

CONCERNING "EASTER."

Dear Friend,

If, by God's infinite grace, you and I are not only called Christians, but have passed out of death into life (John 5. 24), shall we consider His will concerning some things which at first seem to many harmless, necessary, or desirable? It is clear that neither "Good Friday" nor "Easter" are Scriptural terms, the latter being linked with the heathen goddess Astarte, and Ashtaroth, see Judges 2. 13, 1 Kings 11. 5. The word in Acts 12. 4 is a mistranslation of "PASCHA" or Passover. Moreover, "Lent" has a pagan origin; and likewise the well-known BUNS (connected with the miscalled queen of heaven), and the dyed symbolic EGGS.

If, then, we are simple and open-hearted disciples of Christ, should we have anything to do with these things? Do not let us throw aside such a suggestion, and persist in any present actions, because they are usual. CHRISTIANITY is not a "development." We must have God's own authority for everything. If God's people are to avoid the sad way of the heathen (Jer. 10. 2), and if Psalm 16. 4 suggests that the Lord Jesus refused all fellowship with evil, can those who belong to His Kingdom not born of this world, those who desire to be of a Church, EK-klesia, i.e. called out from and distinguished from this ruined world (John 17. 14),—can such please Him if they fall in with traditions? Moreover, even if the days now marked out annually were exactly those of Christ's Passover-death and resurrection, for His wrath-deserving, but blood-purchased people, would the uncommanded observance be satisfactory (Lev. 10. 1, Prov. 30. 6)? Hear what the Holy Spirit led the apostle to say—"Ye observe days and months and times and years: I am afraid of you." (Gal. 4. 10, 11). These things are not little. We cannot thrust them aside. We have Scripture for meetings on any available day (Heb. 10. 25, Acts 5. 42), and for the breaking of bread in the Lord's Supper on the Lord's Day (Acts 20. 7*), but not for an ANNUAL observance, evidently not for a special "service" that would almost suggest share in the unique and sacrificial agony of the Lord, and that would forget His "FINISHED" work on the one altar of His spotless life.

Some will agree with this, yet themselves have "crossed" buns. Apart from origin thereof, let it be remembered we are only told by the word the HOLY SPIRIT chooses, that the stake (stauros) on which Christ was crucified was an upright pole (cf. John 3. 14), and we have no evidence of a cross beam, which, however, WAS a heathen cross in heathen mysteries. Our English translation "cross," and Art that presumes to paint the dying Lord of glory, cause much that grieves God.

And a special "celebration" of a "sacrament" on "Easter" morn is entirely contrasted, in name and nature, with "the bread which we break," weekly, (1 Cor. 10. 16), without priest or official president, in the "Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. 11. 20). No gaudy ceremonial, nor rare observance, nor morning communion have God's approval. If we accept tradition against the Scriptures, we deny the authority of the Spirit of God, and pave the way for fully-developed Romanism. 2 Timothy 3. 13 is very solemn. Nor is Revelation 22. 19 unnecessary, or unmeaning.

If, therefore, dear reader, in the Lord's mercy, you are conscious of salvation, and desire to be preparing for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, will you not consider these things before the Lord, and, confessing sin, give up those things which are not of Him? Let us each, if born of the Spirit, (John 3. 6), endeavour to know the meaning of the inspired message—

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ENGRAFTED Word, which is able to save your SOULS. But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth THEREIN, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." James 1. 19-25.

Let us be gathered humbly outside any popular or state "church," as HIS pilgrims and rejected ones, without grand buildings, ritual or priests, simply baptized as obedient believers (Mark 16. 16), in a way suggestive of burial (Rom. 6. 4), seeking the Lord's Supper as in Acts 20. 7; praying for His guidance of assemblies through brethren whom He raises up, and refusing elders contrary to 1 Timothy 3, and pressing forward into the Kingdom, willing even for much tribulation (Acts 14. 22).

The mark of a disciple is spiritual adherence to the Word of his Lord. Let all habits, and wishes, and ideas be brought to the test of that Word. Humiliation before Him is precious in view of His near Coming (Jas. 5. 8).

Valuing correspondence with any enquiring ones, concerning the Truth, which we all grasp so feebly, and reminding of John 8. 31, 32, and seeking to feel its power, personally, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit,

Yours sincerely in Christ's service,
Percy W. Heward.

* Mark the resurrection day of Acts 13. 33 in its weekly stress (1 Cor. 16. 2).