

III. *The necessity for a perfect High Priest.* As we have seen, no man except the High Priest could ever enter the Holy of Holies. In silence on that great silent day, stood priests and people while he performed his task. His unworthiness for such deeds was impressed upon him every moment. He must offer sacrifices for himself first, and even then he was not clean. Five times a day he washed his whole body, and ten times his hands and his feet. His garments must all be laid aside, while on this day he could wear only the whitest linen. No imperfect man could become a perfect priest any more than an imperfect sacrifice could give a peaceful conscience. Salvation depends upon a more perfect High Priest than Aaron. Among all the sons of men not even a priestly eye could pity, nor could a priestly arm save. The confessions of sin, the purifications and the changing of garments, all declared that the law made nothing perfect.

The person of our great High Priest needed no cleansing from even the bloody sweat of his anguish. His seamless coat, which had caught the dust of the highways of Judea and Galilee, was good enough for Calvary. He needed no cleansing from sin because he was spotless. Aaron entered the holy place by the blood of goats and of calves; our Priest, by his own blood. After the entrance of the Aaronic priest within, the veil of purple and gold dropped back to its place—that was only a shadow,—but when our High Priest had completed his sacrifice, that same emblematic veil in the temple, as if held by unseen hands, was torn in twain from the top to the bottom, and no high-priest has been needed since.

LESSON VII.]

[Nov. 13, 1881]

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

Leviticus 23. 33-44.

Of this Feast of Tabernacles we have here an account. Shall we note some of its more instructive features?

I. *It was a protracted religious meeting.*

As a "feast unto the Lord," it began and ended with a "holy convocation." A holy convocation was a coming together for religious ends. The weekly Sabbath was a day of holy convocation; that is,

of coming together for united worship and common instruction; the primitive place of assembly being the village green, under the open sky, or a wide-spreading tree.

II. *It was a thanksgiving for God's bounty in a complete harvest.*

Coming at the end of the year, when they had "gathered in the fruit of the land" (v. 39), it was a public recognition of divine faithfulness—giving rain in due season, causing the land to yield her increase, and the trees of the field their fruit. Hence its other name, "The Feast of Ingatherings" (Ex. 23. 16). Neither of the great annual festivals was without its element of thanksgiving; but this, the last, coming when the year's labours were all done, when its harvests were all gathered, when, not the grain only, but the fruit, the olive, and the grape had been stored, could hardly have been otherwise than one of grateful gladness. The sixty-fifth Psalm, one of those supposed to have been intended to be sung at this feast, well expresses the thought likely to be uppermost in devout minds. All nature is represented as bursting forth into singing. The Lord has visited and watered and enriched the earth. He has settled its furrows; He has prepared its grain; He has blessed the springing of it; He has crowned the year with His goodness; His paths drop fatness; a smile is on all the valleys; they shout for joy, they also sing.

III. *It was a commemoration of mercies attempering hardships and dangers.*

A part of the command concerning it ran thus: "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." Accordingly, during the appointed days of this feast, tents of leafy boughs, and branches of fruit-trees from which the fruit yet hung, covered the open places of the city, the streets, the courts, the squares, the flat roofs of the houses, the fore court of the temple; and in these the people took up their temporary abode.

But it should be noted that it was not the privations and dangers of "the great and terrible wilderness" which all this