

Leviticus - Commentaries by G. Gardner

God's Purposes and Ways in the Feasts, Tabernacles, The Feast of

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It has been seen that a new era distinctly marked the ways of God in the blowing of Trumpets which led to the unique and eventful Day of Atonement: a time which not only contemplates those concerned being in Jerusalem, but that their mourning and bitterness is associated with the return of their Messiah from heaven to the very spot and place from which He ascended. The final Feast of Tabernacles is evidently dependent upon Christ Himself coming to introduce and establish the day of glory; then this closing Feast will be truly kept and continued from year to year at Jerusalem, the divinely appointed metropolis of the whole earth, the city of the King of kings, and Lord of lords. He it is Who will sit between the cherubim, and, as the Royal Priest in true Melchizedek power and glory, will establish and bless in righteousness and peace.

This blessed time, the theme of Psalms and Prophets, will be known by Israel, when after beholding the wounds of their pierced Messiah, they will be brought under the value of the blood of atonement, and what is written of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23) will be accomplished, incomparably beyond the typical language thus stated. "Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah, on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you, and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah; it is a solemn assembly and ye shall do no servile work therein." Then follows the special feature of the feast. "Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto Jehovah seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day, the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days,.... Ye shall dwell in booths seven days... that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths." This joyful assembly should begin and end on the sabbath, with the addition of an eighth day. But it begins after the vintage and ingathering of the harvest; which implies that the land and people had been cleansed, not only by discriminating, but also by utterly unsparing, judgment when the bad will have been removed and the good grain gathered in, as to which the prophetic Jewish scripture of Matt. 24 is instructive. At the appearance of the Son of man the tribes shall mourn, when they shall see Him 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."

Clearly the elect of God's earthly people is here meant to be gathered to celebrate the harvest feast on the first sabbath. It is a statement distinctly Jewish, denoting the renewal of the Jewish feasts and sabbaths in their own land: a fact not true since the scattering, after crucifying their Messiah.

Strange as it may seem to the Christian who is enjoined (as being dead and risen with Christ) against having to do with holy days, new moons and sabbaths; yet Israel will again keep her sabbaths and feasts. Indeed both the Passover and Feast of Tabernacles will be obediently observed as well as the revived sacrifices and priesthood. Not as once pointing on to the Antitype, but in the instructive retrospect of His having come, and made good for them in manifest glory all that Jehovah shadowed forth, as His sovereign intention of grace for the nation, for whom their Messiah died. Not only was the blood of the everlasting covenant shed by Him Who is raised and glorified, but in due course its application to Israel of Abraham's unconditional promises (as yet unfulfilled) will be made good, with all their glorious accompaniments. Many Old Testament scriptures testify to Israel's coming glorious kingdom; but Ezekiel gives a striking order from chap. 36 to the end of the book, where the future is set forth as to the land, people, city and temple, with its restored ritual, crowned with the closing words, "Jehovah is there."

Chap. 36. deals with Israel's uncleanness when Jehovah their God will give them a new heart and spirit. "And ye shall dwell in the land which I gave unto your fathers, and ye shall be My people and I will be your God." When cleansed from all their iniquities, and dwelling in their cities, they shall say, "This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden." Moreover the remarkable vision of the figure of dry bones, giving the present state of Israel dead and buried among the nations, declares their restoration and union as one people under the antitypical David, their king. Wholly lost, and unknown to man as the ten tribes are, Ezek. 37 shows them definitely gathered back to their land at the appointed time, as well as united to Judah as "one stick," which has never been the case since the days of Solomon. "Neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more." Jehovah also declares, "My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." Such holy and blessed statements may well be followed by the description of the coming glory of the temple and city, with the appointed sacrifices, sabbaths, and feasts, leading to the celebration of the passover before their temple with its returned glory. Then assuredly they will read their glory, blessing, and redemption, in the light of the Cross, which the Passover and the varied sacrifices will declare beyond all typical days. Thus, when reaping the full harvest of the precious fruit of the death of their Messiah, they as a united blessed nation will be fitted to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

The remembrance of their long history will heighten the value of the death of Christ, which secured everything and righteously laid the basis of the new covenant. Nor this only, for their booths on their houses will recall the wilderness life and path, when they dwelt in tents with the given shade, tears, and overcomings, which the thick trees, willows, and palm branches may severally signify, as doubtless will be the lesson learned to call forth their joyful praise and worship, as they appear before Jehovah of hosts in His sanctuary. That this Feast will be held when the Messiah, the King of glory, is in His temple, is clear from Zech. 14.

Moreover, it will be kept year by year, at the time when the representatives of the nations of the earth go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of Hosts, adding, "And to keep the feast of tabernacles." Then the precious things recorded in Isa. 60 about the future

sanctuary of Jehovah and His people will be realized, when He will make the place of His feet glorious, and Jehovah shall be unto them their everlasting light, and “thy God, thy glory; and the days of thy mourning shall be ended; and they shall inherit the land forever.” When the glory of Jehovah is then risen and shining upon the land, and peoples, Gentiles and their kings will minister to them, like the queen of Sheba, beholding with wonder, and bringing glory and riches in homage to the true Solomon, the King of glory, Israel's reigning Messiah. Such will be the sabbath and complete circle of the seven days' joy and glory, the last and final Feast of Tabernacles to continue surely through the full and perfect reign of Jesus, the King of the Jews, and King of the whole earth.

Moreover, does not the eighth day imply going on to the skirts of eternal rest and glory, when dispensations will close, and millennial glory will be merged or established in that period when God will be all in all? Then will the fruit of redemption in the eternal blessedness of God's own rest be fully realized in the stability of the new heaven and the new earth. Surely in the retrospect it only remains for those having part in it to bow in lowly worship at the little seen and touched upon of the marvelous wisdom in the ways of God, past, present, and future. Above all we bless His Son Who, by His death as the one and only effectual sacrifice, so glorified God, as to secure these precious results both for the heaven and the earth; for the church above and Israel below. Both await the coming of the Savior. The heavenly saints meet Him in the air, to go into heaven for the marriage of the Lamb; and Israel, when for them His precious feet shall again touch Mount Olivet, shall have the earthly kingdom and glory.

Till then may the teaching and lessons in the wonderful ways of God be better known in sanctified grace and power, make the word of God a deeper reality, and beget an intelligent holy walk, till our Lord and Savior make good His word, “Surely I come quickly.”

What Israel will presently learn of the mind of the Lord and His marvelous ways, the heavenly people are now privileged by the Spirit of God to know still better, and can already exclaim:

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out... For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.” G. G.

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God's Purposes and Ways in the Feasts, Trumpets and the Atonement, The Blowing of

It has appeared, from the Feasts already touched on, how God, in His infinite wisdom, sketched in brief His intended ways—ways carrying us on through centuries with all the varied history as to Israel and all the nations. It was in view of His declared intention of having Israel as the head, and not the tail, of the nations. Thus is the earth ordered in relation to His people, as was stated by Moses in their early history, “When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel. For Jehovah's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance” (Deut. 32:8, 9).

This treasure and portion Jehovah has never yet truly possessed. For as the antitypical Passover and Wave-Sheaf testify that Jehovah, their Messiah, was by the Jewish builders cast out, and despised and set at naught, whilst exalted by God to heaven, so from thence the Holy Spirit has come, and remains, the clear and positive antitype to the Feast of Weeks. During such time Israel are out of the land, scattered and peeled all over the earth, bearing the marks of Jehovah's displeasure, especially Judah for their guilt in crucifying their Messiah, and willfully saying they had no king but Caesar; also, “His blood be upon us and our children.”

Ever since their Messiah's death, judicial blindness has rested upon them; the like condition is alas! rapidly overtaking Christendom, which for its sin and unbelief must be cut off by judgment, and Israel will again be brought into prominence. True, before Jehovah's action of gathering His earthly people, they may reappear in Canaan, as stated by the Prophet, “They shall gather but not by me.” Moreover their Messiah testified that they would become a prey to antichrist, saying, “I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive” (John 5:43).

Notwithstanding all this, the unconditional promises coalescing with the new covenant await their fulfillment in full and complete blessing. For their still rejected Messiah will then be king in Zion, reigning gloriously over Israel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. In view of this, after the Pentecostal period, the Feast of Trumpets, under the figure of the moon, heralds the reflected light to shine on them, and summons them, not only by the blowing of the trumpets as in the days of the type, but as it is termed, by the “Memorial” to regather them in antitypical blessedness.

Before this moment, the twenty-second verse touchingly shows Jehovah's care and provision for the poor, at the end of the harvest, and outside those contemplated in the closing Feasts. The remaining corn should be for the poor and stranger to glean, and thus share the portion of those gone before who are to come on the scene after the coming of the Lord for His saints. Those slain shall be blessed and share heavenly glory with Christ. Yea, “blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth;” and blessed and holy those that suffer death for Christ and the truth's sake, for they shall have part in the first resurrection. Though not raised till later, they will nevertheless reign with Christ (see Rev. 20:4-6). Such poor and forgotten ones will thus be honored and blessed, as intimated in the wonderful order of the type, which may enhance its application.

Respecting the blowing of trumpets, Num. 10 sheds light on their purpose, also on those responsible at the appointed time, and their distinct object. Two silver trumpets were to be made of a whole piece, “that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps.” The priests, Aaron's sons, must blow them according to Jehovah's appointment, for gathering, guidance, or alarm of impending danger. Of this the scriptures from time to time give samples, some of a most humbling character; whilst others clearly are prophetically given in relation to the day of the Lord and Israel's future, in view both of judgment and of their after restoration to blessing.

Many passages in the Prophets are instructive as to detail; but Joel 2 will suffice to show that the trumpet is to be blown in Zion, and the alarm sounded because the day of the Lord cometh; bringing first judgment, then blessing. The people are to be gathered for fasting and repentance, and finally for blessing and glory on earth.

It is evident therefore, that the summons by the trumpets denoted an unfulfilled epoch in the experience of Israel, when they will respond to the call at the time distinctly future. "In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation." To this period of Israel's summons the varied books of the Psalms assuredly apply, when Jerusalem will be the joy of the whole earth and the prayers of David are ended in the full cup of peaceful blessing under the true Solomon. The preliminary summons with its pointed allusion is thus stated in Psa. 83 "Blow ye the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, in our solemn feast day." The new moon and solemn feast day, when responded to in the reflected light of Israel's new beginning, will gather them for the following feast with their God-given experience, to know and value the one and only work of Atonement, accomplished in the death and shed blood of Him, who died for the nation of Israel, as well as for the salvation and gathering of the children of God.

Blessed indeed for us who now believe is this teaching or lesson in the ways of God, but not least for Israel's nearing future, to learn the feast of Atonement, when on the tenth day of the same month with the blowing of trumpets, "there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you"; and ye shall afflict your souls "and offer an offering made by fire unto Jehovah and ye shall do no work that same day." For this most important feast, Lev. 16 and Zech. 12 will furnish deep instruction later as to Israel's experience yet to be made good in the glorious antitype. Hence in the feast, the people's part in the day of Atonement is distinctly stated, namely, "ye shall afflict your souls and do no work." Both are one as to this. But Lev. 16 also minutely gives the work of the High Priest in which Israel took no part. As the representative of all Israel, he took the blood of the slain bullock and goat, sprinkling it before and upon the mercy seat, thereby declaring that, only by death and shed blood, atonement could be made. This is in character with the passover, and both find their perfect answer in the work of Christ, who has in the value of His own blood entered heaven; from whence He will return to make good in the very people that crucified Him the benefit of His atoning work, when they shall indeed look on Him whom they pierced.

Then a corresponding work in them will follow the work done for them. This has ever been the case; but the distinct and perfect work of Christ for souls is often confounded with the work of the Spirit of God in them, to the hindrance of enjoyed peace with God, which Christ Himself made by the blood of His cross. Truly repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus must be enjoined upon souls in relation to heaven; as affliction of souls, and no work, will be Israel's experience when brought into peace and blessing upon earth in the value of the atoning blood. Then by a divine work of grace they will learn Jehovah's intention to have Jerusalem again inhabited, and by the people spared through all their great and final tribulation. So He saith, "And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced," etc. (Zech. 12:10).

Supplication and mourning will mark them, from royalty and priestly dignity to families generally, even to husbands and wives mourning apart. Then, no longer scoffing and turning their backs on their Messiah, they will look on Him whom they pierced and say, "Lo this is our God: we have waited for Him." It is then they will prove the value of the water and the blood, when Isa. 53:3-6 will be intelligently hearkened to, both expiation of their sins by blood, and the purifying power and cleansing of the water; as it is written "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" (Zech. 13:1).

Such are the privileges in boundless grace Israel has in store, associated with their coming Feast of Atonement, when Jehovah will speak peace to His people, who will never more return to folly, or fall under the yoke of the oppressor. Alas! ruin will be the case of the apostates, "the many" Daniel speaks of, justly doomed to shame and everlasting contempt. But it is to those in whom the Spirit will work in grace according to the new covenant that the day of Atonement applies, as also the following Feast.

God's Purposes and Ways in the Feasts, New Meal Offering of Two Wave Loaves, The

Lev. 23:15-22

It is clear, that the Feasts have not only their intended place with Israel, but indicate a divine order in the time when each would find its antitype to the end of all things, when all would have their holy fruit in eternal rest and glory. In this order as in all other things, how entirely everything depends on Christ, the Second man, the last Adam. The Lamb slain once for all annulled the power of death, and as the risen One He lives to die no more, has become the victorious Firstfruits as well as the real and purposed Wave-sheaf, presented to God and accepted by Him for those for whom Christ died, as was expressed in the type, "It shall be accepted for you."

This then opens the way for the new Meal-offering, as it is written. "Ye shall then count unto you from the morning after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering, seven sabbaths shall be complete; even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath, shall ye count fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meal-offering unto Jehovah. Ye shall bring out of your habitations, two wave-loaves of two tenth deals of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven: firstfruits unto Jehovah" (15-17.) The time and character of the offering, with its state, are clearly defined. Though but little is recorded of the Feast, it is implied like the Passover, that it actually took place in Jerusalem, at Pentecost, the time of the descent of the Holy Ghost, its antitype. The space of time, between this Feast and the Wave-sheaf, is definitely stated.

That Christ after the Passover or the Cross, was not seen by the world that crucified Him is clear. Nevertheless He alive again for evermore made Himself known to His disciples from time to time, during those forty days of His risen life. But seven sabbaths must be complete before this next Feast could be accomplished. Accurate indeed was the time of our God, as when the fullness of the time had come, He sent forth His Son. So in this case, when the fiftieth day set in, the Holy Spirit came to make good the new Meal-offering of two wave-loaves, composed of those hitherto His Jewish disciples attached to their Messiah for His kingdom. They had witnessed His rejection, and crucifixion, but also during forty days to their great joy, the same Jesus had been seen and heard, contemplated and handled in resurrection. Next, after tarrying ten days at Jerusalem in prayerful expectation, the promise of the gift and presence of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled. Not only had the

wave-sheaf been presented but the risen Christ was glorified. Consequent upon it, the two wave-loaves were formed as a thing entirely new, and to occupy an unparalleled place in the ways of God on earth, which might well suggest both the number and the nature of the offering, with the exceptional fact of leaven baked in it.

The distinctive and wondrous truth at Pentecost, and still running on, is the presence of the Holy Spirit, who is forming the church as the body and bride, for the exalted heavenly Bridegroom. This, for other purposes, was not revealed when the Spirit first came. Moreover the type does not present "one body and one Spirit," the church formed as it will be presented in glory, pure, holy and spotless, but rather taking her place in the ways of God upon earth, as a witness to her being associated with a heavenly Christ, and to reflect Himself during the hour of His absence. For its fellowship in the breaking of bread in the expression that was to be of the one body, the Lord had provided the one loaf. The new Meal-offering evidently means those that are Christ's now gathered upon earth; where though having life in Christ risen, and being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, yet leaven, typical of sin, remained in them. For while the flesh is condemned and gone in Christ made sin for us (Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21) before God, still it remains in the believer though he is bound not to allow its activity. The same Spirit, that presents the two wave-loaves with the leaven is the power to give superiority over the flesh, the world, and Satan. Notice that the type says "baken leaven," implying that, though there, it was not to work. Alas! it did so very early in the church's history to the dishonor of the Lord and the grief of the abiding Spirit. Yet the new oblation was to be of two tenth deals of "fine flour"; and "they are the firstfruits unto Jehovah," manifesting how intimately the newly formed association was by the Spirit bound up in life and acceptance with Christ the Firstfruits. So the apostle John declares of all Christians, "As he (Christ) is, so are we in this world," whilst awaiting His full likeness at His coming. Then the leaven within will be completely gone, to the eternal praise of Him who died for that holy and blessed end. Meanwhile, the accompanying sacrifices to be offered shed their light and beauty, for acceptance and joy as well as for answer to the leaven within for unhindered communion. With the Wave-sheaf were only sweet savor sacrifices, as was due to Christ alone. Here were the same, fuller for the need; but as with the First-fruits, wherein was signified, the savor of Christ's perfect obedience in life and death; so here no less associated with the presentation of the wave-loaves. Thus is shown how blessedly God's estimate and Christ's savor would rest upon the new Meal-offerings, together with the Drink-offering that testifies to the joy in the power of the Holy Ghost.

"And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams; they shall be a burnt-offering to Jehovah with their meal-offering and their drink-offerings, an offering made by fire of sweet savor unto Jehovah. Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin-offering and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace-offerings. And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits, a wave-offering before Jehovah with the two lambs: they shall be holy to Jehovah for the priest. And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, [that] it may be a holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work: a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations" (vers. 18-21).

But in contrast with the Wave-sheaf type of the risen Christ were the sin-offering and the two lambs for a sacrifice of fellowship or peace-offerings. Thus, however blessed the church may be, was expressed the infinite and essential distinction of Christ. In the sin-offering the baken leaven was adequately met, and the basis for the blessed privilege of communion, was laid by the peace-offering. Whether acceptance or the joy of communion and no less divine testimony, all awaited the descent of the Holy Spirit, to be made good by the antitypical wave-loaves. This was largely displayed in Acts 2, both in communion, and testimony, when the bonds of unity and oneness gave witness to its precious fruit.

It was then that outside testimony brought in three thousand souls, and inside "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread and the prayers." A new thing indeed in the ways of God on earth, still in principle going on by the Holy Spirit, until the antitype of the wave-loaves has run its course of completion, when Christ the Firstfruits, and His church, are found together in heavenly glory, to make way for further purposes on earth, as will appear in the Feasts to follow.

God's Purposes and Ways in the Feasts, Sheaf of Firstfruits, The: The Sheaf of Firstfruits

This sheaf is most important, and fraught with deep instruction, as the antitype with its application declares and teaches. Jehovah's command was, "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 harvest unto the priest. And he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it" (vers. 10, 11). Evidently the wave sheaf is in character with all the fruits of the land, to be offered by Israel, as enjoined in Deut. 26. All necessitated being in Canaan, and to reap the produce of the land, so as to offer the firstfruits to Jehovah Who had pledged Himself to Moses in Exodus not only to deliver them from Egyptian bondage, but to bring them "unto a land, flowing with milk and honey": "a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig trees, and pomegranates, a land of oil olive and honey, a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness." It cannot be surprising that Jehovah's claims should so fully and distinctly be stated, and that with holy jealousy of being first. Whether corn, fruit, or any produce of the newly possessed land, He who gave it was to have the firstfruits, which should ever keep their hearts in the conscious sense, and becoming gratitude toward the Divine Giver. That which comes from God should return to Him, in the supreme blessedness, not only of being worthy to receive the firstfruits, but as the source, of every good and perfect gift.

How far Israel answered to the claims and privilege, their history in sin and disobedience too plainly declared. They forgot Jehovah their God, and neglected His ordinances, which involved His righteous judgment, in the loss of the fruit of their land; and finally of the land itself.

Infinite the wisdom of divine purpose, and marvelous the grace, that the antitype was the reserve, to make good what Israel's passover shadowed forth, as already seen in the death of Christ. It will also appear that Jehovah's appointed sheaf of firstfruits finds its alone antitype in Christ Himself, in whom God has found His blessed portion, as the Firstfruits of the new creation, where all is of God. If Christ, as the true Paschal Lamb, laid the foundation in His death for the glory of God, is it not in Christ risen up from among the dead, that God displays His righteousness in power and glory? Therein also, Christ is emphatically declared to be the antitype as the Firstfruits in resurrection. Corn is a significant figure, being used by the Lord Himself, which as the sower He sowed to produce the wheat, to be duly reaped for the heavenly granary. In John 12 He unmistakably refers to Himself when answering Philip concerning the Greeks wishing to see Jesus. What was then before Him was the solemn moment of His cross and death, when He must be alone with God: for He, the corn of wheat, must die, if others

were to be associated with Him, which He most definitely states. "Verily verily, I say to you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

This fact of itself is the death-blow to the propounders of the erroneous teaching of union with Christ incarnate. For clearly He was alone in His pure, holy, spotless life, as He was in death; where His absorbing desire was that the Father's Name might be glorified, as the Father would glorify Him. Yea, the corn of wheat dying points not only to the death of the cross, where all man's need, even to his moral end, was met, but to the believer's sad history forever closed for faith. Not this only but it was the direct highway for Christ to become the Firstfruits, and the antitype of the true wave-sheaf presented to Jehovah, to which is added "to be accepted for you."

The Lord's disciples were unconscious when eating the last Passover with Him (Luke 22) that He was then to become the antitype, as also they were ignorant respecting His resurrection as the Firstfruits; although He had plainly told them, that the Third day He would rise again, thus fulfilling the type of the morrow after—the Sabbath. Very early in the morning of what would henceforth be called the Lord's Day, the loved ones ignorantly brought spices to embalm their Lord; but they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher, and they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. At the tomb they were challenged, if not rebuked, by angelic voices saying, "Why seek ye the living one among the dead. He is not here but is risen." The amazing truth, that He who died and was buried had become the Firstfruits in the field of resurrection life, was the living proof that all was over as to the cross and the grave; and that Christ the Firstfruits from the dead, had once and forever triumphed over sin and Satan, death and the grave. Though Mary Magdalene vainly waited at the grave, hoping to find the dead body of her Lord, yet her devoted heart was rewarded by being the first to behold her risen Lord and Savior, though not to handle or have Him as heretofore.

Is it not a touching intimation, and precious aspect of the presented wave-sheaf? The Lord in following Mary's confession as Master, said "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (adding also the truth of association with Himself as the fruit of His death). "But go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God." Not only was it the ascending to the Father after the Lamb was slain, but all the Father's will in life and in death had been fully completed, so that He was raised by the power of God as by the glory of the Father. Thus is He presented as the Wave-sheaf no less in and by whom His brethren are set apart and accepted. The application to Christ the Firstfruits is most positive in 1 Cor. 15 and also to His own as associated with Him. Therefore is it that the dead in Christ who have fallen asleep would be raised, and with the living be changed into His image. For the divinely appointed order is "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

"And in the day when ye wave the sheaf, ye shall offer a he-lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt-offering unto Jehovah. And the meal-offering thereof [shall be] two tenths of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah [for] a sweet savor: and the drink-offering thereof [shall be] of wine, the fourth of an hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor fresh ears, until this selfsame day, until ye have brought the oblation of your God: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings" (vers. 12-14).

Thus the type is established in its true dignity in the risen Lord, with its presentation, acceptance and divine application; not omitting the accompanying sacrifice of the Burnt-offering, the Meal-offering, and Drink-offering. Such must be offered and accepted with the Wave-sheaf, before Israel could eat of the corn of the land, declaring beyond mistake Jehovah's claim and portion first, which in the antitype is blessed and important. To whom should the Lord present Himself, but to His God and Father who gave Him? "I came forth from the Father into the world; again I leave the world and go unto the Father." In the significant space of His life and death is accomplished the whole will of God. Who could estimate all His devotion expressed in the Burnt-offering, and the Meal-offering, as the one to whom it was rendered? with the Drink-offering in the joy and delight He had in doing it? Blessed be God the acceptance and estimate rested with Him; not on the one hand with angels, nor on the other with those who share the eternal benefits of the Wave-sheaf and the varied offerings, though it will be the theme and adoration of the redeemed throughout eternity. But God has His own delight and satisfaction in the Son Himself, and in all that He has done.

God's Purposes and Ways in the Feasts, Passover and the Unleavened Bread, The

IT has been seen that God's sabbath of rest depended on the person and work of His beloved Son, in order that others might share it. It will be no less clear that the sacrifice of Christ alone settles the question of sin, and gives souls a new beginning with God, as well as a holy and righteous title to present peace and coming rest.

The Passover, whether looked at as following or apart from the Sabbath, ranks first in importance even in the typical order. This Israel as a nation had already been taught in their start with Jehovah. Ex. 12 speaks minutely of their appointed beginning with the sacrifice and shed blood of the Paschal Lamb. This was the only ground of difference between them and the Egyptians, as well as the exclusive means of escaping the righteous judgment of God. Typically it raised the question of sin, and settled it on behalf of the guilty who bowed.

Their part was obedience to the divine command; to sprinkle the blood of the slain lamb upon the lintel and side-posts of their houses, and inside to eat its roasted flesh with bitter herbs. Thus, and only so, were they secure from the destroying angel, who, seeing the sprinkled blood, passed over them as assuredly marked off for Jehovah's mercy.

Judgment being settled, the feast of Unleavened Bread, in its most important connection, follows. But the typical appointment of the Passover remains in the order of the Feasts of Jehovah, as well as its blessed and perfect antitype, for the believer in this day. The lamb slain and the blood sprinkled, on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month, laid the foundation of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, as with it came the hour of solemn judgment executed on the Egyptians. It may well be spoken of as a night to be long remembered. Indeed the Passover was instituted, to be kept henceforth by Israel as a memorial throughout their generations. It was observed in Egypt, the place of judgment, enjoined upon them in the wilderness, and kept by them on their entrance into Canaan, under the very walls of Jericho. In the course of their national history the keeping of the Passover retained its fundamental significance.

Alas! like all other divine appointments, it was neglected, though revived from time to time when the power of the written word called them to Jerusalem to keep this feast. When they were under the empire of the Romans, their going up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover is frequently spoken of in connection with Jesus. He who came according to promise and prophecy, and proved His presence by many signs of power and grace, was despised and rejected with hatred even unto death. That hate was willfully carried out, in the full energy of flesh and Satan, when the Lord Jesus spoke of keeping the last Passover with His disciples.

So Luke 22 solemnly declares when the precious details were gone into by Him who knew all from the beginning to the end, with the crowning fact that He who was about to become the antitype to Israel's paschal lamb touchingly said, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." His sufferings were in obedience unto death, even the death of the cross; His body given and His blood shed, when He through the eternal Spirit offered Himself as the spotless victim to God.

Then again, as the one and only true sacrifice, when suffering on the cross the righteous judgment of God due to sin, He became the antitype of the paschal lamb; yea, the Lamb of God, to bear away the sin of the world. There, in and by Him, judgment was exhausted when, so to speak, the action of the fire spent itself on Him who knew no sin and yet was made sin, suffering once for sins, just for unjust. This being once and forever accomplished, it is no longer Israel's feast pointing onward to Christ; for the appointed Savior has not only come and died, but God has raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand: the proof that the question of sin is settled, leaving no further offering for sin.

Indeed, Rom. 3 plainly states how and by what means God showed His forbearance in "passing over" believers in the past through the blood of His Son. Now it is added that He is just and the "justifier" of him that believes on Jesus. Moreover, the apostle Peter writes, giving peaceful certainty in the knowledge of present redemption by the precious blood of Christ, who was without blemish or spot. Such was the Lamb fore-ordained before the world was, or sin entered it, but manifested for all that by Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, that their faith and hope might be in God (1 Peter 1:19-21): an advance truly on the type of the slain lamb, with its sprinkled blood, which shut God the Judge out. For the believer is now cleansed and justified by God through faith of Jesus in redemption with the added proof of the Lamb risen and in glory.

The Passover having run its typical course, and redemption being accomplished by Christ the Lamb of God, the feast of Unleavened Bread necessarily follows in its intimate connection, as will be seen both in type and antitype. On the same evening as the Passover, Israel was commanded to keep the feast for a whole week, in both a negative and a positive way. No leaven was to be allowed in their houses, and from the fourteenth till the one-and-twentieth day of the month, they were to eat unleavened bread. Already, on the night of the Passover, had they eaten of the roasted lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs, with feet shod, loins girded, and staff in hand, ready to quit the place of slavery. Henceforward they must shape their ways and feed on what God their Savior appointed for them. It was no question of choice or opinion on their part. Jehovah's mind was clear and express: no leaven allowed through all the seven days, and only unleavened bread to be eaten. To neglect either would involve, not only the loss of privilege, but cutting off from the congregation. None could with impunity despise the appointed memorial that Jehovah brought them out of Egypt, as He declared: "Therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever."

This is confirmed when again commanded in Deut. 16, where obedience is laid down in view of entering Canaan, to which is added the place of Jehovah's choice, where the Feasts should be kept, as well as the unleavened bread should be eaten (as the bread of affliction). Leavened bread was absolutely excluded. "Neither shall any of the flesh which thou sacrificedst the first day at even remain all night until the morning." The lamb's flesh must not become ordinary food but be treated as holy.

Thus is shown the intimate connection of these two feasts, in privilege and responsibility as clearly appears in the antitype. Indeed, 1 Cor. 5 will at once manifest the way the Spirit of God applies it both to awaken the church of God at Corinth to its slighted privilege, losing the sense and object of the sacrifice of Christ, and also to the holy obedience proper thereto in the exclusion of all leaven. He who laid down what Israel should do, and what they should not do, fully understood its significance, and it was only for them to obey His word in the way and time appointed. Now that Christ, the antitype, has come, it is no longer the shadow or figure of truth, but the abiding reality made good by Him in and by whom God was perfectly glorified at the cross, where the leaven of evil was fully judged, and holiness as well as righteousness everlastingly established.

Such is the mighty sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb, who maintained what God is, and met all that His people needed. Hence it cannot be wondered at that such a death should be the God-given basis of life in holiness and truth. To allow sin, which leaven implied, defiled the assembly at Corinth, and testified that holiness in practice was wanting. But this is to deny what the death of Christ claimed in life, walk, and associations. Therefore they were not keeping the antitypical feast of unleavened bread; for known leaven was allowed in their midst. Being truly a redeemed people, they were unleavened before God; and such was their obligation to be as an assembly before the world. Hence they must put out the leaven, as it is written, "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 unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:7, 8).

Clearly here the combined feasts of Ex. 12 have their practical antitype, and explain their intention as to purity of walk and conduct, measured by Christ and His sacrifice, where holiness and truth were seen, and maintained in perfection, to the glory of God, for life and salvation to His people. Infinite is the grace to be thus bound up with the person and work of Christ, so as to have a holy and righteous beginning with the living and true God, and a secured title to eternal bliss and glory. No less, throughout the complete earthly pilgrimage as set forth in the seven days, are we to keep the feast, guarding against all evil on the one hand, and walking in the fear of God and true sanctification on the other, whilst we cherish that deliverance known by the death of Christ, God's own Lamb, the foundation of all.

God's Purposes and Ways in the Feasts, Sabbath, The

In considering this important subject in Lev. 23, there appear to be two prominent and blessed thoughts in the mind of the Lord. In the one, He strikingly sets forth His purpose to establish a rest for Himself; and in the other, to gather a people around Himself, that they may share that rest. Though the rest is before Him, it is not yet reached; neither are those called to share it yet gathered. Further, it has to be seen, how far the appointed Feasts have passed from Type to Antitype. Again, whether a rest for the earthly scene, in the form of Christ's Millennial reign of righteousness and peace, or the eternal rest, it is quite clear that neither the past nor the present has presented either; so that the rest must be looked for as yet to come.

That these Feasts were to have their actual fulfillment in their literal form is plain, irrespective of their antitypical meaning; they in their order, fixed by Jehovah, had to be maintained by Israel, whatever their spiritual significance. There being seven feasts is notable, especially considering that a period of time is connected therewith. They give a complete history of the ways of God.

With this we may compare what the Lord Himself taught on the seven parables of Matt. 13, and, later still, with the seven churches of the Revelation (in Rev. 2 & 3).

Whilst bearing in mind therefore the responsibility of Israel to heed each and all of the appointed Feasts, scripture beyond this warrants the conclusion, that like the seven parables, and the seven churches, they have their importance historically; and not least will they be seen to make known the person and work of God's beloved Son, and of His redeemed as associated with Him. It is also clear, that the teaching looks forward through the whole vista of time, even to the eternal future of bright glory, the never-ending Sabbath of the ever blessed God.

In looking at the Feast of the Sabbath, it is evident that the Lord intended it should stand out in its own dignified importance, being treated as unique in itself. The true thought of the Sabbath appears to be, His rest after labor; an order maintained throughout scripture by God Himself, and His beloved Son. Here it is thus enjoined upon His people (ver. 3). The closing account of creation is the first given proof, when after six days' work God rested on the seventh day, and blessed and sanctified it. But this rest was soon broken up by Satan's lie received and acted on; which resulted in the ground being cursed for man's sake, and himself turned out of Paradise. Throughout the book of Genesis no mention is made of the Sabbath, indeed not until God's earthly people were redeemed from Egypt, and brought to Him in the wilderness. There, in the ways of divine grace, Jehovah in Ex. 16 instituted the Sabbath in connection with the Manna that preceded it. Israel was enjoined to gather a portion each day, but double on the sixth, laying up for the seventh, which the Lord declared to be "the rest of the holy sabbath" unto Himself. It is no longer His creation and rest, but the gathering of manna, and rest; which surely testifies to the blessed Christ becoming the True Bread come down from heaven, by Whom rest would be established for us also.

If pure absolute grace is shown in the timely boon to Israel of that which shadowed the gift of God's beloved Son as the alone provision for living bread, and rest, how marked the change, combined with the ground of Jehovah's dealing, manifest in the connection and mention of the Sabbath!

But Israel in Ex. 20 passed from grace to law, having through Moses pledged their obedience as the condition of blessing. Thereon the Sabbath was enjoined as a part of the law; for they were to "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy:" an authority embracing, in solemn detail, the family, the employed, and the very cattle.

Moreover in chap. 31 it was to be a sign between Israel and Jehovah, who sanctified them. But if Jehovah kept in view a rest, man totally failed, both as to creation, and the law.

With regard to the latter, after long testing, Ezek. 20 charges the people with rebelling against Jehovah and polluting His Sabbaths. Before this Canaan had been set before them as a place of rest. Yet in this too they signally failed, for the mass who originally started fell in the wilderness; and even Joshua, their new and faithful leader, did not bring them into promised rest, seeing that David, at a later day, spoke of a future rest (Heb. 4:7-9).

Before explaining how these facts are used by the Holy Ghost, it may be well to follow up Israel's sin and failure in connection with the position and action of their Messiah respecting the Sabbath. The Gospel of Matthew, which has a special instruction for Jewish ears, will suffice; especially the account in chap. 12, bearing in mind the position of Jesus in the previous chapter. There He had been morally rejected, not only in His forerunner, but personally. Consequently He turns from the whole scene to His Father, owning Him as Lord of heaven and earth, and in the dignity of His own person as the eternal Son, invites the weary and heavy-laden to come to Him for rest. Instead therefore of kingdom-rest by and by, He now offers soul-rest. In the following chapter the position and practice of the rejected but true David as to the seventh day Sabbath is seen by His vindication of His disciples, when they plucked and ate the ears of corn. He thus silenced the scrupulously religious Pharisees, and bade them learn that mercy and not sacrifice was what God desired.

Then He Himself goes farther and heals the withered hand on the Sabbath, thereby testifying to His own saying that "the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath day." Such a blow struck at their formalism brought out their rage and desire to kill Jesus. Alas! when it was eventually done, they kept sabbath while the Messiah was lying in the tomb. Happily, another path was before the Lord, which He in the absoluteness of divine grace states (John 5) when the Sabbath was again in question, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work" up to the deepest which His Father had given Him to do. If the cross of Christ brought out Jewish, as well as Gentile, hatred to God, and crushed out every hope for man in the flesh, it is there and there only that

God was glorified as to sin, and that a righteous basis was laid to make good all the divine counsels, and the eternal rest ever in the mind of God. In the anticipation of the infinite results of that work, how significant are the words of Jesus! "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." How well calculated to open out the bright future, of God's eternal rest!

It is in view of this, that the Epistle written to the believing Hebrews sheds light, both on the present position of their Messiah, and the promised rest. The Son of God, Who had glorified God, in Himself purging our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Moreover as to the world to come (or age of long promised glory), the Son of Man, Christ Jesus, has all put in subjection under Him, already crowned in heaven with glory and honor. Thence the Christian knows that the sabbath of rest is above, whilst encouraged in the place of labor and sorrow. "There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God," this future rest of God, earthly as well as heavenly. Rest of

conscience is not the point here, for this would deny the truth insisted on in chap. 10:12-14, where Jesus, having completed His work, is “forever sat down”; and by His offering the believer is forever perfect as to conscience. Rest in this sense being the believer's abiding portion, the order now is—using diligence and then rest; so that Christ giving present rest in His right as the Son of God, and the rest which His finished work gives to the conscience, are blessedly consistent with the rest of God in future glory. Then toil shall be o'er and God's eternal day enjoyed. Like the joy of the father with the prodigal, it began and knows no end.

Vain is it therefore to seek rest here, or debate upon the Jewish Sabbath, which so many now unwarrantably confound with the Lord's day. Important as the Lord's day is for the Christian as the day of privilege in worship and service, it turns distinctively on Christ risen and the new creation. But God shall have His rest for and with His people in the millennial sabbath, and finally in the eternal day. That glorious time is briefly spoken of in Rev. 21:1-8, where it is written, God will make all things new, and the tabernacle of God shall dwell with men; death, pain, and sorrow shall be no more, and God Himself shall wipe away all tears. Then will He rest in His love, and His people share the rest of God through an unclouded eternity. Bright indeed the present prospect to energize the Christian's daily labor, and to calm amid the conflict, as the Holy Ghost leads into the realities of the rest secured by Jesus for the people of God.

(To be continued).

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