

"There lived among the mountains of Pennsylvania a poor widow, with five fatherless children. On Sabbath morning, when the collection for home missions was to be taken up in her congregation, she called her little ones about her after family worship to consult as to how much, if anything, as a family, they were able to give. In view of their great poverty, and the severity of the winter, the conclusion was unanimous, that nothing could be given. They went to church. The pastor, according to appointment, preached on home missions. On his way home, whilst passing the cabin of the poor widow, she called to him and put into his hands a little something wrapped in a piece of newspaper, saying with great emotion, 'Its Jeems's keepsake.' It was a two dollar and-a-half gold piece, then as seldom seen in our country as the fabled 'hens' teeth.' 'Jeems' was a brave man, who had fallen in the bloody battles of Gettysburg just fourteen years ago. The night before the battle, the commander of the regiment had said, 'Boys, this will be a dreadful struggle. God only knows who, if any of you, will survive it. Send home to your families anything you have to spare, lest you never see them again.'

'Jeems' sent this two dollar and-a-half gold piece to his wife for a keepsake. He sleeps among the many thousands of brave men who fell in that bloody field. Mary had wept a thousand times over this token of his love; but now she feels that Jesus was dearer than 'Jeems', and she gave this keepsake of 'Jeems' to the cause of Jesus. Noble, heroic, Christian woman! She was a true spiritual daughter of the widow of old who cast in 'all her living,' whilst 'Jesus sat over against the treasury.'

Multitudes of our people (not only the poor, but also the rich), greatly need education in the noble underlying principle of true Christianity; i.e., self-denial for Jesus' sake. A PASTOR.
Fort Coulonge.

THE MODERN JEWISH PASSOVER.

BY REV. JOHN DUNBAR.

As the passover period has so recently passed, a period beginning with the 14th day of Nisan, and corresponding with the 20th of April, and extending to the 28th, it may not be out of place for some of us Gentiles to know a little more than many do, of the modern observance of this very ancient and impressive ordinance instituted by God and signally blessed to its observers. In endeavoring to gather up and give a brief outline of the modern observance of this ordinance, it may be needful to premise that there is now no paschal lamb. In the age following the first institution of the passover, and after the settlement of the Jews in the Holy land, the paschal lamb could be slain only by the priest, and in the court of the temple. It was then returned to its owner, carried home and roasted, and thereafter eaten by himself and his household. Scattered now, however, as the Jews are, into all lands, the temple gone and its priesthood broken up, this sacred ceremonial is simply an impossibility, and hence in the observance there is now no paschal lamb.

In modern times, the feast is therefore simply "the feast of unleavened bread," and in the observance of it is still seen the wonted watchful strictness of the "most straitest sect." The wheat from which this bread is to be made, must, as soon as cut, be scrupulously protected against any rain or moisture, that might tend to engender fermentation. Being carefully threshed and winnowed, it is then ground under the supervision of an appointed official, at once to prepare it in accordance with Rabbinical rule, and to preserve it from admixture or adulteration. In modern times, this bread is bought rather than baked by the Jewish families, and in London, England, there is an extensive establishment which supplies a great deal of the foreign as well as all the home demand. The bread is manufactured into very thin cakes, ranging from a little over or under twelve inches in diameter. Each cake weighs about two ounces, and is thickly perforated with little holes; and every synagogue sees to it that all its poor have a sufficient supply.

For a number of days preceding this festival, the houses of the faithful, both rich and poor, undergo a thorough renovation in scrubbing, scouring, polishing, etc., while pots and kettles are heated red-hot in order to free them from every vestige of leaven; and so scrupulous are many families in this respect, that sets of kitchen utensils are carefully kept solely for pass-

over uses, and in consequence are brought out only once a year. After due care has been taken to discover and destroy every particle of leaven, the head of such household, after family prayer on the evening preceding the beginning of the feast, is bound to make diligent search, with wax taper in hand, into every nook and corner of his dwelling, lest after all the least particle of leaven may have been undiscovered and not destroyed. As he enters on this search he utters the pious ejaculation, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, King of the universe, who hast sanctified us with Thy commandments and commanded us to remove the leaven." During the whole process of search he must not utter a single word, but immediately thereafter he makes the solemn declaration, "All manner of leaven that is in my possession which I have not seen nor removed shall be null and accounted as the dust of the earth." Any leaven found in his research is carefully destroyed.

Everything being in readiness, the festival begins on the evening of the passover day. A sacred service is held in the synagogue, on which the families of the faithful attend, arrayed in their best, after which, amid mutual congratulations and hearty good wishes, all return to their respective homes. There in each home is found the passover table set out with its snowy white covering, an emblem of purity, in accordance with the rules of the feast. This table is equal to the requirements of the whole household, for every Israelite, irrespective of rank or position, must sit down to the feast. In the centre of the table is set a dish containing three extra large passover cakes carefully covered with a cloth. Around this are set four smaller dishes; the first containing some horse-radish and parsley, a memorial of the bitter herbs that were wont to be eaten with the paschal lamb; in the second is a mixture of apples, almonds, raisins and cinnamon, as a reminder of the brick-making of Egypt; the third contains some salt water, a memorial of the miraculous passage of the Red Sea; and in the fourth is found a shank-bone of a lamb with a piece of roasted flesh thereon, to commemorate the paschal lamb, and also an egg roasted hard to signify that the lamb was roasted whole. A silver wine-cup is set for each one at the table, while an empty chair and a wine-cup is left for the prophet Elijah, who is expected to appear as the forerunner of the Messiah. Seated as they thus are at the passover table, the whole household arrangements are designedly such as to present in its social freedom and substantial comfort the greatest possible contrast to the bondage and brick-making of Egypt, and from time immemorial the customary table-talk has been of the cruel oppression and miraculous deliverance of their forefathers. The formalities of the feast begin by the master of the house solemnly asking a blessing on themselves and what is set before them, and then each one at the table partakes a little of the wine. He then washes his hands in a basin placed there for the purpose, and thereafter taking some parsley and dipping it in vinegar he presents a small portion to each one, and all in unison reverently say the following grace ere they partake of it: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruits of the earth." After this he uncovers the large dish, takes out and breaks the middle cake of the three in two, and placing one of the pieces between the two whole cakes, he conceals the other under the cushion on which he reclines in allusion to the hurried march out of Egypt when "the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes." He then takes the shank-bone of the lamb and the egg off the dish, and all at the table taking hold together of the dish containing the cakes, again in unison say, "Lo, this is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt." The shank-bone and the egg are again placed on the table and the wine again partaken of. They all drink of the cup four times during the evening in token of the four expressions employed by God in connection with the deliverance from Egypt. These expressions are: "I will bring you," "I will rid you," "I will redeem you," "I will take you."

After numerous prayers, psalms, and rabbinical sayings, which complete the first part of the ceremony, the master of the house then takes the two whole cakes and the broken one in his hands together, and breaking off a piece from one of the whole cakes, as well as from the broken one, first for himself and then for each member of the household, each partakes of the two pieces together, but not before all in unison have said the following blessing: "Blessed art Thou,

O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hath sanctified us with thy commandments, and commanded us to eat unleavened cakes." Then he takes some lettuce, or tops of the horse-radish, and holding them up before the company as a memorial of the bitter bondage of Egypt, each one partakes thereof after saying, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with Thy commandments, and commanded us to eat bitter herbs." The remaining whole cake is thereafter broken, and a piece of it with some other bitter herbs dipped in a red mixture, in memory of the bricks of Egypt, is handed to each one at the table and by them eaten as a memorial of the unleavened bread and bitter herbs which were commanded to be eaten with the paschal lamb. As the remaining portion of the hidden cake has to be divided among all present and a little piece of it to be kept by each till the following year as a sort of protective charm against all calamities, no little apparent consternation is manifested when the master suddenly discovers that it has mysteriously disappeared from under the cushion where he had concealed it. It had been designedly spirited away as part of the proceedings; soon however it is again found and being disposed to its designed use assumed grief speedily gives place to asserted gladness. After partaking again of the passover cup, prayer is offered, and Psalms and hymns are sung chiefly relating to the wished for speedy rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the ceremonies of the day ends with a hearty and harmonious service of song in honor of the temple once the glory and rejoicing of Jerusalem.

In connection with this ordinance the question is still formally asked by one of the younger members of the family, "What mean ye by this service?" and the reply thereto somewhat modified from that enjoined by Moses is no less formally given. The following day the ceremonial is kept up. The first two and the last two of the eight days of the observance, are with some local variations somewhat similarly kept. The four intermediate days form a kind of half-holiday in which kindly socialities are generously interchanged, but no work must be done and no leaven must be seen during the whole of the passover observances.

THE KEY TO THE DOCTRINES OF SCRIPTURE.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, TORONTO.

Much is said to-day about the relinquishment of doctrine. The old-fashioned doctrinal sermons like those of Jonathan Edwards and Thomas Shephard, embellished at the end of their introduction with the formidable formula "DOCTRINE," preceding the statement of doctrine in the Scripture to be discussed, have long since passed away. Those sermons were in keeping with the character of the people and their quiet, steady times. Then, there were no railways rushing wildly into the nooks and corners of the country disturbing its peaceful silence, no telegraphs nor daily newspapers with their bulletins of exciting news to every town and hamlet in the land. No such incessant intercourse and communication with the most distant parts as we have now, and which really make this great globe but one vast community. There were, comparatively, no distracting elements in the life of the people. Everything went smoothly on. Hence they could listen patiently to a long doctrinal discourse, with most excellent receptive powers, and afterwards "inwardly digest" the same. Indeed, it was to them a kind of necessary food and stimulant to their whole nature. It took the place of the newspaper, the periodical, and the abundant intercourse, that are enjoyed to-day. But the times have changed, and men have changed with them. And the style of preaching has changed also—changed, shall we say, necessarily. The old truths are insisted upon still, but in another way—a more excellent way, in many respects, we think. Doctrines are not now dwelt upon abstractly, they are treated in their relations to the living Lord Jesus. Speaking accurately they are heard of very seldom as being "doctrines" at all. And yet they are as effectively taught as ever before. In our day the prevailing style of teaching is, if not Pauline, at least in the spirit of Paul who said as giving the grand purpose of his Christian life: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." The preaching of Jesus Christ as the Sin-bearer, the Saviour of men, is the grand characteristic of the preaching of our time. He is living—alive