

# THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

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*Illustrated by a coloured chart*



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## CHAPTER I

# THE MEANING OF THE FEASTS

WHEN God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt He so ordered all His dealings with them as to make them types of things reaching far beyond themselves. He sheltered them under the blood of the Passover lamb, and brought them through the Red Sea in such a way as to give us the most perfect instruction as to the great truths of redemption and sanctification. He then gave commandment to Moses as to the setting up of the tabernacle, and the setting apart of Aaron and his sons for the priesthood, so as to give us instruction equally clear and important as to how the redeemed people are brought near to Him, what is the order of His house, and the manner of our worship. As we get it in 1 Corinthians 10. 11, "All these things

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happened unto them typically," for that is the exact word which the apostle uses.

But these valuable and instructive types go further. In the 23rd chapter of Leviticus God spoke again to Moses, and told him to proclaim "the feasts of Jehovah," as fully set forth in the whole chapter. These feasts were spread over the year, and a careful examination of them will show us that they too are types, setting before us in the most wonderfully complete manner the whole of God's dealings with man in redeeming grace, from the time that He first placed him in the garden until the end shall have come, and the Son shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father.

### The Use of Types

It is always necessary when seeking to learn lessons from God's types to remember that the types are given us as helps to our understanding of the direct teaching of the Scriptures. A schoolmaster prepares a diagram, or makes a drawing on the blackboard, in order to make his subject clearer to the scholars. But suppose the scholars were to try and guess at the meaning of the diagram, without listening

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to the explanations of the teacher they would probably get far away from the truth of the matter. The diagram will greatly help to make the teacher's instructions plain to their minds, and also to fix them there; but it must not be used as a substitute for the teacher's words, which it was never intended to be.

Just so with all types; and as we start upon the consideration of these feasts we need to bear this in mind, so that we may be helped by them to understand the direct teaching of other parts of the Scriptures, and not be found twisting them to agree with special thoughts of our own.

### The Diagram

We have prepared a diagram to illustrate the Feasts, simply putting down the feasts in the order described in Leviticus 23. There is nothing of fancy or imagination in this diagram any more than in the arrangement of an ordinary almanac.

In a *long column* are shown the successive weeks and months of the year, and wherever one of the feasts occurs it is marked in its appointed place, so that the eye can take in at a glance how they are grouped together.

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The *blue* bars that cross the column so frequently are the Sabbath days, and the *numbers* to the left of these blue bars show the day of the month of each Sabbath day.

Let us now turn to Leviticus 23. 1, and see how the Lord introduces this weighty subject. We will read from the Revised Version, because it makes one or two matters plainer than the older translation: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, The set feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are My set feasts." The first thing we notice is the expression, "set feasts." This is one of the things in which the Revised Version helps us, because it makes a clear distinction between this word and others which are translated "feast," and which contain the ordinary idea of a banquet or festival.

This word is derived from a root that means to make an appointment, or to meet by appointment. We get the root word in Exodus 25. 22: "And there I will *meet* with thee." The mercy-seat is the place where God meets His people by appointment.

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But as to the full word itself we shall perhaps get a better understanding of it when we are told that it is the word translated "congregation," in every place where the tabernacle, or, more properly, the tent of the congregation is spoken of. The coming together of God's people in His divinely ordered way is no chance meeting, as when two friends meet in the street. It is a meeting by appointment, and God has stamped that name upon His own dwelling-place. It is the tabernacle or dwelling-place of Jehovah; it is also the place where His people meet Him in His appointed way.

### Jehovah's Feasts

We get this same word in Leviticus 23: "The set feasts (literally, as we have seen, meetings by appointment) of Jehovah." But then these set feasts are to be proclaimed as "holy convocations." This last word, in the Hebrew just as in our English, means "calling together." So these occasions, of which God is about to speak, are His appointed seasons, to which He calls His people together that He may meet with them. How important all

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this is. They are Jehovah's feasts, not Israel's. Israel are called together to keep them, but they belong to the Lord. The appointment was of His making, and must be kept in His time and way. It was not a privilege, in the ordinary sense of the word, which Israel could avail themselves of or let alone, just as they pleased. A privilege of the very highest character it assuredly was, but it was a commandment also. Nothing could have shown a more mistaken idea of their responsibility in regard to the keeping of these feasts than for an Israelite to say "I have a right to be there." What he should have said was "Jehovah commands me to be there; for it is His appointed season, and He has called His people together to Himself." The one expression is the language of self-pleasing, the other is that of holy, happy obedience.

### The Feast of To-day

To-day we have no longer a number of feasts with widely different meanings. But the Lord has an appointed season, even in this dispensation; a special occasion when He calls His people together

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to Himself. Still He claims it as His own, as the expressions, "the Lord's Table," "the Lord's Supper," and "the Lord's Day," all bear witness. And as those appointed seasons, to which Israel were called together, had a look backward and a look forward, as well as a present application, so it is with the feast that we are called to keep to-day. We eat and drink, and we show the Lord's death "till He come."

May God help us to see how utterly out of place the language of self-pleasing, "I have a right," is in connection with all this. My right is hidden in the Lord's claim. If I can disregard that claim my right disappears. When I own it I do not need to plead any right of mine; for, coming as an obedient one to keep His commandment, just because it is His commandment, I shall be subject to all His will about it, and my right will never come into question.

## CHAPTER II

# THE BEGINNING OF MONTHS

BEFORE proceeding further it will perhaps be well to say a little more by way of explanation of the diagram. As already pointed out, the *blue* bars that cross the column are the Sabbath days; and it may perhaps be asked why some of them are so much nearer together than others. When special events have to be shown, rendering it necessary to count the days, sufficient space has been allowed to make this plain. But when the weeks pass over without anything to be taken note of, it would only lengthen out the diagram to no purpose if equal space were given. It will be understood, then, that from one blue bar to another is always a week; while the longer *black* lines across the column separate the months. The *figures* on the left-hand side of the Sabbath days indicate the days of the month on which they fall; but it must be remembered that these

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figures have reference to the year in which our blessed Lord was crucified.

### A Wide Survey

But now we come to another question which some may be ready to ask. If, as has been stated before, the Jewish year, with these feasts spread over it, is a representation of the whole of God's dealings with man in redeeming grace, from the time that He first placed him in the garden until the Son shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father, how comes it that the diagram only shows seven months, and begins a few days before the Passover? The Passover undoubtedly represents the death of Christ, and what becomes of the four thousand years previous to His coming into the world?

This question carries us at once to the very foundation of our subject. According to the commandment of God the month Abib (Deut. 16. 1), on the fourteenth day of which the Passover lamb was to be slain, was to become the first month of the year to the children of Israel (Exod. 12. 2). But up to that time it had not been the first month with them.

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Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, tells us that Abib was the seventh month, according to the ancient reckoning before the institution of the Passover; and that, even after that time, all agricultural arrangements were reckoned according to the earlier mode of counting the months. This is confirmed by the fact that the year of Jubilee, the joyful year of restitution, commenced in the seventh month of the new reckoning, which counted Abib, with its Passover feast, as the first month (see Lev. 25. 9). In this way the Jubilee year brought things back to what they were at first. When God was about to deliver His people out of Egypt's bondage He changed the seventh month into the first; and as the year of Jubilee began with the seventh month, the seventh became the first once more.

### A New Foundation

But now we want to know what all this has to do with the typical teaching of the feasts. Let us consider it. When six months of the year had gone by, and the seventh month had begun, God sent a message to His people, saying, "This

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month shall be unto you the beginning of months'' (Exod. 12. 2). Those past six months were to be blotted out, and God was going to make a fresh start with them. But if God was to make a new beginning with them, it must be upon a new foundation, and the next verse tells us what that new foundation was to be. The slain lamb, the Passover lamb, is the starting-point and foundation of all God's purposes concerning His people. What a flood of light this throws upon our subject.

Let us look at our diagram again, the divine calendar of redeeming grace, and what do we see? The first month—yes, but six months of the year had gone before this month, and where the line marks the beginning of the first month we may see those previous six months all cancelled at a single stroke. That is the world's history from Adam till the Son of God appeared on the earth. Man had had his opportunity, and placed under every variety of circumstances had only shown himself more and more to be utterly sinful and corrupt.

Any covenant of promise of God that was conditional in any way upon man's obedience had broken down through man's

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utter and hopeless failure. And now God was going to make a fresh beginning on a new foundation. That foundation was His own blessed Son, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. And as God brings out this Lamb of His own providing (see Gen. 22. 8), He sets aside all that had gone before. In this way we see that these feasts of the Lord fulfil all that we were led to suppose, and lying behind the line which indicates the beginning of the first month we see the whole of man's unprofitableness set aside to make room for God's beloved Son.

### The Sabbath

But this brings us to another matter that we need to look into before proceeding further with our consideration of the Pass-over. Turning again to Leviticus 23 we find that verse 4 repeats the statement of verse 2: "These are the set feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their appointed season" (R.V.). But in between these two proclamations of the feasts of Jehovah we find, in the third verse, a renewal of the commandment as to the Sabbath: "Six days

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shall work be done: but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of work: it is a Sabbath unto the Lord in all your dwellings." The introduction of the Sabbath in this way is not a little remarkable. The feasts that Moses was commanded to proclaim were spread over many months, some coming close together, while others were separated by long distances. But all the while each seventh day was to bring its own message of rest to Israel, while they were to keep it as a Sabbath unto the Lord.

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God" (Psa. 90. 2). Thus wrote Moses, the man of God. In that far back eternity, before His first act of creation, God kept Sabbath. Then came the creation of the Heaven and the earth (Gen. 1. 1), while in verse 2 we find the earth without form, and void. After this we have God's six days of work, in which all was made fair and good; and then on the seventh day God rested. But this rest was bound up with the creation; and when man, the crowning work of that

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creation, sinned the whole work was marred, and the rest built upon it was gone. That rest could never be restored, except upon a new foundation.

### The Rest that Remaineth

The feasts of the Lord, beginning with the Passover and finishing with Tabernacles, set before us the whole work of redemption and its final and triumphant issue. But all the time, week by week, these constantly recurring Sabbath days speak of God's rest and the part that His redeemed people are to have in it. They look back to the eternity that has gone by, while they look on to the eternity that is coming; and they remind us that, while the rest is Jehovah's rest, He has purposed in His infinite grace that all His redeemed people shall share it with Him. "There remaineth, therefore, a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For he that is entered into His rest hath himself also rested from his works, as God did from His" (Heb. 4. 9, 10, R.V.).

In order to help in keeping this in mind we have coloured the segments of circles at the top and bottom of the diagram *blue*, the same as the Sabbath days.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PASSOVER

WE may now return to the Passover, to consider it especially in its dispensational character. The first thing we notice is that the lamb had to be chosen out on the tenth day of the first month, and kept up until the fourteenth day. It was to be a lamb without blemish; and, of course, it must have been equally unblemished during the time before the tenth day, only up to that time no special notice had been taken of it. From the time it was taken out from the flock, and set apart for the Passover, the attention of all was directed to it, and its perfect freedom from blemish of any sort might be taken notice of by all.

But there is a significance in the tenth day that we must not overlook. God has connected certain thoughts with certain numbers, and we learn His thoughts regarding them by noticing the connection in which they are used by the Holy Spirit.

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### The Number Ten in Scripture

Let us call to mind, then, some of the uses of the number ten in Scripture, and so endeavour to learn its typical teaching. First of all, we know that when God was about to give His law to the children of Israel He summed it up in ten commandments which He spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, and afterwards engraved on the two tables of stone. Then this number ten is particularly prominent in connection with the parables that speak of God's testing or approving the professed service of those who take the place of being His servants, as in the case of the virgins, the talents, and the pounds. In the parable of the unjust steward, too, the claims of the rich man upon his debtors were represented in each case by the number 100, which is ten times ten. It would need too much explanation for those who have not previously considered the subject to show the teaching of the number ten in connection with the tabernacle, where it comes in very prominently; but probably enough has been said to show that the Holy Spirit uses this number

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to represent the claims of God upon our obedience, and the complete fulfilment of those claims.

This being so, the ten days, from the first to the tenth of the first month, correspond with the life of the Lord Jesus on earth up to the time of His baptism, in which He had perfectly pleased God as a man upon the earth. He was under the eye of God all the time, but the attention of men had not been called to Him. He was, indeed, God's unblemished Lamb; but none on earth realised that it was so. At His baptism, however, He was *taken out*, to use the language of Exodus 12, the descending Spirit and the voice from the opened Heavens, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," both declaring Him to be God's chosen One; while from that time John bore witness to Him as the Lamb of God. From the tenth day to the fourteenth day the lamb was to be *kept up*, and that period seems to correspond with the three and a half years of the public ministry of the Lord Jesus, during the whole of which He was prominently before the eyes of men as the chosen out Lamb of God

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### Between the Two Evenings

The lamb was to be killed on the fourteenth day of the first month, in the evening, or, literally, between the two evenings (see Exod. 12. 6, margin). It must be remembered that the Jewish day was reckoned from sunset to sunset. Consequently it began in the evening, and finished in the evening. A Jewish day, therefore, was said to be from even unto even (Lev. 23. 32); and, in a certain sense, the whole day might appear to be included in the expression "between the two evenings." But a comparison with other places, where exactly the same expression occurs, shows us that this is not the case. In Exodus 29. 38, 39 we read: "Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning, and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even." Here the words "at even" are exactly the same as in Exodus 12. 6, "between the two evenings;" and here there can be no question, the time indicated is in contrast to the morning. In the same way we are told that Aaron

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was to burn incense upon the golden altar in the morning and also in the evening (Exod. 30. 7, 8); and here again the expression used is the same, "between the two evenings." From all this it seems very evident that these words are intended to point to the very time of sunset, as the one day is merging into the other.

### **The Lord's Passover**

In Leviticus 23. 5, 6 we read: "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even (between the two evenings) is the Lord's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord." As we have already seen, the Passover lamb was killed at the very close of the fourteenth day, or just at the hour of sunset. Immediately afterwards the fifteenth day commenced. The leaven had already been put away out of every house, and there was no interval between the killing of the lamb and the keeping of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, though the one belonged to the fourteenth day and the other to the fifteenth. On the first occasion of the keeping of the Passover this was certainly the order of its observance. Moses

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commanded the people to kill the lamb and sprinkle its blood over their doors, and then to go inside their houses and eat the lamb, and not come out till the morning; and at midnight the Lord passed through and smote all the first-born of the Egyptians. Long after, when the Lord was about to keep the Passover for the last time with His disciples, the order was just the same. Two of the disciples were sent beforehand into the city to find the appointed place and make ready, and when the evening was come they all sat down to keep the feast.

### **The Feast of Unleavened Bread -**

There is an important point in all this. The death of the Passover lamb, as we have previously seen, was to be the foundation of all that is set forth in the other feasts. But in an especial manner it is seen as introducing directly to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The feasts that occupy a single day only all point to some one definite act in God's gracious dealings with His people; but the two feasts that occupy several days—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a seven-day feast; and Tabernacles,

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an eight-day feast—show us the whole condition of things resulting from God's previous dealings. In this way the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are related to one another in the closest manner. The seven days of unleavened bread are a picture of the whole character of the believer's life down here. They tell of communion with God amidst the most adverse surroundings; but this communion is based upon redemption through the blood of the Lamb, and the condition necessary to its enjoyment is that all leaven shall be put away.

We get the application of the type very clearly in 1 Corinthians 5. 7, 8: "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." It is very important to distinguish between the foundation of our fellowship with God and the conditions under which it is enjoyed.

It would not have been the least use for Egyptians to put away all leaven out of their houses while there was no blood over their doors. It was the blood alone that

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of persons who might not partake of the Passover. "A *foreigner* and a *hired servant* may not eat thereof." But a servant bought with money could enjoy the privilege which was forbidden to the hired servant. Those who were born of Abraham's seed and those who were bought with money could alike share in the feast. How beautifully this points out the double title of those who to-day are called to the table of the Lord. We may simply describe that title by the words:

*Born of God. Bought by God.*

None of the human substitutes for these two essential qualifications are of the least avail. Reformation can never take the place of the new birth, and hired service can never stand instead of redemption through the blood of Christ.

## CHAPTER IV

# THE SHEAF OF FIRST-FRUITS

BEFORE passing on to speak of the waving of the firstfruits, it may be well to gather up the threads of the divine story as far as we have followed it.

### Retrospect

In the six months of the year that had passed we see a picture of man on probation, so that he may be fully manifested as to what he really is. The result of this probation is that man is shown to be hopelessly corrupt, and God has to set completely on one side the first Adam, and all that has come from him. For this reason the seventh month is changed to the first, and God makes a fresh beginning with Christ, the last Adam, in place of the first. So the Passover lamb is chosen out on the tenth day, and kept up till the fourteenth day, and then it is killed; and while the blood

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is sprinkled outside the door for the perfect security from judgment of those within the body of the lamb, roast with fire, is the portion of the redeemed household. In this way God shows us how He has laid the foundation of all that is to follow, and the character of redemption, and the blessedness of the redeemed people while still pilgrims here are fully brought out.

### In the Land

But there was another truth connected with that Passover week still to be set forth. It was a truth, however, that could not have its proper display while Israel were in the wilderness; and so, while they could keep the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread all the time of their journeyings, there was something further held in reserve till they should be in the land of promise.

Turning again to Leviticus 23 we read at verse 9: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your

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harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.’’

It is necessary to read this passage in connection with the previous verses, 5 to 8, as otherwise we shall not know what Sabbath is referred to. While the Israelites were in the wilderness they were always to kill the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month, and to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread for the seven days following. But when they were come into the land they were to add a further observance during the same week, on the day after the Sabbath day of that week.

It is well to bear in mind that the use of the words, ‘‘And the Lord spake unto Moses,’’ always point out the beginning of a fresh spiritual division of the subject in all these instructions of God to His people from Mount Sinai. As an ordinary narrative there may be no break perhaps, but as to the spiritual interpretation we shall find the recurrence of these words an important guide to help us in distinguishing God’s divisions of the matter under consideration. So here the

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Lord is still dealing with the week of unleavened bread, and is only adding a further instruction as to something to be done in that week when His people were in Canaan; but a new subject altogether is being set forth in type by this additional ordinance, and it is therefore introduced by the distinctive words we have referred to.

### **The Sheaf of Firstfruits**

We can readily understand how impossible it would have been for the Israelites to carry out this last commandment while they were in the wilderness. They must not only be in Canaan, but must be in possession there before they could reap its harvest, and bring its firstfruits to God. And what are we to understand by this sheaf of firstfruits waved before the Lord on the day after the Sabbath day in Pass-over week? The time appointed for its presentation leaves us without any doubt as to its meaning. It was on the day after the Sabbath in that very week that Jesus rose from the dead, and became "the firstfruits of them that slept" ( 1 Cor. 15. 20); and this waving of the first ripe sheaf of

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the harvest is, therefore, a fitting emblem of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from among the dead.

We may notice, too, that no sin-offering needed to be offered to God in connection with the waving of this sheaf. Verses 12 and 13 tell us of a burnt-offering, with its meat-offering and drink-offering, as the accompaniments commanded by God to go along with the sheaf of firstfruits; but we read of nothing in the shape of a sin-offering. There was only one other occasion when no sin-offering was to be offered to the Lord, and that was on each Sabbath day (see Num. 28. 9, 10). The Sabbath was a witness to the rest of God, resulting from a finished, perfect work, and there could be no occasion for sin-offering in connection with it. The wave-offering of the firstfruits represents the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He was raised again according to the Spirit of holiness, in token that sin had been put away, and God completely glorified; and here, too, there was no room for a sin-offering. But on every other occasion throughout the Jewish year, as we shall find by a careful examination of the

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28th and 29th chapters of Numbers, the sin-offering was never to be wanting.

### The Fact of Resurrection

But in this waving of the first ripe sheaf of the harvest we have not merely the witness to the fact of resurrection. There are multitudes of believers to-day who expect a general resurrection of all who have ever lived and died at what they call the "end of the world." This is far better than the infidelity of the Sadducee, who believed in no resurrection whatever; but it is not the truth as set before us in Scripture. There is not merely to be a resurrection *of the dead*, but a resurrection *from among the dead*; that is to say, some will be raised up, while others still lie in their graves. In Revelation 20. 5 we read of "the first resurrection," and we are told that all who have part in it are "blessed and holy." But the very same verse tells us of the "rest of the dead," who lived not again till the thousand years were finished. That first resurrection is a resurrection, therefore, from among the dead, and the characteristic of such a resurrection is that

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it distinguishes those who are thus raised up as the objects of God's grace.

Now in the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits we get this distinction brought very plainly before us. It is what we might call a selective resurrection, for there is a divine order that must be observed (see I Cor. 15. 23), and there is no warrant for the popular notion of a general resurrection day. It will be well to turn to a few Scriptures which bring out clearly the fact that a resurrection of some before others was a truth never revealed till the calling of the Church was made known.

### **Resurrection of the Dead**

In the first place we will turn to some passages that show us that the general truth that the dead should rise was no new thing in the days when the Lord Jesus was on the earth.

Let us begin with Matthew 22. 23, where we have the Sadducees, "which say that there is no resurrection," coming to try and entangle the Lord Jesus with their questions. In verse 31 the Lord says to them: "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which

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was spoken to you by God?" The words are literally as they are given, "the resurrection of the dead," the word dead being in the plural. It is a broad, general expression, simply asserting that the dead will be raised again.

Then in Acts 23. 6 we have a similar expression, but without the article "the." Paul claims the support of the Pharisees on the ground that he was contending for that which they all believed in, though the Sadducees denied it. "Of the hope and resurrection of the dead (Greek, of dead ones), I am called in question." Then, again, in 1 Corinthians 15 it was the fact that there was any resurrection at all that had been denied. "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (v. 12). And, again, it was that simple fact alone that the apostle included among the six foundation truths, known to the Jews of old, in Hebrews 6. 2.

### Resurrection from Among the Dead

But, as we have already stated, while this was true, it was not all the truth. It was all that was known to Old Testament saints, but there was something further

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to be revealed. We may now, therefore, look at some portions which bring out this further distinct truth, that some would be raised up while others were left for a future occasion.

We will begin at Mark 9. 9. Peter and James and John had been with the Lord in the mountain of transfiguration; and as they were coming down He charged them to tell no man what they had seen till the Son of Man were risen from the dead. The exact words here used are "raised out from dead ones," and distinctly spoke of a resurrection in which others would be left behind. Now, this was a matter of astonishment to the disciples, and they questioned one with another what the rising from among the dead should mean. They would never have questioned what resurrection, or rising out of death, might mean; but it was this thought of rising up from among the dead that was altogether new to them.

### **The Resurrection of Christ**

This is the form of expression always used in reference to the resurrection of Christ, making that resurrection a witness

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to the general truth that the dead shall rise, and also to the special truth that there shall be a resurrection of His own at His coming from among the other dead, who will not be raised at that time. In the preaching of the apostles (Acts 3. 15 and 13. 30), or in the teaching of the epistles (Rom. 4. 24 and 8. 11; Eph. 1. 20; 1 Peter 1. 3 and 21), this is the constant distinctive expression.

This is beautifully illustrated by the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits. There were other portions of the harvest, besides the whole of the vintage, yet to be brought in before Israel could keep the Feast of Tabernacles (see Deut. 16. 13); and this day of the firstfruits not merely declares God's power in resurrection, but His distinctive grace in raising up His own in that first resurrection in which the unredeemed have no part.

## CHAPTER V

### THE JEWISH CALENDAR

THE present point seems to be a suitable one to say something about the way in which the Hebrews reckoned their year. It is well known that the actual length of a year, or the period during which this earth completes its circuit round the sun, is about  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days. It is therefore customary, at the present time, to treat the year as consisting of 365 days; and as the odd quarters of a day mount up every four years to a whole day, every fourth year an additional day is added, and we call these fourth years by the name of leap-year.

To the Hebrews, however, this circuit of the earth around the sun was unknown; and to them the length of the year was only indicated by the changing seasons.

#### Divisions of Time

There are certain divisions of time which are apparent to all, however little knowledge they may have of the subject. Of

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these the shortest and most obvious is the day, or time during which the earth turns round on its own axis. An uninstructed savage may suppose that the earth is a vast plain, and that the sun actually comes up from one side of it and, coursing through the heavens, sinks down at the other side. But even then he can count his days as regularly as the enlightened astronomer. Particularly as we draw nearer the equator the regularity of the length of each division of the twenty-four hours is maintained, so that the year round there are days and nights of about twelve hours each. This accounts for our Lord's saying to the Jews, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not" (John 11. 9).

The next natural division of time is from one moon to another, or the period during which the moon runs its course around the earth. This is what we call a lunar month (a moon's month), to distinguish it from the arbitrary months of our calendar. The length of this month is about twenty-nine and a half days, and the Hebrews, who were in the habit of making their calculations of time largely

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from the lunar month, used to count alternately thirty and twenty-nine days to the month to equalise the odd half days. It is very plain, however, that no exact number of these lunar months would make up a year. Twelve of them only amounted to 354 days, or eleven and a quarter days short of a true year; and while the Hebrews had no knowledge of the exact length of the year, or even of what fixed its length, it would very soon be apparent that the seasons were all getting out of place if they had gone on reckoning their years as consisting of only twelve such months. As we already pointed out, at the present time we fix arbitrary lengths to our months without any reference to the moon, and by making some of them to be thirty days, others thirty-one days, and February twenty-eight days, we arrive at a total of 365. The Hebrews, on the other hand, kept the natural or lunar month, and at the end of twelve months they would be eleven and a quarter days behindhand. At the end of two years the deficiency would have reached twenty-two and a half days, and at the end of the third year it would be thirty-three and three-quarter

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days. At this point, however, they used to restore the balance by adding on an extra or thirteenth month, which would leave them only about four days short, and from time to time they would add this extra month after the lapse of two years only, instead of three, as the progress of the seasons made it necessary.

The Scriptures do not contain any direct information on these matters, but all the references to them contained in the Scriptures correspond with the explanations given by other Hebrew writers, so that we are in no doubt on the subject. For example, we are told by Josephus and in the *Talmud* that the Hebrews reckoned their time by lunar months and by solar years, and that they fitted the one to the other by such a process as has been described above. This is entirely confirmed by the Scriptures. We find in the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth chapters of Numbers the offerings appointed by the Lord for all the occasions of the year. First we have the daily burnt-offering of a lamb every morning and every evening. Then come the special offerings for the Sabbath days; and next, those for the beginnings of their months (chap. 28.

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11). After these follow the offerings appointed for all the set feasts, the same occasions with which we are now occupied, as set forth also in Leviticus 23.

Now compare all this with 2 Chronicles 2. 4. Solomon was sending a message to Hiram, king of Tyre, about the building of the temple, and he describes the temple as "an house . . . for the burnt-offerings morning and evening, on the Sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the Lord our God." Here we get exactly the same occasions as spoken of in Numbers 28 and 29; but in Numbers the expression used for the monthly sacrifices was "the beginning of your months," while in 2 Chronicles it is "the new moons." This leaves us without any doubt that their months began with each new moon, and were consequently lunar months.

It is interesting to know that the word "seasons" in Psalm 104. 19, "He appointed the moon for seasons," is the Hebrew word "*moed*," translated "set feasts" in Leviticus 23. 2 (R.V.), so that God specially regulated these by the moon, while the whole period of the year depends upon the sun.

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### The Solar Year

The solar year was the year regulated by the sun's seasons, and not by the moon. The commandment as to the waving of the firstfruits on the day after the Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread settles the point that each year must have begun shortly before the commencement of the harvest. The first ripe corn must be ready for the sickle during that particular week, and the year must therefore take its commencement according to the season. Barley was the first crop in Canaan, and we learn from Jewish historians that as the twelfth month of the year drew to a close the barley was carefully inspected to see if it would be ready to be cut by the middle of the month following. If it would, the year was allowed to close with the twelfth month; but if not, the extra month was added. The twelfth month being known as Adar, this extra month was called Ve-Adar, or another Adar. In this way the adjustment was made between the reckoning of their months by the new moon and of their years by the seasons, which of course followed the sun.

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It may, perhaps, be thought by some that these explanations are rather out of place when dealing with the spiritual interpretation of the feasts of the Lord. But as we go on with our study of the subject we shall find that an understanding of the months and years, according to Jewish reckoning, is very necessary in order to a right interpretation of the dispensational and prophetic teaching of the feasts. We would therefore ask our readers to endeavour to master these matters of detail that they may be able the better to follow the teaching arising out of them.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FEAST OF WEEKS

THE next in order of the feasts was commonly known as the Feast of Weeks (see Deut. 16. 10-16). In the New Testament we also find it called the Day of Pentecost. The one name arises from the fact that seven complete weeks, or a week of weeks, had to be counted from the day on which the firstfruits were waved before the Lord, and that this feast was celebrated on the day following the completion of the seven weeks. The other name refers to the number of days in the same period, for *pentecoste* is the Greek word for the fiftieth, and the day following the seven complete weeks was the fiftieth day.

First, let us notice the fact that this feast is closely associated with the preceding one. Following the dividing lines given us in the repetition of the words, "and the Lord spake unto Moses," we find that these words occur in verse 9 at the close of the instructions as to the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

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This tells us that those two occasions form a distinct section of the whole subject. Tracing out the same clue we do not find these dividing words again till verse 23, in connection with the Feast of Trumpets on the first day of the seventh month. In this way the whole of the long period from the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits, in the middle of the first month to the end of the sixth month, is seen to form the second section. The two leading events of that period, the waving of the sheaf and the waving of the two loaves fifty days later, are also in the same way declared to be associated together. But there is a further link of connection between them, for each of them is spoken of as a "first-fruits" (see verses 10 and 17 of the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus).

### **The Firstfruits and Pentecost**

Now, bearing all this in mind, we come to the question as to what this fiftieth day signifies in the divine order of events. We can have no hesitation as to the answer when we remember what we are told in Acts 2. 1. It was "when the Day of Pentecost was fully come," and

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the disciples were all with one accord in one place that the Holy Spirit came down and filled all the house, and also filled each believing one there.

On the day after the Sabbath, in the Passover week, the Lord Jesus rose from among the dead, and so became the firstfruits of them that slept. In doing so He fulfilled the type of the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits before the Lord on that very day. Now, fifty days later, the Spirit of God comes down, and it is evident that this must have been the fulfilment of the type contained in the presenting of the two wave-loaves to the Lord.

Perhaps, however, it is not equally evident how the waving of these two loaves is a figure of what took place in Acts 2. In James 1. 18 we read, "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." The Word of Truth, the Gospel of our salvation, is the instrument by which our regeneration is brought about; but the Holy Spirit, who seals and indwells each believer, is the power that makes the instrument effectual (see Eph. 1. 13, 14). The indwelling Spirit is the Spirit who

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raised Jesus from the dead, and He therefore is the pledge and earnest to us that these mortal bodies of ours shall presently be quickened. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit which dwelleth in you."

In this way we see how God has joined these two matters together. By resurrection the Lord Jesus became the "first-born from among the dead" (Col. 1. 18), the "firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15. 20). By the new birth and indwelling of the Holy Spirit we are become the "firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1. 18), the Church of the first-born (first-born ones, literally, Heb. 12. 23). But the coming of the Holy Spirit was the direct result of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and His ascent to the right hand of God. "If I go not away," said the Lord to His disciples, "the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you" (John 16. 7). "This Jesus hath God raised up," was Peter's testimony on the Day of Pentecost, "whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore being by the right

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hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear'' (Acts 2. 32, 33).

### **Jew and Gentile**

In this way we plainly see the inseparable connection between the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, as typified by the wave-sheaf of firstfruits, and the making believers into a firstfruits for God by the indwelling Spirit, as typified by the two wave-loaves. But there remain one or two matters about which question may arise. Why were there two loaves? and why were they baked with leaven? Previous to Pentecost, the middle wall of partition, the law of commandments, contained in ordinances (see Eph. 2. 14, 15), sharply separated between the Jew and the Gentile.

By the Cross that middle wall of partition was broken down, but it was only through the coming of the Holy Spirit that it could be made known that, out of two, God would make one new man. So Peter, in Acts 15, speaking of the Gentiles, between whom and the Jews some wished still to keep up the middle wall of partition,

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declared "God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did to us; and put no difference between us and them" (vv. 8, 9). So in Ephesians 2 the apostle declares that Christ has reconciled both Jew and Gentile in one body unto God (v. 16); and adds, further, that "through Him we *both* have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father" (v. 18). The two loaves, then, waved together before the Lord, fittingly represent this great truth, hidden in a mystery in other ages, but now revealed by the Spirit

### The Leaven

Next, as to the leaven. It was distinctly commanded that no leaven should be burned in any offering of the Lord made by fire (Lev. 2. 11). But these two loaves were simply to be waved before the Lord, and not burned at all. When Christ rose from the dead He was the spotless, the Holy One. No sin was ever found in Him, and therefore no leaven was mixed with the offering of firstfruits that represented Him. For the same reason, no sin-offering was commanded to be offered in connection with the waving of that first ripe sheaf. Of all

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the occasions mentioned in this twenty-third chapter of Leviticus there were only two in which no sin-offering was required to be offered. These were the Sabbath day and this waving of the sheaf of firstfruits. The one was a type of God's rest in the finished redemption work of Christ; the other was, as we have seen, the figure of the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

A careful comparison between Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28 and 29 will prove the truth of the above statement. But when the two loaves were waved before the Lord at the end of the seven weeks it was not to represent the Church glorified in resurrection, sinless bodies, but the inauguration of the mighty work of the Holy Spirit, by which Jew and Gentile were to be formed into one body while still dwelling in mortal, sinful flesh. The leaven with which the loaves were baked is, therefore, the witness to the fact of the presence of sin, even in those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. As a consequence of this, a kid of the goats for a sin-offering has to accompany the burnt-offerings and peace-offerings which were offered to the Lord on this occasion (see verse 19).

## CHAPTER VII

### AN INTERVAL

**BETWEEN** Pentecost and the next feast there is a long interval. Pentecost falls early in the third month, and there is no other solemnity to be observed till the first day of the seventh month.

#### **The Present Age**

Thus the greater part of the third month, and the whole of the fourth, fifth, and sixth months passed by without anything to arrest the attention.

Two other matters help to give a special character and significance to this long period. As far as Pentecost all dates had been reckoned from the Passover. The Passover was killed on the fourteenth day of the first month, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread commenced on the day following. Then, on the day after the Sabbath in that week, the first ripe sheaf of the new harvest was waved before the Lord, and fifty days were

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counted on from that date to Pentecost. But now there is no counting of days up to the next feast, for it falls on the first day of the seventh month, without any regard to the length of the interval between it and the previous feast. This brings us to the other special feature of this interval. It was of uncertain length, varying from year to year.

A glance at the diagram will show the reason of this. The fourteenth day of the first month might, of course, fall on any day of the week. If it should occur on a Friday, the very next day would be the Sabbath, and the wave-sheaf would be presented on the sixteenth of the month. But suppose the fourteenth to come on a Saturday, the first Sabbath afterwards would be on the twenty-first of the month, and the wave-sheaf would not be offered till the twenty-second. As Pentecost was always the fiftieth day from the offering of the wave-sheaf, it would vary in like manner, and might fall on any day from the sixth to the twelfth of the third month. But the Feast of Trumpets was always to be held on the first day of the seventh month, and, consequently, the period be-

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tween Pentecost and Trumpets is, as we have previously stated, an indefinite one, varying from year to year.

### A Waiting Time

In this way we learn a good deal as to this long interval, which begins with Pentecost and ends with Trumpets. The very fact of its commencing from Pentecost leaves us without doubt that it represents the present age of the calling out of the Church by the preaching of the Gospel. Then its undefined length is symbolic of the truth that it is no part of the times and seasons of Jewish prophecy. This last point is further enforced when we call to mind that there is no more counting days from a previous starting-point, as must always be the case in dealing with prophetic dates. And, lastly, the aspect of the whole period is one of waiting and expectation; waiting for the trumpet call that is coming, rather than reckoning back from what had gone before.

### Six Months Completed

But there is yet another point of great interest that we must not overlook. Though

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this interval itself is of varying length, yet taken with what had gone before it completes the first six months of the year. This fact brings back to mind what we have already dwelt upon in chapter 2 as to the previous six months that were all blotted out, when the month Abib, up till then the seventh month of the year, was changed into the first month. Those six months illustrate the whole time of man's probation, before the fulness of the time had come, when God should send His Son. They only served to show man's utter unprofitableness, and afforded no possible foundation for covenant relationship between man and God. Hence they were set aside, and God began afresh, changing the seventh month into the first, and making the Passover Lamb the foundation of all His relationship to a redeemed people.

The close of this second term of six months, therefore, naturally suggests a comparison with the end of the previous like period. And what a contrast does such a comparison bring to view. The first, which spoke of man's works, only served to declare that it had yielded nothing that God could accept, and it was,

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as a consequence, wholly set aside. The second, which shows the character and consequences of redemption, brings us right up to the Feast of Trumpets; a feast, as to the meaning of which we can scarcely now be in doubt.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

THIS Feast of Trumpets, then, represents the coming of the Lord Jesus for His people and our gathering together unto Him. At least this is its interpretation as to the heavenly people. From this point we shall find that each feast has a double meaning. The two meanings in each case are closely allied to one another; but the one has reference to the Church, the heavenly people, while the other refers to Israel.

#### **The Silver Trumpets**

Before we go any further with our examination of the feast itself we shall do well to look at the symbolic teaching of the Scriptures in regard to trumpets, for we shall find that these instruments played no small part in the history of God's dealings with His people. Let us turn to the tenth chapter of the book of Numbers and read carefully the first ten verses.

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The trumpets here spoken of were to be made of silver. All who have at all been occupied with the teaching of the tabernacle types will be familiar with the thought that God connects with silver. It is His appointed type of redemption. The whole supply of silver used in the construction of the tabernacle was obtained from the tribute of half a shekel each man, commanded to be paid when the people were numbered. This half shekel of silver was called the ransom or atonement money; and it was a special acknowledgment on the part of each one who was numbered among Jehovah's host that he had been redeemed from Egypt's bondage by the power of God (see Exod. 30. 11-16 and 38. 25-28).

Now let us apply this to the use of silver for the construction of these trumpets. Whatever commandments or instructions God had to communicate to His people they were always to be conveyed by means of the trumpets. Were the camps to be summoned for their journey; was the whole assembly to be gathered before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle; were the princes, the heads of the people, to be

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brought together; was an alarm of approaching danger to be given; in each and every case Jehovah's message was to be conveyed to the people through the medium of the silver trumpets.

The meaning of all this is plain enough. In Exodus 19, when God had brought Israel to Sinai, and was about to give them His holy law, He prefaced it with the words: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself" (v. 4). It is to a redeemed people that He addresses His commandments; and every word that He speaks to them, from first to last, is on the ground of redemption.

In this way we see that the trumpets had a well-defined and unmistakable meaning. They were the constant memorial of the grace of God, according to which He had first brought His people out of the house of bondage, and was now guiding, instructing, and warning them all through their wilderness journey.

### **The Application of the Type**

The application of the type of the silver trumpets to the circumstances of the present

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dispensation is obvious enough. We, too, have been delivered from bondage, and are journeying through a wilderness; and throughout the whole time of our pilgrimage God commands, admonishes, entreats us as a redeemed people. It is on the ground of redemption that He claims the surrender of our entire being to Himself. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6.19,20). "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5. 15).

But while silver, the material of which the trumpets were made, is God's appointed type of redemption, the very fact of the use of trumpets tells us that there is a distance between the speaker and those to whom he speaks. Most of us are familiar with the use of trumpets or bugles in military manoeuvres. The commanding officer cannot make his voice heard by the large bodies of men that are under his command, scattered, as they are, over a considerable district. By his side, however, is a small company of buglers,

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and, according to a well-defined code, they translate every word of his into clear and far-reaching bugle notes. By means of these bugle sounds troops who are beyond the reach of the general's voice, and even completely out of sight, are made to understand his will.

In 1 Corinthians 14. 8, when speaking of the exercise of spiritual gifts in the ministry of God's Word, the apostle compares those who declare God's message to these buglers or trumpeters, and points out the absolute importance of clearness in the utterance. "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" If the buglers are bunglers there will be nothing but confusion throughout the camp. And how true this is in regard to the spiritual camp. Wherever the clear ring of redemption is lacking everything becomes confused and uncertain. The very first principle as to rightly dividing the Word of Truth is lost sight of, and that which belongs to the children of God is applied to the children of this world, while the solemn warnings of God's Word to the ungodly are made to refer equally to believers.

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### The Lord's Coming Again

It is little to be wondered at if under these circumstances the Blessed Hope of the Coming again of the Lord Jesus is lost sight of. Is there a sweeter note that ever sounds from the silver trumpet of redemption than the oft-repeated word of the Lord Himself, "Behold, I come quickly?" But it is only to the ears of redeemed ones that that note is one of joy and delight. The more the power of redeeming grace is known the more earnestly will the heart respond, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus;" and thus the whole attitude of the child of God will be one of waiting for the *last* trump, of waiting for God's Son from Heaven.

And this shows us why the long-looked-for announcement of His Coming is called "the *last* trump." "Behold, I show you a mystery," writes the apostle; "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15. 51, 52). The figure is still the

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same as in the previous chapter; only then the trumpet was calling to the battle, and now all the conflict is over, and the joyful *last* trump summons to perfect rest and endless bliss. It is the *last* trump; for those who had long been guided and encouraged and admonished by the Word of their unseen Lord are now caught up into His very presence, to see His face and to hear His voice. Thenceforward the trumpet sound will never be needed, for as the bride of the Lamb they shall share His throne and be "for ever with the Lord."

### The Seventh Trumpet

Some have attempted to connect this last trump with the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11, but a very little consideration will show that there is no connection whatever between them. The epistle to the Corinthians was written some thirty-six years before the book of the Revelation; and a letter, written to the Church at Corinth to put them right in regard to serious false doctrine that was being introduced among them, would not have made use of language that could not be understood, except by reference to the symbols

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of a vision which was only to be given long after most of the saints then on earth had departed to be with the Lord.

Moreover, the seven trumpets of Revelation 8 to 11 are angelic trumpets, whereas the trumpet that calls the saints up to meet the Lord in the air is called "the trump of God." "For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thess. 4. 16). In this place, again, the gathering of the saints to be with the Lord is said to be by the trumpet sound, and thus we have abundant confirmation as to the meaning of the Feast of Trumpets. This, at least, as far as the heavenly people are concerned. But it is the purpose of God to gather Israel also, and the Feast of Trumpets has undoubted reference to both gatherings.

As already stated, the remaining feasts from this point onwards have all a double fulfilment. During the present dispensation the nation of Israel is set on one side; they are "*Lo-ammi*," not a people (Hosea 1. 9). Consequently the accomplishment of God's present purpose is in connection with the Church, the heavenly people.

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After the Church is taken away God has declared His intention to gather the nation of Israel again. Consequently we have the heavenly people in Heaven and the earthly people upon earth, both enjoying the favour of God at the same time, and hence the double fulfilment of these remaining feasts.

### **The Trumpets in Relation to Israel**

It remains for us, therefore, to look at what the Scriptures say about the gathering again of the nation; and we may begin with the Lord's teaching to His disciples in Matthew 24. We must observe particularly that the whole subject before us in this chapter relates to the Jews and Jerusalem. In the previous chapter the Lord had concluded His solemn denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, with a touching lament over Jerusalem. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23. 37). Directly after this He told His disciples of the destruction

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that was to fall upon the temple itself; and upon their asking Him as to when these things should be He went on to tell them of events specially relating to Jerusalem and the land of Judea.

The close of the whole prophecy is in verses 30 and 31: "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 His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other." Here we have the trumpet once more, and it is for the gathering of the Lord's people; but yet there is a marked contrast between the two occasions. The gathering up of the Church is His own act entirely. "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14. 3). But for the gathering together of the scattered nation He employs angels as His instruments. Here it is as Son of Man that He is manifested, a title always connected with His judgment of the nations and His earthly

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reign; there we are told that the Lord Himself shall descend, a title specially indicating His relationship to the Church.

### **The Gathering Back of Israel**

In the Old Testament Scriptures we have no direct prophecy concerning the taking away of the Church. It may be hinted at in types and shadows, but nothing more. Concerning the gathering back of Israel to their land, however, the case is far different. This was a frequent theme in the mouths of the prophets; and a reference to some of their mentions of it will help to confirm the marked distinctions between the instantaneous catching up of the Church into the clouds at the shout of the Lord, and the more gradual bringing together of the scattered nation from all parts of the world to the land of promise.

Let us turn first to Isaiah 11. 11, etc.:  
“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the

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islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." In speaking of this as a "second time" of gathering His people together from their dispersion the reference is, without doubt, to the first time, when He would bring a remnant back by successive stages from the seventy years' captivity. But lower down we get a reference to the time when God first brought Israel out of Egypt. Then He opened a pathway through the tongue of the Egyptian sea (the Red Sea); but now He will utterly dry it up, while He will smite the great river, the river Nile, into seven streams (see v. 15, R.V.), so that neither the one nor the other may be an obstacle to His returning people.

We get the same subject again in the close of chapter 27: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they

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shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem'' (vv. 12, 13). Here, again, we have the sound of the trumpet to gather back the outcasts of Israel to their land. But how great is the contrast between this and the catching up of the saints to meet the Lord in the air, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

In the two expressions, "beat off" and "gather," in verse 12, there is an exceedingly beautiful reference to the commandment God had given to His people not to closely glean their fields and vineyards and oliveyards, but to leave a portion for the poor and the stranger. In Leviticus 19. 9, 10 it is written: "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou *gather* the  *gleanings* of thy harvest; . . . thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger." Again, in Deuteronomy 24. 20 we read: "When thou *beatest* thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow." The

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word "beatest" of this last passage is the same Hebrew word as the "beat off" of Isaiah 27. 12; while the "gather" and "gleanings" of the Leviticus passage are identical with the "gathered" of the verse in Isaiah.

The thought, then, seems to be as follows: When Israel were gathering in their harvest they were to leave some gleanings behind. But when the time of God's harvest-ingathering of the nation has come He will beat off, bough by bough, till not a single olive is left behind; but, one by one, all are gathered in.

### ***"In that Day "***

We might refer to many other passages of like import, such as Isaiah 49. 11-23; Ezekiel 37. 15-28; Amos 9. 9-15; etc., for, as we said before, it is a subject that the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament teem with. It may be objected that some of these prophecies refer to the gathering back after the seventy years' captivity, and doubtless they have such a reference. In the same way there were many references to John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus, the complete fulfilment of which is post-

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poned in consequence of Israel's rejection of their testimony; but they will all be fully accomplished "in that day." There is abundant evidence, moreover, that the blessings promised in the Scriptures we have quoted have never yet been bestowed. "I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land" (Amos 9. 15); "I will make them (Judah and Israel) one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all" (Ezek. 37. 22). These and many such prophecies still await their fulfilment. The unchanging heart of the blessed God awaits both events: the catching up of the bride that is to share the throne of the Son, and the gathering together of the long-scattered seed of Abraham to Immanuel's land. Both the one and the other will be with the great sound of a trumpet; and, therefore, a special feast, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, was instituted by Jehovah among the symbolic feasts of the year, to tell of His own mighty joy in the bringing of His redeemed ones to Himself.

## CHAPTER IX

# THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

### PART I

THE next in order of the feasts was the Day of Atonement, and it was commanded to be kept on the tenth day of the seventh month.

#### **The Seventh Month**

In order to understand the significance of this day it will be necessary to go back to the beginning of the year, and to call to mind what we have already learned about the tenth day of the first month. It will be remembered that that first month had previously itself been the seventh month; and that it was only when the Passover was first instituted that the seventh month was changed into the first. In doing this the Lord blotted out from Israel's calendar the six months of the year that had already elapsed, and made a fresh beginning in connection with redemption through the blood of the

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Passover lamb. From the beginning of the creation God had made the number six to represent the time for work, while the seventh was typical of the rest which resulted from a finished work.

We also saw, in connection with the choosing out of the lamb, that the number ten is used as a symbol of the claims of God upon us for a perfect obedience. In accordance with this double type, the tenth day of the seventh month would represent the testing of the work of the previous six months according to the divine standard, the glory of God, and the establishment of the rest which would flow from God's delight in a perfect work.

But, instead of this, that day brought out the most striking testimony to the worthlessness of all that had gone before. The choosing out of the lamb was the most emphatic setting aside of everything else; and, therefore, in connection with the bringing forth of the lamb God completely blotted out every trace of the previous six months, and declared that henceforth the seventh month should become the first.

This month thus became the beginning of a second period of six months, entirely

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connected with the Passover lamb; and the close of that period brings us for the second time to the seventh month and the tenth day of the month. Applying the above thoughts as to the numbers six, seven, and ten, we shall be prepared to find that this seventh month exhibits a rest resulting from the work of the previous six; and that the tenth day of it will show us God's testing of that work and the establishment of the rest which flowed from it. And this is just what is brought before us in connection with the solemn feast of the tenth day of the seventh month, the great Day of Atonement.

### **“What Jesus began to do ”**

When the beloved physician commenced writing for his friend Theophilus the book which we know as the Acts of the Apostles he referred to the third of the four Gospels which he had previously addressed to the same friend (Luke 1. 1-4) in the following words: “The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus *began* both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after that He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto

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the apostles'' (Acts 1. 1, 2). By thus speaking of the whole of what the Lord Jesus had spoken and done, right up to His going back to the Father, as only the *beginning* of His doing and teaching, we are made to understand that the whole of the work of God's grace throughout this dispensation is the continuation of the same work.

The choosing out of the lamb on the tenth day of the first month, its keeping up to the fourteenth day, the slaying of the lamb on that day, and the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits on the day after the following Sabbath, correspond to what Jesus began to do and teach, according to the Gospels.

The Feast of Pentecost, and all the period that followed till the end of the six months, tell of the continuation of His work through the present dispensation. As the seventh month is ushered in the Feast of Trumpets tells of the joy of the Lord in gathering to Himself the precious fruits of His toil. But now, on the tenth day of that month, the whole of the work of the past six months is tested, and the rest that it brought in is eternally confirmed.

## THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

### Atonement, Humiliation, and Rest

A careful reading of the verses in Leviticus 23 that contain the instructions as to the observance of this feast will show us that three things are brought into special prominence—atonement, affliction or humiliation of soul, and rest (see vv. 26-32). In chapter 16, which is entirely occupied with lengthy details of this day's observances, we have exactly the same three things (vv. 29, 30). This day, then, was to bring out the fulness of the atonement as it had never been seen before. But it was also, as a direct consequence of the exhibition of atoning grace and power, to lead to deep and true soul-humbling, while at the same time there was to be a full entering into the rest of God.

As in the case of the Feast of Trumpets, so here also we have to look for a twofold fulfilment of the type: first, in connection with the Church, and afterwards as belonging to Israel. As regards the Church, the whole scene appears plainly to point to the judgment-seat of Christ. It is probably unnecessary to point out that the judgment-seat of Christ is altogether distinct, either from the throne of His

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glory in Matthew 25 or from the great white throne of Revelation 20. Only saints stand before the judgment-seat, and they are there to have their works judged and to receive rewards according to their works. In Matthew 25 the nations then living on the earth are dealt with previous to the setting up of Christ's Millennial kingdom. In Revelation 20 the wicked dead, who had slept in their graves all through that Millennial reign, are brought up for judgment.

We will first endeavour to examine the incidents of the Day of Atonement, as recorded in Leviticus 16, and then compare these with what the New Testament teaches us as to the judgment-seat of Christ.

### **In the Holy of Holies**

Turning then to Leviticus 16 we learn that after the presumptuous sin of Nadab and Abihu, which was visited with such swift and solemn judgment (chap. 10. 1, 2), God ordained that Aaron and his sons should no longer have constant access to the holy of holies. Only on the tenth day of the seventh month should Aaron himself, and, after him, his successors in the high priesthood, pass the veil and stand

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in the immediate presence of the Lord (see verse 29). Moreover, the entrance of Aaron into the holiest on this one day was to be accompanied by a very important and significant ceremonial, a ceremonial which was to bring into prominence the three special features of the feast—atonement, humbling of soul, and rest.

The special offerings of the day were to be, first, a bullock for a sin-offering and a ram for a burnt-offering on behalf of Aaron himself; next, on behalf of the congregation, and provided by themselves, two kids of the goats for a sin-offering and a ram for a burnt-offering. In the first place, Aaron was to kill the bullock, which was to be his own sin-offering. Then he was to take a censer full of live coals and a quantity of incense beaten small, and with these and some of the blood of the bullock he was to pass within the veil and to sprinkle the blood once upon, and seven times before, the mercy-seat.

### A Twofold Atonement

There are two distinct thoughts thus brought before us. The bullock for the sin-offering was to make an atonement

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(v. 11), but the blood of the bullock was not the only thing that Aaron was commanded to take into the holy place. As we have already seen, he was to take a censer full of live coals and incense beaten small, and to bring them within the veil. There is a special significance about the incense being beaten small. The incense was composed of fragrant gums, and in its ordinary condition would only burn slowly, with a very light smoke. But when it was beaten into powder and cast in that state upon the burning coals instantly a thick cloud of fragrant smoke would rise up from it. This is brought out in verse 13: "And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the *cloud* of the incense may *cover* the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not."

The Hebrew word for atonement is literally "covering," and in the blood and the cloud of incense we get two aspects of the wondrous covering by which we are brought near to God. The blood tells of the penalty of sin fully borne; the incense speaks of the fragrance of Christ's infinite perfection. Our sin is covered by the one, our persons by the other. In the case of Aaron it was

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necessary that all this should first of all be done in reference to himself. He had to present the blood, first for himself, and afterwards for the errors of the people (Heb. 9. 7); and it was only after the first was done that he became a true representative of Christ as the High Priest of His people. And now, when his own title to stand in the presence of the glory of God is fully established, Aaron comes forth from the tabernacle and proceeds to act on behalf of the people. Having killed the "goat of the sin-offering that is for the people" he goes a second time within the veil, and repeats exactly all that he did there before (Lev. 16. 15).

### **The Scapegoat**

But this was not all he had to do on behalf of the people. It will be remembered that the congregation had to provide two goats for a sin-offering (v. 5), and that Aaron had to cast lots upon them; one was to be for the Lord, and the other for a scapegoat. It was the one for the Lord whose blood was carried into the holiest, and sprinkled upon and before the mercy-seat; and now we learn what was done with the

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second goat. "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited (margin, a land of separation): and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness" (vv. 21, 22).

In connection with the first goat we see the claims of God's holiness fully and finally met by the atoning Blood of Christ. The righteousness of the throne of God is manifested, and the way right up to the throne revealed. It is all the godward view of the atonement. But in the second goat we see our side of it. The sins of the people were confessed in their presence over the scapegoat, and then the goat was driven away into a land of separation, never to be seen again. The two goats are but two aspects of one great truth, and must therefore be looked at in connection with each other. The claims of God are met and the consciences of God's people are forever cleared.

## CHAPTER X

# THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

### PART II

BUT now we want to consider the bearing of all this in connection with the special day on which it was to be carried out, and the position which that day occupied in the whole series of the Feasts of the Lord. It was certainly intended to be something more than a general setting forth of the precious twofold view of the atoning work of Christ.

### **The Goats'-Hair Curtains of the Tabernacle**

That general view was beautifully illustrated by the goats'-hair curtains which covered over the whole tabernacle, and were hung outside the inner curtains of white linen and blue and purple and scarlet, wrought in the likeness of cherubim. Those inner curtains, which formed the visible roof of the tabernacle, as seen from within, were themselves called "the

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tabernacle" or dwelling-place (Exod. 26. 1 and 6). The goats'-hair curtains were called the "tent" (vv. 11, 12, 13). In the former we see the whole truth of Christ as the Burnt-offering, and, in consequence of what they set forth, the whole place is called the "tabernacle of Jehovah." In the latter we are shown the embodiment of all the truth of Christ as the Sin-offering, and it is in connection with these curtains of goats' hair that the place is called the "tent of assembly," for that is the real meaning of the words commonly translated "tabernacle of the congregation" in the Authorised Version.

These goats'-hair curtains were made one width of four cubits, or nearly eight feet, longer from back to front of the tabernacle than the inner curtains, and the Lord commanded that this extra width should be doubled in the front of the tabernacle (Exod. 26. 9). In this way the doubled width of curtain would hang down nearly four feet along the top of the front of the tabernacle, one half, so to speak, looking inwards towards the throne of God, the other half looking outwards towards the congregation. Thus we get a perpetual

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witness to the twofold character of atonement, as meeting the claims of God and the needs of the sinner.

### **The Judgment - Seat of Christ**

But, as we observed before, when all this is brought up again on the tenth day of the seventh month, it is not merely a general view of this precious truth to which our attention is called, but a special application of it under circumstances typified by that particular day.

Let us consider the position of that day. It followed shortly after the Feast of Trumpets, and was to be quickly followed, in its turn, by the Feast of Tabernacles. The former, as we have already seen, represents the gathering of God's people to Himself—whether it be the heavenly people, at the descent of the Lord Jesus to the clouds, or the earthly people in connection with His coming down to the Mount of Olives on their behalf.

The Feast of Tabernacles, as we hope presently to see, sets forth the final condition of the perfected joy of the redeemed with the Lord. Midway between these

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two is this Day of Atonement; and, as regards all who are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, there seems to be no room for doubt that it represents the judgment-seat of Christ. If we recall all the incidents of the day, as we have them brought before us in Leviticus 16, we shall find that they get their complete fulfilment in connection with that judgment-seat.

Let us remember the three great features of the day—ATONEMENT, HUMBLING, and REST. On that day the sins of the congregation for the whole past year were gone over with a fulness and minuteness exceeding all that had gone before. Individuals had brought their sin and trespass offerings time after time, and had made their own personal confession of this or that sin. But how incomplete this must have been in every case. How much must have been overlooked altogether, or, if remembered, considered not important enough for such special notice. But in this day it is not according to the failing memory or mistaken judgment of each individual that the confession is made. The High Priest himself, divinely empowered and instructed, makes a complete declaration of everything.

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### Confession of Sins by the High Priest

Three times over the word "all" is used in connection with this solemn confession by the High Priest. "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him *all* the iniquities of the children of Israel, and *all* their transgressions in *all* their sins" (Lev. 16. 21). But, notwithstanding this, no shedding of blood follows, no fresh work of atonement is done. The far-reaching effects of atonement have just been declared as they never were on any other occasion. On that day alone the blood of a victim was carried into the holiest of all, and sprinkled upon the very throne of God.

The confession of the people's sins by Aaron, following after this, is only with a view to their never being mentioned, never even coming up to remembrance again. The whole confession is made in the light of that wonderful unfolding of the fulness of the atonement, and seems to say that everything was known to God, and completely provided for by Him when that blood was carried into the holiest. True, a remembrance was made again of sin, and

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an exceedingly solemn one, but the whole of the sins thus brought to remembrance could but enhance the value of the atoning blood that bore witness from the mercy-seat that the claims of God were fully satisfied.

And is not this just what will take place at the judgment-seat of Christ? In 2 Corinthians 5. 10 we read: "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." The word "appear" is, more correctly, to be made manifest, as it is twice translated in the following verse: We must all be made manifest, or, as we are told in 1 Corinthians 4. 5: "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." In this last passage the work of the judgment-seat is put in the closest connection with the Lord's coming, as though the one followed immediately upon the other.

This exactly agrees with the teaching of the day of atonement. In the type the High Priest went *alone* into the holiest, though he went in on behalf of the people. But when Christ comes for His own it will

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be to receive the accomplishment of His heart's desire: "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me *be with Me* where I am" (John 17. 24). The full value of the atoning blood of Christ will then be seen as it never was before, for in person, not in spirit only, redeemed sinners will have been brought nigh to God. All the claims of God's holiness will be seen to have been satisfied, and the saved sinner's title to dwell with God will have been fully established. Then comes the judgment-seat. The bringing to light of the hidden things of darkness, and the making manifest of the counsels of the hearts, when every one is made manifest at the judgment-seat. These things correspond to the solemn confession of all Israel's transgressions by Aaron. In neither does any sacrifice follow. The full value of the one great atonement has just been declared, and the subsequent confession is made in the light of it.

### **Illustrated by a Family**

Perhaps an illustration may help to make this clearer. A father of a family has been absent from home for a long

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time. During his absence the mother has continually informed him as to all that was taking place at home, and particularly as to the children's conduct. On many occasions they have misconducted themselves, and have needed to be punished, and all this has been reported to the father. But in addition to this their good behaviour, their diligence at their studies, and their general obedience have been reported too, and all this the children are well aware of. At last the day of the father's return home arrives. He has told them that he is coming, but without fixing a time. All are eagerly expecting him, and when his voice is heard there is one general, joyous rush to meet him. For the moment all besides is forgotten in the delight of seeing their loved one, for indeed they do love him dearly, every one of them. But after the first greetings are over the remembrance of transgressions during their father's absence begins to rise up in their minds. They are not afraid of punishment, for that had been inflicted at the time, and will certainly not be repeated. But they cannot feel quite happy and at their ease until it has all been gone over. So pre-

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sently the father has a little talk with each one. He has brought gifts for them, but the very gifts that mark his approval of what had been satisfactory in the children's conduct mark also what had been of an opposite character. He would gladly have given larger rewards to some of them, but that certain acts of disobedience forbade it. But now all has been gone over, and though there has been many a humbling remembrance, and even many a tear shed, the father's patient, loving dealing with all the past has made a final end of it all. Nothing will have to be brought up again, and nothing remains to interfere with the full enjoyment of their father's presence and of all his love to them.

### **One Aspect of the Judgment-Seat**

This may help faintly to illustrate one aspect of the Judgment-seat, and one which is particularly brought out in connection with the Feast of Atonement. As we have already remarked, that feast gives special prominence to three things—atonement, humbling, and rest, and these are just the three things that stand out in the most striking manner in connection with

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the judgment-seat. The value of *atonement* is so abundantly declared that the bringing to light of every hidden thing concerning the believer, the very manifesting of the secret thoughts of all hearts, cannot take from him his title to stand before God. Yet it does call for *humbling*, and the very last time when the child of God shall afflict his soul because of his transgressions will be at the judgment-seat. But for that very reason it brings into *rest*, for it is the last, the final mention of these things. Just as the scapegoat, over whose head all Israel's sins had been told out, was driven away never to be seen again, so the precious result of atonement will be manifested, not only because the blood claims our place before the throne, but because it ends for ever the very mention or thought of our sins.

Aaron's confession on behalf of all the people on the tenth day of the seventh month was the supplement of their very imperfect confessions all the year through. Many a time had one and another come with a sin or trespass offering, as the conscience was burdened about some particular transgression. On each occasion the victim had

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been slain, and some of its blood had been put on the horns of the brazen altar of burnt-offering. In this way each confession of sin had been connected with the satisfying of God's claims by atoning blood, and the maintaining of the offerer's standing before God. Yet all this was very incomplete. For one sin thus dealt with in God's presence, how many would be left unnoticed. But every deficiency was made up on the day of atonement. Then, first of all, the blood was carried not to the horns of the brazen altar out in the court, nor even to the horns of the golden incense altar before the veil, but right past the veil to the very throne itself. And then, without a single omission, Israel's High Priest, the very one who had carried the blood into the holiest on behalf of the people, tells out everything over the head of the scapegoat. All heads may well be bowed in deepest humiliation during the recital, but with it all is the knowledge of the blood upon the mercy-seat. And when all has thus been told out, the last mention of it has been made, and nothing remains to mar the perfect bliss of the Feast of Tabernacles.

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In the same way the judgment-seat of Christ will be the supplement of all our too sadly imperfect work of self-judgment down here. Self-judgment connects the sins which we confess with the Cross of Calvary. It leads to truest humbling of soul, because it helps to a right understanding of the hatefulness of sin. It also leads to rest, because it puts away the remembrance of the sin as a barrier to the soul's communion with God, revealing the double efficacy of the blood of Christ. Well for us, indeed, if this solemn and searching exercise of soul were more constantly practised by us.

## CHAPTER XI

# THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

### PART III

WE get another beautiful illustration in the present dispensation of the way in which godly dealing with sin is made the soul's preparation for fellowship with God.

#### **Self-Judgment and Communion**

In 1 Corinthians 11 we read: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (v. 28). And, again: "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (vv. 31, 32). And just as self-judgment prepares us for a right partaking of the memorial feast here, so will the judgment-seat of Christ be the fitting and needful preparation for the marriage supper of the Lamb,

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and the eternal and unbroken communion which it ushers in.

But now, as then, the soul-humbling must go hand in hand with the full knowledge of what atonement has wrought, and of the rest that flows from it. All true self-judgment must be after the pattern of the work of the judgment-seat, as set forth in the type of the Day of Atonement. Apart from a true realisation of what the blood of Christ has wrought, the soul is neither willing nor able to deal honestly with itself in the presence of God about transgression and sin. If we do not apprehend what the blood upon the mercy-seat signifies, of the satisfying of all the claims of God, so that His throne has indeed become a throne of grace, instead of confessing our sins we shall be endeavouring to cover them up or to find excuses for them.

On the Day of Atonement the carrying of the blood into the holiest went before the confession of sins over the head of the live goat. At the judgment-seat of Christ the saints will all have been changed and caught up to the embrace of the Lord before the manifestation of the secrets of all

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hearts. So with our present exercise of soul in self-judgment; it should always be based upon the knowledge and realisation of redemption through the blood of Christ and of our acceptance in Him. It is this that alone will make true self-judgment possible, while it will also make it deep and real. Then follows true rest of soul, true communion with God. Like David, in Psalm 32, when he had made full confession of his sin, the soul can sing: "Thou art my hiding-place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance."

But in all this we have only been considering the type of the Day of Atonement in its bearing upon the saints of God who will be caught up at the coming of the Lord Jesus to meet Him in the air. As we noticed in connection with the previous feast, from the Feast of Trumpets onwards, all the feasts have a double application, being illustrative of the dealings of God with believers of this dispensation, and also with Israel. We must turn, then, to the Scriptures that tell of Israel's future to learn what is this second application of the present feast.

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### Application to Israel

Here, as in the case of the Feast of Trumpets, the wholly different circumstances of the nation of Israel from those of the Church will make the application of the type to differ greatly, but no less will each detail of it be found applicable. Let us turn to the twelfth chapter of the prophet Zechariah, and read carefully from verse 9: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.

"In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives

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apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart. All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."

### Christ Manifested in Glory

The Spirit of God sets this picture before us quite by itself, mentioning the Lord's deliverance of His people by the destruction of their enemies, only as to its bearing upon the solemn time of mourning that follows. The full account of this deliverance and the extremity of anguish and woe immediately preceding it are given us in chapter 14; but here it is the effect of that deliverance upon the people of Jerusalem that is brought under our notice.

Let us consider the whole circumstances. The antichrist king has gathered the confederation of nations who own his sway to fight against Jerusalem. The city has fallen into his hands, and a terrible slaughter has commenced; when suddenly the Lord Jesus, descending from the clouds

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with His attendant hosts, alights upon the Mount of Olives, the very spot from which He ascended to Heaven (see Acts 1. 9-12). The manifested glory of His presence is instant destruction to the antichrist (2 Thess. 2. 8), and all the confederate armies are routed with an awful slaughter; while the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who a moment before were in the direst peril, now find themselves saved with a deliverance as complete as it was sudden and unexpected.

### The Son of Man

And who is this mighty Deliverer? As their eyes behold Him they see the wounds in His hands and feet, and they know that He who has thus descended in the clouds of Heaven from the right hand of power is no other than that Son of Man who stood before Caiaphas and was mocked and spit upon in their very city by their fathers. Aye, and they had confirmed all the deeds of their fathers, and had fully appropriated to themselves the awful curse that had been so wantonly uttered: "His blood be upon us and upon our children." What shall they say, what shall they do in the presence

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of Him against whom they and their whole nation have so long and so fearfully sinned? Neither the fear of judgment nor the sense of deliverance is of itself sufficient to break down the enmity of the natural heart and lead to soul-humbling. But God's time to magnify His Son and to show mercy to His ancient people has come; hence the Spirit of grace and of supplications is poured upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the heart of Israel is turned to the Lord

### Israel's Repentance

But how shall words describe the sorrow, the deep mourning and repentance that will accompany the conviction brought home to every heart—this is the One whom we have pierced? Then will the language of Isaiah 53 have its full meaning as their eyes are opened to see that the deliverance just accomplished is the very outcome of the agonies of Calvary's Cross—"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Pardoning grace and delivering power from Jehovah, their

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God, are made known to them through His beloved Son, and with them comes the sense of the deep sin of their long rejection of Him.

Mark how this humbling work of God's grace in their souls isolates them, shutting up each one, so to speak, alone with God. In the case of those who believe to-day in an unseen Saviour the same thing has already taken place. Nothing so isolates a man from his fellows as the conviction of sin wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit. It is only those who have never felt the burden of guilt who are found saying, "Oh, yes, we are *all* sinners." And such are content to know Christ as "*a* Saviour," or, at most, as "*our* Saviour." But where the Spirit has convinced of sin, "because they believe not on Me," as the Lord Jesus said, how different the language becomes. Like Job, the heart exclaims, "I abhor myself;" or, like Isaiah, "I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips." And then nothing short of the sense of forgiveness and salvation, personally received, can satisfy, and Christ becomes "*my* Saviour" to the believer's soul.

In the case of these people of Jerusalem;

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in Zechariah 12, they had never believed until they saw, and it is only when they are saved that they learn who it is that has saved them. It is on this account that the work of bringing them all apart, each one to mourn and humble himself for his guilt alone before God, becomes needful. The bliss of the Millennial reign of Christ over His restored people could not be complete without it. It is the solemn, soul-humbling dealing of God with all the sin of the past centuries, culminating in the iniquity of mocking God with renewed sacrifices in a rebuilt temple at Jerusalem, while they were still rejecting God's blessed Son, and accepting in His stead the man of sin. It is all brought home to them now, but it is by the revelation of the Lamb of Calvary's Cross as their Messiah and Saviour.

In this way we see here also the three great characteristics of the Day of Atonement. The full declaration of the value of the atonement itself; the consequent humbling of soul of those who sin, though forgiven, is yet made manifest; and the perfect rest of communion with God thus established.

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### The Year of Jubilee

We must not leave our consideration of the Day of Atonement without noticing its connection with that very remarkable institution, the Year of Jubilee. Every fiftieth year, from the time the children of Israel entered the land of Canaan, was to be a year of special gladness and rejoicing. In that year every man who had been driven through poverty to part with his inheritance was to have it restored to him. Or if in still greater straits he had sold himself to be a slave the Year of Jubilee was to give him back his liberty. Divided families would thus be reunited, and all restored to their own possessions.

Now, in Leviticus 25, where God's instructions about the Jubilee are given, we read at verse 9: "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the Day of Atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land." This Jubilee Year, then, did not commence at the time when their years usually began. It was on the tenth day of the seventh month, the Day of Atonement, that the

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trumpet was to proclaim throughout the land that the Jubilee had commenced. But see what this brings us to. Long before, at the first institution of the Passover, God had changed the seventh month of the year into the first. But now the Jubilee Year commences at the seventh month, and so carries things back to their original order, reminding us of "the times of restitution of all things," spoken of by Peter (Acts 3. 21)

### A Double Fulfilment

The Jubilee Year, like all the later feasts, has a double fulfilment. To the Church it represents the time when, the bride being adorned for her husband, God shall tabernacle with His people, and shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, so that there shall be no more death, or crying, or pain; for the former things shall have passed away (see Rev. 21. 3, 4). This will follow immediately after the judgment-seat of Christ. The Jubilee trumpet shall utter its sound on the Day of Atonement. As regards Israel, the Jubilee figure shall have its fulfilment when Zion's mourners shall be comforted; when God, even their

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God, shall give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. This comfort follows immediately upon God's day of vengeance upon His enemies (see Isa. 61. 2, 3, etc.).

We have learned already that when Israel see the Lord Jesus standing on the Mount of Olives as their Deliverer they will turn to Him with true brokenness of heart, and their deep and real mourning over their past rejection of Him will fulfil the type of the Day of Atonement. In like manner God's quickly following comfort, with the building of the old wastes and the raising up of the former desolations, shall be to them their blessed Jubilee; and the type shall have its complete accomplishment in their case as well as in ours.

## CHAPTER XII

# THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

AND now we come to the last of the feasts, the Feast of Tabernacles. Following, as it does, immediately after the Day of Atonement its teaching is very much akin to that of the Year of Jubilee, for both of them carry on our thoughts to the time of perfected blessing and gladness which God has in store for His people. But while the Jubilee presents that time to us chiefly from the point of view of the blessings therein enjoyed by the saints, the Feast of Tabernacles, like all the other feasts, rather dwells on what that time will be to the Lord as the bringing of all His wondrous purposes of grace to a complete fulfilment. Special emphasis is given to this point by the manner in which the instructions regarding the Feast of Tabernacles are given. A reference to Leviticus 23 will show that there is a remarkable break in

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these instructions. Beginning at verse 34 we read: "The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles unto the Lord. On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein."

It is at this point that the break referred to occurs, for the next verse goes on to sum up the contents of the whole chapter by saying: "These are the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon this day." This feast is called the Feast of Tabernacles, and yet the whole subject is apparently brought to a conclusion without any mention of that from which the feast gets its name. It is well to notice, too, the special word used to show the character of the eighth day of the feast. In verse 36 we read of

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this day that it is a "solemn assembly," but this is a very imperfect translation. The margin says "day of restraint," while the margin of the Revised Version gives it as

### "Closing Festival "

The Hebrew word is taken from a word signifying to shut up, or bring to a close; and the prominent thought of this eighth day of the feast is that all the purposes of God shadowed forth in the opening feast of the year, and steadily wrought out from month to month, have now been perfectly accomplished. At the commencement of the whole subject in connection with the words, "feasts of the Lord" and "holy convocations," we learned that the purpose of God was the gathering together of a people for Himself that He might dwell in their midst; and now, with the mention of this last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, we have the same expressions repeated. All this helps to show that this feast has brought us to the point where God's purpose is accomplished, His wondrous toil of love ended, so that henceforth He will rest in His love, while through

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all eternity He inhabits the praises of His people.

There is, however, another matter yet to be touched upon, for verse 39 goes on to tell us that on this same fifteenth day of the seventh month the people were to take boughs of goodly trees and make themselves booths, in which they were to dwell throughout the feast. But no mention of this is made till the other feature of this feast has been so fully dwelt upon that it would even have appeared as if the whole subject had been concluded. We have something of the same sort in connection with the law of the peace-offering. The name of this offering is connected with the fact that in distinction from all the other offerings this one is partaken of in part by the offerer himself, who is thus brought into a wonderful fellowship with Jehovah, for he shares in the same portion.

Yet while this is so, we find no mention of this characteristic feature of the peace-offering in the whole of Leviticus 3, where the commandment relating thereto is first given. That chapter is entirely occupied with showing how the Lord's portion is to be presented to Him; and it is not till after

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the sin and trespass offerings have been fully dealt with that the subject of the peace-offering is taken up again in chapter 7, where we learn what the offerer's part in it is to be. It is in this way that the Spirit of God teaches us that the glory of God, the fulfilling of His purposes, must ever be the first object before us, while our blessing and happiness will come to us as the result of God's will concerning us being done. Before tracing the

### **Fulfilment of this Closing Feast**

first, in connection with the Church, and, next, in its bearing upon Israel, let us take notice of a remark in verse 39 that it was to be kept after the fruit of the land had been gathered in. Referring to the same subject in Deuteronomy 16. 13 we are reminded there that the harvest was twofold in character. "Thou shalt observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine."

A comparison with other Scriptures will abundantly satisfy us as to the spiritual meaning of these two great divisions of the harvest. Wherever we turn we find that

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the fruit of the cornfields represents the people of God. The Lord Jesus compares Himself to a corn of wheat; and the wondrous results of His death, in the salvation of many sinners, to the much fruit brought forth through the falling into the ground and dying of that one grain of corn (John 12. 24). Again, in the second parable of Matthew 13, the children of the kingdom are represented by the good seed. On the other hand, in the day of His vengeance the Lord is set before us as treading the winepress, and staining all His raiment with its blood (Isa. 63. 3). But if we turn to the 14th chapter of the Revelation we find the two great harvests of the corn and the wine set side by side, and the meaning of each left beyond doubt. First, the Son of Man Himself reaps the corn harvest; and, second, a symbolic angel reaps the clusters of the vine of the earth, and casts them into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

It is very plain, then, that the reaping of the corn and wine represents the gathering together of the saints for blessing and of the ungodly for judgment; and the Feast of Tabernacles, falling, as it did, after

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both harvests were ended, must have its fulfilment after God has brought His redeemed ones to the place of blessing and has judged the Christ-rejecters. Our study of the earlier feasts shows that this will certainly be the case, and we may now proceed to inquire as to the meaning of the special features of this feast in their twofold application.

Speaking generally, it is easy to see that we have before us a closing scene of unmingled joy and gladness. But the number of days during which the feast was to be kept shows that the joy is an everlasting joy. In rather a remarkable way this feast is spoken of as a seven-day feast, and yet is said to have an eighth day, which is the greatest of all. "The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord. . . On the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you" (Lev. 23. 34-36). We are accustomed to say, and quite truly, that the number seven typifies perfection, and eight resurrection. But just because the eighth day is a new first day, and so represents resurrection, it is also a figure

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of that which is eternal. All God's new things are eternal. Christ rose from the dead to die no more, and the soul that is born again lives for ever. So while the seven days of the feast declare it to be perfect as to its character, the eighth day shows that as to its duration it is eternal.

### The Last Day of the Feast

The mention of this eighth day of the feast brings to mind that wonderful incident recorded in the 7th chapter of John's Gospel. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (vv. 37, 38).

When God first ordained these feasts He loved to dwell upon them as something peculiarly His own. We have before taken notice of the repeated expression, "the Feasts of the Lord," in Leviticus 23. But if we turn to the second verse of John 7 we read: "Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand." No longer the Lord's, but the Jews' feast. As they had turned

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the house of God into a house of merchandise, so they had robbed these feasts of their divine significance and made them to be mere outward ceremonials. This last day of the feast should have beautifully shadowed forth the time when the desire of every heart would be perfectly satisfied in the Lord Himself, while He would be resting in the accomplishment of all the purposes of His grace. But the Jews, who could see nothing beyond the outward observance, missed all this. They were restless, unsatisfied, longing for deliverance to appear, but little knowing what their real need was.

Perhaps we may be able faintly to picture the thoughts that filled the bosom of the Lord as He surveyed that scene. He Himself could look, with no dim vision, far on to the day of which that eighth day of the feast was the type. He could think of the eternal purpose of the Father's heart, and of the mighty joy of the time when it should all be fulfilled. But what about the teeming multitude around Him who had come from far and near to take part in a ceremonial that, after all, was to them nothing but a name. Why were they

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there so blind, so dark, so unsatisfied? Because they were refusing Him through whom all God's purposes were to have their accomplishment. Therefore it was that He stood and cried: "If any man thirst, let him come unto ME, and drink."

### **Eternal Rest in the Glory**

We see in this feast our eternal rest in the glory with the Lord. But what about the booths in which the people were to dwell? These booths were to be made of branches of trees. The commandment in Leviticus 23 only mentions by name palm trees and willows of the brook, though it speaks of other sorts as goodly trees and thick trees (v. 40). But in Nehemiah 8 we find further mention of olive trees and myrtle trees as included in the divine commandment (v. 15).

The word "pine trees" is a mistranslation, the Revised Version making it "wild olive trees," while literally it is "trees of oil." We have, then, the olive, the palm, and the myrtle tree all combined to form these tabernacles, while they were doubtless interwoven with the willows of the brook. The olive speaks of the fulness

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of spiritual power, the palm of triumphant victory, and the myrtle of joy and gladness. But why should the willow be there? Shall there be any sorrows, any tears, to mar the bliss of that blessed feast? Surely not. But the remembrance of the past will always be with us; not now to cause one pang, but to enhance the joy of the present, and to make our hearts overflow continually with grateful praise and adoring worship

And even while we are yet here it is the will of our Father that we should keep this feast, and anticipate the joys of the many mansions in His house. "Let not your heart be troubled," said the Lord Jesus, when He was about to tell them of those many mansions; "ye believe in God, believe also in Me." By the Spirit's power He would have us already sing the song of victory out of hearts filled with His own joy and peace. And if the sorrows of the way are still present with us, He bids us interweave them with the palm branches, and say, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8. 37).

As regards Israel, the Feast of Taber-

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nacles points on to the time of their Millennial blessings. The features are the same in both cases, but the fulfilment with them is on earth instead of in Heaven. It might seem at first sight as though the type failed in their case, because Millennial blessings are for a thousand years only, and not for eternity. But possibly this may be another reason why the feast is spoken of as of seven days' duration, while afterwards the eighth day is referred to as the greatest of all. The seven days would complete the earthly scene, and then would come the new heavens and new earth of the eighth day. Between these would be Satan's last attempt to deceive the nations and to gather them together against God; his final overthrow, and the great white throne, with its solemn and final judgment of all that had had no part in the first resurrection. In Zechariah 14. 16-19 we learn that the Feast of Tabernacles will be kept during the Millennium, and that God will punish the nations who refuse to go up to Jerusalem to keep it. And this seems to correspond with those solemn events that will follow immediately on the close of the Millennium.

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### An Undefined Period

We have now come to the close of this remarkable series of feasts, but we are still only in the seventh month of the year. What about the remaining five months or more? A reference once more to the diagram will give the answer. There it will be seen that the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles is shown as merging into the beginning of a large circle marked with the words "To everlasting." This is just what the type appears to convey. The remaining portion of the year was really an undefined period. We have already pointed out that the Jewish year, which was reckoned by lunar months of about twenty-nine and a half days each, consisted sometimes of twelve months and sometimes of thirteen, as it required about twelve and a third of such months to make a true solar year, and about every third year an additional month had therefore to be added. It is for this reason that the remaining portion of the year after the Feast of Tabernacles was of undefined length, and just because it was so it fitly represented the eternity into which the last great day of the Feast of Tabernacles ushers us.

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### The Eternal Counsels of God

In this way we have seen the eternal counsels of God being wrought out in the changing scenes of this world's history till they reach their final accomplishment after time has ended. God grant that the contemplation of them may lead every heart to join, with fuller understanding and deeper, humbler adoration in the language of the apostle: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. 1. 3, 4).