

again around a joyous board in His Father's kingdom. To this blessed reunion Jesus taught His disciples to look forward.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

How would it do to begin by saying over, once or twice, slowly and deliberately—"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (the Golden Text)? This will arrest the attention of even restless scholars.

Before the attention droops, ask, "What was the Passover?" "What is meant by 'is sacrificed'?" The class knows about the Passover lamb, and the sprinkled blood, Ex. 12. As to the second question, the father of the family had "sacrificed" the lamb, shed its blood by God's appointment and for the preservation of life.

The "feast of unleavened bread," v. 1. Explain that the Passover was so called because for seven days all the bread eaten was unleavened (made without the yeast or fermenting process). This signified all sin put away.

Now the way is clear. Follow Jesus' footsteps day by day of that last sorrowful week (see Connecting Links). It is Thursday now, "the first day of the feast of unleavened bread," when every good Jew must prepare for the Passover. Hence the anxious question of the disciples. They were far from their homes; where should they and their Master eat the Passover lamb?

His last meal before His death! Jesus knew it, although they did not. How calmly He arranged! "My time is at hand." Verse 18 gives the directions. Mark 14: 13, 15; Luke 22: 10-12 complete the detail—all likely arranged beforehand by Jesus with some faithful friend, the arrangement being one to secure Him from sudden discovery and arrest by His foes. So they "made ready" the lamb and the bitter herbs and the unleavened cakes, with the sauce ("sop") of fruits and vinegar, and the wine.

The evening hour! At the end of the Thursday and the beginning of the Friday, for the Jewish day ended and began at sundown. Were ever men so privileged as these twelve (v. 20)? Was there ever, before or since, such a meal? Let us draw near very softly: it is thrice holy ground.

"As they did eat." Describe the Oriental method, each one of a group of three or four dipping a scoop-like piece of bread into a common dish. How safe they all felt; and how closely drawn to one another and to their loving Master! (If there is time, bring in the beautiful story of John 13: 1-10, which belongs here.)

Like a sudden thunder clap, with its thick darkness following, came the words of v. 21! What could it mean? No wonder those good-hearted, loving, honest men were "exceeding sorrowful." "How could I be so base?" each one said. And yet they knew that He knew them even as they did not know themselves, and so they cried out in fear, "It is not I, is it, Lord?"

There was one who said the words with his lips, but, at the same time, felt the coins in his money bag, the silver for which he had sold his Master. Who would be a Judas? How Judas must have quaked as he heard the words of v. 23! Nothing could he hide from this all-seeing Master; and those more terrible words still of vs. 24, 25. (For "as it is written," see Ps. 22; Isa. 53.) That dreadful thought will sink in almost of itself—better never to have been born than to prove false to Christ; and that other great mystery—our sin is none the lighter because it carries out God's plan. Note how Judas holds on defiantly (v. 25), and how Jesus pierces through his armor of defiance and pretence; read what John says, ch. 13: 30. Oh, the blackness of the night for that lost soul!

The feast of love follows. Explain each step. The scholars are now on familiar ground; they can give the meanings. In v. 28 come back to the Passover lamb. Hymn 158, vs. 1, 2, Book of Praise, interprets it.

A deep shadows follows—this is His last meal with them: the end is at hand. Then a glimpse into the blue, and the glory—the new wine of heaven, v. 29. Then the hymn of thanksgiving (v. 30), Ps. 118, and "they went out into the Mount of Olives," went out to we know what!

Did Jesus grudge the woe that followed? Golden Text is the answer, with the emphasis on "us."