

Christ the Passover of His People

Preached at North Street Chapel, Stamford, on Thursday Evening, November 18, 1858

"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." 1 Cor. 5:7, 8

You that read your Bibles will recollect the institution of the Passover in the land of Egypt, and you who are taught of the Spirit will remember that it had a typical and spiritual meaning. Well, with God's blessing, before we proceed with our text we will just look at the institution of that feast in Egypt. You will find that there were certain things in the paschal lamb and the mode of eating it which had a figurative allusion to the Lord Jesus Christ. "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." Now, this lamb was to be without blemish, which points in a most blessed manner to the Lord Jesus Christ, for his humanity was without blemish; there was not a spot, speck, or wrinkle in it. It was a pure humanity, conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary by the supernatural operation of the Holy Ghost; therefore, like ourselves, yet distinct in this, it was without sin, being conceived not by natural generation, but begotten by the express supernatural influence of the Holy Ghost upon her womb; therefore, it was not like ourselves, peccable, tainted

with original sin, but perfect and spotless, completely holy and pure; thus it was figured by the paschal lamb, it being without blemish. He was also to be a male of the first year, just when he is about to become a sheep—not weak and feeble as in spring, but arrived at maturity, and this to show the power and strength of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. "Ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats," which was to signify the fact of the Lord Jesus Christ dying for the Jew and the Gentile. "And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month." Fourteen days before it was slain it was taken from the fold. This was figurative of the Lord Jesus Christ as being a man of sorrows; and as the lamb was separated from the flock for fourteen days, so Jesus was separated from sinners while he fasted, suffered, and wept here below. "And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel," typical and figurative of the whole church of God, "shall kill it in the evening," margin, "between the two evenings," that is, before the sun dipped its glory in the sky, before the declination of the sun towards the west and its sinking under the horizon; thus showing that Christ came in the evening of a dispensation. What a dark and gloomy state of things was that when the Lord Jesus Christ hung upon the cross, figured by the withdrawal of the light of the sun! how God hid his face from his Son, through his displeasure at the sin which he bore on the cross. "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." The blood was to be taken and stuck upon the side posts and lintel, not on the threshold—no foot was to touch it; this was to show the application and sprinkling of this precious blood on the conscience. This was their safeguard, so that when the angel passed through Egypt and saw the blood sprinkled he passed by, and the persons in that house were safe; they might be sitting down, they might almost distinguish the rushing of the angel's wings and hear in the

next house lamentation and mourning for the first born who had fallen; for all the first born of the land of Egypt were smitten, and all Egypt was filled with mourning and lamentation and woe, and yet not a single person died in the houses of the children of Israel; for the angel seeing the blood passed by. So it is with the saints of God. The blood sprinkled upon the conscience by the power of the Holy Ghost delivers them. People may die on the left hand and on the right; but the destroying angel will not touch them. They were to eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, to signify how the Lord Jesus Christ was roasted, so to speak, in the fire of God's wrath against sin. Not a raw Christ, without sorrow and suffering, and without experiencing the anger of God burning him up in the flame of a holy indignation, not a Christ as a mere example; for that would be a raw lamb; but a Christ burnt with indignation and flame, the indignation of God against sin; that is the Christ whom we worship, and we feed upon him, for that he is the roasted lamb, sweet and savoury. "Nor sodden." It was to be roast, every part of it, the head and the legs with the purtenance thereof. But they were to eat it with unleavened bread, of which I shall afterwards show the spiritual meaning. "And with bitter herbs they shall eat it;" that is with the repentance of the soul, feeling what a bitter thing it is to sin against God. Never until we have tasted of the paschal lamb, and eaten of the bitter herbs, do we know what it is to repent of sin and loathe ourselves in dust and ashes, and no part of it was to be left to "remain until the morning," all was to be eaten that night. Nothing was to be reserved for magical purposes, that there might be no relic of superstition.

This is a mere simple sketch of the paschal lamb and how it was eaten, and now I proceed with our text in opening up of which I shall shew,

I.—First, how Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

II.—Secondly, that we are to keep the feast.

III.—Thirdly, how the feast is to be kept, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

IV.—Fourthly, the exhortation which follows from this, "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven that ye may be a new lump as ye are unleavened."

I.—"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." What a blessed thing it is when our souls can contemplate Christ as sacrificed for us, when we can look at the blessed Jesus bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, and view the sacred stream of blood flowing from his brow in the garden, surcharged with sorrow, and on the cross pierced by the crown of thorns, and from his hands, feet, and side, and to have the Holy Spirit raising up a testimony in our soul that he endured this to save us from the bottomless pit. What a flame of love to him! What a flame of indignation against those sins that crucified the Lord of life and glory does it kindle. Without this there could have been no redemption, pardon, or peace. All the works of man could never have atoned for sin; oceans of tears, innumerable prayers repeated on bended knees, hard as iron, could never have put away a single sin. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." Nothing could take it away except the blood of the lamb; because the justice of God required satisfaction. As long as his sins are not blotted out by Jesus' blood, the sinner must die, that justice may not be infringed upon. But when Jesus came, the justice of God was satisfied, the debt was paid by his obedience to death, even the death of the cross, and now God can be just and

yet the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." God views every sin by virtue of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! what an intolerable load of sin lies upon a sinner's conscience when the Lord searches his heart as with candles, and spreads before his eyes the sins from childhood's hours to his present time of life, holds them up in the light of his countenance, curses them by the sentence of an inflexible law, and then brings all these sins upon the sinner's conscience. What can keep that sinner from destruction and despair? It is like a rapid river which breaks through the dam, which would sweep him away unless he was supported by the power of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ had borne his sins upon the cross. How we should have died in despair, and have fled from God's presence, as those that go down to the pit flee from the presence and indignation of the Lord by an act of violence and only throw themselves into an endless hell, but for the power of God, and all because we could not endure the opening up of the floods. Never think little of sin; think of it only as a most dreadful and damnable thing. But when we can view the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ as the passover, that God can pass over sin by virtue of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, then we can rejoice in the propitiation offered and in the sprinkling of the atoning blood upon the conscience; for as the children of Israel could rejoice in Egypt under protection of the blood sprinkled on the door posts, so the children of grace can rejoice under the covering of the protecting hand of God. They may see people falling on the right hand and on the left, death, eternal death may visit houses and families, but if the child of God only knows he is under the protection of atoning blood sprinkled upon his conscience, he can welcome death and say, "let death come when it will."

II.—But "let us," to go to our next point, "let us keep the

feast." We are to keep the feast experimentally. How did they keep it? They fed upon the roasted lamb. Christ is our lamb, Christ as roasted in the flame of God's burning indignation against sin. The sacrifice has been offered, the Lamb has been roasted, now let us keep the feast. The first thing that is requisite to the keeping of the feast is to feel an hunger after it. We know that the choicest delicacy might be spread before our eyes; but if we had no appetite it would be all in vain. But how sweet the smell of roasted meat to a man pining for want of food, how distasteful to one who has no appetite! How loathsome is Christ crucified to a Pharisee; he is sick unto death and full of self-righteousness, such an one is not called upon to keep the feast, God has not bidden him, nor does the Holy Ghost say to him, "let us keep the feast." But how are we to keep the feast? First, by having a view of the roasted Lamb put upon the table, that is viewing Christ put upon the cross. Now come the bitter herbs. We must know something of the bitterness of sin, which will make the Lamb all the more savoury and sweet, the contrast being greater. This is real sauce that makes the Lamb sweet. So if a man knows nothing of the bitterness of sin, how can he feed upon Christ? To him there is no sweetness in the Paschal Lamb. On the one side of his mouth, the child of God has the joy and sweetness of the roasted Lamb, on the other side the bitter herbs; on the one side mourning over sin, on the other side rejoicing in Jesus. At the same moment with the same mouth he tastes the sweetness of the Lamb and the bitter herbs. So the sinner that feeds upon Jesus feeds upon his sweetness, and at the same time feels the bitterness of his sins. Do you know what it is to feed upon a roasted Christ, and upon the bitter herbs of repentance at one and the same time? Again, they were to eat it with their loins girded, with their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand, and they were to eat it in haste as pilgrims all ready to go. And so the saint of God is to pass through this

world as a pilgrim with his staff in his hand waiting to depart, knowing that he is only in this world for a time, waiting for a home of eternal bliss. Unless there is a turning from Egypt there is no passover; for it was in the house of bondage that the children of Israel cried and wept under their cruel taskmasters; but the time drew nigh when the Lord's promise was to be fulfilled, and they were bound to go forth for all eternity, and on that very night they ate the paschal lamb; no more were they to return to Egypt, but to go forth under the Lord's leading to the promised land. So with the saint of God, he is going on his pilgrimage to a heavenly country, where he is to see Christ face to face without a veil between.

III.—But the apostle tells us we are to keep the feast not with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. That was a very prominent point which the Jews had to observe in keeping the passover. Before that time they might eat unleavened bread. The leaven is something like our yeast or balm, though not exactly the same. The bread made from it is very good the first day or two, but it soon becomes sour. The leaven is a piece of the sour bread, which put among the fresh dough makes the whole ferment, and it acts in the same way as our balm or yeast. Well, this leaven was not to be used in making the bread for the passover. No leavened bread was to enter the houses of the children of Israel during the feast, before which there was a universal clearing out, and I understand in the houses of the Jews in London and elsewhere, at the time of this feast they do not leave a nook or corner unstirred, every crumb, every speck of dust and dirt is taken out of the house, and to this in a great measure is to be attributed the health of the Jews. It shows how rigorous of old were the children of Israel in observing the passover. It is a remnant of an old custom. But we are to

keep the feast, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and wickedness. Now there is a leaven in our hearts, as there was in the houses of the Jews, and if we keep the feast, we are not to keep it with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and wickedness. What is this old leaven in our hearts? First, there is a great deal of legal leaven, strong pride and self-righteousness, which is diffusing itself as the leaven spreads itself in the dough. Just as the leaven heaves up the dough, and every part is diffused in the lump, so this legal leaven, this pride and self-righteousness mixes itself with all a man thinks, says, or does, with his hearing, with his reading, with his preaching, and with his praying. Those who come to hear cannot hear without it, those who preach cannot preach without it, and those who pray cannot pray without it, any more than those who read can read without it. So that pride and self-righteousness work in everything we do. Whether we read, hear, sing, or pray, whether we are at home or abroad, alone or in company, oh! how this leaven is poisoning every word and work and contaminating the whole. And then there is the antinomian leaven, a principle of antinomianism, of licentiousness as well as legality, and these fit together. One moment we are thinking sin cannot damn us, and the next priding ourselves on our legal performances, as though there was something in that wherewith to commend ourselves to the court of heaven, and thinking very little of evil temper, evil words, and evil works. Thus we go on oscillating between the two. First comes the legal and pharisaical leaven, and then the antinomian licentiousness and we can hardly tell which makes the dough the most sour. If you know your hearts, you know I speak the truth. The apostle says, "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven that ye may be a new lump as ye are unleavened." It must be put out of the house. We must fight against it with tooth and nail, and if we get entangled in pharisaism we must confess it before God, and if we get ensnared in

antinomianism we must beg of him to give us a deeper view of what his Son endured for sin. But there is not only a legal and an antinomian leaven; but there is also a leaven of malice and wickedness. Ah! how can we think that a child of God has malice! I want to know whether he has not. If people injure you in business, don't you feel a malicious spirit heaving up? If a person has ridiculed you, or said something unpleasant to your feelings, and you get to hear about it, are you very mild and gentle, or do you feel a spirit of resentment, and if you could do them an injury upon the spot you would. You cannot endure malice, and yet there is this malicious spirit about you. It might not pass through your lips or hands, but still it is in your heart. Now, how can you keep the feast? You are to sweep out this malice, this callousness. If you have bad thoughts, unkind feelings, against any man or woman, and especially a child of God, how *can* you keep the feast? How *can* roasted lamb agree with malice; a pure, spotless, innocent Christ correspond with wishes against your enemies, so that you could almost malign them, and blacken their character? How can you keep the feast, and all the time have these malicious thoughts in your mind? There might not be leaven on the dining room table, but there might be a crumb or two in a corner of the house, if there were, there was still a condemnation. So though your leaven might not be on the table, it is in a corner of the house, it may be wickedness of any kind, sin, lust, pride or covetousness, yet here is the leaven, and one leaven works as well as another. It must not be so, we must not keep the feast with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness. The feast is to be eaten with unleavened bread, of which the first element is sincerity. If a man is not sincere, he has not taken the first step in religion. How much hypocrisy is there in men's breasts, in men's flattering words, how much insincerity, hypocrisy and vanity is there in the best of men! How hard it is to be sincere! If a

person comes to see you, whether you want to see him or no, you are almost forced to say, "I am glad to see you to-day," and perhaps all the while are glad when he is gone, and there is a lie in your mouth! How hard it is to be sincere before God for a single moment. Have you ever had five minutes of sincerity before God? How impossible, and yet without it, what is man before God? What is he, if he carries a heart about with him that is not sincere? We expect it about worldly people. If a man was known not to be sincere, who could trust him with a five pound note, and oh! in the things of God to be insincere, how awful! The saints of God often fear that they are hypocrites, they feel so much hypocrisy, they feel that they are insincere to the very core. I have felt it over and over again, it has tried me again and again. The feeling of fear lest you should have indulged hypocrisy, and lest you should prove to be an impostor, a stage player, anything but a child of God is very trying; but if we had not unleavened bread we should not so search and try ourselves. When we sweep hypocrisy out of the house as a thing loathed and contemned by God and man, when we have truth in the inward parts, truth in speaking, truth in acting and truth in all the relations of life, and truth before God, then we have the unleavened bread, and they who feed upon a precious Christ must put away all the old leaven, the leaven of malice and wickedness, of falsehood and insincerity.

IV.—Then we come to the exhortation which is our fourth and last point; "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump as ye are leavened." There is purging out, which is by affliction and furnaces, and deep waters where there is no standing, and by feeling the anger of God made manifest against sin. Though the Apostle is speaking to the Church we may take the words in a personal sense, and I ask, "Are you made sincere by the Spirit of God in you, and

the eyes of God upon you, by deep afflictions, hot furnaces, and the presence of a heart searching God and by a heart searching ministry?" A heart made sincere is continually purging out the old leaven; hardly a day goes by but what he has the broom in his hands, like a cleanly woman or servant who always has the duster or brush in her hand to wipe away every speck of dirt, so the Christian takes the brush God puts into his hands and is continually purging out the old leaven from the inward house, for without this dusting and purging there is no feeding upon a precious Christ. What a continual searching of heart does it require to keep out all this which is so disgusting in the eyes of a holy, heart searching God! By all these things the soul is kept alive in the hands of God. Dust is ever settling. Every day brings the dust and every day brings the duster. It is so naturally, and it is so with the Christian. There is in his inward house, there must be, a regular sweeping that the Master may sit down with him, and feast at the marriage supper of the Lamb. But those that eat the passover here will be privileged to sit down hereafter with the Lamb, and will see him in the light of one unclouded day.