

CHAPTER 12

TABERNACLES--THE FEAST OF GLORY

THE EVENTS OF THE SEVENTH MONTH BLEND INTO ONE

Let us recall how the three events comprising the Feast of the Passover all blended harmoniously together to form that first great Feast of the Church. There were the Passover, the Unleavened Bread, and the Sheaf of Firstfruits: distinct events, yet blending together to form one Feast--beautiful type of the death and resurrection of Christ, and the new life which His death made possible. So now in the last Feast, the events are of a threefold nature: the Blowing of the Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Ingathering. And again these three events blend together to form one great Feast, the last great revival of the Church age. Let us not imagine that this great revival of gifts and ministries of the Spirit is by any means the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles. But it is the promise and the earnest of this fulfillment, the beginning of the end. For this move of the Spirit must rise and rise and rise (through much sifting and testing and trial), even unto the fullness of the Feast of Tabernacles itself.

And therefore, as the day of glory and of triumph begins to dawn upon the eastern horizon, we may expect to receive a foretaste of that glory as the first rays break forth upon the Church. But we dare not, we must not, settle for anything that God has yet given to any people in any age or dispensation. We must go forward to explore the infinite realms of the Spirit of God. We must pass out of the realm of the natural, and into the realm of the spiritual. We must progress from the "length and breadth" and begin to comprehend somewhat of the "height and depth" of spiritual things. The "to and fro" experience must give way to an "ascending and descending" experience on Jacob's ladder. We must pass from a knowledge of the understandable, to a knowledge of the inconceivable. We must rise from the visible to behold the invisible. We must hear the inaudible, grasp the intangible, explore the unsearchable, and declare the unspeakable. For God hath set eternity in our hearts, and we will not rest--nor will we give Him rest, till He stablish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. The Church must yet bring forth a child that shall "rule all nations with a rod of iron" (Rev. 12:5). For it is given unto the overcomer to "rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter, shall they be broken to shivers" (Rev. 2:27).

ICHABOD, THE GLORY HAS DEPARTED

We can expect that with the travail of the saints to bring forth this Son, there shall also be the travail of a dying priesthood to bring forth something to perpetuate and sustain the old order. But it shall not prosper. The Aaronic priesthood--glorious as it was in its day, must give way to a new priesthood, the priesthood after the "order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6:20).

And so it was that Hannah stood before the temple in Shiloh and in anguish of soul prayed that God would give her a man-child, for she was barren; and she promised that if her request was granted, the child would be dedicated unto the service of the Lord all his days. God heard her prayer, and give her a child, and she called his name "Samuel," meaning "Asked of God." This man-child was destined to become Israel's priest, to succeed the dying priesthood of the house of Eli. Because of the wicked way of Eli's sons, God had decreed that the priesthood should be snatched away from the house of Eli, and given to another. As a young child it was revealed to Samuel that God was going to bring judgment upon the house of Eli, and as it was revealed so it came to pass. Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were in line to receive the priesthood--were both slain in one day. At the same time the ark of God was captured by the Philistines; and as Eli heard the sad news he fell backward and broke his neck and died. The glory had departed from Israel, and he who served in the house of God was slain in battle. Then it was that the wife of Phinehas heard the sad news; and that news caused her pains to come upon her, and she travailed and brought forth a man-child. In her dying moments she named him

"Ichabod," and she named him well, because the ark of God was taken. Ichabod signifies, "No glory," or "Where is the glory?"

And try as she will, this modern-day church system, this Babylon of religious pomp and splendour, will produce nothing but Ichabods. "Where is the Glory?" Where is that real, vital presence of the Holy Spirit in the congregation of the saints to work the very works of God Himself, and produce the fruit of the Spirit? Yes, the dying priesthood will bring forth its manchild, but Ichabod is the name. God has already prepared another manchild, and Samuel is the name. He was "asked for." The cries and prayers of God's people for years have prevailed upon the God of Heaven, and in answer to their prayers and travail, "a Son, a male" is to be born, for that is the literal translation of "manchild" (Rev. 12:5). Ichabod is in line for the priesthood, that is true; but God has ordained another priesthood, a priesthood of glory.

THE MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD

The Melchizedek priesthood is a priesthood of life, and of fadeless glory. It is a priesthood of eternal fellowship and communion with Christ, and not like the Aaronic priesthood which experienced the presence of God only on a certain occasion, once in the year. It is a priesthood that is established by the word and oath of God Himself. It is a priesthood which cannot pass away, for there is no death in the fullness of this new order. It is a priesthood of royal power and authority. Gone shall be the bondage of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. For this priesthood introduces the royal-priest behind the veil, behind the flesh. The flesh is rent asunder, and the glory of God is unveiled. The Head has already entered into this priesthood--and if He has entered it means the way is open for others to follow. "Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." (Heb. 6:20). It is a "new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb. 10:20). Can you hear these words, child of God? "For us..." Not for the Church of the past centuries, for they did not hear these beautiful words, and therefore it had no application to them. But "for us" to whom the Word of God is now given. Not to men of some future dispensation or some future Kingdom: but "for us" who live in this day of opportunity, this today of hope and promise. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart..." In the fullness of this new priesthood we shall be completely glorified, like unto Christ. But even as Christ began His priesthood on earth by interceding for His brethren--so let us begin even now to possess this glorious heritage in the Spirit, the Kingdom of God within.

A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people..." (1Pet. 2:9). A royal priesthood! A priesthood of kings, and a kingdom of priests! A company of overcomers, who have power with God and with men! As priests they have power with God, and as kings they have power with men. As priests they have "access by faith into this grace" of our holy standing; and as kings they have the power of God to rule and reign in all circumstances and over all opposing forces. As priests they can intercede with God on behalf of men; and as kings they can impart life and power and deliverance to the captive, and set the oppressed free. Such is the kingdom of Melchizedek. He reigns, but he also intercedes; and in fact he reigns by interceding. His very power and kingly authority is for the benefit and sake of others. Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore..." (Matt. 28:19). And again, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). He is King! and Priest! And He has designated His kingly authority and His priestly authority to such as are of Him and in Him. In this realm the flesh "profiteth nothing." Natural advantages, fleshly attainments, racial distinctions, educational standards, ecclesiastical success--these profit nothing. This priesthood knows nothing of father, mother, genealogy, beginning of days nor end of life. It is the sphere and realm of the Spirit of God, a priesthood and a Kingdom which the Sons of God shall enter into as they grow up into Christ.

Melchizedek signifies by his name, "King of righteousness." He is also called King of Salem, and that means King of Peace. (Heb. 7:2). His ministry, therefore, is to establish righteousness and peace in those who are under sin's dominion. And that, of course, is the very essence of the Kingdom of God. "The Kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17).

Now can we understand how the overcomer in the Day of the Lord, when Great Tribulation is upon the earth, will be able to administer help and comfort and sustenance to God's people who are under oppression and persecution. The great tribulation itself is going to be cut short because of the Sons of God. As Moses interceded for Israel and spared them from wrath; and as Jesus intercedes for His people, and spares them from wrath; so the Sons of God, through the exercise of their royal priesthood, shall actually shorten the Great Tribulation. Jesus has declared that they would: "For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matt. 24:22). The elect shall have entered into a new priesthood, a royal priesthood. As priests they will be able to present the needs of the people to God, and intercede for them; and as kings they will have the authority of God to dispense life and blessing to such as are in tribulation and distress. The world has had her day of kings and dictators whose passion it is to exercise lordship and dominion over a suffering humanity. This new Kingdom shall be a Priesthood--a priesthood that "can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way" for they will remember their former afflictions. They will recall their former bondage under Satan's cruel kingdom, and the days of yester-years when the flesh tormented them, and they cried in anguish of soul: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me...?" They shall not have forgotten that they too were once sinners, defiled in His sight, and poured out their complaint to God in the bitterness of their sorrows. And therefore they shall reign as priests--co-heirs with the Son in the Kingdom of Grace.

"Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. 6:13). What does this mean? "Between them both...?" "Both" refers back to Joshua the high priest, and "the man whose name is the branch." It is the priesthood of the Son and the many Sons. Joshua means "Jah saves," and is the same as Jesus in the Greek. The branch, on the other hand, is said to "grow up out of his place." It is Christ; and His place is the Church. But He is called the branch, or literally the sprout, because this Man is a many-membered Body, that grows up into maturity. We read therefore that the Body is to "grow up into...the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:15). Hence, away back in the days of Zechariah who prophesied words of encouragement to the builders of the second temple, we have the truth of the new priesthood, a priesthood that reigns upon the throne, a priesthood comprising Christ and His people, the Son and the many Sons, with the counsel of peace "between them both."

Is it not written, "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together"? (Rom. 8:17). And does not the apostle declare that God "hath raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus"? (Eph. 2:6, Literal).

O the depths and the heights of this glorious priesthood! It far surpasses anything we can possibly imagine in the natural; for it is an infinite and eternal priesthood, and we are yet carnal and walk as men. Only by the Spirit can we comprehend anything of our heritage in Christ.

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL, A PATTERN OF THE CHURCH

In the history of Israel's Kingdom we have a picture of the Church of Christ throughout her long history. As a young lad on the hillsides of Bethlehem David received his Pentecost. There it was that the prophet Samuel poured the anointing oil upon his head, and he was anointed as king over Israel. So it was that the Church of early apostolic days received a mighty anointing from God, an anointing which constituted her a "royal priesthood." Like David, the Church was anointed to rule and reign; but her kingdom was in exile much of the time; she reigned amidst much conflict and tribulation. Hunted and hounded on every hand, she dwelt in caves

and holes of the earth, persecuted, martyred, tortured, tossed to the lions, burnt at the stake. Every conceivable device was used against her; but the more she was persecuted, the stronger she became. The kingdom of Saul waxed weaker and weaker, and the kingdom of David waxed stronger and stronger. Finally, by the end of the third century A.D. it is said that about one-half of the Roman Empire had been converted to Christ.

Then for a brief period it would seem that the Church entered into her "Solomon" stage. Solomon means "Peace." The persecutions ceased, and for a time the Church enjoyed rest from tribulation, and she became a mighty and powerful and prosperous kingdom. However, it was not for long. The Church soon lost her power and her glory; for Satan had succeeded in deceiving her; and the prosperity which she enjoyed served only to lull her to sleep, and to rob her of her spiritual life. God warned Israel that when they took possession of their heritage, "Houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Deut. 6:11,12). Israel did forget, and so did the Church. Solomon's glory departed and his temple was destroyed; and likewise the glory departed from the Church, and her beautiful temple was destroyed.

Then began the captivity. Israel went into Babylonian captivity; and the Church went into her spiritual Babylon of the Dark Ages. Solomon turned away from the Lord in his old age and built idolatrous images, and the king who had received the greatest wisdom ever accorded to any king in Israel--lost his glory and turned to folly. So the Church married many strange women of idolatrous and heathen Rome, and the wisdom of God which had been displayed in mighty signs and wonders and demonstrations of the Holy Spirit, degenerated into the utmost of folly.

Then there was restoration from the captivity. After the captivity a believing remnant returned from Babylon to rebuild the temple and restore Israel's order of worship. And after the Dark Ages a spiritual remnant returned from spiritual Babylon to restore God's pattern for the Church. There was Restoration for Israel; and there was Reformation for the Church. There was great persecution for the builders of the second temple in Jerusalem; and there was great persecution for Luther and his allies as they began to restore the foundations of Truth which had been lost during the Dark Ages.

Once again there was disobedience in Israel, until we come to the time of Christ, when Israel's worship had degenerated into a meaningless system of form and ritual, devoid of the glory of God. There were Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees, and great activity in the temple; but there was no real worship of the one true God of Israel. And so we have the same thing in the Church. Protestantism itself had degenerated into a meaningless system of religion, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. True there is much religion, great temples, fine orchestras and choirs and illustrious preachers; but so very little real spiritual worship of God and His Christ.

And all this brings us up to the Appearing of Christ in Israel, and to the second Appearing of Christ now at the ends of the ages. Just as Israel's temple was abandoned and left unto them utterly "desolate" because of their disobedience, and a new temple was brought into being by Incarnation; so now Protestantism has been left "desolate" because of her disobedience, and a new Temple is being born by the Spirit of God,--even the Temple of the living God, the Body of Christ. As the days drew nigh when Christ was to go to Gethsemane and the Cross, He prophesied to the people, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn. 2:19). They thought He meant the temple of Herod which took forty and six years to build; but no, He referred to the Temple which He was, the Temple of His body. So once again, in this hour of His second Appearing, the prophecy goes forth that He will raise up His Temple, that the Body of Christ shall be brought together to form a holy Temple of the Lord. Many have thought that He referred to the resurrection of a dying religious system; but no, He is referring to the spiritual resurrection of a spiritual Body, made One by the power of the Holy Spirit, motivated and energized by the presence and power of Christ Himself in the midst of His people.

What we should notice particularly, however, throughout this whole pattern, is that the culmination of the old order is the beginning of the new. When the veil of the old religious order was rent in twain, a new way of access was opened up into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus; and within three days a New Man, a New Temple, came into being in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. So now once again, with the veil of the old religious order being rent asunder, a new way is being opened up into the Holy of Holies, even the way of the Melchizedek priesthood--and it will not be long ere a New Temple springs into being by the resurrection of the Body of Jesus Christ, this time a spiritual resurrection. For this is the day and hour of His Appearing, the hour of His spiritual visitation within His saints. It is the day and hour when Christ shall be "formed within" His people. It is the "out-resurrection from among the dead." It is Christ "the resurrection and the life" standing in our midst. It is the seed breaking forth into the blade, the blade into the ear, the ear into the full corn. It is the caterpillar being transformed into the butterfly, and breaking forth from the cocoon of death into the glorious liberty of the atmosphere above. It is the day and hour of the manifestation of the Sons of God, when the Son Himself shall be unveiled in the hearts and lives of His many brethren.

THE FOCAL HOUR OF GOD'S PURPOSES

We may expect, therefore, that in these end times, when the events of the ages are to be focused into one, that we shall discover the pattern of this great hour prefigured and typified everywhere in the sacred Scriptures. This is the day of the "fulness of the times." The ends of the ages have come upon us. Not the end of the age; not the end of the ages; not the ends of the age; but even "the ends of the ages" (1Cor. 10:11, Literal). And therefore, just as the river which begins as a trickle in the top of some mountain, flows down the steeps and through the plains, and gathers into its flow the waters from all the springs and rivulets and streams along the way--and finally empties all its accumulated waters into the ocean, so it is with the stream of God's purposes. There was judgment and there was glory with every age and every dispensation that God ever gave; but now we have come to the ends of the ages when all the judgments as well as all the glory of bygone ages are to find their focus in this great hour. Why did Jesus say of the Jews of His day: "That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation?" (Lk. 11:50). Simply because the sum and substance of all the promises of the Scriptures were heaped together and offered to that generation in the Person of Messiah; and therefore in their rejection of Messiah all the judgments which were due to all preceding generations were heaped together and laid upon that generation. And so it actually came to pass, and was fulfilled in the desolation of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans in A.D. 70.

Now we have come to the ends of the ages. Once again there is an apostate religious system, upon which the wrath of God shall descend in great fury; and then shall be fulfilled the Great Tribulation, of which the desolation of Jerusalem in the days of Emperor Titus was but a type and shadow. That was a local event, concerning only the natural Jerusalem; this shall be a world-wide event, and all the earth--especially apostate Christendom--shall feel the mighty impact of the Day of the Lord. But as we have already discovered, the Day of the Lord is the unveiled might and power of the God of Heaven, descending in wrath upon the ungodly, but in great power and blessing upon the overcomer.

The dispensation of the Law could only end in tribulation and the curse: for it is a ministration of death. But the dispensation of Grace must end in glory and victory: for it is a ministration of life. The universal Church, however, has refused to accept the dispensation of Grace, and has continued from the earliest times to live under the dispensation of the Law. Religion continues to patch that which Christ has declared useless. The veil that He rent in twain has been sewn together, and the flesh continues to rule in the place of the Spirit. Instead of the blood of Christ, there is the work of man. Instead of new birth, there is moral rearmament. Instead of the Holy Spirit, there is fleshly entertainment. The Day of the Lord is at hand, even the ends of the ages, and great shall be the display of God's glory. It shall be light, glorious light, or it shall be darkness, gross darkness; and that will all depend upon our position before God. Just as all the wrath and judgments which were due to all preceding generations were heaped together and laid upon the generation of Christ's day; so now, not only all

the wrath but all the glory ever administered or ever offered to all preceding generations, shall be heaped together and laid upon our generation when the Day of the Lord is revealed. It shall therefore be Great Tribulation, such as was never known from the foundation of the world; but it shall also be Great Glory, such as was never known from the foundation of the world. To the one class of people it shall be a day of "darkness" and of "gloominess." But to the other, "as the morning spread upon the mountains." (Joel 2:2). To the one, the Great Tribulation; but to the other, "The Manifestation of the Sons of God."

This is the focal hour of history. The glory of Moses' day is for us; the glory of David's kingdom is for us; the glory of Solomon's kingdom is for us; the glory of the restored temple of Ezra's day is for us; the glory of Enoch's day, and the glory of Elijah's day, and the glory of Paul's day,--all this glory and much more is available to us, if we can hear His voice.

THE ARK BROUGHT TO SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

"And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto King Solomon at the feast of the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. And they brought up the ark of the Lord...into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place..." (1Kgs. 8:2-6). David had previously pitched a tent for the ark of the Lord on Mount Zion. But he was not permitted to build a permanent house for the ark, because he had been a man of many wars. His kingdom must give way to Solomon's, and his tent to the permanent, glorious temple to be constructed by his son. And so finally, the temple was completed, and the ark of the Lord was brought into the oracle of the house, even the holy of holies. When this took place, and "the priests were come out of the holy place,...the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord" (vs. 10,11).

All this took place on the occasion of the Feast of Tabernacles; a beautiful picture, therefore, of the glory which God has prepared for the Temple not made with hands, a Temple of living stones. Solomon in his great dedicatory prayer prophesied of Israel's future disobedience and their dispersion among the nations; but with that prophetic warning there was also a promise that if they returned unto God with all their heart in the land of their captivity, then God would hear from Heaven and maintain their cause. (See 1Kgs. 8:15-61). So it happened to Israel, and so it happened to the Church. Solomon's beautiful temple was destroyed; and the Church went into the millennium of the Dark Ages.

Soon, however, the Church will have received "double for all her sins," and in the hour of restoration she shall receive double the glory that she had before. A "double portion" of Elijah's spirit was promised to his successor Elisha, if he would but follow his master step by step and keep his eyes firmly fixed upon him. And Elisha got his request. Jesus has promised, "Greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." (Jn. 14:12).

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins...and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together..." (Isa. 40:1,2,5). A greater than Solomon is here! A greater glory than Solomon's Temple shall be revealed in this hour of the Lord's appearing in the midst of His saints.

THE STAVES REMOVED FROM THE ARK

"And they drew out the staves of the ark..." (2Chron. 5:9). Why? Because the Church's long wilderness journey shall be over, and now she will enter into her long-awaited rest. "Now, therefore, arise O Lord God, into thy resting place, thou and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness. (2Chron. 6:41). The great Church victorious is destined to become the Church at rest.

Not, however, by way of the coffin. Not by living a life of defeat, and then passing on to be with the saints who have died. But by pressing into her heritage by the Spirit, and appropriating the blessedness which is hers "in the heavnlies in Christ Jesus."

And so this Feast of Tabernacles was probably the greatest in Israel's history. There was a "very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt." (2Chron. 7:8). How little did they realize that they, in their joy and gladness of heart, were merely fulfilling the rites and ceremonies of a fading type and shadow, and that one day it would give way to the unveiled glory of God in the Church of Jesus Christ, and especially in the Church of this great hour in which we live!

JEROBOAM'S SUBSTITUTE FEAST

Let us ever be on the watch for the counterfeit. God's glory is not going to be revealed without the apostate religious world trying to reproduce the same thing in the power of the flesh. Especially now in this day, with the powers of darkness mustering their forces and bringing forth their secret weapons, the saints are going to find it increasingly difficult to discern the real from the counterfeit. It is not going to be sufficient that we should see signs and wonders and miracles performed in the name of Christ; for Satan is going to empower his emissaries of light to do all the miracles that the Church will do. Jannes and Jambres worked side by side with Aaron, performing sign for sign, and miracle for miracle. But it will not always last. In due course "their folly shall be manifest," even as the wisdom of the Church shall be manifest. The time will come when Aaron's rod shall swallow up the rods of the magicians, and their power shall be broken.

Therefore, in this hour of the Church's trial and sifting, when the real and the counterfeit are going to work side by side--let us be on the alert to detect the false and discern the real. Only the walk of obedience and faith and utter consecration will deliver the child of God from the deception of Satan. Discern the Lord's Body. Recognize the ministries which He is establishing in the Body. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Not by their miracles, or by their signs, or by their wonders; but "by their fruits."

And so it is quite evident, even now in this hour of the Body of Christ, that Jeroboam the Enlarger (for so is his name by interpretation) is going to seek the expansion of his kingdom by producing a counterfeit of the real. When people are hungry for God and can see the moving of God's spirit, the adversary always tries to reproduce what the people are looking for in order to isolate them from the Truth. If there is healing, Jeroboam will heal. If there is a manifestation of the Spirit, Jeroboam will have something similar. If there are tongues in the Spirit, Jeroboam will speak in tongues. If there is prophecy, singing in the Spirit, laying on of hands for the gifts, miracles, words of knowledge or wisdom,--or any other manifestation of the supernatural which God has in store for the saints--then Jeroboam will do all in his power to reproduce these same manifestations in his kingdom. And unless the people have spiritual discernment they will be deceived.

This is what happened. Because of Solomon's disobedience God decreed that his kingdom should be broken up. And so to Jeroboam were given ten tribes of Israel for his kingdom, and to Rehoboam were given the other two tribes. Jeroboam, then, was to be king of Israel; and Rehoboam king of Judah. But Jeroboam was at a great disadvantage, because Jerusalem was in Rehoboam's kingdom--and what would happen if Israel should go up to the holy city to worship God? So reasoned Jeroboam. He was in danger of losing his kingdom if the people were to continue going up to Jerusalem to sacrifice unto the Lord and observe the Feasts. So we are told he took counsel, "and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." (1Kgs. 12:28). And the people believed it! And so they went to worship at Bethel and Dan where the calves were set up. You see, Bethel means House of God, and Dan signifies Judge. We have shown how the number "two" signifies the Body of Christ, the fullness of Christ in His people. And so Jeroboam made two calves. Bethel the House of God, and Dan the Judge! A real counterfeit of the Body of Christ and the ministries in that Body! Dan will be there to judge; there will be

apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. And to all appearances it will be the Body of Christ. It was at Bethel, you will recall, that God appeared to Jacob when he fled from the face of his brother Esau, and as he slept he saw the angelic hosts ascending and descending upon the ladder. We have already shown how this typifies the fullness of the Son of Man in His Body. And Jacob awoke in fear and cried: "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (Gen. 28:17). But now at the very house of God a golden calf is worshipped as the God of Israel!

Nor will Jeroboam stop at this. The saints of God in this present hour are hungry, desperately hungry for the things of God and the restoration of the Feasts of the Lord. And so Jeroboam will provide a Feast of Tabernacles for them too. "And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah... So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart..." (1Kgs. 12:32,33).

These are sad truths, and yet so genuinely applicable in our day. And the reason for the whole idolatrous system was simply this: Jeroboam did not have the real thing, and he wanted to maintain his kingdom, so he had to provide a substitute. The golden calves which he made were intended to maintain the unity of his kingdom, and to prevent his people from going to Jerusalem to keep the real Feasts of the Lord. "And this thing became a sin..." to the children of Israel. But God's judgment was upon it. Said the Lord, "They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off. Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off; mine anger is kindled against them." (Hos. 8:4,5).

Do you see, then, how subtly the enemy will work, and how easy it is going to be for Christians to become entangled in an idolatrous system and not realize it? Notice this one thing: that Jeroboam's attempt to reproduce the real thing according to the devices of his own heart--produced nothing more than an idolatrous system of worship. He followed the pattern as close as he could, but he missed the real Feast. His was in the eighth month; the real Feast of Tabernacles was in the seventh. So shall it be in our day. Any attempt to reproduce the real moving of the Spirit of God, in order to maintain and sustain a dying denominational system, will eventually lead to idolatry.

The day of reckoning is at hand, and judgment must begin at the House of God. This idolatrous ecclesiastical system is doomed. The word of prophecy has gone forth upon Jeroboam's altar: "O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born unto the House of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee..." (1Kgs. 13:2). Aaron's rod shall yet swallow up the rods of the magicians in the Day of Christ's Appearing; and the dross shall be consumed from the gold and the silver in the house of Levi. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple... And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." (Mal. 3:1,3). He comes to His temple! Even to the Church of the living God. "For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them..." (2Cor. 6:16).

BY WISDOM SHALL THE CHURCH BE BUILT

When the people of God ridicule these great truths concerning the rebuilding of God's holy Temple, and the perfection of the saints into one, vital, united Body--such ridicule is not against the saints, but it is against God Himself. We know God's people do not realize this, but that is exactly what they are doing. They are not ridiculing men, but God who has spoken and declared His purpose. And they are not scoffing at fools, but they are scoffing at the Wisdom of God. Why should it be thought incredible that a God of Wisdom should do all these things and more? Was it not by Wisdom that God established the heavens and the earth? (Prov. 3:19). And is Wisdom not the gift of God, which fools may receive by simply asking God for it in faith? (Jas. 1:5). And furthermore, is not the Wisdom of God always foolishness with man? (1Cor. 1:20-25). Let us not be guilty.

therefore, of charging God with folly. What device of man or Devil shall be able to withstand the Wisdom of God and prevail?

The Church and the world are both going to be literally dumbfounded and amazed when the Wisdom of God is restored to the Church in great power. Nothing shall be able to withstand the Wisdom of the Almighty. And that is exactly how Solomon's Kingdom became so prosperous and mighty, because of the wisdom which he received from God. Now if this be so concerning the natural kingdom of Solomon, how much more shall it be so concerning the spiritual Kingdom of Christ? For the wisdom that God hath in store for the Sons of God shall far outshine and surpass the wisdom of Solomon. Let us not stumble at the commonly accepted, but false interpretation of 1 Kgs. 3:12, "I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee." From 2 Chron. 1:12 it is clear that God was referring to the kings of Israel, his predecessors and his successors--and it is true that Solomon's wisdom far exceeded that of any king who reigned in Israel before or after. "Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like." But Jesus said, "A greater than Solomon is here." And this "greater than Solomon" is going to reveal Himself in His people; so that the display of wisdom in God's people shall far exceed anything we have ever imagined to be possible. "To the intent," says Paul, "That now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God," (Eph. 3:10). "The manifold," or literally, "The many-sided wisdom of God." Solomon's wisdom was displayed before all the great kings of the earth; so that they came from all parts to hear and to behold the wisdom which he had. But this Wisdom, this very manifold, many-sided Wisdom of God is going to be displayed--not only before earthly rulers, but before the principalities and the powers of the Heavens!

No wonder Solomon tells us: "Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established." (Prov. 24:3). So shall it be with the House of God. It shall be built, it shall be established, by Wisdom, even the manifold Wisdom of God. There was no more spirit left in the Queen of Sheba as she beheld the glory of Solomon's kingdom; and though she had heard of his fame she confessed. "Behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me..." (2Chron. 9:6). But lo! A Greater than Solomon dwelleth in the midst of God's people. And shall not His Glory exceed the fame of anything we have heard or read, even from the Scriptures? And shall not His Kingdom be established, even unto the uttermost parts of the earth?

IS GOD TEASING THE SAINTS?

God forbid! Hath He spoken and shall He not do it? Hath He promised and shall He not bring it to pass? Did He not mean what He said concerning the Holy Spirit, that He was given to search out the "depths of God," even the things that have not entered into the heart of man? Shall the prayer of the Son of God go unanswered? And were His words falsely spoken when He declared, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them?" Shall the first Adam who brought desolation and chaos into the world be permitted to live almost a thousand years, and the sons of the Last Adam be accounted blasphemers and fanatics for preaching Divine Health and Divine Life? Shall men like Enoch and Elijah reach out and appropriate translation by faith, and the brethren of Christ be accused for cherishing a similar hope? Shall the All-wise God account Himself a fool according to His Beloved Son, for not sitting down first and counting the cost, and see whether He is able to lay a foundation for a glorious Temple, and not able to finish it, while scoffers and passers-by ridicule His feeble architectural plans? Shall the gates of Hell continue to prevail against the Church of Jesus Christ? Shall the great Husbandman admit defeat, and thrust in the sickle before the grain is ripe and fully formed in the ear? Shall He prove the impatience of His Spirit by cutting down the grain before it receives the early and the latter rain? Shall He impart gifts of the Spirit to His people and set the ministers of Christ in the Church for the perfecting of the saints, and then rapture them all before they attain to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ? Shall He serve good wine in the beginning of the feast, and reserve the diluted mixture for the last? Shall a God of wisdom, in the unfolding of the greatest drama of the ages, make a spectacle of the saints before angels and

before men, and culminate the Acts of the apostles with the tragic blunder of Modernism and present-day apostasy? Shall the Wisdom, the very manifold wisdom of God in the Church, which God intended for display even now unto the principalities and powers, degenerate into the wisdom that is earthly, sensual, and devilish? Shall demons and hosts of wickedness continue to have a free hand as they barter with the bodies and minds of God's people? Shall God not rise up in vengeance on behalf of His elect? Is God not concerned about vindicating His great Name, while the nations rage against the authority of Zion's King, and make His heritage a desolation? Shall the ever-increasing glory of the New Covenant give way to the transient, fading glory of the Law? Or shall the ministration of God's power in the passing glory of the day of Moses, exceed the ministration of God's power in this day? Shall God not restore the years that the locust, the caterpillar, the palmerworm, and the cankerworm have eaten? And shall not the glory of this latter house be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts? Shall all creation, yea the children of God themselves,--groan and travail in birth-pangs for the manifestation of the sons of God, all to no end or purpose? And if Zion travail, shall she not bring forth? Or shall the sons be brought to the birth, and God shut the womb?

No! A thousand times no! God's Sons shall yet be manifested in this great hour of the Church's sorrow and travail; and shall display before this wicked and perverse generation the unveiled glory of God in a manner not hitherto revealed or even imagined. The prayers of sorrow and bitterness and travail throughout this long wilderness journey of the Church from Pentecost until now--have all been bottled up in the heavenly vials, and soon they shall be poured upon the world in great Heaven-shaking events, dethroning the powers of darkness and of Satan, and establishing the overcomer in authority on Zion's mountain.

CHAPTER 13

TABERNACLES-THE FEAST OF RESTORATION

As we have considered the spiritual significance of the glory and power and wisdom of Solomon's kingdom, so now let us consider the spiritual significance of the days of restoration, following the captivity. Both temples and both periods of history are applicable to our day: Solomon's day speaking of the glory and power and wisdom of the Church; and the days of Restoration showing in what manner the lost glory is to be restored.

As for the days of Restoration, it will be of particular interest and profit to us if we consider carefully the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah--because these four books deal particularly with the return of the remnant to Jerusalem following the captivity, and their attempts to restore the walls and the temple and the order of religious worship. Ezra was a priest; Nehemiah was the governor of Jerusalem; and both Haggai and Zechariah were prophets of the Lord who encouraged the builders in the great tasks which lay before them.

THE FIRST FEAST OF TABERNACLES AFTER THE CAPTIVITY

The remnant who had returned from Babylon to Jerusalem were determined that all things should be restored according to the original pattern. And so they kept the Feasts of the Lord also in their due season. "They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings, as the duty of every day required" (Ezra 3:4). They could not keep the feast in its fullness, for the foundation of the house of the Lord was not yet laid, but they observed the pattern as best they could, and God honoured their faith. And now as the first rays of this glorious Feast begin to appear on the eastern horizon, we have every reason to rejoice--knowing that the days of restoration are here. And little by little we can see how the pattern is being unfolded before our eyes.

THE PEOPLE ASSEMBLE AS ONE MAN

"And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves as one man to Jerusalem." (Ezra 3:1).

This, of course, is the foundational truth of this whole revival which God has given the Church, and one of the first revelations that came forth: that God would now at this time bring His people together to form one body. At the beginning it was hoped that the Christians everywhere would catch the vision, and that before long the whole Body of saints would become one vital, living organism, united together in the bonds of the Spirit unto one common purpose. But it is becoming apparent that only a remnant are returning to Jerusalem. The vast majority are content to remain in Babylon, for they have grown up in that state, and know nothing of the glory of God which once rested mightily on the Temple of God. They are prosperous enough; and the venture which a few fanatical Israelites have started upon is so utterly hopeless and fantastic that they will have nothing to do with it. Just imagine a small group of Israelites, with no natural resources (for they were a captive people), and very little perhaps in the way of education or business and administrative ability--venturing off to a land they had never seen, to a city utterly wasted and desolate, and starting to erect a temple comparable to Solomon's! And so the majority, the vast majority, were content to remain in Babylon, with only about fifty thousand of the multitudes in Israel thinking it worth their while to go up and start work on the temple.

We know God has a great and eternal purpose for all His precious saints, and when His plan is revealed we shall glory in the wisdom of God who "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." But it is becoming increasingly evident that the pattern of the remnant in Israel who returned to Jerusalem is the immediate pattern for this hour. And as then, so now, a group of people who have really seen the vision of what God is doing, have assembled together as one man. It is the vision of the Body of Christ. It is the vision and assurance that there must arise out of the dust of Jerusalem a Holy City, a Beautiful City, and a Temple not made with hands--a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle. "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem..." (Isa. 52:1,2). This whole passage speaks loudly of this day and hour in which we live, when the glory of God is about to be restored to the once-holy city of God, even the "heavenly Jerusalem." "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem." (vs. 8,9).

THE FOUNDATION OF THE TEMPLE LAID

"And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord..." (Ezra 3:10).

The first feast of Tabernacles that they observed was before the foundation of the Temple had been laid. Therefore the real meaning of the Feast was lacking; but it did promise great things to come when the days of restoration were over. That was in the first year of their return from captivity. Now the second year had rolled around, and God had enabled them to lay the foundation for the temple. There was great rejoicing, therefore in the camp of Israel, to know that God had prospered their work, that the foundation was laid, and that the work was progressing. Hence there was cause for great rejoicing.

THE PRAISE OF THE MUSICIANS

"And they sang together by course (or, alternately) in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid." (Ezra 3:11).

It is not without Divine purpose, therefore, that the ministry of spiritual song and music is being restored to the Church. Actually it is the voice of prophecy. We read, therefore, "Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals..." (1Chron. 25:1). No doubt there was usually prophetic singing accompanied by the musical instruments; and together it formed this great prophetic orchestra and choir. And because it is the voice of prophecy, that is why there is a work of deliverance wrought when songs are sung in the Spirit, or when instruments of music are played in the Spirit. David, you will recall, drove the evil spirit away from Saul, as he played upon the harp. It is the voice of God; and it is a ministry, as it was in the case of the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun. Asaph means Gatherer; Heman means Faithful; and Jeduthun means Choir of Praise. What a wonderful description of what is generally called the Heavenly Choir. "The Choir of Praise!" Sung by those who are "Faithful" in their ministry; and to "Gather" the saints together in the unity of the Spirit.

It is not difficult, then, for us to understand why the Choir of Praise has been restored to the Church. The Temple service is being restored. The saints are singing "by course,"--that is, "alternately" in prophecy one to one another, because once again the Lord's Temple is being restored.

WHY THE REJOICING?

"And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid." (Ezra 3:11).

The present work of the Holy Spirit in re-establishing the Temple of God and its spiritual order of worship, has really just started. But we can thank God, nevertheless, that the pattern has been revealed, and that the foundation has been laid. Perhaps it is not too evident to some, because the building is just under construction. It is not our purpose to try to prove that the foundation of apostles and prophets has been relaid. Nor is it really the minister's responsibility to prove any doctrine to anybody. His duty is to minister the Bread of Life to the hungry. If they can receive it, they will be nourished: if they cannot, then perhaps we could administer the sincere milk of the Word that they might grow thereby. According to every man's ability to receive, and their stature in Christ--so may God enable us to minister the words of life. And let us realize that we are sent to feed Christ's sheep, and nourish His people--and not to fill them with doctrines and theories which will not profit. These things, therefore, are written only for those who can receive them; and for none others.

We realize, therefore, that perhaps there are very, very few who can discern the foundation of the temple being relaid in this day. And of course it is most difficult to see a newly laid foundation, for it is usually almost obscured amidst the concrete forms and the supports and the heaps of broken stones and boards that cover the ground. But the Choir of Praise continues to exalt the Lord, and the saints continue to sing one to another in prophecy, because they can see that the foundation has been laid, and the temple is beginning to take shape.

"Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built (literally, are being built) upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. 2:19,20.)

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles (I Cor. 12:28.)

The time is at hand when God will vindicate who His ministers are, and what their place is in this new Temple. For these ministries are not by human-appointment, nor by self-appointment, but by Divine appointment. Until now perhaps there has not been any great need for recognized leadership. We have been in the wilderness; and you really do not need a guide until you start travelling through strange territory. But those days are about to end. We stand on the brink of Jordan, Before us lies a good land, a great land, a rich heritage in the Spirit. But it

is strange territory, As of old, therefore, God is establishing ministries which shall lead the way across Jordan; and the people must be prepared to follow.

"And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host, and they commanded the people, saying, when ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it." (Josh. 3:2,3.) This is a new way. We have not passed this way heretofore. And with this new way, there shall arise new dangers, new problems, new perplexities. Such terrible days are ahead, and such deception shall be manifest by the adversary, that the saints must know who God's ministers are that they might follow them into this good land. Said Paul, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (I Cor. 11:1.)

GREAT OPPOSITION

It would be most enlightening if we could take time to examine in detail the opposition that was raised -against the faithful remnant who laboured on the second temple; for it is a clear picture of what is now transpiring, and what shall yet transpire, as this new Temple begins to rise into her glory, First there was the opposition of the people who dwelt there in the land. Their request was, "Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do." (Ezra 4:2.) But Zerubbabel discerned their true nature, and refused to accept their help. No doubt he was condemned for not co-operating with this noble gesture, and this desire for fellowship. But Zerubbabel's action was certainly confirmed in what followed: for immediately they sent letters to the King of Persia, demanding that the builders be forbidden to continue their work. Their argument was quite a modern one: "Be it known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings." (Ezra 4:13.) There are many "kings" in the Church today, collecting toll and custom from the people, and the restoration of the Church is going to bring about their downfall. In the first place, they were never ordained of God. In the second place, instead of shepherding the flock they are fleecing them. In the third place, when the Church is properly established there will be local elders in each assembly to guide the flock, and there will be no need for a permanently residing pastor. Every minister of God should carefully examine himself in the light of God's controversy with the shepherds of Israel, and make his calling sure:

"Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them." (Ezek. 34:2-4.)

There seems to be very few real, genuine shepherds, who are prepared to lay down their lives for the sheep. It is no wonder, therefore, that the false shepherds do not want to see the Temple of God restored, and the gates set up! Their revenue shall be endamaged when this happens. And so they persuaded the authorities in Persia to forbid the progress of the work; and the work ceased.

THE PROPHETS ENCOURAGE THE BUILDERS

Just how long the work ceased on the temple we do not know. And just how long the work on this Temple is going to be hindered, we do not know. Perhaps God in mercy will do a quick work. Nevertheless, despite all the opposition and all the obstacles, the work shall continue. Has the Lord not raised prophets to encourage the builders, just as He did for Israel? With the builders, we are told. "Were the prophets of God helping them," encouraging them in their task. (Ezra 5:2.) Is it not the purpose of prophecy to speak unto men words of "edification, and exhortation, and comfort?" (1Cor. 14:3.) Edification! Building up! It is the work of prophecy to edify and build up the saints as they labour in this holy Temple of the Lord. The opposition will continue

from within as well as from without--but the prophets of God are there to exhort and comfort the saints in every hour of trial.

Once again there were efforts to hinder the work, and the matter was referred to Darius, but permission was granted and the work continued. In fact, he even ordered that timber and salt and wine and oil be given the builders to help them in their task. And so they built and they prophesied . . ." And they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo." (Ezra 6:14.)

HAGGAI'S PROPHECY

Haggai's prophecy is most enlightening, in view of all these facts that we have mentioned. For Haggai and Zechariah were God's special prophets sent to Jerusalem to encourage the builders in their work.

His first task was to cause the people to realize that the hour had really come for the House of God to be built. The problem is the same today: "This people say, the time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." But God gave Haggai a simple word of wisdom, and it was enough to settle that argument. "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?" (Hag. 1:2,4.) You have your comfortable churches; and, of course, that is all right! You have beautiful carpets, and tapestry, and stained-glass windows, and beautiful furniture . . . there is plenty of time for that. But you have no time for the restoration of God's beautiful House, the Temple not made with hands, the Temple made of "living stones." Is it not a fact, a solemn fact, that the beauty and glory of the Church of Christ has been sacrificed for the natural beauty and refinement of our places of assembly? The people have no objection to this extravagance whatsoever. But let a group of saints declare their intention of restoring the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem and seeking God's face for a restoration of early apostolic power and glory and unity in the congregation of the saints, and there is no time for it!

"Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways." (vs. 6.) And well might the Church of Christ consider her ways. "Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes." (vs. 6.) It seems almost perplexing and mysterious sometimes when we consider the ways of the Church. We read of great revivals, of mass healing meetings, of thousands getting converted or filled with the Spirit, But when the hour of testing comes, where is all this glory of which we have boasted? How many really continue to show evidences of salvation when the revival passes on to the next town? How many retain their healing when they get back home? How many keep filled with the spirit? We are not suggesting that these great Healing or Gospel ministries are not genuine. There will be the false, of course; but God has raised up mighty ministries in the power of the Holy Spirit, to bring healing or salvation to the nations; and much has been and is being, accomplished compared to what we have seen in the past. But little, very little compared to what these ministries should produce. We looked for much; and then God blows upon our efforts in the great fanning-mill through which we all must pass, and where is the wheat? Does it not seem to have disappeared with the chaff? And, "Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house." (Hag. 1:9.)

The implication is clear, and the indictment against sectarianism is with no uncertain voice. If the Body of Christ is betrayed for the sake of base gain, or for one's own Personal interest in this sect or that, then all our vaunted claims to revival and great mass conversions are empty. Is it not true, that the people assemble together to co-operate in some great mass effort for revival, and after it is all over they run "every man unto his own house . . ." Back they go to their little sect and attempt to build it up with the new converts brought to birth by the revival effort. And God blows upon their work by His sifting, testing, trying Spirit; and "Lo, it came to little." Hence the drought, the lack of spiritual power and blessing; the absence of any real fellowship with the

saints or unity of the Spirit; and the reason there is no latter rain. God has called the drought, and therefore at His word the Heavens have withholden their dew.

ZERUBBABEL FACES THE CHALLENGE

Zerubbabel (who was in charge of the building of the second temple), and Joshua (who was the high priest), and the remnant of people, obeyed the voice of God as spoken by the prophet, and "they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts." (Hag. 1:14.) We have already considered in some detail the story of their labours and their problems. But God was with them. Zerubbabel means "Sown in Babylon," and Joshua is the Hebrew for "Jesus." Is it not true that we have all been planted in Babylon, that great city, the city of all manner of abominations, religious and otherwise? But some have heard the call, "Come out of her, my people" and have been transplanted into another land, the land of their true calling. "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." (Heb. 12:22,23.)

HAGGAI PROPHECIES ON THE LAST DAY OF THE FEAST

It has been assumed that Haggai was probably born on a Feast day, because his name signifies "Feast of Jehovah." However, an amazing passage of scripture in his prophecy reveals that Haggai gave utterance to one of the Church's choice promises on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Therefore he was truly named "Haggai," which signifies "Feast of the Lord." One might wonder why the Scriptures go into such detail at times, in giving us dates and seasons which seem to be meaningless to us. God no doubt has a great plan in it all, and as our eyes become enlightened to the riches of His Word, many delightful surprises are there to greet us. And so we read, "In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the Lord by the prophet Haggai, saying . . ." (Hag. 2:1.) The seventh month, and the twenty-first day of the month! In other words, in the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles!

Just imagine what concern and heartache must have gripped the holy prophet of the Lord as he looked down upon this second temple, slowly rising from the dust--but so very, very incomplete, and far from being a glorious temple. And now on this great day, the last day of the Feast, when the memory of every true Israelite would naturally revert back to the days of Israel's glory and power in the days of Solomon's magnificent kingdom--Haggai would likewise be thinking of the great and tremendous heritage which they had lost because of the captivity. The magnificence of Solomon's temple was utterly unsurpassable. There is nothing in the annals of history to compare with it, past or present. How could this feeble remnant begin to erect a structure even comparable to that wonderful temple? How discouraging their work must have been as they contemplated the glory they had lost! But at that very moment, on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the word of prophecy came upon him and he cried to Zerubbabel and the remnant:

"Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? And how do ye see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing! Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord :and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith Lord of hosts: According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." (Hag. 2:3-9.)

Notice the repetition of the phrase, "Saith the Lord of hosts." God wants us to make no mistake about this: God hath spoken and not man. True, our feeble attempts at restoration are nothing compared to the glory of the early

Church, the Temple of the living God erected in apostolic days. But God hath promised: "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former . . ." Neither Zerubbabel's Temple nor the Temple of Herod could begin to compare with Solomon's Temple. But God was not speaking of the earthly house; He was speaking of the Temple not made with hands, composed of living stones. And the "Desire of all nations" would be the Glory of that Temple. And so Malachi prophesies: "And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, . . ." (Mal. 3:1.) All nations--yea the creation itself, are waiting eagerly for His appearing, even for the manifestation of the Sons of God." (Rom. 8:19.) Nor shall their hopes and expectations be disappointed.

And how shall this exceeding glory be manifested? By the very shaking of the heavens and the earth. Paul quotes this passage in Heb. 12:26 and assures us that this shall be fulfilled in the Kingdom of the saints. We dealt somewhat with the shaking of the heavens in a previous chapter. The very unseen powers of the heavenlies must be toppled from their thrones; yea, even now are they beginning to feel the impact of heaven-tremors as the Sons of God begin to mount up with wings of an eagle to take unto themselves their God-given authority in the Spirit.

"Be strong . . . be strong . . . be strong is the threefold prophecy of comfort and encouragement to the builders of the Temple, to the priesthood, and to the remnant. For it is in the spoken word of prophecy that power and strength shall be imparted to the builders, enabling them to use the tools of their ministry in the one hand, and to fight with the Sword of the Spirit in the other. With similar words of encouragement, and with a similar purpose in mind, the apostle Paul exhorts the saints: "Finally, my brethren be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:10-12.) It is this wrestling with the spiritual hosts of wickedness in "the heavenlies" that shall cause the very heavens to shake and Satan and his hosts to relinquish their kingdom into the hands of the Sons of God. Everything that can be shaken is going to quake and fall before the Sons of God. And then into the very heavenlies shall they ascend, first of all in the Spirit, to take possession of the kingdom left vacant by the casting out of Satan, and his evil hosts. Then shall they be in a position to administer peace and life and blessing to a Church and a world that are in bondage and under oppression.

ZECHARIAH'S PROPHECY (See Zech. 4)

Zechariah likewise prophesied words of encouragement to Zerubbabel and the remnant who laboured on the temple. In what way would the Lord encourage the builders in the colossal task that lay before them? Well, the Lord would give the prophet a vision that would explain the means of their success. How helpless they were! How would the Lord encourage them? And so Zechariah looked, and what did he see? Mountains of stone and timber and mortar? Huge labour battalions marching down from Babylon to help them? Great machines to aid in their seemingly impossible task? Ah no! But he looked, "And behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon and two olive trees by it A very simple illustration, and meaningless perhaps to many: two olive trees pouring their oil into a candlestick. Zechariah himself did not know what it meant; and so God gave him the interpretation.

"This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." Shall anything be too hard for the Lord? By my spirit," saith the Lord, and so shall it be. And now let us notice this great word of encouragement, which God speaketh even now to the builders of this living Temple: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it: and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things?" Child of God, remember these words; God has pledged His Word that this Temple shall be finished. Let us never lose that vision.

But still Zechariah was puzzled; what were these "two olive trees" that he saw emptying their golden oil into the candlestick? And the angel replied: "These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." Literally, "These are the two sons of oil . . ."! Sons of the anointing! It is the Moses-Elijah company, as we shall discover in the next chapter. It is the company of overcomers who shall go forth in the Day of the Lord working all manner of signs and wonders and miracles in the Name of the Lord; and nothing shall stand against them.

"By my spirit," saith the Lord. This is a work of the Spirit of God. The Oil of the Spirit flowing through them: That is the secret of their power.

RESTORATION OF THE WALLS

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah cover two periods of restoration. Neither Ezra nor Nehemiah were present at the rebuilding of the Temple but came many years later: Ezra to teach the people the laws of God, and Nehemiah to rebuild the walls and the gates of the City.

And so we read that "All that could hear with understanding" assembled together "as one man into the street that was before the water gate" while Ezra the priest read from the law of God from morning until midday. This was the first day of the seventh month, the month of the Feast of Tabernacles. (See Neh. 8:1-3.) "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." (Neh. 8:8.) This is the hour of revelation and spiritual understanding. The Spirit is speaking to the churches, but only those with "ears to hear" shall understand what is spoken, The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, and only men whose minds have been quickened by the Spirit shall be able to "give the sense" on the one hand, or "understand the reading" on the other. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

THE PEOPLE IN THEIR PLACE

"And the people stood in their place," (Neh. 8:7.) God is setting His ministries in the Body according as it pleases Him, and the time has come when every man must know his place in the Body and serve the Lord accordingly. Ministries have been raised up for the express purpose of administering gifts of the Spirit through prophecy and the laying on of hands--and the saints are exhorted to "war a good warfare" accordingly. (I Tim. 1:18.) We realize, of course, that much harm has been done by those who are attempting to administer gifts to others through prophecy and the laying on of hands--when God has not authorized them to engage in this ministry. But the tares must always grow together with the wheat until the time of harvest. If the child of God is walking in close communion with his Lord, then the Spirit will witness as to the truth of the prophecy which goes forth concerning him. And if he is not walking in close communion with God, then the prophecy will mean nothing to him anyway--except perhaps to harden his heart or fill him with pride. This will I serve as a good test. If pride rises up in the heart, the prophecy--whether true or false, cannot be relied upon. For even a true prophecy must submit to the test of faith and obedience in one's life and ministry. Furthermore, the purpose of prophecy is to establish, edify, comfort and exhort; and if the candidate is left in a state of confusion or turmoil and doubt--he might as well reject what has been said concerning him. "For God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace." (I Cor. 14:33.) We merely mention these things, because we know that many are trying to engage in this ministry of prophecy, with the laying on of hands--and God has never commissioned them to do so. The ministry is real and genuine, as all can testify who have really entered in to the realities of this move of the Spirit. But as surely as the Sower plants good seed, the enemy is there to sow tares --and both must grow together until the harvest.

However, if the child of God who hungers to know God's will, and do it--has not had the opportunity of being set aside by prophecy and the laying on of hands, he need not be in the least discouraged. Let him continue in the

things which God has placed in his hand to do. Choose the humble and lowly position, and you cannot go wrong. Pray, fast, intercede, shew mercy, give, help and assist God's people --do whatever the Lord enables you to do, in humility and meekness, and God will honour your efforts. And regardless of any prophecy that has been given to any man, utter consecration unto God is God's will for you, first and foremost. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:1,2.) That is the will of God for you! Take the lowly position, therefore, and God will exalt you in due course when you are able to receive it. Much better that you should be found doing some humble task, and the Lord promote you unto honour, than that he should be forced to say: "Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room." (Lk. 14:9.) If this plan is followed, God will certainly give guidance and direction. And in His own good time, when He chooses to reveal your ministry in greater fulness through prophecy and the laying on of hands, His servants will be directed your way, and led of the Spirit to set you apart unto the work for which God has called you.

SEND PORTIONS TO THE NEEDY

"Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared . . ."(Neh. 8:10.)

As the Feast of Tabernacles begins to dawn upon us, it is becoming increasingly important that the saints have something to minister to their fellow-members in the Body. They must not "appear before the Lord empty: every man shall give as he is able. according to the blessing of the Lord." (Deut. 16:16,17.) This strongly reminds us of Paul's exhortations to the Romans and Corinthians, concerning their ministry in the Body of Christ. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering . . ." (Rom. 12:6,7.) The whole ministry of the various members is to edify the Body, and not for their own gratification. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (I Pet. 4:10.) As he ministries develop and the Body is edified, then they will go forth unto the world bringing health and gladness to those who sit in darkness, starvation, and the shadow of death.

VICTORY AND PROSPERITY AHEAD

"Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written...." (Neh. 8:15.)

No doubt all these trees are significant of one thing and another. But broadly speaking they depict the victory and prosperity and joy and triumph of the people of God. The "olive"--a true symbol of the Holy Spirit. The olive oil was used for making the holy ointment, for the anointing of prophet, priest, or king. Palm branches, you will recall, were cut down and scattered in the pathway of the King who came riding triumphantly into Jerusalem sitting upon an ass, amidst the shouting of the people and of the children. "Hosanna" they cried, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Mk. 11:9.) And the saints who come out of the Great Tribulation clothed in white robes have "palms in their hands," as they shout the victory song and worship the Lamb that was, slain for them. There is a great day of gladness ahead for the saints when the Feast of Tabernacles is observed. But they must leave their homes in the streets of Jerusalem. They must forsake their own ways, their own thoughts, their own plans and desires, and crucify the flesh--in order that the life of Christ and the joy of the Holy Ghost might be their portion.

What a spectacle this scene must have presented. Thousands upon thousands of little humble tabernacles or booths erected along the streets of Jerusalem, or upon the house-tops, or in the courts of the temple, or in the

open places of the city; all assembled together with one common purpose in mind, with one heart and one soul, to keep the Feast of the Lord. The booth was nothing much to behold--just a humble, fragile hut. Says Paul, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (2 Cor. 4:7.) Weymouth's translation of this passage is most expressive: "But we have this treasure in fragile earthen pots, in order that the surpassing greatness of the power may be seen to be God's and not to come from us." Again, Paul says, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2 Cor. 12:9.) Literally it reads, "That the power of Christ may spread a Tabernacle over me. . ." It is the manifestation of Christ within us. It is the crucifixion of our flesh, that the very life of Christ might be revealed, in the power of the Holy Ghost.

OPPOSITION WITHIN AND WITHOUT

Nehemiah gives further light on the opposition that was arrayed against them. As they started the tremendous task, there was nothing more than mockery. One said, "Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall." (Neh. 4:3.) But soon their mockery turned to violence. They realized that great progress was being made in spite of their tremendous difficulties, and so they began to get fearful, and tried to hinder the work by force of arms. It became necessary, therefore, for the builders to be armed with spears as well as tools; and they builded with the sword girded by their side. (Neh. 4:18.)

If we seek to restore the walls of Jerusalem, we are going to find it necessary in the very near future to put on "the whole armour of God." Mockery is giving way to violence. Satan will soon begin to use force against the saints instead of insult, because he realizes that the plan of God is being fulfilled, even if the work is slow and not any too spectacular.

Then carnality crept into the midst of God's people, and brother was ill-treating brother. Because of the hard times, some were being forced to mortgage their fields and their properties, and the rich were exacting usury from the poor. And we can be sure of this, saints, that one of Satan's sure devices against God's people is in causing internal strife and division. If he cannot conquer by outward attack, he is often most successful by causing the congregation to fall into sin. When Balaam could not curse Israel (for they were God's people and God turned the curse into a blessing)--then he advised Balak to invite the people to a great sacrifice of their gods--and Israel fell into the trap. Consequently a great plague swept through the whole congregation. (Num. 25:1,2; 31:16.)

Finally, Sunballat conceived another plot against Nehemiah, perhaps the most subtle of all. If he was unable to conquer by force, or by mockery, he would befriend Nehemiah and in that way betray him. He would propose a conference. "Come, let us meet together . . ." he suggested. But Nehemiah discerned the true intent and purpose of the proposed meeting, and he replied that he was too busy. (Neh. 6:2-8.) Failing that he hired a man to come and persuade Nehemiah to flee into the temple for safety, stating that some were after his life. But Nehemiah had no part in the priesthood, and he refused to sin against God in this manner; and again the plot failed. Nehemiah's ministry was to govern the land, not to minister in the Temple. Perhaps Satan's most successful form of attack against the saints, is to get them to become involved in some work of the Lord which is not theirs to perform. It appears to be such an innocent thing. And perhaps the need that arises would almost demand that you submit, and take upon yourself some ministry which God has neither enabled you nor called you to perform. But God knows all about it. and he has some who are qualified to meet that need. Let every man minister according to the ability which God gives, and in the place which God has designated for him.

EVERY MAN HAD HIS JOB TO PERFORM

No man needs to be unduly concerned about his ministry if he will but minister according to the ability and power which God has given. For the ministry that you have is one that is suited to you, and one for which God

has gifted you. If you are walking with God you will automatically be in your ministry. And the ministry that you have from God has constituted you a "steward," or literally, "a house-manager" of His affairs. Having received a gift from God, therefore, we are called upon to be "good stewards of the manifold grace of God." And as a "steward" of God's House, only one thing is required of you, and that is faithfulness. (I Cor. 4:1.) You are not called upon to be great, or mighty, or prosperous, or clever, or successful, or to do great things--but to be "faithful." Before God that is true greatness, and true success. The lone soldier guarding some obscure vital spot in the field of battle, even if he never sees any action, is just as much entitled to promotion as the man in the front lines. One thing is sure, the Day of Christ is going to reveal every man's faithfulness in building upon the one foundation, which is Jesus Christ. This we know: the Judgment Seat of Christ will reveal quality and not quantity. "And the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (1 Cor. 3:13.) If it is "gold, silver, precious stones," it will stand the test; and if it is "wood, hay stubble" it will be burnt up, leaving the builder without the crown of glory, saved as through fire.

And so every Israelite had his job to perform. Some on the sheep-gate, some on the fish-gate. Some on this tower, and another on that tower. Some at the fountain, some at the pool, some at the stairs, some at the armories, some at the houses of the priests. But they all worked together, according to their several ability, the prophets of God encouraging them as they built--and in due course the wall was finished, and the defence of the City was made secure.

CHAPTER 14

TABERNACLES--THE FEAST OF HIS APPEARING

We mentioned in the first part of the book how the observance of the natural Feasts served to illustrate their spiritual application to the Church. Thus when the Feast was observed at the dedication of Solomon's Temple, we have a type and pattern of the Glory of the Church, and when the Feast was observed in the days of Zerubbabel's temple, we have a type of the restoration of the Church to her first Glory. Now we come to the occasion on which the Feast was observed in the time of Christ.

Let us recall how that in the plan of God Israel's Passover was the occasion that God chose for Christ Himself to die as the true Passover Lamb. And again, on that great day of Pentecost, when devout Jews had assembled from all parts of the Roman Empire to keep the Feast--then it was that God poured out the Holy Spirit on His disciples, thus fulfilling the old and establishing the new Pentecost. It is therefore with great significance that we read these words: "Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest." (Jn. 7:2,3.) However, the Lord remained where He was until His brethren had gone to the Feast; and afterward went up "as it were in secret." (vs. 10.) No doubt the Lord intentionally visited the Feast of the Jews "in secret" by way of illustrating a great truth to the Church, the truth of His appearing.

RESURRECTION LIFE FOR US

There is no question as to the fact that one day "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout," and the saints shall be caught away to be with Him for ever. (1 Thess. 4:16.) And again, "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. 15:52.) This is the final victory for the Church, when mortality is clothed upon with immortality, and corruption puts on incorruption. This is the consummation of the Church's last great victorious event, for then it is that "Death is swallowed up in victory," and the "last enemy," even Death, is destroyed. (1 Cor. 15:26,54.)

We are sure of this, however, that the Church is being robbed of her glory in not knowing that there is rapture for her even now, while waiting for Rapture, and there is resurrection here and now while we wait for Resurrection. There is no doubt whatever that God holds many secrets for future revelation concerning the order of events and the nature of the Resurrection. But in this we are confident: before this cherished rapture or resurrection takes place, there is to arise a group of overcomers who shall appropriate even here and now their heritage of Resurrection Life in Jesus Christ. God has placed His only Begotten at His own right hand in the heavenlies, until all his enemies have been placed under His feet. (Ps. 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25,26.) There He shall remain, in obedience to the Word of the Father, until there ariseth a people who shall go in and possess their heritage in the Spirit, and conquer over all opposing forces of World, Flesh, and Devil. We are not inferring that the saints will go about in glorified bodies. But we are speaking of the saints reaching out and appropriating even here and now in their earthly temples the very Life of Christ, of entering into their heritage in the Spirit, of participating in the Melchizedek priesthood and kingdom, and of living the very spotless, immaculate life of the Son of God Himself in virtue of His abiding presence within.

Let us remember that God is bound by His word and His oath, but He is not bound by the dispensations, by general historical procedure, nor yet by the notions of men. "It is appointed unto men once to die . . .," that is quite true; but even though death is quite general God was free to reach down and translate Enoch "that he should not see death" when this holy man believed for it. (Heb. 11:5.) Nor did it prevent God from catching Elijah up into heaven in a whirlwind, when He chose to do so. (2 Kgs. 2:11.) Nor could it prevent the Lord from extending the life of John the Beloved for two thousand years, if He chose to do so. It was neither Peter's business, nor ours, nor was it contrary to God's Word, if the Lord wanted it that way. (Jn. 21:22.) Jesus has promised that He would raise up "at the last day" all those who would believe on His Name. (Jn. 6:40.) There is no question about that. But that did not stop Him from resurrecting Lazarus, even during His earthly ministry. (Jn. 11:44.) Nor did it prevent Moses from rising from the dead somewhat prematurely, as he must have done according to Jude 9. Neither did it prevent the tombs from bursting assunder when Christ died on the Cross, and the bodies of the saints arising and coming into the city and appearing unto many. (Matt. 27:52,53.) God is perfectly free to raise whom He will any time He chooses; to impart Divine Life to whomsoever he will, whenever one shall believe for it; and to translate any one that has the faith for it. Let us not argue with the good-man of the House; is He not free to do as He will with His own? If we have bargained with God for a resurrection at the last Day: are we going to have an evil eye if God in mercy and love imparts His resurrection life to some before the last day?

JESUS CHRIST, THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

One of the most glorious facts of Scripture, we believe, is this: that the Resurrection and the Life is not a mere historic event, to take place in the distant future,—but the Resurrection and the Life is a Person, even the Lord Jesus Christ who dwells in our hearts. How He yearned over Mary and Martha at the tomb of Lazarus, and sought to inspire faith in their hearts to believe in Him. But they would insist, like the vast majority of Christians today, in believing facts about Him and about God, instead of believing in Him. "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection . . . I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God...." But all the time Jesus was wanting them to believe that He was the I Am, the answer to their immediate need. A historical resurrection? Of course, they would believe in that. Christ, the Messiah? Why of course, they would believe that. But this kind of faith is not sufficient to bring one into the fulness of sonship, and to a real genuine appropriation of Divine Life here and now. They confessed their faith in the fact that Lazarus would rise again in the resurrection at the last day. But Jesus replied, "I am the Resurrection, and the Life . . ." Resurrection and Life, then, are not merely the attributes of the resurrection, and events which are to take place at the rapture. But the Resurrection and the Life are held out to the Sons of God even here and now.

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live . . ." That was the case of Lazarus, was it not? And did he not live, because he died believing in Christ? And then the Lord

continues, "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (Jn. 11:25,26.) It is certain we do not believe it. O, we might believe it theoretically but not one of us has believed it experimentally, or Divine Life would be surging through our beings. But the promise is there nevertheless, even though we all disbelieve it. "Let God be true and every man a liar." By faith all things are and shall be possible. The very dispensations themselves are but weak barriers and obstacles if men of faith are enabled by the Spirit to reach out and leap beyond them. Enoch did it. So did Elijah. And so shall the Sons of God. The Word of faith shall grip their hearts, and they shall reach out and appropriate the Resurrection and the Life even now in this life. If they do not, Christ never will return to earth. For God hath said, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Ps. 110:1.) And the last enemy is Death!

THE COMING OF THE LORD

There has been a general misunderstanding of the Word of God throughout Christendom concerning the truth of the coming of the Lord; for it is clear as we consider all the Scriptures on the subject, that the Lord's coming is a spiritual visitation in the midst of His people, as well as a literal and bodily visitation. James therefore associates the bestowal of the latter rain with the "coming" of the Lord: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he (it) receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." (Jas. 5:7,8.) Notice in this passage how the truth concerning the latter rain is sandwiched between these two statements concerning the "coming of the Lord."

The word commonly translated "coming" in the New Testament is "parousia," which signifies "presence," or "a being alongside." It is therefore used of the coming of men in the flesh, as well as of the coming of Christ. That the word signifies "presence" more than the act of one's arrival, is evident from 2 Pet. 1:16,17. In this passage Peter describes the glorious visitation of God on the mount of transfiguration as the "coming," the "parousia," the "presence" of Christ. Now Christ had already come in the flesh; the four men had walked together up the mountain; but here was a "coming" of the Lord not previously known. And so he says, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Notice how the apostle associates the power and coming of Christ with the glory of God that appeared in the hour of Christ's transfiguration. In fact, the Lord Himself explains that this visitation of the Glory was in reality, the very Kingdom of God. In each of the three accounts where the scene is recorded the story is preceded with the remark: "But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God." (Lk. 9:27.) Matthew describes it as "the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (Matt. 16:28.) Mark refers to it as "the kingdom of God come with power." (Mk. 9:1.) and Peter combines the two statements in the words, "The power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

THE MOSES-ELIJAH COMPANY

The whole transfiguration scene is a beautiful picture of the power and coming of the Lord into the midst of His people in this glorious hour to create the Moses-Elijah ministry. Moses, and Elijah; because this is the day and hour when the old must give way to the new, when death is to be swallowed up of life, when Law must be fulfilled in Grace. And so Moses typifies the old order of Law and of death. Elijah speaks of the new order, of grace and of life. This is the hour known as the "ends of the ages" when the judgments that have been written concerning the Church and the world must be fulfilled on the one hand, and all the glory and power that is written concerning the Church must be fulfilled on the other hand. Hence the Moses-Elijah company: the fulness of God in the midst of His people, to do away with the old and to establish the new. Moses died; Elijah lived. Moses went down into the grave; Elijah went up into Heaven. Moses administered death and condemnation; Elijah in translation administered life and power--and the very mantle that he wore fluttered

down upon his servant Elisha, even the mantle of power and life. This is the hour of God's vengeance upon the earth; but it is also the hour of God's Glory in the midst of His people.

THE DAY OF VENGEANCE

"For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled." (Lk. 21:22.) Vengeance! How we shrink from the awfulness of the Day! But this vengeance is not only to administer death; it is also to administer life. When Jesus picked up the scroll in the synagogue of Nazareth and opened it to the place which spoke of the anointed Messiah bringing deliverance to the people. He closed the book just before He came to the words, ". . . And the day of vengeance of our God." He was reading from the prophet Isaiah, as follows: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord . . ." (Isa. 61:1,2.) Thus far the Lord read, and then closed the book and gave it back to the servant. (Lk. 4:20.) Why, then, did the Lord close the scroll there, right in the middle of Isa. 61:2? Because thus far was His earthly ministry, and no further. The common explanation is that the remainder of the verse will be fulfilled after the rapture of the Church. Now it is true that the remainder of Isa. 61:2 is to find its fulfillment in the Day of the Lord, when God's judgments are poured out. But what seems to be largely ignored is the fact that the day of vengeance is at the same time a great day of blessing. Isaiah therefore continues: "And the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called Trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." (Isa. 61:2,3.) True, it is the day of vengeance, but it is likewise a day of rejoicing--for it is the display of God's power and glory. It is therefore vengeance upon the works of the Devil, and that will bring judgment to the disobedient, but rejoicing to the obedient. That is why we read, "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." (Isaiah 35:4-6.) Vengeance? Yes, but to save, to heal, to revive. Again we read, "For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come," (Isa. 63:4.) Vengeance? Yes, but at the same time the "year of my redeemed!"

THE TWO WITNESSES

Such, then, is the ministry of this Moses-Elijah company, We are told that the "two witnesses" shall have the power "to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." (Rev. 11:6.) "As often as they will."--for the simple reason that they have overcome, they abide in Christ, and their will is the very will of the Father manifested through them. They have the "mind of Christ," so that they minister judgments according to the Spirit of God. It is quite evident that this is the Moses-Elijah company from an examination of the judgments which they administer. Their power is the very same as that of Moses and Elijah: to turn water into blood, to smite the earth with all manner of plagues, and to shut up the heavens that it rain not. They have the fire of the Holy Ghost in their mouth, and that is their protection and power. They are sent forth into the earth to administer God's power. If there is repentance, there is power to bless; if there is enmity, there is power to destroy. Says Paul, "To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor Of life unto life." (2 Cor. 2:16.) It is the ministry of Christ; but it is the fulness of Christ in His people, Remember what we observed about the number "two"--it signifies Christ in His fullness, in His Body, His people, His overcomers--this "perfect man" created "in Himself" (Eph. 2:15) John further identifies the two-witnesses by referring to a prophecy of Zechariah: "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth." We mentioned these two olive trees in a previous chapter. In Zechariah we read, "What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? Then said he, These are the two anointed ones (literally, 'these are the two sons of oil'), that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." (Zech.

4:11,14.) These were the builders of the restored temple, to whom God said, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." these are the two "sons of oil," those who live, and move, and walk, and think, and speak, and work in the very realm of the Spirit of the Living God.

ELIJAH'S TWO-FOLD APPEARANCE

The Day of Vengeance, therefore, is to be a great day of restoration. But before there can be real and genuine restoration, there must be destruction: destruction to the works of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. And so there is Moses to destroy, and Elijah to restore. It is noteworthy that in the last chapter of the last book of the Old Testament we read these words: "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant . . . Behold. I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers . . ." (Mal. 4:4-6.) Of course, Christ did appear once, in one Man, in the flesh. And therefore we had a partial fulfillment of the Elijah ministry in one man, in the flesh: and that man was John the Baptist. Said Jesus, "Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed." (Mk. 9:13.) His ministry was to prepare the people for Christ's Appearing. But a great secret in God's counsels was this: Christ was to appear twice, first in Incarnation, and secondly at the ends of the ages. Now we are awaiting Christ's second Appearing, this time in power and glory in the saints, in the fulness of His Body. And therefore we can expect not only an Elijah ministry, but the fulness of the Moses-Elijah ministry. Christ's first Appearing was in the Head only, in one Man. Hence Elijah appeared in one man, even John the baptist--for his spirit and power rested upon him. Now Christ will appear in His Church the Body. Hence the Moses-Elijah company, the fulness of Christ in many.

TRANSFIGURATION GLORY

It is remarkable that the Lord's declaration concerning the coming of Elijah followed immediately after the Transfiguration experience, when Moses and Elijah had appeared in glory on the mount. The Lord was "transfigured," we are told, and Moses and Elijah "appeared in glory" with him. (Lk. 9:31.) The Glory was Christ's Glory, and He it was that was "transfigured," but these two men appeared in His Glory. And that, in fact, is exactly what is going to happen when Christ is manifested in the saints; the saints are to appear with Him in Glory! "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:4.) It is participation in the Transfiguration glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, just as Moses and Elijah appeared in His Transfiguration glory. The Scriptures teach that this Transfiguration is for us.

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed (transfigured) by the renewing of your mind . . ." (Rom. 12:2.)

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed (transfigured) into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18.)

The open face is the "unveiled" face. The reference is to the veil which Moses wore over his eyes to hide the glory from the sensitive eyes of the Israelites, when he came down from the mountain. But when he went in to speak to the Lord, he took the veil off. Paul, therefore, exhorts the Corinthians to take the veil off. This is the day and hour of God's great Unveiling--even the Unveiling of the Sons of God! And as our eyes and hearts and minds become unveiled before God, we are going to be transfigured into the same image! These words are unmistakable in clearness. The same image! And this image is developed and manifested as we partake of His Transfiguration, with minds and hearts and eyes unveiled before the Spirit of God.

What Peter beheld, therefore, on the Mount of Transfiguration was a true picture of the "power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" into the midst of His people in this great hour of His power and Kingdom. But it was just a picture; and when the real meaning of the scene is fully revealed to us by way of experience, it will far

outshine any attempt to describe it. The best we can do now is to behold some of these truths as through a glass darkly. We have all puzzled over Peter's strange suggestion: "Let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Apparently Peter was so caught away in the ecstasy of the Spirit that he thought they were observing the real Feast of Tabernacles; and his immediate suggestion, therefore, was to erect a little tabernacle or booth for each of them, as they were accustomed to do at this Feast. It certainly was a foretaste of the real Feast of Tabernacles, for which the saints are looking: but coming to himself Peter realized it was but a vision, and the hour of the Feast had not really arrived.

All the events that transpired at the Transfiguration scene are no doubt very significant, and at the same time largely hidden from our view. However as the Day of His Appearing draws nigh, and the scene is reproduced in its fulness in the Body of Christ, its Glory shall far transcend what happened on that occasion. Still it was a wonderful event, and Peter never forgot its glory. To him that was the real Coming (Parousia) and the real Power (Dunamis) of the Kingdom, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the Power and Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. but were eyewitnesses of His majesty . . ." (2 Pet. 1:16.) And he used the plural, we, because he was speaking for James and John as well. No wonder Peter, James, and John spoke much of the manifestation of Christ within His people, of the Day-star arising in their hearts, of abiding in Christ, of seeing Him as He is, and of being made exactly like him in the hour of His spiritual visitation in the hearts of His people. That is the hope of the Church. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him-- for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." (1 Jn. 3:2,3.) It is the Appearing of Christ within His people, and their, consequent transfiguration after His very likeness by beholding Him as He is: not by rapture, but by the spirit! ". . . transfigured into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18.)

THE SECRET-CHRIST IN YOU

It is significant, therefore, that on the occasion of the Feast of Tabernacles the Lord went up to the Feast "not openly, but as it were in secret." For it is in this very manner that He shall first reveal Himself to the saints. Says Paul, "Even the mystery (secret) which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery (secret) among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:26,27.) Wonderful secret! That Christ should visit the saints in the last great Feast, and minister His life "in secret" before He is openly manifested! Christians think it a horrible thing that Christ's second Coming should be spoken of in this manner. To so many, there is no real Coming of the Lord until He comes visibly, openly, and physically. Why is this? Because to them the only things that are real are the things that they can see. Whereas Paul declares that the things which are most real are eternal, invisible, and spiritual. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:18.) When a Christian comes to that place where he really appreciates and understands and enjoys Spiritual things, then he can truly rejoice in the fact that Christ is coming back again to be manifested within.

Speaking of this glorious intimacy which He would have with His own, and which the world would not understand, we are told that "Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Lk. 10:21.) This does not seem good to orthodox religion; but it seemed good to the Father. Paul tells us that God "was pleased to make known" the glory of this mystery, this secret. For it is a secret that is shared by Christ and His intimate friends. "All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." (Lk. 10:22.) Here is a knowledge of the Father and the Son such as no man can acquire except by revelation. Theology will unveil before the student all manner of facts relative to the Father

and the Son and the Holy Ghost, But here is a knowledge which defies any attempt of man to unravel. It is a knowledge, not about God and about Christ and about doctrines, but it is a genuine knowledge of God and an intimate acquaintanceship with Him.

UNION WITH FATHER AND SON

In John 14 we have a beautiful description of Christ's Coming unto His own by the Spirit. Let it apply to the rapture, or to Heaven, if you will, for it is our heavenly heritage, even the "heavenlies" that God has placed us in by His grace. But those who will reach out and appropriate this new life, and are initiated into this "secret" of which we have been speaking--theirs shall be the joy and delight of exploring the heavenlies long before they get there.

"Let not your heart be troubled," said Jesus, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you." (Jn. 14:1,2.) Then after much perplexity on the part of His disciples, the Lord explained fully what He meant by Father's house of "many mansions," and the place which He was going to prepare for them. First of all He shows that it is a spiritual place of union with the Father and the Son, a union so blessed and intimate that, if the Son whom they thought they knew was really apprehended and really known--then they would be in vital union with the Father also. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should (would) have known my Father also . . ." In consequence of this glorious union, therefore, it would come to pass that the beloved disciples would do "greater works" than Christ Himself performed when on earth, because He was returning to the Father; and the vital power and life and union which was His with the Father would then be transmitted to the disciples, and it would become their heritage. So positive and so real and so genuine is this secret life in union with the Father and the Son that Jesus promised without any qualifications whatsoever, "if ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." In our carnal minds we reason that God could not mean exactly that, because if He did, then men would be asking for all manner of earthly and selfish things, and God would be dishonored, and still duty-bound to grant the request. But the fact is this: Christ has made this promise only to such as know the "secret of the Lord," and are in vital union with the Father through Him. Such a man in such a spiritual condition could ask nothing except what would please the Father, and God would have to hear his prayer. In fact, the believer's prayer would be the very prayer of the Spirit of God within him. For in this blessed condition we have "the mind of Christ," and we could only think and pray in the Spirit.

Then the matter is solved, for the Lord goes on to explain how all this shall come to pass. When He went away He would ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit to "abide" with them for ever. And it is this abiding experience in the Holy Spirit that constitutes this new life of which we speak. "I will not leave you comfortless (orphans)," said Jesus. "I will come to you." (Vs. 18.) Jesus said, let us notice, "I will come"--and He was referring to the coming of the Holy Spirit in the fulness of His abiding presence. The Appearing of the Lord in secret in the hearts of His disciples! "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me . . ." (Vs. 19.) Notice this also: "Ye see me . . ." Let us remember, as we pointed out before, that the real things of God are not seen with the natural eye, but are seen by the eye of the Spirit. This Coming of the Lord, therefore, is genuine and real to those who can see Him after this manner: in fact, far more real than His physical and bodily appearance to the world. "Ye see me . . ." See Him not in the flesh, for henceforth we are to know no man after the flesh, not even Christ. (2 Cor. 5;16); but see him with the eyes of the Spirit, like Moses of old beholding Him "who is invisible," That Christ is not speaking here of a literal and physical appearance it is evident, for He says, "The world seeth me no more; but ye see me." And why? "Because I live, ye shall live also."

Then notice once again how vital and how glorious this union becomes when we enter into the fulness of this experience. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." What day? The day of which He has been speaking all through this chapter, the day of this abiding experience in the Holy Spirit. "I am in my Father," He said. We cannot doubt that; we know that the Son is genuinely one with the Father,

completely immersed in the celestial glory. But in the same breath He continues, "And ye in me, and I in you." Therefore, if the union of the Father and Son is genuine and exquisite and real and vital and powerful, then the union of the Son and the many brethren is to be just as real and just as glorious.

THE SECRET OF THIS MYSTERY

What is the secret of being initiated into this secret experience? It is very, very, simple; and therefore at the same time very difficult for man to appropriate: because he must simply cast away his life in the natural, that he might find it in the more abundant life of the Spirit. He must lose his life in order that he might find it. He must consecrate Himself absolutely and entirely unto the will of God. "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and We will come unto him . . ." The Coming of the Father and the Son! "We will come . . ." A secret visitation of Christ in the hearts of His people. "And make our abode with him. . ."

MANY MANSIONS

When Jesus said, "We come unto him, and make our abode with him." He used the very same word for abode as He used back in vs. 2 when He said, "In my Father's house are many mansions." The word "mansion" and "abode" is one and the same Greek word. This, then, is the real mansion that Christ has gone to prepare for His own. Some might prefer a house of gold or of glistening white marble or pearl. But those things are corruptible; even gold and silver are described by the apostle as being "corruptible things." They are not real. The real things are the spiritual counterparts of gold, and pearls, and sapphires, and emeralds, and jasper. In our finite and limited understanding these natural and earthly things are used to describe our heavenly heritage--because that is the only language that we can understand. But in reality, the glorious realm of the Spirit far transcends and outshines any such earthly glory.

One glorious thing about the realm of the Spirit is that here there is nothing stagnant or monotonous. Immediately one is introduced into this glorious realm. there is ceaseless progression and activity. Then you are linked up with the infinite and eternal God, whose ways are past finding out, whose depths are unsearchable, and whose heights are unattainable. Therefore the Lord tells us there are many abodes in Father's House, depending on the level of one's Christian experience, and his spiritual attainment through faith and obedience. "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonour." (2 Tim. 2:20.) There is a resting-place, an abiding-place; but in God the true rest is found in the midst of outward strife and warfare: and the true abiding-place is the one that is ceaselessly moving forward and upward into a closer and more vital union with the Father. Israel's rest in Canaan consisted in conquering the enemy and marching forward to possess their possessions. It did not consist of crossing Jordan, and then settling down on the banks of the river and singing the victory song. Nor is it so with the abiding experience in the Holy Spirit. If we are abiding in Christ, we are abiding in a River, a River that flows on for ever.

THE KINGDOM IS WITHIN

"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. (Lk. 17:20,21.) A common explanation of this passage is this: the kingdom of God in the Church is invisible and "cometh not" with observation; but when the earthly Kingdom Age begins, then it will come with observation. As a matter of fact, there is nothing intimated here about two kingdoms; nor is it stated that the Kingdom of God cannot, or will not, be observed. Of course it will be observed and made manifest in the earth in due course; and "of His Kingdom there shall be no end." But this passage is very clear as to how and in what manner the Kingdom shall be brought into being. Not with a great

burst of glory from Heaven, for it "cometh not" with observation. Rather shall it come "in secret," in the hearts of God's people.

"So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself: first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." (Mk. 4:26-28.) The full corn is wonderful to see; so is the ear: and even the blade is visible. But it all started under the ground through the mysterious, secret, invisible processes of nature, we know not how.

"Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field. . ." (Matt. 13:44.) The hidden kingdom! And Christ is the One who sold all that He had, and purchased us unto Himself. To do so He redeemed the whole world through His Blood. Soon will He remove the treasure from its hiding place, and manifest it!

LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE

In Christ's day the Jews were constantly looking forward to the day when their Messiah would suddenly manifest Himself in great power, deliver them from the Roman yoke, and set up the Kingdom. No wonder the Lord was so unpopular with them, for He told them plainly that the Kingdom would not come with "intense watching" (as the word 'observation' means). It is strange that one generation will not learn from the mistakes of their predecessors. For practically the whole body of evangelical churches today is looking forward with that same "intense watching" for a rapture or a kingdom that will deliver them from earth's bondage, and establish them on thrones of power and authority in the earth. True, there shall come a day when the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth "as the waters cover the sea"; when every eye shall see Him; when the same Jesus that was taken up into Heaven, shall come in like manner as they saw Him go. But first there is the Appearing of Christ in the midst of His people by the Spirit, to establish the Kingdom of God within, and that is the hope of the Church.

Says Paul, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13) Literally, it reads: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of the great God . . ." When Solomon's temple had been constructed, the priests and Levites set in their place, the singers and the musicians in theirs, and the vessels and furniture all properly arranged--then, "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord . . . that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." (2 Chron. 5:13,14.) That is the Hope of the Church!

CHRIST TEACHES AT THE FEAST

So it was that the Lord visited the Feast of Tabernacles "as it were in secret" before He revealed Himself openly. But little by little He manifested Himself to the multitudes, began teaching in the temple, and causing them to marvel at His wisdom and knowledge. Even then they did not know that this man was the one called Jesus; for He had gone there in secret, and had not revealed His identity even when He taught. They tried to take Him, but His hour had not come and they had no power against Him. They sent officers to arrest Him, and they returned without Him, and with closed mouths. "Never a man spake like this man," they testified. Dear child of God; when the power and glory of the Feast of Tabernacles begins to dawn upon the Church, God's people are going to be clothed upon with such power and authority that the very nations themselves will have to bow in submission. Never did any king or dictator or president speak as the Sons of God shall speak. For they shall be literally clothed upon with His Divine majesty and authority, and they shall be the very living oracles of God to the Church as well as to the nations. Then shall they do God's will as God Himself shall direct, and no earthly power will have any power against them. When the Lord's hour of crucifixion drew nigh, then were they

able to arrest Him; for His hour had come. But it was not because He was powerless to do anything about it. There was a great work of Redemption which He had to perform, and a great baptism of death which He must accomplish.

In the Lord's discourse with the Jews at the Feast we have a glorious promise of that hidden life. He told them, "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come." (Jn. 7:34.) Where He was, the world could not come; but in this very hidden place the disciples would come. Did Jesus not promise the disciples concerning the coming of the Spirit, Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you?" (Jn. 14:17.) They knew that the Lord was referring to that hidden life, and the manifestation of Christ within them, for they said: "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" (vs. 22.) They were beginning to see and to understand that there was to be a real manifestation of Christ in them, where they would be in vital union with the Father and the Son, a place which the world could not invade. And so this hidden place could not be found by the Jews; whereas His beloved disciples would enter into it. "Where I am, thither ye cannot come," He said to the Jews. But to the disciples, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." (Jn. 14:3.) Where is it? Jesus said, "Where I am," That is sufficient. It is a place in the Spirit which no man can invade. A hidden place for those who are in world, but not of it, in the very sanctuary of the Spirit of God. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." There shall the Sons of God be hidden as they work the works of Christ in the midst of a world of wrath and judgment. And then, in God's good time, they shall be manifested openly. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:4.)

THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH

As we write these words we are very conscious of our inability to comprehend, much less to attempt to explain, this glorious mystery. Of necessity this must be so, inasmuch as we write concerning things not seen as yet. We are confident, therefore, that the glory of this heritage, when revealed, shall far surpass our feeble attempt to explain or imagine what it shall be like. This secret place shall be to those who fear Him. It is a place in which we are shut away from the world, even though dwelling right in the midst of its turmoil and its dangers. A place where we can see the countenance of the Bride-groom, and hear His voice. "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely" (Song 2:14). Not only shall our conference with the Lord be sweet and our communion unbroken by the ravages of the Great Tribulation, but the overcomer shall know a protection and a shelter as real as, but far more wonderful than, that enjoyed by Noah's family in the ark.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday . . ." (Ps. 91:1-6). This is the secret place of the Most High. It is His dwelling place, and it shall be ours. It is not in Heaven, nor is it by way of rapture. But it is that place of vital union with God by the Holy Spirit, which constitutes one an overcomer even in the place of death and desolation and judgment. "Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. We shall be right in the very midst of earth's calamities, but in a place of rest and shelter, in this abiding experience that Jesus told His disciples about. God said, "I will set him on high, because he hath known my name" (vs. 14). "The heavenlies in Christ Jesus" which we have long talked about and admired and boasted about having, are going to be appropriated by the Spirit even now in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation.

The Overcomer, therefore, will live the very same life of the only begotten Son of God. When the authorities tried to take Him, they could not. He was right there in their very midst, walking about in a visible, physical, tangible, earthly body; but they had no power to touch Him. They sent officers to arrest Him, but they were dumb-founded and returned without Him. Why? It was during the Feast of Tabernacles, and Jesus would teach us by His presence at this Feast some of the great spiritual truths which are yet to transpire at the Real Feast of Tabernacles.

We can easily understand, therefore, how the Glorious Gospel of Christ shall be proclaimed throughout the whole earth, regardless of the opposition that shall be raised. There will not be a country on earth that will be closed to this Gospel of the Kingdom. It will be just as simple to proclaim the Truth in Communist Russia as anywhere else on earth. The authorities will send the police to arrest this strange personage that is so boldly preaching Christ, and working the works of God, and he will have disappeared; for he shall have been caught away in the Spirit like Philip the evangelist. Or perhaps they will reach forth their hands to take him, and he will disappear from their view. They may rush upon him with sword or bayonet, and their weapon will be blunted as truly as if they had charged an armored tank; for no weapon that is formed against him shall prosper. They might fire a shot, and the bullet will glance off his brow, as it would from a heavy plate of steel. They shall poison his food, but it will be like adding vitamins to his diet. They shall put the over-comer in prison, and by night the Angel of the Lord will unlock the prison doors, bring the captive forth, set him free, and then promptly lock the prison doors again--leaving the guard in a very awkward situation. They shall seek to prevent the Gospel from being proclaimed over the air; and yet even without the aid of radio or transmitter the voice of the overcomer shall be heard in the streets or in the homes, as it penetrates the atmosphere at God's command and in God's place. He shall be cast to the lions, or to fierce beasts, and the beasts themselves shall become his best friends. He shall be tossed into fiery flames of fire, and yet shall feel as comfortable as he would in a warm living room on a cold day. If there is no food, he shall call manna down from Heaven. If there is a river to cross, he shall raise his hand, and the waters shall roll back before him that he might walk over on dry land. And "nothing shall be impossible" unto the man who believes! The most powerful atom or hydrogen bombs ever invented shall be perfectly harmless to the man who is hid away in the secret place of the Most High.

Can we not see, then, how simple a matter it will be for the overcomer to administer help and comfort and deliverance to a persecuted and suffering Church? For he shall be an overcomer in the fulness of Christ's victory over the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Sin, sickness, or death shall have no claim on him. He will be even as his Lord and Master as He walked upon earth and ministered among men. No man could take His life from Him. But He testified, "I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (Jn. 10:18). So shall it be with His "many brethren," If they lay down their life, it shall be for the sake of the brethren and for the Truth; and as surely as they lay it down, they shall take it again in greater glory and fulness, nevermore to see corruption. No man could lay their finger on Christ until His hour had come; and then He gave Himself willingly that He might finish the work which God had given Him to do. So it shall be with His many brethren. They shall be completely triumphant over all the powers of darkness that are arrayed against them--and shall in no wise partake of the world's coming Tribulation, except to fulfill the works of God on behalf of the Church. If they suffer or die, it shall be for the brethren's sake, and according to the plan of God and the power of Christ that worketh in them.

These things may sound fantastic to many Christians; but if so it is only because God's people in this modern age are so earthly-minded that they cannot appreciate nor understand the realities of the Spirit. Many, many more miracles than we have mentioned--or even imagined possible--shall be performed by the Sons of God in the day of their manifestation. They will not even require a glorified body in order to do these things. This, of course, will become their heritage when their work on earth is finished, just as in the case of Christ. But they will not require a glorified body to work the works of Christ. Daniel was human, even in the lions' den. The three Hebrew children had flesh and blood the same as we all have--and yet the fire meant nothing to them, except release from their bondage and a visitation of One like unto the Son of Man. Philip was a natural human

being, with a natural body--and yet was caught away in the Spirit without the aid of any human means of transportation. Peter likewise, and yet the locked doors flew open and forth he went out of the prison by the hand of the Angel of the Lord.

These things are really all quite simple and small, compared to some of the unseen, unheard-of things that God has prepared for those that love him. Jesus meant exactly what He said when He promised: "Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove: and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matt. 17:20).

THE LAST GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST

Perhaps we should describe in some detail the order of events which transpired during the Feast of Tabernacles in the days of Christ. This was the culminating festival of the year. The Feast began, as we mentioned, with the Blowing of Trumpets, followed by the Day of Atonement, and then culminated with the Feast of Tabernacles. It was a time of great joy and hilarity and gladness, for it was really a great Thanksgiving Festival for all Israel, when the fruit of the land had been gathered in. Hence it was called the Feast of Ingathering. The harvest was over, and now they assembled in the streets and open places of Jerusalem to observe the ordinances of the Lord, praising and thanking Him for His goodness, singing the Psalms of David, and keeping all the rituals connected with the Feast.

In the days of Christ, other ceremonies were observed in addition to those commanded in the Law. We are told that the people, at the time of the morning sacrifice, would take palm-branches and myrtle branches and willows, and with a citron or some other fruit in their hands would make their way to the temple, and march around the altar of burnt offering after the manner of the children of Israel when they encompassed Jericho. They would do this once daily, and then seven times on the seventh day of the Feast.

Then there was the ceremony known as "The Pouring Out of Water," which in all probability was in vogue in the time of Christ. In the fulfillment of this ordinance, the priest would take a golden vessel to the pool of Siloam at the time of sacrifice, fill it with water and carry it back to the temple amidst the blowing of trumpets and shouts of joy. Then the water would be mixed with the wine of the sacrifices and poured out beside the altar, and from there conducted by a sewer into the valley of Kidron. As this took place, there would be a quotation from Isa. 12:3, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

Truly it was a festival of great hilarity and gladness. If there was any cause for sorrow in Israel, this was no day to make it known. If there was disappointment, hunger, thirst--it was to be forgotten on the occasion of this great Feast: the Feast of joy, and unity, and rest, and prosperity, and gladness. But Jesus was there, beholding all their demonstrations, and knowing full well that these natural, earthly celebrations were but empty and vain so far as Israel was concerned. He knew, too, that soon they would pass away, and would find their fulfillment in a new, and living Feast which He himself had come to earth in order to bring into being. He realized that their joy was only outward, and that within the hearts of every true Israelite there was that empty void which He alone could fill. He realized, also, that the hour had now come when He must give the real meaning of their festivities; and so we read these beautiful words:

"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. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.") (Jn. 7:37-39).

On that day, we are told, it was customary for the priest to quote this verse from Isaiah: "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation (Isa. 12:3). Do you see, then, what the Lord would teach us?"

That the time would come when men would no longer draw their experience from wells of Divine provision, but an artesian fountain of living water would rise up in the soul, and flow forth unto humanity in mighty rivers of blessing and life. It is the healing, life-giving stream that we read about in Ezekiel: "These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh" (Ezek. 47:8, 9). Jesus said, "I will make you fishers of men." The coming revival shall utterly eclipse anything we have ever read about in the Bible or in Church history! This River of Life has been flowing ever since Pentecost: we realize that; but soon it shall empty into the mighty oceans of humanity, bringing life and blessing to a dry and parched wilderness.

As the water was poured out on the altar, it was customary for the priest to quote a portion from Isaiah twelve. In fact, it is quite possible that he would have read the whole chapter. If he did so, then he would have concluded with the words: "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." What irony there would be in those words! He knew nothing of the true Messiah who stood right before him; and yet there it was written, and he may have spoken forth these words in utter ignorance of the truth they conveyed: "Great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee!" There He stood, the Holy One of Israel, the very Fountain of Life, and the Substance of all their ceremonies and festivities. He does the same today. He stands in secret in our very midst, waiting for admittance. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20).

RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert" (Isa. 43:19). We thank God for the taste we have had from the Fountain of living water. But Jesus has promised, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (Jn. 4:14). Sad to say, we have been like the fountain in the Song of Songs. "A spring shut up, a fountain sealed" (Song 4:12). A fountain! But shut up, sealed, frozen over. Abraham digged many good wells in his day; but after his death we are told that the Philistines had filled them in. Isaac found he had to dig them again before he could take advantage of the refreshing waters that lay buried under the rocks and dirt and filth which the enemy had tossed into the wells. So it is with the Church of Christ, and the fountain which Christ has created in the hearts of His people. All the potentialities of this new life and this new experience are right in our heart, locked up like the germ-life in the seed. And therefore we profit nothing.

THE CORN OF WHEAT MUST DIE

Is it not written, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (Jn. 12:24)? Notice the setting of this beautiful statement. Andrew and Philip had just come and told the Lord that "certain Greeks" had requested to "see Jesus." And this was the Lord's astonishing reply: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and, die, it abideth alone . . ." Strange reply! But not hard to understand, when we begin to realize that Jesus shall appear and shall be seen in His people through His Cross and Resurrection. "We would see Jesus," said the Greeks. Then they must see Him in the harvest which His death would bring into being. They must see Him in the grain that would be reproduced after His very likeness, in His very image. They would see Him in His people! And the only way that we, as the people of God, are going to manifest the life and resurrection power of Christ is by becoming identified with Him in His cross. It is not sufficient that we merely accept Christ and His finished work for us. Doing that we are saved; but "abide alone." We must share His sufferings, identify ourselves with His Cross, so that it actually becomes our very own--and then we shall rise in resurrection life to bring forth much fruit unto the Kingdom. "For if we have

been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:5).

No wonder the apostle Paul who knew Christ, had personally seen His Lord on the Damascus road, had talked with Him and heard Him reply in an audible voice--yearned in the travail of his spirit for this great manifestation: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead Or "the out-resurrection from among the dead." (Phil. 3:10,11.)

THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN

Any true Christian would immediately rise up in arms if one were to suggest that the Old Testament was not fulfilled, or needed not to be fulfilled, in Christ. Jesus promised so definitely: "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Lk. 24:44). And yet it seems a most reasonable and plausible thing to the whole body of evangelical Christianity that the New Testament need not be fulfilled in Christ's Church. Let us assure the saints everywhere that the New Testament is now a part of the verbally-inspired Word of God; and Jesus has declared emphatically "The Scripture cannot be broken," and again, "The Scriptures must be fulfilled" (Jn. 10:35; Mk. 14:49). And if this is true of the Old Testament. how much more is it true of the New Testament? Because the glory of the Old was to pass away, but the glory of the New is to remain. (2 Cor. 3:9-11).

We are confident, therefore, that if Christ must minister faithfully for many years amidst the scoffing and ridicule of men, suffer the anguish of Gethsemane, die on a Roman cross, and rise again from the dead, in order to fulfill the Old Covenant; then it is positively essential that the Body of Christ rise from the dust and desolation of her captivity, become identified with the Death of Christ the Head, and rise again with Him to manifest His glory and His power,--in order to fulfill the New Covenant.

Men will argue, What about the falling-away? What about the apostasy? Is this not to be the condition of the Church in the last days? Of course there is to be apostasy, as the apostle prophesied. And it has certainly come to pass. But we are speaking of the true Church, the Body of Christ, the Sons of God, the Overcomer, the Bride--the people of whom it was said: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10). And this must be fulfilled if the Scriptures cannot be broken.

The apostle said, "To him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen" (Eph. 3:21, Literal). And the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

The New Covenant is destined to make of God's people, "the epistle of Christ . . . written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God" (2 Cor. 3:3). And the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

The New Covenant has decreed that its holy precepts shall be written upon the hearts and upon the minds of God's people. (Heb. 8:10). And the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

The New Covenant has provided a glory that abides, and grows ever more illustrious, in contrast to the fading glory of the Law of Moses. (2 Cor. 3:7,8). And the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

The New Covenant has prepared a panoply, a complete armour, by which the saints are to be enabled to topple Satan and his wicked hosts from their heavenly strongholds. (Eph. 6:11-18). And the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

The New Covenant has commanded the saints of God to have the same love, to be of one accord, to be of one mind, and to be perfectly joined together in the same judgment. (1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2). And the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

The New Covenant has established the Church as a Body, functioning as genuinely and as perfectly as the members of the human body, with Christ as the Head. (1 Cor. 12 to 14). And the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

The New Covenant has ordained that the saints of God shall grow into maturity and unto the knowledge of the Son of God, and unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Eph. 4:12,13). And the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

The New Covenant has decreed that after the successful ministration of the gifts and ministries of the Spirit, the love of God shall be manifest in the saints, taking the place of the gifts. (1 Cor. 13). And the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

The New Covenant has ordained a place in Christ and a birth by the Spirit, which shall completely banish sin from the heart, and bring to pass a victory which knows no defeat. (1 Jn. 3:7-9). And the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

The New Covenant has declared that the earnest expectation of the Creation, and that the groans and travails of a world under the curse of sin and death--shall find glorious release and liberty in "the manifestation of the Sons of God" (Rom. 8:19-23). And the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

Then, saints of God, let us not be like Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not behold the glory on his countenance. And well he might! For that glory was doomed to pass away! But ours is destined to become ever more brilliant, and to shine even more and more unto the Perfect Day. Let us therefore go forth ministering the Word of Life with all boldness, prepared even to die the death of the Cross in this hour of His betrayal, and knowing that as surely as God raised Christ from the dead in the power of an endless life, so surely shall we rise also with Him to walk in newness of life.

If men choose to remain where they are in their Christian experience, then this message is not for them. Thank God that they may eat of the manna that falls from Heaven, and drink of the water that flows out of the rock, and receive healing and strength for their journey. But sorry to say, they shall die in the wilderness, and shall not see this good heritage of the Spirit.

On the other hand, if some would arise and cross over Jordan there shall be tremendous obstacles to overcome, there shall be unseen dangers lurking in their pathway, and there shall be powerful enemies to subdue. Nevertheless, theirs is a good spirit which the Lord shall honor, and His Presence shall be their protection. To them God would speak words of great encouragement:

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Josh. 1:8,9).

OURS IS A LEAPING FOUNTAIN

"A well of water leaping up into everlasting life (Jn. 4:14). This is Christ's promise to His people. We do not write for the purpose of settling any doctrinal disputes: but simply for those whose souls are thirsting for this living stream. If men are content with their Passover experience, this is not for them. If they are satisfied with

their Pentecost experience, this is not for them. Such contentment only proves that the Rivers of Living Water have ceased to flow from their souls; for this Fountain that Christ places within, if not cluttered up with the mire of the Philistines, is a Fountain that is constantly leaping up into everlasting life. Thank God for every measure of truth and power and glory that God has restored to the Church from the Reformation until now. But let it flow, child of God,--let it surge forward until it becomes a mighty Amazon in this desert-world of sin, sickness, and sorrow.

Said Jesus, "Out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water." We are not looking forward, then, to some strange, foreign power . . . some glory or some experience that does not really belong to us. But we are awaiting the release of the Divine flow which is now locked up in the hearts of God's people. We are "A spring shut up, a fountain sealed . . ." The Church has passed through a long, cold, arduous, and barren winter. But the All-wise God has been the author of the winter; for He is working out a great and a mighty plan:

"He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?" (Ps. 147:16,17).

Yes, the winter has been upon the Church for centuries. We could not understand it; but God has intended it for the glory and the triumph of those who shall be living in the day of Spring! Already we can see the firstfruits of Spring and the banishment of winter: "He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow . . . He hath not dealt so with any nation" (Ps. 147: 18,20).

The breezes of the Spirit are gently sweeping through the Church; and with the winds of the Spirit, and the illumination of the Sun of Righteousness, there is a melting. The ice and the snow and the frost are melting, and dissolving, and flowing together--to form this living stream from Lebanon. Therefore, let us even now begin to rejoice in the New Day of Spring, as the first rays of hope arise on the Eastern horizon:

"Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land; The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away" (Song 2:11-13).

THE END