

# The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 115

## September 1989

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## Editorial

Dear Brethren and Sisters and Friends, Greetings in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thank you once again for all your letters. Brother John Carter has had a bad spell with a cold. During this summer a very severe type of cold has been going around and those who have had it can sympathise with him. However, Brother John is in his 90th year now and good health is precious, so we pray that he will be blessed with it, if the Lord will.

Brother Harvey and Sister Evelyn Linggood send their Love to all the Brethren and Sisters.

From time to time I am asked if copies of individual articles are available for passing on to friends. Yes, of course, any articles are freely available and I am happy to send whatever you require.

From your letters:-

"We agree with the article "The Ground" with the reservation to do with the word 'sake' which Bro Simmonds said meant for Adam's 'benefit' that mankind was cursed, as another meaning to the word is 'because of' and this seems more likely to be the meaning in Genesis 3:17, as also in 1 Samuel 23:10, regarding David."

"In your essay 'The Lord's Prayer'... you asked for the thoughts of others under the heading 'They will be done,' - my own view is that there will still be sin on a limited scale but it will be dealt with speedily (Ecclesiastes 8:11) for we read in Isaiah 65:20 "...the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed," the mortal population will still have to "learn righteousness" and work out their own salvation like we have to now, with the advantage, of course, of righteous rulers - Christ and the Saints. Also it seems, in describing the temple in Ezekiel, there will still be sin-offerings probably as a 'looking back' to the one great Sin-offering Christ our Lord, to keep before the minds of the people what He has done for mankind, the mortal population will also have the advantage of knowing the one true God and one law in all the earth, which is not the case now, so their probation should be easier,"

Brother Phil Parry writes, "I would call our members attention to the words of Jesus concerning the nearness of the Kingdom through the witnessing of the heraldic signs. I have stressed these views before but received little support, at least with regard to the fig tree and all the trees in the parable. Luke 21:25 speaks of signs in the sun, moon and stars; and upon earth distress of nations, etc., men's hearts failing them for fear - the powers of heaven shaken - then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Verse 28, "And when these things begin to come to pass, look up - your deliverance draweth nigh." Nothing about Jews returning to Israel here, - not a thing about them being scattered and dwelling in other lands. This has to do with His coming and His Kingdom. He spoke a

parable; "Behold the fig tree and all the trees, when they now shoot forth ye know of your own selves that summer is nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand." "These things." What things? The things mentioned from verses 25 to 28. If, as some people like to believe and teach, the budding, or shooting forth of the fig tree has reference to the Jewish revival and return to the land of Promise, then let them explain the significance of the other trees. What does their budding and shooting forth teach us other than what Jesus said "Ye know of your own selves (experience) that summer is nigh?" It is understandable that the fig tree was perhaps the most common of the trees in the land of Israel and Jesus would obviously name it first in order with the other trees, even as in my own area of this country I would have given preference to the oak tree at an earlier stage of history, but it has been very much depleted of late and replaced by the faster growing conifers.

I believe people have been directed to this parable as fulfilling the gathering by God of the natural Jews to the land of promise, that they have come to regard it as a true prophecy of Jesus, when in my opinion it is nothing more than man's wishful thinking and interpretation. As much as anyone, I want to see the land of Israel inhabited only by God's people, but, like us, their relationship to God must be through Christ and their spiritual growth derived from the same root, the root of Jesse.

Brother Phil continues, "Regarding the Holy Spirit - that we do not have it in the sense that certain Apostle did in the performing of miracles like raising the dead and many other signs and wonders to demonstrate the Divine authority working in them as preachers of the true Gospel of Christ - but we do have it through the word of Truth, for as the Apostle Paul said of the Gospel he preached, "It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth...." I do agree with others on this and also in regard to the fact that the miraculous powers will be demonstrated again in the earth, nevertheless, I believe that the Holy Spirit is working in believers now, for how can we explain our conversion to the real Christ unless there be some drawing power? Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:44,5. See also verses 39 & 40. We must have His word abiding in us if we are being led by the Spirit of God, "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Last month we mentioned the introduction of a "Chat Section" and further to this Brother Harold Dawson writes, "I note in the August Issue, No. 114, that my suggestion for a "Chat Section" is offered for consideration, and if there is some interested reaction I will certainly be of assistance if I can. Perhaps another brother would also form with me 'a Panel' so that questions will be answered without bias of any kind and so be more helpful to the questioner. I suggest this overall idea as we are scattered, and therefore fellowship in the personal sense does not really exist, and therefore it may be meaningful for any with problems (they arise for all of us) to have someone to turn to if they wish. Questions can be about anything - our beliefs, scriptural points that may seem confusing, or problems about general things that are causing concern. The object, then, is to be helpful."

Sincerely your brother in the One Hope, Harold Dawson.

So, Brethren and Sisters, if there is anyone who would join with Brother Harold in editing a "Chat Section" do please contact him.

Sincere Love to all in the Master's service,

Russell Gregory.

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## **Fighting To Win**

Victory is a wonderful word, a wonderful happening. It is the opposite of defeat. And what a happy time it is, when it is the end product of all the effort, heartbreak, anxiety and everything else that goes into waging total war.

The elderly today will tell of the happy days when, in 1918, an end was brought to the world's most horrific war. People all over the world were beside themselves with joy. In the streets of London people sang and danced for a full week, while there were ticker-tape showers in the streets of New York.

In 1945, victory in the West and victory in the East once again brought joy to the victors. Once more there was singing and dancing in the streets of London and New York, even bonfires in the middle of the road. It was OVER. We had come through alive and we, thank God, were victorious.

How much greater will be the joy when by God's help we shall come out victorious over sin - if victory be ours. On that day when Christ returns to take His place on the throne of His Father's Kingdom, what joy there will be! What a day of rejoicing, when not only wars will have to cease but the dreadful curse of disease and illness will have been conquered.

Christ had His battles in life, and He won them. As He hung on that cruel Roman cross. He could cry out, "It is finished" and know that He had been victorious; all His efforts, all His sufferings were not in vain. The victory was His.

There was a famous British ship named "Victory". To give its full name, it was the H.M.S. Victory and today it is in dry dock at Plymouth. It was the flag-ship of Admiral Nelson who was the most famous of all British sea fighters. The ship was well named, for it was in this ship that Nelson defeated the French and the Spanish navies at the Battle of Trafalgar in the year 1805. Nelson's ship was victorious and the war was won, but the victory cost Nelson his life.

Brethren and Sisters, if you are to be victorious for the Lord, that victory will cost you your life - your old way of life. You will have to become a new creature, a different person, all new. "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Ephesians 22:24).

There will be many battles in your life; time after time you will be knocked down, but as you live close to God, in the forefront of your mind will be Romans 8:18, "For I reckon that the sufferings, of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

As the gallant Admiral Nelson lay dying on the lower gun deck of the fighting ship, the H.M.S. Victory, after his 27 ships had defeated the 33 combined French and Spanish fleet on their way to invade England, his last words were, "Thank God, I have done my duty."

What rejoicing will be heard by those who have overcome self, who have through their lives put God first, following after Christ, who in His darkest hour was able to say, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." (Luke 22:42). They will hear those wonderful words, "Well done thou good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:21).

After this battle in which Nelson was victorious many nationalists tried to bring the ship back to her former strength, but with all their efforts they were too few. Nevertheless, they did what they could; whatever the background and nationality of the crew, they were shipmates who pulled together in a common cause.

Are we not like them in our Christian endeavour? "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." (Ephesians 2:19).

Those of us who are separated from those of like precious faith and who have little hope of being able to join in fellowship with like-minded disciples, find peace and joy in the knowledge that we are not really alone, for we are all at one with each other, having one purpose, pulling towards one end, eternity in Christ's Kingdom. Through the exhortations sent to us in Christian love by those of like faith we find encouragement to press on.

Nelson's message to his fleet as they sailed toward the enemy was. "England expects every man will do his duty." Sailors are not born; they are made through hard work and dedication. Failure to do one's duty in the British navy meant harsh punishment; but Nelson's sailors did not fail; they had faith in their Admiral and fought their way through.

Can we not do as well as Christians? "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." (Romans 12:1).

Every country has its heroes; its men and women ready to die for it, but what of us who are seeking God's best? Can we say we are as dedicated? How willing are we to give the last full measure of our devotion? Can we say, with the apostle Paul, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (Romans 8:35).

If we are true soldiers of God fighting for victory, we shall say all this and more: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Brother Harry Laver.

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Extract from

## **"THE TEMPLE AT THE TIME OF CHRIST"**

by Rev. Dr. Edersheim.

### **Chapter 14 THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES**

"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..."

The most joyous of all festive seasons in Israel was that of the Feast of Tabernacles. It fell on a time of year when the hearts of the people would naturally be full of thanksgiving, gladness, and expectancy. All the crops had been long stored; and now all fruits were also gathered, the vintage past, and the land only awaited the softening and refreshment of the "latter rain", to prepare it for a new crop. It was appropriate that, when the commencement of the harvest had been consecrated by offering the first ripe sheaf of barley, and the full ingathering of the corn by the two wave-loaves, there should now be a harvest feast of thankfulness and gladness unto the Lord. But that was not all. As they looked around on the goodly land, the fruits of which had just enriched them, they must have remembered that by miraculous interposition the Lord their God had brought them to this land and given it them, and that He ever claimed it as peculiarly His own. For the land was strictly connected with the history of the people; and both the land and the history were linked with the mission of Israel. If the beginning of the harvest had pointed back to the birth of Israel in their Exodus from Egypt, and forward to the true Passover-sacrifice in the future; if the corn-harvest was connected with the giving of the law on Mount Sinai in the past, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit of the Day of Pentecost; the harvest-thanksgiving of the Feast of Tabernacles reminded Israel, on the one hand, of their dwelling in booths in the wilderness, while, on the other hand, it pointed to the final harvest when Israel's mission should be completed, and all nations gathered unto the Lord. Thus the first of the three great annual feasts spoke, in the presentation of the first sheaf, of the founding of the Church; the second of its harvesting, when the Church in its present state should be presented as two leavened wave-loaves; while the third pointed forward to the full harvest in the end,

when “in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things.... and He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from all the earth.” Isaiah 25:6-8.

That these are not ideal comparisons, but the very design of the Feast of Tabernacles, appears not only from the language of the prophets and the peculiar services of the feast, but also from its position in the Calendar, and even from the names by which it is designated in Scripture. Thus in its reference to the harvest it is called “the feast of ingathering,” (Exodus 23:16); in that to the history of Israel in the past, “the Feast of Tabernacles,” (Leviticus 23:34 & 43); while its symbolic bearing on the future is brought out in its designation as emphatically “the feast,” (1 Kings 8:2); and “the Feast of Jahweh,” (So, literally, in Leviticus 23:39) . In this sense also Josephus, Philo and the Rabbis (in many passages of the Mishnah) single it out from all the other feasts. And quite decisive on the point is the description of the “latter-day” glory at the close of the prophecies of Zechariah, where the conversion of all nations is distinctly connected with the “Feast of Tabernacles.” (Zechariah 14: 16-21). That this reference is by no means isolated will appear in the sequel.

The Feast of Tabernacles was the third of the great annual festivals, at which every male in Israel was to appear before the Lord in the place which He should choose. It fell on the 15th of the seventh month, or Tishri (corresponding to September or the beginning of October), as the Passover had fallen on the 15th of the first month. The significance of these numbers in themselves and relatively will not escape attention, the more so that this feast closed the original festive calendar; for Purim and the “feast of dedication of the Temple”, which both occurred later in the season, were of post-Mosaic origin. The Feast of Tabernacles, or, rather (as it should be called), of booths, lasted for seven days, from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Tishri, and was followed by an Octave on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Tishri. But this eighth day, though closely connected with the Feast of Tabernacles, formed no part of that feast, as clearly shown by the difference in the sacrifices and the ritual, and by the circumstances that the people no longer lived in booths. The first day of the feast, and also its Octave, or Azereth (*clausura, conclusio*), were to be days of “holy convocation,” and each “a Sabbath,” not in the sense of the weekly Sabbath, but of festive rest in the Lord (Leviticus 23:25 & 32), when no servile work of any kind might be done.

There is yet another important point to be noticed. The Feast of Tabernacles followed closely on the Day of Atonement. Both took place in the seventh month; the one on the 10th, the other on the 15th of Tishri. What the seventh day, or Sabbath, was in reference to the week, the seventh month seems to have been in reference to the year. It closed not only the sacred cycle, but also the agricultural or working year. It also marked the change of seasons, the approach of rain and of the winter equinox, and determined alike the commencement and the close of a sabbatical year. (Deuteronomy 31:10). Coming on the 15th of this seventh month, that is, at full moon, when the “sacred” month had, so to speak, attained its full strength, the Feast of Tabernacles appropriately followed five days after the Day of Atonement, in which the sin of Israel had been removed, and its covenant relation to God restored. Thus a sanctified nation could keep a holy feast of harvest joy unto the Lord, just as in the truest sense it will be “in that day” (Zechariah 14:20) when the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles shall be really fulfilled. (Quite another picture is drawn in Hosea 9, which seems also to refer to the Feast of Tabernacles. Indeed, it is remarkable how many allusions to this feast occur in the writings of the prophets, as if its types were the goal of all their desires.)

Three things specially marked the Feast of Tabernacles: its joyous festivities, the dwelling in booths, and the peculiar sacrifices and rites of the week. The first of these was simply characteristic of a feast of ingathering: “Because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates.” Nor were any in Israel to “appear before the Lord empty: every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee.” (Deut. 16:13-17). Votive, freewill, and peace-offerings would mark their gratitude to God, and at the meal which ensued the poor, the stranger, the Levite, and the homeless would be welcome guests, for the Lord’s sake. Moreover, when the people saw the treasury chests opened and emptied at this feast for the last time in the year, they would remember their brethren at a distance, in whose name, as well as their own, the daily and festive sacrifices were

offered. Thus their liberality would not only be stimulated, but all Israel, however widely dispersed, would feel itself anew one before the Lord their God and in the courts of His House. There was, besides, something about this feast which would peculiarly remind them, if not of their dispersion, yet of their being “strangers and pilgrims in the earth.” For its second characteristic was, that during the seven days of its continuance “all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths; that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.” (Leviticus 23:42,43).

As usual, we are met at the outset by a controversy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The law had it: “Ye shall take you on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook,” which the Sadducees understood (as do the modern Karaite Jews) to refer to the materials whence the booths were to be constructed, while the Pharisees applied it to what the worshippers were to carry in their hands. The latter interpretation is, in all likelihood, the correct one; it seems borne out by the account of the festival at the time of Nehemiah, (Nehemiah 8:15,18), when the booths were constructed of branches of other trees than those mentioned in Leviticus 23; and it was universally adopted in practice at the time of Christ. The Mishnah gives most minute details as to the height and construction of these booths, the main object being to prevent any invasion of the law. Thus it must be a real booth, and constructed of boughs of living trees, and solely for the purpose of this festival. Hence it must be high enough, yet not too high - at least ten handbreadths, but not more than thirty feet; three of its walls must be of boughs; it must be fairly covered with boughs, yet not so shaded as not to admit sunshine, nor yet so open as to have not sufficient shade, the object in each case being neither sunshine nor shade but that it should be a real booth of boughs of trees. It is needless to enter into further details, except to say that these booths, and not their houses, were to be the regular dwelling of all in Israel during the week, and that, except in very heavy rain, they were to eat, sleep, pray, study - in short, entirely to live in them. The only exceptions were in favour of those absent on some pious duty, the sick, and their attendants, women, slaves, and infants who were still depending on their mothers. Finally, the rule was that, ‘whatever might contract Levitical defilement (such as boards, cloth, etc.), or whatever did not grow out of the earth, might not be used in constructing the booths.

It has already been noticed that, according to the view universally prevalent at the time of Christ, the direction on the first day of the feast to “take the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook,” was applied to what the worshippers were to carry in their hands. The Rabbis ruled, that “the fruit of the goodly trees” meant oethrog, or citron, and “the boughs of thick trees” the myrtle, provided it had ‘not more berries than leaves.’ The oethrogs must be without blemish or deficiency of any kind; the palm branches at least three handbreadths high, and fit to be shaken; and each branch fresh, entire, unpolluted, and not taken from any idolatrous grove. Every worshipper carried the oethrog in his left hand, and in his right the lulav, or palm, with myrtle and willow branch on either side of it, tied together on the outside with its own kind, though in the inside it might be fastened even with gold thread. There can be no doubt that the lulav was intended to remind Israel of the different stages of their wilderness journey, as represented by the different vegetation - the palm branches recalling the valleys and plains, the boughs of thick trees, the bushes on the mountain heights, and the willows, those brooks from which God had given His people drink; while the oethrog was to remind them of the fruits of the good land which the Lord had given them. The lulav was used in the Temple on each of the seven festive days, even children, if they were able to shake it, being bound to carry one. If the first day of the feast fell on a Sabbath, the people brought their lulavs on the previous day into the synagogue on the Temple Mount, and fetched them in the morning, so as not needlessly to break the Sabbath rest.

The third characteristic of the Feast of Tabernacles was its offerings. These were altogether peculiar. The sin-offering for each of the seven days was “one kid of the goats.” The burnt-offerings consisted of bullocks, rams, and lambs, with their appropriate meat- and drink-offerings. But, whereas the number of the rams and lambs remained the same on each day of the festival, that of the bullocks decreased every day by one - from thirteen on the first to seven bullocks on the last day, “that great day of the feast.” As no special injunctions are given about the drink offering, we infer that it was, as usual, a quarter of an hin of wine for each lamb, a third for each ram, and a half for each bullock (the hin = 10 pints). The “meat-offering” is expressly fixed at one tenth of an ephah of flour, mixed with a quarter of a hin of oil, for each lamb; two tenths of an ephah, with half a hin of oil, for each bullock. (Numbers 29:12). Three things are

remarkable about these burnt-offerings. First, they are evidently the characteristic sacrifice of the Feast of Tabernacles. As compared with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the number of the rams and lambs is double, while that of the bullocks is fivefold (14 during the Passover week, 5 x 14 during that of Tabernacles). Secondly, the number of the burnt-sacrifices, whether taking each kind by itself or all of the together, is always divisible by the sacred number seven. We have for the week 70 bullocks, 14 rams, and 98 lambs, or altogether 182 sacrifices (26 x 7), to which must be added 336 (48 x 7) tenths of ephahs of flour for the meat-offerings. We will not pursue the tempting subject of this symbolism of numbers further than to point out that, whereas the sacred number 7 appeared at the Feast of Unleavened Bread only in the number of its days, and at Pentecost in the period of its observance (7x7 days after Passover), the Feast of Tabernacles lasted seven days, took place when the seventh month was at its full height, and had the number 7 impressed on its characteristic sacrifices. It is not so easy to account for the third peculiarity of these sacrifices - that of the daily diminution in the number of bullocks offered. The common explanation, that it was intended to indicate the decreasing sanctity of each successive day of the feast, while the sacred number was still to be reserved for the last day, is not more satisfactory than the view propounded in the Talmud, that these sacrifices were offered, not for Israel, but for the nations of the world: 'There were seventy bullocks, to correspond to the number of the seventy nations of the world.' But did the Rabbis understand the prophetic character of this feast? An attentive consideration of its peculiar ceremonial will convince that it must have been exceedingly difficult to ignore it entirely.

On the day before the Feast of Tabernacles - the 14th Tishri - the festive pilgrims had all arrived in Jerusalem. The booths on the roofs, in the courtyards, in the streets and squares, as well as roads and gardens, within a Sabbath day's journey, must have given the city and neighbourhood an unusually picturesque appearance. The preparation of all that was needed for the festival - purification, the care of the offerings that each day would bring, and friendly communications between those who were to be invited to the sacrificial meal - no doubt sufficiently occupied their time. When the early autumn evening set in, the blasts of the priests' trumpet on the Temple Mount announced to Israel the advent of the feast.

As at the Passover and at Pentecost, the altar of burnt-offering was cleansed during the first night-watch, and the gates of the Temple were thrown open immediately after midnight. The time till the beginning of the ordinary morning sacrifice was occupied in examining the various sacrifices and offerings that were to be brought during the day. While the morning sacrifice was being prepared, a priest, accompanied by a joyous procession with music, went down to the Pool of Siloam, whence he drew water into a golden pitcher, capable of holding three log (rather more than two pints). But on the Sabbath they fetched the water from a golden vessel in the Temple itself, into which it had been carried from Siloam on the preceding day. At the same time that the procession started for Siloam, another went to a place in the Kedron valley, close by, called Motza, whence they brought willow branches, which, amidst the blasts of the priests' trumpets, they stuck on either side of the altar of burnt-offering, bending them over towards it, so as to form a kind of leafy canopy. Then the ordinary sacrifice proceeded, the priest who had gone to Siloam so timing it, that he returned just as his brethren carried up the pieces of the sacrifice to lay them on the altar. As he entered by the "Water-gate", which obtained its name from this ceremony, he was received by a threefold blast from the priests' trumpets. The priest then went up the rise I of the altar and turned to the left, where there were two silver basins with narrow holes - the eastern a little wider for the wine, and the western somewhat narrower for the water. Into these the wine of the drink-offering was poured, and at the same time the water from Siloam, the people shouting to the priest, "Raise thy hand," to show that he really poured the water into the basin which led to the base of the altar. For, sharing the objections of the Sadducees, Alexander Jannaeus, the Maccabean king-priest (about 95 BC), had shown his contempt for the Pharisees by pouring the water at this feast upon the ground, on which the people pelted him with their oethrogs, and would have murdered him, if his foreign bodyguard had not interfered, on which occasion no less than six thousand Jews were killed in the Temple.

As soon as the wine and water were being poured out, the Temple music began, and the Hallel (Psalm 107 & 108) was sung in the manner prescribed, and to the accompaniment of flutes, except on the Sabbath and on the first day of the feast, when flute playing was not allowed, on account of the sanctity of the days. When the choir came to these words, "O give thanks to the Lord," and again when they sang, "O work then now salvation, O Lord;" and once more at the close, "O give thanks unto the Lord," all the worshippers shook their lulavs towards the altar. When, therefore, the multitudes from Jerusalem, on

meeting Jesus, “cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way, and... cried, saying, O then work now salvation to the Son of David!” they applied, in reference to Christ, what was regarded as one of the chief ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles, praying that God would now from “the highest” heavens manifest and send that salvation in connection with the Son of David, which was symbolised by the pouring out of the water. For though the ceremony was considered by the Rabbis as bearing a subordinate reference to the dispensation of the rain the annual fall of which they imagined was determined by God at that feast, its main and real application was to the future outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as predicted - probably in allusion to this very rite - by Isaiah the prophet. (Isaiah 12:3). Thus the Talmud says distinctly: ‘Why is the name of it called The drawing out of water? Because of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, according to what is said: “With joy shall ye draw out of the wells of salvation.” Hence also, the feast and the peculiar joyousness of it are alike designated as those of ‘the drawing out of water;’ for, according to the same Rabbinical authorities, the Holy Spirit dwells in man only through joy.

A similar symbolism was expressed by another ceremony which took place at the close not of the daily, but of the festive sacrifices. On every one of the seven days the priests formed in procession, and made the circuit of the altar, singing:

“O then, now work salvation, O Lord! O Lord, give prosperity!” But on the seventh, “that great day of the feast,” they made the circuit of the altar seven times, remembering how the walls of Jericho had fallen in similar circumstances, and anticipating how, by the direct interposition of God, the walls of heathenism would fall before Jahweh, and the land lie open for His people to go in and possess it.

We can now in some measure realise the event recorded in John 7:37. The festivities of the Week of Tabernacles were drawing to a close. “It was the last day, that great day of the feast.” It obtained this name, although it was not one of “holy convocation” partly because it closed the feast, and partly from the circumstances which procured it in Rabbinical writings the designations of ‘Day of Great Hosannah,’ on account of the sevenfold circuit of the altar with “Hosannah;” and ‘Day of Willows,’ and ‘Day of Beating the Branches,’ because all the leaves were shaken off the willow boughs, and the palm branches beaten in pieces by the side of the altar. It was on that day, after the priest had returned from Siloam with his golden pitcher, and for the last time poured its contents to the base of the altar; after the Hallel had been sung to the sound of the flute, the people responding and worshipping as the priests three times drew the threefold blasts from their silver trumpets - just when the interest of the people had been raised to its highest pitch, that, from amidst the mass of worshippers, who were waving towards the altar quite a forest of leafy branches as the last words of Psalm 118 were chanted - a voice was raised which resounded through the Temple, startled the multitude, and carried fear and hatred to the hearts of their leaders. It was Jesus, who “stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.” Then by faith in Him should each one truly become like the Pool of Siloam, and from his inmost being “rivers of living waters flow.” “This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.” Thus the significance of the rite, in which they had just taken part, was not only fully explained, but the mode of its fulfilment pointed out. The effect was instantaneous. It could not but be, that in that vast assembly, so suddenly roused by being brought face to face with Him in whom every type and prophecy is fulfilled, there would be many who, “when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the prophet. Others said, This is the Christ.” Even the Temple-guard, whose duty it would have been in such circumstances to arrest one who had so interrupted the services of the day, and presented himself to the people in such a light, owned the spell of His words, and dared not to lay hands on Him. “Never man spake like this man,” was the only account they could give of their unusual weakness, in answer to the reproaches of the chief priests and Pharisees. The rebuke of the Jewish authorities, which followed, is too characteristic to require comment. One only in number had been deeply moved by the scene just witnessed in the Temple. Yet, timid, as usual, Nicodemus only laid hold of this one point, that the Pharisees had traced the popular confession of Jesus to their ignorance of the law, to which he replied, in the genuine Rabbinical manner of arguing, without meeting one’s opponent face to face: “Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?”

But matters were not to end with the wranglings of priests and Pharisees. The proof which Nicodemus had invited the, to seek from the teaching and the miracles of Christ was about to be displayed both before the people and their rulers in the healing of the blind man. Here also it was in



allusion to the ceremonial of the Feast of Tabernacles that Jesus, when He saw the “man blind from his birth” said, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world;” having “anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,” just as He told him, “Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam (Which is, by interpretation, Sent).” For the words, “I am the light of the world,” are the same which He had just spoken in the Temple, and they had in all probability been intended to point to another very peculiar ceremony which took place at the Feast of Tabernacles. In the words of the Mishnah, the order of the services for that feast was as follows: ‘They went first to offer the daily sacrifice in the morning, then the additional sacrifices; after that the votive and free-will offerings; from thence to the festive meal; from thence to the study of the law; and after that to offer the evening sacrifice; and from thence they went to the joy of the pouring out of the water.’ It is this ‘joy of the pouring out of the water’ which we are about to describe.

At the close of the first day of the feast the worshippers descended to the Court of the Women, where great preparations had been made. Four golden candelabras were there, each with four golden bowls, and against them rested four ladders; and four youths of priestly descent held, each a pitcher of oil, capable of holding one hundred and twenty log, from which they filled each bowl. The old, worn breeches and girdles of the priests served as wicks to the lamps. There was not a court in Jerusalem that was not lit up by the light of ‘the house of water-pouring.’ The ‘Chassidim’ and “the men of Deed’ danced before the people with flaming torches in their hands, and sang before them hymns and songs of praise; and the Levites, with harps and lutes and cymbals and trumpets and instruments of music without number, stood upon the fifteen steps which led down from the Court of Israel to that of the Women, according to the number of the fifteen Songs of Degrees in the Book of Psalms. They stood with their instruments of music, and sang hymns. Two priests, with trumpets in their hands, were at the upper gate (that of Nicanor), which led from the Court of Israel to that of the Women. At cock-crowing they drew a threefold blast. As they reached the tenth step, they drew another threefold blast; as they entered the court itself, they drew yet another threefold blast; and so they blew as they advanced, till they reached the gate which opens upon the east (the Beautiful Gate). As they came to the eastern gate, they turned round towards the west (to face the Holy Place), and said: ‘Our fathers who were in this place, they turned their back upon the Sanctuary of Yahweh, and their faces toward the east, and they worshipped towards the rising sun; but as for us, our eyes are towards the Lord.’

A fragment of one of the hymns sung that night has been preserved. It was sung by the ‘Chassidim’ and ‘men of Deed,’ and by those who did penance in their old age for the sins of their youth:

The Chassidim and Men of Deed;

‘Oh joy, that our youth, devoted, sage,  
Doth bring no shame upon our old age!’

The Penitents:

‘Oh joy, we can in our old age  
Repair the sins of youth not sage!’

Both in unison:

‘Yes, happy he on whom no early guilt doth rest,  
And he who, having sinned, is now with pardon blest.’

It seems clear that this illumination of the Temple was regarded as forming part of, and having the same symbolical meaning as, ‘the pouring out of water.’ The light shining out of the Temple into the darkness around, and lighting up every court in Jerusalem, must have been intended as a symbol not only of the Shechinah which once filled the Temple, but of that “great light” which “the people that walked in darkness” were to see, and which was to shine “upon them that dwell in the land of the shadow of death.” (Isaiah 9:2). May it not be that such prophecies as Isaiah 9 and 60 were connected with this symbolism? At any rate, it seems most probable that Jesus had referred to this ceremony in the words spoken by Him

in the Temple at that very Feast of Tabernacles: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12).

Only the first of the seven days of this feast was "a holy convocation;" the other six were 'minor festivals.' On each day, besides the ordinary morning and evening sacrifices, the festive offerings prescribed in Numbers 29: 12-38 were brought. The Psalms sung at the drink-offering after the festive sacrifices (or *Musaph*, as they are called), were, for the first day of the feast. Psalm 105; for the second, Psalm 29; for the third. Psalm 50, from verse 16; for the fourth. Psalm 94, from verse 16; for the fifth. Psalm 94 from verse 8; for the sixth. Psalm 81, from verse 6; for the last day of the feast. Psalm 82, from verse 5. As the people retired from the altar at the close of each day's service, they exclaimed, 'How beautiful art thou, O altar!' or, according to a later version, 'We give thanks to Yahweh and to thee, O altar!' All the four-and-twenty orders of the priesthood were engaged in the festive offerings, which were apportioned among them according to definite rules, which also fixed how the priestly dues were to be divided among them. Lastly, on every sabbatical year the Law was to be publicly read on the first day of the feast. (Deuteronomy 31:10-13).

On the afternoon of the seventh day of the feast the people began to remove from the booths. For at the Octave, on the 22nd of Tishri, they lived no longer in booths, nor did they use the lulav. But it was observed as "a holy convocation;" and the festive sacrifices prescribed in Numbers 29: 36-38 were offered, although no more by all the twenty-four courses of priests, and finally the Hallel sung at the drink-offering.

It will have been observed that the two most important ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles - the pouring out of water and the illumination of the Temple - were of Post-Mosaic origin. According to Jewish tradition, the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night had first appeared to Israel on the 15th of Tishri, the first day of the feast. On that day also Moses was said to have come down from the Mount, and announced to the people that the Tabernacle of God was to be reared among them. We know that the dedication of Solomon's Temple and the descent of the Shekinah took place at this feast. (1 Kings 8: 2. Chronicles 7). Nor can we greatly err in finding an allusion to it in this description of heavenly things: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying. Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

Whether or not our suggestions be adopted as to the typical meaning of the two great ceremonies of the "pouring of the water" and the Temple illumination, the fact remains, that the Feast of Tabernacles is the only type in the Old Testament which has not yet been fulfilled.

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## Jesus said.....

## No. 3.

"If thy hand offends thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched... where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Mark 9:43 & 46.

"Depart from me ye cursed, into eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels... and they will go away into eternal punishment." Matthew 25:41 & 46.

If hell fire and eternal punishment were literal then so would be the advice to cut off the hand, or foot, or pluck out the eye that offends - and are there immortal worms, or maggots in hell?

Eternal punishment requires eternal life; but the wages of sin is death, not life of eternal torment.

Paul explains that “those who know not God and obey not the Gospel... shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.” 2 Thessalonians. 1:8 & 9. The everlasting destruction is everlasting in its effect, not in its duration.

The parables of Jesus present this view, for Jesus compares the wicked to the tares which are bound into bundles to burn. Matthew 13:30; “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.” Matthew 7:19; and the Stone will grind to powder those “upon whomsoever it shall fall.” Matthew 21:44. Jesus does not teach that the sufferings of the wicked commence at death.

Obadiah sums it up in verses 15 and 16: “For the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations... they shall be as though they had not been.”

Brother Russell Gregory

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## **FRIENDSHIP AND LOVING-KINDNESS**

Friendship can only thrive where there is common interest; that is, unity of thought, desire and purpose, and in creating man it was God’s intention that he should bring glory to his Creator. To do this it was necessary that man should have faith in Him, without which it is impossible to please Him, and this faith is exhibited by obedience to God’s righteous and just laws.

Abraham was a friend of God, renowned for his faith, who desired to please God and realised there was nothing to compare with His friendship, who, by faith, looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

How lasting is our joy when we seek to please God and delight in the things in which He delights - those things which can be seen to be so well worth while. And the things in which God delights lead to eternal life.

Loving-kindness should not be hard to show to our fellow man. It can never hurt but brings joy to those who show it and to those to whom it is shown. It heals many wounds, stills many storms and disperses dark clouds. It is always peaceful and is the prime component of love, for love is only true where loving-kindness is shown. It is the first and greatest of all God’s attributes.

Jesus Christ bases the selection of His friends upon their manifestation of loving-kindness, for He said, “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you,” and “This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you.”

The Father takes notice of loving-kindness wherever it is shown for it reflects His glory. As Jesus said, “I lay down my life for the sheep.... Therefore doth my Father love me...” In order that we may please our heavenly Father and His Son it must be accompanied by judgement and righteousness. When we delight in these three things, loving-kindness, judgement and righteousness and practice them, we will not only be friends of each other but of God.

So shall we know God, and this is life eternal.

“But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgement, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.” Jeremiah 9:24.

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