

THE PASSOVER, by Professor R. D. Wilson, D. D.

THE CALENDAR OF THE HEBREWS, by Professor J. M. Mecklin, Ph. D.

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Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

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CONTINUING

The Bible Student and Religious Outlook.

Vol. IV., New Series. DECEMBER, 1901.

Number 6.

A Sore Loss. In common with the cause of truth in general and the Presbyterian Church in particular, THE BIBLE STUDENT has sustained a sore loss in the death of Rev. GEORGE T. PURVES, D. D., LL. D. When THE RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK was merged into THE BIBLE STUDENT the interest of Dr. PURVES was enlisted, his cordial coöperation was secured, and from that time until his lamented death he was on its active staff. Not even his transfer from the professor's chair to the more numerous, various and exacting duties of the most prominent, metropolitan congregation in American Presbyterianism was suffered to withdraw him from his connection with this magazine or to interfere with his regular work on its editorial staff. Such practical devotion to its interests enhances the loss our magazine has sustained. A suitable memorial prepared by one peculiarly and preëminently fitted for the task appears elsewhere in our pages. We here simply note his death and express our sense of sore bereavement.

"God's ways seem dark but, soon or late,
They touch the shining hills of day."

Vocation. There is no doctrine of more practical importance than that of

a divine vocation. There is none that is more uniformly assumed or more frequently referred to. Oftentimes the assumption lies in a mere allusion made by some speaker or writer without adequate appreciation of what is involved in it, using phraseology made current by a usage developed under the influence of Christian conceptions of God and of his providence, coin the image and super-scription of which have been worn off by long use but which are freely given and received for their face value. The fact has become fast embedded in our most familiar phraseology in daily, heedless use. Whenever one's vocation is spoken of, the doctrine is assumed. Even an avowed atheist would not hesitate to refer to another's profession in such terms, saying that his vocation was the law or his calling was medicine. Not that such a man would thus avow his belief in the doctrine of divine vocation, by no means; but at the same time his unwitting use of such words does bear unconscious testimony to the ineradicable hold this doctrine has obtained in the world's thought. Vocation presumes a voice, and calling involves a caller.

When one pursues his "calling" with such enthusiasm and persistence as to challenge note, it is not uncommon to mark the man or woman as one "with a mission," *i. e.*, one who

work,—his faithfulness as a presbyter and his readiness to spend himself in the organized work of the church. No voice was more potent in the church courts. He was a member of four General Assemblies. He served on two of the great Boards through which the church performs its evangelizing functions. He was a much sought after committeeman in every good enterprise. As a member of the faculty at Princeton, his counsel was always valued and his faithfulness and wide-minded loyalty to a high ideal of ministerial education most marked. Into his private life, which was exceptionally beautiful, I must not here intrude. Suffice it to say that he fulfilled in every department of life his full duty in the gladness of willing service. He was married on October 11, 1881, to Miss Rebecca B. Sellers, of Wayne,—his first parish; and she remains with six children lovingly to cherish a memory which must be to them a joy and a blessing throughout life. Wise in counsel, prudent in speech, faithful in performance, he has left behind him the inspiration of a high and devout life, lived in close imitation of the Master who went about doing good. Unsparing of himself, he literally wore himself out in unremitting labor. It was on the 24th day of September last, after forty-nine strenuous years of well-packed, well-directed work, that he escaped from the labors of earth and entered into the rest of God. It would be cruel to begrudge him his well-earned rest:—

His body is at peace in holy ground,
His spirit is at peace where angels kneel.

THE PASSOVER.

PROFESSOR ROBERT DICK WILSON, D. D., PRINCETON, N. J.

The English word "passover" is a noun derived from the verb "to pass over," which was used by the English translators to express the meaning of the Hebrew word employed in Exodus xii. 13, where God says: I will pass over you when I see the blood. It is used in three senses: first, of the paschal lamb; secondly, of the supper; and thirdly, of the whole festival of unleavened bread, extending over the week from the fourteenth of Nisan to the twenty-first.

The word "paschal" is derived through the Latin from the Greek form of the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew word for "passover." Though similar in sound, it has nothing to do with the Greek verb "to suffer," from which, through a false derivation, based upon a similarity of sound, some of the fathers came to speak of the passion of the Lord as the equivalent of the Lord as a passover, or paschal lamb.

Whether the Israelites had observed a festival in the month Nisan before the establishment of the passover, and what were the manner and meaning of such a festival, if festival there was, are questions of interest, but difficult to answer on account of the paucity of the facts known. We can say that it is probable from Exodus v. 1, and like passages, that there was such a festival, and that it was a pilgrim festival for the purpose of sacrifice. But we must further say, that according to the Scriptures, the main purpose of the passover festival, its commemorative character, dates from the time immediately preceding the Exodus, and that its mode of observance was almost altogether altered at that time. A festival before the exodus there may have been, but not a service in thanksgiving for, and as a memorial of, the passing over of the Israelites by the destroying angel, when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain.

Jewish theologians have been in the habit of distinguishing the passover as it was first observed from that which was instituted at Sinai and modified partially in later times. The distinctive characteristics of the Egyptian passover were as follows (see Rodkinson's translation of the Babylonian Talmud, vol. v. 202). The lamb to be sacrificed was ordered to be selected on the tenth of Nisan; it was required, that its blood should be sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop on the lintel and on the side posts of the door, and that it should be eaten in a hasty manner. It seems, also, that the command, that no one should go out of his house until the morning, was meant for this first observance only (Ex. xii. 22). Elias of Byzantium adds, that there was no command to burn the fat upon the altar, that the pure and impure all partook of the paschal meal contrary to the law afterwards given (Num. xviii. 11), that both men and women were required to partake, that the Hallel was not sung, and that the lambs were not slain in the consecrated place (see Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, page

2342, where authorities are cited).

It will be noted that they agree as to the date of the festival; the slaying of the lamb; its age, sex, and freedom from blemish; the sprinkling of the blood; the roasting of the lamb whole; the eating of it in that night with unleavened bread and bitter herbs; the burning with fire of what remained until the morning; and the command to tell their children, when they should ask what it all meant, "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses."

It was deemed of so great importance that every male should have an opportunity of keeping this feast, that a second passover was appointed to be observed a month later than the first (Num. ix. 11). This second passover was intended for those, who in consequence of ritual uncleanness, or of absence on a distant journey, or of error or compulsion, were prevented from observing the first (see Rodkinson: *Babylonian Talmud*, v. 191). It was distinguished from the first, in that, during it, leavened articles might be used in the house and that it was not required to recite the Hallel prayer at the eating of the supper (Rodkinson: *Bab. Tal.*, v. 198).

In considering the feast, we shall treat, first, of the participants in it; secondly, of the preparation for it; thirdly, of the constituents of it; fourthly, of the order of it; and fifthly, of its meaning, as a whole and in its parts.

In the law itself, the males only are commanded to appear before the Lord to observe the feast of the passover (Deut. xvi. 16); but at the institution of the Egyptian Passover it is repeatedly stated that all the household were to be present (Ex. xii. 3, 4). Who were embraced in the term "household" is not defined. In later times, Hannah and Mary are said to have attended the feast (I. Sam. i. 7; Lk. ii. 41, 42); and the Talmud takes it for granted that women might attend, and gives many minute directions as to where they should eat the passover and when they should be precluded by ritual uncleanness from partaking of it. Slaves also, as part of the household had a right to partake of the paschal supper (Lev. xxii. 11; Edersheim: *Laws and Polity of the Jews*, p. 114; *The Babylonian Talmud*, Rodkinson's version, vol. 173 seq.). At what age children were permitted, or

required, to partake, is not mentioned in the Scriptures. The later Jews had the children present at the Passover, in order that they might inquire as to the signification and meaning of it, in accordance with Ex. xii. 26, and xiii. 8-14 (*Hamburger's Real Encyclopädie für Bibel und Talmud*, I. 644). According to the Talmud, minor children, as well as women and slaves, were permitted to participate in the paschal supper (see Rodkinson's version, vol. v., 179).

The preparation for the feast consisted in the careful removal from the house of everything that was leavened and the appearance before the Lord at the central sanctuary (so long as it existed), of every male, with a gift proportioned to his means (Ex. xxiii. 15, Deut. xvi. 15, 16). The lamb was then selected, bought, slaughtered, and offered,—the blood being sprinkled by the priests. Exactly when the lamb was slaughtered is disputed. The phrase "between the evenings" has been interpreted as meaning any time from noon to dark, or from sunset to dark. Deut. xvi. 6 seems to fix the exact time, for it says, "thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down (literally "going in"), of the sun." The lamb must be a male without spot or blemish. It was usually slaughtered by the offerer. Its blood was sprinkled by the priest upon the altar. Its fat was burned on the altar the same evening. After dark the lamb was thoroughly roasted and eaten at a table, around which the company had first arrayed themselves in proper order. Not a bone of the lamb was to be broken (Ex. xii. 9). If any part of it remained until the morning, it was to be burned with fire. The bread used at the passover was unleavened, in accordance with the command of Exodus xii. According to the Talmud, the bread might be made of wheat, barley, spelt, rye or oats; any of which might become leavened; but not of rice or millet, which cannot become leavened. According to the same authority, the unleavened bread was to be made thin, like a wafer, to prevent a possible fermentation. The bitter herbs which were allowed to be eaten are lettuce, endive, nettles, bitter coriander, and horse-radish, either fresh or dried, but not pickled, boiled, or cooked in any way.

The sauce into which the herbs and meat were dipped, was a mixture of various ingredients, such as almonds, vinegar and spices. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament, and its com-

position is not given in the Talmud.

No beverage, in connection with the passover, is mentioned in the Old Testament; but the Mishna declares that no one at the supper should drink less than four cups of wine, even if it had to be given to him from the funds devoted to the support of the poor. It is not certain which of these cups is the cup of blessing of First Corinthians x. 16, since the Mishna speaks of a blessing to be pronounced immediately after the pouring out of each one of the four, and there is nothing to determine which of these blessings is the one referred to by the apostle.

The hymn which was sung by our Lord and his twelve disciples at the last supper, is doubtless the Hallel, or praise song of the passover. The Hallel consisted of the six psalms from one hundred and thirteen to one hundred and eighteen, inclusive. A part of it, how much is not certain, was sung after the explanation of the meaning of the festival, and before the pouring out of the second cup. The remainder was sung after the pouring out of the fourth cup. In addition to the above mentioned articles, the Talmud states, that two kinds of cooked food, such as fish and eggs, or mangold and rice, or two kinds of meat, were allowed; one to serve as a remembrance of the paschal offering, and the other as a remembrance of the feast offering.

The order of the meal was as follows. After all had been arranged at their ease around the table, the first cup was poured out, the blessing on the festival was said, and the benediction on the wine was pronounced. Herbs and vegetables were then brought; the lettuce was immersed, and part of it eaten. Next, unleavened cakes were placed before each one, with lettuce, sauce, and two kinds of cooked food. Then, during the existence of the temple, the paschal sacrifice was brought in. A second cup of wine was next poured out, after which the son inquired of his father the reasons for the ceremony. These having been given, the first part of the Hallel was sung, the third cup of wine was poured out, and the after-dinner benediction was said. Finally, the fourth cup of wine was poured out, the rest of the Hallel was sung, and the blessing on the songs of praise was pronounced. No dessert was allowed. (For the order of the meal given above, see the Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim, chapter x.)

As to the meaning of the passover, three things are especially

explained in the Mishna: the paschal sacrifice, the unleavened cakes, and the bitter herbs. The paschal lamb is said to have been offered, because the Lord passed over the houses of Israel in Egypt. The unleavened bread was eaten, because the people were redeemed from Egypt before they had time to leaven their dough. And the bitter herbs were eaten, because the Egyptians embittered the lives of the children of Israel in Egypt. In the New Testament, the purpose and meaning of the feast are referred to in different connections and in various details. In Hebrews xi. 28, it is said that by faith Moses kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them. In First Corinthians v. 7, Christ is called "our Passover," who was slain for us; and in John xix. 36, the law, that a bone of the lamb should not be broken, is cited as having been fulfilled, when the soldiers brake not the legs of the crucified Jesus, because he was dead already. The connection between the Jewish passover and the Lord's supper is not in all points clear. Certain it is that they are both suppers commemorative of a deliverance wrought by God by means of the shedding of the blood of a substituted sacrifice; through faith in which, God's people are delivered from bondage and death. The sensible signs by which this deliverance is set forth differ widely in the two; but in each case, they are entirely appropriate and show forth clearly the great truths of redemption. The Lord's supper, because simpler in its elements and clearer in its significance, is better fitted than the elaborate passover for a religion, which proclaims a deliverance world-wide and all-embracing.

It will be seen, that in the above discussion, we have confined ourselves to the first day of the feast, or to the passover festival in the narrower sense. In the broader sense, the passover is equivalent to the feast of unleavened bread, to which the sacrifice of the paschal lamb and the supper were the opening service. The other ceremonies marking this seven, or in later times, eight-day festival, were three, or four, in number. On the twenty-first, as well as on the fifteenth, there was a holy convocation; and on the last day of the feast there was a solemn, or closing assembly (Ex. xii. 16, xiii. 6, Deut. xvi. 8). Special burnt offerings were to be made in each of the seven days. These consisted of bullocks, rams and he-lambs, with their appropriate meal offerings

of fine flour mingled with oil. Besides, on each day, a sin-offering of one he-goat was to be offered to make atonement for them.

The third special service was the presentation of the sheaf of the first fruits of the harvest unto the priest (Lev. xxiii. 9-14). With it was offered a he-lamb for a burnt offering, with its accompanying meal and drink offerings. Not until after the presentation of this sheaf, was it permitted to eat bread, or parched corn, or new ears, of the incoming harvest.

In addition to these offerings, which are expressly commanded in the Scriptures, the Mishna speaks of festal offerings, which were voluntary, and additional or supplementary to the paschal lamb. It is probable that this free-will offering is referred to in Deut. xvi. 2, and also in II. Chron. xxxi. 22-29, and xxxv. 7.

THE CALENDAR OF THE HEBREWS.

PROFESSOR JOHN M. MECKLIN, PH. D., EASTON, PA.

In discussing the calendar of the Hebrews, it is well to remember that the modern custom of reckoning days, months or years according to a general and exact era was unknown in antiquity. World-eras approximating our Christian era were known only in late antiquity, and of these only three gained any general acceptance, namely, the Byzantian, the Antiochian or Alexandrian and the Jewish. The Jewish era dating from 376 B. C. gained more general acceptance in the 12th century and still continues to be used.

We find no trace of an era in the Old Testament. The references to the Exile in Ezek. xxxiii. 21; xl. 1; II. Kings xxv. 27; Jer. lli. 31, cannot be so regarded, since it is highly improbable that the Jews would date an era from an event of national humiliation. Neither is I. Kgs. vi. 1 to be taken as a trace of an era reckoned from the Exodus. The jubilee period seems to lend itself most readily to chronological purposes, but we have no evidence that the regulations of Lev. xxv. 9 fg. were ever carried out.

In the absence of an era, it is not to be expected therefore that the Jews should have a fixed and scientific calendar, in our sense of the word. Indeed, it is probable that as late as the beginning