

# The Feast of Jehovah

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## THE SABBATH.

### *Lev. 23: 1-3.*

The scripture we are entering on at this time brings before us the whole outline of the dealings of God with His people on earth. It is not of course in detail, but first is the original purpose as before God; next, the foundation which He laid in order to accomplish this purpose; then, again, the ways of God in the application which He made of the mighty work thus accomplished; and, finally, the direct and full result at Christ's appearing in glory, the heavenly things as well as the earthly.

It will be proved in the course of these remarks that God did really look forward far beyond the existing state of His ancient people. The Feasts had a simple and primary application, as no Christian doubts, to the Jews as they then were. The Feasts, at any rate the chief of them, served the purpose of gathering Israel around Himself where He had placed His name. But it is impossible to limit scripture to such an application. We hope to gather what the Holy Ghost contemplates in the shadows; for He was looking on to other things far greater than men are apt to allow. All was future in this point of view; and we may clearly see what has been accomplished, and what will be, as well as that which is now being verified. He has anticipated therein what was to have an entirely different and superior character, indeed what we commonly call Christianity. He also removes the veil from the age to come when He will establish the kingdom in glory. Whether for heaven or for earth, we see the stress laid on "holy convocations": for God in Christ will gather His own around Himself. When we think what man

was and is become, what grace! Thus we shall be able to trace the dealings of God, first, not merely in letter but in spirit, and then, when it will be no longer grace but glory, and this not only for heaven but mainly for the earth. It is quite a mistake to suppose that His glory is connected only with heaven. Undoubtedly He has allowed Satan to do his worst; but He has already won the victory morally in Christ, and efficaciously in His death and resurrection: and He will prove it before every eye in a day fast approaching. But now we walk by faith, not by sight. May the scripture thus brought before us continue to strengthen the faith of those who believe, as well as to rebuke those who dare to disbelieve, the word of God.

The first thing to which attention should be drawn is the sabbath, introduced in an altogether peculiar manner. This is no mere notion of mine, nor of any one else. It is marked very clearly in the opening of the chapter before us.

" 1 And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, 2 Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, The set feasts of Jehovah, which ye shall proclaim [as] holy convocations, these [are] my set feasts. 8 Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh day [is] a sabbath of rest, a holy convocation; no manner of work shall ye do. It [is] a sabbath to Jehovah in all your dwellings" (vers. 1-3). Thus the feasts open; but let us notice that the fourth verse begins again, "These are the feasts of Jehovah." Hence we see that in the beginning of the chapter, where the feasts are introduced generally, the sabbath is named in particular; next, in ver. 4, there is a fresh beginning which excludes the sabbath.

Now there is nothing in vain in scripture; not a word from Genesis to Revelation which God wrote could be changed but for the worst. We know certain minds find this difficult to believe; and the reason is because they judge of God by themselves. If you, they, or I had written it, there would have been many a word to change for the better; and we are apt to attribute our infirmities to God's word. No man can rightly reason on God's word from himself; nor is it sound to reason from nature up to nature's God. We must begin with God, and reason from Him (or His word) down to His works. If we start with what we find in reason or things here below, it is a start with what is frail, feeble, inconstant. How can we reason soundly when we commence with that which breaks at a touch? When we begin with God and His word, we are bound by that which judges all men and things. But the tendency of man is to take on him to judge the word of God; did he believe that the word of God judges all, it would be safer and more becoming. If God has given a revelation of His mind, the revelation must be worthy of Himself; and He has taken particular care to call it His word. Undoubtedly He wrought by various means; but He never calls it the word of Moses, of David, of John, or Paul's, or the word of man, but the word of God. Let us never forget this.

It may be said that here is a difficulty, and what appears even an irregularity. The sabbath is introduced, first as the beginning of the feasts; and then, secondly, we begin with the sabbath left out. Why? Because the sabbath has a character altogether peculiar to itself. Evidently as a matter of fact, and merely looking at it from a literal point of view, all the other feasts were celebrated but once a year, the sabbath every week. There is therefore a distinct line of demarcation; and so the second beginning is justified. But still the sabbath has the character of a feast, and with a most important aim, if in a way that marks no other; for this feast, and this alone, was to be continually repeated, as the end of the week came round. It was of all importance, that its twofold witness should be habitually before God's people, the testimony to the creation as His work that sanctified it from the first, and the testimony of the great rest of God which His people are to enter and enjoy at the end.

Here let us not fail to notice the difference between this and what scripture calls "the Lord's day." Those who would and do confound the two understand neither. The sabbath day was originally

and historically at the end of the week, when man had accomplished his ordinary round of toil. The end he gave to God. He had laboured himself for six days, on the seventh he rested. According to God's law, it was not merely a seventh but "the" seventh day. No other day of the week would have done so well, or at all, if one looked at it with truly fear of God. From a utilitarian point of view, one day was as good as another; and this is man's way of dealing with things. But God knows that man is prone to forget Him even in creation, above all to forget the gracious and final purpose of God pledged in the sabbath.

What is it that God means to bring in? A rest for Himself, a rest worthy of Himself, and a rest which He will share with His people. When will this be? Not till the end of all things. It is a wicked and fatal delusion that every man will enjoy that rest. No one can think or say so who believes what sin is, or that God will judge it, and the world by the Man risen from the dead and ordained for it. But while acknowledging that God must show His deep resentment against evil, we know also by faith that He has brought in a Deliverer and a deliverance for all who believe, in due time a manifest and glorious deliverance for creation. This is precisely what God will display in the day of Christ's appearing; and His rest it will be.

Let me refer here to the striking New Testament scripture on the rest of God. In Heb. 3 and 4 we find the Spirit of God (after pointing to Christ on high, Son of God, and Son of man, Who had died atoningly) to introduce this rest. What gave occasion to it was the evident danger for the Hebrew believers of taking their ease now, and thus forgetting they were pilgrims passing through the wilderness. They were so accustomed to connect with the coming of Messiah a present rest, that they could hardly understand why they were ushered into a scene of trial answering to His Who suffered without the gate, and were called to count it their privilege. They were in danger of seeking to make themselves at ease and comfortable here. The First Epistle to the Corinthians shows that they were not alone in this. It is a very natural snare to the heart of man, even for those who have found the Saviour. After a trying time of doubt and anxiety, the soul knowing what the judgment of God on sin is, and its own utter guilt and condemnation, there is often danger of reaction when deliverance in the Lord Jesus is once found.

The saints are apt to settle down, thinking that the campaign is over, because the great battle has been fought, and the victory is given through the Lord Jesus Christ. They flatter themselves that no great trouble can be more, because the deep soul-distress is closed. It is sufficiently plain that these Hebrews were in some such state. Hence the apostle not only reminds them later how joyfully they took their early spoliation and sufferings, but here instructs them that theirs is not yet the pattern of the settlement in the land, but like Israel to march through the desert. Accordingly we find that the whole argument of the Epistle supposes not the temple but the tabernacle, from first to last; and thus it hails from the camp, not from the kingdom to be set up in due time after the conquest of Canaan.

Hence it is said, "Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. 4: 1). The apostle does not speak of believing in the Lord Jesus for present rest of conscience. Had this been the point before him, he would have boldly assured them that faith has no need to fear. To speak of the blood of Christ, and then exhort to fear, would be the denial of the glad tidings. For the gospel is the declaration of full remission, yea, of more than this, of reconciliation, of salvation of souls (1 Peter 1: 9), through the Lord Jesus. If forgiveness through Christ's blood were in question, he would rather call on them to dismiss every fear; for, as the apostle John says in discussing the point, "perfect love casteth out fear." It is not "perfect love" on our part (the law asked for this, and never could get it), but the perfect love of God, which is only revealed in and through our Lord and Saviour. What are we to fear then? Not the blood of Christ failing, not

losing the remission of sins through change of mind at any moment from grace in God. Be afraid of settling down in this world; fear the coming short of the true outlook of pilgrims and strangers on the way to a better land. To have rested in the wilderness would have been fatal to Israel; and so we have to remember that this is not our rest, and that to settle down is virtually to deny and lose the rest to come.

In this Epistle the Spirit of God urges the necessity of going forward to the rest of God; and I press this as the only genuine meaning, because it is often applied to soul-rest, which it rather tends to enfeeble or destroy. That it is not within the scope of the passage of the text, we may see from verse 11, where we read, "Let us labour (or, use diligence) therefore to enter into that rest." What sort of a gospel would it be to tell people they must do so for rest of conscience? Evidently it would upset the grace of God, for that means no other than salvation by works. On the face of it, all can see that the apostle is addressing such Jews as professed Christ, who were in danger of slipping into present ease, instead of pressing through the wilderness world on their way to "that rest," the rest of God's glory.

Do not suppose that one overlooks Matt. 11: 28, that in Christ is a present rest for faith. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." This is the rest of grace now, not of glory. Then follows something further too: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." First, in pure sovereign favour, He gives rest unconditionally to all the weary that come; and then, when walking in the path of obedience and submission to Him, the faithful find rest. For if one be disobedient, one must have (as 1 John 3 teaches) the heart ill at ease. Our heart condemns us; how then can be any rest of soul? But there remains a third sense: not only rest given by Christ as a present relief to the conscience; and, again, true rest of heart found in the path of obedience and learning of Him; but the rest of God, when it is no longer a question of man and sin and self-will and misery, but all the chequered scene of toil and suffering will be over; when God will rest in the satisfaction of His own love and glory, having brought His sons and His people into His everlasting rest, rest above and rest below.

Doubtless, as the apostle argues, God gave the sabbath at the beginning; but this was not His rest, for sin spoiled creation. Hence He says afterwards, "If they shall enter into my rest." "If" implies that they had not entered it, and might fail also. So again, after Joshua (the "Jesus" of Heb. 4: 8) had put down the Canaanites (though never completing the conquest), after Israel had settled themselves in the land, was it then the rest of God? By no means; for the Psalm which speaks of that rest as not yet was written long after Adam and even Joshua. The conclusion is that "there remaineth therefore a rest (σαββατισμὸς, a sabbath keeping) for the people of God." Consequently it is not yet come.

Further, the apostle strengthens this from another principle, namely, that one cannot be both working and resting in the same sense, at the same time. If one has entered into rest, he has done with works, even as is said of God Himself (ver. 10). But the bright day when we shall rest is not yet arrived. He therefore exhorts the saints to diligence meanwhile. Now is the time for work; and every one that has the love of Christ in such a world as this must feel it, for the simple reason that sin and wretchedness overspread the world. Divine love, whether in God or in His people, refuses to rest in evil or in misery. After Christ comes, it will not be so. "There remaineth therefore a sabbath-keeping for the people of God."

Further, it is a mistake to suppose the sabbath is done with, for it is to be in force throughout the millennium. I am not speaking of the Lord's day, when we very properly meet together as Christians; and let me say, so far from its being a mere question of man or the church appointing the Lord's day, that it has the very highest divine sanction. So true is this, that a Christian in losing sight of the import,

object, and character of the Lord's day, would be more guilty than a Jew who dishonoured the sabbath day. But as the Lord's day came in by the resurrection of Christ for the Christian and the church meanwhile, it will be the sabbath, and not the Lord's day, when Jehovah God establishes the kingdom, and our Lord Jesus Christ reigns manifestly; when idolatry shall be abolished, superstition swept away, and every kind of iniquity which now raises its head will have met its end; when the groaning creation of this world will sing for joy. For one pities the man who thinks the world was only made to be spoiled. Certainly he who does not believe it is spoiled must be most lamentably wrong; but it is a gloomy and false thought that God made creation only to be ruined. As sure as the first Adam was the means of universal ruin for the creature, so the Second Man will be the great Deliverer not only of us but of it. He will reconcile to God all that He made, that is, all "things:" not all *persons*, for this is fatal error. In scripture you never read of all persons being reconciled.

One little word makes all the difference between blessed truth and hateful error. What can be more false than the infidel dream of universal restoration? God will judge all whose sins have not been borne away to faith in Christ and His cross.

There is a day coming when all creation shall rejoice, when the heavens and earth and all in them unite together. God has taken particular pains to express the earth's joy also, and it is a singular proof of the infatuation of man that he cannot see it though clearly revealed. This will be the rest of God; and, when it comes, the sabbath (and not the Lord's day) will again be the distinctive sign of God, which He will have observed and honoured through the whole earth. You will judge then from this that one is anything but an anti-sabbatarian. Yet it is an indisputable fact now that all is changed. We do not keep the last but the first day of the week. And what principle lies at the bottom of the change? That the Lord is risen indeed, and not only so, but is gone to heaven; and the first day of the week shines from the person of the risen Lord Jesus in the heavens, now opened, on a heavenly people who are as yet here, but going to be with Him there at His coming. Hence it must always follow that, when men confound the sabbath and the Lord's day, they are earthly-minded. As the sabbath is bound up exclusively with the earth and an earthly people, so is the Lord's day with those who are "heavenly."

It is not the same principle which we find in the Lord's day; for this is the intervention of divine power in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, after He had gone down into death to make propitiation for our sins, yea, to reconcile us and all things to God. Consequently the Lord's day is an excellent day for spiritual toil, for the work of faith and the labour of love; and no one acquainted with Christ would think it wrong, if able, to preach a dozen sermons on that day, or to take many sabbath-day's journeys to preach them. Were it the sabbath-day, he could not do so lightly. Thus they have a wholly different character. The source, nature, and end of the Lord's day is marked out by grace in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, as the sabbath is by creation and the law of God.

It seemed good to the Lord then, and it is necessary for man, that there should be first the "rest truth of the sabbath set forth before we enter on the basis of all, and the ways of God. Before He gave the type of His redemption work, He hung out clearly and distinctly this initiatory pledge of rest at the end. "I am coming to have My rest (it means) but not to have it alone; you shall share it in glory with Me." The sabbath is to be fulfilled in a day yet to come; and both for heaven and earth. But the rest is after all work is done, whether in type or anti-type.

# THE PASSOVER.

## *Lev. 23: 4, 5.*

Here we come to a very distinct thing: God laying the foundation for all blessing. Mark first, He does not effect it hastily. There are many who think it would have been better if God had at the beginning given His Son to die for sinners. Instead of this He waited for 4,000 years and more. In His word we get the key to the difficulty. "In due season Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5: 6). When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, come of woman, come under law that He might redeem, etc. (Gal. 4: 4-6). It was not on the first day of the first month that the passover was instituted, the great standing type of Christ slain for sinners, but on the fourteenth day. Was not God in this delay of importance in many ways testifying the fulness of time?

First, He leaves man to his own way; and then, lest man should complain that he had gone astray because abandoned to himself, God took him in hand and tested him under law. So Israel, as the centre of mankind, was placed under His government. What was the result? After all possible pains the tree bore more bad fruit. Israel at the close was worse than at the beginning. The end of man morally was the cross of Christ. They hated the Son and the Father. Therefore do we hear of Christ's death at the consummation of the ages (Heb. 9: 26). It is not a mere chronological expression. God had tried man in various ways, as judgment, promise, law, rejection of His people, etc. which ended in nothing but wickedness and ruin. What does God then? He displaces alike man's sin and his religion, which blinded him to sin as well as to God's grace, by the infinite work of redemption; and this is what we have in the Feast of passover.

" 4 These [are] the set feasts of Jehovah, holy convocations which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. 5 In the first month, on the fourteenth of the month at even, [is the] passover to Jehovah" (vers. 4, 5). What was the great truth set forth in this Feast? God had intervened to deliver His people from the house of bondage. It was not because of any good in them; for the children of Israel were at that time worshipping false gods, and were utterly indifferent to the glory of the True. Next, if God delivers them, He must deliver them righteously. Pay particular attention to this. It is not simply a question of mercy in forgiving wicked people, but He will have them before Him on a foundation of right. He is a just God and a Saviour. Hence on that night He sent through the land a destroying angel to avenge sin. It was His judgment of evil, as the first thing impressed. He came down by that angel to deal with whatever was offensive to His nature and character. But one thing stayed the hand of the destroying angel, namely, the blood of the slain lamb. Wherever this was not on the doorposts and upper lintel, death reigned. Not that God was yet judging all men or all false gods. It was a sample, which testified practically what sin deserved, and what alone could screen from divine judgment. Jehovah declared by that blood on the sprinkled doorposts of the children of Israel, that only the death of a suited substitute could stay judgment.

If it was in the last degree solemn — the lamb judged for sin, what wondrous grace also! Judgment falling on the lamb; not on the guilty, but on the substitute! The judgment of God because of our sins Christ was given to endure, the spotless Lamb of God. What made the Lord Jesus sweat anticipatively as it were great drops of blood? Was simple dying before Him? This would lower the Lord below yourself, if you are a believer. A Christian rejoices in the thought of departing to be with Christ, Who alone suffered and died for our sins. But what meant that cry, "My God, my God, why didst thou forsake me?" It was the judgment of sin which then fell on Christ. It was not what the Jews did, nor Pontius Pilate, nor Herod, nor what man in general laid on Him.

We know the popular hymn says, "I lay my sins on Jesus." But the truth is far better: God laid them there. If you or I had to bring our sins for expiation, we might have forgotten many; Jehovah laid the whole burden on Him. Hence the Lord suffered on the cross as never did before either any other or Himself. For if He had been bearing sins all His life, as some say, either He must have been forsaken of God all His life, or God must have acted as if sin was tolerable till then. Is either thought true? Neither; indeed without even an appearance of truth. Christ suffered once (ἄπαξ) for sins.

The judgment of God falling on the Lamb alone explains what sin is and calls for. The sprinkling of the blood on the doors answers to the believer's application of Christ's blood by faith to his own case. In this and this alone was seen that which made it a righteous thing to pass over sin. God's judgment fell on His Son, because He is His Lamb Who was able to bear it. The blood of the Lamb is the witness of God's judgment, but in the richest grace, because on His Son it fell. This was God's basis; and let it be remembered that in these types we have not what Moses or others understood, but what God said and faith receives in and through our Lord Jesus.

Do you ask the authority for all this? 1 Cor. 5: 7 declares "Christ, our passover, was sacrificed for us." Is not this ample warrant? The Holy Spirit says it to those who had been Gentiles and now were His church. In Egypt and before then He looked far beyond the Jew to another day; and in this day we find ourselves. But beyond us Christ's death is the groundwork of all blessing, the blood of the slain Lamb, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. We may see too, that it was not a question of continuous or repeated offering; as is argued in Heb. 9: 26, "For now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Further, "He bore," as Peter says, "our sins in His own body on\* the tree." The consequence of His work is perfect peace to the believer. If it were continually going on, one could not, one ought never here to, have settled peace. The perfect efficacy goes with the singleness of Christ's offering, through righteousness as the apostle teaches in Rom. 5.

\* The Authorised margin "up to" is not justified by Levitical usage in the LXX. which entirely conforms the textual rendering. Besides the verb is in the aorist, which expresses simply the fact and is transient not continuous which would require the imperfect. In every point of view the interpretation of Drs. John Brown, H. Bonar, and the like, is not only wrong but excluded by this scripture, as by others.

## **THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD.**

Here is another feature to be noticed. The passover was followed immediately by the feast of unleavened bread. Not a single day was allowed to intervene. For as an ordinary rule, there was a space between these different feasts; but here is a plain exception to the rule. Let me ask who could, save by God's power, have appreciated the force of this beforehand? Now that it is revealed, we may follow. Like Moses from the cleft of the rock, one can see Him as He passes before us; but who can go before Him? The passover was followed immediately by the feast of unleavened bread. There was not the lapse of a day between them — one being on the fourteenth, the other on the fifteenth, of the same month. As the feast of unleavened bread in the New Testament is treated as beginning with the killing of the paschal lamb, the immediate response of the Christian to Christ's blood is to walk in holiness. Henceforth God will not have him to claim a single day to himself. At once he is called by the grace of God to own his responsibility to put away all leaven. We know from 1 Cor. 5: 7 that leaven is symbolic of corruption. "For also Christ, our passover, was sacrificed for us; wherefore let us keep the feast." What feast? That of unleavened bread.

This differs in a weighty particular from the passover; for one day was kept in the latter case, seven days in the former. It may be assumed that all those who read their Bibles know the force of "seven days." It was a complete cycle of time in connection with God's people on the earth. "Day" might be used of heavenly or earthly things, but "seven days" intimated a full period for men on earth.

We may derive important instruction in God's ways from all this. There are in scripture several applications of leaven. The Lord speaks of the leaven of the Pharisees, of the Sadducees, and of Herod. The Holy Ghost uses the expression "a little leaven" twice in the Epistles of Paul. From this we do not well to allow the thought that they are merely parallels. Each has its own force, though there is of course a common character. But as to all such passages, apt to be loosely huddled together, it is well that we should seek to discriminate. True wisdom is not manifested, as one of our sages says, by seeing resemblances in things which differ, but by discerning the real difference among those which resemble one another. We need to cultivate a sound judgment; but it is never got by hunting up so-called parallel passages.

It is written then that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Hence to many, as the same words appear in two different passages, the too rapid inference is that they point to the same thing. So far is this from being true that the application is wholly different. What then is the bearing of each? Pay attention to the principle, that, if we wish to understand any verse of scripture we must always interpret it by its context. In 1 Cor. 5 leaven represents what is unclean, corrupting, and manifestly immoral. They were not to allow "the wicked person" in their midst, for evil spreads; and ever so little leaven, if allowed, defiles the whole lump. In Galatia evil was taking what we may call a religious or legal form (Gal. 5: 9). The Christians there were observing days, months, times, and years. They were crying up circumcision as a desirable supplement to faith. This was the Pharisaic leaven, as in Corinth was the Sadducean. The leaven of the Sadducees was the evil of free thought and licentious action. The leaven of the Pharisees was that of rigorous legalism and human tradition, as that of Herod was worldly time-serving.

" 6 And on the fifteenth day of this month is the feast of unleavened bread to Jehovah; seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread. 7 On the first day ye shall have a holy convocation: no manner of servile work shall ye do. 8 And ye shall present to Jehovah a fire-offering seven days; on the seventh day [is] a holy convocation: no manner of servile work shall ye do" (vers. 6-8).

Keeping the feast of "unleavened bread" typifies the feeding on Christ, on Him in His unsullied purity. The bitter herbs were eaten with the lamb's body on the paschal night; self-judgment accompanied faith in God's mercy through the Lamb. But the unleavened bread was their food through all the seven days. This involved and required the maintenance of personal holiness. No leaven must be found in their houses. So scripture insists: Rom. 6, 7, 8; 1 Cor. 5, 6; Gal. 5, 6; Eph. 4, 5; 1 Thess. 4: 1-8; Heb. 12: 14, etc. If we do lift up our hands to the Lord, let it be piously, without wrath or doubting; let the walk and ways be under the sense of responsibility, as separate to the Lord; let love be without dissimulation and with incorruptness.

But is this all? Not so. Leaven was to be banished from the house as well as from the individual. You may often find people rightly jealous as to personal walk, yet to the last degree lax as to ecclesiastical impurity. The Lord calls us to beware of allowing leaven anywhere. But corporate purity is a worthless pretension without due regard to personal holiness. Bring not horror of clericalism or of sects into shame by lack of a lowly spirit and a holy walk. We are bound to eschew all evil, whether collective or individual. In short, what God has here at heart is that we should please Him in every relation, in what is collective as well as our individual walk. It is far from all; but it covers the present

time here below. The feast of "unleavened bread" takes in the entire pilgrimage, our whole course public as well as private. Thus we may see that, if the feast was to begin the first day after the Passover, the greatest care is taken to show that it was to be continued throughout our actual sojourn on earth. To keep this feast is ever our calling while here.

## **THE WAVE SHEAF AND THE WAVE LOAVES.**

The foundation of all the ways of God for a fallen people is laid not in grace only but righteousness; it is the death and the efficacy of the blood of the Lamb. Theology would have ordered otherwise, and made it the law or Christ's obedience of it. But mark it well; the paschal feast is not even a witness of the incarnation, nor of the Lord's path on earth; but His blood staying divine judgment. God begins with Christ's death; and no wonder. He could not overlook our sins; and there they were for the first time righteously met, and one may add, as far as the type goes, for the last time as well as the first. They were perfectly met for us by Him. It made no difference to the revealing Spirit whether the facts were present or future, so; far as the communication of God's mind was concerned. All was before His eyes, though in Christ and after redemption the truth comes out with deeper and infinite fulness.

For every scripture is divinely inspired, and it was just as impossible that God could lie before His atoning work was accomplished as when it was; and that is in part my reason for taking this chapter for consideration. It is high time for every Christian to stand for the word of God, and for every written word of His. The difficult times of the last days are come, Those that hesitate their dislike, or openly declare it, against what they call "verbal" inspiration, are apt to lose all right sense of God's word. It may be profitable, for such as shrink from the inspiration of the Bible, to say what remains for themselves to depend on. If you give up to the infidel the words of scripture, he will not leave you the thoughts of God. You may try to separate the truth from the words of God; but truth is communicated by words; and the apostle claims to speak "in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." (1 Cor. 2: 13) The Bible is the only book which possesses such a character: and the Christian who is led by the Spirit in searching the word of God will learn how worthy of confidence is the only and absolutely perfect communication of His mind.

On the paschal night God acted as Judge. This was necessary and righteous. How dangerous it is when people talk about His love, where they ought to think of their guilt and bow before His solemn judgment of all sin!

Love is not to be denied for an instant; but even the boundless love of God cannot treat with sin, except by His own judgment of it. If sin were to be judged in our persons, we must be lost for ever. Therefore grace provided an offering, the only adequate one, in Christ on the cross; and accordingly all the holy unsparing force of God's judgment fell on the head of the Lord Jesus there and then. It is not merely that He died in love in order to meet our need — this He did most surely; but there was far more and of deeper import, for He met the judgment of God. He suffered what sin deserved at the hand of God. And this is so essential to truth; that one could not call a true believer in the atonement him who only sees Christ dying in love to man, and so only takes in the outward fact and human side of the cross.

It is patent to all that those who that day only saw Christ crucified were none the better, but rather worse. They were hardened at the sight, and afterwards more careless than ever. Those whom grace gave to believe what God wrought therein were saved from wrath. Shelter from judgment was shadowed in the blood of the slain Lamb.

Thereon immediately (and there is nothing morally more remarkable in these feasts) follows the feast of Unleavened Bread. Indeed as may be seen elsewhere, the two are so bound up together that they are both sometimes called the Passover. Not one day is allowed to separate them; and this because God will not allow that the remission of our sins brought in by the blood of the Lamb shall be for ever so little separated from our responsibility to holiness. The moment the Israelite was under the shelter of the blood of the Lamb, he was forbidden to eat leavened bread, or to have leaven in any shape within his house.

## THE WAVE SHEAF.

" 9 And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say unto them, 10 When ye come into the land that I give to you, and ye reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf (omer) of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. 11 And he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah to be accepted for you; on the next day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. 12 And ye shall offer that day, when ye wave the sheaf, a he-lamb without blemish, a yearling, for a burnt offering to Jehovah; 13 and the oblation (meal offering) thereof, two-tenths of fine dour mingled with oil, a fire-offering to Jehovah for a sweet odour, and a drink-offering thereof of wine, a fourth of a hint 14 And ye shall not eat bread, or roast corn, or green ears, until the same day that ye shall have brought the offering of your God; an everlasting statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings" (vers. 9-14).

Now we come to another principle, which is made definite by a new speech of Jehovah to Moses. Yet in fact the Wave-sheaf was during the feast of Unleavened Bread on the morrow after its great sabbath. It was not merely that God was at the cross as the Judge of sin. What was shown at Christ's resurrection? Without doubt, as it is written, that God, the very One Who smote Jesus, raised Him from the dead.. Sin was condemned, not for every one, but for those who believed. For those who do not believe there will only be the greater condemnation; for their sins are aggravated by the fact that, in the face of God, they have despised and rejected the Son of God; and, more than that, the Son of man dying as a propitiation for sins. Thus the divine judgment of sin on the cross makes the case of the unbeliever incomparably graver; for he is not only a sinner, but refuses the grace of God that would save him at all cost to Himself.

It is of express design, in fact a new utterance of Jehovah to Moses; not precisely a new feast, but at any rate introductory to a new feast and indeed the whole pivot on which it turns. What is the bearing of this? The reader, it may be taken for granted, believes that every word of God has a meaning, and a most important meaning. You do not require to be reminded that God's word before Christ is just as truly inspired as the New Testament since.

The Wave-sheaf then is introduced as quite separate from the Passover and accompanying Feast of Unleavened Bread. But in point of fact the Wavesheaf was waved on the first day of the week that followed the passover. So the Lord was crucified on Friday, lay in the grave on the sabbath or last day of the week, and rose on the first day or Sunday as the Gentiles called it. He was raised from the dead on the very day the Wave-sheaf was waved before Jehovah. Little did the priest who waved it conceive the power and character of the truth set forth in the first-fruits he was thus presenting before the God of Israel. But the Risen one and Raiser of the dead had left the grave and broken its power for believers, whether they knew it or not; but if the Jews refused to listen, the Gentiles by grace would hear. Thus the type of the Wave-sheaf begins a new order of things, distinguished from all before, as befits Him Who is the Beginning, the First-born from the dead, as the type of the Christian gathering

(or the church) is seen immediately after. The church is dependent on Christ's resurrection.

Indeed there is no apter figure of resurrection in the Bible than that of the grain falling into the ground and dying, and then springing up. It is the Lord's own illustration in John 12: 24: "Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Of whom was this spoken? Of His own death and resurrection, with the mighty consequences. If He is not raised, vain is apostolic preaching, and vain the Christian's faith. But Christ is raised from among the dead, first-fruits of those fallen asleep. So here it is said, "And ye shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah, to be accepted for you" (ver. 11). Nor is "salvation" ever known without it, though souls may be born again. For it is the light of His resurrection which chases away all gloom and dries every tear of sorrow. It is the resurrection of the Lord which brings out the acceptance of the believer without question before God. In His death our evil was dealt with atoningly, the sole righteous basis for the forgiveness of sinful man; but Christ's resurrection declares that the sins are for ever gone for those who believe. "He was delivered for our offences, and raised for our justification." "On the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it." The type is fully confirmed by the striking coincidence of the plain and wondrous facts.

This then is what we have prefigured in the Wave-sheaf: Christ raised by God's power and the Father's glory. For His power entered the grave of the Lord Jesus, after all that God felt and could do against sin was exhausted in the cross. Therein was He so glorified that it was His right to raise up Jesus from the dead, never ceasing till He set Him at His own right hand in heaven, and gave Him a name which is above every name. As man He died; as man He is raised up and exalted. As a divine person, the Son has everything; but He became man, and humbled Himself, yea, to death of the cross; and now, in resurrection, He is taken up as man by the power of God, Who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God.

With the Wave-sheaf there was to be no offering for sin. This is a remarkable exception. If Israel or the Christian had been meant, there must have been a Sin and Trespass offering. Here it is Christ, and as fittingly there was no such offering. When it was a question of bringing Israel out of Egypt, blood was put on every door-post. The Passover was thus a striking type of holiness following. Here is a fresh truth in the Wave-sheaf. For there are two great principles: one displayed in the death of Christ; the other in His resurrection; and these are so distinct that God employs two different types to show them forth in our chapter.

It is certain that this typifies Christ's resurrection, and none but His; for we see there was no offering for sin connected with it. He was the only man since the world began who could be presented to God without blood. An offering for sin was needed, even for the high priest, "as for the people, so also for himself;" but not so for Christ, Who died for our sins. It is clearly then a question of Christ only. For here we have the two great offerings of sweet savour: the Burnt-offering and the Meal-offering, both speaking of acceptance personally in His perfection; and of a double perfection — perfection of life lived, in the meal-offering, and perfection of life given up, or of death, in the Burnt-offering. There was of course the accompanying Drink-offering, but not a trace of anything inconsistent with the savour of rest that God found in Christ; for it is of Him, and of Him alone, that the Spirit here speaks prophetically.

The next verse helps to explain an expression in Luke 6: 1, about which very likely some here present have found difficulty, as certainly most people elsewhere. "And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the cornfields: and his disciples plucked the ears of corn and did eat, rubbing them in their hands." What is the force of "the second sabbath after the first"? To

explain this it is of little use to send you to the commentators: for they are all at sea about it, as too often about difficulties for which help would be welcome. Some have had recourse to a harsh way of getting out of the difficulty by cutting out the word (for in Greek it is only a single word, δευτεροπρώτω): a very dangerous principle where the Bible is concerned. One celebrated critic thus guilty repented, virtually confessing the fault by replacing it. But it is no bad moral lesson for us when we can say, "I do not know." This at least is true and lowly: and if one looks up for light, it is well; for thus God can give what is lacking.

Let us look then at verse 14, for it is important, and helps to clear up a phrase otherwise dark. It is a vital claim of piety all through scripture that God must have His portion first, before the believer can becomingly take and enjoy his. One feels how right it is that God should be considered in the first place: it is due to Him, and true in everything; and if we do not render it, we must suffer the bitter consequence. So distinctly was this impressed on the statutes and ways of Israel, that no godly person then would have attempted to touch his corn before the first sheaf had been waved before Jehovah. How blessedly this applies to Christ, we all feel! Once Christ is the waved first-fruits, what of blessing may not follow?

For remember that Christ is a man, not only the eternal Son of God, but One Who having become man has accomplished redemption. To His resurrection the Wave-sheaf pointed in type, and this for our acceptance. As man risen from the dead He goes up to heaven. He was not taken up in a merely exceptional way as an individual, like Enoch or Elijah. He was head of the new family whose sins He had borne, going up into the glory of God, accepted for man, that is, for those who believe. By man, when He came here below, we know how He was rejected and crucified; but God raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God.

Here then the disciples were going with their Master through the cornfields; and, being hungry, according to the gracious permission of Jehovah they on the sabbath plucked and ate the ears of corn. Now it is said here that this particular sabbath was "the second after the first," or second-first. How striking that this should be the first sabbath on which it was allowable! It was of no use to show this to unbelieving Pharisees. For what did they care for the truth? Their only wish was through the disciples to damage the Lord, being blind instruments in the hand of Satan. But the Lord vindicates amply His guiltless followers. On this we need not enter, save just to sift out the force of the term in question. The first sabbath on the paschal feast was emphatically said to be a high or great day (John 19: 31); and no wonder when we take in what God foresaw. But so it was in Jewish estimate. Alas for man! It was the very day in which Christ lay in the grave, the only day, sabbath as it was, marked by that awful crime throughout its entire evening and morning. There was only a part of the other two days, out of the three, but each reckoned a day and night. On *that* first sabbath, immediately before the Wave-sheaf as it was, no Jew would have partaken of the corn. The day after it was the first day of the week, when the Wave-sheaf was offered. The following sabbath was "the second-first" immediately after the Wave-sheaf. The one was the first, the next the second-first because associated with it.

But why dwell on this? To show how precious is scripture to explain scripture. What else can? Yet we need the Holy Spirit to apprehend it aright. The word "second-first" occurs nowhere but in this verse of Luke. We see the value of the Old Testament to understand the New, not only of the New to understand the Old. Holy scripture is inspired and profitable: yet it is a fact, as singular as it is sure, that we only appreciate intelligently the Old when we are at home in the New. They both go together for faith and blessing, as they ought; and the key to both is found in Jesus the Saviour alone, the Christ of Israel, and to reign over all nations too, as well as Head of the church as He is now. For we must not limit or confound but confess His glories.

## THE WAVE LOAVES, OR FEAST OF WEEKS.

Next let us turn to the feast of verses 15 *et seqq.* " 15 and ye shall count to you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering, seven sabbaths shall be complete; 16 even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days, and ye shall offer a new oblation (meal-offering) to Jehovah. 17 Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two tenths: they shall be baked with leaven, the first-fruits to Jehovah. 18 And ye shall present with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be a burnt-offering to Jehovah with their meal-offering and their drink-offerings, even a fire-offering of a sweet odour to Jehovah 19 And ye shall offer one he-goat for a sin-offering, and two he-lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace-offerings. 20 And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits, a wave-offering before Jehovah with the two lambs: they shall be holy to Jehovah for the priest. 21 And ye shall make proclamation on the self-same day: a holy convocation shall it be to you; no manner of servile work shall ye do: an ever-lasting statute in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

" 22 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, and the gleaning of the harvest thou shalt not gather; thou shalt leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am Jehovah your God" (vers 15-22)

There is the peculiar expression of fulness here, such as we hear of nowhere else. This feast only is marked out by seven sabbaths intervening. It is the feast of weeks, but among the Hellenists or Greek-speaking Jews, the number fifty, as is well known, has given the name to this feast, which is therefore called "Pentecost." What then was fulfilled when the day of Pentecost was fully come? The Father made good His promise, that incomparable promise of which the Lord Himself had said, "It is expedient for you that I go away." What could outweigh the blessedness of His presence with His disciples on earth? The gift of another Advocate, not merely gifts but Himself baptizing them, no longer in hope but accomplished in fact.

Therefore they were told on that day to offer a new Meal-offering. I daresay you are all familiar with the repugnance that many, believers even, have to looking at the church as a new thing. They like to think of it as that which has always been and which shall always go on till eternity. Yet it is remarkable that not only does Paul give it the name of the "one new man," but here Moses calls it a "new meal-offering." There was a Meal-offering before, unambiguously shadowing Christ. What did the "new meal-offering" on the day of Pentecost mean? I leave it to yourselves, to your own conscience and intelligence: the answer is so certain that one need not say more about it. At that day began here below a thing so new that it was entirely without precedent. Compare 1 Cor. 12: 12.

Again, in verse 17, we hear of "two waveloaves." Mark the association with Christ. He was the Wave-sheaf, and He alone: these were Wave-loaves, and there were to be two. Do you ask if it be not said that the church was a mystery hid for ages and generations? How then can it be thus typified here? My answer is, God took care, though giving this type, not to reveal the mystery. He did show some important truths that meet in the mystery, but never disclosed itself. For instance, if He had meant to reveal it in this type, would it not, if one may reverently so speak, have been spoken of as "one loaf?" When the mystery was revealed, it was certainly marked as "one new man," "one body," etc.; and in the sign of the Lord's Supper we have, not two loaves, but one bread or one loaf symbolising one body. The time then had not come to reveal the mystery; for Christ had not been rejected, nor was redemption yet wrought. Consequently the Spirit of God has only given us here the witness of our association with Him; what may be called a shadow, not the very image. The symbol

was plain in the one loaf when the church began.

Some excellent men have supposed the two loaves to be the Jew and the Gentile; but it seems to be too much to assume. Ecclesiastical history may assure us that Peter and Paul founded two churches at Rome; but we know that the church of Rome was founded by neither apostle, and indeed by no apostle. It is perfectly certain from scripture that the saints in Rome were gathered long before an apostle went there; and it is very hard to learn on what ground they ever went there, except as prisoners of the Lord. Peter may have been crucified there; Paul went there to prison, and on the second occasion to death; but as to founding the Roman church, they never did; and no claim is put in for any other apostle.

Further, in the book of The Acts (so called) we have the fullest evidence of the care then taken to avoid having two churches anywhere. When Philip went down to Samaria, though people were converted and baptized, there was no church formed till the apostles Peter and John went down. Thus the link was kept up with the church in Jerusalem in the most careful manner. Of laying on of hands we hear not in Jerusalem, there being no necessity for it that day; in Samaria without it there might have been ground taken for an independent church, of which there is no trace in scripture. Geographically there may be ever so many churches, but there is only one church of God: but one communion is recognised on earth. No doubt many persons are exceedingly sore as to the point; it is usual when people feel their weakness. What they need to see is that it is no question of opinion or will, but of submission to God and His word.

Assuredly the two Wave-loaves do not mean two churches, a Jewish and a Gentile: the very worst notion possible, one may add, as it keeps up the old distinction; while the very essence of the gospel, as well as of the one body, is to break all this down, to unite as well as to save, in Christ.

When God speaks of a witness, His regular way is by at least "two." So we read "that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." When there was to be a full witness, and not a barely valid or sufficient testimony, there were three. So the Lord was three days in the grave; there was the fullest witness to His death. Two witnesses were necessary. And so it will be by-and-by, when things come to a serious pass for the truth in Jerusalem. There will be "His two witnesses:" not that we need to understand this said numerically, but according to the figure of adequacy. Here Christ was risen, the Wave-sheaf. What witness was given next of the power of His resurrection? The assembly, as the two Wave-loaves. The Christian company are witnesses, not to the law of God like Israel, but to His grace in Christ risen from the dead. Such is the contrast that Paul brings out in 2 Cor. 3, where he speaks of our having Christ written on us. He takes particular pains to show that it is not on tables of stone. This he leaves to the Jew, who, without doubt, was called to bear witness to the law of Jehovah, as the Christian is to a dead and risen Christ in the power of the Spirit.

The Wave-loaves, we read, were to be of fine flour baken with leaven. Here are two constituents in the type, so opposed to each other that one who knew their use elsewhere might well wonder what to think of them here. Fine flour! - why, this is like Christ, pure without sin: but leaven! — this is like ourselves, naturally corrupt and corrupting; and is not this just what scripture teaches? It is exactly where so many find a difficulty about the two natures; but really it is hard to find an excuse for such want of light as to both scripture and themselves. Christians ever so young in truth should not be slow to believe that they have two natures within them: one craving after what is evil, the old habits of self; the other delighting in the will of God and loving what is of Christ. We have the truth plainly in Epistles like those to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians. Here we have the type to guard against the snare. Moses refutes all pretension to perfection in the flesh. For we have two seemingly

incompatible things mingled in what typifies Christians — fine flour and leaven. Yet sad experience tallies with it. Not that there is the least excuse for yielding to sin; but sin is there, set out by leaven, not working but baked in the bread.

Thus we see how truth all hangs together, and from first to last God above reveals perfect truth. Man, without Him, can only find out and utter what is untrue in spiritual things. Our part in the things of God is not to theorise, but to believe. But the Spirit is as necessary to the understanding of the word, as the word is the necessary material for the Spirit to use. Hence it is that one really finds the truth, not as a mere student but rather as a believer. God is dealing with the heart and conscience. We cannot separate growth in the truth from the spiritual state of the soul: if we essay it, we may appear to run on fast in "mastering" the Bible; but it is to be feared that the next step will be a fall.

Again, in ver. 18, we read of the accompanying offerings of sweet savour. The Christian should have the sense of complete acceptance through and in Christ before our God and Father. But even that is not all. In verse 19 we are told of Sin-offerings and sacrifice of Peace-offerings. "Then ye shall sacrifice one buck of the goats for a sin-offering, and two he-lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of Peace-offerings." With the Wave-sheaf there was enjoined a Burnt-offering and a Meal-offering. It is just the same here: the church by grace has the same acceptance as Christ had in Himself. The object of redemption was that we might be even now as completely freed from sin, yea, and as acceptable before God as the blessed Saviour. He in His own perfection, we in virtue of His work for us. Nothing can be plainer than the type, unless it be the divine explanation in the New Testament. Consequently we have the same figures and similar language used; but now we come to a different thing, for there is a striking difference. With the Wave-loaves there was to be a Peace-offering, and also a Sin-offering; there was none in the case of Christ. In Him was no sin. It is not merely that Christ never sinned, but in Him was no sin; and this must be particularly pressed. He never had a sinful nature, else He must have required a Sin-offering for Himself. For it was absolutely needful that an offering for sin should be essentially sinless. And again, when it was a question of Him or of His person, Peace-offerings have no place. The Peace-offering was when communion was restored (or when it was not in question); but thus it followed the Sin-offering. Compare Lev. 7: 13, where we learn that cakes of leavened bread were to be offered with the sacrifice of Peace-offerings for thanksgiving. So it must be where we are directly concerned, but not in what foreshadowed Christ. The application is to us and not to Christ.

The Feast of Weeks then is a distinct type of God's grace to, and ways with, the Christian calling. It is hardly possible that any one possessing an intelligent claim to the name of believer should question the fact. The Feast tallied to the very day with God's sending down the Holy Spirit, and beginning to gather together His scattered children in one. No doubt they all were Jews or Proselytes at first, but along with it went this remarkable peculiarity: they were Jews that spoke every language under heaven. Jews that spoke not only the language of Canaan but the tongues of the Gentile world. Was it not a most significant fact? More than this: not only were such brought in, but Jews of Palestine, yea of Galilee, were employed by the power of the Holy Spirit to address them in the various Gentile languages never before learnt. The miraculous sign showed the widely-flowing grace of God that was come and to go out. It was not as yet that all creation, groaning in bondage, was to be delivered, but the whole of it under heaven was to hear the gospel. Hence the power of the Spirit enabled the unlettered fishermen of Galilee thus to address their fellow Jews in the language of every land into which the judgment of God had scattered men.

Besides a gathering power to Christ as a centre, grace would meet men in the variety of tongues to which the judgment of God had doomed them at Babel. For it needs no reasoning to prove that

God's work at Pentecost was not merely to save sinners. Those who say so have a most superficial idea of the great work done that day. Undoubtedly salvation was going on, and it was a new fact. Salvation before this was only held out in promise. Now the promise was accomplished. Clearly then those who believe salvation to be no more than promised do not understand the immense step God had taken in His ways. It is really because of the low estimate they have, not perhaps of Christ, but of His work. The root of the mischief lies there; it may seem a distant point, but, when approached, it will be found as the rule to be an inadequate view of redemption. There is not the full reception of God's testimony within. Of course one speaks here of soul-salvation, as we read in 1 Peter 1: 9, "Receiving the end of your faith, [even] the salvation of your souls." The salvation of the body is not come yet; the salvation of the soul is as complete as it ever can be. This is Christianity, in fact; which comes in after the work of Christ was done, to save the soul before He comes again to save the body. It is exactly within that interval that we find ourselves now.

But there is another thing besides salvation, and that is the kingdom of God in mystery, for it is not yet manifested. The Lord Jesus is exalted, but not in a public manner. He is not yet on His own throne, but on His Father's. He is not therefore in the New Testament spoken of as the King now reigning, but as rejected and glorified on high at God's right hand. "King of saints," in Rev. 15: 3, is often cited to prove that He now reigns by those who ought to know that it is a clerical error discarded by all critics, and on evidence of the most satisfactory kind. Thus, while there is now a kingdom of God, it is of course in a mysterious way, with its own distinctive principles accordingly. All Christians are priests and kings destined to reign with Christ. None who bear His name can escape the responsibility of such a place of privilege; while those who are in the secret by the Spirit suffer with Him now, as they walk in grace and will be glorified together.

Besides salvation and the kingdom, there is a still more wondrous work going on at the same time — the calling of the church. Let me warn you against confounding these things. This confusion has been one of the early causes of the ruin of Christendom, and essentially characterises popery, which could not subsist without it. Papists abuse the idea of the kingdom to get earthly power. But it is gross ignorance of the word of God; for it is the "kingdom and patience" now, not His power. The Lord Jesus always draws a marked distinction between the church and the kingdom, as in Matt. 16 and 18.

These three things then go on now: first, the salvation of the soul; secondly, the kingdom of God, or of heaven, as the case may be (which differ somewhat but are substantially the same great fact); and thirdly also, the church, the body of Christ. This last was in a general way intimated in the portion of the chapter we had before us under the figure of the two Wave-loaves.

On another word of the Spirit we must be brief. In verse 22 we read, "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field." What is the meaning of this? Does it not seem rather singular that, after the two Wave-loaves have disappeared from the scene, good corn should be found still in "thy field?" The Wave-loaves, as all agree, mean the Christian body. Some may go farther back than others, but none deny that it refers to Christians at any rate. How comes it, when these ere gone, that we hear of grain left in the corners of the field? Can the Wave-loaves typify all saints? Does not such an instance as this confirm that true believers will be on the earth after the church has gone on high and before the day of Jehovah? There will be some little good corn. Of course they are not members of the one body then complete. But God has other purposes, and purposes for both the Jew and the Gentile; as here some corn was to be left for the poor and the stranger.

In the corner of the field then corn was to be left. It is not meant by this that members of Christ will be left behind by the Lord when He comes for His own, but that God's Spirit will work in another way, and that believers will be called after the church is gone. They will be found in the little interval which follows, in the last or seventieth Week of Daniel.

If any one wishes to trace the history of this transitional space, the details of it will be found in the latter half of Daniel and the central parts of the Revelation. The Psalms are full of their sorrowful experience but also of their blessed comfort in faith, and of their aspirations in hope before the day of His appearing. There may be read the full answer to the question of the corn which is to be left in the corners of the field.

## THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

We find ourselves in presence of an entirely new scene from verse 23. " 23 And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying, 24 In the seventh month, on the first of the month, ye shall have a rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. 25 No manner of work of labour shall ye do, and ye shall present a fire-offering to Jehovah." So far from the gospel being a continuous work to the end of the world, as many suppose, we see here that the Lord will begin a fresh testimony with a suited instrumentality for this new aim when the church is gone. Observe that it is said here "in the seventh month;" this was the last month in which Jehovah instituted a feast. He here brings to a completion the circle of His ways on the earth and for Israel.

In the very beginning then of this closing period of God's dealings, what do we read? "A memorial of blowing of trumpets." God is inaugurating a fresh testimony. The trumpet is clearly a figure of His intervention to announce some signal change. It may be for judgment, as we find in some cases; it may be a distinct testimony in grace, as we know elsewhere. It is clearly a loud summons from God to people on the earth. Here, as we read, it is not merely a blowing of trumpets, but "a memorial" of blowing of trumpets. It is a recall of what had long passed out of memory. It is God calling to mind what had once been before Him, but long dead and gone. What can this be? It is the recall of His ancient people on the earth. The Jew is again brought into remembrance before God. No wonder that there should be such "a memorial of blowing of trumpets." Hundreds, one might say thousands, of years had passed since they had stood before Him as His people. For the return from Babylon was only a partial work: as a whole, Israel never returned, but remained a dispersion over the world. Where was the bulk of them? They were lost among the Gentiles; and so to this day they have remained in a peculiar condition, unlike any other since the world began. They are in all countries without possessing one of their own, and yet a people; they are without a king or a prince, and yet a people; without the true God and without a false god, yet a people (Hosea 3): a standing rebuke to the infidel, yet largely and deeply infidel themselves!

But this very people, as the same prophecy lets us know, are yet to return to their land, and seek Jehovah their Lord and David their king; they shall fear Jehovah and His goodness in the latter days. But what does God do in the first place? He awakens them. The day of shadows is gone for ever. The cross of Christ has closed unrealities. By the power of His resurrection the Christian is introduced into the new creation. The old is gone, the new come; and before God we have our place in Christ. When this work is finished, grace will begin to act in Israel, and they shall be awakened.

Nothing more distinctly proves that God will have done with the Christian; for the gospel went out to the Gentiles (though to the Jew first), and in the church, as in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek. The Feast of Trumpets is God's taking up Israel afresh to awaken them. Undeniably then this

feast is after and quite distinct from Passover and Pentecost in which we have our interest. Hence the first thing disclosed in it is God's loud summons to a people who once had a place before Him and again come into remembrance for mercy, not judgment. It is evident that this could not consistently apply to the gospel that has been at work since Christ's death and resurrection. We have had His sacrifice, and call to practical holiness, and the gift of the Spirit long ago. But when God has done with our blessing, the chapter reveals that in the seventh month dead Israel is to be raised from the grave by God's trumpet, as Ezekiel predicted long after (Ezek. 37). As this is clearly a new work for a people long disowned, let us trace what light other scriptures furnish on it.

Let us refer to the Psalms. There you may learn how truly they and the prophets agree with this figure in the law. See Psalm 81. There is a plain enough testimony as to its forge: "Sing aloud unto God our strength; make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a psalm and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the time appointed, on our solemn feast day." If men were not prejudiced, none could deny the application to Israel. The moon, that luminary which wanes and loses her brightness, once more renews her light, as mercy will do for the rebellious people.

How strikingly is this to be verified in Israel! It could not be said of the world-church, or Christendom. The apostasy of the Gentile is fatal. Take Babylon; and what does scripture teach as to this? Babylon never recovers her old light; Babylon is the corrupt woman who assumes the credit of being the bride whilst false to Christ, a mere harlot with the kings of the earth. Once the Roman empire carried her, but this she has no more. Once she was drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. Still she has a golden cup in her hand, full of abomination and the unclean things of her fornication. But her end will be judgment and destruction: no renovation for her; no new moon shining out in fresh strength and brightness. Babylon will never rise again. Destruction is determined, and determined from the Lord God, but by the hand of the revived Roman empire and its satellite kings, avenging those she had corrupted too long.

It is quite different with Israel, which never had the privileges of the church. The Jew was under the law: what did he know of being under grace as we are? By and by Israel will be put under the new covenant; but this cannot take place till the trumpets have blown once more, and the new moon is shining, as we hear in the Psalm, the new moon at the set time of God. The language is suited for Israel, and not for the church. They sing and make a joyful noise to the God of Jacob. Why confound this with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Why deny Israel's hope of mercy?

How mischievous the perversion to apply everything of the sort (the blessing at least, not the curse) to the church! Are we not blessed in heavenly places? We are entitled to take delight in these promises; but it is not truly to enjoy them if we misappropriate them to ourselves. Let us rejoice that they are yet in store for other people, for Israel in the latter days. We have the new covenant in spirit, if not letter; we have also our own special privileges far beyond Israel's, even in the days of the Kingdom.

If we know any converted, are we to be jealous of their blessing? Are we not to rejoice that the grace of God which visited ourselves reaches out to many others? that it will embrace a larger circle by-and-by? So here, when we see in the scriptures that loved but guilty Israel is to emerge from the grave, from their long sinful and dense darkness of unbelief, why wish to hear only of the church? Indeed it is to lower our character of blessing from heaven to earth. Let us rather rejoice that at length God will awaken His people and accomplish all His earthly purposes not only in them but in all the nations through them.

Here let me briefly call your attention to a passage on this subject poorly enough rendered in the Authorised Version: — "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel", (Luke 2: 32). "A light for revelation to the Gentiles" in the R. V. is no better; but the margin is right. It should be "A light for revelation (or, unveiling) of [the] Gentiles." This means that Christ is a light for bringing Gentiles into divine view; and it is accomplishing now, besides His being the glory of Israel by and by. The Gentiles, instead of being in darkness as they once were in the ways of God, have now, as privilege and responsibility, the true testimony of God. Not before the millennium will He be the glory of Israel. The Gentiles were once in the dark as the Jew is now; ere long the Lord will come for the glory of His people Israel. Luke's is the only Gospel where we have the coming of Christ thus viewed as present light for revealing the Gentiles and as future glory for Israel. It is important for us to seize the intended and real bearing of God's word. We must not be too hasty in assuming it; but when assured of it, let us hold it fast and use it for the Lord with one another.

Psalm 81 then speaks of the blowing of trumpets distinctly in connection with Israel. No one doubts there is the figure of a trumpet for ourselves — in a general figure now, as in 1 Cor. 14, or in a precise and future way most impressively given, as in 1 Cor. 15. But it is never in our case "a memorial of blowing of trumpets." Thus the "last trump" is a blessed and solemn word as to us. What is its source and bearing? A figure taken from the military usages of the Romans, then familiar to everybody. We must remember that the Romans were at that time masters of the world, and that most people knew too well what their legions were. Few and distant were the places where men did not feel the grinding iron bondage of that imperial power. Josephus is one who describes their encampment, and lets us know the various and successive signals given for the different movements of the army. But finally sounded the "last trump;" and, the moment this was heard, they all moved off. This may serve to explain the Spirit's application of the phrase to the final summons of His people for meeting the Lord in the air.

Another scripture has its interest here, Isa. 27: 12. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall beat off from the flood of the river unto the torrent of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel." This is the gathering, not of believers to heaven, but of the children of Israel to their land. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown; and they shall come who were perishing in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship Jehovah in the holy mountain at Jerusalem." Is not the application evident and sure? "Perishing" would not apply to the gathering of the church to heaven. We shall be glorified in that day, after being objects of grace, as Christians, and Christ's body on earth. It is equally clear that, just before God interferes, the Jewish people are to be in the last extremity of tribulation, and set upon by all their enemies, when their Deliverer appears.

As long as Israel is unnoticed or chastised by God, the Gentiles can be peaceable. But directly any movement for good is afoot, and God works to make Israel the head and not the tail, the old enmity soon revives. In that day they shall be gathered by God to Jerusalem. It is not Jerusalem above, where our portion is by grace; but Jerusalem on earth, where Jehovah in due time shall reign according to His goodness and many promises. The future awakening of Israel then is clearly what answers to the Feast of Trumpets.

In Matt. 24: 29-31 it is written, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a

trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other." The context proves that His elect here are of Israel, not elect Christians. Such a remark may not satisfy some, who, whenever they see good things held out in Scripture, are apt to assume that it must be for the church. But we can well afford to rejoice in the future gathering of Israel. Have our brethren learnt the parable from the "fig tree"? What is its forge? Not more surely is the rose the emblem of one part of our land and the thistle of another one could name, than the fig tree was similarly used of Israel. "When its branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh." They have had their long winter, and soon shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings for them.

## THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Next, we come to the most solemn of all the feasts, the great Day of Atonement. " 26 And Jehovah spoke to Moses saying, 27 Also on the tenth of this seventh month is the day of atonement: a holy convocation shall it be to you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and present a fire-offering to Jehovah. 28 And ye shall do no manner of work on the same day; for it is *a* day of atonement; to make atonement for you before Jehovah your God. 29 For every soul that is not afflicted on that same day, he shall be out off from among his peoples. 30 And every soul that doeth any manner of work on that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people. 31 No manner of work shall ye do: an everlasting statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 32 A sabbath of rest it shall be to you, and ye shall afflict your souls; on the ninth of the month at even, from even to even, shall ye keep your sabbath."

But it is well that we should observe how events crowd on during this eventful month. When the day comes and on its fulfilment, God will soon finish His work on the earth. He will at length put out the evil that had so long ravaged among men, and bring His ancient people into fulness of blessing, with the world blessed also, and both through Christ the Lord.

On this Atonement Day Israel shall be brought under the propitiation of Christ. But first bear in mind how impossible it is to think that in the chronological scheme of the Feasts this can be for us. We have had Christ as our sacrifice in the Passover long ago. There can be no want of it for the Christian a second time. For to repeat the work for us would be to impeach its everlasting value on the principle of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is really therefore the work of Christ applied to Israel. Once they had the testimony to the Lamb; but they refused it. We meanwhile by grace have been brought into the blessing. Are they to be left out for ever? Assuredly for a time only, as Rom. 11, yea Law, Psalms and Prophets assure us. The day of Atonement in the seventh month, so long following the Passover, indicates, not that the work is to be done over again, but that a second and distinct application of that work is to be of course to Israel as God pledged His oath. Do you ask for scripture proof of this? John 11: 51 sufficiently answers: — "And this spake he not of himself; but, being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." In this passage we have most clearly put, the double bearing of the work of Christ. Of old "that nation," the Jews, rejected it, for to the Jew first the offer was made. But it was not only for them, but to gather in one the children of God, who are both saved and also gathered into one. This is the church baptised by the Holy Spirit. But the prophets and the N.T. declare that there remains for Israel the blessing by and by. This is suspended for the present; but the precious blood, the death, of the Lord Jesus in all its efficacy cannot fail for them also — for the very people who were of old so unbelieving and rebellious. How patient, yet powerful and victorious is the grace of God!

On the tenth of the seventh month, God's set time, the day will surely come. But remark the most striking emphasis in the language employed here, compared with that used of old: "And ye shall afflict your souls, and offer a sin-offering to Jehovah." We do not find such words as these under the paschal lamb; and no wonder. God will make Israel specially feel their sins, as He could not be unobservant of their long unbelief; and when their day of blessing comes, can any one think that they will be insensible? Is it conceivable that the Jews will regard themselves as other than sinners? Certainly not. They will justly say, We are the guiltiest people on earth: the Messiah, the Christ of God, was sent to us after the fullest prophecies, with rich signs, and what a life! Yet we despised and loathed Him; He was not yours, yet you Gentiles bowed to Him and the gospel. For the Messiah rejected by Israel became the suffering yet exalted Son of man, and the Gentiles do hear Him, as Israel will another day.

Joseph rejected by his brethren was in the land of Egypt exalted to the right hand of the throne. There too, while next to the one who set him in the highest place, unknown to his brethren. When the true Joseph presents Himself to the sons of Israel, will they not afflict their souls as Joseph's brethren did, while the house of Pharaoh heard it? Never was so genuine a mourning as this for the seed of Jacob. So, yet more, yea incomparably, will it be in the day that hastens. It could not be otherwise, if God wrought real repentance as He will in Israel. The day of atonement bears the distinct mark of what will historically and most fully, apply to His people in that future day, when God's plans for the earth are to be completed.

But this is not all. In verse 28 we read, "And ye shall do no work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement to make an atonement for you before Jehovah your God." Could this be said so fittingly and emphatically to any other people? For a nation is in question here, the one chosen people of Jehovah. Were they not the people of all others who boasted of their works, and so, going about to establish their own righteousness, "stumbled at the stumbling-stone"? Acceptable works are found only in believers. We know that those who have the Spirit of God working in them really show forth the fruit of the Spirit and do not boast). Where all is felt to be of grace, how could one brag? Others who slight faith and consequently talk of the law do in fact nothing acceptable to God. The Jew boasted but stumbled over the lowly Nazarene, the crucified Saviour; but it will not be so in that day; when the reality of faith will not only work repentance but exclude pretensions of self. Not that works will not follow; but the Day of Atonement for the time shut out everything, if I may so say, but Christ, their propitiation and substitute; so that their self-loathing will be as complete as their abandonment of their own works. The very fact of their then believing what God had done for them in Christ makes them ashamed of the least reference to any of their works: nothing can mix with His work.

These are the two effects of grace: on the one hand, affliction of soul in the confession of their sins; and, on the other hand, no mingling any thing of their own with that which Christ suffered for them before God. Verses 29, 30, repeat it with solemn emphasis: "For whatsoever soul it shall be that shall not be afflicted on that same day, he shall be cut off from among his peoples. And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people." Again, in verse 32, "It shall be to you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls." The two moral realities, no work of man and true affliction of soul, mark the Day of Atonement for Israel.

How blessed when Israel know and feel thus! And here again one may appeal to other parts of scripture. Listen then to one of the prophets in connection with the still unfulfilled day of Jehovah, Zech. 12: 9. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem." For then the nations will be again jealous of and hostile to Israel. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of

supplications." Is not this their Day of Atonement? "And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him." It is a day of afflicting their souls, "As one mourneth for an only one, and shall he in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for a first-born." "In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart, and their wives apart." Conscience leads one to be alone with God, that confession may be true and deep. Such is the effect of real Spirit-wrought sorrow; for the conscience, when it is thus truly reached by the Spirit of God, always isolates itself, and makes the soul desire to go alone to God. To whom, alas! could one tell out honestly all he is? What good would it do any one else? It might do harm. It is to God then we must go, and to God we must confess. It is good for the soul; for God will have sterling honesty; He will have guile taken away; and this is accomplished by His own grace and truth. It is their Day of Atonement, when Israel hide not like Adam, but pour out their sins into the bosom of God. The Lord Jesus gives them the boldness of faith. They see Him Whom they pierced.

"Every family apart." So close, so real, is the work that we hear of even "their wives apart": the nearest and closest relationships are severed, that there may be now, for the first time, "truth in the inward parts." And which are the families named? "The family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart." Why David and why Nathan? Once there was a time when the king trembled as he stood thoroughly convicted, and the faithful prophet was strengthened of God to convict him: "Thou art the man." Now what a change! It is no humbled king nor convicting prophet. All are convicted, and so profoundly filled with the sense each of his own sins, that they feel thoroughly the need to be alone with God. It is not only real but deep work; it is not the mere effect of feeling or sympathy fed by a weeping crowd. They go alone, each before God, that all may be out and clear. Surely this should be a word of warning as to the danger in these days of multitudinous meetings, revivals etc. This is not said to weaken any one's confidence, but that all may see how momentous it is for souls to be alone with God as to their sins.

Nor is this the only picture; we have two others to complete the scene. "The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart." The margin gives "Symeon" as the alternative, and so does the oldest version, the Septuagint. Of course there is a difference of opinion as to this as in most things. Then it is a common thing in Scripture to find two names for the same person, as, for instance, Paul and Saul, Silas and Silvanus, Jude and Thaddeus. But if we accept the view of the Greek translators, it recalls two sons of Jacob painfully notorious in their earliest history. Revenge then brought them together. No doubt the Gentile was guilty of gross wrong, and dishonoured their sister; but the brothers' wrath was cruel, and their revenge as deceitful as outrageous. Therefore was Jacob also full of shame at his unworthy sons, who had been united in deadly purpose under the guise of religion. But now they (that is, in their offspring who are then alive) have found the Saviour, or rather the Saviour has found them, and they are confessing each his own sins. Thousands of years had passed over; but here, it would seem, are the descendants of these two fathers in Israel bowing down before the Lord who died for them.

However it be as to the last names, the true meaning of the Day of Atonement here is its application to Israel; and let us rejoice that God will extend thus His grace, through our blessed Saviour, to His guilty people, kept for this and other great ends of God.

## **THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES**

The last feast begins in verse 33 " 33 And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children

of Israel, saying, " 34 On the fifteenth day of this seventh month [is] the feast of tabernacles (or, booths) seven days to Jehovah: 35 on the first day is a holy convocation: no manner of work shall ye do. 36 Seven days ye shall present a fire offering to Jehovah: on the eighth day shall be a holy convocation to you: and ye shall offer a fire offering to Jehovah: it [is] a solemn assembly; ye shall do no work of labour. 37 These [are] the set feasts of Jehovah, which ye shall proclaim as holy convocations, to offer a fire offering to Jehovah, a burnt offering and a meal offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, each in its day; 38 besides the sabbaths of Jehovah, and besides your gifts, and besides all your vows, and besides all your voluntary offerings which ye give to Jehovah. 39 Surely on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep the feast of Jehovah seven days: on the first day a sabbath, and on the eighth day a sabbath. 40 And ye shall take on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palms, and boughs of bushy trees and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days. 41 And ye shall keep it a feast to Jehovah seven days in the year: an everlasting statute throughout your generations: in the seventh month shall ye keep it. 42 In tabernacles shall ye dwell seven days, all born in Israel shall dwell in tabernacles; 43 that your generations may know that I caused the children of Israel to dwell in tabernacles, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God. 44 And Moses declared the set feasts of Jehovah to the children of Israel."

First then it is to be remarked that we have had nothing about seven days since the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and this, as was shown, signified our walking in sincerity and truth, in Christian holiness, the true import of that feast, because Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. It is the pilgrim course of those who are under the privilege of grace. Now here are seven other days for a different purpose; and what are they, Seven days of glory on the earth. This may startle some; for there are very many Christians who, when they think of glory, always connect it with heaven. So they speak of souls having gone to glory at death. Now we are very far from denying that the Christian is destined to heavenly glory. We do belong distinctly to Christ on high; we depart at death to be with Him.

But we are far from thinking, with a celebrated Scotch divine (Dr. Chalmers), that the glorified church is to live and reign on the earth. It is not in a likeness of heaven we are to dwell for ever; we are going to the true — to heaven itself. The Father's house does not mean the earth, however sublimated or etherealised, but the brightest part of the heavens. Look not for some distant corner or outskirt of glory, but where the Son abides now, where the Father's love satisfied itself in receiving the Son. There shall we be with Him, in the Father's house of many mansions. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." We go where He is. The portion of the Christian is Christ in the Father's house; so we shall be ever with the Lord. He would not tell us so if it would raise our hopes too high. He did so tell us that He might inspire us with the same expectation that filled His own breast. The bride is to be with the Bridegroom. The notion therefore, is altogether unfounded, that the scene of our glory is to be on the earth. No matter what the piety of men who have such views, we must reject them as low and doubly injurious. They deny the church's glory to be distinctively heavenly, and they leave no due room for Israel's future glory, according to promise, on the earth. It is really therefore a mistake of grave consequence, which affects our interpretation of the Bible, and deprives of an adequate scheme of God's ways.

Hear what the New Testament teaches: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." We are blessed there in title already in Christ, as we shall be there in fact with Him when He comes for us, and we shall be

changed, caught up, and ever with the Lord. But in the portion before us quite another truth is brought out. Here it cannot mean our going to heaven, for we do not speak of time there. It is one eternal day in that sphere of unchanging light and blessedness; and by a figure it may be very well called the "day of eternity." Indeed this is the way the apostle Peter does speak in the last verse of his Second Epistle: "To Him be glory, both now and to the day of eternity." But glory will assuredly come to the earth. Thus "Arise, shine; for thy light is come," etc. Where is this to be? In heaven? No; Zion is here on the earth. Was it not that mountain on which the king's palace was built? and how significant of grace yet to build up the broken house and realm of Israel, when God will give them the true David!

Let me draw your attention here to two schools of theology, as the truth in question is of practical moment as well as doctrinal. It may be instructive to see how they both come short of what the Holy Spirit reveals for the glory of God. As to the future we find each of these schools in opposition. One says that the scene of future glory is to be the earth, where Christ died and God has wrought so graciously, and as to which He has promised such glorious things. Fully is this admitted; but the inference that we shall be glorified there is unsound. The other school holds that heaven will be the only scene of glory; and this so exclusively as almost, if not quite, to forget the body and its future resurrection from the grave. They are in danger of thinking only of the soul, and of heaven as a place for pure spirit; which is a poor substitute for the Christian's hope, and not at all what the word of God teaches. It is quite true and blessed that even now the separated spirit goes to be with Christ; and no believer should seek to weaken this truth. The just converted robber was to be that day with Him in paradise. It is lamentable to know how little this is believed by modern theologians; and no doubt their feebleness here is due to their scanty knowledge of Christ and redemption. But this intermediate blessedness is not resurrection; though departed saints, when risen, shall be, as now, in the "paradise of God" (Rev. 2: 7). As the paradise of Adam was the brightest spot on earth, so the "paradise of God" is the brightest portion in heaven. Sinful man was cast out of the one; believing man is received into the other. Christ was the first-fruits, as but due to Him, the Son and Saviour; afterward those that are Christ's at His coming.

But there is another thing, the kingdom of God, which has "earthly things"; and for these man needs new birth (John 3), as well as for "heavenly things." So it will neither be heaven alone, nor the earth alone, but truth in harmonious yet suited blessing (compare Eph. 1: 10 and Col. 1: 20). In scripture faith finds no real difficulty, though it be far larger than theology, which invariably stops short of the truth of God. For theology is an attempt on man's part to reduce the word of God to a science, and a science for man, converted or not, to learn. No wonder that this always proves a failure, as it deserves to be. You cannot squeeze what has life into this iron vice of theirs without destroying its strength and tissues and beauty. Heaven, earth and sea, and all creatures in them, are to be under Christ, the distinct but united spheres of His reign to God's glory. In the fulness of the times, God is going to gather "all things" under Christ; not all persons, for this will never be; Alas! those who despise the Lord Jesus must, at the end, be cast into the lake of fire. But "all things," the groaning creation, guilty of no sin, but suffering from the sin of man, shall be delivered through the victory of the Second Man. For this we and it are waiting, as Christ Himself is.

It is not true, therefore, that the earth is to be the only scene of glory, but also heaven. One might prove this from other scriptures besides the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians. But remember well that it is no good sign to require many passages. One scripture, if plain, is conclusive. Who would admire the state of soul that, when one scripture is given, asks for another? Even if one had only to do with a man's word, would any wish him to repeat the same thing half-a-dozen times over? In fact, if he habitually did so, might it not arouse suspicion. But, if such be the case with man,

is it not most dishonouring to God to look for ever so many assurances from Him? Granted that in certain cases He may present the same thing in various forms; but this is only pure grace in consideration of the weakness of man.

Take as an instance Ps. 73: 24; and it is chosen in order to clear out a singular mistake of our translators. There we read these words, a favourite text with many: "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." It may be good Christian doctrine; but is it the object of the Psalm to teach anything of the sort? Let us be subject to scripture. You see the word "to" is inserted. And what is the reason for it? "To" or "with" would require authority, for it cannot be inserted or left out in this sort of way. The truth is that our translators did not understand the meaning of the words as they stand, especially as it was taken for granted that the Psalm speaks directly of our Christian comfort; hence they conjectured it must mean, "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me [to] glory." They never thought of the peculiar hopes of Israel, and so they could not find out the bearing. It was confusion to apply these words to the church now, but natural, as they did not know anything worth mentioning of God's ways for the future, when Christ shall reign over the earth.

{\*In the Revised Version the case is still worse; for the unlearned reader cannot see that it is a guess, as they often omit to mark their conjectural insertions in italics.}

Now, people are learning to translate accurately, whether they understand the meaning or not. This may not be pleasant; still it is more honest; and thus grace may the sooner use some one else to help toward the meaning. Further, years ago, one of our American kinsmen brought out a new translation of the Psalms. The late Dr. J. A. Alexander, of Princeton, was a man not to be despised. His book on the Psalms, as a version, is respectable, though some of us might think its exegesis rather dark. He did not understand the Jewish relations of Christ; yet he was a scholar, and translates uprightly his text. But being a pious scholar only will never enable one to understand the scriptures. The one and only means of understanding is by the Holy Spirit, Who gives us God's mind there. If it be the church in the New Testament, we must see it in its relation to the Head; if it be Israel in the Law or the Psalms, we must see them as they are related to their Messiah.

Now the late Dr. Alexander never saw the true distinction between Israel and the church, but being honest and conscientious, though he did not know what the passage meant, he translated it as it really stands, "In (or, By) Thy counsel Thou wilt guide me, and after glory Thou wilt take me." But what is the meaning of this? The last clause is obscure, he says; and no wonder: he had no notion of the special hopes of the ancient people of God, which are here presupposed.

The Christian, no doubt, is received now, and will be caught up at the coming of Christ to heavenly glory; but His dealings with Israel are quite different. He will come in glory to the destruction of their enemies, and bring them in deep penitence to Himself; and then they will be received as His people before the universe. This will only be "after glory." The glory will have shone first. Take Saul of Tarsus for instance, though he was a pattern not only of the Jew but for the Gentile. All will remember that he had a vision of the Lord in glory, and also after that, he was given acceptance before God.

When we see this, it helps us to understand how the children of Israel will be brought into their blessedness. There were to be "seven days" of suffering in grace, as we have them now under the type of the Unleavened bread; and seven days of glory in the age to come. This will be the Feast of Tabernacles in its ordinary character for Israel on earth. How plain is the truth! Further, verse 39 adds, "Surely on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye

shall keep a feast unto Jehovah seven days." It was when they had gathered in the produce of the land, when the harvest was past, and the vintage over. Why should a believer doubt its meaning? God's judicial dealings on the quick will have taken this course. The harvest is that character of judgment where the Lord discriminates the good from the bad. The vintage is where He will trample down wicked religion unsparingly. It is the infliction of divine judgment, and, mark, it is on the living. The judgment of the dead is at the end of the kingdom, which is not spoken of here. This is the judgment of the quick at the beginning of the Lord's reign. Of this men speak constantly in the creeds: do they really believe what they confess?

We get something further in verses 39, 40: "Ye shall keep a feast unto Jehovah seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath:" an earthly rest for a long while, a heavenly one for ever.

It is not only that there shall be a complete term of glory then on the earth as we are now going through a complete term of grace. In this one feature, we may see, the Feast of Tabernacles stands distinct from all the others; it has an eighth day. There has been no mention of this in the other feasts. The seven days, we said, were glory for the earth but there is the "eighth day" too. This opens heavenly and eternal glory! So it is not "days" now, but this one! day," "the eighth day." Therefore it has a beginning, but it shall never have an end. If it be objected that for the Wave-sheaf there was "the morrow after the sabbath" (ver. 11), it only confirms the principle. For as that morrow beheld Christ risen, so the eighth day points to a new scene of resurrection glory above that of the "seven days."

But this is not all. " 40 And ye shall take on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palms, and boughs of leafy (or, bushy) trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days. 41 And ye shall keep it a feast to Jehovah seven days in the year; an everlasting statute throughout your generations; in the seventh month shall ye keep it. 42 In tabernacles shall ye dwell seven days, all born in Israel shall dwell in tabernacles; 43 that your generations may know that I caused the children of Israel to dwell in tabernacles when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God "(vers. 40-43). Indeed it was this dwelling in booths for seven days, not on the eighth, which gave this Feast its ordinary name. It was the Feast of Ingathering; but Israel dwelt thereon in booths. Yet the booths consisted, not of tents but of the fruit of goodly trees with all latitude, of branches of stately palms so characteristic then of the land, not only on its north-western border, but in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, even to the Dead Sea on the east, and generally. Boughs of leafy trees or brushwood, as myrtle, etc. were to be used, and willows of the brooks.

It was the solemn recognition in the days of glad fruition when they had gathered in the fruit of the land, that they had been, after deliverance from Egypt, sojourners so long in the dreary desert. Thankful joy it testified that they once knew the wilderness who were now in the promised land. Then alas! was the provocation during the day of temptation in the wilderness where their fathers tempted by proving God instead of walking dependent and obedient and thankful, to the ruin of that generation. Now they are surely to keep the feast with rejoicing, but with the memorial of wilderness shame and sorrow to chasten yet enhance the joy. It was for Israel still on earth, for man not risen though in a day of glory, when joy needs such a remembrance, lest even joy alone might be a danger if not death.

But the eighth day is the link with the heavenly places and the higher glory of resurrection, not of Christ now but of those who are His reigning with Him. This of course is not set out, but an implied allusion. It was the last day, the great one, of the feast; and the Lord in John 7: 37 stood and cried,

saying, If any one thirst, let him come unto He and drink: he that believeth, as the scripture said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spoke He, says the Evangelist, of the Spirit which those believing on Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet [given], because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Thus the rejection of our Lord by the Jews postponed for them the blessing, and they therefore meanwhile have no part in the Passover and Pentecost, to speak only of great Feasts; and need the rich mercy which provides specifically for them in those of the seventh month, as we have seen. But in John vii. we also learn that for us who do believe during their eclipse, grace gives us characteristic blessing even according to that final Feast of Tabernacles which of course remains to be fulfilled for heavenly as well as earthly men. It is not that we are in the glory yet, but Jesus is, and He has already sent the Spirit for the believer to receive Him, not only as the Spirit of grace to spring up in worship (as in John 4), but as the Spirit of glory (compare 1 Peter 4: 14), and not to drink simply but to be as rivers of water flowing from his inward affections in testimony of Christ to perched and weary and wretched mankind. How this shows that all things are ours by the grace of Him to Whom we owe all we boast!

We have seen then in this chapter; — first, the purpose of God generally sketched, next, the work of the Lord Jesus for eternity, with the holy call it involves for all blessed by it, and the witness to Christ's resurrection for those risen with Him. But the application of that work has been in the main to the Gentiles now called in, or rather to the effacing of all distinction as in the church. In the "seventh" month "Israel shall be awakened to confess their sins, when the day of glory dawns on earth: and not only this, but a glance at that which is heavenly and eternal on the eighth day."

" 44 And Moses declared to the children of Israel the set feasts of Jehovah." If these Feasts have been truly expounded, they carry no slender evidence of a genuine prophet. But what a witness are they not to Him Who is not only the Prophet greater than Moses, but the Lord God of the prophets, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!

May the Lord bless His own word, so that you may be simple and clear and wise in the truth unto salvation! And may we have our faith strengthened as we see how God has given a complete cycle of His ways in one of the most ancient books of the Bible. When the theological professors of our day are misusing their position to give currency to the cavils of unbelief, which have lost much of their acceptance even in free-thinking Germany, it is time for men whose fathers valued revealed truth, assuredly for God's children, to wake up to these insidious efforts at undermining their faith under the pretentious claims of learning and science. The best of all answers to Satan is a deepening entrance by the Holy Spirit into the truth, and an enlarged sense of that divine wisdom and grace in the word, which is as much superior to Elohistic and Jehovistic theories, or such like vanities and speculations, as the Second man is above the first. "Sanctify them by Thy word: Thy word is truth."