of the lamb gave expression, as forcibly as type could do, to the intensity of Christ's sufferings when He exposed His blessed person to the full action of Jehovah's righteous wrath against sin. Now it was one thing to rest in the security of the shed blood *without* and another thing to eat of the "lamb roast with fire." Hence the apostle says, "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and *fellowship of his sufferings.*" Here was the desire of one who had already rested in the blood of sprinkling. The fellowship of Christ's sufferings is but little known even by those who are resting in the precious efficacy of Christ's blood; were it more entered into, there would be far more depth of experience and

power of Christian action than there is. We are too ready to rest content with knowing the value of the blood, without feeding on the Lamb, and thus we lose much of what is really our privilege in the way of personal fellowship with Jesus. We are introduced by the blood into a position in which we can dwell with ever deepening joy upon the intrinsic excellency of the Person of Christ. It is not merely the work which has been done, hut the One who has done it. The former is properly the object for the sinner, the latter for the saint; and the more the saint is enabled to enter into what Christ is, the more perfect will be his repose in His work.

Again, *the lamb was eaten with unleavened bread*. This marked the power of holiness, as the practical result of that nearness to God into which the blood had introduced the soul. But, my reader observe, this holiness is the result of Christ's work applied to the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost, and does not, in any wise, form the basis of our peace in the presence of God. This should be clearly understood, for the fact is, that this distinction will be found to constitute the great difference between true Christianity and all the false systems of religion of the present day. True Christianity puts Christ as the prominent object before the soul, and, moreover, shows that all real fruit to God must flow from the knowledge of our completeness in Him: false religion on the other hand, puts Christ in the background — puts Him in the distance, and teaches the sinner that he must work his way upward by virtue of his own fancied holiness. Terrible delusion! Oh! for a simpler, clearer, fuller view of Jesus!

Lastly, *the lamb was eaten with bitter herbs*. This expresses the believer's experience, under the teaching of the Spirit, of the bitterness of that which dwells in him, which, though it has been most fully met in the cross, must ever be recognised as that which brought the Son of God down into the horrible pit and miry clay. It is only in the cross that the real heinousness of sin can be seen; and though it is there viewed in the light of that which puts it away for ever, yet the heart is self-judged and humbled even while it rests in an accomplished redemption.

Let me say, in conclusion, that the highest thought of all is, to have *Christ Himself* before the soul. It will not suffice to have thoughts of His work merely — thoughts of what He has done for us. There is much of mere selfishness in all this. We must be drawn to Jesus because of what He is; and this, so far from detracting from the value of His work, will deepen our sense of it every day.