

(Continued from page 294.)

public opinion is. Probably some of the very lips that shouted hosanna, not long after, shouted crucify Him; and the very parties who hailed Him as king of their nation, rejoiced when He was condemned as a malefactor, and sentenced to die the dreadful death of crucifixion.

### THIRD SABBATH.

**SUBJECT:**—*The Lord's Supper*—Matt. 26 : 26-30.

We learn from the preceding verses of this chapter that our Saviour was at Bethany, two miles from Jerusalem, when he sent His disciples into the city to prepare the passover feast for Himself and His followers. Luke tell us that James and John were sent and that they found everything as Jesus had predicted, and "they made ready." The hour of the feast when he sat down with the twelve would be six in the evening. Observe how Jesus fulfilled the rites and ceremonies of the old religion up to this time, but not in the slavish and ritualistic manner of his countrymen. The Passover was the great Jewish feast. It was instituted in Egypt when the destroying angel passed over the blood-sprinkled houses of the Israelites and entered, and slew the first born in the homes of the Egyptians. But now comes the hour of transition between two economies and their two great festivals—the one about to close forever, the other to begin its career which shall not cease until it be transferred from earth to Heaven.

The season of the year would be part of our March and April. The place of meeting was an upper room in Jerusalem, and those who sat with Jesus were His chosen twelve. How strange that among so few there should have been a traitor like Judas. If his hard heart was concealed from the eyes of his fellow disciples it was not hid from Christ who pointed him out as "the one of them that should betray Him." It is supposed that Judas left the table before the celebration service began and that he did not partake of the symbols of bread and wine.

"This is my body." It is impossible to suppose that our Lord meant anything more than that the broken bread he held in His hands represented his body which was soon to be broken and bruised for our sins. And yet many maintain that Christ meant that the bread was his own body; although all the senses must have testified the absurdity of such a thing. His disciples who saw Him break the bread, and heard Him speak as He sat beside them never could for a moment have supposed that he meant anything of the kind. They knew well that He was then speaking in the way

He was so fond of teaching them viz., by figures and symbols. He had told them that He was a vine and that they were the branches, again he said "I am the door," "I am the good shepherd," "Ye are my sheep," &c. We cannot, without setting common sense at defiance, imagine that the disciples would take these words in their strict and natural sense, and conclude that their Master had become a real door, or a real vine, or that they had become metamorphosed into branches, or sheep. No! they would be at no loss to know what He meant, and would at once seize on the great spiritual lessons, so simply and strikingly set before them.

And he took the cup. The cup of blessing passed round the table to all the guests on such occasions. A Jewish head of a family would here explain to his assembled household the origin and meaning of the Passover. This explanation was given every year in answer to this question put by the eldest son. "What mean ye by this service? Exod. 12, 26." When this question is put to us as Christians at the celebration of the Lord's Supper let us see that we can give an intelligent reply. It points us to a greater than Israel's deliverance, and to blood more precious than that sprinkled on any Egyptian door way. It points "to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," and to the great deliverance he has accomplished on our behalf.

Observe that Christ before He broke the bread or gave them the cup asked a blessing and gave thanks—thus He teaches us as His disciples a great lesson that we should remember and practise. He reminds us that any blessing comes from our Heavenly Father, and should be thankfully acknowledged when partaken of.

Notice how closely our blessed Master drew the cords of Divine brotherhood that bind together all His disciples. Not only were they seated together at the same table, but eating from the same loaf, and drinking from the same cup. They thus openly declared that they were fed by the same Father's hand, and bound to one another by the ties of mutual dependence. Now also they are taught that as His disciples they must bear one another's burdens and by loving one another convince the world that they are His true followers. Eating and drinking together is an ancient way of showing friendship, but this feast means more than friendship. It means that all who partake of it believe in the same God who feeds them by His bounty, and that they believe in the same Saviour and hope for pardon in the same blood. It proves that they are all children of the same Father, members of the same family, travelling together to the same Father's home