

Parish and Home.

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" FOLLOW ME."

WHEN the voices of the world are loudly calling
Mid the tumult of life's sea,
Like the dew of eve upon thy tired heart falling
Comes a whisper, all thy restlessness enthraling,
"Follow Me."

Does the pathway open rough and wild before
thee?

Feeble though thy footsteps be,
Shouldst thou falter, He stands ready to restore
thee,
And His gentle tones in watchful love implore
thee,
"Follow Me."

When thy soul the night of death is swiftly near-
ing,
And life's fitful day-gleams flee,
Lo! His form amid the doubt and gloom appear-
ing,
And His loving voice thy fainting spirit cheering,
"Follow Me."

Brighter far than all earth's fairest dreams of
splendor,
Heaven's portals thou shalt see;
Dearer far than all the gifts the world can ren-
der
Is the love that welcomes thee in tones so tender,
"Follow Me."

—Julia E. Goodwin, in *Churchman*.

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

FROM MALACHI TO JOHN THE BAPTIST.

(Continued from July.)

THE social life and customs of the Jews were of the most primitive character, and time brought few changes. Our European civilization is a matter of constant change and progress, and even two successive centuries are separated by a very wide interval. But throughout the East, civilization is stationary. The customs of to-day are practically those of two or three thousand years ago. The Jew in Europe conforms to our western civilization, but in Palestine he lives just as his ancestors did in the times of which we are treating, and they, in their turn, were little altered in

their ways from the Jews of the time of Saul and David. The traveller in Palestine to-day gets a very fair idea of how men lived in the days of Christ. They had no art, no science, no music, save of a most primitive character, and no architecture. The only buildings of note in all Palestine were the successive temples, and these were not native in design. Strictly speaking, there was even no calendar.

The new moon was celebrated by the feasts of trumpets, and these were regulated by actual observation of the heavens. The first appearance of the new moon was eagerly watched and instantly reported at Jerusalem. If the testimony were pronounced true, a beacon fire was lighted on Mount Olivet. This was the signal for other beacon fires throughout all Palestine, and from these fires the new month was reckoned. The cultivation of the land and the tending of herds, weaving and spinning, and the work of the tanner and dyer and potter and smith, were all that the people engaged in.

In an ordinary year, rain was expected at the autumnal equinox, and it continued until the vernal equinox. The great storms of these two seasons were known as the "former" and the "latter" rains. Just before the rainy season the ground was plowed, and the sowing began in October. In April the barley was green and high, and in May the wheat was ripe in the plains. The fruit season began about September. The land was cleared of stones and thorns, was plowed and cross-plowed, though not very deeply, and was allowed to lie fallow. But the rotation of crops was practically unknown. In May and June came the harvest. The grain was brought to the granary, or threshing-floor—an open rock platform—and trampled by oxen, and a rude sledge was dragged over it by horses or other beasts. It was winnowed by being tossed with shovels and forks, and was finally shaken in a sieve. There were two other principal crops, the vine and the olive.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that religious observances were of the essence of Jewish life. Everything made way for obedience to the law. Twice in the year every male Jew had to visit the Temple at Jerusalem. The priests were divided into twenty-four courses or orders. These orders relieved one another every week in the Temple service. The whole nation was divided in a similar manner, and a certain number of the laity visited the Temple with every company of priests. Such an organization of the nation was

admirably fitted to preserve the purity of the national faith, but that so strict a rule could actually be carried out shows how vital an element religion was to the Jew. There were four great feasts in the Jewish year—the Passover, early in April; Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks, in May; the Feast of Tabernacles, in October; and a later Feast of Purim, held in March, and commemorative of the national deliverance by Esther. Besides these, six fasts were observed annually, including the great Day of Atonement at the end of October. In the observance of these festivals there were the minutest details to be followed.

Another great feature of Jewish life after the captivity was the rise of religious parties. They did not attain their full strength until the first century before Christ, but, as their real origin dates back to the return under Ezra and Nehemiah, a brief description of some will not be out of place here. The most interesting and, in many ways, the most important party was that of the PHARISEES, or *separated ones*, as the term signifies. They were the separatists, the puritans, the exclusive ritualists of the time. The whole spirit of practical Jewish religion was, indeed, conservative and exclusive. God had separated them from all mankind, and given them, by direct revelation, a religion for themselves, and in the light of the fact the Jew acted. In the captivity, they had been thrown in with the heathen worship of the Babylonians, and so developed an almost fanatical attachment to the faith of their fathers. On their return, full of zeal for the old ways of Israel, Ezra and Nehemiah found the land occupied by many semi-pagan tribes from the East, who went to form the Samaritan people. Overtures for co-operation on a broad basis were received from these, but were indignantly repelled. Nothing but the Law carried out with scrupulous exactness to the last detail would satisfy, and they began the reorganization of the national faith with an uncompromising hostility to everything foreign or pagan. In this strict, purist spirit is to be found the origin of the Pharisees. Later on, when Greek influence began to prevail in all parts of the country, and the Roman power got a footing in the land, the Pharisees came out as the national party, the bitter opponents of everything that was not ancient or Jewish. The patriotic cry is always one of power, and the Pharisees became the popular party and got the ear of the masses. At first their spirit and aim were, on the whole, commendable; but, as is so