

CHAPTER 3

THE UNLEAVENED BREAD

The observance of the Unleavened Bread followed Passover and was associated with it. So much so that the two events were regarded as being one and the same Feast. We read therefore, "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover." (Lk. 22:1; Matt. 26:17). The Passover event itself was on the fourteenth day of the first month, in the evening. Then the Unleavened Bread continued from the fifteenth day until the twenty-first day, seven days in all.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LEAVEN

As to the spiritual significance of the Unleavened Bread we are not left in doubt. Says Paul to the Corinthians, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 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." (I Cor. 5:6-8).

The penetrating and spreading characteristics of leaven make it to be a fitting type of malice and wickedness in a believer or in an assembly. Paul likens the persuasive and corrupting influence of the Judaizers upon the Galatians to "leaven." "This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (Gal. 5:8,9). Again, our Lord likens the doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees to "leaven," because of their evil influence. "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the Sadducees." (Matt. 16:6). To observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, therefore is to live a life that is free from the corrupting influences of sin and the flesh.

HOW TO BE FREE FROM LEAVEN

When the children of Israel departed from Egypt they gathered up their dough before it was leavened, for they did not have opportunity to leaven it, "because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry." (Ex. 12:39). Had they lingered in Egypt, they would have had plenty of opportunity to leaven their dough; but because they were thrust out in haste their bread was unleavened.

So it is with the child of God. As long as he is pressing on with God, and fleeing from the corrupting influences of the world, the flesh, and the Devil - his life is free from sin. He does not have "time" for sin to work within him. He is too busy following his God and following on in the pathway of obedience. But let him linger by the way, lose the vision of the glory that is set before

him, and yearn for the good old days when he had plenty in Egypt - and leaven will begin to work afresh in his life. Let any child of God, or group of saints, lose the vision of God's glory, and before long that man or that assembly becomes filled with the leaven of malice and wickedness. There is only one sure way by which a stream of water can be kept pure and clean-and that is *by flowing*. Let it be diverted into an open pit, and before long the water becomes a stagnant pool and will breed corruption and death. So it is with Truth. When an individual, an assembly, or a group of assemblies settles back in self-complacency, satisfied with their condition, and content with the thought that they have arrived at the Truth - stagnation immediately sets in, the leaven begins to function, and "malice and wickedness" characterize the whole denomination. You simply cannot expect to keep a sect clean from the corrupting influences of the flesh, because if they linger behind when the glory-cloud moves forward, they have plenty of time to leaven their dough. On the other hand, if you proceed from "glory to glory" there is no opportunity for you to become leavened.

MODERN PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES

That is why Jesus warned the disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Now the doctrines of the Sadducees were definitely false, for they denied the resurrection, the fact of angels and spirits, and so forth. They were the predecessors of our modern religions which have a form of godliness but "deny the power thereof." They denied the supernatural; and we have plenty of Sadducees in the world today. But the Pharisees, on the other hand, were quite orthodox in their teachings; so much so that Jesus commanded His own disciples to observe and do what they said. (Matt. 23:3). Why then did He tell the same disciples to "beware" of their doctrine? For this simple reason: "They say, and do not." What they said was all right, generally speaking, but their works gave the lie to their teachings. So it is with our modern Pharisees, our orthodox Christian teachers. They teach about the power of Jesus' blood; they lift you to heights of praise as they expound the glories of the celestial, and the power of Christ's resurrection; they speak much of the miracles of Christ, and the power of the early Church; they will expound the doctrines of healing, and miracles, and the various gifts of the Holy Spirit. But "they say, and do not." And not only that: for they condemn and denounce the man who wishes to go in and explore the glories of resurrection life and the "powers of the age to come." They think it is all right to talk about resurrection and life and the heavenly realm - but when one suggests that this is the heritage of the saints here and now, there are loud protests from the Pharisees. Then the leaven begins its subtle influence, and an orthodox theology develops into malice and wickedness.

O saints of God everywhere, let us launch out into the deep! Let us lift our anchor which has gripped the earth for so long -and let us become anchored to Christ in the heavens, where we ought to be anchored. For God has intended that our anchor should pass into the heavens, behind the veil, whither the forerunner has for us entered. (Heb. 6:19,20). If we are anchored to earth, and to the doctrines of men, we will be earth-bound creatures; but once we

anchor to Heaven and to the Man behind the veil, we are Heaven-bound creatures - and we are constantly rising higher and higher and higher into the realms of the Spirit. Then one day, thank God! - the veil of the flesh shall be rent asunder, and we shall see Him as He is! And when we speak this way, we are not talking about physical death, nor about the rapture; but we are speaking of seeing Him "who is invisible," as Moses did of old. We shall see Him, even though the world sees Him not. Did not Jesus say, "The world seeth me no more; but ye see me..." (Jn. 14:19)? And was He not speaking of seeing Him in the Spirit, because of the coming of the Holy Spirit into the hearts of the disciples?

THE LORD'S SUPPER

"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover." (Lk. 22:1). It is most significant and enlightening when we discover that Jesus used the natural observance of the Feasts of the Lord by which to explain and reveal their spiritual significance. So it was on the occasion of the last Passover that Jesus revealed its true spiritual significance. To fulfill all the righteousness of the Law on the one hand, and to establish the new Covenant on the other, the Lord kept this Feast with His disciples. "With desire," He said, "I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." (Lk. 22:15). He greatly desired to do this that He might introduce His disciples into a new order of worship and fellowship in the Spirit. On the eve of the Passover, when He Himself was about to be slain as the true Passover Lamb, then it was that our Lord gathered His disciples together and gave them the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. He finished the old ceremony that He might establish the new. For it is always consistent with God's plans and purposes that He takes away the first before He establishes the second. (Heb. 10:9). And again, "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual." (1 Cor. 15:46). First the earthly, then the heavenly. First the flesh, and then the Spirit. Christ was therefore desirous to eat the last Passover with His disciples, that He might take it away and establish the new Feast, the Lord's Supper. "And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you." (Lk. 22:19,20).

THIS IS THE HOUR OF RESTORATION

It is certain that God is now preparing His people for the greatest Feast of her long history - the Feast of Tabernacles. And therefore it is not without significance that in this day and hour of restoration God is stressing the spiritual significance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, that we might be prepared to go on to the fulness of Pentecost, and then to Tabernacles. And this must be so, because it is always God's plan to lead us from "glory to glory" and from one experience to the next in Divine order. And though it is true that the Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost, both found their fulfillment in Christ and the early Church - we have now come to the "ends of the ages" when the glory of the past must be restored and absorbed in the last great Feast of the Church. Truth having been largely lost or obscured during the Dark Ages, the Spirit is now as never before bringing forth out of God's treasure-house

things new and old, re-establishing the walls and foundations of Truth, and rebuilding the Temple of God. And so from Reformation days and until now. God has graciously been restoring lost Truth; and the Reformation is by no means finished yet.

Therefore, with the corruption and division of God's people, the true meaning of the Lord's Supper has been lost. That is why Paul said to the Corinthians, rent asunder as they were with strife and heresy: "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not (or, it is not possible) to eat the Lord's Supper." (1 Cor. 11:20). The fact is this: the Lord's Supper, when observed in the Spirit, and in spiritual union and fellowship with the saints, is actual participation with Christ. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of (participation with) the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of (participation with) the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16). Therefore, without that spiritual participation and fellowship, it is really not the Lord's Supper. True, the Corinthians partook of the elements of the Communion just the same as our churches do today - but it was not really the Lord's Supper, because in their carnality they did not understand its true meaning, and instead of appropriating Christ they became weak and sickly, and many even died.

This however, is the day and hour when God is moving by His Spirit to restore His Church, to perfect the saints, and to establish unity in the Body of Christ. This is the day and hour that God has chosen to restore the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem, and turn again the captivity of Zion. And therefore, it is beginning to become possible, once again, for the saints to eat the Lord's Supper in reality, and partake of Christ in so doing. "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." (1 Cor. 10:17). Perhaps we have often wondered why there are so many sick and weak saints of God. But how could we have anything else with a Church filled with malice and wickedness and disunity and bitterness? Under such conditions the Church has been doing nothing more nor less than eating and drinking condemnation to itself- and consequently many have become weak and sickly, and many have died. For it is only in discerning the Lord's Body that we can expect to derive healing and health and life from the Table of the Lord. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation (condemnation) to himself, not discerning the Lord's body..." (1 Cor. 11:29).

THE REAL UNITY IS SPIRITUAL

This Feast is pre-eminently a spiritual Feast, and consequently a spiritual unity that God is mostly concerned about. Let us not be deceived into thinking that great mass rallies, with hundreds and thousands of people from various sects assembled together in one building, constitute the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ is a spiritual Body, and the unity in that Body is a spiritual unity. In this Body, Divine life can flow from one member to another, and from Christ the Head to all members - as the various members minister one to another by the Spirit, and Christ the Head ministers to the whole Body by the same Spirit. Feasting upon the Unleavened Bread, therefore, is living in real genuine fellowship and communion with all the saints, recognizing their God-ordained

ministry in the Body of Christ, and giving honour one to another in meekness and humility. May our constant prayer be, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread. Make us one, even as Thou didst pray in the gathering darkness of the Cross. Purge out of our midst the old leaven, that we might become a new lump. Rid us of all our carnal ways -from divisive tendencies, from the chaos of doctrinal disputes, from hatred and variance and emulations and strife. Restore unity to Thy people, that we may become that holy and glorious Church of which all the prophets and apostles have spoken since the world began. Give us the mind of Christ, till we all think and say and believe and understand the same things.'

And rest assured, child of God, that this prayer is going to be answered; for it is the burden - not only of the holy apostles and prophets who penned the sacred pages of the Bible, but also the prayer of the Son of God Himself, who testified concerning His Father, "I know Thou hearest Me always."