

HOME. This FEAST commemorated Israel's dwelling in TABERNACLES (tents) while in the desert. *Characteristics:* (a) It began on the fifteenth of the seventh month. (b) Lasted seven days. (c) Feast of ingathering at year's end. Exod. xxiii. 16; xxxiv. 22. (d) A time of unusual joy; of thanksgiving for past blessings; of trust in God for future prosperity. Daet. xvi. 13-15. (e) At all these festivals "every man" must "give as he is able," and "not appear before the Lord empty." Deut. xvi. 16, 17. (f) Sacrifices made. Num. xxix. 13. (g) Booths used. Lev. xxiii. 42; Neh. viii. 15, 16. (h) Every seventh year laws read. Deut. xxxi. 10-12; Neh. viii. 18; (i) Palm branches borne. Lev. xxiii. 40; Water from Siloam. Isa. xli. 3; John vii. 2, 37-39. Hosannas sung. Psa. cxviii. 24-29; Matt. xxi. 8, 9. The feast, or convocation, was a type of heaven, the Christian pilgrim's eternal home; where are no more tents, wanderings, or sorrows; no hunger, no thirst, no war, no pain, no sin, no death. Psa. xvi. 11; Rev. vii. 9, 10, 14-17. For all believers Jesus has prepared "mansions" "eternal in the heavens." John xiv. 2. 2 Cor. v. 1, 4.

#### English Teacher's Notes.

In order that both we and our scholars may rightly appreciate the nature and influence of the ordinance which required the attendance of all Israelites three times a year at God's chosen sanctuary, we should take any known track of country, a province or a country, about one hundred and thirty miles long and forty broad, and imagine that it had only one great central church, at which all the regular worship must be offered; that a large body of ministers was always on the spot to conduct the services; and that the people throughout the district had to assemble thrice in the year at the great church, travelling thither on foot, and staying in the place for a week. We see at once what great interest would attach to these celebrations, how they would be looked forward to, how they would be made the occasion of family gatherings and the transactions of necessary business: how they would become the epochs of the year; and thus how important their influence must have been in bringing the people together as a nation, and in reminding them at regular intervals of God's claims upon them.

An effective picture may be drawn of the com-

panies of Israelites wending their way over hill and dale to Jerusalem, singing the "Songs of Degrees." (Psa. cxx. to cxxiv.) especially Psa. cxxii. In describing the feast of the Passover, the great one in Hezekiah's day can be referred to, (2 Chron. xxx.) See also 2 Chron. xxxv. and Ezra vi. The feast of tabernacles is vividly portrayed in Neh. viii.; but for our picture of the feast of Pentecost we can get materials only from the original injunctions in Deut. xvi.

It should be noticed that the three feasts did not fall at periods arbitrarily fixed. They corresponded with the yearly epochs natural to an agricultural people. The Passover marked the gathering of the first-fruits of the crops, and the sheaf of first-fruits to be presented to God was one of barley, that being the first ripe grain. Then the people went back to their homesteads, and occupied themselves for six weeks in reaping the barley and the wheat; and when, on the fiftieth day, they again appeared at Jerusalem for the Pentecost feast, they brought *two loaves*, in token of the harvest being finished. But the produce of the vine-yards, olive-yards, etc., was not gathered for some months after; and then came the feast of tabernacles or "of ingathering," in acknowledgement of all God's bounty.

But there was another significance in the three feasts. The Passover commemorated the deliverance from Egypt. Pentecost corresponded with the date of the giving of the law at Sinai, which was fifty days after the exodus; and this feast is still regarded by the Jews as an occasion for giving thanks for the law. The feast of tabernacles looked to the future, (see Zech. xiv. 16,) the dwelling in booths would remind the people that, however settled, they were in this world but "pilgrims and sojourners," and would point them to the great final ingathering—the fruits of all God's work of grace.

In this threefold significance we may find an application for the lesson. It is the Christian's part to look back to the deliverance effected by "Christ our Passover," and—not to the giving of the written law—but to the giving, on the Day of Pentecost, of that Spirit who writes the law upon the heart. And he will look forward, too, knowing that "the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved," and that he will then be "gathered into the Lord's garner."

Or, following the suggestion of the Golden Text, we can base a simpler application on the value of united worship at set times, and on the