

# SACRED HISTORY

FROM

THE CREATION

TO

THE GIVING OF THE LAW

BY

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## PREFACE.

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ONE of the objects of this work is to furnish a ready help to the understanding of those perplexing passages of the earliest Scriptures, which furnish so much of the working capital of cavillers and unbelievers, and by which candid and devout readers are so often disturbed, because these passages, if seen from the point of view of a narrow observation, seem not only strange, but sometimes quite unintelligible. But if viewed in their connection with the entire sweep of the Sacred Scriptures, and in their vital relation to the unfolding principles and processes of the kingdom of God, that which seemed strange becomes appropriate, and the obscure is made clear in the light of the glory of the past and the present and the future comings of the Lord.

With a wonderful patience and skill, has the author rescued from obscurity and possible contempt a multitude of Scripture passages, by so setting them in their honorable and what are shown to be their necessary places, in the grand whole of Sacred History, that their beauty and value are at once discerned.

The author's enthusiasm and devout interest in the subject of Sacred or Biblical History, which began early, have been the growth of a lifetime. He had a thorough acquaintance with the theme, resulting from a careful study of every verse and line of the Bible bearing upon it, and from a comprehensive reading of the literature of all sides of the subject; which study and reading have extended through more than forty of the best and most vigorous of his years.

Rev. Dr. Robert Christie of St. Paul, Minn., who was Dr. Humphrey's successor in the College-street Church at Louisville, wrote a spontaneous notice of him soon after his death, a portion of which, is, with Dr. Christie's permission, inserted here:—

“Edward Porter Humphrey was born in Fairfield, Conn., in an atmosphere of piety and culture. The name Humphrey, and the maternal name Porter, so prominently connected with the presidencies of Amherst and Yale, show that he belonged, on both sides, to the ‘academic races’ of New England. He studied at Amherst while his father, Dr. Heman Humphrey, was president, and filled the position of tutor, for some time after he graduated, in the same institution. He pursued his theological studies at Andover while Dr. Moses Stuart was creating a new era in biblical learning, and the impress of that great teacher was legible in all Dr. Humphrey's handling of Scripture. In response to the Macedonian cry that was reaching New England from the ‘Far West,’ some fifty-four years ago, he came to Jeffersonville, Ind., and took charge of a mission congregation there; but in about a year he accepted a call to the Second Presbyterian Church of Louisville, where he labored with distinguished success for eighteen years. About that time he was elected to a chair in Princeton Seminary, which he declined, but was afterwards prevailed on to accept the chair of church history in the seminary at Danville, Ky. There his fine scholarship, his pulpit power, his graceful diction, his manifest piety, his winning manners and unrivalled skill in imparting knowledge, made him the ideal professor, to whose influence the minds and hearts of the students turned as the clay to the seal.

“At the close of the war, a few of his old congregation in Louisville removed from that Church, and formed a new enterprise, and invited Dr. Humphrey to take charge of them. Looking upon it as a call from God, he entered upon the work, and soon gathered around him a vigorous congregation which included among its members some of the most eminent professional men of the city. According to a long-formed resolution, he resigned the pastorate of College-street Church when he reached his seventieth year, leaving as a monument of fourteen years' labor a large and flourishing congregation, occupying one of the most commodious and beautiful houses of worship in a city noted for attractive church buildings.

“The vast dimensions of some buildings are concealed by their perfect proportions, and so the greatness of Dr. Humphrey did not strike the casual glance by reason of the finely balanced harmony of his many great powers.

All the faculties of his mind seemed equally vigorous, and would have enabled him to excel in almost any walk of ambition in which he had chosen to exert his abilities. In a State where the standard of eloquence has been formed on the finest models, he was listened to with increasing admiration for half a century. His pulpit style was a fine blending of strength and beauty, warmed by the glow of imagination, sensibility, and intense conviction. But, as Lord Cockburn has said of his friend Blair, 'His true eloquence was in the dignity of his look and manner, and in the weight of his reputation.'

"No diocesan bishop of any branch of the Church ever received more homage from the clergy of his charge than has been freely given to Dr. Humphrey for a quarter of a century by the membership of the synod to which he belonged; and none was ever less conscious of the possession of such influence, or was farther from abusing it. The veneration for him was almost filial in its depth and tenderness, and to a multitude of fellow-citizens he has long been a kind of pole-star to whom they looked for guidance on the great moral questions that from time to time have agitated the city or commonwealth. And that star in the heavens has not been more faithful to the points of the compass than he has been to the cause of truth and righteousness.

"Those who have known the author intimately venture the opinion that if a biography of him could be so written as to present any thing like the living reality, the theological student of to-day would have about the best ministerial model that our century has produced."

Meanwhile some of the best fruits of Dr. Humphrey's thinking have been gathered by himself into the following chapters. He did this at the repeated solicitation of clergymen who had been his pupils and of many other friends.

During the last autumn he quite completed the manuscript, and made all arrangements with the present publishers for its publication. But before the work could be even begun, he was called away from this life on the 9th of December, 1887, and summoned to the heavenly ministries.

It is quite safe to say, out of one's actual experience, that the reader of these pages will often find himself lifted up to a height of vision from which he surveys the entire field of sacred history at a glance, and sees the harmonious relations

of its various parts, and exclaims with delight at the surprising clearness and completeness of the view, and the ease and grace with which he has been lifted to the enjoyment of it. And though he may have read a score of books that, in certain lines, have traversed and compassed the same field, and done it well, yet he has the feeling that the wholeness of the Divine plan, in its purposes and in its progressive unfoldings, has never been so clearly presented to his mind before.

A careful perusal of the entire book has produced the conviction that it will bring welcome assistance to all ministers who are seeking to broaden and deepen their comprehension of Divine truth; that it will bring a surprising number of fresh suggestions of kindling and enriching thought to all careful students of the Bible, and advanced readers of Sacred History; that it will clear away the mists from the vision of many serious and candid doubters; and that it will refresh and confirm and gladden the choicest hopes, personal and evangelical, of all those devout readers who regard themselves and all believing souls, the world over, as inheritors of "the covenants and the promises," and who in these days are "waiting for the manifestation of the Sons of God."

With these considerations in view, the sons of Dr. Humphrey send this book forth, in affectionate and reverent memory of its author, with the prayer that it may have the usefulness which he so devoutly desired for it, and in the hope that it may be also a fit monument to his love and loyalty to the Word and Kingdom of God.

LOUISVILLE, KY., February, 1888.

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# SACRED HISTORY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### SACRED HISTORY.

BEFORE entering on the field of sacred history, it is necessary to consider the main aspects under which this branch of learning comes before us.

Sacred history explains how human nature, having been created in the image of God, became completely depraved, and how the Divine plan for the restoration of man to holiness was progressively revealed. Paul's apothegm, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive," is the key to both sacred and secular history. Redemption proceeded from the fall of man to the incarnation and resurrection of Christ, and thence it is now moving onward to the end of the world. While assigning these temporal bounds to the work, it should not be forgotten that Christ was fore-ordained to be our Saviour before the foundation of the world (1 Pet. i. 20); and the fruits of his sufferings will remain forever in the holiness and blessedness of his people.

Biblical history tells the story of the supernatural. The word "supernatural" is used here in two senses,—first, for that which is above nature, and by nature is meant any thing out of God; next, for the voluntary agency of the Holy Spirit, transcending the power of second causes, and therein distinguished from the providential agency of God.<sup>1</sup> The Bible, being the record of a direct revelation from the Almighty, is

<sup>1</sup> Hodge : Syst. Theol., iii. 214.

supernatural in its origin. Having been immediately inspired of him in the original text, the book is supernatural in its authorship. The Bible reveals the existence of God, the mode of his being in three co-equal persons, and his adorable attributes, unfolding, side by side with this self-revelation of God, the history of redemption: the book, therefore, is supernatural in its substance. The same volume informs us that God saves sinful man through the obedience and death of his incarnate Son, whereby our pardon was purchased, and through the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit, whereby spiritual life is communicated to men dead in sin; and this joint work is supernatural. The unerring truth and divine authority of the Bible are attested by miracles and signs and wonders: the revelation is, therefore, supernatural in its credentials. From this it follows that there is an impassable difference between sacred and profane history, and between the Bible and every other sacred book, so-called, in existence. Profane history deals with God's providential agency in human affairs, working through second causes: sacred history is largely the story of his supernatural agency, either dispensing with the second causes; or bounding, ordering, and governing them to his own wise and holy ends. The inferiority of the Koran to the Bible appears, among other particulars, in the absence from the former of attesting miracles. Real and imposing signs from heaven hold in the Scriptures the place assigned to fables and myths in the sacred books of the heathen. The credentials of the Vedas, for example, are false cosmogonies, spurious incarnations, innumerable and impossible wonders. The basis of fact, which is absent in them, supports the Holy Scriptures.

The materials of sacred history are deposited in the written word. Nothing is left to tradition, either secular or ecclesiastical; nor are the materials hidden under obscure signs of thought, like the hieroglyphics of Egypt, or like the sculptures and euneiform inscriptions of Nineveh, or like the thirty thousand uncouth ciphers of the Chinese. The Scriptures were written in the Hebrew and Greek languages, and the ability to read the original text may be gained by any man of ordinary



intelligence. Further, the record exists in its integrity. No canonical book has been lost out of the volume, nor is any one of them mutilated or interpolated or otherwise corrupted. We have them as they came from the pen of their writers; we have them all. By the care and providence of God, they have been kept pure in all ages, and are therefore authentic; and, further still, the record is sufficient and complete unto all the purposes of a veritable history of redemption. We need not go beyond it in order to ascertain or establish a single important fact. The task of the inquirer is one of interpretation, comparison, and construction. He will welcome any light which the literature and antiquities of the older nations may cast upon the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek text; but he will accept that meaning, when ascertained, as final and conclusive.

The plan upon which the record is constructed is one of the products of Divine inspiration. The Holy Scriptures are a collection of books, sixty-six in number, composed by thirty or forty different men. These writers were, for the most part, strangers each to all the others, separated by habits of life, by degrees of knowledge, by social position, by forms of civilization, and by dividing tongues and more dividing ages. Yet, withal, these books could not have been more thoroughly one in their general plan and method of thought if they had been composed by a single person in a single year of his life. This oneness of plan is not limited to historical statements, but extends to revelations from the spiritual world which are beyond the reach of human discovery or intuition, and upon which the imagination and reason of all other authors have run into confusion. More than this, with the harmony there exists a progress in the unfolding of divine truth. The sacred writers begin by revealing one God, and gradually ascend to the mystery of Three in One; they begin with a lamb slain at the first altar, and rise to the God-man slain for sin, and thence to the Lamb slain enthroned in glory. No error, no discrepancy, mars the record. The words of Moses, the first of the sacred writers, agree with the words of John, the last of them all. The theophanic manifestations granted to a Chaldaean

shepherd find their counterparts in the apocalyptic visions disclosed to the survivor of the twelve apostles. These documents, whether prepared in the wilderness of Sinai, or in the courts of the Jewish temple, or in the schools of the prophets, or by the River Chebar, or by the River Euphrates, or in the idolatrous cities of the Roman Empire,—all go to make up one composition, in which part answers to part, and every word of truth to every other word of truth inscribed upon its pages. The sum of the matter is briefly this: The plan of redemption was fore-ordained to be gradually disclosed through the period of four thousand years; and the record follows the disclosure in a consecutive and progressive narrative,—one testimony, one religion, one Mediator between God and man. Given in sundry times and divers places, by many men, in many ages and many tongues; yet one book, only one. The unity of its contents points to their origin in one far-seeing intelligence,—a great First Cause, having his dwelling-place in all generations, and ordaining a law of revelation which advances ever with a motion unresting, unceasing, like the motion of the heavenly bodies. That First Cause is the Almighty, and the law which controls the revelation is Divine inspiration. Furthermore, the doctrine of inspiration involves the mingling of the Divine with the human in the record. Thoughts and truths revealed by the infinite God are clothed in human language. The Bible is an inspired record, in Hebrew and Greek, of a Divine revelation. A marked peculiarity of biblical language, proceeding from its Divine-human character, is called anthropomorphism.

Anthropomorphism is the representation of the Deity under the human form, and with human attributes and affections. The Bible speaks of God's hands, and feet, and mouth, and nostrils, and eyes, and ears. He is said to love, to hate, to be angry, to be pleased, or to repent over what he had done. Kalisch points out eight examples of this metaphor in the history of the creation. God moves upon the face of the waters; he speaks, examines, sees, breathes, gives names, approves of his works, deliberates with himself, and rests

from his works. These representations root themselves in the likeness to God in which man was made. If we are like God, he is like us. We are helped to a knowledge of God by looking closely into our own rational and spiritual nature, and using that as a reflection, though imperfect, of the Divine attributes. And, lest we should ascribe our own limitations to God, we are taught to correct the conclusions drawn from the knowledge of human nature, by a study of the character of Christ, who was the brightness of God's glory. Accepting what we see in ourselves as an imperfect, but real, image of God, and what we read of Christ, the express image of his person, we are at liberty to say that God thinks and acts and judges, that he sees and pities, that he is angry and appeased. One step farther finishes the explanation. When the Bible speaks of God's hands and feet, of his eyes and ears, the intimation is that he does, in his own inscrutable way, what we do with the help of our bodily members. When the Bible says that God is angry with the wicked, that he loves his children, that he repented that he had made man, it is intimated that he does, after his own inscrutable way, what we do after our modes of thought and affection. If it be urged that anthropomorphism leads us to make God, after the manner of paganism, altogether such a one as ourselves, a being with human limitations and passions, the first reply is, that, in point of fact, anthropomorphism does not produce that effect upon any enlightened understanding; and the further reply is, that we must choose between that method of thought, and utter ignorance of God. Jacobi well says, "We confess, therefore, to an anthropomorphism inseparable from the conviction that man bears the image of God; and maintain, that besides this anthropomorphism, which has always been called theism, is nothing but atheism and fetichism."<sup>1</sup> But the mingling of the Divine with the human is not confined to the phenomenal and anthropomorphic representations of Scripture. It passes over into its general contents, appearing constantly in the inseparable relation of the history of redemption to human affairs.

<sup>1</sup> Hodge: Systematic Theol., i. 339-345.

The religion of the Bible is historic ; its home is on the surface of the earth ; its dwelling-place is with the children of men. Considered as a system of religious doctrine and worship, revealed religion has a history not less real than Mohammedanism. The Church, considered as a visible society, thoroughly organized and equipped for its work, has a history not less distinct and characteristic than that of Rome. None of its temples are built in the clouds ; none of its battles are fought in the air. In this respect, revealed religion is distinguished from the speculative systems of the heathen world, ancient and modern. Dean Stanley remarks that Christianity “ alone, of all religions, claims to be founded, not on fancy or feeling, but on fact and truth.”

The points of contact between sacred and secular history are practically innumerable. The progress of redemption is inseparably associated with the progress of all the great kingdoms of antiquity, — with Egypt and Ethiopia, in Africa ; with Arabia, Phœnicia, Syria, Assyria, Babylon, and Medo-Persia, in Asia ; and, in Europe, with Macedonia, with Rome under the empire, and with Greece. The record introduces to our attention nine seas, — the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Dead Sea, the Indian Ocean, the *Ægean*, the Sea of Tiberias, the Adriatic, the Archipelago. Mention is made of the islands Cyprus, Crete, Patmos, Melita, and Sicily ; and of the rivers the Nile, Jordan, Tigris, and Euphrates ; and of the mountain ranges Ararat and Lebanon. Great cities take their places in the story : Rameses, Damascus, Gaza, Jerusalem, Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Rome, Corinth, Athens, Philippi, Alexandria, Thessalonica, Antioch, and Ephesus. Famous heathen kings also figure in the narrative : Chedorlaomer, Abimelech, several of the Pharaohs, Og, Sihon, Balak, Rezin, Shalmaneser, Tiglath-pileser, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Cyrus, Ahasuerus, Tiberius, and the Herods. The mass of historical material within the reach of the sacred writers was simply enormous.

Their skill in the selection and arrangement of these materials is one of the conspicuous signs of their Divine inspiration. They never hesitate to use any secular matter needful to make

plain the progress of redemption. They deal freely with the customs, laws, and idolatries of the heathen; with their kings and priests and people; with their social, political, and religious institutions. And yet only an infinitesimal percentage of human thought and history is admitted to their pages. Momentous events, which changed the face of the world, are mentioned at large if they fall within the plan of the narrative, or are omitted if irrelevant. The overthrow of Samaria by Assyria, the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon, and the capture of Babylon by the Persian king, are described in the Old Testament, because these were decisive events in the history of the Jewish Church; but the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, being without significance to Christianity, is not mentioned in the New Testament, except in the prophetic warnings given by Christ. Further, the prophets and apostles were enabled to prepare unerring statements of the facts selected, to abridge the story without impairing its value, to construct an unimpassioned and colorless narrative, to define the relation of secular affairs to the truths supernaturally revealed; to show how the sum of men's crimes and virtues, knowledge and ignorance, apostasies and reformations, were associated with the mighty works of Providence and grace; and to fuse down the whole matter into the self-consistent and progressive history of redemption. Nor is this the only sign of the inspiration of the Scriptures.

Their method of dealing with all that ever can be known to the end of the world, in the various departments of human learning, discloses the unerring foresight and wisdom which belong exclusively to God. The case may be conveniently set out in a series of propositions suggested by a remark of Lord Bacon: "The Scriptures were written to the thoughts of men, and to the succession of all ages, with a foresight of heresies, contradictions, differing estates of the Church, yea, and particularly of the elect."

1. Every page of Scripture is fully abreast with the sound knowledge of the day and the place in which it was composed. No mistake or anachronism has been detected in what is said,

in the written word, of the arts and sciences known to the world before the Flood, or those known to Egypt and Assyria in the days of Abraham or Moses ; or known to Canaan in the reign of David and Solomon, and in the prophetic era ; or known to Chaldæa during the exile, or to Rome in the age of Christ and his apostles.

2. The Scriptures are composed with an absolute, though silent, foreknowledge of the discoveries, even the most surprising and brilliant of them, in all coming generations, and in all lands. Hence it occurs, that not only are they abreast of all that was known when they were written, but they are in harmony with all that will ever be disclosed.

3. While the sacred record is instinct with this Divine provision, it does not go before scientific investigation, and reveal its findings in advance of their discovery. It is no part of the Divine purpose to tell men the secrets of nature which they are able to find out for themselves. The introduction, moreover, into the Bible, of a perfected astronomy, geology, chemistry, and kindred sciences, would have swelled the Bible to the dimensions of an encyclopædia. It would have been impossible to thresh out of this ponderous mass, the golden particles of Divine truth which now illuminate every line of the word of God. Let it be imagined, moreover, that Moses had been moved by the Holy Ghost to describe, in Genesis, the solar system as seen from the sun. The doctrine would have been unintelligible to the great mass of his countrymen. It would also have been treated as a preposterous speculation during all the centuries which went before the establishment of the Copernican system. Instead of doing that, he was led by the Spirit to represent the movements of the heavenly bodies according to their phenomena, and yet to construct the record so that it should be in harmony with the reality of things.

4. Popular superstitions and blunders receive no countenance in the Bible. No place is given to the notion that earthquakes, comets, meteors, and eclipses are the products of direct supernatural agency ; to the powers, that is to say, which were supposed to inhabit the forests, hills, and air. Demonology, sorcery,

astrology, and necromancy, though rooted in the minds of men, are not mentioned in the Bible, except with reprobation. It is a clean, square record of the actual phenomena of the creation as God has ordained.

There is not the least reason to suppose that the sacred writers were better informed than their contemporaries in human knowledges. Their special and only office was the communication of religious truth. For that purpose they were inspired of God, and for no other. In their daily thoughts, language, and modes of expression, they were not distinguished above their neighbors. They were infallible in Divine truth; but they were fallible, like other men, in all questions of science and history, except in so far as a better knowledge was necessary to the communication of religious truth. To allege that they shared fully in the ignorance of their day, and accepted as true contemporary superstitions, is no impeachment of the truth of what they spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Indeed, the more notorious their ignorance of current learning, the more their minds were perverted by popular errors, the more remarkable is the inspiration which prevented them from declaring as historically and scientifically true what is historically and scientifically false. Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians: what withheld him from adopting into the Pentateuch, Manetho's scheme of chronology reaching back thirty thousand years anterior to the Christian era? David was doubtless acquainted with the spirit of the heathen poetry of his day, but it is impossible to detect a trace of that spirit in his psalms. The harp of Isaiah never vibrated with a strain taken from the splendid mythology of the heathen. Daniel was wise in Chaldean lore: how did he escape, as a sacred writer, from lending the authority of inspiration to the monstrous cogitations of the Babylonians? Paul was educated in the best learning of his time: why do we find nothing in his speeches and epistles like Tertullian's ascription of thought and feeling to plants; nothing like Augustine's vehement denial of the existence of the antipodes; nothing like Ambrose's opinion that the sun drew up water to cool and

refresh himself in his extreme heat?<sup>1</sup> The follies and falsehoods suppressed by the sacred writers, as well as the truths revealed by them, attest their inspiration.

The inerrancy of sacred history is another proof of its plenary inspiration. Hengstenberg, a celebrated Egyptologist, affirms that what is related in the Pentateuch concerning Egypt, not only agrees with the accounts of Herodotus, Diodorus, and other ancient writers, but also receives remarkable confirmation from the recent discoveries made with reference to Egypt. The information concerning Egypt, in the later historical books, is strongly confirmed by the Egyptian monuments, especially in what things they disclose respecting the Egyptian kings mentioned in Scripture, such as Shishak and several of the Pharaohs. It is well known that the ruins of Nineveh, the old Assyrian capital, have furnished the strongest support to the truth of biblical history. The canonicity of the Book of Esther has been vehemently disputed, but Heeren characterizes the book as perfectly trustworthy in regard to the internal arrangements of the Persian court. Baumgarten has shown that almost every statement which the Book of Esther contains may be verified from the scattered accounts of ancient writers in Persia. Hengstenberg adds that "all modern distinguished historians, as Niebuhr, Schlosser, Heeren, and Leo, agree in this, that the Old-Testament history is more authentic, even in that which it relates concerning other nations, than the most reliable native sources."<sup>2</sup>

No other book in existence is so thickly set with direct or incidental allusions to the antiquities of the older nations. The number of issues which it tenders to its adversaries is immense. It contains the names of nearly four thousand persons and places distributed among the primitive and early ages, and over the surface of the globe as known to the ancients.<sup>3</sup> Only a small proportion of these persons and places have been identified. But wherever a cylinder or tablet has been dug up, in

<sup>1</sup> Dr. T. V. Moore: Univ. Lect., p. 291.

<sup>2</sup> Hengstenberg: King. of God in Old Test., i. 27-29.

<sup>3</sup> Scripture Names and Places in Webster's Unab. Dict.



all the lands of the Bible, from Thebes to Mosul, bearing one of these perished names, and whenever the site of a buried city has been discovered, in no one instance — not one — has the testimony of the Scriptures been invalidated. So far as now known, no dead man's name is a myth, no old ruin is misplaced. And the thing that is now shall be hereafter. "Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven" (Ps. lxxxv. 11).

## CHAPTER II.

## THE CREATION.

“IN the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” These opening words of Holy Scripture assume that there is a God, and one God only, unbeginning and self-existent. They teach directly, or by unavoidable inference, that he was ante-mundane and supermundane, for by him all things in the heavens and on earth were created; that he is a free, living, thinking, willing, personal Being; that the world is not a part of the substance of him who is its Creator; that he is omnipotent; that he is not limited by time or space; that he may be known, and is known; and that his eternal power and Godhead, even his goodness, wisdom, power, and majesty, are plainly revealed to us by the things that he has made (Rom. i. 20).

The Mosaic cosmogony teaches, moreover, that matter is not self-existent or eternal; it had a beginning, and was created. It denies that God builds up the universe as the life of an animal builds up the body; it denies that he is the *anima mundi*, the inward source of the organism and force of the world; it denies that the earth was the product of a fortuitous collection of atoms, or that it was derived, not from the will of God, but from his essence, or that it was the result of an internal or external necessity, “as though God needed any thing.” “God created the heavens and the earth;” they were the free emanations of his will, and the spontaneous works of his wisdom, power, and love. The sacred narrative of the creation is in the nature of a protest against the modern doctrine of monistic or agnostic materialism, which begins by affirming that matter and force are self-existent and eternal,

and that entity was automatically evolved from non-entity, organism from inorganic matter, life from the lifeless, the vegetable from the mineral, the sentient animal from the insensate vegetable ; and that the free will, self-consciousness, reason, and conscience of the man were derived from the instinct and intelligence of the brute beast, — a theory which concludes with the dogma that there is no place for God in the universe, all things in existence being sufficiently accounted for on the assumption that there is no God. Our sacred cosmogony stands opposed, also, to the school of atheism which postulates the existence of a Creative Will, who formed the original atoms, and endowed them with the promise and potency of life ; these atoms having been unfolded spontaneously, through an ascending series of existences, up to this present world, and the original Creative Will, who is unknown and unknowable, having been as good as dead since he formed the atoms. The Book of Genesis stands opposed to these and all other theories which come short of the idea of the creation and preservation of the universe by one self-existent and supreme Being, who created and preserves the heavens and the earth by the word of his power.

In the sacred narrative, the basis is laid for a full revelation of the mode of the Divine existence in three Persons and one God. Separate mention is made of GOD, of the SPIRIT, moving upon the face of the waters, and of the WORD which God spake.

The history of the creation is so constructed as to discredit every form of idolatry from Sabeism to fetichism. The heavenly bodies are not ethereal divinities to be worshipped ; they are masses of dead matter serving as torches to give light to man by day and night, and as chronometers to mark off for us, mechanically and unconsciously, days, months, and seasons, and years. Under God's creative word, the air and seas and earth were peopled with fish and fowl and beast ; these were given to man, not as objects of worship, but as natural brute beasts, subject to his dominion in perpetual subordination. He cannot worship them without abjuring his own lordship, and doing despite to his Creator.

The narrative is singularly free from the myths and superstitions which are interwoven in the pagan cosmogonies. Some portions of the true story may be found in the recollections of ancient peoples who never saw the sacred record, demonstrating the primeval unity of these races by the unity of their traditions. The oldest Chaldaic and Assyrian tablets, for example, derive the present order of the universe from a watery chaos ; they distribute the works of creation among six successive days ; they describe the central position and uses of the luminaries, marking the seasons and measuring the time ; they assign to a particular day the creation of cattle and creeping things ; and the inscriptions on certain fragments of broken tablets begin, apparently, the story of the first man and woman. But with the particulars wherein the heathen and Mosaic cosmogonies agree, there are associated impassable differences. According to the Assyrian legend, our planet was, at the very first, created out of pre-existent matter ; at the era of the creation, none of the gods had yet been born ; the "great gods" Lahmu and Lahamu, male and female, "were born and grew up ;" and from them proceeded, by natural generation, a numerous offspring of deities.<sup>1</sup> According to the cosmogony of the Japanese, while the earth was still soft like mud, or like oil floating on the surface of the water, there arose out of the mass a rush, called *ari*, from which sprang the land, forming God.<sup>2</sup> Pindar, says, "One race of gods and men, from one mother breathe we all." This mother is Nature or the Earth. Still another cosmology comes to us from the Chaldaean. The "All" consisted of darkness and water, filled with monstrous creatures, and ruled by a woman. Bel divided the darkness, and cut the woman into two halves, of which he formed the heaven and earth ; he then cut off his own head, moistened the clay with his blood, and made man out of it. In the myths accepted by many of the older nations, the world-egg figured largely. Aristophanes, in his "Comedy of Birds," as translated by Tayler Lewis, sets forth this representation : "Chaos was, and Night, and Erebus black, and Tartarus wide. No earth, nor air nor

<sup>1</sup> Geikie: Hours, etc., i. 29-33.

<sup>2</sup> Encyc. Brit., 9th ed., art. Cosmogony.

sky was yet ; when in the immeasurable bosom of Erebus " (or the chaotic darkness) " winged Night brought forth, first of all, the egg from which, in after revolving periods, sprang Eros, the much derived, glittering with golden wings, and Eros again in union with Chaos produced the brood of the human race and brought it first to light." <sup>1</sup> Professor Clifford calls attention to the legendary " gods of our own race, Odni, Valo, and Ve, who walked about the earth until they found two trees, one of which they made into a man and the other into a woman ; and of Deucalion and Pyrrha, who threw stones over their heads, which became man and woman." <sup>2</sup> The theory of evolution by natural generation is exhibited in Smith's " Chaldæan Genesis." He entertains his readers with a curious genealogy of the gods and goddesses, beginning with Tantu the Sea, and Abiu the Abyss, who begat Mummu, that is, Chaos. The pedigree proceeds through five generations to the sixth, the planets, from which again spring the lower gods. <sup>3</sup> No comparison can be instituted between the Creator of the heavens and the earth, in Moses, and the creator in the heathen story rising out of an abyss of mud and water, or issuing from the amours of gods and goddesses : these representations belong to separate spheres of thought. Moses did not gather the materials for his cosmogony from the traditions of the Semites, and give them a coloring taken from the religious ideas of the Jews, after the manner of Aristophanes, who compiled a cosmogony for the Greeks from the legends current among his countrymen. Moses composed an authentic history of the creative work which preceded the existence of man. He received, from Divine inspiration, an exact knowledge of the work, and the unerring accuracy by which he reduced his information to record. The traditions of the heathen took their origin, so they believed, from the facts of the creation. But the Mosaic record is a well of living waters kept sweet and pure from the beginning ; while the pagan cosmogonies are turbid streams issuing from an old fountain, but making their way through continents of mud,

<sup>1</sup> Six Days, etc., p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> Clifford: Lect. and Essays, vol. i. p. 318.

<sup>3</sup> Geikie: Hours, etc., i. p. 33.

and gathering up mire and slime from every affluent and every shore.

According to the teachings of the Scriptures, the glory of God in the manifestation of his perfections was the last and highest end of the creation. But it appears not less clearly that the world, as its subordinate end, was made for man. Let these thoughts be weighed: The creation rose in its significance, step by step, through the six days, in an ascending series. Not until the close of the sixth day was man made, and God rested from all his works. Again, man was made in the image and likeness of God. Dominion over every living thing was conferred upon him; the entire planet was granted to him for a perpetual inheritance, with command to multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it. "Man was doubly blessed. He shared fruitfulness with the fish and the fowl, dominion was peculiarly his own." Further, six times in the progress of the work, God saw that what he had ordained was good; but when man appeared, God saw every thing that he had made, and he said, "Behold, very good." The heavens are supplied with luminaries answering directly to the necessities of mankind. The obliquity of the ecliptic secures habitable abodes and fruitful seasons through one hundred degrees, divided by the equator. The waters of the seas yield the pure breath of life to the continents; majestic equatorial currents temper the higher latitudes, and polar currents the lower. The seas open their paths to commerce; and the bays and harbors along the coast lines invite the entrance of the knowledge of the Lord, which goes forth to fill the earth. Stores of hidden treasures enrich the crust of the earth. Iron, the staff of material civilization, is found wherever men are sufficiently civilized to reduce it to their uses. The precious stones and metals are more unequally but sufficiently distributed. Marbles, sandstones, granites, sand, lime, chalk, clay, may be had for the taking. Furthermore, the existence of petroleum as an illuminating and lubricating fluid, the use of steam as a motive-power, and of electricity as a common carrier of thought and speech and as a torch-bearer, were practically hidden from mankind six thousand years, until

a time within the memory of the living. And yet, so soon as these new agents became necessary to the progress of Christian civilization, rivers of oil rose out of the deep bosom of the earth, steam disclosed its immense motive forces, and electricity submitted, though with a certain rebellious obsequiousness, to the dominion of man. Nor is this all. Life-preservers, stowed away in the hold of a ship, reveal anticipations of perils by the sea. In like manner our Father in heaven was pleased, at the creation, to deposit in minerals and plants and trees remedies for our sicknesses and wounds. Even so, also, Christ was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world to save his people from their sins.

Natural theology supports the unity of the Godhead, by the argument that all the phenomena of the universe are sufficiently accounted for by the efficiency of one God, — only one. The significancy of the facts is exhausted in that conclusion; leaving nothing unaccounted for, on which to rest the idea of a co-Creator. Another argument to the same purpose is derived from the unity of nature. The story of the creation discloses an orderly series of successive and harmonious operations. The work of each day, after the first, presupposes and is built upon the work of some preceding day; and the work of each day, except the last, anticipates the work of some following day. So obvious is the unity of the plan, and its perfect execution, that Professor Dana discovers in the Scripture cosmogony an “arrangement and a far-reaching prophecy to which philosophy could not have attained, however instructed.”<sup>1</sup> He reduced this prophetic element to a tabular view of the creation, dividing the work of the six days into halves, thus: —

## THE FIRST HALF.

Day 1. Light created.

Day 2. Firmament dividing the waters.

Day 3. Dry land appeared.

## THE SECOND HALF.

Day 4. The luminaries appear.

Day 5. Air and waters peopled.

Day 6. Animals and man created.

The work of the first, second, and third days were prophetic of the fourth, fifth, and sixth, each to each. The prophecy

<sup>1</sup> Dana: Geol., p. 745.

which lay in the successive fiats shows the unity of plan in the order of creation.

If we turn from the Mosaic history of the creation to the discoveries of science, our sense of the unity of nature is strengthened. The use of the spectroscope has discovered in the sun and the fixed stars, so far as the fixed stars have been explored, the mineral substances which enter into the composition of the earth, — hydrogen, antimony, magnesium, iron, tellurium, alumina, calcium, bismuth, and mercury, — the most of these in all.<sup>1</sup> The chemical elements found in the human body are the four principal gases, with lime, potash, iron, sodium, and phosphorus. The Duke of Argyle remarks, that “the same general composition, with here and there an ingredient less or more, prevails throughout the whole animal and vegetable world,” and “the same elementary substances are common to man.” By virtue of this sameness of composition, the air we breathe and the animal and vegetable food which we eat minister to our support.<sup>2</sup> Still further, the brain, enclosed in a bony case, is common to all vertebrate animals; and the organs of sense in them all are massed around the brain. We should take into account, also, the similarity in all these animals, of the digestive function; the presence of the bi-sexual principle, both in the animal and largely in the vegetable kingdom; and the presence of the mysterious principle of life in both.

The completion of the creative work is announced with a certain copiousness of diction. “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the hosts of them.” “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made.” “And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all the work that he had made” (Gen. ii. 1-3). Now the creation, as a finished work, proclaims the inviolability of what we call the laws of nature. This must be so, for the laws were impressed upon the creation at the beginning, and were, therefore, an essential part of the finished creation itself. The revolutions of the heavenly bodies remain

<sup>1</sup> Encyc. Brit., 9th ed., vol. ii. p. 818.

<sup>2</sup> Argyle · Unity of Nature, chap. ii.



as they were. The astronomer can calculate eclipses and obscurations with mathematical accuracy, backward to the creation, and forward to the end of the world. The chronometer of the heavens has not gained or lost a second of time since it began to move. The obliquity of the ecliptic, and with it the times and seasons, are true to their appointments. In like manner we observe the inviolability of the laws of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and of the forces of nature, such as light, heat, electricity, and motion. Here we come upon a large part of our inheritance on earth. All scientific investigation presupposes the immutability of nature's laws. The progress of discovery, never more rapid and brilliant than now, depends upon the same principle. The doctrine of the miracles recorded in Scripture is grounded in its truth.

The Mosaic account of the creation has given rise to what has been called a "conflict literature." It is asserted that the cosmogony in the Book of Genesis is sharply antagonized by modern science, especially by astronomy and geology. On the other hand, it is confidently affirmed that the teachings of science, to the full extent in which they are true, coincide with the teachings of the Bible. Three methods of treating this problem have been proposed. It is suggested, first, that facts, well established by natural science, distinctly contradict the Mosaic account of the creation; hence the facts must be accepted, and Moses must be repudiated. This is the thought of vulgar unbelief. Secondly, science and the Bible cannot be reconciled; but the testimony of both is to be accepted, the science being true to the reason, and the Bible true to the Christian faith; and, inasmuch as reason and faith belong to different spheres of intelligence, the contradiction ought not to disturb anybody's peace of mind. This is the theory of Wagner. It proposes a distinction between reason and faith which has no foundation in the nature of either. "Faith," says Arnold, "is reason resting on God." Thirdly, it is confidently asserted that the findings of a really scientific cosmology are in exact accord with the Bible rightly interpreted; that is to say, the works of God in creation and providence are in

harmony with his inspired word. This is the position of the Christian philosopher. In a manifesto drawn up at a meeting of the British Association in 1865, signed by over six hundred gentlemen, many of them eminent for scientific attainments, they declare that "it is impossible for the word of God as written in the book of nature, and God's word written in Holy Scripture, to contradict one another, however much they may appear to differ."

A survey of the common ground occupied by natural science and Christian philosophy, and a review of the controversies which have arisen, lead to the expectation that these results will continually occur: First, apparent inconsistencies between nature and revelation will be sufficiently reconciled. Next, certain accepted solutions of out-standing problems will be abandoned for solutions that rest upon a surer basis. And, further, new questions demanding attention will emerge from progressive knowledge and discovery. The end of the controversy is not in sight.

An examination, moreover, of this literature will show that much confusion of thought has arisen from the misuse of terms. For example, it ought not to be said that there is a conflict pending between science and the Bible. Taking the word *science* in the sense of an unerring *scientia*, or knowledge of God's works, and then taking the Bible in its exact meaning, there neither is nor can be any disagreement between them. The works of God, and his word, must, by an invincible necessity, be at one. The contention is either personal or dogmatic. The personal debate is among disputants who, though professing to be philosophers, are in error as to findings of science, or who, though professing to understand, do yet misunderstand the Scriptures. In the conflict between dogmas, the antagonism lies between results of imperfect observation and experience on the one hand, and unsound interpretations of the Scriptures on the other. We do great injustice to the cause of truth, both scientific and religious, when we admit that a true knowledge of God's works is at war with a true knowledge of his word. Indeed, all these disputations arise from blunders in

science, or from ignorance of the Scriptures, or from spiritual blindness.

In considering the difficulties which are supposed to embarrass the Mosaic account of the creation, it will be convenient to distribute them into classes, which shall be distinct and shall exhaust the subject. The first class embraces all those questions in which the meaning of God's word is fully ascertained, and the opposing sciences are immature. Of this class, the unity in origin and species of the human race is a fair example. Nobody denies that according to the Book of Genesis all mankind, without doubt and exception, descended from one man and one woman. But Moses goes farther. As if to exclude the suggestion that the first man and woman may have belonged to different families, he is careful to inform us that the woman was taken from the body of the man, so that, in a sense most strict and unique, the ultimate truth is that the whole human race proceeded from a single ancestor. Paul responds to Moses. He declares that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts xvii. 26). He shows, also, that the doctrine of the apostasy of the human family in one man, Adam, and our redemption by one other man, Jesus Christ, rests upon the basis of the unity of the race (1 Cor. xv. 21, 22; Rom. v. 19). No ingenuity can extort from the Bible any testimony other than this.

Comparative philology is relied on to break the force of this declaration. The number of languages and dialects, living and dead, known to mankind, is estimated at one thousand. The contention is that the countless diversities of these tongues prove the plural origin of the races. But it is to be observed that philology is in its infancy, — it was born among the last of the sciences, — and is therefore incomplete. It has not fully mastered the Japanese, or the Chinese, or the Hindustani tongues in their many dialects. Of the languages spoken in Central Asia, it knows but little; of those spoken by the vast tribes in Central Africa, and by the aborigines of North and South America, next to nothing. And these peoples taken

together make up more than half of the human race. The Christian scholar with these considerations before him will adhere to the Bible, which affirms the primeval unity of mankind; not doubting that when philology shall understand itself, its conclusions will coincide with those of the Divine Word. We are strengthened in this position by the findings of modern ethnology. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* in alluding to a theory of Renan remarks, "This theory which presupposes the plurality of races may be very acceptable to the philologists, but it is one with which most ethnologists do not agree. Where philologists see a difference in nature, ethnologists see rather a difference in degree."<sup>1</sup> Physiology and pathology, also, call attention to the sameness of all the members of the human family in the anatomical structure and normal temperature of the body; in the average rate of pulsation and inspiration; in passion, instinct, and appetite; in the period of pregnancy; in the nature, life-history, and cure of diseases; and in the persistent fruitfulness of marriage between the most incongruous people. Above all, human beings everywhere are in possession of a free will and conscience, and are the subjects of native depravity and religious susceptibility. The gospel of Christ is the power of God alike to the European, the Malay, and the Eskimo. Let us believe that a mature philology will be distinguished by its harmony with the word of God.

The second class of these apparent contradictions embraces those problems in which natural science is mature, and the Bible is not understood. For example, according to the first chapter of Genesis, the firmament is a solid expanse; our globe is the centre of the universe, the sun and moon and stars are the earth's satellites. Similar language occurs throughout the Bible. "The sun rejoices as a strong man to run a race." "The sun also ariseth and goeth down." "The earth is established that it cannot be moved." For more than thirty-five hundred years these representations were accepted as literally true. At the discovery of the Copernican system, faith was severely staggered. But in due time it was observed that a

<sup>1</sup> *Encyc. Brit.*, 9th ed., vol. viii. p. 622.

sound distinction exists between what is true to the appearance, and what is true astronomically. That the earth is at rest, that the sun revolves every day around the earth, moving from east to west, is not less true to the appearance of things, than the doctrine that the earth revolves yearly around the sun, and daily on its own axis from west to east, is true to ascertained science. This is the language of common life. Every rational man talks about the rising and setting sun, about the sun crossing the meridian and sinking below the horizon, and he will do so to the end. Further, the philosophers themselves, however hostile to revelation, and however fastidious in the use of terms, habitually speak of the sky as a concave vault, of the path of the sun, and of its right ascension and declination. In solving this question by the aid of the distinction between the real and the phenomenal, we follow common sense; we do not strain the language of Scripture in order to bring it into harmony with science, nor do we resort to interpretations of the holy word other than such as we might adopt if the problem had never arisen. The Bible and the science being understood, they are seen to be at one.

We now come upon the third class of the questions at issue, and this class with the other two exhausts the subject. Here the findings of science are incomplete, and the proper explanation of the Bible is not yet reached. The biblical account of the creation raises certain important problems of this description in astronomy and geology. The astronomers propound such inquiries as these: Was the light of the first day solar, or terrestrial? If solar, how did it occur that the sun was not "made" until the fourth day? If terrestrial, how were the alternations of day and night produced? Did not the earth begin to revolve around its axis and in its orbit until the fourth day? According to the computation of Herschel, the Milky Way is so remote from the earth, that the light of its suns and stars could reach us only after a journey of one hundred and twenty thousand years; and the rays of light from the remotest nebulæ must have been almost two millions of years on their way.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kalisch on Gen., p. 30.

How can we account for the fact that they were all visible at the creation?

The geologists call our attention to the fossil-bearing rocks. These are said to be from seven to ten miles in thickness, measured from the surface of the earth downwards. Among these deposits are the coals, which are of vegetable origin. The remains of animals occur also, in immense quantities, from the skeletons of land and sea monsters, to those of animalcules so small that forty thousand are accommodated within the compass of a single cubic inch. But a fact which is full of significance is that no traces of man, either of his person or his works, have been discovered in the fossiliferous structures which are older than the creation of Adam and Eve. Professor Virchow of Berlin is, perhaps, the foremost physiologist and biologist of the generation. In a speech at the centenary of the University of Edinburgh, Virchow said "that he had been specially occupied for twenty years in making prehistoric investigations to get near the 'primitive man;' and he can get no nearer than Adam. He began by thinking that the existence of a predecessor of man was a possibility, perhaps a probability. But no *pro-anthropos* had been discovered, *not even a fragment of him.*" He had studied skulls in great numbers, and says emphatically: "In my judgment, no skull hitherto discovered can be regarded as that of the predecessor of man."<sup>1</sup> Our countryman Edward Hitchcock remarks, "The remains of man are found only in alluvium, the most recent of the formations."<sup>2</sup> These eminent authorities in science point to the conclusion that man, and with him the present creation, is of comparatively recent origin.

Astronomy and geology open, as we have now seen, an important debate. In the treatment of these problems it is to be observed, that, according to its conditions, the physical sciences are immature, and the word of God in regard to them is not fully understood. Astronomy is an older science than geology, and its main doctrines are better established. And yet, in regard to the manner in which light is propagated, the

<sup>1</sup> The Presbyterian (Philadelphia), Sept. 10, 1884.

<sup>2</sup> Elementary Geology, ed. 1863, p. 395.

astronomers are to this day divided as to the rival claims of the corpuscular theory or the motion of free particles of light, and the undulatory theory, the doctrine of wave-propagation. And many of their propositions in regard to the fixed stars rest, not on mathematical proof, but upon the unverified assumption "that every thing which has been ascertained as to the nature and motion of light in our solar system must be equally true of the fixed stars."<sup>1</sup>

The department of geology which deals with the fossil-bearing rocks is beset with uncertainties. The science is of recent origin, not being older than the present century. The geologists have not explored the crust of the earth below the depth of eight or ten miles, reminding one of an orange of which the rind only has been pierced. According to Mr. Huxley, "only about the ten-thousandth part of the accessible portions of the earth have been examined properly;" and "three-fifths of this surface is shut out from us, because it is under the sea."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, many of the most plausible theories of the geologists, and many of the phenomena, are in dispute. On the other hand, the biblical scholars are not agreed in their interpretations of certain Hebrew words which are essential to the inquiry. The word *yom*, for example, translated "day" in the first chapter of Genesis, is taken, by some of our best Hebrew scholars, for a literal day of twenty-four hours, and by others equally learned for an unmeasured period, covering perhaps thousands, possibly millions, of years. Nor have the Hebrew words translated "to create," "to form," or "to make," been defined to the entire satisfaction of the interpreters of the Bible. In the problem now before us, the prime conditions are unsettled; that is to say, the sciences are immature, and the meaning of God's word is not settled beyond a doubt.

It is not difficult to determine the attitude which we should occupy in regard to this unsolved problem. We should hold to the inerrancy of the Scriptures fairly interpreted; and should assume that modern science, wherein it impeaches the Bible, is

<sup>1</sup> Keil and Delitzsch on the Pent., i. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Huxley: Origin of Species, p. 38.

incapable of verification. And we should confidently maintain that the word and the works of God will be in perfect accord when the facts are all in, and are fairly classified, and when the word of God is made plain. But in the present unsettled state of the sciences, and in our imperfect knowledge of some of the Scriptures, we must submit to a suspension of judgment as to what will be the final solution of the problem. We need not abide in that state of suspense without some relief. It is proper to seek a resting-place for the mind in the form of a provisional solution ; an explanation *ad interim*, which shall appear to harmonize the phenomena in astronomy and geology, so far as they are now understood, with the Word of God, so far as that is understood. The analogy is found in the working hypothesis of the philosopher, and in the interlocutory decree and temporary injunction of a court of justice. The use of the hypothesis is to help the philosopher in his investigations. The use of the legal proceeding is to quiet the parties for the time being, and save all their rights from prejudice, until the cause can be fully heard and finally decided. It is proper, and it may be wise, for the religious inquirer to adopt a similar method of thought amidst the controversies now under consideration.

Several explanations have been proposed. Two of these may be disposed of in a few words. According to the first, the Mosaic history of the creation should be taken as a poetical description, with the concession to it of the usual poetical license in dealing with historical facts. According to the second theory, a vision of the creation, distributed in six scenes, passed before the mind of Moses ; and visionary representations should not be subjected to a rigid scientific analysis. These explanations do not explain Moses : they simply impeach his inspiration. It is open to the inquirer to choose, provisionally, one of three other solutions.

Third, God made all things out of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six ordinary literal days. In other words, God created the heavenly bodies, and the earth and all its fossils, vegetable and animal, after the analogy of plants, trees, and animals, which were made full grown. This doctrine



was commonly received in the Church until within a recent period; it was formulated by the Westminster divines, and is ably defended by Keil.<sup>1</sup> However strongly it may be doubted, it is every way more probable than the allegation that Moses, whether wantonly or ignorantly, has deceived his readers.

A fourth explanation is supported by the authority and learning of such men as Cuvier, Hugh Miller, Ebrard, Schultz, and Tayler Lewis. They maintain that the "six days" of the biblical narrative are periods of indefinite length, perhaps innumerable millennia; one day being with the Lord as a thousand years. Within these immeasurable creative periods, ample time was afforded for the geological formations; and within them also the heavenly bodies, including the most distant nebulae, were created, and set in their orbits, and their light began and finished its journey of ages to the earth. The profound and exhaustive treatises in which this hypothesis is expounded give it a wide currency.

A fifth scheme of reconciliation is proposed by Chalmers, Hengstenberg, Kurtz, and Edward Hitchcock, and is now almost universally adopted by our most approved authorities, both biblical and scientific. These writers distinguish between a first and a second creation, both being described in the first chapter of Genesis. Thus:—

1. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

2. "And the earth was without form [waste, *Rev. Version*] and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters:"

The first verse, it is said, describes the early or original creation of the earth and the heavenly bodies. The second verse sets forth the chaos and darkness in which the earth, having been swept of life, was found by the Spirit of life brooding upon it. The blank space between these two verses, as above printed, represents a vast period during which the successive orders of animals and vegetables, some of them colossal, flourished, died, and were fossilized. Ample time was also afforded, wherein light from the most distant stars could

<sup>1</sup> Keil and Delitzsch: *Pent.*, vol. i. pp. 40 seq.

reach the earth. The subsequent verses, beginning with the third, contain a narrative of the second or Mosaic creation in six days of twenty-four hours each. The first appearance of the light, and the alternations of day and night, before the first day, are variously accounted for. Some hold that the light was terrestrial, and its daily motions were regulated by the Almighty. According to Hugh Miller, the mist and darkness which enveloped the earth were dispersed at the Divine command, by the power of the sun. The current theories of the nature and motion of light may be easily adjusted to either of these explanations.

One other branch of the general question remains. The infliction of death upon myriads of living animals, before the creation and fall of man, is involved in the fourth and fifth of these explanations, an assumption which is thought to be inconsistent with the doctrine that sin brought death into the world. To this suggestion the first answer may well be that the Bible nowhere intimates that brutes die because man sinned. "Death passed upon all *men* because all have sinned." Next, by the very nature of the brute he cannot suffer death in the broad sense of the sentence passed on man: that sentence included not only the dissolution of the body, but moral depravity, with the destruction of both soul and body hereafter. And, further, man by sin reduced himself, in many forms, to the level of the brute beasts; and his death marks his degradation. "As one dieth, so dieth the other; so that a man has no pre-eminence over a beast" (Eccles. iii. 19).

It is not necessary that one should acquaint himself with the science of geology, with all its facts, ascertained or alleged, its intricate theories and endless disputations, in order to justify him in adhering steadfastly to the truth of the Mosaic cosmology. He is at liberty to adopt either of the three explanations above proposed as provisional only, a temporary resting-place for the mind until the investigation shall be completed. Or he may abide in the conclusion that among so many solutions, supported by established facts and high authority, some one of them will be finally verified. He may be sure that a generali-

zation will at length be reached which shall include in its expression the many and varied phenomena of the creation, with the declarations concerning them in the written Word.

Whenever the facts in geology shall be fully established and rightly interpreted, it will be seen that the earth, no less than the heavens, declares the glory of God; geology showing the supremacy of the Almighty through incomputable time, even as astronomy acknowledges his supremacy through immeasurable space. If indeed the mountains are the crowded catacombs of worlds older than they; if the rocks, like the undissolving snows of the frozen zones, mark in their successive layers the lapse of ages; if their strata are scrolls upon which the orders of life, long since extinct, have perpetuated, after the manner of an unconscious autobiography, the history of themselves; if they are charged with inscriptions monumental of worlds ages ago dissolved, not chiselled upon the surface, but wrought into their very substance and structure,—what if these things be true? Has geology a prophecy, as well as a history? If the present order of things has been preceded by orders less perfect, is it to be followed by others more glorious? “A new heaven and a new earth” are promised; is the present creation one of a series, the first and rudest of which is in the bosom of the past, and the last and most sublime in the womb of the future? Is our dispensation but one link in the ever-brightening chain of God’s eternal providence? By such inquiries does the human mind reveal its aspirations and its ignorance. Let us reverently wait for further disclosures.

“Parts, like half sentences, confound: The Whole  
Conveys the sense, and God is understood.”

## CHAPTER III.

## THE MAN.

MOSES describes the creation of the earth and of man in two forms; a detailed narrative in chaps. i. and ii. 1-3, and a recapitulation in ii. 4-7. The latter opens with the title: "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth." Here we meet for the first time with an intimation of the distribution into several sections of the Book of Genesis. The division into fifty chapters was made by the rabbins, for the convenience of the synagogues, and is of no higher authority. But the distribution of the Book of Genesis into sections, called generations, was made by Moses, by virtue of the Divine inspiration which guided him in the composition of the text. These "generations" are, in some instances, a history of the creation or of a particular family; as, the "generations of the heaven and the earth" (ii. 4), and "the generations of Noah" (vi. 9). In other places the word signifies simply a genealogical table; as, the "generations of Shem" (xi. 10). There are eleven of these sections:—

The Introduction, from i. 1 to ii. 3.

1. The primeval history from the creation to the birth of Seth, — ii. 4 to chap. iv.

2. Adam's descendants down to Noah, — chap. v. to vi. 8.

3. Noah's family till his death, — vi. 9 to the end of chap. ix.

4. History of the sons of Noah, — x. 1 to xi. 9.

5. Genealogy of Shem to Terah and Abraham, — xi. 10-26.

6. Terah's posterity, including Sarah and Rebekah, and the biography of Abraham, — xi. 27 to xxv. 11.

7. Ishmael's posterity, — xxv. 12-18.

8. The history of Isaac and his family, from the death of Abraham to his own death, — xxv. 19 to the end of xxxv.

9. Esau's offspring, — xxxvi. 1-8.

10. Esau in Mount Seir, — xxxvi. 9 to xxxvii. 1.

11. The history of Jacob to his death, and the death of Joseph, — xxxvii. 2 to the end of Genesis.

These sections are of unequal length; the longest containing thirteen chapters, and the shortest seven verses only. Subdivisions occur in the longer sections, and are distinctly marked. They indicate the salient points in the progress of the history, and contribute to both the perspicuity and unity of the narrative. But this distribution of the text does not appear in any other of the five books of Moses. It occurs twice only in the later Scriptures. The genealogy of David is introduced in the Book of Ruth by the title, "Now these are the generations of Pharez;" and the Gospel of Matthew is superscribed, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ."

GEN. i. 26, ii. 1-7, v. 1, 2. — On the sixth and last of the creative days, the beasts, cattle, and creeping things were called into existence; after that was done, man was made. What are some of his leading characteristics?

1. He was created single and alone. The lower animals were formed in pairs. And the production "abundantly" by the waters, at the word of God, of fishes and fowls, warrants the conclusion that each species inhabiting the water, and the air, and the dry land, was created not only in the pair, but in swarms or flocks. But only one human being was originally created, the woman not having been formed until after the sixth day.

2. "Male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam" (Gen. v. 2). A few writers, among them Lenormant, give countenance to a Jewish tradition to the effect that Adam was made androgynal; both sexes being in his one person.<sup>1</sup> This preposterous tradition may be dismissed without ceremony on the authority of Moses, who describes minutely the formation of the woman, not by a resolution of

<sup>1</sup> Lenormant: *Beg. of History*, p. 64, New York ed., 1862.

one double being into two separate persons, nor by any natural development even as the limb shoots out of the trunk of a tree, but by a distinct creative act. The LORD God made (*Heb.*, built up) into a woman, the rib which he took from the man. Adam knew that she was not formed of the dust, but from a portion of his own person. He said, "This is now" (*Heb.*, "this time it is") "bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman" (*Heb.*, *Isha* or man-ess; *Saxon*, wife-man), "because she was taken out of my flesh." Now, this unique creation yields several important results. It clears up, for example, the doctrine of the unity of the human race, both in origin and species; for even the first pair was not by original creation two, and therefore separate persons, but one, — only one, and the same. The way is closed against any impeachment of this consanguineous unity on the allegation that the first man and the first woman were of different races, or of different families of the same race. Next, the creation of both sexes in one person confronts the dogma and opprobrium of the pagan philosophy which teaches that woman is in her intimate nature inferior to man: by original creation she is one with him. This oneness, moreover, establishes the indissoluble character of the covenant of marriage. "Wherefore," said Christ of the man and his wife, "they are no more twain, but one flesh" (*Matt.* xix. 6). Again, only one man and one woman can be lawfully joined together in marriage; for so, undoubtedly, was it at the beginning. Further, there is a lesson here pointing to the delicate respect and affectionate attention which the husband and wife owe to each other: "For no man ever yet despised his own flesh." Still further, the analogy between the conjugal relation and the relation of Christ to the Church, makes it obligatory on the husband to love his wife as Christ loved the Church, and on the wife to see that she reverence her husband (*Eph.* v. 25, 33). Lastly, since the whole race was in the loins of this one man Adam, he was competent, as their sole representative, to enter with God, for himself and for them, into the covenant of works.

3. Taking the narrative of the creation in its obvious sense, we learn that man was created full-grown, after the analogy of

the formation of the grass and herb and of the tree "whose seed was in them," and of the lower animals after their kind. Surely this cannot be a rash statement; for there is nothing in the record and nothing in the nature of the case indicating that the trees in Eden sprouted and grew up from the seed, or that man began life in infancy. He was created in ripe manhood, with the faculties of body and mind in full vigor, with the gifts of reason, conscience, the free will, and speech, and in original righteousness. This circumstance is of commanding importance, showing that the man was not left in his adolescence or unreason, or with an embryo conscience, to meet the responsibilities that were laid upon him in the matter of the forbidden fruit.

4. He was body and soul joined together. His body was formed of the dust of the ground. His soul was a specific Divine creation: "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." There is no rational ground for the conjecture that God first constructed his body, and after that was done he breathed life into the lifeless form: we should rather say that the creation of the body and soul was a simultaneous act of Divine power. There is, doubtless, an impassable difference between matter and mind: matter, so the case may be briefly stated, has extension, is complex, divisible, and does not think; mind is without extension, is simple, is indivisible, and does think. The dignity, therefore, of the human frame is not to be estimated by the limitations or meanness of its constituent elements. For in nothing is the wisdom of the Creator more conspicuous than in the congruity of man's body to the living spirit. Let us imagine the horror which would seize upon the rational soul if it were to find itself incarcerated in the carcass of a dumb beast. Or, reversing the conception, what could be more revolting than the freak of nature which should put into the body of a man, like King Saul, the spirit of a beast, like the ass on which he rode? Now, when man stood in his original righteousness, the body divinely created was in perfect unison with the human soul divinely in-breathed. Nor has sin, or death by sin, wholly obliterated the

signs of this congruency. The man, though fallen, preserves his erect position, his majestic form and lordly bearing, agility and grace of movement, sustained vigor alike in arctic and tropical latitudes; melody and compass of voice; brain, tongue and hand, the organs respectively of thought, speech, and cunning; and his countenance telling the tale of inward resolve and emotion. His primitive longevity pointed to the original immortality of the body. The same body, though now dying, is susceptible to the change which shall prepare it for eternal life and celestial experience. The thought gathers immense weight from the honor which the Son of God put upon the human frame when he took it to himself, "with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof." There was in him no sense of an unnatural or misjoined relation to our flesh and blood. He was at home in the body. Moreover, the glory with which the Lord Jesus clothed this body became exceeding glory when he brought it up out of the grave changed, yet the same, and bore it up with him at his ascension into heaven and to his throne. In a word, the Scriptures ascribe a dignity more than imperial to our mortal frame, teaching us that it became first the habitation of the image of God in the soul, then the temple of the Son of God (John ii. 21), and now the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 19); and it is hereafter to put on immortality and incorruption.

5. We come next upon the true glory of man: he was made in the image and likeness of God. The word "likeness" explains the word "image;" that is to say, God made man in an image like himself. This image is not predicated of the body, for God had none; and of the human nature of Christ it is declared that he was made, in that particular, like to his brethren, not that they were made like unto him. The likeness of man's living soul to God presents itself in various aspects. First, in its substance the soul is spiritual or immaterial, and immortal, — not identical with but like unto God. Secondly, intelligence is an essential element of this Divine image. Through self-consciousness man comes to a knowledge of things around him; by virtue of abundant revelations he comes to



know God himself. There is nothing irreverent in the suggestion that in some branches of science, as in pure and applied mathematics, man sees things precisely as God sees them. When Kepler had discovered the three laws of planetary motion, he prayed, saying, "Father of the universe, what moved thee to raise a little feeble creature of earth so as to make him a king, and almost a god, in thinking thy thoughts after thee? I thank thee, Lord and Creator of all, that thou hast filled me with rapture over the works of thy hand, and hast enabled me to disclose to men the glory of thy creation, so far as a finite mind can comprehend infinity." Still further, in the sphere of the spiritual, man is able to revolve in his mind the things that occupy the attention of the Almighty; the truths concerning the being of God, in substance one, in persons three; his adorable attributes; sin, in fallen angels and men; redemption; the death of the soul and body, the salvation of both; eternal misery, and eternal blessedness. Thirdly, the conscience in man is an element in his likeness to God. He is competent to perceive the ineffaceable distinction between the right and the wrong, the evil and the good, in the sphere of eternal and immutable morality. With the findings of this judgment, the approval of the right and the good, and the disapproval of the wrong and the bad, rise in his bosom. He excuses or accuses himself and others. The judge who sits within responds to the Supreme Judge who stands always at the door. Fourthly, man, like God, is a person, a separate force. "Person," says Locke, "stands for a thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places."<sup>1</sup> A person can say *I* and *my* and *mine*; may be addressed as *you* or *thou*, *yours* or *thine*; may be spoken of as *he* or *she*, *him* or *her*. Personality, therefore, is common to both God and man; but it is not shared with them by any material substance or lower animal. If it be suggested that we apply the personal pronouns *him* and *her* to birds and beasts, the reply is that we use these words simply to denote the distinction of sex; and we show that we deny per-

<sup>1</sup> Essay on Human Understanding, book ii. chap. 27.

sonality to them, by refusing to speak of them as *who* or *whose*. Unlike God and man, they are brute beasts, not persons. Fifthly, a will to choose, as well as a reason to examine and conclude, is an essential feature of this image. God, who is the freest being in the universe, gave to man the power to choose and to refuse in view of the motives set before him. He is therefore free. This royal but perilous gift proved fatal to man and his posterity, but it could not be withheld from the image of God in man; that being absent, the creature would not have deserved the name of man. Sixthly, in the affections or feelings man was made like God. A supreme being without affections, cold and impassive towards the pure and the beautiful and the good, towards the miserable and the guilty, may suit the philosophy of the Brahmin and the pantheist; may satisfy the spiritual longings of those who call the Absolute, the Unknown and Unknowable, Humanity, Motion, Force, Matter clothed with the Potency and Promise of Life, by the name of God. But the God of the Bible, and Jesus his express image, and man created in his likeness, are, each in his own measure, redundant and perpetual fountains of mighty affections. We must, however, rise to a higher plane of thought. Seventhly, the moral righteousness in which man was created displays this image in its highest glory. Three sources are open from which we may take knowledge of man's original righteousness. Putting together our best conceptions of the holiness of God, of the holiness of Christ, and of all that is holy in the renewed man, we reach a conception of the original righteousness in which man was created. That is to say, he was created in knowledge, or the right apprehension of spiritual truth; in righteousness, or rectitude towards God and towards his neighbor; and in holiness, which penetrated and lighted up the soul with the Divine excellences. In all these respects he was, by creation, in the likeness of God.

It is hardly necessary to add that the likeness of man to God was a similitude or resemblance, not a sameness or identity. God is self-existent, infinite, immutable, and infallible: man is derived, finite, mutable, and fallible. God is a most pure Spirit,

without body, parts, or passions. Man's spiritual nature is lodged in flesh and blood; his immortality is conditioned on the will of his Creator; his intelligence is narrow; his conscience needs a guide wiser than he; his personality, though rooted in a separate force, asserts itself but feebly; his freedom and power of will to do that which is well pleasing to God was yet mutable, so that he might fall from it; his pure affections were not proof against temptation; and his original righteousness might be lost. Taking this possible loss under reflection, the Reformers drew a distinction between the moral correspondance and the constitutional likeness of man with God. Spirituality, immortality, intelligence, conscience, personality, the affections, and the free will enter into the very substance of the soul, and they could not be taken away without the loss of humanity itself; they being gone, the man would cease to be a man. But knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness are attributes which man might lose, and in point of fact did lose, and yet he remained a rational, voluntary, and accountable being, — a fallen man, but still a man, in spiritual substance the same, in moral nature depraved.

The exalted dignity of man, having been made in the image of God, takes the place of a ruling idea in the history of redemption. It appears, for example, (1) in the union of the Divine and the human in the person of the Redeemer. He took to himself not the body only, but the whole and perfect nature of man; so that "the Godhead and the manhood were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion."<sup>1</sup> This "great mystery of godliness" is partly explained by the real dignity of the nature which Christ assumed; the created image and likeness of God in man being united to the "uncreated image of the invisible God." The wonder grows upon us as we learn that this union is indissoluble. Jesus is at the right hand of God exalted, and reigns the God-man forever.

(2) The Divine purpose to redeem man found a sufficient reason in his original greatness. He was worth saving; he for

<sup>1</sup> Westminster Confession, chap. viii.

whom Christ died was no worm. No wonder that the Almighty "had a desire to the work of his hands," when he saw in that work a similitude to himself.

(3) The same royal nature opens the way for an intimate communion between God and man. The attributes which were common to both, though in the creature of low degree in the comparison, are so many ear-gates and eye-gates, through which the words of infinite wisdom and the light of Divine glory are delivered upon the human soul. The revelations of God address themselves to our intelligence, conscience, personality, free will, and affections; to our fears and hopes. We may gain the knowledge of God by the study of his works, by examining his image in the soul, by searching the Scriptures, by looking unto Jesus, and by the enlightening of the Holy Spirit. Intimate communion with God was the supreme blessing granted to man in his state of innocency in the garden; and though in a lower degree, it is to this day one of the most exalted privileges bestowed on him in whom the image is renewed.

(4) The capacities for knowledge, in the soul of man redeemed and made holy, are limited only by the limits of the finite. But who shall set bounds to these capacities? Here inspiration itself leaves us at loss what to say. The great apostle was unable to fetch the compass of the amazing dimensions of the knowledge of the love of Christ towards us, which passeth knowledge. They that receive such knowledge are filled with the *pleroma*: "all the fulness of God." Because we are like him, and he is like us, the infinite ability in him to give, and the large but finite capacity in us to receive, are in some sense correlative.

(5) The intrinsic worth of this Divine image is to be recognized in the command of Christ to preach the gospel to every creature, and in the eagerness of the apostles to do that. All men, everywhere, have one common nature; all without exception are in God's image and likeness: therefore salvation is offered to all. Strip the human being of every adventitious peculiarity, whether skin-deep or bred in the bone; color, stature, language, religion, civilization or barbarism, virtues or crimes, culture or ignorance, of high caste or of the outcast;

cut down to the quick; come down to what is radical and thorough in human nature, and you shall find there the image of God, — distorted it may be, defaced, shattered, polluted, but the indestructible image still. Christ died to redeem, and the Church strives to save, that immortal, self-conscious, willing, choosing, feeling, enduring personality; distinct from matter; the image of the great, self-existent, eternal First Cause of all things, even the Most High, Most Holy, Most Absolute, Most Free, the Lord God Almighty.

These Divine revelations may be used for the purpose of testing the speculation of modern evolutionists in regard to the creation of the first man. While biblical scholars are busy with the relation of man to his Creator and Redeemer, the biologists are busy with the relations of man to the lower animals. Among the theories that are proposed, two are most talked about. One of them is advanced by Darwin and supported by the materialists, the other is held by certain Christian philosophers. The relation between these theories and the word of God is the only aspect of the case which falls within the range of Sacred History.

The hypothesis of Dr. Charles Darwin is substantially as follows: <sup>1</sup> “The quadrumana” (among which the ape is classed) “and all the higher mammals are probably derived from an ancient marsupial animal, and this, through a long line of diversified forms, either from some reptile-like or some amphibian-like creature, and this again from some fish-like animal.” <sup>2</sup> He remarks that the simiadae (or monkey tribes) are divided by almost all naturalists into the Old-World monkeys and the New-World monkeys, differing in the shape of nostrils and in the number of premolars in each jaw, — six against four. To this he adds, “There consequently can be no doubt that man is an offshoot of the Old-World simian stem.” <sup>3</sup> “It is, therefore, probable that Africa was formerly inhabited by extinct apes, closely allied to the gorilla and chimpanzee; and as these species are now man’s nearest allies, it is somewhat more probable that our

<sup>1</sup> Darwin: *Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 2 v., N. Y., 1871.

<sup>2</sup> *Descent of Man*, vol. ii. p. 372.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i. pp. 188, 189.

early progenitors lived on the African continent than elsewhere.”<sup>1</sup> The conclusion which Dr. Darwin reaches is thus announced in his last chapter: “We thus learn that man” (body, soul, and spirit) “is descended from a hairy quadruped, furnished with tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits, and an inhabitant of the Old World.”<sup>2</sup> The repugnance of this hypothesis to the word of God may be pointed out in a few words.

The hypothesis assumes, (1) that man was begotten, not created *de novo*. (2) He came with his rational and accountable nature, by ordinary generation, from the loins of a pair of dumb beasts, a sire and a dam. (3) The last clause in Luke’s genealogy of Christ might read, “Cainan, which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Adam, which was the son”—shall we say, of a monkey? (4) According to Moses, man was made in the image of God: according to Darwin, this young immortal, the heir of the world, was suckled by a mother brute; anticipating the story of Romulus and Remus and the she-wolf, with the difference, that in the heathen mythology Romulus and Remus were the sons of Mars, in the new science Adam was the son of an advanced ape. (5) It is a fair inference from Moses, that man was made full grown, in the maturity of his exalted nature, and that he was immediately admitted to communion with God. It is a fair inference from Darwin, that this free, choosing, thinking, speaking being was born a cub, domesticated with irrational, chattering, conscienceless, hairy, arboreal mammals, taught to recognize them as his parents, and the younger brood, if brood there was in the ancestral cave or hollow tree, as his full brothers and sisters; unless indeed they also were, like him, infant children and not cubs. (6) Moses teaches us that the birthplace of our primitive ancestors was in Asia: according to Darwin it is “more probable that they lived on the African continent than elsewhere.” (7) The Mosaic account of the creation of man is simple, sufficient, and attractive; worthy alike of the Creator and the creature. On the other hand, as Sir William Thomson observes, the hypothesis

<sup>1</sup> *Descent of Man*, vol. i. p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 372.

“that man could be evolved out of the lower animals is the wildest dream of materialism, a pure assumption, offensive by its folly and arrogance.”

Theistic evolution assumes the existence of God, the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, and the infallible authority of the Mosaic account of the creation. The hypothesis suggests that the body of the first man Adam — evidently, according to some thinkers; probably, according to others — was derived by Divine power from a lower animal, say the anthropoid ape; his soul was created by the Almighty; and his wife was formed from Adam's side by a specific act of the Almighty. The consistency of this hypothesis with the word of God is the only inquiry to be considered.

In the outset, this speculation comes to the Scriptures under certain disadvantages. First, its advocates do not affirm that the theory is expressly set forth in the Bible, nor that it is distinctly upheld thereby, or in harmony therewith; but that, simply, it is not contradictory thereunto. This is of itself a sign of weakness, in the judgment of those who adhere to the Church doctrine of the positive agreement between God's work of creation and the Mosaic account thereof. Moreover, the most approved thinkers in this school of evolution go no farther than to say that their doctrine is probably true, or that as yet it is an unverified or unproved hypothesis. Now, it is an established rule of interpretation, that the Scriptures ought not to be taken out of their obvious and historical sense in order to be adjusted to any hypothesis which is confessedly unverified; lest perchance the Scripture itself be broken by the final rejection of an erratic speculation. Again, this theory brings together in one view the origin of man's body from the body of non-human ancestors, the origin of man's soul by the inbreathing of the Almighty, and the creation of Eve's body and soul by a direct act of Divine power. The picture is marred by an incongruity in its features quite foreign to the sustained dignity and unity of God's word and works. The marriage of a woman created by the Almighty, to a man derived from an advanced ape, is a poor analogue of Christ and his Church.

In bringing the hypothesis to the direct test of Scripture it will be convenient to consider two questions: By what process of Divine power was the body of man produced? Whence was derived the material of which it was formed? The answer returned by the Divine word to the first question is that man's body was created; without a hint to the effect that it was begotten, or in any way derived from a lower animal. "So God created man in his image" (i. 27). The word "created" (*bah-rah*) in the Kal, or simple form, appears thirty-eight times in the Hebrew Scriptures. In every instance God is the subject; it is nowhere said that another than God created any thing. The word is used in all the great beginnings of the earth and man. In the very beginning, when non-entity gave place to the existing universe, God *created* the heavens and the earth. In the original of animal life, God *created* the sea-monsters and all that live in the air and waters. In the original of rational and spiritual life, God *created* man in his own image. In the beginning of the new life in the soul, dead in sin, God *creates* the clean heart and renews the right spirit (Ps. li. 10). At the great consummation, God says, "I *create* new heavens and a new earth" (Isa. lxxv. 17). Creation, therefore, is the calling into a separate existence of one of the nobler works of God. Man, in his origin, is in the category to which belong the universe, life in the air and seas, spiritual life in the soul, and the new material universe; that is to say, like them he was created immediately, body and soul, by the Almighty. It should be observed, however, that the word "formed" is in one place applied to man: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground" (ii. 7). The explanation is easy. The word "create" in the Hebrew text is never used with the accusative of the material; when, therefore, the sacred writer would mention the substance entering into man's body, he must needs employ a different verb admitting of the use of that accusative. It should be noted again that God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The appearance of the word "make" is not so readily accounted for. And yet it may be remarked, first, that in the Divine counsels "make"



was used where the leading thought was the exalted type of the coming man, not the mode of his formation; next, when Moses passes from the Divine purpose to the Divine execution of the purpose, he is careful to employ the term "create," and that repetitiously: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (v. 27).

In answer to the second question it is written, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground." The word "dust" is here broadly used to embrace all the earthly substances which enter into the composition of the human body: phosphorus, lime, iron, carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen. God created these materials, and deposited them in the earth; when the time came, he built them into the body of the first man. That he did not form Adam's body out of the substances which had been organized in a lower animal akin to man, but out of unorganized matter, appears from the limitation put on the word "dust:" "the dust of the ground." Construing the phrase according to the obvious and historical meaning (and nothing appears in the record suggesting any other meaning), we learn that the ground from which the dust was taken for Adam's body is the very kind of ground which was not tilled before man was created (Gen. ii. 5); the ground which was watered by the mist (ver. 6); out of which grew the trees of the garden (ver. 9); out of which God formed every beast and fowl (ver. 19); the ground that was cursed for man's sake (iii. 17); out of which man was taken, which he was required to till (ver. 23); and to which he shall return (ver. 19); which Cain tilled (iv. 2); the fruits of which Cain offered up to God (ver. 3); from which the blood of Abel cried to God (ver. 10); and which should refuse her strength to Cain (ver. 12). These places are taken from the first four chapters of Genesis. In the sequel of the Old Testament, the same Hebrew word is translated interchangeably in the Authorized Version, by the synonymes "ground," "land," and "earth." Now, the attempt to read into the phrase, "the dust of the ground," the dust which God had previously organized into the carcass of the anthropoid ape, cannot succeed, so

long as it is supported by nothing more persuasive than an unverified hypothesis, and not upheld by any fair or natural interpretation of the sacred text.

The hypothesis accepts the word "rib" out of which the woman's body was formed, in its literal sense: why not give the same literal sense to the word "dust of the ground," out of which the man's body was formed? Again, the creation of Eve was confessedly an immediate act of God: why, in the absence of any thing in the record to the contrary, should not the same be said of the creation of Adam? We are taught by both Moses and Christ to apply the same word to both. Moses said, "Male and female created he them." Christ said, "From the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female" (Mark x. 6). And the unities are all preserved by the contrast which Luke sets forth between the birth of Seth by ordinary generation, and the supernatural origin of Adam: "Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God" (Luke iii. 38). The believer may rest securely in the strict and literal sense of the inspired deliverance, "God created man in his own image," and "the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground."

The original dignity of man, and his position in the scale of being, was fully recognized in the fitting-up of the primeval home in Eden, the garden planted by Jehovah. Eden, or Delight, was the name of the region; the garden itself is commonly called Paradise. The exact situation of Eden, and of the garden in its bosom, has not been determined. The question is in a singular posture. On the one hand, the description is minute and precise. The garden was planted to the eastward of the land of Canaan, or of the home of the sacred writer. It was watered by four streams, two of which are the well-known Tigris and Euphrates. The text employs terms belonging to postdiluvian geography, showing that the Deluge made no changes in the face of the country sufficient to defeat the inquiry. It is, moreover, the only notice preserved of the geography before the Flood; and its position in the narrative seems to indicate that it was inserted in order to explain the context.

On the other hand, the most diligent scholars have not been able to identify two of the four rivers, the Pison and the Gihon, or the two lands of Havilah and Cush. As a further obscure point, the four streams are not called rivers, but "heads," and these are said to be formed by the stream on leaving Eden. From the fulness of the description it may be safely inferred that the problem will be finally solved. And yet, what is obscure in its conditions shows that the solution will not be reached until the geography of Eastern Asia, and the sacred text, are better understood.<sup>1</sup> No such doubts beset the description of the garden itself.

The trees there were of three kinds. Jehovah made to grow out of the ground every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. Beauty for the eye and sweetness for the taste crowned the abounding supply of food. The lesson was that the natural life of man, even in paradise, was sustained, not from within himself, but by food which God provided from without. There was also a tree in the midst of the garden, called the tree of life. Some critics suppose that it was so called because it bore fruit perpetually, like certain tropical trees which show continually upon their boughs the ripe fruit, the growing fruit, the blossom, and the bud. This may be true, but it does not exhaust the idea of the tree of life. Nor is it sufficient to say that its only efficacy was to sustain the life of the body; this object was secured by the trees first named in the text. We ought to say that the tree of life was a symbol of the holy life which man had received from God. The use of its fruit was to nourish the life of holiness sacramentally, just as the bread and wine in the supper, received by faith, nourish the graces of the believer. As often, moreover, as our first parents ate of this fruit, they were reminded that they received, day by day, their life of holiness from Him in whom alone is life. Augustine says, "There was in other trees a *nourishment* for man, but in this also a *sacrament*." A symbol this was of the tree in the new creation: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Alexander in the Princeton Review, 1860, pp. 94-98.

midst of the garden" (Rev. ii. 7, xxii. 2, 14). There was also the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." The design of this tree was wholly moral. It was appointed to be the test of obedience; to prove whether man would be good or bad. Its only allowable use was to let it alone. By abstaining from the forbidden fruit, man would be able to discern between the good and the evil through a kind of intuition, after the manner of the holy angels. By eating that fruit, Adam would acquire the knowledge of good by losing it, and of evil by experiencing it. Calvin: "Knowledge is here taken in a bad sense, for that wretched experience which man began to acquire for himself when he departed from the only fountain of perfect wisdom."

The special ordinances given to man in paradise are four in number. 1. Dominion is mentioned first. The original charter of man's sovereignty is recorded in Gen. i. 26-28. This instrument constituted man the lord of the lower creation, and clothed him with absolute authority therein. Sin has restricted and enfeebled his sway. But even now, what animal walks the earth so free or fierce or wild that it is not subdued or slain by man? What fish of the sea does he not capture? what fowl soars so high in the air that he does not bring it down to his feet? What clay or stone or metal or timber does he not subject to his purposes of utility or ornament? He arms the forces of nature — fire, air, water — against its inert materials, shaping the toughest, reducing the hardest, and subduing the most refractory. And he is perpetually pushing his conquests into the secret recesses of nature, and into new fields and departments of labor, changing from age to age the face of the world by his inventions and discoveries. The elementary forces are on the one hand resistless, and on the other within certain wide limits they do the bidding of man. But this grant contains the origin or germ of a wider dominion, — the power of civil society over its members. This is, in its nature, strictly absolute and irresistible. The state, even the people of the most unlimited monarchy on earth, is stronger in the long-run than the strongest despot. Civil society, then, is the image of God's supreme dominion over the universe of things and forces

and beings. Pursuing this course of thought, Dr. R. J. Breckinridge observes that society everywhere distributes its functions of government into the legislative, judicial, and executive. These functions may be divided and exercised by separate bodies of magistracy, or united and exercised by a single person; but they are all present in every form of government, and none other can possibly appear in any. Still further, these functions express distinct characteristics of man's moral and rational nature. His reason is represented in the legislative assembly; his conscience in the court of justice; and his will in the acts of the executive. Thus we reach the conclusion that the civil magistracy is, in some good sense, an image and likeness of God as the great Lawgiver, Judge, and Ruler of the universe.<sup>1</sup>

2. The ordinance of the sabbath comes next in the order of these Divine appointments. The narrative meets face to face the fiction that the sabbath originated in the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. Nothing can be plainer than the words in Gen. ii. 2, 3. First, the heavens and the earth being finished, God ceased from the work which he had made. Next, he rested from his work. He did not rest by reason of weariness, nor to recover strength expended in labor. He rested, or reposed, in the perfect satisfaction with all his work which he had made. He recognized that his ideal had become real: God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. Again, God blessed the sabbath day. At the creation of living animals, God blessed them; he blessed man also. This blessing was not limited to those individual beings which were immediately created by God, but was intended for all the following generations. In like manner the blessing on the first sabbath indicated that the day, down to the end of time, was a gift of God to man laden with blessings. Once more, God hallowed the sabbath, consecrating the day to rest from labor, to holy services and worship; setting it apart from all the other days of the week, and thus giving to it a higher significance. The sabbath is not a holiday, but a holy

<sup>1</sup> Breckinridge: *Subj. Theol.*, 408-411, 651.

day ; a monument of the primeval blessedness of the race, and a type of the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

3. The ordinance of labor was also appointed. Labor is not a part of the penalty of sin. While man stood in his innocency, "the Lord took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." Sin brought a curse upon toil. Labor, before the first sin, was expended on a garden most kindly and fruitful ; toil after that catastrophe was expended on a thorny and reluctant soil ; but labor was, as well before sin as after, the appointment of God to man. Labor without irksomeness and slavish toil, which makes rest, otherwise tedious, a delightful repose ; which is itself physical enjoyment and the keenest stimulus and relish of the mind, — labor was one of the blessings of paradise.

4. Not less certain is it that marriage was an ordinance given to man in his estate of holiness and in his primeval home in the garden. The marriage of one man to one woman, whereby they are no more twain but one flesh, is a mystery and a blessing which was contemplated in the creation of man in one person as male and female, and in the formation of the woman out of the trunk of the man. The institution of the sabbath opened the way for intimate communion with God ; even so marriage secured the most intimate and sacred associations of human society. The relation of husband and wife springs from the very constitution of humanity ; it is one of its permanent and indestructible elements. It is the root out of which has grown every form of human society, first the family, then the tribe. Out of the tribe has sprung the state, and finally the church.

Now, these four ordinances are not accidents in our nature or our position. Neither of them was an after-thought, nor were they introduced one by one, in the lapse of ages, into the bosom of the human race. They are not gifts of Divine grace imparted to man as a sinner in his sins, or as a sinner saved from his sins. They were granted to man as man, in the very beginning. Their necessity is deeply laid in the structure of his being. They are incorporated among the essential and enduring elements of life on earth. They belong to all men everywhere ;

the common, inalienable inheritance of humanity ; the arrangements made by the one only living and true God for the welfare of man when, as yet, the race existed in the person of one godlike man, and for all who should descend from him to replenish and subdue the earth. In the absence of either of the four institutions, society could not exist. It is difficult to say which loss would be most fatal, — the loss of dominion over the earth and the living things that move upon it ; or the loss of the sabbath day as a day of rest and worship ; or the loss of the productive labor, skilled and clumsy, with its products ; or the loss of marriage, terminating in unrestrained concubinage.

There is a fifth primeval ordinance, known as the covenant of works. Its historical position and significancy give it a place not inferior to those that have been mentioned. But on account of what is peculiar in its characteristics it must receive a separate treatment.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE FALL.

To the four Divine ordinances given in paradise and already mentioned, God was pleased to add another in the nature of a covenant. This constitution is commonly called the covenant of works, pointing to its condition, perfect obedience. In this, and in all the other covenants set forth in the Scriptures, God gives, man receives; a guaranty that these institutions were ordained in infinite wisdom, holiness, and love.

Of the covenant of works, these are the elements: The parties were God, acting without the intervention of a mediator, and man, acting for himself and for his posterity, as their natural head and representative. The condition of the covenant on man's part was perfect obedience to the revealed will of God. Adam was subjected also to an outward and decisive test of that obedience. The promise made to Adam, on condition of obedience, was life, natural, spiritual, and eternal, for himself and his posterity. The penalty of the first man's disobedience was death, natural, spiritual, and eternal, for himself and his posterity. Moreover, life and death hung upon a single trial, — one for all. And it is reasonable to infer that a definite period of probation was appointed. Had Adam continued obedient through that period, we may safely believe that neither he nor any of his posterity would have ever been exposed to the danger of sinning. The seal of the covenant is commonly believed to have been the tree of life.

Man's first disobedience, and the dealings of God with him, are minutely described in the record. The facts, in the order of their occurrence, are these: I. A test of obedience was set



before our first parents, in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were under obligation to obey God in all things. But they were distinctly commanded not to eat of the fruit of that particular tree. Their conduct in relation to this command would determine whether or not they were ready to obey their Creator in whatever he should require or forbid. Was this a reasonable and suitable prohibition?

(1) To this inquiry, the first reply may well be that Adam was not a mere child, destitute of foresight and insight; he was not a youth, rash and ignorant: but he was a mature man, mature in knowledge and discretion, with the gift of reason and articulate speech. (2) He was holy. He was not, like his descendants, prone to sin, and cursed with corrupt appetites and affections. The image of God in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, was unmarred in his bosom. The book of his heart began with no blank leaves; the law of God was written on every one of them. It is not enough to say of him, that he was able not to sin, for his disposition was towards perfect obedience to God. So eminent were the advantages with which he went into the trial, that it is one of the insoluble problems of human nature how, being holy, being in the image of God, he could be led into disobedience. (3) He held direct intercourse with God. At the moment of his creation he received the Divine benediction and the grant of dominion. God confirmed that grant by bringing all the beasts and fowls to Adam, to see what he would call them. And in the cool of the day, the man heard the voice of the Lord God, who was walking in the garden and seeking communion with the creatures made in his likeness. (4) The man was sufficiently forewarned. God pointed out the tree that was forbidden; ordered him, in direct terms, not to eat of its fruit; and told him, plainly, that death would be the penalty of disobedience. He knew the tree, the prohibition, and the penalty. There could be no misunderstanding here; and, in point of fact, there was none. None was ever alleged. (5) Every lawful enjoyment was offered to the man. For his sentient nature, plenty, fragrance, and beauty were poured forth around him. For his social nature, the companionship of

his wife, a help every way meet for him, was provided. For his rational and religious nature, God revealed himself to his understanding, and set before him the hope of endless life. What more could heart desire? Why go after forbidden enjoyment? (6) The duty enjoined was not difficult. No great labor was required, no intense strain on body or mind, no act of supreme courage in confronting danger, or of fortitude in bearing pain; nothing but abstinence from the fruit of one tree among the many trees in the garden, all of them laden with the consummate fruits and flowers of a soil and climate blessed of God. (7) The test was simple and intelligible. It required no severe process of thought to ascertain what was forbidden. There was no room for doubt or perplexity. The matter rested on no metaphysical or philosophical investigation. In substance, God said, "Behold that tree: of that thou shalt not eat; of every other tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but not of that tree; in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die!" Both the man and the woman understood the whole case. For, the woman said to the serpent, "God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither touch it, lest ye die." Is it conceivable, asks the sceptic, that God suspended such far-reaching consequences on so slight an issue? To this question the answer is, first, that the command was admirably adapted to the end proposed, because it set forth a naked test of obedience. Will the man obey God, in a thing indifferent, for the sake of obeying? The trial is cleared of every question of morals that can obscure the duty of unqualified obedience; the act forbidden is wrong simply because it is forbidden. Now, will the man obey the absolute will of God, or will he follow his own inclinations? The second reply may be, that the smallness of the gratification sought by the transgressors shows most clearly their sin and folly. Their personal guilt, with its folly, has betrayed itself continually in their posterity. Esau parted with his birthright at a price miserably cheap. In the days of Joel, the people sold a boy to a harlot for a single indulgence, and a girl for a drink of wine (Joel iii. 3). Judas, in the language of Dr. Chalmers, "went to hell

in a small way." And to this day men sell themselves for naught into the bondage of sin and death.

II. In its description of the tempter and the temptation, the record brings Eve into the foreground. The tempter approached Eve first of all. She parleyed with him, she hesitated, and was lost. Such is the testimony of Moses in the narrative. Paul also, speaking not only on the authority of Moses, but by personal inspiration likewise, says, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." The apostle, having made himself responsible for the fact, deduces from it the rule by which the position of woman in the Church is determined (1 Tim. ii. 11-14).

The tempter was the Devil, using the serpent as his tool. Satan was not transformed into a serpent: he became incarnate in the reptile, as in Christ's day he entered into man and beast. The serpent is called a beast of the field; he was sentenced to crawl on his belly, and eat dust all the days of his life. He was subtle and wily and insidious, watching for the moment in which to inflict the fatal wound. He had the means of bruising the heel of the woman's seed, and he was provided with a head which could be bruised. In the New Testament it is related that the devils once voluntarily entered into a herd of swine; in the garden the Devil became incarnate in the serpent,—spectacles, both, of deliberate spontaneous degradation.

The real tempter was the Devil. (1) All the testimony points to this conclusion. Consider the craft displayed by the Evil One. He used reason and articulate speech. He argued out the case with Eve; he stimulated her curiosity, pride, and ambition; he played upon the weakness of her human and womanly nature. He sneered at her scruples, and cast covert insinuations on the uprightness of the Almighty, — conducting the whole interview with fiendlike cunning. The intelligent, bold, and lying spirit by whom this was accomplished, is called in Scripture the Devil. (2) The same conclusion is derived from the curse pronounced on the serpent, to the effect that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Nobody can believe that this word is fulfilled in the war made by man-

kind upon snakes. (3) The tempter and his organ are treated as distinct, and yet blended, in the New Testament. Christ declares that the Devil was "a murderer from the beginning," "a liar, and the father of it" (John viii. 44). Paul says "the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty" (2 Cor. xi. 3). John speaks of the "great dragon," and of "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan" (Rev. xii. 9, xx. 2). Undoubtedly the tempter was the wicked spirit; he entered into the serpent, and in that disguise deceived our first parents. The method by which he effected his purpose is vividly described. The conversation was opened by the tempter.

SATAN. — *Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* He concealed his allusion to the forbidden tree, under the euphemism, "every tree of the garden." He insinuated the doubt whether God had in point of fact uttered the prohibition; and he intimated that in any event it was arbitrary and unreasonable.

EVE. — *We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.* Instead of bidding the tempter, Begone! she listened. And in the phrase which she interpolated, "neither shall ye touch it," she exaggerated the prohibition, intimating that she thought it too stringent, and that she had begun to drink in the poison of discontent and distrust. The serpent instantly saw his advantage.

SATAN. — *Ye shall by no means die!* An insolent imputation to God of false speaking.

EVE made no reply. Having trifled with the word of God, she was ready to disbelieve it altogether. The serpent interpreted her silence aright, and spoke again.

SATAN. — *But God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof your eyes will be opened, and ye will be like God, knowing good and evil.* That is to say: It is not because the fruit of the tree will injure you, that God has forbidden you to eat of it, but from ill-will and envy, because he does not mean that you shall be like himself.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Keil and Delitzsch *in loco*.

At that moment Eve was tempted by her senses and appetite, as well as by pride. "The woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes," and that it was a "tree to be desired to make one wise." The Devil was a murderer from the beginning. He was a liar also, repeatedly paltering with words in the double sense. His assurance, "Ye shall not surely die," was both true and false. It was true in regard to the instantaneous execution of the penalty; but false in the end, and false in regard to the spiritual death which instantly followed the transgression, and the eternal death of both soul and body. "Your eyes shall be opened," said Satan. Their eyes were opened, as he said; but what they saw was their nakedness and guilt. "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." This promise was kept to the ear; but broken to the hope, in what they lost and what they got. What they lost was the intuition of the good and the evil which belonged to the image of God, in which they were created; what they got was the knowledge which comes with the conscious loss of innocence. Before they sinned, they were wise after the wisdom of holy angels; after the transgression, they were wise after the experience of the fallen angels. The tempter persuaded her that knowledge and understanding were to be found in the taste of the forbidden fruit. It would solve for her the great mystery of the good and the evil. And perhaps her curiosity and self-will were stimulated by the fact that it was forbidden fruit. The tempter hinted that her eyes had been closed unreasonably, by the Creator, on some wonder in the sphere of thought. She distrusted God, and believed the serpent. Her eyes were opened. What did she see? Her nakedness and shame.

III. THE FALL.—The triumph of the adversary, and the ruin of the race, instantly became complete: "She took the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat." It has been thought that a radical difference between the temptation and sin of the woman and the temptation and sin of the man is established by the testimony of Paul: "The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty;"

“Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (2 Cor. xi. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 14). But these declarations do not prove that Satan alone tempted the woman, and the woman alone tempted the man. Least of all do they teach, what a well-known commentator suggests, that “the temptation, as actually applied to her, would have been ineffectual on him.” The phrase in Genesis must not be overlooked: “She gave to her husband *with her*.” He was probably present at the time, consenting to what she said and did. She took the lead in the guilty act; she joined her solicitations with the solicitations of the tempter; but the guilt of man and of woman was substantially the same. The husband ought to have protected his wife from the enemy and from herself. To the full extent in which he was personally influenced by the Devil, and in which he failed to defend the purity of his wife, he is considered by all good men dishonored and guilty. We are plainly told in Scripture that God held the man responsible for himself and his posterity (Rom. v. 12-21; 1 Cor. xv. 22-45). It appears, moreover, that not until both had eaten, were the eyes of both simultaneously opened. They sinned and suffered together.

From this explanation, it is plain that the root of the first disobedience was unbelief. The man and woman were led by the enemy to believe that the word of God, annexing death to transgression, was an idle threat. They impeached, in thought, the goodness of God in withholding what would make them wise, and his fair dealing in denying to them the knowledge of good and evil by virtue of which they should become like God himself. By their unbelief they made God a liar, capricious and unjust. One step more completed their ruin. Out of the evil heart of unbelief proceeded the deliberate act of disobedience. Here we discover the ground on which it is declared in the word of God, that unbelief is the root of every form of sin, and faith, its opposite, is the earnest of every saving grace. Adam’s life of disobedience began with unbelief; our life of new obedience begins with faith. What prodigious force does this narrative lend to the saying of Christ in regard to the

salvation of those who believe, and the perdition of those who believe not!

The radical change of heart from holiness to depravity, from spiritual life to spiritual death, which took place in the fallen pair, immediately betrayed itself. (1) They suffered under the sense of moral degradation. Their eyes were opened, and they "saw that they were naked." While they stood in primeval innocence, they stood also in what Milton calls the "first naked glory" of the human body, and were not ashamed. But as soon as they sinned, their nakedness became associated with the consciousness of guilt, and they were overwhelmed with shame. The inseparable connection between their sin and their shame was pointed out by the Creator: "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" The coherence of the narrative appears in the fact of their nakedness (Gen. ii. 25), the discovery of that nakedness (iii. 7), and the remedy of that nakedness (iii. 21). (2) They experienced the dread of judgment. They hid themselves from God's presence among the trees of the garden. Terror in the presence of God, like the shame of nakedness, was inseparable from the sense of guilt. (3) They became deceitful, drinking in the subtle poison of Satan's duplicity. When asked by the Almighty why they were hiding themselves, they kept back their guilt and prattled of their modesty. (4) They became shuffling and insolent. Adam laid the blame of his sin partly on his wife and partly on God, showing that he was both impious and had lost what men call the sense of honor. "The serpent beguiled me," said Eve, "and I did eat." She concealed her dalliance with the tempter, and she offered no excuse for beguiling her husband. This train of thought distinctly suggests the antithesis between the death of the body and its resurrection, and the antithesis between the change of heart, wrought by the first sin, from holiness to depravity, and the change of heart, wrought by the Holy Spirit, from depravity to holiness. This double and counter-revolution in human nature enters largely into the history of redemption.

Our course of thought raises the inquiry as to the origin of man's apostasy. The answer of Pelagianism is that God could not, without destroying Adam's free agency, prevent him from falling, and that he sinned simply because he chose so to do. But this answer antagonizes the many scriptures which teach that God secures the final perseverance of the saints, and that he will keep the redeemed in heaven from sinning any more. Manichæism would answer and say that Satan was wholly independent of the Almighty, and that he constrained man to sin by virtue of his own irresistible power. This answer deserves no attention. Some divines, in the main orthodox, hold that God, by his direct influence and for his own glory, moved and impelled man to sin. But the reply to that is, "God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man" (Jas. i. 13). The explanation of God's word is set forth precisely in the Westminster Standards: "Man in his state of innocency had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well-pleasing to God; yet mutably, so that he might fall from it." He was made a dependent being, and as such was upheld in holiness only by the power of God. "Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of Satan, transgressed the commandment of God, in eating the forbidden fruit, and thereby fell from the state of innocency wherein they were created."<sup>1</sup> Why God permitted this catastrophe, must be answered in the words, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." It should not be forgotten that the real difficulty lies back of man's first sin, even in the apostasy of the evil spirits, and, through that apostasy, the admission of sin into the universe. Man sinned under the solicitations of one of these fallen angels. How came that angel to fall, unprompted, unsolicited, untempted, kept in holiness we know not how long, standing in the life full of glory? We can give no other account of this guilt than by saying that the angels, being creatures, were dependent on the Creator, and that God, for reasons not revealed, left them to the freedom of their own wills, and they destroyed themselves.

<sup>1</sup> West. Conf. of Faith, chap. ix. Larg. Cat., Q. 21.



Afterwards man, under the temptations of the fallen angels, likewise fell. The beginning of this awful series of events, the first sin of the holy angels, is the profoundest mystery of the creation. And yet it went before, if it did not lead to, the apostasy of our first parents. Lenormant remarks, "This dogma of the fall of the human race, through the bad use that its earliest progenitors made of their free will, remains an eternal truth which is nowhere brought out with the same precision. It affords the only solution of the formidable problem which constantly returns to rear itself before the human mind, and which no religious philosophy outside of revelation has ever been able to solve."

IV. THE JUDGMENT. — The Almighty proceeded to pass sentence on the parties. On the tempter he pronounced an inexorable curse. On the woman the sentence was twofold: pain in childbearing, and subjection to man. For the man, the ground cursed for his sake, unceasing toil, and in the end death, were his portion. Instantly, on the very day of the transgression, both the man and the woman came under the power of death. The body became mortal, the soul died in trespasses and sins, and body and soul were exposed to everlasting perdition. They became corrupt. They experienced not only a change of condition, but a change of nature. They were guilty, in the sense of liability to punishment; and, still further, they were totally depraved, and made opposite to all that is spiritually good. The Pelagian thought that the death of the body was a primeval law of human nature, and that Adam would have died even if he had not sinned, receives no support from the Word of God. The longevity of the patriarchs in the first two thousand years indicates that the powers of an endless life were gradually exhausted. The statements in 1 Cor. xv., and in other places in the doctrinal epistles, show that death is a penal evil, inflicted on man because he sinned.

V. THE EXPULSION. — God drove the guilty pair from the garden. This was not merely a dismissal, but penal and final banishment. Cherubim were posted at the garden-gate. Near by the cherubim, though not in their hands, a flashing sword

appeared, and was continually brandished in every direction. The cherubim and the sword kept back the transgressors from approaching the garden. The sword was a symbol of Divine justice. The cherubim were beings from a higher world, in the form of living creatures. They are represented as surrounding the throne of God, both in the visions of Ezekiel and the Revelation of John. The Hebrew word used here is the root of the term *shekinah*, pointing to God's manifested presence. It may, perhaps, be inferred that the place of the cherubim was set apart for Divine worship. Certain it is that the cherubim were subsequently set up in the holy of holies, shadowing the mercy-seat, the throne of God. Their figures were wrought on the curtains of the tabernacle, and were engraved on the walls and doors of the temple. This would explain what Cain said to the Lord in his exile, "From thy face shall I be hid;" and what is said of him, "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord." We may interpret, therefore, the flaming sword as the symbol of justice, and the cherubim as the images of mercy and hope. Behind them, and guarded by them, was the garden, in its full beauty and glory. The covenant of works was no longer the covenant of life. The probation was ended; the reward was lost; the penalty was incurred. In process of time, the garden disappeared, and with it the tree of life and the forbidden tree. The cherubim also, and the sword, the symbols of God's mercy and justice, were finally withdrawn.

All these penal consequences came upon the posterity of the fallen pair. Their own children were born outside of the garden, and we all share their exile. We, their remote descendants, also share in their depraved and corrupted nature. The sense of guilt, showing itself in the shame of nakedness, afflicts us all. The naked condition of the brute creation gives no offence to the most fastidious; the exposure of the human body shocks the sensibility of the rudest. The terror at the presence of God, the loss of communion with God, and the spirit of murmuring against God, have passed from our parents to all their descendants. The woman's pains in childbearing, her subjection to her husband; the earth cursed for man's sake, his toil

and sorrow, his bread eaten in the sweat of his face, his return to the dust, — all these inflictions became the unwasting legacies of the generations which were unborn when their parents fell. They point directly to the truth that the man who fell in the garden was the root of all mankind, and our representative in the covenant of works. In Adam all sinned, in him all died.

The antiquarian researches of modern scholars have disclosed certain distorted traditions of paradise, the fall, and the expulsion, in the sacred literature of the ancient peoples. It would be easy to make out the true story of Eden, by comparing and adjusting the echoes that come to us from the pagan world. The primeval purity and happiness of man are reflected from the literature of many ages and nations. The tree of life, and the tree of knowledge, are represented in the oral traditions of Persians, Arabs, and Greeks, and in the bas-reliefs or cylinders of Assyria and Babylon. Signs of the slimy trail of the serpent are found everywhere. One famous ancient Roman sarcophagus “shows a man and woman, naked, standing at the foot of a tree, from which the man is about to take some fruit, while the demon, who has tempted him, is standing near.” On a Roman bas-relief, a huge serpent is coiled round the trunk of a tree, beneath which a man and a woman, in primitive nakedness, are standing. “In the Scandinavian legend, Thor, the first-born of the highest God, a mediator between him and men, . . . breaks the head of the great serpent with his club, and finally tramples it under foot, and slays it, though at the price of his own life. So in the oldest Hindoo temples, two figures of Krishna are seen; in one of which he is trampling on the crushed head of the serpent; while in the other, the serpent clings around him, and bites his heel.” A Babylonian cylinder, brought to England by Layard, represents a tree with two bunches of fruit hanging down, a man sitting on one side, and a woman on the other, both reaching their hands towards the fruit, and behind the woman is a serpent erect. According to a primitive Persian tradition, man was created holy, but the evil spirit seduced first the woman, and then the man, to believe in him and not in God. The tempter grew bold, and “brought

them fruits which they ate, and by eating which they lost all the hundred blessings they had had, save one, and were wicked and unhappy. Having ere long discovered fire by Divine revelation, they offered the first sacrifice of sheep, and began to eat flesh, and to clothe themselves with the skins of the sheep, and to make garments of their hair.”<sup>1</sup> Dim traditions of the cherubim and sword have also been preserved. The inquiry whether serpent-worship did not take its origin from Eden is worthy of attention.

These primeval temptations are not without analogies in human experience. Stier discovers similar evil solicitations in the three periods of man’s life: “Enjoyment entices the youth; honor, the man; and possession or power, the old.” The Israelites in the wilderness were tempted by the appetites, longing for the flesh-pots of Egypt; by hard thoughts of God, clamoring for better food than manna from heaven, exclaiming, “Our souls loathe this light [*literally*, despicable] bread;” and by unbelief, refusing to go up and possess the promised land. Similar comparisons have been instituted between the temptations in paradise, and the worldly lusts described by John (1 John ii. 16). The sight of the tree that was good for food excited in Eve the “lust of the flesh;” the “pleasant” appearance of the same tree awakened in her the “lust of the eye;” and the “pride of life” was represented by her unholy ambition to be “as gods.”

A more instructive analogy exists between the temptation of the first Adam in paradise, and the second Adam in the wilderness. The relation which the two Adams sustained to each other, to the human race, to sin and redemption, and to the covenants of works and of grace, entitles this comparison to unusual prominence. On both occasions, in the first place, the temptations were threefold. Next, Christ and Adam, being holy, were tempted, or proved, or tried. There is nothing morally wrong in being tempted without our consent; the sin consists in yielding to the evil solicitation. Further, in both

<sup>1</sup> Geikie’s Hours with the Bible, i. 15, seq. Lenormant: Contemp. Rev., September, 1879. Len., etc., Anc. History, i. 10 seq.

instances, the enemy was from without, and was Satan, the adversary of the race and of the Saviour. Adam was, by creation, in the image of God; and it is incredible that his holy affections generated spontaneously the purpose and sin of unbelief and disobedience. Our Lord was, by virtue of his essential nature, very God; and it would be blasphemous to assume that there was in Jesus either error or corrupt affection. Still further, the means employed were the same,—duplicity and downright lying. The serpent assured Eve that she should not die, that her eyes should be opened, and that she should be as God; all of which assurances were essentially false throughout. After the same strategy of fraud and lying, Satan promised to give to Christ all the kingdoms of the world “if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” But these kingdoms were not Satan’s to give away. Again, the temptations were, in the nature of them, analogous. The first was addressed to the appetite. The woman, bewildered by the cunning of the serpent, saw that the tree was good for food and pleasant to the eye. Our Lord was hungered after a fast of forty days, and the Devil said, “Command these stones that they be made bread.” The second experiment, in Eden, was made upon the inordinate curiosity of the woman: “She saw that the tree was to be desired to make one wise.” If we follow the order of events in Luke, we learn that the second experiment on our Lord was intended to infuse an unholy vanity and love of display into his bosom: “If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down.” If this be the proper interpretation, the analogy exists in the pride assumed by the enemy to be in the hearts of the tempted; in the woman, the pride of intellect; in Christ, a pride in the ministration of angels. Or, as an alternative to the rather obscure analogy, it might be said, that in both cases the enemy sought to entice the tempted into the sin of presumption. The third temptation was undoubtedly intended to awaken, if possible, profane ambition. To the woman, the adversary said, “Ye shall be as gods.” To the Christ he offered, in exchange for one act of worship, “all the kingdoms of the world.”

Before leaving this part of the history we should compare

the positions of the first and the second man. Adam, being the root of all mankind, was appointed in the covenant of works to be our actual representative ; Christ, having taken our nature, was appointed to be our actual representative in the covenant of grace. Adam was tempted and fell, and ruined us all ; Christ was tempted, and was yet without sin, and by his obedience unto death purchased salvation for all who will believe. “As, after Adam’s first transgression, all subsequent sin was simply the unfolding of the original ; so this, the Saviour’s first victory, appears as the foundation of all those that follow after.” “Adam fell in paradise, and made it a wilderness ; Jesus conquered in the wilderness, and made it a paradise, where the beasts lost their wildness, and angels took up their abodes.” The apostasy and shame of Adam, and the Divine integrity and glory of Jesus, are easily explained. The first Adam was a mere man, the second was the Lord from heaven.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE FIRST GOSPEL.

“MAN having, by his fall, made himself incapable of life by the covenant of works, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace, wherein he freely offered unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup> This covenant is the basis of human redemption, and a concise account of it is needful in this place.

The *parties* to this constitution are the Father, representing the undivided Godhead, and the Son representing his chosen people. The *undertaking*, on the part of the Son, was to assume to himself human nature, to stand in the place of the elect, in the broken covenant of works, so far as to fulfil all its obligations, and to endure its penalty, — being made a curse for us. The *engagement* made by the Father to the Son included all needed support in his atoning work, the gift of an innúmerable throng of redeemed souls, and a personal exaltation at the right hand of the majesty on high. The *requirements* imposed on those who would be saved are, faith in Christ’s atoning blood, a faith that is the gift of God, and works by love, and is accompanied by repentance for sin and a new obedience. The *promise* to them that believe includes the forgiveness of sins, the graces of the Spirit, regeneration, justification, sanctification, adoption, final perseverance, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. The first covenant contemplated man as holy, and required perfect obedience; the second covenant contemplates man as a sinner, and requires him to believe on Jesus Christ. Lastly, the blessings of the new covenant were, in the

<sup>1</sup> Westminster Conf., vii. 3.

Old-Testament Church, *sealed* to believers by the sacraments of circumcision and the passover ; in the Christian Church, by the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The covenant of grace was disclosed to the fallen pair at the time when they and the tempter were arraigned for the first transgression. The man and the woman answered separately. The answer of each began with a shuffling apology, and ended with a confession of guilt. The serpent offered no defence ; indeed, he was not interrogated. The Lord God then passed judgment upon all the parties before him, following the order in which they had severally taken part in the transgression ; that is to say, first on the serpent, next on the woman, then on the man.

Now, in the first of these judicial awards, "the Lord God said unto the serpent: Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field ; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel " (Gen. iii. 15). In these words the Church has always recognized what has been variously called the first gospel, the first promise of salvation, the earliest Messianic prophecy, or, in the language of the schools, the *Protèvangeliùm*. It was the first manifestation of the covenant of grace.

The form in which the glad tidings were made known is worthy of notice. It might be conjectured that God would convey them in the shape of a direct and definite promise. But instead of that he put the first gospel into the bosom of the curse on the serpent. In its aspect towards the tempter it was strictly retributive ; in its aspect towards the man it was strictly remedial. The whole has been well styled a "remedial sentence." It took its retributive quality from the proceeding then pending. God was administering Divine justice on the guilty. Addressing the reptile which Satan had employed as his organ, God said, "Thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field." Then turning to the real tempter



incarnate in the serpent, God said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The proceeding was strictly judicial. The proprieties of the occasion clothed even the word of salvation with the force of a Divine malediction on the enemy of souls. Such is the malignity of Satan towards our race, that a blessing on us is a curse on the adversary.

By the terms of the curse the serpent was condemned to supreme debasement and contempt. "Thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." The effect of this malediction upon the reptile, and its effect on the real tempter, should be separately considered. Many commentators, both Jewish and Christian, have held that the serpent suffered a physical and organic degradation. Some writers have conjectured that it was originally furnished with wings, or that it was provided with legs, or that it was a flying seraph. According to Maimonides, an old Jewish gloss affirms that the serpent was an animal as large as a camel, and that Samael, which is another name for Satan, rode on it when Eve was deceived. Even the most plausible of these conjectures involves a supernatural change in the anatomical structure of the reptile. But no such change is indicated in the record; it is not established by any good and necessary conclusion from what is said, nor is it suggested by a fair explanation of the facts. That explanation is proposed by Calvin, to the effect that the serpent was originally created to go upon its belly, and eat dust mingled with its natural food; that it was now simply remanded to its former prostrate condition; this condition became by Divine appointment, and in the unalterable conceptions of the human mind, a token of perpetual infamy. To this it may be added that the reptile had risen into a temporary exercise of reason and speech. It was stripped of these gifts, and sent back into its original beastliness and the use of an inarticulate hiss. So much for the effect of the curse on the organ of the tempter. The tempter himself was sentenced by

the terms of the curse to everlasting shame and abhorrence. He had used the serpent as his tool; and now, in the condition and habits of the reptile, Satan should recognize his own abject condition. The serpent became a visible representative on earth of the Devil in his degradation, "upon thy belly shalt thou go;" of his filthiness, "dust shalt thou eat;" of a perpetual curse, "all the days of thy life;" of his stealthiness, "bruising the heel," a snake in the grass. The serpent is cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field that the Lord God had made; even so Satan is the most despicable of all rational creatures. The Almighty, having made this disposition of his enemy and ours, proceeds to unfold the features of the first gospel.

First, it contains a substantial but indefinite promise of salvation. This promise comes before us in its germ to be gradually unfolded through the ages. The ultimate victory of the kingdom of light over the kingdom of darkness is predicted, and the assurance is added that this victory shall be won by the seed of the woman. But who are the seed of the woman? The expression bears a threefold meaning. Primarily it signifies the whole human family, for Eve is the mother of all living. More precisely, it describes the righteous portion of the race: "The good seed are the children of the kingdom" (Matt. xiii. 38). In its highest sense it is predicated of Christ, who is proved by genealogical tables to be the direct descendant of the first pair. But the first gospel does not declare whether the victory shall be gained by the human race as a whole, or by a favored portion of the race, or by one adorable person. Nor does it designate the time when the great conqueror shall arise, nor the country and the people in the midst of which this redemption shall be wrought out. These particulars are reserved, to be subsequently revealed. The modern believer, with the advanced revelations before him, interprets the promise as of one, even Christ, and of the Church whereof he is the head. Calvin says, "I explain the *seed* to mean the posterity of the woman in general." "But since experience teaches us that not all the sons of Adam, by far, arise as the conquerors of

the Devil, we must necessarily come to one head, that we may find to whom the victory belongs. So Paul from the seed of Abraham leads to Christ. Wherefore, the sense will be, in my judgment, that the human race, which Satan was endeavoring to oppress, would at length be victorious." If to this we add that the Lord Jesus Christ, the ideal seed of the woman, will win the victory, the sense of the promise is fully brought out.

In the second place, the first gospel contains certain prophetic intimations of the plan of salvation. The words were uttered by God himself. Having devised that plan, he was pleased to plant the germs of its ruling ideas in the initial promise, intending to unfold and reveal them in the later scriptures. These are its intimations. 1. Salvation shall come through a person. We are saved by a Saviour, not by a philosophy or a dogma or a system of morality; not by a ritual of worship; but by a living Being who is able to save, and who does save, the lost. 2. This Saviour shall be a man, and yet more than a man. He shall be a man, the seed of a woman; a partaker of her flesh and blood; a true man, having a human body and a reasonable soul. And yet he shall be more than a man. He who had destroyed our first parents was greater than they, and could not, in his turn, be overcome except by one who is greater still. He who shall bruise Satan under his feet, who shall put in subjection the conqueror of man, must be supreme over the subjugated race not only, but over the conquering enemy. The prophecy points out not obscurely a union, in the coming one, of the human with a superhuman, if not with the Divine nature. 3. The Saviour shall be the seed of the woman severally, not of the man and woman jointly. "*Her* seed shall bruise thy head." The inscrutable idea of the seed of the woman, as thoroughly distinct from that of the man, would probably be recognized among the contents of the first gospel only in the light of subsequent revelations. The word of Jehovah through Isaiah re-stated the mystery in plainer terms: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. vii. 14). Even this prediction was susceptible of another interpretation. But when God sent

forth his Son, born of a woman, then was divulged the mystery that lay hidden in these old prophecies respecting the seed of the woman, and the child born of a virgin mother. The creed expresses the truth in one aspect: "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary;" and Archbishop Usher in another: "As a man he was without a father, as God without a mother." "In the fact that the destroyer of the serpent was born of a woman, without a human father, these words were fulfilled in a way which showed that the promise must have proceeded from that Being who secured its fulfilment not only in its essential force, but in its apparently casual form."<sup>1</sup>

4. The Redeemer should be a suffering and a triumphant Messiah. Not only so, but his sufferings and triumphs, as the seed of the woman, should bear a certain definite relation to the seed of the serpent. He should receive a bruise in the heel, a curable wound; he should bruise the head of his adversary, a mortal wound. 5. The salvation purchased for us by the seed of the woman will be complete. By his apostasy man had incurred the penalty of death, including spiritual death to the soul, death by dissolution to the body, death eternal to both soul and body. By virtue of the first gospel, provision was made for the restoration of life to the soul, of life to the body, of eternal life and blessedness to both. 6. Redemption was promised not only to the first man and woman, but to their posterity likewise. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman," — an assurance, personally, to the woman; "and between thy seed and her seed; it" (her seed) "shall bruise thy head," — an assurance for her posterity. The grammatical forms used here, *seed* and *it*, point to the Lord Jesus Christ; "for God said not *seeds* as of many, but her *seed* as one, which is Christ" (Gal. iii. 16). The sin of the first parents had ruined the race. Their children would find themselves exiles from paradise, with loss of the Divine image and the Divine favor, subject to sorrow, toil, the dissolution of the body, and the second death. After the same rule, a common victory over the tempter was promised to the fallen pair and to their

<sup>1</sup> Keil and Delitzsch on Pent., i. 102.

descendants. The vital relation of Adam to his posterity in the first transgression, in its punishment, and in the promised deliverance, is here most distinctly set out. Indeed, the doctrine of headship is a point squarely made. The student of the Bible may, without hesitation, accept the conclusion that the Scriptures make it certain that the promises to the divinely appointed representative men of the race, notably Adam, Noah, Abraham, and David, are promises as well to their seed after them. 7. God put enmity between the two seeds. This statement is borne out by the conflict which began at the apostasy between the righteous, the good seed of the kingdom, and the wicked, the children of the wicked one. Nothing is more distinctly foreshadowed in the remedial sentence than this conflict; nothing is more distinctly traced out in biblical history. The holy war began in the murder of Abel; it was renewed in the successful attempt of the posterity of Cain to debauch the posterity of Seth; in the ungodly sinners in the days of Enoch; in the indecency of Ham; in the mocking spirit of Ishmael; in the hatred of Esau towards Jacob; in the outrages inflicted by the Egyptians on the Israelites; in the attack of the Amalekites on the exhausted rear of God's people in the wilderness (Deut. xxv. 17, 18); in the hatred of Ahab and Jezebel towards Elijah; in the long and dreary wars waged for a thousand years against the Israelites by the heathen tribes dwelling between the Euphrates and the Nile; in the weapons formed against Daniel and his friends in Babylon; in the hostility of Jew and Pagan towards the followers of Christ; and in the persecutions which have worn out, in all ages, the saints of the most high God. It is worthy of notice, also, that the children of the Devil have inherited all the subtlety which their father displayed in the garden. On their part, the war is a merciless onset joined to the wiles of the Devil. On the side of the righteous, the victory is to be won by the truth in a fair fight in the open day.

But the conflict was carried into a higher sphere. Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of the Devil. The struggle began early. Even in the infancy of Jesus, Herod sought the

young child's life. Immediately after the baptism, Jesus was tempted of the Devil. The adversary was defeated, but he departed from Jesus only "for a season" (Luke iv. 13). Before the supper, the Devil had put it into the heart of Judas to betray him; at the supper, Satan, in order to make sure work of it, "entered into him." And, during the passion, Christ exclaimed to his enemies, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." The Evangelist treats this mysterious hour with a reserve which ought to be sacredly respected; but it may be safely inferred that the old serpent mingled bitter ingredients in the cup which Jesus prayed might pass from him.

This direct personal warfare between the Prince of peace and the prince of the power of the air appears in the demoniacal possessions, the accounts of which enter largely into the New-Testament history. Similar possessions occurred very rarely in the Old-Testament period, and have in modern times, so it is commonly thought, disappeared altogether. But to the end that the Son of God might spoil the powers of darkness, and make a spectacle of them, and demolish them openly, God was pleased to loose the adversary for a little season. Hence the astonishing multiplication of these possessions in the time of Christ, and the frightful power which the foul spirits exercised over their victims, are to be referred to a special Divine permission. This explains the importance attached by the Evangelists to the miracles in which the devils were cast out, the minuteness with which both the symptoms and the instantaneous cure of the malady are described, and the careful record made of the words spoken by Christ and by the unclean spirits, and of all the attending phenomena. The repeated instances in which the Son of God rebuked the unclean spirits by name, and in which they addressed him by name, show that the heads of two hostile kingdoms were met face to face. And further, the refusal of Christ to receive the testimony of the devils to his Messiahship (for "he suffered them not to say that they knew him to be the Christ")<sup>1</sup> shows that he came not to be witnessed unto by the adversary, but to bruise him under his feet. The plan of

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 41, in the margin.

this part of the final gospel is a thorough commentary on the first gospel. Christ was fully conscious of the victory that he would win. "I beheld," said he, "Satan as lightning falling from heaven."

A quality of mercy in the sentence on Adam and Eve was pointed out as early as the third century by Tertullian. He observed that no curse was pronounced on Adam and Eve. Only to the serpent God said, "Thou art cursed." He condemned the woman to sorrow and subjection, but he pronounced no curse upon her person. God condemned the man to sorrow and toil all the days of his life: he cursed the ground for man's sake, but not the man himself. Satan only was accursed, not his victims. Tertullian's remark should be qualified. There is a painful sense in which we are, all of us, under the curse of the law until we receive the regeneration. But there is a specific sense in which the tempter only was accursed, and in which the final curse shall be in due form of law pronounced, to take effect at once on the wicked in the day of judgment. "Depart, ye *cursed*, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41). In this special sense it is true that the curse was withheld from our first parents. Satan was left to perish in hell without hope of escape, but the sentence on the human race was adjourned over to a future day; meanwhile a period of probation was granted, and the way of salvation was opened before us.

Next, God intimated to the fallen pair that their lives should be spared for a season. They were not struck dead at the instant of the transgression. Moreover, the Divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head conveyed the assurance that the woman should live to bear children, and the sentence of toil indicated that the man should live to till the ground. A respite only was granted, not a final pardon; for God instantly added, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Adam joyfully recognized the reprieve, and the hope held out that time would be given to the woman before her death to give existence to a posterity among whom should be the author of eternal life. He expressed his joy in the new

name that he gave to his wife. When she was formed he called her woman, "because she was taken out of man." Now he called her name Eve, "because she was the mother of all living;" the continuance and redemption of his race being guaranteed to the man through the woman. But how is this reprieve to be reconciled with the terms of the threat? The threat was, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" the respite actually granted was nine hundred years. The answer is to be found in the complex character of the death which was threatened. This form of punishment is threefold: The corruption of our whole nature, which is spiritual death; the separation of soul and body, which is temporal death; and the destruction of both soul and body in hell, which is eternal death. Spiritual death instantly followed the eating of the forbidden fruit; the human body became mortal, and began to die; while the infliction of eternal death was, by Divine mercy, withheld during the life of the sinner. There was added the further promise of a posterity which should subjugate the adversary. This promise was conveyed in terms too explicit to admit of any doubt. Adam did not, it is probable, anticipate that the promise would culminate in Christ; but he was plainly told that the victory should somehow be won by his posterity.

The established connection between the salvation of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked is set forth in the first gospel. This is no ingenious deduction of the theologians from the terms of the remedial sentence, but it is a settled principle of the Divine administration. Nothing short of a deadly wound, inflicted on the serpent, can give victory to the seed of the woman. Not only was the drowning of the old world associated in point of fact and time with the rescue of righteous Noah, but the flood that bore him safely on its bosom destroyed the ungodly. Noah and his family were saved, not from, but "by, water;" "the like figure whereunto baptism doth now save us" (1 Pet. iii. 21). The escape of Lot from Sodom was closely followed by the destruction of the cities of the plain. The emancipation of the Hebrews from bondage in



Egypt was procured by a series of desolating plagues upon their taskmasters. The departure of Israel, God's first-born son, was joined with the death of the first-born of Egypt; and at the Red Sea the double process of the deliverance of the people of God and the overthrow of his enemies was made conspicuous. The settlement of the chosen people in the promised land involved the extermination of the filthy inhabitants of Canaan. In the days of Elijah, the escape from slaughter of the faithful Israelites was secured by the slaughter of the priests of Baal and of Jezebel and Ahab. In Babylon, also, the three holy men were taken, alive and well, out of the fiery furnace, and Daniel came unhurt out of the den of lions; while their executioners and enemies were consumed by the flames, or cast upon the hungry jaws of the wild beasts. The release of the Jews from captivity in Babylon was brought about by the destruction of the city, its king and nobles. The Messiah also came to destroy and to save. Isaiah predicted that he should come "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God" (Isa. lxi. 2). John the Baptist took up the same strain: "He shall gather the wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (Matt. iii. 12). In the fall of Jerusalem, which was a type of the day of judgment, the believers, being warned of God, escaped to the mountains, while the scoffers who remained perished in the siege. In the day of judgment itself, the simultaneous salvation of the righteous, and the destruction of the wicked, will finish the present dispensation of mingled mercy and justice. The eternal song will begin, and at the same moment the eternal wail.

The Lord God "drove out the man" from the garden. The prospect before the exiles was one of indescribable sorrow, and yet of a comfortable hope. Little did they know of either. They could not foresee the shame and sorrow which waited for them, the extent to which the first sin had changed the face and fate of the world, or the awful growth of physical and moral evil which should spring forth into everlasting corruption from the seeds of the transgression. So also the endless hope that was laid up in the first promise was largely hidden from them.

Standing in the light of the subsequent revelations, we behold our first parents bearing with them from the garden, though unconsciously perhaps, such promises as these: Eternal life is provided for the race; this life shall come through a personal Saviour, the incarnate Son of God; he shall be born of a virgin mother; he shall be a suffering but triumphant Messiah; he shall bruise Satan under his feet; the overthrow of the wicked shall go hand in hand with the deliverance of the righteous; the posterity of Adam and Eve shall, jointly with them, be heirs of the righteousness that is by faith; and all these blessings are guaranteed by a covenant entered into by the First and Second Persons in the Godhead, and administered by the Third Person of the adorable Three in One. And so the fallen but redeemed race, in the person of their progenitors, left the garden, having first received a promise exceedingly great and precious. In the phrase of the Puritan divines, our first parents were "prisoners of hope." Their lives had been spared; the curse on the serpent was withheld from their persons. If, as many think, a sacrifice, expiating by blood the guilt of their sins, and covering their shame with the skins of the victims, was offered by them, they went forth not in their nakedness, not hiding their shame in a flimsy rag of fig-leaves, but clothed upon with a sign of mercy; and one might almost say that the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world met them at the gate, and cast over them the robe of his righteousness. One other joyful signal was in reserve for them. When they departed into the land of exile, they looked back, and behold, the cherubim were posted at the sunrise gate marking the place of the presence and altar of God. The flaming sword, the "fiery arm" of Divine justice, was there; but in the cherubim mercy was seen rejoicing over judgment.

But, is the Mosaic account of the creation and apostasy of the human race a veritable history? This narrative has been called an absurdity, or a pure fiction, or a higher species of the fable. The most respectable of the sceptical thinkers propose the mythical theory. They treat the record as a collection of legends, well told and well woven together, of the creation of

the world, the origin of the human race, its primeval innocence and degeneracy. These myths are, according to some, of Persian origin. The analogies are the story of Romulus and Remus and the she-wolf, and the legendary chronicles of ancient Egypt and Greece. This theory is liable to three serious objections. First, if the Mosaic account of the creation and fall is mythical, there is no trustworthy history of these events in existence. The narrative is simple and artless; it is not poetical in its structure, but historical; it is coherent and progressive; the unities are preserved; its ethical and psychological features are true to reason and nature; and the highest truths are among its contents. If this be discarded, what other tradition, written or unwritten, of that early period is worthy of credit? Secondly, the value of the Book of Genesis as a whole, and of all the later scriptures, depends on the historical verity of the three opening chapters. If their contents be mythical, it is impossible to explain what follows them in the record. The plan of redemption developed in the two Testaments roots itself in the Mosaic account of the beginning of all things. The incarnation and death of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, presupposes the absolute truth of all that is said in regard to the creation and apostasy of the first Adam. Or, reversing the thought, we may say that Strauss's conception of Christ is the logical sequent to Von Bohlen's notion of Adam. Fable answers to fable, as in water face answereth to face. Thirdly, our Lord and the apostles treat these facts as sound, and as the genesis of other revelations. It would be easy to construct from their declarations a compendious history of the formation of the man and the woman; the tree of life; the serpent; the Devil, his subtlety, his access to our first parents, the order in which he proceeded,—first beguiling Eve, then Adam; the entrance of death into the world; the representative position of Adam, and the ruin which his first sin wrought in the world.<sup>1</sup> Was Moses the retailer of idle legends, and were our Lord and the apostles his dupes?

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ii. 7, xxii. 2, 14; John viii. 44; Rev. xii. 9, xx. 2; 1 Tim. ii. 14; 2 Cor. xi. 3; Rom. v. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 22.

Scarcely less objectionable is the allegorical method of explaining the narrative. The allegory sets forth facts under the form of a figurative representation. It has been called a continuous metaphor. The eightieth Psalm contains an inspired allegory, in which God's chosen people are represented by a vineyard. In English literature, Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" and Spenser's "Fairy Queen" are fine examples of this vehicle of thought. Now, some interpreters, who profess to hold to the inspiration of the Scriptures, in their zeal to make every thing easy to the natural man deny the presence of a real serpent in the temptation and fall. They resolve the reptile, and what he said and did, into a sacred allegory. But this explanation does not clear up the subject: it raises new difficulties. First, this narrative purports to be, and on its face is, a plain and veritable history. Next, it is a part of a continuous statement of facts. It is the only link connecting the planting of the garden in chap. ii. with the birth of Adam's sons in chap. iv. Our respect for the veracity of the historian and the dignity of the history is destroyed if we believe that this link is nothing more than a continuous metaphor; and that it is inserted, without notice to the reader, in a coherent narrative of absolute facts, like the links of a chain parted in the middle, and held together by a spider's web. Further, the fall of man is the most terrible catastrophe which has ever occurred on earth. It is a great mystery, but it explains other and perhaps greater mysteries. That the historical truth in regard to an event so decisive is obscured, in the sacred record, by a fable or an allegory, is harder to believe than the story itself taken in its plain and obvious sense. Still further, the suggestion of Bishop Horsly is unanswerable. If the serpent is an allegorical reptile, the forbidden fruit, the tree on which it grew, the conversation between the enemy and the woman, and the eating of the fruit are all allegories. In that case, the record winds up with a metaphorical curse on the tempter and on his tool, and a like sentence on the man and the woman, with allegorical fig-leaves and coats of skin, an allegorical expulsion from the garden, and allegorical cherubim and flaming sword at the eastern gate.

Where does the history break off into allegory? and where does the allegory end, and the history begin anew? Where in the old granite walls of sober fact are the layers of the crumbling sandstone?

This chapter may well close with the weighty words of Dr. Tayler Lewis:—

“How every Pelagian view of life falls before this record, as it brings into prominence the causal connection between the sin of the spirit-world and that of man; between the sin of the woman and that of the man; between the sin of our first parents and their own sinfulness, and the sinfulness of their posterity! How limited and vapid appears the modern view, which regards the senses as the prime starting-point of evil! And how clear is the explanation of evil, of punishment, and of judgment, as it meets us in this account! that the natural evil does not belong to the moral, but, notwithstanding its inward connection with it, is still the Divine counteracting force against it; that from the very acme of the judgment breaks forth the promise and salvation. These truths, which are far above every high antichristian view of the world, make it apparent that the first judgment of God, as a type of the world-redeeming judgment of God, has found its completion in the death of Christ upon the cross.”—LANGE'S *Genesis*, p. 75.

## CHAPTER VI.

## CAIN, ABEL, AND SETH.

GEN. iv. — The crime committed by Cain has been used to give point to several religious and moral lessons. For a few examples: A corrupt nature was conveyed from our first parents to their immediate posterity; by the hideous wickedness of Cain, we may measure the depth of depravity in the generation next to Adam, — the first murder being the natural product of the first transgression; unbelief is the root of sin, and faith is the beginning of righteousness; unbelief, jealousy, hatred, murder, lying to hide crime, and insolence towards the Almighty, are successive stages in a career of disobedience; hatred towards God and hatred towards one's brother go together; and the punishment of the wicked is greater than they can bear.

Besides these obvious lessons, there is another which falls within the pre-arranged plan of the history of redemption. The crime of Cain was the first recorded manifestation of the mortal enmity between the seed of the serpent, even the children of the Devil, and the seed of the woman, even the children of God. The hostile attitude of the parties is a prominent feature in the first gospel (Gen. iii. 14, 15). It is there intimated that God would put reciprocal enmity into the nature of the two seeds; the enmity should be perpetual; open war should be waged between them; in the conflict, the righteous should suffer much, and should triumph at last; the wicked should fight hard, and be ignominiously put down; the parable being a bitten heel and a crushed head.

The parties to the first conflict between the two seeds were

Cain and Abel. It would be difficult to imagine the curiosity and wonder with which Eve took to her bosom her first-born infant son. In her exultation, she exclaimed, "I have gotten a man with the help of Jehovah;" and she called the child Cain, *Acquisition*. From her use of the word Jehovah, the covenant-name, we may presume that she recognized in her son the promised seed of the first gospel, who should bruise the head of that old serpent, even him by whose subtlety she had been deceived and ruined, with the loss of Eden. Her second son was Abel, *Nothingness, Vanity*. Eve named both Cain and Seth; but it is not said that she, with her own lips, gave the name Abel to her second son. It may be that *Vanity* expressed Eve's disappointment in the character of Cain, together with a vague presentiment of Abel's premature death.

Cain became a tiller of the soil, and Abel a shepherd, — occupations which have been called the ground forms of human industry, first united in Adam, then divided between his two oldest sons. Having stated this particular in order to explain subsequent events, the sacred narrative passes in silence the training and history of the two brothers, through the period of one hundred and thirty years, down to the murder of Abel. This date is fixed by the birth of Seth, which occurred shortly after the crime was committed, and when Adam was one hundred and thirty years old (Gen. iv. 25, v. 3). The tragedy opens with the information, that, in the course of events, the two brothers engaged in the worship of God. Abel offered in sacrifice the fattest of the firstlings of his flock; Cain offered the fruits of the earth. The brothers worshipped the same Divine being; both presented before God valuable gifts; both brought the products of their daily toil. And yet "God had respect unto Abel and his offering, but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect" (iv. 4, 5). The Divine acceptance and rejection were made known by a sign intelligible to each of the worshippers; some have conjectured, by fire from heaven consuming Abel's sacrifice, and leaving Cain's untouched (1 Kings xviii. 38). Paul explains the Divine preference thus, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than

Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts" (Heb. xi. 4). The apostle makes a distinction between the persons of the worshippers and their gifts. God rejected both the person of Cain, and his offering; he approved both the person of Abel, and his offering. Attention must be given to the order in which the persons and gifts are mentioned. Abel was a good man; he was "righteous Abel," and "God testified of his gifts that he was righteous;" Cain was that "wicked one who slew his brother." In the dawn of human history, in the person of him whose oblation was accepted and in the person of him whose oblation was rejected, God made it plainly known that "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight" (Prov. xv. 8).

Moses informs us that they differed widely also in the matter of their sacrifices. Abel brought a living animal, whose life was in its blood, the choicest of his flock, and slew it before the Lord. Cain brought the fruits of the earth, the best of their kind perhaps, but bloodless. The gifts differed, also, in the motive with which they were offered. Abel had faith, Cain had none; and for this reason, Abel's service was "a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain's." The precise nature and extent of this faith has not been determined. Some of our best interpreters teach us that Abel's faith led him to make a bloody sacrifice for sin, while Cain's unbelief led him to exclude, intentionally perhaps, the idea of propitiation from his offering; even as the theosophists of Paris, in the revolution of 1798, by way of public worship laid fruits and flowers on the altar. It is thought that Abel's offering was governed by the incident recorded in Gen. iii. 21: "Unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." Animals, it is urged, were not slain in paradise for food, inasmuch as permission to eat flesh was not granted until after the Deluge (Gen. ix. 3). Nor may we say that Adam, of his own motion, slew animals for their skins: the Lord himself ordained this mode of clothing. From this it has been inferred that victims were slain by our first parents, in sacrifice for sin, and the skins



stained with blood were by Divine appointment used to hide their shame and guilt. To this is added the difficulty of believing that a type so conspicuous, of the Lamb of God, should not have been Divinely ordained from the beginning. If we may assume that bloody sacrifices were instituted in paradise, and the fact was known to the brothers, it is easy to explain the acceptance of Abel's offering and the rejection of Cain's offering; and we have before us examples, not uncommon, of the good man who relies on the atonement for salvation, and of the bad man who relies on his morality. And yet it must be said that the origin of expiatory sacrifice in Eden is left in a very doubtful position in the record; an uncertainty which opens the way for the remark, that while the Divine appointment of the sabbath, and other sacred institutions, is carefully mentioned in the Bible, the text is, confessedly, all but silent in regard to the origin in Eden of sacrifices for sin. This suggestion authorizes us, perhaps, to agree with Murphy in leaving the origin of sacrifices an open question, and to agree with Kurtz in holding that even if bloody offerings were not ordained in Eden, Abel's gift proceeded from a more profound appreciation of religious truth than that of Cain, and was, on that account, rightly preferred.

Straight and short was the way of Cain from spurious worship to fratricide, and so was the way of Abel from the act of saving faith to life everlasting. Cain was enraged at the Divine preference for Abel and his offering. His countenance fell; he scowled; he was angry with his brother. The Almighty graciously expostulated with him: "Jehovah said to Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth [or coucheth, *Rev.*] at the door: and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." According to a widely accepted interpretation, the sense of the expostulation is: "If Cain behaved well, God would accept him; if wickedly, then sin would crouch like a wild beast at the door of his soul; its appetite would be whetted for him, but he ought to rule over it."

An important modification of this explanation was first suggested by Professor Stephen Yerkes of the Danville Theological Seminary. It was drawn from him by the writer of these pages, who asked him to examine critically the Hebrew text. Dr. Yerkes says, —

“In Gen. iv. 6, the Lord says to Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance *fallen*? In reference to this word *fallen*, the Lord adds, ‘If thou doest well, shall there not be a *lifting-up*’ (Heb., *seth*), i.e., a lifting-up of your countenance? the exact opposite of what is implied in the *falling* of the countenance. And as to his brother, with whom he is now *wroth*, because he (Abel) had been exalted above him by the acceptance of his offering, the Lord says to Cain, Unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him; i.e., he shall be in a state of subordination to thee, — thou shalt be exalted above him. But between these two parts of the promise, which is made on condition of Cain’s well doing, is interjected the dreadful menace in case he does wrong: ‘But if thou doest not well, sin is *crouching* at the door;’ crouching as a wild beast ready to spring upon, and devour him; or, sin is a *croucher* (Heb., *rōbēts*) *at the door*, as Fuerst puts it in his lexicon. Now, this threat, interposed between the two parts of the promise, is to be taken as a parenthesis, and the sense as follows: ‘If thou doest well, shall there not be a lifting-up of thy countenance? (but if thou doest not well, sin is crouching at the door;) and unto thee shall be his (Abel’s) desire, and thou shalt rule over him.’ I take it that the suffixed pronouns in the last clause undoubtedly refer to Abel.”

Another explanation has been obtained (1) by recognizing the fact that the Hebrew word for *sin* may be translated a *sin-offering*: (2) by showing that the pronouns “his” and “him” refer to Abel; and (3) by resorting to a well-known meaning of the Hebrew word for “lieth” or “croucheth.”

1. The Hebrew word *hāt-tāth*, although repeatedly translated *sin* in the English version, is rendered *sin-offering* in eighty-four places in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers; twelve times in a single chapter (Num. vii.), and twenty-three times

in the later scriptures. Thus, "Thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a *sin-offering* for an atonement" (Exod. xxix. 36). After the same manner the Greek word for *sin* is used for *sin-offering* in 2 Cor. v. 21: "For he hath made him to be sin" (a sin-offering) "for us, who knew no sin." This rendering being adopted, the place will read: "If thou doest not well, a sin-offering lieth at the door." In this sense the word is taken in the place before us by many scholars, among whom are Archbishop Magee, Lightfoot, Kennicott, Candlish, and Jacobus.

2. The pronouns "his" and "him" doubtless point to Abel, not to sin; sin being in the feminine would be naturally followed by *her*, or *its* and *it*. The clause then reads, "Unto thee, Cain, shall be Abel's desire, and thou shalt rule over him." It is a significant circumstance, that God here repeats to Cain what he said to Eve, describing her loving subordination to her husband: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. iii. 16). It is hard to believe that God employed the beautiful language by which he had described Eve's wifely relation to Adam, to describe the sin of her son as a wild beast crouching at the door for the fatal spring.

3. "Sin lieth" (croucheth, *Rev.*) "at the door." Gesenius says that the Hebrew word *rō-bēts* generally signifies "to lie down (*cubuit, recubuit*) as quadrupeds with their feet under the breast." Thus "Jacob looked, and beheld a well in the field, and lo, there were three flocks *lying* by it" (Gen. xxix. 2). "He maketh me *to lie down* (Hiphil conj.) in green pastures" (Ps. xxiii. 2). "Where thou feedest thy flock, where thou makest it *to rest* at noon" (Song of Solomon, i. 7). Gesenius, however, follows the common interpretation of the place before us. He says, "*Specially*, sin croucheth (lurketh) at thy door, i.e., sin lieth in wait for thee, as a wild beast crouching at thy door." But as we have seen, Gesenius teaches us also, that the primary signification of the Hebrew word is "to lie down," or "to repose," like sheep or goats. If these three renderings of the Hebrew text be adopted, the sense of Jehovah's expostulation with Cain will be substantially, "Why art thou angry with thy brother? why thy fallen or sullen countenance? If thou doest well,

shall it not be lifted up in token of conscious acceptance with God? If thou doest not well, a sin-offering, like Abel's, lieth at thy very door: it is not far to seek, it is nigh thee. Present this offering in faith, and Abel's heart will turn in love upon thee; and thou, as his elder brother, shalt have pre-eminence over him." This interpretation recommends itself by presenting Jehovah in the attitude of mercy, rather than of menace, towards the first-born of the race. It acquaints us also with one of the methods by which the precious things of the gospel were made known to Adam and his children while they were lingering about the gates of Eden. It is believed that we may safely adopt such an interpretation. And with these contributions to the solution of the problem we may resume the narrative.

Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, enticed Abel into a lonely field or forest, and slew him. And so ended the first assault of the seed of the serpent on the seed of the woman. Righteous Abel represented the seed of the woman. "He obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts" (Matt. xxiii. 35; Heb. xi. 4). Not less certain is it that Cain represented the seed of the serpent. For he was a murderer, the first on earth to strike at the image of God in man. Next, the crime was deliberate, committed in cold blood, and in spite of God's forewarning against the unnatural purpose, while as yet it was concealed in his bosom. Treacherous, also, was it; done in a secret place, to which he allured his victim. It was, moreover, unprovoked; perpetrated not in self-defence, or even for plunder. He could not plead the impulse to revenge an insult, or a blow, or an imputation of dishonor. It was a crime simply malignant, a murder without a passion other than one most brutal, and, worse than that, most diabolical. Further, it was a fratricide; branded in the narrative by the use of the endearing word "brother," repeated seven times, — three times by God himself. And, further still, the parents of both the assassin and his victim were still living. In the bruised and lifeless body of Abel, the unhappy pair saw, perhaps for the first time, the terror of death, and the execution of this part of the dreadful sentence of sin; a terror and sentence inflicted by

one of their sons on the other. And, finally, the crime of Cain showed that he was at open enmity with God himself. He slew his brother "because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 John iii. 12). John says "he was of that evil one," meaning that he was a child of the Devil, and an enemy of all righteousness and of a righteous God. He could not smite the Almighty, whose awful frown had fallen like a curse on his bloodless offering; he struck, therefore, at the image of God in Abel, — even as, long afterwards, Saul of Tarsus persecuted Christ in the persons of his saints (Acts ix. 4, 5). More than that, when God arraigned him for his crime, he confronted, most insolently, his Judge with a lie and a sneer. "The Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not:" there was the lie. "Am I my brother's keeper?" there was the sneer. He denied his guilt, and charged the Almighty with impertinence; combining, in the assassination and falsehood, malice towards his brother, with blasphemy towards God. The black inspiration which Satan breathed into the answer of our fallen parents to Jehovah, in Gen. iii. 9-12, betrays itself, with renewed insolence, in Cain's reply.

The judgment of the Lord upon the guilty man took its form from the voice that went up from the earth, and from the occupation of the murderer, — the tillage of the soil. Blood — or, as the Hebrew reads, drops of blood — cried aloud for vengeance. Similar cries are elsewhere mentioned, — the cry of the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah; the cry of the oppressed Hebrews in Egypt; the cry of laborers defrauded of their wages (Gen. xviii. 20; Exod. iii. 9; Jas. v. 4). Abel's blood disappeared in the dust; but its voice could not be silenced, for "the Lord maketh inquisition for blood." Next, the Lord visited with a curse the business of Cain; and bitter is the calamity which falls on the source of one's daily bread. The soil which the murderer habitually cultivated had been already cursed for man's sake; now it became, as if infected with blood-poison, sterile beneath his feet. The earth shot at him a double curse: cursed was it passively, and cursing him actively. For another element in the judgment, the Lord condemned

him to the life of a runaway convict and of a miserable tramp. The instinct of a murderer is always flight. He is driven away, not only by fears, but by the restlessness of guilt. He cannot endure the frightful associations of the place where the earth has received the blood of his victim. "How much," says John Foster, "there is in a thousand spots of the earth, that is invisible and silent to all but the conscious individual!"

"I hear a voice you cannot hear;  
I see a hand you cannot see."

The pitiful cry of Cain was, "My punishment is greater than I can bear!" — my punishment, not my guilt; the cry of remorse, imbittered by impenitence and despair. Then follows Cain's lamentation: "I am an exile from home, I am an outcast from the favor and protection of the Lord, and every one that finds me shall slay me." But the Lord answered that his life should be spared from the bloody retribution which he deserved and feared. Sevenfold vengeance should be visited upon whomsoever should slay him. It is certain that a visible and indelible mark was set upon the person of Cain, otherwise it had not served its purpose. It is useless to inquire what the mark looked like, and on what member of Cain's person it was set. But why was his life spared? In the absence of any explanation in the record, we may, under correction, suggest that God had not yet given to man power to inflict capital punishment. Or perhaps, as Kalisch suggests, a long, laborious exile, with the fear of sanguinary retribution perpetually impending, was equivalent to death. Another conjecture may be, that God saw proper to make in Cain, and in the curse and visible mark which he carried about with him, a long-lived example of the Divine anger against the crime of murder. Finally, remembering the infinite mercy of our Father, we may presume that God spared the life of Cain to give him space for repentance.

Another profound idea in the first promise is pointed out in the narrative. The head of the serpent should be bruised, the heel of the woman's seed should be bitten. It is true that Abel was slain, and Cain survived. But Cain was punished by perpetual

remorse and despair. His past and his future were veiled in gloom. He was an outcast from his father's house, and God had hidden his face from him. From the earth under his feet Divine maledictions sprang up along the pathway in which he dragged out his exile. Even the sign that protected him from a bloody retaliation, branded him as an unforgiven fratricide. "The early death of Abel," as Kalisch remarks, "was no curse, and the long life of Cain was no blessing."

Moses now passes from Cain to his descendants. He describes their exile from the gates of Eden, their settlement in a new home, their expansion into a powerful tribe, and their position as the seed of the serpent. The birth of Seth follows, with the increase of his posterity, and their position as the seed of the woman.

GEN. iv. 16-24. — After the death of Abel, Cain wandered in an easterly direction as far as the land of Nod. The geography of Nod cannot be defined. The name signifies the land of Exile or Flight; contrasting Eden, the land of Delight. Cain took with him one of his sisters as his wife. The marriage between brothers and sisters in this family was plainly unavoidable. These alliances yield one important result. The doctrine of the absolute unity of the race is derived from the creation of one man, and the formation of his one wife from his person; and that unity was distinctly maintained by the intermarriage of the sons and daughters of the first pair.

Cain introduced a new form of society by building a city or fortress, calling it Enoch, from the name of his oldest son. In the silence of the record, we cannot judge whether he sought relief in town-building from the curse which drove him from the tilling of the soil; or hoped to mitigate the ills of his exile; or was attracted by the soil, climate, and other natural advantages of his new home. But the measure introduced a new epoch in human history, and with it a new civilization. Passing over the uneventful period covered by four generations of Cainites, the historian comes down to Lamech. From this one man, and in his remarkable family of three sons and one daughter, the new civilization received its type.

The first element was supplied by Lamech himself. He took two wives. Their names describe personal attractions: Adah, the Beautiful; and Zillah, the Shady or Tinkling. Here began polygamy,—the development of ungodliness, indecency, and incipient heathenism; in marriage dishonored and polluted, and in the degradation of woman. Other elements in this civilization were supplied by Lamech's sons. Jabal, or Profit, originated the pastoral life of the Eastern tribes, introducing the tent for the accommodation of the cattle-raisers and their flocks and herds. By the revenue derived from this pursuit, the means were provided for a life of luxury. Jubal, another son of Lamech, invented the harp and organ, stringed and wind instruments, and with them, doubtless, the science and art of music. To this æsthetical element in the Cainite mode of life, a third son of Lamech added one of a tougher fibre, the working in metals and the use of edge-tools. His name was Tubalcain, the Forger of Brass and Iron. The industries of the three brothers, in the manufacture of musical instruments, tent-making, the working in metals, the production of edge-tools, with the implements of husbandry and war, indicate great progress in mining, smelting, spinning, weaving, and the forging and polishing of brass and iron. And then the daughter of the house, Naamah, the Lovely, gave to the family and to society the charms of womanhood. But the picture of the times is not complete until we bring forward again Lamech, the head of the family. He had killed his man; and he exceeded the hardness of his ancestor Cain, by an open defiance of justice, human and Divine. He became a poet for the occasion, and composed a "song of the sword," which he sang in the audience of his two wives,—taking inspiration from lust and vengeance. The song is in these words:—

“ Adah and Zillah, hear my voice ;  
 Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech :  
 For I have slain a man for wounding me,  
 And a young man for bruising me :  
 If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,  
 Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.” (*Rev. Ver.*)



This ode, considered as a product of thought, is worthy of attention, because it is the oldest lyrical fragment in all literature, its date being fixed at more than twelve hundred years before the Deluge. It exhibits, moreover, in perfection, one of the leading characteristics of Hebrew poetry denominated parallelism. The harmony in the versification arises not from rhyme, but from the use of a measured couplet, wherein the sentiment of the first line is repeated in the second line, in other terms, and with an added emphasis. The parallelism is of three kinds: the synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic. In Lamech's ode, it is synonymous, each couplet being repetitious. Lamech relied for self-defence on the weapons forged by his son Tubal-cain. The import of the song is that Cain was shielded from punishment by the Divine protection: Lamech is armed, and can take care of himself. God would inflict sevenfold vengeance on the man who should lay hands on Cain: Lamech will retaliate an attack upon him seventy times seven, for his power is increased by the arms he carries elevenfold.<sup>1</sup> Such is the picture of Lamech's family, and of the corrupt form of society of which they were the founders. Drechsler remarks, "The history of the Cainites began with a deed of murder, and ended with a song of murder." Society in the land of Nod took its character from this family: poetry, lust, and murder, from the patriarch; music, and the arts of industry, and the implements of war, from the sons; social attractiveness, from the wives and the daughter. No mention is made of the name of Jehovah, or of his worship, or of his dealings with men, except in Lamech's allusion to the protection granted to the first murderer. The Cainite civilization foreshadowed the civilization of Babylon, of Corinth, of Paris in 1798, — an accumulation of wealth, cultivation, profligacy, ferocity, and desperate ungodliness. The Cainite race represented, with a certain terrific loyalty, the seed of the serpent. From the outcast race Moses turns, by a natural transition, to the seed of the woman.

GEN. vi. 1-8. — Shortly after the death of Abel, another son

<sup>1</sup> Lenormant.

was born to our first parents. Eve called his name Seth, Appointed or Substituted; for, said she, "God hath given me another seed instead of Abel whom Cain slew." The giving of this name indicated in Eve a good hope, if not an abiding faith, in the promise of a holy seed; and a belief that this seed, destroyed in the death of Abel, was to be renewed in Seth. But Moses is careful to add, that, while Adam was created in the image of God, Seth was born in the likeness of the fallen Adam; that is to say, with a darkened understanding, depraved affections, and a dying body. This explanation prepares the way for the subsequent revelation of other momentous truths. First, the new birth is not communicated by ordinary generation from godly parents to their children, but by the Holy Spirit in a supernatural regeneration. Next, the wickedness of Seth's posterity became great on the earth in the days of Noah. Again, the seed of the woman, in Jesus, its consummate representative, was begotten, not of any son of Adam after his own likeness, but of the Holy Ghost, in "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person."

The historical position of the Sethites, as the chosen race indicated in the oracle which attended his birth, is more fully set forth in the fifth chapter of Genesis. A comparative view of the descendants of Seth and Cain may be helpful, although we do not know who of the sons of Seth and Cain were contemporaries; whether or not, for example, righteous Enoch, of Seth, lived in the days of the ruffian Lamech, of Cain.

## SETHITES.

Seth,  
Enosh,  
Kenan,  
Mahalalel,  
Jared,  
Enoch,  
Methuselah,  
Lamech,  
Noah,  
(1) Shem, (2) Ham, (3) Japheth.

## CAINITES.

Cain,  
Enoch,  
Irak,  
Mehujael,  
Methushael,  
Lamech,  
(1) Jabal, (2) Jubal, both of Adah;  
(3) Tubal-cain, (4) Naamah, both  
of Zillah.

Sceptical criticism has professed to detect in the similarity of these names, evidences of a mythical origin. But these resemblances are few in number, and such only as might naturally arise in two branches of the same stock, and from the intercourse between them which is known to have existed. These registers, in the first place, bring down the line of Seth, through nine generations, to the sons of Noah, and within sight of the bridge across the Flood, over which the Sethites passed into the possession of the renovated earth. But the genealogy of the other seed is suddenly broken off at the family of Lamech, the sixth from Cain, the curtain falling upon the race at the culmination of its profligate and barbaric career. Again, in Seth, the line of this holy patriarch, beginning with Adam, was continued through Enoch, Noah, and Shem, to Abraham and his immediate descendants. Out of their loins proceeded the chosen people of God, and in due time Christ appeared, the Divine glory of the chosen seed. Luke, in his genealogy of Christ, is careful to name every man who stood in the Sethite succession. On the other hand, not one of these patriarchs appears in the line of Cain. Moreover, the age of each of the Sethite fathers at the birth of his son, in the royal pedigree, together with his age at death, is carefully recorded; while these details in regard to the Cainites are suppressed, in token of their insignificance in the subsequent history. Further, the three or four holy patriarchs who were raised up in the favored race, contrast the impious chiefs in the outcast race. At the birth of Enoch, his father Cain was laying, in the building of a city, the foundation of a godless kingdom; while in the days of Enosh, Seth's son, his family was invoking the name of Jehovah the God of grace. About five hundred years later, Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was found walking with God; but Lamech of Cain, being also the seventh from Adam, introduced polygamy into the unhappy land of Nod. Our attention has been attracted by the earliest known example of lyric poetry; and now we find that Enoch of Seth also composed, by the spirit of prophecy, a hymn of judgment, answering back to the song of the sword, composed and sung by Lamech of Cain,

in the spirit of his ancestor. We have heard Lamech's ode ; let us attend to Enoch's anthem : —

“ Behold, the Lord cometh

With ten thousand of his holy ones,

To execute judgment upon all,

And to convince all that are ungodly of all their works of ungodliness  
which they have ungodly wrought,

And of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against  
him ” (Jude 14, 15).

The holy anthem of Enoch, and the ribald song of Lamech, represent, not unfairly, the historical position of the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, and the relation of each to the kingdom of God. The genealogy of Cain closes with the three sons of Lamech, and his unhappy race make their way through obscurity towards extermination by the waters of the Flood. The genealogy of Seth is carefully continued from Enoch, through each successive generation, down to Noah and his three sons, the appointed heirs of the new world.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE SECOND APOSTASY.

THE first apostasy was that of Adam and Eve in paradise. In them the whole human race departed from God; they composed at the time the entire family of man, and they represented all their posterity in the covenant of works. Another occurred in the Sethite portion of the race, in which the promised seed had been renewed after the death of Abel. This second apostasy took its origin from the unrestrained intermarriage of the sons of God, or the Sethites, with the daughters of men, or the Cainites, and perhaps with ungodly women among the daughters of Seth. By a singular anomaly in biblical interpretation, distinguished scholars, ancient and modern, have held that these "sons of God" were angels. That rationalists such as Von Bohlen, Ewald, and Kalisch, should accept this explanation, is quite natural, since it supports the mythical or fabulous origin of this part of sacred history. They profess to discover parallel representations in the Persian myths in regard to Ahiram and his evil spirits; in the love of the gods for the beautiful daughters of earth, in Grecian song; in the marriages between the nymphs and divine heroes, in the Hindoo mythology, and in the story of the giants, three thousand feet high, the offspring of these marriages.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to account for the countenance given to this caprice by such scholars as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Cyprian, among the early Fathers; together with Baumgarten, Delitzsch, Alford, and Kurtz, among modern writers. But the later Fathers, notably Chrysostom, Theodoret, Cyril of Alexandria, Augustine, and Jerome, with

<sup>1</sup> Kalisch on Genesis, p. 162.

Luther and Calvin among the Reformers, and the great majority of modern interpreters, unite in rejecting this view.<sup>1</sup> Nothing could be more preposterous than the vagary of the intermarriage of angels with the daughters of men, unless it be the vagary that the corruption of the antediluvians was brought down from heaven by the holy angels. The obvious sense of the text corresponds with the plan of the narrative. The statement that "the sons of God" (the Sethites) "saw the daughters of men" (the Cainites) "that they were fair," corresponds to what is said before of the sensuous charm of the wives and daughter of Lamech. The words, "they took them wives of all which they chose," indicate, it may be, not only the mixed marriages, but the introduction among the Sethites of the Cainite usage of polygamy. Their progeny, moreover, is such as might be expected to proceed from these unhallowed alliances. Some of their offspring were giants, or monsters of iniquity; men of enormous size, prodigious strength of limb, and brutal instincts, like the sons of Anak, like the giant kings of Bashan, like the giant in Gath, and his four sons, who fell by the hand of David and his servants (Num. xiii. 33; Josh. xii. 4; 2 Sam. xxi. 16 *seq.*). After the giants, there came Nephalim, or heroes, warriors, less lawless than their colossal kinsmen, resembling the guerrillas and freebooters of modern times. These all filled the earth with violence (Gen. vi. 13).

The record affords a few hints in regard to the beginning and progress of the falling-away. The early piety of the Sethites was answerable to their Divine calling. In the days of Enosh, Seth's son, men began to call upon the name of Jehovah. This use of the covenant name of Jehovah shows that they rested upon his promise of redemption. It is evident also that in their time the ordinances of primeval worship were sufficiently enlarged to include with the ritual of sacrifice the offices of prayer, thanksgiving, and praise. There is reason to believe that the apostasy had made great progress in the days of Enoch, the patriarch who lived in the period about half way from Seth to Noah. Enoch's prophecy respecting the day of vengeance

<sup>1</sup> Speak. Com., Gen., p. 65.

has been already cited. It is right to infer that his warnings were not addressed to the Cainites in the land of Nod apart from the Sethites at the gates of Eden, but to the offspring of the promiscuous marriages whereby corruption had already begun to work in the chosen seed. Traces of its further progress appear in what is said of Lamech, Enoch's grandson. Wearied with the toil required to wring subsistence from the reluctant earth, and oppressed with the growth of wickedness around him, Lamech was led to look to his son as in some way identified with the sorely needed relief. He called his name Noah, Rest or Comfort.

In due time God revealed his sense of the nature and extent of the apostasy. Through the period of a hundred and twenty years, he threatened to withdraw, judicially, the restraints of his Holy Spirit from the wicked, and allow them to have their own way; for, said he, "they are flesh," carnal, depraved. When the violence introduced by the giants and the men of bad fame had culminated, God saw that the iniquity was high-handed and abounding, and perceived that their inmost thoughts, and the "imagination of their thoughts," even the deep-seated affections out of which their thoughts sprang, were evil, nothing but evil, and evil all the time. Still later, having remarked that righteous Noah was accepted of God, the historian declares that "the earth was corrupt before God," and "all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth." These representations characterize sufficiently the apostasy, and vindicate the dealings of God with the apostates.

The history shows, first, that "it repented God that he had created man; it grieved him at his heart." These are strong anthropopathic expressions, the nature and grounds of which have been already explained.<sup>1</sup> They are borrowed from the ordinary language of men, to represent the Divine affections and purposes by the analogy of human affections and purposes. He repented, or regretted, that he had made man, as though he were, after the manner of man, disappointed in the work of his hands. He was grieved, as though, after the manner of man,

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i.

he were wounded to the heart by the sins of the generation. The change was in them only, not in him; and he dealt with them according to the counsels of his own wisdom and justice. His repentance proceeded from two considerations. First, he regretted, for its own sake, that he had brought the human race into being, even as Christ said of Judas: "It had been good for that man that he had not been born." Next, he was grieved that he was under the necessity of putting everybody to death; even as at a later period his heart was turned within him, and his repentings were kindled together while he thought upon delivering Israel to the destruction of Admah and Zeboim (Hos. xi. 8). He resolved to destroy the race. Man had become utterly corrupt in heart and in manner, and he would sweep him from the face of the earth; he would cut off every living thing, — man, beast, creeping thing, and fowl; he would lay waste the earth itself, even cities, fields, and forests. He chose also the instrument of destruction. He would bring a flood of waters upon the earth, so that every thing that was in the earth should die. Noah and his family should be saved alive. Personally, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. vi. 8); the word "grace" excluding merit, and presupposing faith. Noah was "heir of the righteousness that is by faith," and was one of the three heroes of faith in the old world, Abel and Enoch being the other two. He was righteous, a preacher of righteousness, and he walked with God. And yet, in sparing Noah and his household, God secured purposes far more gracious than the saving alive of eight persons. The covenant-keeping Jehovah remembered the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. The first experiment towards the fulfilment of the promise had apparently failed in Abel, who died without children. The second experiment, in the immense posterity of Seth, was about to terminate in the judicial drowning of the earth. But God will not allow his promise to fail evermore in the universal catastrophe. In the family of Noah he will secure the preservation and restoration of humanity; he will make a new departure towards the consummation of his redemptive plans



on the theatre of a renovated earth. Noah, saved from drowning, represented the seed of the woman that should get the victory.

To the wicked God afforded space for repentance. First, he gave to them the respite of one hundred and twenty years. “The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing” (1 Pet. iii. 20). Moreover, he directed Noah to build the ark in the presence of the doomed peoples. For a hundred and twenty years the steady progress of the work was a perpetual warning to mankind of the approach of the Flood. Paul declares that Noah, by the very act of building the ark, “condemned the world” (Heb. xi. 7). Noah was also “a preacher of righteousness,” and doubtless he dealt faithfully with the people. Still further, Christ himself, the consummate seed of the promise, endeavored to lead the ungodly to repentance. Peter says, “Christ, also, hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water” (1 Pet. iii. 18–20). The true sense of this much-disputed passage will appear in a simple analysis. Who went and preached? Christ; even He who afterwards suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, now offered salvation through his blood to the antediluvians. By what sufficient agency? By his Spirit; that is, his own Divine nature; not by a personal ministry visible to man, but by the Godhead that was in him, whereby he was more than two thousand years afterwards “quickened” or raised from the dead. Through what human instrumentality? That of Noah, the “preacher of righteousness,” so called by Peter himself (2 Pet. ii. 5). To whom did Christ preach through the tongue of Noah? To the contemporaries of Noah, the disobedient who perished by the Flood after God had suffered long with them. When was this preaching done? In the time during which God was waiting in patience

on the disobedient; through a hundred and twenty years while the ark was in building. What and where were these people when Peter wrote his Epistle? They were lost spirits, shut up in hell. The peculiar expression, "preached to the spirits in prison," is repeated in equivalent terms by Peter in the next chapter: "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead" (1 Pet. iv. 6); that is to say, to them who were dead when Peter was writing, but who had heard the gospel while they were alive. A notable instance is this, of grace abounding, grace despised, and vengeance executed on the unbelieving. Christ, by his Spirit, went and preached to the wicked men. God said, "My Spirit shall not always strive" (Gen. vi. 3).

The end speedily came. On a certain day Noah went into the ark, and all his family. On the seventh day following, the Flood descended. The catastrophe took its victims by surprise. In a few words Christ describes not only their surprise, but their self-indulgent habits of life: "They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" (Matt. xxiv. 38). Lamech had been dead ninety-eight years. Methuselah, Enoch's son, died in the year of the Flood. Whether he was drowned or not, whether the reptile blood of Cain ran in the veins of any of the eight souls that were saved, are questions for the curious. Neither of them is answered in the record, nor are they of the least importance. The really vital facts are, that the ark, as it floated upon the bosom of the waters, bore within its narrow walls the seed of the woman, while the seed of the serpent perished; and the salvation of the righteous once more went hand in hand with the destruction of the wicked.

The sacred history of the world before the Flood, covering a period, according to Usher, of sixteen hundred and fifty-five years, closes with the day when Noah and his family, together with "male and female of all flesh, went into the ark, as God had commanded him, and the Lord shut him in." Before leaving this period, however, we should attend to some important particulars not yet considered.

Several questions have been raised with regard to the

“Church before the Flood,” so called. Was there any thing in existence worthy of the name? If in existence, was it an organized society, fully equipped with a constitution, confession, catechisms, with office-bearers, spiritual courts, and a sufficient discipline, with well-ordered worship and solemn sacraments, with suitable edifices and furniture? or did this Church exist in its germs only?

We shall be helped to answer these questions by bearing in mind that the record before us is entitled “Genesis,” or “the beginning,” and that its contents are accurately described by that title. The first six chapters contain, if we may so say, the very beginning of the beginnings, the first of the *origines sacre*. This remark is the more important, inasmuch as it applies not only to antediluvian history, but to the five books of Moses, and to the Old Testament taken as a whole. The law of genesis and progress in the revelation gives shape to the structure of the Scriptures. He who disregards this rule, and professes to find the whole gospel clearly revealed in the Old Testament, must answer the question, Why was the New Testament added to the Old? He who professes to find no gospel, no Church, no sacraments, in the Old Testament, must answer the question, Why was the Old prefixed to the New? Augustine’s remark covers the ground: “The New Testament is latent in the Old; the Old is patent in the New.” In the antediluvian history, we find the incipencies of the whole stupendous revelation. Even so the garden, in the spring season, is full of the roots and germs wherein we recognize the “potency and promise” of a ripe and abundant fruitage. The visible Church is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the household and family of God (Eph. i. 19, iii. 15). Its final form is contained in the New Testament. Inasmuch as it is a Divine institution, we must look for its origin among the beginnings of other Divine ordinances. We must expect also to find its primordial elements, and nothing more, where other sacred institutes existed only in their rudiments. These expectations are realized in the information afforded by Moses concerning the Church before the Flood.

All those who believed in God, and obeyed him, were members of this Church; especially those who received and rested in the promise of salvation contained in the first gospel. Among them we may include our first parents. If the interpretation frequently put upon their use of skins for clothing is correct, it follows that Adam and Eve, in the ritual of bloody sacrifice, expressed their faith in the promise, and their acceptance of the method of salvation set forth therein. There is, however, better reason to think that they showed the same faith in the names which they gave to Cain, Abel, and Seth. It is certain that some of their descendants were the children of God. Abel, Enoch, and Noah are named by Paul among the heroes of faith, and all of them had this testimony that they pleased God. Besides these holy men, there were many, who, in the days of Enosh, "called upon the name of Jehovah," the covenant name of the Almighty. These all, and others like them, were members of the Church before the Flood.

The constitution of this Church is easily made out. Christ was its Head. For, first, he was in the highest sense, the "seed of the woman" (Mic. v. 3; Matt. i. 23). He was born of a virgin; he is the Head of the great body of the redeemed, who are themselves, though in a lower sense, the seed of the woman; and in him the Church will gain the victory over the seed of the serpent. Next, Christ began his mediatorial work at the apostasy; for mercy began at that moment to be exercised towards man, and mercy can come only through Christ. He began also, at that time, to teach men, for Christ is the only Divine teacher (Matt. xi. 27); and, in the days of Noah, Christ, by the lips of Noah, preached to the disobedient (1 Pet. iii. 19). Moreover, God deals with his Church only through Christ. He is the Door, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Another element in this constitution is its organic law, the covenant of grace, made in Christ; in and through him, and in and through him only, man is reconciled to God. Moses points out the sources from which proceeded the earliest revelations of God's will. First, mankind derived from God's works of creation a knowledge of the existence and natural attributes of the

Creator. Secondly, further knowledge was gained by observation and experience. Our first parents were witnesses of what took place in the Garden of Eden, and at the altars of Cain and Abel. They and their descendants were the human factors in the history from Seth to Noah, and this history is full of the elements of revealed truth. Thirdly, God's word spoken supplied the place of God's word written. He gave to our first parents the command in regard to the fruit of the forbidden tree; he pronounced upon them the sentence of sorrow, toil, and death; and he communicated to them the first gospel. He remonstrated with Cain, and sent him into exile. He warned Noah of the coming flood, and gave him directions for the saving of his house. Fourthly, the Holy Spirit revealed future events to Enoch and Noah; and, by the gift of inspiration, they became infallible prophets, and preachers of righteousness. And, fifthly, God made his word visible at the expulsion from Eden, at the translation of Enoch, and in the drowning of the Old World.

The truths revealed in their rudiments extend to the doctrines concerning God, man, salvation, and the end of the world. (1) In theology God made known his existence and his supremacy in the universe, as the one only living and true God. He talked with men face to face; he blessed the righteous, he condemned the wicked. So distinct were the disclosures of his awful personality, that idolatry was a sin unknown in the midst of universal corruption. Next, he revealed himself as the Creator of all things that began to be; and in these works he declared his power, wisdom, and goodness. Moreover, he made himself known as the supreme Ruler of the world in the dominion conferred on man, in the test proposed, in the perfect obedience exacted, in the awful sentence pronounced and executed, in the expulsion from the garden, in the exile of Cain, and in the Deluge. (2) In regard to man himself, the doctrine made known was his creation in the person of one man, from whose side the woman was taken; the formation of his body from the dust of the ground, and his soul in the image of God; his original righteousness, his probation and fall and punish-

ment, the fall and ruin in him of his posterity. The universal and total depravity of mankind was displayed in the crime of Cain, in the godlessness of his descendants, and in the violence and corruption which filled the earth. So intense was this depravity, that it contaminated the imagination of the thoughts. Men's deeds were evil, their deeds were engendered by evil thoughts, and their thoughts were polluted by evil affections. Through Enoch, the last things were revealed. He prophesied of the coming of the Lord to judge the world, and to take vengeance on sinners for their ungodly speeches and deeds. By his translation were proclaimed the salvation of the body, and, by unavoidable conclusion therefrom, the resurrection of the dead, the eternal state, and the future blessedness of the righteous.

(3) The ordinances of worship were few and elementary. The sacred rites were, the calling on the name of the Lord in prayer, and the preaching of righteousness. In regard to the ministers of religion, we are led to infer, from the story of Cain and Abel, that, at the beginning, each worshipper presented oblations for himself; and, from the history of Noah, we gather that in his time the patriarch of the family exercised the office of the priest. Touching the ritual of worship, the history of Cain and Abel is instructive. As to sacred time, it is plain that the sabbath was set apart and sanctified, at the creation, as a day of holy rest. The notices in the history of the Flood, respecting the seventh day, show that the sabbath was kept holy by the few righteous people in the days of Noah (Gen. viii. 10-12). The expression, "in process of time," in Gen. iv. 3, is thought by many to refer to the sabbath.

Considered as a visible society, the Church was not yet organized. But certain of the elements of visibility were present. The enmity established in paradise between the two seeds displayed itself very early in the murder of Abel, and in the separation of the Cainites and Sethites; and both hostility and separation are conditions of visibility. Again, the immediate descendants of Seth instituted openly the worship of God. The Sethites were known as the sons of God, while the Cainites

were called, in the persons of their daughters, the children of men. Moreover, in the same line Enoch and Noah appeared, righteous and faithful men. In the absence of any ecclesiastical organization, the visibility of the Church in the persons of individual believers, and of inspired prophets and teachers, known to be such, may be affirmed.

From this survey, it appears that none of the elements of the future Church were as fully made known as were the essential truths of revealed religion. The believers were scattered abroad; they were not organized into a distinct society, with the office-bearers, and spiritual courts, and established discipline, which belong to the kingdom of God. There was in existence no written rule of faith, no sacraments, no minute ritual of sacrifice, or holy priesthood, or sacred calendar. But the four heads of doctrine concerning God, man, redemption, and the end of the world, were set forth with a certain fulness which marks their supreme importance, and shows that the truth, even in the absence of outward ordinances, conveys salvation.

Next, we gather from what has been said, that the further development of these saving truths, the disclosure of other truths, and the unfolding of a complete ecclesiastical polity in government, discipline, and worship, were all regulated by two laws working together. The one is the law of progress in the teachings of Scripture; the other is the law whereby these teachings went abreast in the order in which they were given and received. We may take as example, the doctrine of the Trinity, and its environments. It is not pressing the case too far to say, that, the plural unity of the Godhead being assumed, the use of the plural name Elohim, as the second word in the Book of Genesis, is altogether appropriate. And the mode of the Divine existence in three persons, if not fully revealed, is assumed in the first three verses. Mention is made of GOD, who created the universe; of the "SPIRIT, moving upon the face of the deep;" and of the WORD, "God spake." Moses, having planted these vital germs in the record, passes to other topics. On the next page he takes from the lips of Jehovah the words of the first gospel. In the blood of Abel we find the

type of an atonement, by the shedding of blood. But whose blood that shall be, whether the blood of one, or of many, of a man, or of a God-man, whether it should be shed within a year, or not until the end of four thousand years, are secrets slowly divulged only as the ages passed. But with every explanation of the first gospel, made from age to age, there was associated some new disclosure of the doctrine of the Trinity; one truth keeping equal step with another in the progress of its communication from God, and in its apprehension by men. One effect of this double growth is the discovery to mankind of the distribution of the work of salvation among the Persons of the sacred Three. Another effect is to connect the plan of saving sinners with the attributes of God himself. And still another is to show how the wonders of salvation and the glory of God, stored up in the Genesis, are progressively unfolded in the "breaking-out of the Gospel," and of the shinings of the Divine glory, until all stands fully manifested in the Book of Revelation. Meanwhile the Church, which is scarcely visible in Genesis, is brought forward in the last book as the bride,—the Lamb's wife.

It is to be said, moreover, that the truths revealed to the Old World were sufficient for the salvation of its inhabitants. And yet it must also be said, that when, in the plan of Providence, new revelations were added to the old, men could not be saved unless they accepted the whole body of truth made known to them. The Hebrews in the days of Joshua might not rest on the things declared in the days of Enoch, and reject all subsequent revelations; nor might the Jews under Ezra profess to receive what was made known at the conquest, in disregard of what God had spoken in the interval of one thousand years from Joshua to Ezra. At the baptism of John, the Jew might be saved by the Old Testament; but, when the New was given, he was required to receive not only the testimony of Moses and the prophets, but the testimony also of Christ and his apostles. For this reason, it may be confidently said that there is not a righteous Jew on earth: he rejects the message which God has sent to him by his Son.



In estimating the value of the antediluvian sacred history, it may be remarked, in the first place, that it is the only memorial in existence of the world before the Flood. Of the myriads who lived during the first sixteen centuries and a half of recorded time, — a period nearly equal to that of the Christian era, — no other vestiges remain. The people lived and died, they built cities, they invented poetry and music, they wrought in brass and iron, and the construction of the ark shows progress in architectural science and handicraft. And yet no traces of their skilled labor or art, no inscriptions or hieroglyphics, no papyrus or brazen tablet, no pyramid or broken column, no vast ruins like those of Central America, no mounds like those of Nineveh, no deserted tombs like those of Petra, no mummies, — in short, no historical monuments whatever, — of that long period, now exist. Except for the record in Genesis, we should know less of them than of the savage tribes that roamed through our western forests during the Trojan war. The world is indebted to the inspired historian exclusively for all that is known of the primeval ages.

This history is indispensable also as an introduction to what follows in the Scriptures. In ignorance of its contents, no explanation could be given of the place which the Deluge occupied in the early history of mankind and in the plan of Providence; or of the position of Noah and his family; or of the origin of the conflict between the good and the evil which appeared in the family of Noah, and which proceeded thence onward; or of the beginning of the series of covenants which gave shape to the later Scriptures. These few chapters put into our hands the clew to all that follows. Moreover, nothing can exceed the simple and artless structure of the narrative. It deals with the most stupendous and far-reaching events; but, if it were an inspired child's history, it could hardly be more artless and story-telling in diction and style. Never did a mountain spring deliver the rain from the sweet heavens to the plains more purely than Moses delivers his narrative, cleared from myths and fables, the legends of gods and demigods and heroes, gods many and lords many, the things incredible and

impossible, which adulterate the cosmogonies of the heathen. Indeed, not a single miracle is ascribed to any one of the patriarchs of the period; every thing that was supernatural is ascribed to the Almighty; and, what is not less remarkable, the attributes of God are rarely named or described in these chapters. He is not distinctly called holy, or wise, or good. He manifested himself to men as wise and good, as angry or forgiving, by his acts and works, leaving to his creatures to infer what he was from what he did. But at the same time these unadorned and simple annals give answers to all such honest inquiries concerning God and man as these: the beginning of the universe; the fitting-up of the world for our race; the creation of the first man; the formation of the first woman in such manner as to establish the absolute unity in origin of the two and of all their posterity; the original righteousness of the pair; the temptation, apostasy, and ruin of the first man, and in him of his posterity; and, finally, the Divine plan of redemption and its workings from Adam to Noah.

The historical significance of the genealogies must not be overlooked. Only five or six chapters, which can be read deliberately in thirty minutes, are afforded to this long and critical period. One-sixth part of that small space is taken up by genealogical tables. But they are well worthy of the prominence given to them. They establish the fact that all mankind descended from one man and one woman. This truth is fundamental to revealed religion, because it points out the indissoluble connection between the lost estate of all mankind and the disobedience of their common progenitor; and it lays the foundation for a plan of redemption that shall be one plan, and yet applicable to every member of the race. Accordingly, the line of Seth, which was the line of promise, and, by intermarriage, even the line of Cain's outcast race, are brought down in the tables to the three sons of Noah, showing that both lines began in Adam the first father, and were represented in Noah the second father of all. From this it follows that all the people in the ark, even if the blood of Cain ran in their veins, were of one and only one original stock. These tables prepare the way

also for the assurance that Christ is the Saviour of the whole race. Luke uses this table as a part of the proof that Jesus was the Son of Adam, "who was the son of God." It was not possible for the unbelieving Jew, with his register before him, to dispute the common humanity on which, as a part of his case, Paul said, that, as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. Finally, all the covenants, beginning with the covenant of works, presuppose the unity of the race, unto which unity these tables certify. While, therefore, we should not overlook the striking moral lesson conveyed in these chapters, we should bear in mind that their primary object was to trace out the early history of redemption.

The registers call our attention also to the longevity of the patriarchs. The proof by which the longevity is established, the vital forces to which it is to be referred, and its results, historical and moral, should be considered. The facts are sufficiently established by the word of God. This testimony is to be taken in its obvious sense. The theories of certain critics, that the figures are to be applied not to the persons, but to races of the patriarchs, or to groups of generations, are incapable of verification; so also are their attempts to bring those ages within our present limits of life by assuming that the years consisted of only one, or of three, or of six months.<sup>1</sup> These explanations are less worthy of attention, for the reason that the traditions of the oldest nations do not invalidate the sacred record, either by way of contradiction or silence. Josephus relates that the Egyptian, Phœnician, Babylonian, and Greek historians united in declaring that there had been instances of persons who lived nearly a thousand years. Among the historians of the old empires, who give accounts similar to those in Moses, Josephus names Manetho, Hestæus, Hieronymus of Egypt, Hesiod, etc.<sup>2</sup> Mr. George Rawlinson believes that a very wide-spread tradition existed in the ancient world to the same effect.<sup>3</sup> That these many traditions, coming down from so many widely separated peoples and remote ages, echo an historical fact, is far more probable than that they all rest on a mere

<sup>1</sup> Kurtz: *Old Cov.*, i. 93. <sup>2</sup> Josephus: *Antiq.*, i. 3-9. <sup>3</sup> *Aids to Faith*, p. 320.

fable. Isaiah confirms the written record of Moses, and the unwritten traditions of the heathen, by the hope that the old longevity may be restored in the administration of the Messiah (Isa. lxxv. 20).

In regard to the vital forces by which this length of days was secured, it will be sufficient to mention some of those that have been suggested. The phenomena are referred, for example, to the freshness and purity of the antediluvian atmosphere; to the strength of the human constitution derived so recently from Adam; to simple modes of life, as abstinence from animal food and strong drink; to favorable climates, the equality of seasons and such like. Some of these suggestions prove too much, others too little, and taken together nothing at all. The length of days in former generations, as well as in individuals in all generations, must be ascribed to the will of God, who has appointed the bounds of our habitations. Among the results of this longevity, is the light cast by it upon the immortality wherein the human body was created. The same Divine power which supported the life of fallen Adam through nine hundred and thirty years, was sufficient to keep the unfallen Adam so that he should never see death. Secondly, the long lives of the patriarchs enabled them to perfect the useful arts. Wisdom and experience did not die early with the persons by whom these were acquired. Thirdly, the historical uses of this longevity are conspicuous. In the absence of the art of writing, it secured the transmission, through the memory of the long-lived people, of useful inventions and discoveries, together with such knowledge as might be gathered by observation and study. It afforded the means, also, for the preservation of primeval history; strengthening our confidence in the authenticity of the sacred record, when considered apart from its inspired authority. Methuselah was contemporary with Adam two hundred and fifty years, and with Shem one hundred; Shem was contemporary with Abraham one hundred years, and with Isaac fifty. On the supposition that the patriarchs who were living at the same time were acquainted with each other, it may be assumed that the story of Eden

was related by Adam to Methuselah, and was repeated by Methuselah to Shem, and by Shem to Abraham and Isaac. Further, of the eleven generations before the Flood, nine were always contemporaries. Of the eleven postdiluvian generations from Noah to Abraham, never fewer than eight were living together on earth. Noah's life covered six centuries of the world before the Flood, and three centuries and a half of the world after the Flood.<sup>1</sup> Adam survived Enoch's translation, and may have come to the certain knowledge of the salvation of the saints in soul and body. Noah lived with six generations who had themselves lived with Adam, and who may have heard from his lips the story of Eden. Abraham and Isaac were contemporaries with Noah's sons; and Noah's sons, through one hundred years of early life, had witnessed the building of the ark. In short, living men could have transmitted to the days of Abraham and Moses trustworthy traditions of the temptation and fall in Eden, of the Cainites and Sethites, the corruption of both, the Deluge, the apostasy at Babel, and the dispersion of mankind. By the aid of these traditions, the Holy Spirit, eliminating from them whatever was fabulous, clearing up what was obscure, and supplying what was lacking, enabled Moses to compose an unerring history of the first two thousand years. It should be said, furthermore, that the longevity of the antediluvians may have largely contributed to the wickedness which overspread the earth towards the close of the period. No sinners are more hurtful to public morals than old sinners; none are more daring and reckless than those who look forward with confidence to a long life. The delay of punishment evermore emboldens the transgressors (Eccles. viii. 11).

<sup>1</sup> Coleman's Historical Atlas, p. 263.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE DELUGE.

GEN. vi., vii., viii. — The destruction by a flood of the entire human race, Noah and his family excepted, is established, not only by the direct testimony of Moses, but by its congruity with the general plan of the history. The catastrophe is in harmony with all that went before. The corruption of all flesh, the violence which filled the earth, the repentance of the Almighty that he had made man, the promise of the first gospel that the head of the serpent should be crushed,—all lead up, naturally, to the destruction of the existing race, and the appearance of another. And the Deluge explains what follows in the record. The position of Noah and his family, the expansion of his descendants into families, tribes, and nations, their dispersion from a common centre to all parts of the known world, and the steady progress of the plan of redemption, all point back to the destruction and renovation of the earth. Moses is confirmed, moreover, by Isaiah, by Christ, and by two of his apostles. Isaiah records the oath of the Almighty, that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth (Isa. liv. 9). Christ makes himself responsible for the historical character of the narrative, and uses the catastrophe to describe the suddenness with which the Son of man shall come (Matt. xxiv. 38; Luke xvii. 27). The Epistle to the Hebrews, and Peter's two letters, relate several incidents in the Deluge, and explain by them the nature of saving faith, the long-suffering of God, and his treatment of the godly and of the ungodly (Heb. xi. 7; 1 Pet. iii. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 5). No fact in ancient history is more fully supported by the united testimony of

Moses and the prophets, and of Jesus Christ and his apostles. Moreover, it was once confidently believed, by intelligent inquirers, that the inundation had left indelible traces on the surface of the earth. As late as the beginning of this century, it was thought that the numerous shells and plants, found as fossils in the rocks, were deposited by the Noachian Deluge. After that opinion was abandoned, not a few of our most accomplished geologists held, with Cuvier, that satisfactory evidence of the great Flood was supplied by superficial deposits; such as the remains of animals in the mammaliferous crag, of which the Siberian mammoth is a conspicuous example. They relied also on the drift, or diluvium, composed of water-washed pebbles and bowlders, on the moraines, and the contents of bone eaves. Further inquiries have led our Christian philosophers to the unanimous conclusion that the entire contents of the fossil-bearing rocks, and for the most part of the drift, are to be referred to the period, in remote antiquity, of the regular geological formations. Their further conclusion is, that the question in regard to the actual occurrence of the Deluge is left untouched by every thing that has been discovered on the surface or in the crust of the earth. Geology being dismissed from the inquiry, sufficient proof of the catastrophe is found in the sure word of God, and in the witness-bearing of history. But Cuvier, Buckland, and Silliman, representatives of the science and Christian sentiment of France, England, and America, who first urged, and, when better informed, abandoned, the geological argument, did honor to their sense of the obligations due to the truth. They certainly escaped the ridicule which rests on the name of Voltaire, called by a witty Frenchman, the "wicked overmuch." In a dissertation for the Academy at Boulogne, and in his "Philosophical Dictionary," Voltaire accounted for the appearance of shells on the top of the mountains, by several conjectures; one of which was that the shells had been dropped from the hats of pilgrims on their way from the Holy Land to their homes.<sup>1</sup> But even if geology, in its present state of advancement, is silent in regard to the catas-

<sup>1</sup> Miller's Test. of Rocks, 320 seq.

trophe, the memory of mankind supplies its place with abundant testimony.

Few historical traditions are so definite and well established as those which bring to us accounts of the Noachian Deluge from the great races of antiquity. The annals of ancient Chaldæa derive peculiar claims on our attention from the indisputable authenticity of the documents containing them, and from the particulars in which they agree with, and in which they differ from, the Hebrew Scriptures. Of the Chaldæan narrative, a version was preserved by Berosus, a priest of Babylon, who lived about two centuries and a half before Christ, and was published to the world by Eusebius and by other Greek historians. Berosus confirms Moses to a very remarkable extent, and his narrative is quoted at large by Geikie and Lenormant.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this recital, which after all comes to us at second hand, we now have an original Chaldaic version, taken directly from cuneiform tablets exhumed at Nineveh, transported to the British Museum, and deciphered by the late lamented George Smith. The history of the Deluge was written upon these tablets by order of the king of Assyria, Assur-barni-abal. The importance attached by the king to these records led him to secure the preparation of three separate copies thereof. The great antiquity of the documents is fully established. First of all, these three copies were made in the seventh century before Christ, from a manuscript in the sacerdotal library of the city of Uruk. Next, it has been proved that the ancient transcript at Uruk, which the king's scribes copied, could not have been of later date than seventeen centuries before Christ, and was probably older; older, that is to say, than the time of Moses, and reaching back perhaps as far as the day of Abraham. Nor is this all; even this venerable manuscript had itself been taken from one older still, older than Abraham, and contemporary, it may be believed, with the survivors of the Deluge.<sup>2</sup> The fragments of the three copies in the British Museum have been compared, and a consecutive narrative written out. The

<sup>1</sup> Geikie's Hours, i. 190. Lenormant's Beginnings, p. 390.

<sup>2</sup> Lenormant's Beginnings, 392 seq. Geikie's Hours, etc., p. 392.



narrative may be found at large in Lenormant and in Dr. Geikie.

In comparing this Assyrian legend with the sacred record, it will be seen that the many and important particulars in which they agree point directly to the self-same unique catastrophe. Both Moses and the Assyrian scribe call attention to the wickedness of mankind, to the anger of the Deity, to his resolve to punish the transgressors, to his choice of the Deluge as the instrument of punishment, to the warning given to a single man, and to the Divine purpose to spare that man and his family. The sacred and the heathen historian set before us the man who built the vessel; who closed its seams, within and without, by the use of bitumen; who took with himself into the ship his own family, the beasts wild and tame, together with food sufficient for all. Both describe the violent storm of rain, the swelling inundation, the drowning of all the living, the receding of the waters, the lodging of the vessel on a mountain, the opening of the roof or the window, the three birds sent forth, only two returning, the drying of the earth, the withdrawal from the ship, the offering of a sacrifice by fire, the promise that the earth should never be destroyed any more by a flood, and the appearance of the luminous bow or "zone" on the clouds.

The points wherein the two accounts differ are not less characteristic. The Assyrian tablets bear the marks of the national polytheism. Four gods, sitting in council, resolve on a deluge; six storm-gods execute the decree; while the rest of the hagiarchy of gods, frightened by the "waterspout," lie down close to one another like dogs, or fly for protection to Anu in the higher stars. Oriental exaggeration also plays its part in the story. Hasisatra's ark was nearly twice as large as Noah's. Seven thousand two hundred measures of bitumen were used to close the leaks. Such was the downpour of the rain, that the waters swelled up to heaven in six days and nights; and the flood fell as rapidly as it rose. Nor are the signs of Oriental luxury absent. The voyage of Hasisatra was simply a junketing at sea for a month. A great company of guests was on board.

The host was a king, revelling in food and wine; not a simple patriarch, and preacher of righteousness, patient in the labors of a hundred and twenty years. Forty-eight hundred laborers had filled two-thirds of the ship with thirty-six hundred chests of provisions for the royal table, and thirty-six hundred for the sailors, and with wine like the waters of the Euphrates for abundance, and provisions like the dust of the earth. At the close of the entertainment, the king went ashore, and offered a sacrifice of burning reeds, cedar-wood, and juniper. "The gods smelled a good odor, and gathered like flies over the sacrifice." The story closes with the apotheosis of the hero and his wife, leaving his guests to repeople the earth. But withal, the tablets make no mention of the marks of the true religion in the transaction; nor the distinction between the clean and the unclean; nor of God's covenant with the master of the vessel; nor of an offering for sin in the blood of the burnt offering; nor of the position assigned to the survivor as the second father of the race. We have, therefore, in these tablets an independent testimony to the truthfulness of Moses; testimony of a remote antiquity, and of unimpeachable genuineness. It is sufficiently like Genesis, having, says Kalisch, "not only a family likeness, but the appearance of a twin," to guarantee its accuracy; and sufficiently unlike, in form and tone, to establish its pure Chaldæan origin.

A second group of traditions comes to us from the Aryan races. Four narratives of the Flood have been pointed out in the Indian or Hindoo literature. The Greeks preserved two similar legends, in one of which Ogyges figured as the navigator, and in the other Deucalion. According to the last named, Zeus doomed the race of man to destruction in punishment of their impiety. Deucalion, being warned by his father Prometheus, built a large vessel, in which he placed pairs of animals of every kind, and to which he took refuge with his wife Pyrrha and his sons and their wives. The Deluge continued six days and nights, at the end of which the vessel rested on Parnassus. A dove was sent forth, and came back with mud in its claws, showing that the waters were retiring. In

due time, Deucalion and Pyrrha left the ship, offered a sacrifice, and repopled the earth by throwing the "bones of the earth," the stones, behind their backs; or, as another story goes, they threw over their heads the fruit of a palm-tree, from which sprang a new race. Among the Persians, Scandinavians, and Celts, the traditions were national, and were also too distinctive to be mistaken for versions of the Mosaic or Chaldean legends.<sup>1</sup>

A third series of these traditions appears among the Turanians, who are represented by the aborigines of the Western Continent. Our countryman, Mr. Catlin, says that, "amongst the one hundred and twenty tribes that he visited in North and South and Central America, not a tribe exists that has not related to him distinct or vague recollections of such a calamity, in which one or three or eight persons were saved, above the waters, on the top of a high mountain." Among the wild Indians of South America, whose tribal names are unknown to the civilized world, Humboldt found the tradition still fresh and distinct. "The belief in a great deluge," he says, "is not confined to one nation singly, the Tamanacs; it makes part of a system of historical tradition, of which we find scattered notions among the Maypures of the great cataracts; among the Indians of the Rio Everato, which runs into the Caura; and among all the tribes of the upper Orinoco."<sup>2</sup> The close resemblance between these stories and the Mosaic narrative awakened in Humboldt very naturally the suspicion that they might have been taken from the teachings of the Christian missionaries. On further reflection and inquiry, he dismissed the doubt as groundless.<sup>3</sup> Lenormant, after having passed a mass of authorities in review, said, "We are constrained to admit that the tradition of the Deluge among the various nations of Mexico is genuine and thoroughly indigenous; it is by no means an invention of the missionaries, as has been insinuated."<sup>4</sup> He adds, "We can state positively that it was not borrowed from the Bible after the advent of the Spaniards."<sup>5</sup> He suggests,

<sup>1</sup> Ency. Brit., 9th ed., art. Deluge.

<sup>2</sup> Miller: Test. Rocks, 285.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>4</sup> Lenormant: *Beg. Hist.*, 466.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 469.

however, that it might have been imported at an earlier epoch from some other country. The learned author might have added that such an importation would confirm the authenticity of the original tradition, just as copies of an old manuscript prove the previous existence of the manuscript itself.

These recollections come to us from the three leading civilized races of the ancient world: the Aryans or Indo-Europeans, the Semitic or Syro-Arabians, and the Kushites or Turanians. They bear the marks, moreover, which identify them severally with their peoples. Many of them boasted of navigators native-born to the soil, and bearing names of familiar sound. The Noah of the Hebrews was known as Xisuthros and Hasisatra by the Chaldæans, as Teman by the Persians, as Manu and Satyavrata by the Hindoos, as Deucalion or Ogyges by the Greeks, and as Coxox or Tespi or Teocipactli by the Mexicans. The wife of Noah, although anonymous in Genesis, is the Pyrrha of India, the Nata or the Xochigetzal of Mexico. The older nations pointed out also the resting-places of the ark within their borders. Phrygia advanced the claims of Apemea; the Armenians exhibited the ruins of the ark on Mount Baris; the Chaldæans visited the fragments of Hasisatra's ship on the Gordyæan mountains.<sup>1</sup> The traditions are interwoven not only with the national literature, but with the polytheism, with the mythological fables, with the distorted and fantastic conceits, of the heathen. If these peculiarities were absent from their accounts of the Deluge, the accounts themselves would be set down as spurious. But when the mythological elements are cleared away, they leave a deposit of fact corresponding to the simple and faithful narrative of Moses. By comparing and arranging the heathen narratives, a history of the Deluge may be easily constructed, corresponding in all important particulars with the story in Genesis.

No account is taken of beliefs in countries which are in possession of the Pentateuch. Nor is it necessary to consider what effect should be given to the myths current in China, Egypt, and Polynesia. The facts, which are undisputed, show

<sup>1</sup> Lenormant: p. 439.

that these reminiscences are widely diffused among nearly all peoples, with the sole exception of the blacks. They are perpetuated in tables of stone, and in the sacred books of the Parsees, Scandinavians, and Hindoos. They come to us from remote ages, and from distant parts of the civilized world, from races separated by mountains, by seas, by idolatries, and by antipathies. Echoes sound out from the ruins on the Euphrates and the Tigris, and from the wild woods of the Orinoco and the Missouri. The untaught barbarian in the heart of the Western Continent unconsciously responds to the thought of the half-civilized idolaters of Central Asia. The proof stands the test of universal acceptance: "*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus creditur.*"

In regard to the geographical extent of the Flood, the authorities are divided; some holding that it was universal, submerging the entire planet, and others teaching that it was limited to the region inhabited at the time by mankind.<sup>1</sup> It will be convenient to begin the investigation by clearing the question of some of the conditions under which it is presented.

In the first place, the whole body of Christian thought concurs in the proposition that the entire human race was drowned, eight souls only excepted, together with all the animals in the region covered by the Deluge. No support whatever is given to the theory of a partial destruction of Adam's descendants, or to the fiction of the existence of races of men other than Adam's, and of their escape from destruction. Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. Next, Hugh Miller is of the opinion that the question bears not on the punitive extent and ethical consequences of the Flood, but merely on its geographical limits and natural effects, and is not a moral but a purely physical question.<sup>2</sup> But this opinion is subject to a caveat contending that the question cannot be

<sup>1</sup> FOR A UNIVERSAL FLOOD. — Granville Penn, Fairbairn, Kitto, Kurtz, Keil, Alford, Wordsworth, Jacobus.

FOR A LIMITED FLOOD. — Pool, Stillingfleet, Pye Smith, Hitchcock, McDonald, Tayler Lewis, Hugh Miller, C. Geikie, A. Geikie, the Bishop of Ely; with the Bib. Cyclopædias of Smith, of Fausset, and of McClintock and Strong.

<sup>2</sup> Test. of Rocks, 306. Westminster Conf., chap. 1.

determined irrespective of the testimony of God's word. Geology and geography must give way before whatever a sound biblical criticism shall ascertain to be true. We must adhere to the principle, that, in every question of natural science or history, the declarations of God's word concerning them are to be taken in their obvious and historical sense, unless a modified interpretation is required by facts which are established in the sight of all mankind. This rule is applicable to Dr. Kitto's remark: "A plain man sitting down to read the Scripture account of the Deluge would have no doubt of its universality." This observation is not without plausibility; for it is written in Moses, "All the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upwards did the waters prevail, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth, and every man" (Gen. vii. 19-21). But if Dr. Kitto's "plain man" should study the Pentateuch, he would discover that Moses does not hesitate to employ general terms in a limited signification, and that in this use of language he is supported by the later writers of the Sacred Scriptures, by Christ and his disciples, by the most accurate historians ancient and modern, and, indeed, by the universal usages of speech. The remark of Moses, that all the high hills that were "under the whole heaven" were covered by the Flood, bears a family likeness to the recorded purpose of Jehovah to put the dread and fear of the Israelites upon the nations that are under "the whole heaven," — the nations, to wit, that occupied the Oriental regions (Deut. ii. 25); to the declaration of Luke, that at the Pentecost there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men out of "every nation under heaven," meaning the Roman Empire (Acts ii. 5); and to the statement of Paul, that in his day the gospel had been preached "to every creature which is under heaven," meaning in all countries then known (Col. i. 23). When we read that in the Deluge all flesh died "that moved upon the earth," we are reminded of the famine, which was, Moses says, "over all the face of the earth," and was "sore in

all lands," and "all the countries came to buy corn" (Gen. xli. 56, 57). We remember also, so our Lord tells us, that the Queen of Sheba came from the "uttermost parts of the earth," that is to say, from a far-off region, to hear the wisdom of Solomon (Matt. xii. 42); and that, according to Matthew, "Jerusalem and all Judæa and all the region round about Jordan, were baptized of John in the Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matt. iii. 5), meaning simply a very large proportion of the people.

In regard to the difficulties which are supposed to encumber the theory of a universal deluge, some, who profess to have investigated the subject, are of opinion that certain trees yet living are from four thousand to six thousand years old; for example, the baobab in Senegal, and the taxidodium of Mexico. It is assumed that an inundation, laying them under water for a year, would destroy them. It is said, also, that a district in France is covered with extinct volcanoes older than the days of Moses, exhibiting cones of pumice-stone, ashes, and other light substances which could not have resisted an overflowing flood. But Hugh Miller does not rely upon the argument derived from these trees and volcanoes, on account of uncertainty in the calculations.<sup>1</sup>

It is at least extremely doubtful whether the ark was large enough to accommodate seven pairs of all clean animals, two of all the beasts that were upon earth, and all the fowls by sevens, and of every creeping thing two of each kind. Hugh Miller, writing in A.D. 1856, estimated the number of different animals in existence at 1,658 mammals, 6,264 species of birds, and 657 reptiles.<sup>2</sup> Later estimates raise these figures to 2,000, 7,000, and 1,500 respectively, to say nothing of the 120,000 insects after their kind.<sup>3</sup> The exact size of the ark in cubits is furnished by Moses. How it was possible to find room within it for all these subjects of the animal kingdom, together with provisions for their support for an entire year, is an unsolved problem. But another difficulty still more obstinate relates to the collection, from all corners of the earth, of every species of

<sup>1</sup> Testimony, etc., 351, note.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 336.

<sup>3</sup> Geikie: Hours, etc., i. 216.

cattle, fowl, reptile, and insect, their support in the journey to Mesopotamia and in the ark, and their redistribution to their native haunts. It is sufficiently difficult to explain how the African ostrich, giraffe, lion, and gorilla, the Bengal tiger and the boa-constrictor, the Siamese elephant, and the polar bear, could find their way overland to Noah, exposed to unfriendly climates, through thousands of miles, and then back again to their homes. Still further, if the Flood was universal, Australia and New Holland must have furnished to the ark their contingents of kangaroos and wombats, and specimens of all their fellow-beasts, two and two of each kind. By what system of navigation did these all ferry the broad ocean, first on their outward and then on their homeward voyage? South America is on the other side of the globe from the place where the ark was prepared. Among its uncouth fauna are the sloth, which lives in trees and rarely comes down to the earth, crawling painfully on its surface; and the armadillo, which burrows in the ground, and seldom goes abroad except at night. Dr. Geikie imagines a journey of the sloth and his mate on their way to Noah, crawling inch by inch northwards through Mexico, "then the whole length of North America, then miraculously crossing Behring's Straits; thence westward through the whole breadth of Asia, a continent broader than the moon."<sup>1</sup> We must account also for their return to South America, and show how they could find supplies of food while passing through so many climates and over such vast spaces; and how they were, all of them, without exception, male and female, protected from the dangers of a journey by sea and by land from South America to Mesopotamia, and thence back to South America.

The doctrine of a universal deluge, and the doctrine of a limited deluge, are encumbered with a difficult question in regard to the source whence the waters were derived. The sacred record nowhere intimates that the Almighty created the waters out of nothing, or that he brought them from a rainy planet, or that, after they had served their purpose, they were miraculously disposed of. Next, as against a limited

<sup>1</sup> Hours, etc., i. 215.



deluge, it is urged that a mass of waters covering all the high hills under the whole heaven would, in seeking their level, cover the face of the earth, producing a universal deluge, covering even the polar regions. As against a universal deluge, it is urged that the introduction of such masses of water would increase the equatorial diameter of the earth by several miles; would change its revolution on its axis, and its orbit around the sun; would disturb the solar system, and the poise of the system in the broader stellar regions. In reply, Keil remarks, first, that we are not at liberty to set bounds to the Divine omnipotence; next, that the proportion of waters of the Flood to the entire mass of the earth is no greater relatively than that of a profuse perspiration on the person of a man. Another writer has compared the proportion to the thickness of the varnish on a twelve-inch globe. Dr. Tayler Lewis meets the difficulty by the conjecture that the whole region inhabited by the race was sunken deep down below the level of the seas; and, in due time, the submerged country was raised again to its former level. Dr. Lewis designates a portion of Central Asia as possibly the scene of the catastrophe, that being at the time the home of mankind. The territory is nearly equal in area to Europe; the general level is below the surface of the Black Sea; its rivers, the Volga, the Ural, and other great streams, run not to the ocean, but to the interior lakes, the Caspian and the Aral; and Mount Ararat rises near the edge of this great depression. The sinking of the country bounded by the Euxine and the Gulf of Finland on the north, and the Persian Gulf on the south, would submerge the dry land, carrying with it Mount Ararat. The uplifting again of the sunken territory would return the waters to the neighboring seas, and Ararat to its place.

Some support is afforded to this explanation by the many instances cited in the books, of the elevation and depression of the earth in historic times. Wallace is quoted as showing that a vast portion of South Asia, a region of over two million square miles, has sunk beneath the ocean since the Mosaic creation.<sup>1</sup> Miller calls attention to the volcanic forces which

<sup>1</sup> Malay Archipelago, i. 14.

elevated the mountain Jurullo in a single night sixteen hundred feet over the plain.<sup>1</sup>

What has been now set forth leads to these conclusions: The weight of authority and argument is given to a partial deluge. On that theory, the subject is cleared of many difficulties not otherwise met; and the narrative of Moses is rescued from an interpretation involving, not impossibility with God, but an enormous expense of inconceivable miracles, in a journey to and fro over the whole earth, of beasts, and birds, and reptiles, and insects of every species. "God," says Dr. Chalmers, "is not prodigal of miracles." Again, the Scripture fairly interpreted is not "broken" by the theory of a limited inundation. While, however, we seem to be shut up, by the evidence now before us, to accept this explanation, we may reasonably connect with it a certain degree of reserve, until the whole subject can be re-examined in the light of future discoveries in both the works and word of God. This reserve will be comfortably maintained when it is remembered, that the final solution of the problem cannot affect the relation of the Flood to the plan of redemption.

Through the calamity a righteous sentence was inflicted on mankind for their sins. In suddenness and terror, in destructive force and universality, it is the type of the final judgment at the end of the world. It was an act of salvation also, preserving Noah and his family, but looking beyond them to the redemption of the race. Ewald perceives that "its purpose must have been to wash clean the sin-stained world, to sweep away the hopelessly degraded race of man, and produce, upon a purified and renovated earth, a new race, stimulated by that warning voice to become both purer and better."<sup>2</sup> Lange's view goes deeper: "The sin-deluge is, at the same time, a grace-deluge; and so far a type of holy baptism (1 Pet. iii. 21), and of life rising out of death. Therefore it is that the old ecclesiastical artists were so fond of distinguishing chapels of burial by a representation of it."<sup>3</sup> From this point of view, we

<sup>1</sup> Testimony of the Rocks, 356 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. of Israel, i. 270.

<sup>3</sup> Lange on Gen., p. 296.

may easily discover the relation of Noah and his family to the human race, and to the kingdom of God.

Noah stood in the unique position of the second father of all mankind. The headship of humanity was in Adam the first father, and in Noah the second father of us all. By virtue of their headship, they became parties to the memorable covenants which God established with them, for themselves and their seed after them; the covenant of works with Adam, and the covenant of forbearance with Noah. Further, Noah and his family formed the connecting link between the old world and the new. The ark resembled a bridge spanning the waters which divided the two worlds; and this little family of eight persons carried in its bosom the gift of life to the renovated earth. In this family, again, the promise in the first gospel received a new development. God spared them, not only for the sake of righteous Noah, but to fulfil the purpose of redemption. Here, then, the kingdom of God rises once more out of a family, as before it had taken its beginning in the family of Adam, and as afterwards it assumed an organic form in the family of Abraham. The primal idea of the family lies at the foundation of God's dealings with the race, and of all the covenants. It is the oldest society on earth, and it is the parent of both the Church and the State. No conception of history, either sacred or profane, is worthy of a thought, which does not root itself in the family constitution. Noah's household is, therefore, the new starting-point of these historical studies. Moreover, these eight souls constituted the Church in the ark. It was identical with the Church before the Flood. Its life was the same; its members held the same relation to the covenant of grace; the same great Head was over it; the same promise, holy day, creed, and ritual, were held sacred therein. It was also a Church gathered out of the world, and called to an exalted destiny. The parents and children, moreover, had been delivered from the corruption of the ungodly, even from polygamy, violence, and atheism. They were saved, likewise, from the destruction of the wicked, having been commanded to go up into the ark, shut in by the Lord himself, and saved alive. So

far, again, as the household professed to believe and worship God, the Church in the ark was the Church visible; it was invisible in the persons of those who were *truë* believers and *holy* worshippers. Nor was the attending circumstance absent, the constant element in the progress of the ages, — the destruction of the wicked going hand in hand with the salvation of the righteous. The flood that drowned the reprobate, bore the chosen ones safely upon its bosom.

## CHAPTER IX.

## REVELATIONS TO NOAH.

GEN. viii. 20-22, ix. 1-27. — The return of the waters to the seas, and the restoration of Noah to the dry land, introduced a new world, and a distinct epoch in the history of redemption. The occasion was distinguished by a series of Divine revelations, far in advance of all that had been made known. The revelations communicated to Noah embraced several particulars :—

- I. Ordinances of Divine worship, Gen. viii. 20-22.
- II. Special gifts, ix. 1-7.
- III. A new covenant, ix. 8-17.
- IV. The second Messianic promise, ix. 25-27.

I. Noah took possession of his earthly inheritance by an act of worship. In his intention, this was both a thank-offering and a sin-offering; at once an expression of his gratitude to Jehovah, and a confession of guilt, together with the acceptance, by faith, of the salvation revealed in the first gospel. But that sacrifice conveyed a broader, even a prophetic, meaning. Among its contents were some of the ruling ideas of the future Hebrew ritual. He undoubtedly received them from Jehovah. Otherwise it had been impossible for him to avoid mere will-worship, or to foreshadow the ordinances of sacrifice given by the Almighty from Sinai seven hundred and fifty years later.

In the first place, Noah builded an altar. And the altar became the central object in the life of the patriarchs, and in the Hebrew ritual; it was the genesis also of the future tabernacle and temple. Next, Noah offered a sacrifice in blood. He brought before the Lord, not the fruits and flowers of Cain,

but the blood of Abel. In due time the remission of sin, by the shedding of blood, became the vital element in the Mosaic ordinances. Further, Noah selected for the altar the clean beast and fowl. He took as an offering to the Lord, no reptile or wild animal, neither swine nor beast of burden: he took that only which might be eaten. Ever afterwards the flesh of those beasts and fowls which were laid upon the altar, and none others, might be used as food. These were called clean animals. Still further, Noah brought to the altar at least one of every clean beast and clean fowl. It was the most comprehensive sacrifice that had ever been offered on earth; linking together also, as a part of religion, the daily food of the family, and the daily worship of God. Moreover, the patriarch put another conspicuous ceremony into his ritual: he added fire to blood, giving to the ordinance of sacrifice as it came from Abel, a new character and a new name,—the burnt-offering. The Hebrew word is *OLAH*, meaning ascending; signifying that the victim was first slain, then consumed by fire, conveying from the altar to heaven, in a smoke, the savor of burning flesh. Here is disclosed the original of the burnt-offering in the Levitical law. The altar stood in the outer court of the tabernacle, open to the sky. Victims were laid upon it morning and evening. They were consumed by a slow fire, burning from the morning through all hours to the morning again. "It is," said the Lord, "a continual burnt offering, which was ordained in Mount Sinai, for a sweet savor, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord" (Num. xxviii. 6). The *Olah* of Noah and Moses was, moreover, the divinely appointed type of the great Sacrifice. "Wherefore, when Christ cometh into the world, he saith: Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me." "And Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor" (Heb. x. 5; Eph. v. 2). The sum of the matter is, that Noah's oblation was expiatory and prophetic; it involved the confession of guilt, the remission of sin by the shedding of blood; and it pointed forward to the way of salvation by the sacrifice of Christ.

God accepted Noah's offering: "The Lord smelled a sweet savor." By this we know that Noah was divinely guided in his form of worship; it was not in the nature of will-worship, but of God's appointment. Having respect to this sacrifice, the Lord said that he would not again curse the ground for man's sake, nor smite any more every thing living. The purpose is emphasized by the expression, "The Lord said in his heart," and it is confirmed in Isaiah by the form of an oath (Isa. liv. 9). His determination was deliberate and unchangeable, and it was the more memorable because of what he said before, and then after, the Flood. Before the Flood, he saw that "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually," and he added, "I will destroy man." After the Flood, he resolved that he would not again curse the ground for man's sake, or smite every thing living; "for," said he, "the imagination of man's heart is only evil from his youth." Some of the critics have, as they think, detected an inconsistency here. But the solution is found at Noah's altar, and is complete. Looking at man's corrupt nature only, he was angry. Looking at the great reconciliation prefigured in Noah's burnt-offering, he was propitiated. So impious was man's enmity to God, that he deserved to be destroyed by the Deluge. And so inveterate was his enmity, that no punishment would change his nature, no deluge would wash away his defilement. Here came in the glorious truth, "Where judgment is impotent, grace may prevail." God would no more destroy: he would save. He would provide the blood that cleanses from all sin, the reconciliation which at once pardons and purges the imagination of man's heart. As a material element in this purpose of mercy, the Lord resolved to restore the seasons which had been suspended during the year of the Flood, making one long winter, to their regular and recurring courses while the earth shall remain. The promise of day and night was added to complete the guaranty. The new epoch, with the altar of Noah set up at its threshold, was an epoch of grace renewed. The methods and extent of this grace are still further disclosed in the gifts and promises of God to Noah and his posterity.

II. Jehovah, having graciously accepted Noah's burnt-offering, is represented as communing with himself: "The Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart," etc. On the ground of the great propitiation of which the offerings were symbolical, his inmost thoughts were thoughts of peace and good-will to men. They found expression in three forms, of which the first is a series of free gifts.

In the first place, he renewed to Noah and his sons the possession of the earth. The terms in which the original grant was made to Adam were repeated to Noah. The grant to both was introduced with a benediction. God blessed Adam, and he blessed Noah. He said to both, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (comp. Gen. i. 23). All things began anew with the new world and its heirs.

God gave to them also a qualified dominion over the lower animals. The nature and extent of Noah's supremacy differed distinctly from that of Adam. In Adam, it was a dominion of absolute authority; in Noah, it was a lordship of "fear and dread." Beast and fowl, and reptile and fish, should be subject to Adam; they should be afraid of Noah. The brutes resist, often ferociously, the rule of man; yet even the tiger, the lion, and the venomous reptiles instinctively flee from him, unless brought to bay, or maddened by hunger or by peril to their young. We recognize here indelible signs both of the gift of the earth, and the curse upon it for man's sake.

Moreover, animal flesh was now given for food, and mankind were authorized to use it as freely as they use vegetables and fruits. We are not at liberty to say that, in point of fact, flesh was not eaten by the antediluvians. We are told only that a Divine permission to use it was now, for the first time, granted. The distinction between the clean and the unclean, just established at the altar of Noah, prepared the way for this new gift. And we must not overlook the stigma which was quickly put on the worship of animals by the decree instilling the fear and dread of man into their natures, and then giving the choicest of them all to man for food. This degrading form of idolatry, known as fétichism, is described in the later Scriptures, which



speaking of the idol of man's hands; of the tree, a part of which the idolater uses for cooking, and a part for the making of a god; of flesh, a part of which he roasts and eats, and "the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image, and falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth to it, and saith, 'Deliver me; for thou art my God'" (Isa. xlv. 9-20).

Again, a strict limitation is laid upon the use of flesh for food: "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." These words contain far more than the prohibition of raw flesh, and the flesh taken from living animals. They disclose the basis of the law of sacrifice, in which blood was appointed by God as the symbol of expiation for sin. It was so treated in the Levitical law: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls" (Lev. xvii. 10, 11). The inflexible rule was, flesh for food, blood for sin. The ordinance rested upon three ruling ideas: First, life is, to all appearance, associated with the blood. Next, God had reserved the blood for himself, as an offering for sin; it was to be poured upon the altar, and the residue was to be drunk up by the earth. Lastly, being a consecrated thing, it might not be eaten. Thus an important feature of the Mosaic economy was disclosed nearly eight hundred years before the law was given. The ordinance in regard to the life that is in the blood of animals, was immediately followed by an ordinance in regard to the life that is in the blood of man.

Further, Jehovah said, "And surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hands of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man."

1. The penalty of death is affixed to the crime of murder. This ordinance is not only an expression of the Divine will, but it gives effect, also, to the sense of justice which is implanted in the human bosom. Cain felt, instinctively, that he deserved to die; he was sure that others thought the same, and, further,

that every man who saw him would feel himself moved to put him to death. Nothing but the Divine protection gave him impunity.

2. The reason of the law is plainly declared: "For in the image of God made he man." He who strikes at the life of a man, strikes at God's image, and, through his image, at God himself. Murder is not only a crime against humanity, but is *leze-majesty* as against the Almighty. We come here upon the wickedness of suicide; for self-murder is a thrust at the image of God in one's own soul.

3. The brute beast killing a man must be slain. By this measure a repetition of the tragedy is prevented. We are strengthened also by the act of slaying the brute, in the apprehension of the sacredness of human life; and we are justified in the extermination of ferocious beasts and venomous reptiles.

4. The minister charged with the infliction of the penalty is appointed. "At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man." The Hebrew for "every man's brother" signifies literally "the one and the other," meaning that God requires of every living man the blood of the murderer; there shall be no escape for the guilty, and no excuse for "the other" who connives at his escape. The Sovereign of the universe appoints the officer of justice. And this appointment is justified by the fact that man is the image of God in moral judgment, in the sense of justice, and in the gifts of reason and the free will. As such, he is qualified to represent the Almighty in the trial, conviction, and execution of the murderer.

5. The law is of universal and perpetual obligation. The lawgiver is the Almighty. And the law is in the nature of a Divine command. It was given to Noah, the second father of the race, taking its date from the beginning of the new world, and standing among the foremost institutes in the established order of things. Imperishable attributes of humanity, the image of God in man, vindicate the sentence of death on the murderer. It appears among other Noachian ordinances confessedly permanent; and it is preceded in the record by the law of sacrifice, and followed by the covenant with Noah for

himself and all his posterity. Provisionally, it was set up as a barrier to the violence which had filled the old world; prospectively, it pointed forward to a place, in the Mosaic institutes and in the New Testament, for the sword in the hands of the magistracy, and for the protection of human life in all ages. It bears all the marks of a permanent Divine ordinance as distinguished from temporary Mosaic usages.

6. These two brief verses are, by the soundest publicists, held to contain the fundamental principles of civil government in the hands of a magistracy. The duty of protecting human life from the hand of violence is enjoined on mankind. To that end, the power of life and death is conferred upon us. And the three functions of the magistracy are, not obscurely, described in this place,—the legislative enacting the laws, the judicial applying the laws to the conduct of men, and the executive enforcing their sanctions.<sup>1</sup> Luther finds in the eight verses the appointment of an order of instruction in Noah's offering, an economy in the blessing on the family, and a law of protection in the magistracy. The Almighty now repeats, in the seventh verse, the promise of the illimitable and orderly increase of mankind: "Be fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein." But the catastrophe of the Flood might well awaken in the mind of Noah the apprehension of its recurrence from time to time, laying waste his inheritance. The Almighty relieved his natural fears by establishing a covenant with him and his posterity.

III. This covenant comes before us in several aspects: (1) It has been described as a covenant of forbearance. The preservation of the earth from the waters of another flood is the sole promise conveyed by its terms, strictly interpreted.

(2) It was a new manifestation of the covenant of grace. It secured an opportunity for the execution of the plan of salvation. If the race had been wholly destroyed, the eight souls not excepted, the promise in the first gospel would have failed: the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent would have perished together. Or, if a succession of sweeping floods were

<sup>1</sup> Dr. R. J. Breckinridge.

to occur through the ages, a few only being saved each time, the promise would come almost to naught. Not only the re-creation of the earth and its repopulation, but its future preservation as well, were conditions indispensable to the dignity of this plan of redemption. "There shall be no more flood to destroy the earth," was a guaranty that God's plan of saving grace should not be defeated by another universal destruction. "There may be floods and famines and pestilence on parts of the earth's surface; tribes may be extirpated, and nations dispersed: but all flesh shall be no more destroyed." Nor does this guaranty lose sight of the final conflagration to which the earth is hastening (2 Pet. iii. 5-10). For, not to lay undue stress on this fact that the last catastrophe shall come not in water but in fire, we must bear in mind that this will mark the end of the world, the plan of redemption having been fully carried out. Again, the ground of the covenant with Noah is disclosed in the covenant of grace. By the act of God putting him in possession of the new inheritance, "Noah became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. xi. 7). The difference between Noah, taking his possession under the covenant which is conditioned not on works but on faith, and Adam, who was an heir of the righteousness obtained by original creation, is sufficiently obvious. Moreover, the immediate antecedent of this covenant was the burnt-offering of Noah: God smelled a sweet savor from that offering, and said he would no more smite the earth. He would preserve the race until the seed of the woman, even Christ, should come to take away sin by offering himself once for all.

(3) The promise in the covenant was made for the benefit of the lower animals (v. 10). This is not the only place in the record which points out the bond uniting the rational to the brute creation. Man and the lower animals were made on the same creative day; dominion over the beasts and fowls was given Adam, in token whereof they were brought to him to see by what names he would call them; their skins were given to man for clothing in the days of Adam, and their flesh for food in the days of Noah; they were drowned in the flood that

destroyed the human race ; a few of them were saved in the ark with Noah ; and now they are admitted by virtue of a covenant to some small share in the Divine mercy, while they are subjected to the fear and dread of man.

(4) The covenant was made with Noah and his sons for themselves and for their posterity. The people, for example, who are now on earth, were born under a covenant by virtue of which they are preserved from destruction by a general deluge. The covenant with Noah, like that of works and of grace at the first, and like that with Abraham afterward, extended to the posterity of the party with whom it was concluded. The Pelagian doctrine, that God deals with every man as if he were an independent power on earth, has no support in Scripture. God selected Adam, Noah, and Abraham, and afterwards David, as representative men, and entered into covenant with them for their posterity. It is impossible to understand the plan of Providence in the disregard of this integral element in its structure.

(5) Very conspicuous in this covenant is the absence from it of the idea of reciprocity. God pledged himself that there should be no more deluges. But he took no counter-pledges from mankind. The extension of the covenant to the lower animals proves that its promises were not reciprocal. The gift was absolute ; no duty on our part is exacted either as the condition of the promise, or the security for its perpetuity. It was purely an act of mercy, not deserved by any thing good in man, not to be forfeited by any thing in him of the evil and unthankful. "It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed." Not only are these blessings conveyed by the terms of the covenant, but they shine forth in its beautiful token, the rainbow.

There is nothing in the record, or in the nature of the case, showing that the rainbow was unknown before the Deluge. Nor is that assumption needed to explain the appointment of this phenomenon to be a sign to Noah of a new covenant. The difficulty, if there be any, is resolved by the thought that the bow, though it had been a familiar object from the creation,

now became the sign of a new idea, the idea of a Divine covenant. The principle here involved, an old sign made to bear a new signification, runs through the Scriptures. It is well established, that circumcision, for example, was in use, especially among the Egyptians, long before the days of Abraham. But it was simply an expedient for the purpose of health and cleanliness. Jehovah chose this ancient custom to be the sign of his covenant with Abraham and his posterity, and to be the symbol in his Church of consecration to God, and of spiritual purification. He raised the usage of the heathen to the sanctity of a sacrament. In like manner, a custom of common life, the lamb roasted, and eaten with bread and wine, became another sacrament. Our Lord, before he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of the supper, in the bread and the wine, to represent the remission of sins by his blood. After his resurrection, he appointed the sprinkling of the body by water, to represent, in the sacrament of baptism, regeneration by the work of the Holy Spirit. The analogy is obvious between these ordinances and the appointment of the rainbow as the token of a new covenant. A further illustration of this principle appears in what has been called the "language-moulding power of Christianity;" the selection, to wit, of certain Greek words for the purposes of inspiration. Words there are which have been lifted up from the level of heathen thought to express Christian conceptions, vessels ordained to bear spiritual truth to the world. We may cite the Greek term *logos*, the classical meaning of which is a living, spoken word; in the New Testament, it is set to signify the gospel and the person of the Son of God. *Anastasis*, the act of rising from sleep, is used by the Spirit to describe the resurrection from the dead in a spiritual body. *Heaven*, in classic use, signifies primarily the firmament above us; in the New Testament, it sometimes describes the dwelling-place of God. *Flesh* is made to mean the sinful condition of human nature; *life* stands for holiness and blessedness, *death* for sin and misery. Biblical scholars point out more than a hundred Greek words which, so to speak, are adopted by the Holy Spirit into the language of his kingdom. Many hundred

others are less deeply colored by the process of inspiration. The appointment of the rainbow, therefore, as the sign of the Noachian covenant, follows the general law of Scripture, whereby a well-known object is employed to set forth promises and truths, now for the first time distinctly revealed. The bow in the cloud, well known before the days of Noah, became the signal of a Divine promise, a beautiful phenomenon clothed with a new meaning. If we may revert, for a moment, to the history of the fall in Paradise, we may find, in the principle here set forth, a satisfactory explanation of the curse pronounced on the serpent: "On thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." We may explain and say that the serpent was originally created to crawl in the dust, but this prostration should be, thenceforth, a perpetual sign of degradation and abasement. The contempt of mankind should be associated with the position in which it was created.

One other point remains. The bow in the cloud was the token simply of the covenant, not a sacramental sign. The difference between the sign of a Divine covenant, and a sign bearing a sacramental character, is twofold. First, a sacrament is a sign of the covenant of grace, and of the spiritual benefits conveyed therein. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are sacraments instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers. The rainbow had no such significance. Next, in a sacrament is something to be done by us, or applied to us; a sacramental action, so called. In baptism, water is applied to the subject in the name of the Trinity; in the supper, there are the acts of breaking the bread, of blessing and distribution, of eating the bread and drinking the wine. But, in the matter of the rainbow, there is no act on our part of acceptance, or worship, or faith. It is not required that we look upon the bow, even; for God said, "I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant."

This account of the new order of things secured by the Noachian covenant is completed, in the record, by a prophecy respecting the races which should take their origin from the

three sons of Noah; for by them the earth was, in due time, overspread. The future destiny of each family, and its relation to the other two, and to the kingdom of God on earth, are pointed out in what is called the second Messianic promise.

IV. THE PROMISE (Gen. ix. 18-27). — Noah, the second father of the race, like Adam our first father, was overtaken by a flagrant sin. Attempts have been made to excuse Noah's conduct. But the plain, blunt word of Calvin is better than any apology: "I rather suppose that we are to learn, from the drunkenness of Noah, what a filthy and detestable crime drunkenness is." Nobody offers an excuse for the indecency of Ham. It proceeded from a native-born spirit of indecency, and of ribaldry and mockery towards all that is good. Ham's crime divided the sons of Noah into two parties, — Ham and his posterity representing the seed of the serpent; Shem and Japheth, with their descendants, the seed of the woman. There is an analogy between the sin of Noah, and the sin of Adam. Both were followed by a curse on the guilty, and a blessing on the righteous. Moreover, the first Messianic promise was deposited in the bosom of the curse on the serpent; even so the second Messianic promise was associated with the curse on Ham.

The inspired utterance now before us takes the form of an ode, in three couplets; one for each of the brothers. Each couplet sounds the note of judgment on the guilty one: —

"Cursed be Canaan;

A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem;

And Canaan shall be his servant.

God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem;

And Canaan shall be his servant."

In the first stanza, it appears, that, although Ham sinned, his son Canaan is cursed. This incident has been used to illustrate the rule whereby the sins of the father are visited upon the children. The principle of retributive justice, also, has been discovered here; Ham had dishonored his father, and in return was put to shame by the degradation of his son



Canaan. These moral lessons being duly weighed, attention should be given to the historical significance of the abject position assigned by Noah to Canaan. This affords the clew to the proper interpretation of the prophecy, foreshowing the plan of Providence for the later ages. Canaan's descendants, far more than the posterity of any other son of Ham, were brought into close contact with Semitic Hebrews. The prophecy of Noah in regard to Canaan was, in the course of time, fulfilled to the letter, in the subjugation of the Canaanites by the Semitic Hebrews. The sons of Canaan settled themselves in the land to which they gave their name. They were the aborigines. They cultivated the fertile soil, they planted gardens and vineyards, and built walled cities. When Abraham, the Shemite, first saw the country, the Canaanite was in the land (Gen. xii. 6). Unconsciously to themselves, the aborigines held the domain in trust for the benefit of the Hebrews. When the iniquity of the Canaanites was full (Gen. xv. 16), the Hebrews took possession of the country by force of arms. Multitudes of the natives were slain, and others were reduced to servitude; they became hewers of wood and drawers of water. At last the scattered and broken remnants of the conquered tribes were enslaved by Solomon (1 Kings ix. 20, 21). In their turn the sons of Japheth took up the work of subjugation. The Phœnicians were the sons of Canaan; the Persians and Macedonians, by whom the Phœnicians were subdued, were the sons of Japheth. The Carthaginians were Canaanites of the Phœnician stock; and the Carthaginians were ignominiously driven under the yoke by the Romans, the sons of Japheth. As it has been said, "We can almost hear the echo of Noah's curse in Hannibal's *agnosco fortunam Carthaginis*, when the head of Hasdrubal, his brother, was thrown contemptuously into the Punic lines." Such was the curse on Canaan. According to its terms, he was doomed to become a "servant of servants," an abject slave, "to his brethren." And, in point of fact, the Canaanites have been reduced, not only to the ordinary condition of conquered peoples, but, very largely, to involuntary and degrading servitude, by their Semitic and Japhetic masters.

The abject position assigned to Canaan, first in the prophecy of Noah, and, since that was uttered, in the history of the race, shows that he was a typical head of the serpent which was to be bruised.

Noah's prophecy in regard to Shem took the form, not of a benediction on Shem, but of a doxology to God. "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." The boon promised here is indicated by the name Jehovah God, given to the Almighty. He is called, not Elohim, the general term describing the Divine Being, but by his greater name JEHOVAH, the God of redemption, the covenant-giving and covenant-keeping God, even He who had just entered into a special covenant with Noah. Next, Jehovah is called the God of Shem. Never before, in Scripture, is the Almighty called the God of any one person or race. But after this, the distinguished honor follows the line of Shem throughout the ages. Jehovah is described as the God of Abraham; the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob; the God of his people Israel. Five times in the Ten Commands he says to Israel: "I am Jehovah, thy God." Christ, moreover, quotes with emphasis the words of God, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob;" connecting this saying with an authoritative declaration of the resurrection of the dead. Noah's prophetic use of the covenant-name of Jehovah in the doxology, and the words of the doxology itself, indicate the establishment of an intimate relation between God and the posterity of Shem. "Blessed is that people whose God is Jehovah." They foreshow the future exaltation of Shem over his brothers, in his descendant Eber, and later still in the illustrious family of Abraham, with whom the far-famed covenant of circumcision was established.

This prediction has been received by the Church as the second Messianic promise. Not that the person or name of the Messiah is set forth here; not that his coming in the line of Shem is declared in so many words here: but those prophetic words, in their real meaning, point to the person of Jesus Christ. What is general and impersonal in the first gospel in Eden, begins to descend to particulars. A sure but indefinite redemp-

tion was revealed in this second promise: it is intimated that the Holy Seed shall appear, not among the broader multitudes descending from Noah, but in the narrower line of Shem. Well might Noah say, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." Well might Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, give echo to Noah's doxology, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel" (Luke i. 68).

Turning to his oldest son, Noah said, "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." The first of these prophetic announcements points to worldly prosperity; the second, to spiritual privileges. Recognizing the meaning of the name Japheth (far-spreading), Noah predicts for his posterity a world-wide expansion, including every form of earthly exaltation. The God of Shem is Jehovah, the God of salvation; the benefactor of Japheth is Elohim, the God of creation and providence. This particular looks only to good things temporal. But the second clause admits Japheth to a home in the tents of Shem, plainly showing that he should partake in the salvation secured by the gracious presence of Jehovah among the Semites. Renown and power are granted to Japheth by the immediate gift of God; salvation was laid up for him in the keeping of Shem.

Nothing in the history and present state of the world is better known than the fulfilment of this prophecy in all its parts. God has enlarged Japheth. From the very beginning his sons became the emigrating, colonizing race, until they have passed by land and sea around the world. They occupy the larger and more fertile portions of Asia, the whole of Europe and North America, and are gaining possession of Central and South America and Australasia and Africa. The Celts, Teutons, Slaves; the Hindoos, and perhaps the Tartars, — are Japhethites. And the exaltation of these peoples over the posterity of Shem and Ham, in the sphere of material civilization, is not disputed. Not less certain is it that the posterity of Japheth have found the salvation which was first bestowed on Shem. "They dwell in the tents of Shem," because they have a common spiritual inheritance with the people among whom the

Lord builded his tabernacle. The prophecy of Isaiah (lx. 3) is an echo of the prophecy of Noah: "Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Some interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, have interpreted the clause thus: "He (God) shall dwell in the tents of Shem." But, first, this explanation deprives Japheth of the promise of any spiritual blessing whatever, while it adds nothing to what has been made sure to Shem. Both the brothers were united in the same act of filial piety towards Noah, and it is only natural to conclude that both would partake alike in the best promises. Next, the use of the name Jehovah in Shem's blessing, and the use of the name Elohim in Japheth's, shows that they are not to be confounded in their personal application. Again, the refrain, "Canaan shall be his servant," shows that verse 26 must be applied to Shem; for a like reason, verse 27 must refer to Japheth, otherwise the prophecy in all its parts is thrown into confusion.

Noah's prophecy embraced several particulars. First, the seed of the woman are represented by Shem and Japheth, and their posterity, shall be exalted in power and renown. The seed of the serpent are aptly represented in Canaan; and his posterity is condemned to abject servitude, enslaved by other races, and enslaving one another. Secondly, the blessing promised in the first gospel shall flow along the line of Shem, and from his posterity God will choose a particular people for himself. Thirdly, Japheth shall receive the largest portion of the habitable globe for his inheritance, and he shall partake of the salvation primarily bestowed on Shem. Fourthly, the establishment of the visible kingdom of God on earth, and the appearance of the Messiah in the family of Shem; the giving of the covenants and the laws; the time and the manner in which Japheth should be introduced into the kingdom, and receive the Messiah; the spiritual blessings which should flow forth to the descendants of Ham; and the happy period when all the members of the human family shall be embraced in the common salvation,—all these joyful tidings are reserved for subsequent prophecies. That revelation was steadily progressive in the primeval era, is

made clear by a comparison of the period of Adam with that of Noah, and by a comparison of the first with the second Messianic promise.

The two periods may be characterized thus: 1. Adam was the first father of the whole race, and Noah was the second father. 2. The earth was given to both for a possession: to Adam as righteous by the deeds of the law; to Noah, as righteous by faith (Heb. xi. 7). 3. Dominion over the lower creatures was conferred on Adam; the fear of man only was promised to Noah. 4. Both received the promise of an immense posterity. 5. A covenanted headship was common to both. The blessings and the curse brought by Adam on his descendants are repeated, though faintly, by the blessing and the curse pronounced by Noah on his three sons. 6. The sacredness of human life was announced by the Almighty in the exile of Cain, and made more emphatic by the death penalty for murder made known to Noah.

In regard to the plan of redemption, it is to be noted: 1. The promise of salvation was made to these patriarchs, for themselves and their posterity. 2. The two seeds, the good and the evil, appear in Abel and in Shem and Japheth for the good, and in Cain and Ham for the evil. 3. God selected from both families a son who should stand in the line of promise. In Adam's household it was Seth; in Noah's it was Shem. Why Seth, rather than some other son of Adam? Why Shem, rather than Japheth? We discover here the principle of a sovereign choice, or an election of those who should enjoy the highest spiritual blessings. There is no evidence in the record that either Seth or Shem was better than his brother. Nor was the law of primogeniture followed in the selection, for neither of these men was an elder son (Gen. v. 3, x. 21). 4. The second promise was more definite than the first. To Adam the promise was given, generally, to the seed of the woman; in the Noachian promise it was stipulated that her seed should come in a particular family, that of Shem, passing by all other races and tribes. 5. Bloody sacrifices—so many believe, though many doubt—stood connected with the promise to Adam in the

beasts slain for their skins. Noah also offered bloody sacrifices; but he enlarged the ritual by the offering of all clean beasts, and added the use of fire to the use of blood at his altar.

A homiletical view of Noah's sacrifice, looking at it again from its human side, and discerning its spiritual significance, is presented by Dr. Tayler Lewis:—

“In the flame mounting heavenward from the great altar of Noah, there rises up, in all its rich suggestiveness, the idea of *sacrifice*, of *life-devotion* to that which is higher than all life—all, too, prefiguring One who made the great sacrifice of himself for the sins of the world, and who, although historically unknown to Noah, was essentially embraced in that recognition of human demerit, and of the Divine holiness, which is styled ‘the righteousness of faith.’ Whilst thus the new spirit of sacrifice ascends from the baptized earth, heaven is represented as bowing down to meet the symbol of reconciliation; the infinite descends to the finite, and humanity, in verification of the scripture paradox, rises through its very act of lowliness and self-abasement.”

## CHAPTER X.

## THE SONS OF NOAH.

GEN. x.-xi. 9. — The third part of the Book of Genesis, entitled “the generations of Noah,” brings the narrative down to his death. It is immediately followed by a section containing an account of “the generations of the sons of Noah,” in the form of a genealogy of the families and nations which proceeded from him, with a history of their dispersion over the face of the earth. The whole section is closely connected with the Messianic prophecy of Noah.

The tenth chapter is a contribution of the highest value to history, both sacred and profane. It is received by the archaeologists as the most valuable ethnological chart in the possession of mankind. It is entitled to that pre-eminence by its antiquity, being more than three thousand years old. Then, again, it is the only trustworthy account in existence of the settlement of the earth after the Deluge. Sir Henry Rawlinson says this is “undoubtedly the most authentic record we possess in the department of ethnology.”<sup>1</sup> Bunsen says, “It is the most learned among all the ancient documents, and the most ancient among the learned.”<sup>2</sup> Schröder says, “From this chapter must the whole universal history of the world take its beginning;”<sup>2</sup> and with him Von Müller concurs. Moreover, this document of less than fifty lines exhausts the science of the origin of nations; no other races have ever existed. All the “springs of history” are here; the real beginnings of the old-world empires, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Judæa, Syria, Greece, and Rome. By it are dissolved the fables told by the nations of their gods, and

<sup>1</sup> Jacobus on Genesis, chap. x.

<sup>2</sup> Lange: Genesis, p. 352.

heroes, and dynasties, and millenniums; and by it are extinguished the claims which any of them have asserted to the position of autochthones, people indigenous to their native soil. The archæologist, excavating the ruins of the buried cities in the old world, digs down through the rubbish of extinct civilizations till he comes to the bed-rock; so also the historian finds his way back, through the pre-historic ages, to the tents of Noah's three sons, the ancestors of us all. And here we come upon a convincing historical proof of the unity, in origin and species, of the human race.

The plan upon which this table of genealogies is constructed is admirable every way. In the first place, it rests historically on the basis of the Flood. The compiler is careful to say that sons were born to Shem, Ham, and Japheth, "after the Flood" (x. 1); and, that, by the people descending from these, "were the nations divided in the earth after the Flood" (v. 32). If we overlook the destruction of all flesh by the Deluge, eight souls only excepted, and the repopulation of the earth by the few that were saved, we can make nothing intelligible out of the chapter; if the story of the Deluge is a myth, the table of nations is a rigmarole. Next, the register conveyed a useful lesson to the Hebrews. They were taught by its contents, that, if they descended from Noah, so also did the Egyptians who had enslaved them, and the barbarians who had harassed their march in the wilderness, and the Canaanites who disputed, with force of arms, their right to the promised land. The Moabites also, and the Syrians, and the Assyrians, and the Babylonians, and later still the Romans, whom the Jews affected to despise, and really hated, could prove, by Moses, their claims to a direct descent from the common ancestor through one or another of his three sons. No rebuke more stinging than this could be administered to the race-pride and superciliousness of the Jews.

This table of nations affords persuasive proof of the prophetic inspiration of Noah, and casts light on the plan of history adopted by Moses. In the narrative immediately preceding, the sons of Noah are mentioned together four times, and always in this order: Shem, Ham, Japheth. In the genealogies before



us, the order is: Japheth, Ham, Shem. But why did Moses give the first place to Japheth, and the last to Shem? The answer is, that he first disposed of the races that branched off from the main line, and thus cleared the way for an uninterrupted history of the promised seed. This explanation, so far from being fanciful, is adopted by the three diverse schools of criticism, of which Alford, Ewald, and Keil are the representatives. Alford suggests that Moses sought to dispose first of Japheth and Ham in order that the main subject, the line of Shem, might be free for treatment.<sup>1</sup> Ewald says, that, "by this method," the narrative gains its highest attraction and greatest breadth.<sup>2</sup> Keil's words are: "According to this plan, which is strictly adhered to, the history of Cain and his family precedes that of Seth and his posterity; the genealogy of Japheth and Ham stands before that of Shem; the history of Ishmael and Esau stands before that of Isaac and Jacob; and the death of Terah, before the call and migration of Abraham to Canaan."<sup>3</sup>

This critical judgment is sustained by the consistency with which this plan is carried out in the genealogies. Ham's important position is defined by the insertion of the names of the eleven sons of Canaan, the ancestors of the tribes with whom Abraham and his posterity were brought into contact. The territory occupied by them is also described (x. 15-19). Particular attention is also directed to Mizraim and Nimrod, pointing to the part afterwards taken by Egypt and Babylon in the history of Israel. In the line of Shem, seventeen descendants of Arphaxad are named. One of these was the father of the Hebrews, another was Peleg, another was Joktan, and all of them the kindred of the chosen seed. But Japheth, having but little significance in this part of the history, is dismissed with the simple mention of his seven sons and seven of his grandsons. Ewald is fully sustained in his opinion that "this fundamental arrangement, consistently carried out in the minutest details, pervades the entire structure of this great work," — the Pentateuch.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alford: Genesis, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. of Israel, i. 80.

<sup>3</sup> Keil and Delitzsch: Com. on Pent., i. 37.

<sup>4</sup> Hist. of Israel, i. 80.

Not less worthy of notice is the intimate connection between the Messianic prophecies of Noah, and these genealogies. Salvation, said Noah, shall come to the race through the family of Shem: accordingly the register preserves the names of four successive generations proceeding from him, Arphaxad, Selah, Eber, and Peleg; the four pointing towards Abraham, the tenth from Shem, in whose family the kingdom was established. Japheth, Noah had said, shall find salvation in the tents of Shem: accordingly his pedigree is preserved here. Noah made no similar promise to Ham. But Moses records the names of as many as thirteen of the peoples descending from Ham, in token that the doors of the kingdom will in due time be opened to him, as well as to his two more favored brothers; and that not one of them has been forgotten in the counsels of Infinite Love.<sup>1</sup>

The chart resembles a missionary map of our own day, wherein the heathen nations, to which the gospel is to be preached, are carefully laid down, one by one, each in its proper place. It would seem that Moses, in the preparation of these genealogies, bore in mind the promise in the first gospel, in regard to the seed of the woman, and that he anticipated, prophetically, the larger promise reserved for Abraham, that in him and in his seed all nations should be blessed. The section affords, therefore, an appropriate introduction to the history of Abraham, by defining not only the genealogical position of his posterity among the nations, but their geographical relation to them all.

We are indebted to Dr. Robert S. Candlish for a suggestion that leads to a clear understanding of the geography of the tenth chapter. Let two lines be drawn on the map from west to east; the one from the southern, the other from the northern, border of Palestine. The territory between these two parallels was the portion of Shem. Ham took his inheritance below Shem's southern line: Japheth made his home north of Shem's upper line.<sup>2</sup> Japheth, however, in course of time, encroached on the possession of Ham in Southern Arabia; and Ham, repre-

<sup>1</sup> Rawlinson: *Origin of Nations*, 167.

<sup>2</sup> *Discourses on Genesis*, l. 176.

sented by Nimrod and by Canaan, trespassed on the inheritance of Shem. This general allotment gave effect to the prophecies of Noah. Shem became the recipient of Divine revelation, and in due time the channel from which salvation flowed to the posterity of Japheth and Ham. His geographical position, between his brothers, was a vantage-ground corresponding to the sacred duties which awaited him. Shem gave origin to the fixed and stable element of history. From Japheth proceeded the Caucasians, and from Ham the negroes. Japheth secured the temperate zone, with its invigorating climate; Ham was doomed to the hot regions, preparing him for his destiny as a servile race; and Shem took root in the intermediate country, drawing to himself vigor from the northern skies, and a touch of stagnation from the southern. The Armenians have a saying to the effect that Ham received the region of the blacks, Shem the region of the tawny, and Japheth the region of the ruddy.<sup>1</sup>

An easy lesson, showing the inspiration of Noah, lies before us just here. He foretold the destiny which awaited the posterity of his three sons. Japheth should dominate the planet; Shem should receive, and in due time send everywhere abroad, the salvation of God: Ham should serve his brethren. But these destinies were all bound up with their future homes on the surface of the earth. Let it be imagined that Japheth and Ham had missed their way, Japheth going to the torrid zone, and Ham to the northern temperate latitudes; and then let us imagine the confusion which this misplacement would have introduced into Noah's scheme of prophecy. Now, it is a fair question: Was it "good guessing," or Divine inspiration, whereby Noah not only foresaw the part assigned to each in the coming ages, but whereby he ascertained, also, that each of them would settle in the precise zone and latitude which were adapted to his peculiar destiny?

Biblical scholars have pointed out, with a certain degree of accuracy, the regions to which the various families emigrated immediately after their dispersion from the Tower of Babel. It should be borne in mind, that the names in the record stand,

<sup>1</sup> Blakie: Bib. Hist., 34.

for the most part, not for individuals, but for races or countries ; as Ashur for Assyria, Elam for Persia, Madai for Media, Lud for Lydia, Aram for Syria, Cush for Ethiopia, and Mizraim (in the Hebrew dual number) for Egypt, Upper and Lower. It should also be remembered that the primeval homes of the nations were held within narrow boundaries. None of the peoples appear to have pushed their migrations beyond the farther shores of the Euxine on the north, the Caspian towards the east, the straits of Babelmandeb and Upper Egypt southwardly, and Greece westwardly. Or, more tersely, they contented themselves with Eastern Europe, Hither Asia, and Northern Africa. From thence, in after ages, they overspread the earth, like the sea with its shores taken away. While we are able to determine beyond a reasonable doubt the homes of the earlier generations, we can follow a few of them only in their migrations during the four thousand years which have elapsed since the dispersion ; we can identify only a portion of them with the races now in existence. The progress of archæology has solved some of these problems, and gives promise of further discoveries. It may be safely predicted that these discoveries will be consistent with the Mosaic narrative. A minute examination of the register is not called for by the nature of these inquiries. Nothing need be considered here beyond what seems to be established respecting the peoples who are factors in Old-Testament history.

1. The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. Gomer has been identified with the Celts, Madai with the Medes, and Javan with the Greeks. Magog may stand, though not without some doubt, for the European Scythians, or the Slavonic races, of which the Russians are the modern representatives. Tiras was probably the ancestor of the vast hordes of the Thracians. The names of Tubal and Meshech have perished with the insignificant tribes which proceeded from them. Three sons of Gomer, and four sons of Javan, are mentioned. Of these, Ashkenaz of Gomer is most prominent ; he is commonly believed to be the ancestor of the Germanic races, and through them of the Anglo-Saxons ;

though Mr. George Rawlinson confers this distinction on Tiras through the Thracians.<sup>1</sup> The original home of the Japhetic races was the region around the Black Sea, and south of the Caspian. Ethnology, "following a strictly inductive method, and wholly freed from all shackles of authority," confirms what Moses says of the common origin of the races above named. Mr. Rawlinson styles Professor Max Müller "the greatest of modern ethnologists," and quotes from him these words: "There was a time when the ancestors of the Celt, the Germans, the Slaves, the Greeks and Italians, the Persians and Hindoos, were living together beneath the same roof, separate from the Semitic and Turanian races." And again, "There is not an English jury nowadays, which, after examining the hoary documents of language, would reject the claim of a common descent, and a legitimate relationship between the Hindoo, Greek, and Teuton."<sup>2</sup> Moses, so Rawlinson avers, "anticipated the discovery" (of modern ethnology) "by a space of above three thousand years."<sup>3</sup>

2. Ham's sons were Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan. The spirit of prophecy, which guided Noah in forecasting the future of his three sons, evidently made known Ham's pedigree to Moses. Phut represents the Nubians; but the inspired genealogist, foreseeing that the Nubians would rarely intersect the career of the promised seed, passed by every one of Phut's descendants. Cush receives a different treatment. He stands here for fifteen races; among them are the Assyrians and Babylonians, nations which were to be perpetual and implacable enemies of Israel. Assyria was fore-ordained to carry the ten tribes, and Babylon was fore-ordained to carry Judah, into captivity. As a part of this history, Nimrod is lifted out of the oblivion in which the names of the early monarchs of these kingdoms are buried without hope of resurrection; for Nimrod was not only the Samson and Hercules of his race, valiant in war, intrepid in the chase, but he was the founder of five great cities in the plain of Shinar, Nineveh and Babylon being two of them. Mizraim represents the two Egypts, the Upper and the

<sup>1</sup> Origin of Nations, 177.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 178.

Lower. Egypt became in due time the house of bondage for the people of God, and was entitled to a place in this table, attended by the group of seven nations. Canaan was the youngest son of Ham. The names of thirteen tribes descending from Canaan are given, one by one. Nor is Moses content with that. He departs from the usual form of genealogical tables by inserting, with the names of the pioneers of the promised land, the boundaries of their original settlement: "The border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha" (x. 19). This feature contributes to the sufficiency and completeness of the genealogy without disturbing its harmony.

3. Shem's genealogy begins thus: "Unto Shem, also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born. The children of Shem: Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram." The characteristics of the table are prominent and significant. It opens with the assertion that Shem, the younger brother, not Japheth the elder, was the father of Eber, — that is to say, of the Hebrews. The compiler emphasizes this pre-eminence by tracing Shem's line down to the sixth generation, having just before disposed of Japheth's with his grandsons, and Ham's with his great-grandsons. Moses goes much farther in the same direction. Shem had five sons. Four of them are dismissed with the fewest number of words. Aram's four sons are named with the purpose, apparently, of calling attention to one of them, Ur, the ancestor of Job. Lud stands for Lydia, Asshur for Assyria, and Elam for Persia. Lydia rarely intersected the career of the future Israel; but both Assyria and Persia figure most conspicuously in the later history of the Jewish commonwealth, as it is written at large in the books of Daniel, Esther, and the minor prophets. But the inspired genealogist turns suddenly away from Asshur and Elam, as if to clear the channel for the stream of history flowing from Shem's third son, Arphaxad. This is explained when we read that Arphaxad was the ancestor of Abraham; accordingly nine-tenths of the

table are given to him. In the two sons of Eber the family was divided, one line proceeding through Peleg to Abraham; the other proceeding through Joktan, Peleg's brother, to the thirteen tribes of barbarians who settled Central and Southern Arabia. The Hebrews set great store by this genealogy. But it confronted them with the fact that through Eber, from whom they took their proud patronymic, they were kith and kin with the Arabs. "These," said Moses, "are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations."

The Jews maintain, as an article of faith, that the whole of the tenth chapter of Genesis is as fully and directly inspired as are the words, "I am the Lord your God."<sup>1</sup> The Christian need not hesitate to subscribe that article. It does not profess to embrace all the peoples in existence at the time. But it is complete and sufficient to the end for which it was compiled; it is a commentary on Noah's Messianic prophecy, and a preface to the history of Abraham. Its omissions are as essential to its proper uses as its contents. More than that, every word of it is true. No contradiction between its details and the findings of sound ethnological science has been discovered. It is entitled to carry on its face, not the caveat, "errors excepted," but the challenge, "errors nowhere." In the words of one of the masters of archæology, we may say, "The record rightly interpreted completely harmonizes with the science; and not only so, but even anticipates many of the most curious and remarkable of the discoveries which ethnology has made in comparatively recent times. . . . The Christian may, with confidence, defy his adversaries to point out any erroneous, or even any improbable, statements in the entire chapter, from its commencement to its close. The thorough harmony which exists between ethnological science and this unique record is a strong argument for the truth of both."<sup>2</sup> And so we are brought back to the several theses so often recurring; theses affirming the unity of the human race, the prophetic and historical inspi-

<sup>1</sup> Geikie: Hours, etc., I. 266.

<sup>2</sup> George Rawlinson: Origin of Nations, p. 253.

ration of Noah and of Moses, the vitality, everywhere, of the chosen seed, and the persistency with which the sacred writers adhere to the pre-arranged plan of the narrative.

Glancing back along the line of the last three chapters, and considering the men whose characteristics and careers have come under our notice, — such men as the inventive and enterprising sons of Lamech, in the family of Cain, and as Enoch and Noah in the line of Seth — and, with the glimpse we have just now had, in the concurrent light of prophecy and history, of the vigorous and brilliant peoples immediately descended from Noah's sons; we are freshly impressed with the confidence that man did not begin his career in a condition of physical and psychological immaturity and feebleness. He did not emerge into his human estate just a hair's-breadth above the brute estate; but, rather, he “was *made* a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor, and all things put under his feet.” How honoring to God and his Word is the declaration that “the primitive man was a splendid being, — not scientific, nor civilized, in the modern sense of the words, but possessing great power, both of body and soul. These early men had great aims, they attempted great things, and they accomplished great things.”

We have only to take this view, and we shall go forward with the greater interest to study the history of the redemption of this once lordly race, and more immediately to consider the ambitious but unhallowed and disastrous endeavors of the race which constitute the subject of the next chapter.



## CHAPTER XI.

## BABEL.

GEN. xi. — According to the rules of historical composition, Moses was at liberty to record, first, the dispersion of mankind, and then its procuring cause in the confusion of tongues; or he might, at his discretion, reverse that order in his narrative. He chose to give the first place to the dispersion in the tenth chapter, and to reserve the explanation for the eleventh chapter. But at the close of each of the three genealogies in chap. x., Moses is careful to say, that, when the sons of Noah were scattered abroad, they were controlled in their removals and places of settlement by what was peculiar in their tongues, families, and nations. This remark prepares the way for the extraordinary events which took place on the plain of Shinar.

The historian begins with the remark that all mankind were of one language and one speech; more literally, of "one lip and word." By the "lip" is meant the brogue or pronunciation, including the vocal inflections; by the "word" is meant the vocabulary. All the living had one word for each idea, and one way of pronouncing that word. They were one in speech, just as they were one in origin from Noah. Their primal dwelling-place was among the head waters of the Euphrates, in the mountains of Armenia. Here they rapidly multiplied. Impelled by the propensity for emigration, which is an element in human nature, the sons of Noah removed, by slow stages, toward the south-east, along the banks of "the great river," until they came to a region between the Euphrates and the Tigris, in later times called the land of Shinar. Here they found a plain, "and dwelt there." In striking contrast with the highlands of

Armenia, the climate was soft and genial; and the soil, if we may believe Hippocrates and Herodotus, was capable of yielding from two to three hundred-fold. In after ages, this region became the home of sensual life and unclean worship, the site of the palaces of Semiramis and of the city of Babylon. Here the sons of Noah began to prepare for themselves a permanent dwelling-place. The native clays furnished them with the very best material for bricks and slabs. Bitumen for cement came floating on the surface of the river Is, from inexhaustible springs on its upper waters. Babylon was afterwards built out of these substances. Layard says that the bitumen, by which the bricks are held together, is so tenacious that it is almost impossible to detach one of them, entire, from the mass.

With these facilities, the emigrants said, "Go to, let us build a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." This language betrays the existence of a conspiracy for the purpose of founding an empire which should be universal, embracing the entire race, and should become godless by renouncing Jehovah, by setting up idolatry, and establishing a splendid but corrupt form of material civilization. The race had once more departed from God. Biblical scholars have characterized the degeneracy as the postdiluvian apostasy, and the birth of heathenism.

The record does not designate either the leading spirit in the conspiracy, or its place in the chronology. In the popular treatment of the subject, it is frequently assumed that Nimrod was the prime mover. A certain prodigious force of character is ascribed to him; and in x. 10, it is said that Babel or Babylon was one of the four cities founded by him in that region. But his "might in the earth," and "his might as a hunter before the Lord," whatever these phrases may mean, do not prove that he was one of the tower-builders. He appears to have flourished long after the confusion of tongues; for he not only founded four cities in the land of Shinar, one of them being Babylon, but, according to the Revised Version, he extended his empire northward as far as Ashur or Assyria, where he established a

second group of four capitals, Nineveh being one of the four (Gen. x. 9-13). The building of the tower must have antedated these enterprises by many years; and, having been projected by the first settlers in Shinar, Nimrod could hardly have been among them.

In the days of Peleg, "the earth was divided." This statement has been thought to establish the date of the building of the tower. Peleg was born about one hundred years after the Flood. It is conjectured that Shinar was settled about that time, when, according to a moderate calculation, there were about thirty thousand people in the world. These circumstances point to Peleg's day as the date of the confusion. But it is a matter of doubt whether this division of the earth here mentioned refers to the confusion of tongues, or to the final separation of Eber, the forefather of the Hebrews, from his brother Joktan and the thirteen tribes descending from him, Eber remaining in Mesopotamia, and Joktan removing to Southern Arabia. This doubt unsettles the date, but the point is not of sufficient importance to detain us longer from the course of the narrative.

The avowed purposes of the tower-builders were altogether impious. God was engaged in establishing his kingdom in the family of Shem, which he had chosen to represent the seed of the woman. But Shem united with his brothers in attempting to set up a world-kingdom, in opposition to the Divine purpose, betraying his affiliation with the seed of the serpent. There is no evidence that they built the tower as a place of refuge from a second general deluge, or as a fortress, or as a landmark which should be visible from afar. They assigned two reasons for what they were doing: First, they proposed to make themselves famous. An apt illustration of their impious pride was furnished near this very spot, about seventeen hundred years afterwards, when Nebuchadnezzar surveyed, from the roof of his palace, the vast extent and superb embellishments of Babylon. As he "walked" with his Oriental strut, he exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my

majesty?" (Dan. iv. 30.) His boast answered back significantly to the fatal passion for glory which swelled the hearts of the tower-builders. Next, they built the tower, "lest they should be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." Now, on the day in which God made man in his image, and afterwards on the day in which he brought Noah and his sons out of the ark, he blessed them, and conveyed to them the inheritance of the whole earth, saying, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." In order to secure the actual occupation of the entire planet by the race, he put in its bosom a centrifugal force, the passion for emigration, a passion and force which have not been satiated or exhausted to this day. And with this propensity, he gave to man a physical constitution capable of supporting the extremes of heat and cold, so that, unlike all other living creatures, he is at home in every climate, — cosmopolitan by nature, not provincial. But the tower-builders set themselves to defeat both the natural instincts of the human race, and the ordinance of God. They were resolved on maintaining a unity, — *not* the unity of one God and of one Divine worship. That, as Delitzsch observes, they had lost. They sought to reach an ungodly unity through self-invented, outward, sensual means. In its essence, therefore, the building of the tower was a Titanic, ungodly enterprise.

It has been suggested, although without sufficient evidence, that the tower was intended to be used for idolatrous worship. Heathenism, it is said, came to its birth on the plain of Shinar. Shortly after the dispersion, the worship of the heavenly bodies seems to have become universal. Now, it is more probable (such is the argument), that the scattered tribes carried away with them the first lessons of idolatry, than that the lessons were learned simultaneously, among peoples widely separated by distant regions and discordant tongues. Moreover, the vast pyramids built afterwards in Shinar by the famous Uruk were unquestionably heathen temples. Altars were set up on their summits; and sacrifices were offered upon them to the heavenly bodies, and to Sardi the king of the gods. That Birs Nimru was intended for such worship, is indicated by the tablets found

in its ruins. But these colossal piles were built long after the dispersion of mankind, and there is nothing in the sacred record to show that the Almighty withheld the fatal blow until the tower-builders had gone so far in their conspiracy as to agree on the dedication of the work of their hands to false worship.

Of this part of sacred history the most prominent feature is the confusion of tongues. The two particulars which demand attention are, the unity of language spoken by the human race when they began to build the tower; and the Divine interposition by which this unity was disrupted, and in consequence of which the people abandoned the enterprise, and were scattered abroad. Upon the first of these inquiries Moses is very explicit, and the new science of comparative philology has something to say about it.

In the tenth chapter of Genesis, Moses shows that all mankind descended from one man, — Noah; and it goes without his so saying, that the original unity of speech is a necessary conclusion from the unity of the race in origin. Moses, however, instead of leaving the question to be answered inferentially, declares that, at the time of the settlement of Shinar, the “whole earth” had one stock of words and one pronunciation. Such is the statement for which Divine inspiration makes itself responsible. The philologists approach the subject by setting out, in various forms, a scientific classification of the languages, both the dead and the living. One of these systems, called the ethnic, follows the division of the race proceeding from the three sons of Noah. The Japhetic, Semitic, and Hamitic groups of tongues are called, severally, the Aryan or Indo-European, the Semitic, and the Turanian. The proper allowance is made, also, for a few unimportant exceptions.

In examining the Aryan group, attention is called to a brilliant discovery of modern times, showing that the Sanskrit, though long since dead, was the mother-tongue of the Hindoos, the Persians, the Armenians, and of all the European peoples; among them the Greek, Latin, Russian, Saxon, Celtic, and Icelandic families. From this circumstance, the Sanskrit and its offspring take the name of Indo-European. The authorities

maintain with one consent, and without hesitation, that all these languages were derived from one common source, on the banks of the Ganges. Moreover, these scholars not only hold to this linguistic unity as an established fact; but they go farther, and rely upon it to establish, as another fact, the unity in origin of all these Asiatic and European races. Bunsen says, "As far as the organic languages of Asia and Europe are concerned, the human race is of one kindred and one descent." "Our historical researches respecting language have led us to facts which seem to oblige us to assume the common historical origin of the great families, into which we found the nations of Asia and Europe to coalesce." "The Asiatic origin of all these [American] tribes is as fully proved as the unity of family among themselves."<sup>1</sup> Canon Farrar writes: "When once a few scholars had profoundly studied it" (the Sanskrit), "and had published their results to the world; when such a book as Bopp's Comparative Grammar had placed side by side the facts of nine such languages as Sanskrit, Zend, Armenian, Greek, Latin, Lithuanian, Slavonian, Gothic, and German; and when Pritchard, Zeuss, Diefenbach, and others had published their Celtic labors,—it could no longer remain doubtful to any reasonable man, that the stately Brahmin, and the gay Frenchman, and the restless Albanian, and the Irish peasant, and the Russian serf, and the Lithuanian farmer, and the English gentleman, and the Dutch boor; nay, even the poor outcast wandering gypsy,—all speak languages which were once a single, undivided form of human speech, and are all sprung from ancestors who radiated from one geographical centre, which was their common home."<sup>2</sup>

Evidence of the identity of languages is derived from the identity of their roots, and from their grammatical structure. As an example of the selection in the Aryan tongues of the same word to represent the same object, we find that *house* is, in Sanskrit, *dama* and *dam*; in Zend, *de mana*; in Greek, *domos*; in Latin, *domus*; in Irish, *dahm*; in Slavonic, *domu*; in English

<sup>1</sup> Phil. of Univ. Hist., vol. ii. pp. 4, 79, 112.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. F. W. Farrar: Families of Speech, p. 58.

we say *domestic*. As another example: *boat* was, in Sanskrit, *nau* or *nauka*; in Persian, *naw*, *nawah*; in Greek, *naus*; in Latin, *navis*; in old Irish, *noi*; in old German, *nawa* or *nawi*; and in Polish, *nawa*; and in English we have *nautical* and *navigation*.<sup>1</sup> Similar examples might be multiplied almost indefinitely. In the language of Canon Farrar, "The numerals, the pronouns, the most ordinary and essential verbs, the words for all the common relationships, for the parts of the body, for all the domestic animals, for the most necessary cereals, and the most familiar metals, are substantially the same in all the languages of this great Aryan family."<sup>2</sup> The case seems to be fully made out. One might well support Professor Max Müller in his militant position: "The terms for God, for house, for father, mother, son, daughter, for dog and cow, for hearts and tears, for axe and tree, identical in all Indo-European idioms, are like the watchwords of an army. We challenge the seeming stranger; and whether he answer with the lip of a Greek, or German, or an Indian, we recognize him as one of ourselves. Though the historian may shake his head, though the physiologist may doubt, and the poet scorn the idea, all must yield before the facts furnished by language."<sup>3</sup>

The Semitic tongues are less numerous, less diverse, less dissonant. They are in the possession of a people who, in numbers, as compared with the Aryan, are as, say, forty million to four hundred million souls. The philologists divide the Semitic tongue into three branches,—the Hebrew, with its idioms, the Samaritan, Phœnician and Carthaginian; the Arabic, with the Maltese and other dialects; and the Aramaic, including the old Syriac, the new Syriac, the speech of the Druses, and the cuneiform inscriptions of the Assyrians and Babylonians. Philology does not appear to be prepared with any judgment in regard to these races, except the four which are most prominent,—the Hebrews, the Syrians, the Assyrians, and the Arabians. That these four are brethren of the Semitic family, and of cognate tongues, is a fact established by the

<sup>1</sup> Clarke: Ten Religions.

<sup>2</sup> Families of Speech.

<sup>3</sup> Languages of Seat of the War.

word of God, and the findings of linguistic science. Professor Max Müller “regards the close connection of the Syriac and Hebrew languages as so patent and so universally acknowledged a fact, that argument on the subject is superfluous.” Rawlinson adds, “This indeed has been allowed for many centuries, ever since Hebrew and Syriac first became objects of study to Occidentals.”<sup>1</sup> The resemblances between the Assyrian and the Hebrew and Syriac have been more recently discovered. According to Müller, “The conclusion which linguistic scholars have universally drawn from the careful study and analysis of the ancient form of speech is, that the language is Semitic, nearly akin to both Hebrew and Syriac, but, on the whole, closer to the former.”<sup>2</sup> But what does ethnology teach in regard to the Arabians? Rawlinson answers, “Beyond a doubt, two things, principally: first, that, with the exception of certain races upon the south coast, they are homogeneous, clearly of one blood, resembling each other most closely, alike in language, manners, customs, traditions, and physical conformation; secondly, that the type of their language is Semitic, its inflections, syntax, and vocabulary bearing, all of them, a near resemblance to those of the Assyrians, the Syrians, and the Hebrews.”<sup>3</sup>

The links that hold together the Semitic idioms lie nearer the surface than those which unite the Semitic group with the Aryan. If we may so say, their domestic relations, here as elsewhere, are more intimate than their foreign. We have the highest possible authority, that of the word of God, for maintaining that the speech of Japheth and Shem was originally one. The ethnologists have not been able as yet to determine how far the languages, spoken by the descendants of the two brothers, perpetuate the evidences of a common source. For the present they can do no more than report progress in their inquiries. Dr. James Strong has made a valuable contribution to the inquiry. He has compiled, in the course of his own reading, a list of about five hundred Hebrew roots which recur

<sup>1</sup> *Origin of Nations*, pp. 237, 238.      <sup>2</sup> Rawlinson: *Origin, etc.*, p. 239.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251.



in the Indo-European dialects, and which, as he holds, are so palpably similar in form and signification as to leave little doubt of their original identity. Some of the more striking examples are these: The Hebrew *ahnak* is *angehi* in Greek, *ango* in Latin, *angoisse* in French, *enge* in German, and *anger* in English. The Hebrew *yesh* is *esti* in Greek, *est* in Latin, *est* in French, *ist* in German, and *is* in English. In a large proportion of the five hundred roots, Dr. Strong remarks that the resemblances are "too striking to be accidental." He strengthens his case by an argument drawn from the grammatical structure of the various languages;<sup>1</sup> and he is supported in his conclusions in regard to the relation of the Aryan and Semitic tongues, by Ewald, Olshausen, and Bunsen. Max Müller believes not only in the possibility, but the probability, of such a relation; others admit it with some reserve.<sup>2</sup> We may say confidently that philology, as now understood, leans strongly towards the identity in origin of the two families of speech; and we need not doubt, that, when the problem is mastered, the solution will admonish Shem not to reproach Japheth, and Japheth not to deny Shem, for they be brothers, and it is ordained of God that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem.

The Turanian is used by the philologists to describe the idioms of the barbarous and semi-barbarous peoples. They make up about one-half of the human race, and are supposed to speak nearly a thousand different dialects. The word Turanian is without significance in etymology, having been taken, as it were, at random, from Turkestan. It holds a place in philology similar to that assigned to the title "miscellaneous" in an insufficient catalogue of a library or museum. The Turanian tongues are not Aryan; they are not Semitic; and that is the whole case. Among them are the languages of the Basques, the Chinese with their many dialects, the Malays including the Japanese, the Polynesians, the aboriginal Americans, the Australasians, and Africans. To this promiscuous mass, the Chinese contribute forty thousand monosyllables; the

<sup>1</sup> McClintock and Strong, *Cyclo.*, art. *Philology*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, art. *Semitic Languages*.

Mexicans and Choctaws innumerable polysyllables, glued together; the Hottentot his clicks; the Hawaiian his "vowelled undersong;" the Tlatskanian his guttural ejaculations; and the Root-Digger a jargon hardly more articulate than the cawing of the crows which fly over his head. Some of these tongues have been investigated, and have received the Holy Scriptures; notably the Chinese and the Japanese. The larger number have not been analyzed or classified, or even examined. They are to philology what the paupers and criminals are to Christian civilization, — its "sediment and failures." But the study of them is not abandoned. The purpose of the Church to translate the Scriptures into the heathen dialects will make it necessary to reduce them to written forms, and to furnish them with grammars and lexicons. As this work goes on, the Christian scholar expects to discover in these savage tongues many affinities with the cultivated, just as the physiologist and psychologist find, in the most degraded tribes, proofs of a common nature with the most enlightened. It is not open to us, under the plea of our present ignorance, to resist the conclusions fairly drawn from the Scripture doctrine of the unity of the race, showing the identity of the Turanian idioms in their origin with the Aryan and Semitic tongues. Indeed, it may be confidently asserted that the tendency of scientific research at present is in the direction of original unity in speech, the correlative of the unity in origin and species of the race. "Nothing," says Max Müller, "necessitates the admission of different beginnings for the formal elements of the Turanian, Semitic, and Aryan branches of speech." "It is possible even now to point out radicals which, under various changes and disguises, have been current in the three branches ever since their first separation." "Research," adds Bunsen, "respecting these three races — the Turanians, the Semites, and the Aryans — leads us to a great common centre, the district bounded by the mountains of Central Asia, — the Caucasus, Ararat, and the Altai.<sup>1</sup>

The other decisive and far-reaching event in the history of Babel is the confusion of tongues, by which the Almighty put

<sup>1</sup> Geikie: Hours, etc., i. 281, 282.

down the unholy conspiracy of the tower-builders. The narrative takes the form of a vivid anthropomorphism. Jehovah dwells on high; he comes down to inspect the city and the tower; he examines and deliberates; he detects the intentions of the builders; he perceives that they are thoroughly united and bold in purpose; that their strength is in their common language; that their plans are conceived in impiety; that they will go on from bad to worse, in nothing restrained from an apostasy of gigantic proportions. The Almighty resolves to crush the incipient rebellion. And, as if to emphasize his displeasure, he repeats, in the first words of his soliloquy, the rallying cry of the leaders. "Go to" (*lit.* "Up"), said they, "let us build a city and a tower whose top may reach to heaven" (ver. 4). "Go to," responds Jehovah, "let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech" (ver. 7). The Divine decree was quickly executed. "Jehovah did there confound the language of all the earth, and from thence" (Shinar) "did Jehovah scatter them abroad over the face of the whole earth." And so a social revolution was effected, second only in importance to the first apostasy of the race and its expulsion from the Garden of Eden. The name of the place was called Babel, "babbling." As might be expected, some echoes of what took place still linger about the old plain of Shinar.

Two Greek historians, Polyhistor and Abydenus, derived from Babylonian sources accounts of the building of the tower, and the confusion of tongues, corresponding with the biblical narrative. These testimonies were preserved by Eusebius. They have long been known, and confidently relied on as important historical evidences. But they come to us at second or third hand. Polyhistor and Abydenus are known to us only by the citations from them in Eusebius and a few other Christian authors; and the two historians, so cited, were Greeks, and not native Babylonians. Mr. George Smith has recently cured these defects in the proof. He has unearthed at Babylon the original native accounts concerning Babel, from which it is fair to assume the two Greek historians, quoted by Eusebius, drew

their reports. The version of Polyhistor is as follows: "Once upon a time, when the whole race of mankind were of one language, a certain number of them set to work to build a great tower, thinking to climb up to heaven; but God caused a wind to blow, and cast the tower down, at the same time giving to every man his own peculiar speech. On which account the city was called Babylon." The original version, written on the clay tablets brought by Mr. George Smith from Babylonia, and deposited in the British Museum, is substantially as follows:—

"Babylon corruptly to sin went, and  
 Small and great were mingled on the mound;  
 Babylon corruptly to sin went, and  
 Small and great were mingled on the mound.  
 . . . . .  
 Their work all day they builded;  
 But to their stronghold in the night  
 Entirely an end God made;  
 In his anger also, his secret counsel he poured forth,  
 He set his face to scatter;  
 He gave command to make strange their speech;  
 Their progress he impeded.  
 . . . . .  
 In that day he blew, and for (all) future time  
 The mountain (was demolished?);  
 Lawlessness stalked forth abroad;  
 And though God spake to them,  
 Men went their ways, and strenuously  
 Opposed themselves to God.  
 He saw and to the earth came down;  
 No stop he made, while they  
 Against the Gods revolted . . .  
 . . . . .  
 Greatly they wept for Babylon,  
 Greatly they wept."<sup>1</sup>

Eastern antiquity has been closely interrogated in regard to the subject. Answers have been returned not only from the Greek historians already named, but from the queer fancies of

<sup>1</sup> Records of the Past, vii. 131, 132; quoted in Rawlinson's *Egypt and Babylon*, p. 10.

the rabbins; from the anonymous sibyl of Josephus; from the song of Homer celebrating the prowess of the two giants who piled Ossa on Olympus and Pelion on Ossa; from the hieroglyphics of Egypt; and from the contents of a Mexican manuscript in the Vatican.<sup>1</sup> But these legends and traditions add but little probative force to the original, authentic, Babylonian records.

The measure adopted by the Almighty to defeat the tower-builders was wisely chosen. It was effectual; babbling was their despair and ruin. Moreover, it was in keeping with the occasion. The lingual unity which promised success to their plans, was turned into lingual incongruities which completely frustrated them. Again, their punishment corresponded to their sin. Their sin was an attempt to set up a godless empire; their punishment was the dissolution of the incipient empire. Further, this incident reveals the irresistible forces with which the Divine decrees are armed. God had determined that the whole habitable globe should be occupied by mankind, and here that purpose is accomplished by his single fiat. And, further still, the resources of the Almighty are inexhaustible. He punished the first apostasy in Adam and Eve, by banishment from paradise, and the sentence of death; he swept away the corruption of the earth by the waters of the Flood; he met the arrogance and impiety of the tower-builders by the confusion of tongues; he mastered the bondage of his people in Egypt by the ten plagues; the waywardness of the people at Kadesh-barnea, by laying their bones in the wilderness; and the consummate wickedness of the Jews, by the destruction of their commonwealth. And when he shall destroy the world, he will use fire instead of water as before. God rarely repeats himself.

Nor did the Almighty forget any of his gracious purposes towards our race in the confusion of tongues. Biblical scholars concur in accepting the miracle of the Pentecost as the antithesis and reversal of the miracle at Babel. In the words of Grotius: "The punishment of tongues dispersed mankind; the gift of tongues gathered the dispersed into one people." Babel

<sup>1</sup> Geikie: i. pp. 284 seq.

represents God's judgment on the impiety of men, driving them asunder; Pentecost represents the work of the Holy Spirit, restoring men by the righteousness of faith to unity again. And to this end the Church is striving to give the Scriptures, and to preach the gospel, to every creature under heaven, in the tongue in which he was born. Nor is this all. The redeemed will undoubtedly return to lingual unity when they shall be gathered around the throne (Rev. vii. 9, 10). Keil suggests that "with the disappearance of unity, the one original language was also lost. It is extinct, buried in the materials of the languages of the nations, to rise again one day to eternal life in the glorified form of the new tongue, intelligible to all the redeemed; when sin with its consequences is overcome and extinguished by the power of grace."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Keil and Delitzsch on the Pent., i. p. 175.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE OLD AND THE NEW.

“THE generations of Shem” is the title given to the fifth book of Genesis. It begins with chap. xi. 10, and ends with xi. 26. It is wholly occupied with the genealogy which connects Noah with Terah and Abram. In chap. v., Moses traces the line of the antediluvian patriarchs from Adam to Noah. Each of these registers covers ten generations and one thousand years. Taken together, they bring down the genealogy of Christ to the point of time midway from the creation of the world to the incarnation of its Redeemer. These registers, completed by those in the later scriptures, supplied Matthew and Luke with the materials for genealogies showing that Jesus Christ, as the Son of man, was, in common with us all; the partaker of a nature derived from Adam, and that he was, in strictness of speech, the seed of the woman promised in the first gospel. An authentic pedigree is set forth, which has no parallel in the annals of mankind. Its beginning antedates the dawn of profane history by five and twenty centuries. It pursues its way through the entire antediluvian ages, a period unknown to every writer other than Moses; then through another thousand years, the mythical and fabulous domain of profane history; and after that, fifteen hundred years to the birth of Christ. Still further, the historical unity of the first eleven chapters of Genesis is shown in these registers. Beginning with Adam, and proceeding with unbroken continuity through two thousand years, to Abraham, the tables form the spinal column of the narrative. The names of the patriarchs answer to the vertebræ, articulated each into those

which are immediately above and below, and built up into one compact and continuous structure.<sup>1</sup>

This section supplies, moreover, the connecting link between the longevity of the antediluvians and the reduction of the term of human life in the Abrahamic era. About the middle of the fourth century after the Flood, the average duration of human life was diminished by one-half. Noah, the last of the antediluvian patriarchs, lived nine hundred and fifty years; his son Shem was spared six hundred, and Eber four hundred and sixty-four years; with Peleg the term of life was reduced by one-half again to two hundred and thirty-nine years; with Serug, to two hundred and thirty years; and Nahor died at the age of one hundred and forty-eight. Kalisch, by way of accounting for these facts, suggests that man was originally endowed with immortality, but his remarkable vitality was gradually exhausted by the poison of sin. Keil suggests that the two catastrophes — the Flood, and the dispersion of the race at Babel — abridged human life; the former by modifying the climate of the earth, the latter by demoralizing the habits of men. A better explanation is found in the wisdom of God appointing from time to time the bounds of men's habitation, and accomplishing that purpose by means not revealed. The significant facts are, that the term of Abraham's life was limited to one hundred and seventy-five years; in Isaac it rose to one hundred and eighty, in Jacob it fell again to one hundred and forty-seven, and in Joseph to one hundred and ten years.

Still further, this book reveals the selection of particular men out of their generations as instruments for accomplishing the plan of Providence. It is said of the patriarchs, both before and after the Flood, that they begat sons and daughters. But of their many children, only one was chosen to stand in the illustrious line of Christ's ancestry. All the others are quietly dropped into oblivion. There is not the least reason to suppose that the appointment of one rather than another to this distinction was controlled by the law of primogeniture, or by any foresight of goodness in them. One was chosen, and

<sup>1</sup> Coleman's Atlas, p. 6.



another passed by, according to the counsels of God's will. This discrimination will appear conspicuously as we proceed. Here we have a hint preparing us for the subsequent disclosures.

“The generations of Shem,” the fifth book in the record, closes thus: “And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.” Then begins the history of an advanced period in the kingdom of God. Some knowledge of the condition of the human race, at the close of the old and the opening of the new era, will facilitate our inquiries, even if one may not be able to escape some anachronisms and mistakes in matters of fact. Risks, these are, which beset every attempt to fill up the outline of the sacred record with historical notices drawn from the traditions, written and unwritten, of the older nations. The archæologists differ widely in regard to the population of the known world when Abram left Ur of the Chaldees. Professor Keil<sup>1</sup> entertains his readers with two arithmetical calculations, resting upon conjectures as to the number of marriages which had taken place since the Deluge, and the average number of children in each family. The first calculation terminates in an aggregate of twenty-five million souls; and the second, in a sum total of two hundred and ninety-three millions. Professor Murphy, following a similar method, estimates the population at nearly sixteen millions.<sup>2</sup> One may be excused if he looks with some distrust upon an attempt to settle an historical question, not by testimony, but by an arithmetic which relies on guess-work as data, and terminates in conclusions so wide apart. Until we are better informed, it will be safe to lean toward the most moderate of these estimates.

The three peoples with whom Abraham was connected are those of Chaldæa, Canaan, and Egypt. Among the ancient Chaldees, traces are to be found of a splendid but uncouth material civilization. They were tower-builders. The ruins of several colossal structures remain to this day. They were built in the form of irregular pyramids, and were made of bricks, sun-dried for the interior and baked for the outer walls.

<sup>1</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, vol. i. p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> Murphy on Gen., p. 252.

“The heavy massiveness of the walls, the coarseness of the material, the absence of ornamentation, and its mean character, tell of a time when art was in its infancy.”<sup>1</sup> Their implements belonged to what is called the stone and bronze age. In pottery, their ingenuity expended itself on coarse clay mixed with chopped straw. What Rawlinson calls the unevenness of the civilization of the early Babylonians, appears in their elaborate silk and linen dresses, well-wrought ornaments, beautiful seal and gem engraving, and artistic furniture, co-existing with rude and primitive architecture, and implements of stone.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Geikie reaches conclusions somewhat more flattering to the cultivation of the people of Mugheir, now commonly thought to be Ur of the Chaldees. According to him, Mugheir was, in Abraham’s day, a splendid city. “The arts and sciences were cultivated, astronomers watched the heavens, poets composed hymns and epics, and patient scribes stamped on soft tablets the books which have in part come down to our day.”<sup>3</sup>

Egyptian civilization was in advance of the Chaldæan. The Pyramids, it is probable, were built before Abraham’s visit to that land, if not also the colossal temple at Heliopolis. He became familiar with the vessels by which the Nile was navigated; with the dancers moving to the music of the song, the harp, and the pipe; with the glass-blowers and cabinet-makers plying their trades; with the plough drawn by oxen, and the reapers gathering the wheat into the granaries. Immense herds of camels, asses, flocks of sheep, and fat kine fed in the meadows; orchards, gardens, and vineyards responded in their luxuriance and beauty to the soil, fertile by nature, and solicited by the waters of the Nile flowing through innumerable channels. The precious metals were abundant; for Abraham “went up to Canaan rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.” Astronomers followed the courses of the stars, geometricians mapped out the topography of the country, while physicians watched the sick and embalmed the bodies of the dead.

The land of Canaan was, in Abraham’s day, thinly peopled.

<sup>1</sup> Rawlinson: *Origin of Nations*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 47.

<sup>3</sup> Geikie: *Hours*, etc., vol. i. p. 296.

If it had been otherwise, the natives would scarcely have allowed Abraham to feed his immense herds of camels and sheep in their pastures, and to traverse freely the whole land, from Shechem to Beersheba, in search of green fields and redundant water-springs. The natives were gathered into independent tribes. Moses describes ten of these tribes by name in Gen. xv. 19-21. The country was divided into districts, which were ruled by sheiks, and protected by walled cities. Thus we read of the kings of Sodom, Salem, and Shechem. The Philistines towards the south and the Phœnicians in the north dwelt by the sea, were warlike, and traded with the people who inhabited the neighboring coasts and islands of the Mediterranean. We have but little information of their civilization, if, indeed, the term "barbarism" ought not to be applied to them.

The plan on which the sacred records were constructed confined their writers to the religious life or superstitions of the peoples, with such incidental allusions to their antiquities as were needed to clear up the narrative. But the inspired historian sets forth sufficiently the religious condition of the human race at the time of Abraham, and explains the character of the new era in the kingdom of God, which was begun in him. The distinguishing mark of this era was a transition in the Divine administration from what is known in the schools as "universalism" to what is called "particularism." The term "universalism," as used here, is equivalent to the word "catholic" or "œcumenical," and is employed to express the ruling idea in the history of redemption from Adam to Abram. In these early ages the Divine revelations were not restricted to a single race. The first promise was made to the seed of the woman, a phrase applicable in an important sense to her entire posterity. The cherubim, symbols of God's presence, were posted at the east of the garden, in the sight of all the living. The weekly sabbath invited the toiling children of men, without distinction, to enter into its sacred rest. Access to God at the altar was granted to every holy worshipper. In the days of Enos, the third from Adam, the formal worship of Jehovah was instituted. At a later period Enoch, with Noah, preachers

of righteousness, made proclamation of the word of God in the hearing of all men. There was on earth no favored people in the bosom of which the kingdom of heaven was established, and no sacerdotal order holding an exclusive prerogative to offer gifts and sacrifices to God. These revelations and ordinances, in the wide distribution of them, lost their efficacy in the midst of universal corruption; and, in the days of Noah, the waters of the Flood terminated what has been called the first experiment on human nature. After the Flood a covenant of forbearance was made with Noah, for himself and his posterity, wherein the ritual of worship was enlarged, and the general offer of salvation, which had been refused by the old world, was repeated to the new. But a second apostasy occurred at the Tower of Babel, and was followed by the dispersion of mankind. The people carried with them everywhere a spirit of incipient heathenism and desperate ungodliness.

At the call of Abraham, true religion was almost extinct. Among the three groups of nations descending from Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the Divine revelations to Adam and Noah were forgotten or disfigured. Idolatry, a sin unknown to the generations before the Deluge, but conceived at Babel, was steadily gaining ground. Both the true and the false worship were, in the well-chosen words of Hengstenberg, "in a transition state,—idolatry on the increase, true religion on the wane." This judgment is supported by the history of the struggle between the two opposing forces. To begin with Egypt, Moses reveals the existence of polygamy, or concubinage, in the attempt of Pharaoh to take Sarah into his house. The record is silent in regard to the religious observances of the Egyptians. From other sources we gather that Sabism, the worship of the sun, moon, and stars, was, throughout the East, the earliest form of idolatry. It is vividly described by Job (Job xxxi. 26–28). That Sabism and its revolting antithesis—animal worship—were gaining a foothold in Egypt, may be inferred from the marriage of Joseph, about sixty-five years after the death of Abraham, to the daughter of the priest of the Temple of the Sun at Heliopolis. In Joseph's day, also, if the antipathy

of the Egyptians to the Hebrews is rightly explained, the Egyptians paid divine honors to the animals which were slain for food and for the altar by the Hebrews. The worship of the molten calf at Sinai was an act of fetichism. What Herodotus says, speaking of a later time, is probably true of the earlier: "The cow is worshipped by the Egyptians; and therefore no Egyptian, either male or female, may kiss a Greek or a stranger, or make use of his knife or his roasting-spit or his pot."<sup>1</sup> From these circumstances it is right to infer that idolatry prevailed in Egypt when Abraham visited Pharaoh.

Turning now to Chaldæa, we are told that the race of the patriarch served false gods. "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time; even Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods" (Josh. xxiv. 2, 14). Sabism was introduced very early into Chaldæa. There is reason to believe, that, before Abraham left his native country, Sargon had established a complete system of idolatry, with its hierarchy of priests. The planets were recognized as gods; astronomy fixed the holy season; astrology regulated the lives of the people; and superstition, led from bad to worse by magic and divination, became an incurable epidemic.<sup>2</sup>

The sacred writer gives us no information in regard to the idolatry of the Canaanites, either before Abraham's day, or during the sojourn of the three pilgrim fathers. Molech the god of Ammon, and Chemosh the god of Moab, are first mentioned in the history of the journey of the Hebrews in the wilderness (Lev. xviii. 21; Num. xxi. 29). Baal-peor does not appear until near the close of the journey (Num. xxv. 3). Just before the period of the judges, "Israel forsook the Lord" and served Baal the chief god, and Ashtoreth the chief goddess, of Sidon (Judg. ii. 13). These historical notices do not prove that the Canaanites, before Abraham came to Shechem, worshipped either Baal or Chemosh or Ashtoreth; they lend an

<sup>1</sup> Hengstenberg: Kingdom of God, vol. i. p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> Geikie's Hours with the Bible, vol. i. pp. 305-307, and the authorities cited there.

air of probability to the conjecture that idolatry, in some form, prevailed among them at that early time. There can be no doubt in regard to the moral corruption, at that period, of Sodom and Gomorrah. The horrible customs prevailing there have given to our language a word, "sodomy," to define a filthy crime, otherwise nameless, against God and human nature. And, yet, at that very time, Moses says the iniquity of the people "was not full." What it was at the full, may be learned from the eighteenth chapter of Leviticus. It should be said, however, that some traces of Divine knowledge lingered in those lands. Laban in Mesopotamia, while carefully guarding his house-gods, called upon the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, to witness between himself and Jacob (Gen. xxxi. 53). Pharaoh recognized Jehovah as the author of the great plagues which plagued his house on account of Sarah. Abimelech, king of Gerar, obeyed the warning of God in regard to Sarah, acknowledged that God was with Abraham, and made a covenant with the patriarch at Beersheba (Gen. xx.). Melchizedek, although a Canaanite, was a holy priest-king. He characterized Jehovah as the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth; he blessed Abraham and was a type of Christ. But while the light of the earlier revelations was struggling with the darkness of heathenism, the night was gaining steadily on the day. Chaldæa was going "mad on her idols." Egypt was becoming the basest of kingdoms. Canaan was filling up the measure of its iniquities. In the days of Terah the system of universalism, by which the offer of salvation was made broadly to all mankind in the first gospel, had issued in the apostasy of the race.

Another and widely different method of grace was at that time devised, beginning with a new man. The time for the reformation was well chosen; the last element of Divine knowledge not having been eliminated from the mixture of revealed religion and idolatry. And the new man, Terah's youngest son, was well chosen to be the progenitor of the new race. The new method is commonly called particularism; the new man was Abraham. In him was renewed the promise of

the first gospel, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head;" and on him was bestowed the consummate blessing of the covenant with Noah: "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." The characteristics of particularism, as distinguished from the universalism which it superseded, are plainly disclosed. The Almighty chose out of the human race, one man, a native of Mesopotamia, called Abram, changed his name to Abraham, the father of many nations, separated him and his household from his native country and kindred, made an everlasting covenant with him and his seed after him, and established, in that single household, his church and kingdom on earth. To them he gave specific revelations and covenants, together with a sanctuary, Divine oracles, a complete ritual of worship, priestly orders, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the hope of life everlasting through a Messiah to come. For two thousand years the visible kingdom of God was preserved in the bosom of a single race, insignificant in numbers, and wedged in between the basin of the Mediterranean, and the mountains of Moab. This selection of one particular race was accentuated by the silent rejection of all other peoples. Egyptians, Canaanites, Assyrians, Babylonians, in short all the descendants of Japheth, and of Ham, and of Shem except Abram and his seed, were counted as aliens from the covenants, and were left outside of the Church and kingdom of God. Even so, the wicked in the days of Noah were left outside of the ark.

But this plan of Providence, on the one hand bestowing the true religion on the descendants of Abraham as their particular possession, and on the other hand passing by all the outlying nations, though called particularism, is not the equivalent of exclusivism. It was predestined to issue in the gospel for all nations. "I will bless thee," said God to Abram; "and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," was quickly added (Gen. xii. 2, 3). And lest any doubt might arise as to the meaning of the word "families," the new plan of salvation is preceded in the tenth chapter of Genesis, by a genealogical register. This document shows, in the first place, that all the tribes then living, together with all the peoples which should

proceed from them, are one and the same in origin, species, and native-born sinfulness. Moreover, this register, preserving the names of all the sons of Noah, "after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations," is in the nature of a written guaranty that none of them will be forgotten in the counsels of Infinite Mercy, although Jehovah would suffer the heathen "to walk in their own way" through many generations (Isa. xlix.).<sup>1</sup> In Abraham the universal gave place for a time to the particular; but the particular was, from the beginning, intended to widen out again into the universal. One race was chosen to receive the blessing in the first instance, and that race was also the appointed channel through which the blessing was, in the fulness of time, to flow to all mankind.

This train of thought reveals the true relation of Judaism and of heathenism to Christianity. It has been thus defined: Judaism prepared Christianity for man; heathenism prepared man for Christianity. In the bosom of the Jewish Church God slowly matured the salvation of the gospel. By the open manifestation of his glory he planted in the mind of that people, on roots that cannot be extirpated, the idea of one only living and true God. Through the ritual of sacrifice and purification he made known the guilt and corruption of human nature, together with the necessity of the atonement and the new birth. By the use of types and prophecies he described the person and office of the coming Messiah. When John the Baptist, the last of the Old-Testament prophets, saw the Lord Jesus, he exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" The frankincense-tree, solicited by sunshine and shower, distilled the savory gum from root and bough and leaf and flower, and at last brought its whole life, in its aromatic gift, to the altar. In like manner, salvation by the cross of Christ had been slowly eduved from the first gospel by the unfolding purpose of God running through all the ages. Meanwhile heathenism was preparing man for Christianity. The spasmodic and futile efforts, of here and there a

<sup>1</sup> Kurtz: Sacred History, p. 62.



troubled conscience, at self-redemption, and the failure of all the plans devised to rescue human nature from its degradation, demonstrated the insufficiency of reason and of the light of nature, and the necessity of Divine interposition. The heathen became weary of idolatry. The Roman poets of the Christian era scoffed at their gods, or made merry with them in satires and epigrams. Further, the Gentile civilizations were appointed to bring into existence, as future auxiliaries to Christianity, the arts and sciences, a compact system of civil government, together with a language of wonderful copiousness and precision, to express the mind of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. "Science, art, worldly culture, and in general the vessels for the coming salvation, were to be prepared by the heathen; but *salvation* itself was solely by the Jews (John iv. 22)" (*Kurtz*). "The Jews, Greeks, and Romans were the three peoples of God's election; two for things temporal, and one for things eternal. Greek cultivation and Roman polity prepared man for Christianity" (*Arnold*). "When our blessed Saviour was crucified, the superscription of his accusation was written above his cross, in letters of Greek and Hebrew and Latin. "The city of God is built at the confluence of three civilizations, — Hebrew, Latin, and Greek" (*Howson*). Biblical scholars have discovered in the parable of the prodigal son, a likeness to heathenism in the younger son, and to Judaism in the elder brother. The Jews remained in the Father's house. They lived upon his bounty until they came to regard themselves as the sole heirs of the immense inheritance. The heathen, like the younger son, left the old homestead. They took with them, as their portion of the goods, the accusing and excusing conscience, the recollections of the traditions of Eden and the fall, of the earlier revelations of the Flood and the dispersion of mankind. Many of these goods they wasted on the "riotous worship of nature," and others they perverted to the ministry of their evil passions. Although the pagan superstitions and observances to which they were reduced, bore some faint resemblance to the Divine verities and worship, even as the husk retains the shape given to it by the grain, — yet it is

but a husk, fit only for the swine. At last the "law written on the heart," never wholly obliterated, acted as a mighty force drawing them back to the Father's house. Still further, the attitude of the Gentiles waiting for the gospel, shown in the visit of the Eastern sages to the cradle of Jesus, and in the Macedonian cry, finds its parallel in the return of the prodigal. The command of Christ sending to them the gospel is the act of the father meeting the long-lost son while a great way off. The unnatural conduct of the elder son, at the return of his brother, represents the resistance offered by the Jews to the reception of the Gentiles into the Christian Church.<sup>1</sup> This feature in the history of redemption is far more clearly brought out in the ministry of Jesus Christ, whereby, indeed, whatever is obscure in the plan of salvation is cleared up, and whatever is clear is illuminated. "Now I say," writes Paul, "that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy" (Rom. xv. 8, 9). That is to say, the immediate attention of Christ following the law of particularism was given to the Jews, in order to secure for them the blessings promised to the fathers; but his saving mercies, following the law of world-wide beneficence, were for the Gentiles also. His personal ministry was restricted to the Jews. We have no account of his leaving his native country more than once, going then into the frontier of Tyre and Sidon. He cured, so far as is known, only two heathen patients, — the servant of the centurion, and the daughter of the Syrophœnician woman. His original commission to the twelve followed the line of a strict particularism: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. x. 5, 6). To the woman of Canaan, who besought him to heal her daughter, he announced the limitation which was laid on his mission, before he yielded to her entreaty: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. xv. 24). "Let the children first be filled:

<sup>1</sup> Kurtz: Old Cov., i. p. 118.

for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs" (Mark vii. 27). But while his personal ministry was to the Jews, he made it plain that his salvation was intended for the Gentiles as well. In him the particular was to give place to the catholic or œcumenical. This is indicated in the visit which he made to a pagan land; in the miracles by which he healed the servant of the centurion, and the daughter of the woman of Canaan; and in the recognition which he gave to the faith of both. To one he said, "O woman, great is thy faith;" to the other, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." In his visit to Samaria he reveals more clearly his gracious purposes towards the outcast races. His journey was premeditated; "he must needs go through Samaria." There he wrought a miracle; he told the woman at the well all that ever she had done; he spent two days in the city preaching his gospel; he enabled and persuaded many of the people to receive him as the Messiah. He provided in these first converts the materials for the future church in Samaria, and cheered his disciples with the assurance of a speedy ingathering of souls there; "for," said he, "the fields are already white for the harvest." Nor did he forget in the training of the twelve his purpose to remove, before he should leave the world, all restrictions from the sphere of his saving grace, and to give it a world-wide expansion. Very early in his ministry he called the attention of his disciples to the faith of the centurion, and declared that many should come from the four quarters of the globe, and sit down with the three old patriarchs in the kingdom of heaven, while the apostate Jews should be cast out into outer darkness (Matt. viii. 11). If the disciples forgot his words, he did not; for two years later he repeated them with added emphasis (Luke xiii. 29). Within a few months before his death, being at Jerusalem, he said, "I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice" (John x. 15, 16). During the last pass-over week he said to the Jews, that the kingdom should be taken from them, and given to another nation (Matt. xxi. 43).

The plan which he adopted for the accomplishment of his purpose was sovereign and timely. Before his death he sent no mission to the heathen, he organized no Christian church, he revealed no complete system of saving knowledge; for the reason that every thing of this kind was to rest on his atoning death. But in the twelve he founded a missionary society and an organizing body; them also he informed into the first principles of the gospel, and prepared them to receive from the Holy Spirit, and to communicate to mankind orally and in writing, the final form of Christian doctrine. This being done, he purchased by his death the salvation of the world. At his ascension he removed all the old traditional restrictions, and opened wide the channels through which Divine grace might flow unto all nations through the ages. He commanded his disciples to go into all the world, and to preach the gospel to every creature. The order in which they were to proceed was laid down. They were to begin at Jerusalem, and go thence to Judæa, to Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. With the commission they received power from on high, the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Chrysostom notes, with apparent surprise, the contrast between this command, and the original commission forbidding the twelve to go in the way of the Gentiles and into any town of the Samaritans (Matt. x. 5, 6). The explanation is before us: The particular, which was established in Abraham, and which was the rule of Christ's personal ministry, had given place to the universal, which was declared once for all in the final apostolical commission. The subject, examined from this point of view, gives answer to an objection which may be urged against the Divine origin of Judaism. It is not credible (such is the adverse suggestion) that the Almighty would for so many ages restrict the revelation of saving knowledge and the ordinance of holy worship to one people, — a people insignificant in number, and undeserving of God's favor, as their books openly declare; inferior in science, art, and culture, and encamped on the edge of Asia Minor. To this the word of God replies that Judaism, in the Divine purpose, contemplated as its predestinated end the sal-

vation of the entire family of man. In its nature it was a particular, not an exclusive, system. Judaism was meant to be, and in fact was, strictly provisional and temporary. It was established, not for itself, but for the introduction of a broader and better dispensation; and the final cause of its existence was the preparation and offer of salvation to all the people that dwelt on earth. The objection as against modern Judaism, which declares itself to be a finality, is unanswerable; as against revealed religion, the religion of the Old Testament, it has no validity. God's word explains the Judaism of Moses and Isaiah in all its intents and purposes. The real significance of particularism is, shortly, this: narrow institutions, world-wide promises. The whole scheme of Providence in this sphere may be summed up in three sentences: First, general, through two thousand years, until the calling of Abraham; then particular, two thousand, until the coming of Christ; then general again, many thousand, until the second coming. It explains the parable of the mustard-seed,—in the sowing, the least of all seeds; in the growth, the greatest of herbs.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## CALL OF ABRAM.

## CHRONOLOGY OF ABRAM.

*(After Usher.)*

B.C.		AGE.	
1996	Born at Ur.		
1923	The call . . . . .	73	
1921	Arrival at Shechem . . . . .	75	Gen. xii. 4.
1920	Went to Egypt . . . . .	76	
1918	Returned to Canaan . . . . .	78	
1917	Lot went to Sodom . . . . .	79	
1913	Slaughter of the kings . . . . .	83	
1913	First stage of the covenant . . . . .	83	
1910	Ishmael born . . . . .	86	xvi. 3, 16.
1898	Second stage of the covenant . . . . .	99	xvii. 1-16.
1898	Cities of the plain destroyed . . . . .	99	
1898	Gerar and Abimelech . . . . .	99	
1897	Isaac born . . . . .	100	xxi. 5.
1892	Ishmael cast out . . . . .	105	
1872	Isaac sacrificed. The oath . . . . .	125	
1872	The covenant confirmed . . . . .	125	
1860	Sarah died, aged 127 years . . . . .	137	xxiii. 1, 2.
1857	Isaac married . . . . .	140	
1853	Abram married Keturah . . . . .	144	
1822	He died . . . . .	175	xxv. 7.

NOTE. — The inaccuracies in Usher's genealogy do not wholly destroy its value. Exact dates are of little importance compared with the sequence of events, and the sequence of events is maintained in all the genealogies.

GEN. xii. 1-3. — At the point in time about midway from the creation to the incarnation, a Shemite family left Ur of the Chaldees, east of the Euphrates, and removed to Haran. The

head of the family was Terah. He took with him Abram his youngest son, Sarai his daughter (who was also the half-sister and wife of Abram), and Lot his grandson. Lot's father Haran, Terah's eldest son, was dead. This emigration was secured by the command of God requiring Abram to go to another land (Acts vii. 3). Although this command was addressed to Abram, yet Terah, true to the instincts of an aged father, undertook the journey with his son. The emigrants remained in Haran until the death of Terah, when Abram, now the patriarch of the family, took with him Sarai and Lot, his servants and his movable property, and set out for the land of Canaan.

Mention is here made, for the first time, of the most illustrious name in the Old Testament. The prominence given to Abraham in the record appears in the space afforded to his biography, in the frequent recurrence of his name, in the titles of honor applied to him, and in his position in the genealogies. The history of the world for the first two thousand years is condensed into eleven chapters of Genesis, but the personal history of Abraham fills fourteen chapters of the book; and all the following scriptures are occupied by the unfolding of the Divine purpose, the rudiments of which were revealed to the great patriarch. Next, the name of Adam occurs eleven times in both Testaments; the name of Noah twenty times; but that of Abraham is mentioned in about one hundred and twenty places, — these places being distributed not unequally throughout the entire scriptures. Again, terms of the highest reverence are applied to him. Ab is equivalent to "father," Abram to "high father," and Abraham to "the father of many nations" (Gen. xvii. 5). He is called the friend of God by historian, prophet, and apostle (2 Chron. xx. 7; Isa. xli. 8; Jas. ii. 23). Paul styles him "our father Abraham," "the father of all them that believed," and "faithful Abraham." Christ describes "Abraham's bosom" as the heavenly rest. Further, the tables of genealogy and chronology in the antecedent history terminate with his name; and the tables which follow in Moses, in the Chronicles, and in the Gospels, take their

departure from him or from Adam, and make their way through the ages to David, and through David and his royal line to Christ.

The ground of this pre-eminence is laid in the Divine call addressed to Abram, personally, by Jehovah. Stephen said that the patriarch received the communication from the "God of glory, appearing to him when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran" (Acts vii. 2). The word of Jehovah was, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii. 1-3). This is, undoubtedly, the key to the biography of Abram, and to the subsequent history of redemption.

Upon its face the communication conveyed a Divine vocation to Abram. According to Moses, "The Lord had said unto him," etc. According to Stephen, "The God of glory appeared unto him, and said, Get thee out of thy country," etc. He was not, as some have thought, a Bedouin sheik, leaving the insufficient pastures and water-springs of Mesopotamia, and wandering with his flocks as far as Canaan in search of fresher fields and more redundant fountains; nor was he drawn away from home by the love of adventure or the impulses of a roving disposition. He was not a fugitive from justice or oppression, nor a refugee from the ruins of a falling kingdom or the terrors of civil war. His journey was undertaken at the command of God. When he was called, he went out, not knowing whither he went. Not only was his immediate vocation Divine, but it was answerable to a revelation made to Noah nearly four hundred years before, showing that the blessings promised in the first gospel were to come in the posterity of Shem; and, according to the register in Gen. xi., Abram was the tenth from Shem.

The call was Divine not only, but was sovereign also. Why



Abram was chosen rather than a Melchizedek, if such there was among the Shemites, does not appear. Why he was chosen rather than Terah his father, or Nahor his brother, or Lot his nephew, is not explained. Terah, his father, was an idolater. If in early life Abram served other gods,—which is an open question,—his idolatry furnished no reason why he should be chosen out of the mass of the Chaldæan pagans to become the father of the faithful. If he was from his youth a worshipper of the true God, his piety was a Divine gift, and could not be the meritorious cause of his vocation. His moral qualities, even his generosity, courage, and hospitality, his obedience and faith, gave him a place among the heroes of the Old Testament. But none of these virtues explain his call. Their existence in him is to be accounted for by the circumstance that God first appointed him to his exalted position, and then qualified him for its duties by the proper gifts and graces. His vocation was sovereign, both because he was chosen for reasons not revealed, and because these reasons were in God, not originally in him. His vocation was not only Divine, but it was conveyed to him through august theophanies.

The term “theophany” is derived from the Greek (*θεωφανεία*), and is applied to the appearance of the God of glory to the senses of men. This manifestation was made supernatural to Abram in the vision, or in the trance, or in a bodily form assumed by Jehovah. Moses wrote, “The word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision;” “And Jehovah appeared to him in the plains of Mamre; and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day” (Gen. xv. 1, xviii. 1). Stephen said, “The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia.” Stephen used *ωφθη*, “appeared.” For the meaning of the word we refer to Acts ii. 3: “And there *appeared* [*ωφθησαν*] unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.” So also the Lord Jesus revealed his glory visibly to Stephen at his martyrdom, and to Paul at his conversion. The call of Abram may be treated as the opening of the theophanic era; an era which culminated with the incarnation and life on earth of the Son of God. The

sensible manifestations of God to Abram are ten in number, and occurred as follows:—

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. In Mesopotamia. Acts vii. 2;  | 5. Mamre. Gen. xvii. 1.         |
| Gen. xii. 1.                     | 6. Mamre. Gen. xviii. 1.        |
| 2. Shechem. Gen. xii. 7.         | 7. Mamre. Gen. xxi. 12.         |
| 3. Bethel. Gen. xiii. 14.        | 8. Mamre. Gen. xxii. 1.         |
| 4. Mamre. Gen. xv. 1.            | 9. Mount Moriah. Gen. xxii. 11. |
| 10. Mount Moriah. Gen. xxii. 15. |                                 |

These appearances give unusual weight to the contents of the revelations made to Abram, both to the commands and promises contained in them.

The first word in the command was a mandate of expatriation: "Get thee out of thy country." Paul remarks that "he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. xi. 8). The important fact is that he went into perpetual exile from his native land. The first settlement of the English colonists at Jamestown and Plymouth resembles the migration of Abram, except for his entire ignorance of the name of the country whither he was to go. Colonization, which was so conspicuous in the history of the Japhetic peoples and the Phœnician branch of Ham's family, was foreign to the habits and traditions of the Semitic tribes. The Chaldæan shepherds, guided by the stars, led their flocks over distant ranges of pasture-grounds. Their warriors, impelled by the thirst for plunder and revenge, carried their arms, even before the call of Abram, as far as Southern Palestine. Of these warlike expeditions a ready example appears in the expedition of Chedorlaomer and his allies, petty kings in the region of the Euphrates, occupying the lower Jordan, and reducing the cities there to vassalage (Gen. xiv.). But the shepherds returned from their wanderings, and the Bedouin robbers from their raids, to the tents of their wives and children. Their habitual inertness and contentment, their virtues, such as they were, and their vices also, rooted them to their native regions. But Abram was required to abandon all the affiliations of race and of home-life, and to quit forever his native land. With expatriation, its usual

concomitants came to him and his posterity, — new usages and habits of life, a new type of civilization, and, what was the leading feature in his experience, a new religion.

Closely allied to the expatriation of the patriarch was the process of segregation. He was directed to separate himself not only from his country, but from the closer ties of life, his "kindred, and his father's house." A strict segregation was exacted of him. At his departure from Ur of the Chaldees, he took with him none of his family except his father, his wife, Lot his nephew, and Lot's wife, bidding adieu forever to the great body of his kindred. He remained at Haran, — a city a few days' journey north of Canaan, — until the death of Terah severed the last link that bound him to his native land (Acts vii. 4). Not long after their arrival in Canaan, a quarrel among the herdsmen led to the final separation of Lot from the chosen family. The isolation of Abram was now complete. He and his wife, with their servants, were alone in the land. His wandering life, bringing him successively to Shechem, Bethel, Hebron, Egypt, Gerar, Beersheba, and back to Hebron, together with his way of worship, precluded any enduring intimacy between himself and the Canaanites. Further, the difficulties in which he became involved with Pharaoh and Abimelech, banished him from their domains. And, still further, when he went into Canaan he had no children. Then, finally, his son Ishmael, when he was grown, was separated from the chosen family, and banished to the desert toward the south; and the children of Keturah, Abram's last wife, were sent away "eastward into the east country" (Gen. xxv.). Nothing is more remarkable in the dealings of God with the patriarch, than the rigor with which the law of isolation was applied to his immediate family; unless it be the strictness with which it was afterwards enforced on the patriarchs descending from him, and finally on the nation of Israel. The Almighty having given these two commands to his servant, encouraged his obedience by a series of promises, six in number.

This is the first: "I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee"

(Gen. xvii. 6). The patriarch entered Canaan childless, and without expectation of offspring. At his death he left behind him, in Ishmael, the progenitor of twelve princes, and of as many powerful tribes; and in the seven sons of Keturah, the ancestors of numerous and warlike peoples in Arabia. The famous kings and nations which descended from him, through Isaac and Jacob, were also held within the compass of the promise. The kingdom of David was the nation, and his successors on the throne of Judah were the kings. The nation was populous, wealthy, and warlike. It was a wise and intelligent people, a great commonwealth, having Jehovah for its God and King, and Divine statutes and judgments for its constitution (Deut. iv. 6-8). The same promise embraces also the illustrious and world-wide kingdom of Christ; its everlasting King being a direct descendant of Abraham, and its innumerable subjects being also his spiritual children.

The second promise is, "I will bless thee." The nature and extent of this blessing are explained. The servants born in his house furnished him with three hundred and eighteen fighting men; suggesting fifteen hundred as an estimate of the total number of his servants of both sexes and all ages. By the blessing of God going with him, he routed the armies of the confederate kings from the east who had invaded Palestine, and had carried off Lot and the women and the plunder (Gen. xiv. 13-16). His wealth also increased: "He was very rich in cattle, silver, and gold." And as the crown of his temporal blessings, God gave to him a son in his marriage with Sarah, and spared the boy when bound upon the altar. Abram enjoyed length of days; he lived to the good old age of a hundred and seventy-five years. And more than all, God bestowed upon him the consummate spiritual blessing of justification by faith, a free, gratuitous, and irrevocable gift, together with all the benefits which flow therefrom in this life and the life to come. Towards the close of the narrative, the writer sums it all up in terms responsive to the original promise: "Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things" (Gen. xxiv. 1).

Thirdly, God said, "I will make thy name great." The position accorded to this man in the written history, and the unwritten traditions of the Oriental races, illustrates and makes good this promise. The cheeks of the Jews mantled with pride when they exclaimed, "We have Abraham to our father." According to Josephus, he is revered by the Chaldæans as their teacher in monotheism; and by the Egyptians, as their teacher in mathematics and astronomy. Nichalaus, the historian of Syria, says that he reigned a long time at Damascus on his way, at the head of an army, from Chaldæa to Canaan.<sup>1</sup> The Koran abounds in tributes of respect to his memory, and in traditions of his piety and wisdom. The natives of Orfa—a town claiming, although on insufficient grounds, to be the ancient Ur of the Chaldees—still repeat his story; and among the cypresses which shade the sacred pool of Callirhoë, the beautiful spring, they point to the spot where, as they flatter themselves, he offered his first prayer to the living God. Hebron to this day bears the name of El Khulil, The Friend, in honor of Abraham; and the inhabitants identify the venerable oak, Sindian, under which he pitched his tent, and the tomb in which he was buried. Moreover, the increasing circulation of the Scriptures throughout all the ages, and in all lands, is giving to the patriarch a world-wide reputation. Most illustrious, also, is his name as the father of the faithful. No honors can exceed the honors which Jew, Mohammedan, and Christian, at variance in almost every other habit of thought, unite in paying to the imperishable memory of Abraham.

"And thou shalt be a blessing," was the fourth of the six promises. He was a public and representative person; the channel through which the Divine mercies flowed to others. He was the founder of a new race. Ten theophanies were granted to him, communicating saving knowledge to himself and his posterity. God entered into everlasting covenant with him for his seed after him, and he received for himself and all his posterity the sacramental seal of the covenant. To them also was given, through him, the land of promise. In his family

<sup>1</sup> Josephus: Antiquities, vol. i. vii. 2.

the Church of God was founded, to be perpetuated forever. He was both blessed in his own person, and a blessing to others.

In the fifth promise, Jehovah declares that he will take as personal to himself the treatment which Abram should receive from his friends and enemies: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." The words "curse" and "curse thee" in this place are equivalents of different Hebrew words, and signify, the first a judicial malediction on the part of the Almighty, and the last a blasphemous cursing on the part of Abram's enemies. Keil calls attention to the plural "them" as used in connection with the blessing, and the singular "him" as used in connection with the cursing; intimating that there will be many to bless Abram and his seed, while only here and there one will return curses for blessings. It should be noticed, also, that Jehovah does not authorize the patriarch to return cursing for cursing. The word going just before is, "thou shalt be a blessing;" and the word immediately following is, "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Vengeance belongs to God, the holy Judge and Avenger; to his chosen people it belongs not to curse, but to bless mankind. Further, Abram stands here not as an individual, but as the representative of God's people, and the vehicle of salvation to this world; and he who curses that man is an enemy of both God and man. Conspicuous instances in which God punished those who maltreated his old servant are recorded. When Pharaoh, and afterwards Abimelech, were about to take Sarah away from her husband, the Almighty protected her honor by sending plagues into the family of Pharaoh, and threatening Abimelech with death. The later scriptures relate how God, true to his promise, was favorable to the lands that were favorable to Israel, and how he hurled back on hostile kingdoms the wrongs which they attempted to inflict on his own chosen people. Egypt, Moab, Edom, Syria, Assyria, Persia, Philistia, Rome, suffered, one after another, the judgments of God when he arose to scatter the enemies of his chosen people. The humiliation into which the Almighty brought the heathen powers is well set forth in the shame of Moab and Ammon.

Ephraim is the stronghold of Israel, and Judah wields the sceptre; while Moab is the foot-tub of Israel, and Edom is the servant to whom his master flings his shoes to be cleaned (Ps. lx. 7, 8).

The consummate blessing is thus described: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." The Apostle Paul declared, in terms, that these words point directly to the spread of the gospel among the heathen: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. iii. 8). In Rom. iv. 16, 17, Paul puts the same sense upon the words, "I have made thee a father of many nations;" the nations are the redeemed. Some interpreters suggest that the expression "all families of the *earth*" should be read "all families of the *ground*;" that the word "families" points to the confusion of tongues, and the word "ground" points to the curse pronounced on the ground (Gen. iii. 17). From this it is inferred, that the blessing of Abraham is the antithesis of the curse pronounced at the fall of Adam, on the ground; and that, by virtue of this blessing, the families divided at Shinar are to be re-united, and the curse is to give place to a blessing on the entire human race. The promise to Abraham was repeatedly renewed. At the destruction of Sodom, the Almighty admitted the patriarch into his secret counsels, because, said the Lord, "All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him." After the sacrifice of Isaac, Jehovah said to him, "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed." Here the original promise, that all nations should be blessed in Abraham, is made definite by the assurance that the blessing should come in his seed; and that seed, in its ultimate and consummate sense, is Christ. Such is the word of the Holy Spirit through Paul: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. iii. 16). The destinies of the human race were deposited in the person of the Shemite from beyond the Euphrates. The antecedent history of the world is but an introduction to the Divine vocation with which he was honored. And the entire cycle of promises

made to him, to the patriarchs who came after him, with those communicated through Moses and the prophets to the chosen people, culminated in the exceeding great and precious Messianic blessing. Thus the promise of Christ is the key to the history of redemption. As given to Abram it is commonly styled the third Messianic promise, the first having been already bestowed upon Adam, and the second upon Noah. It explains with perfect lucidity, and illuminates with ever-growing brightness, the course of events proceeding from the covenant given to Abram, — even the subsequent covenants; the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms and the Evangelists; the incarnation, death, and exaltation of Christ; the Pentecost of the Jews; the Pentecost of the Gentiles (Acts x.); the labors of the apostles, the testimony of the martyrs and confessors; and the world-wide spread of the gospel.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE GIVING OF THE COVENANT.

It pleased God to give to Abram the covenant of circumcision. It is the fourth in the series of covenants recorded in the Scriptures; the first being the covenant of works with Adam, the second that of grace with Jesus Christ, the third that of forbearance with Noah. It is the glory of Abram, that he was a party with Jehovah in one of the everlasting covenants. The provisions of this covenant are integral elements in the plan of redemption. They were executed by imposing providences; they controlled the career of the nations and kings who came out of the loins of Abraham; and they furnished the organic law to the Jewish and to the Gospel Church. The importance of the covenant is still further indicated by the vehicles through which it was conveyed.

Ten theophanies were granted to the patriarch. They marked the critical periods of his life through half a century. They appeared in divers places; in Ur of the Chaldees, at Shechem, Bethel, and Mamre, and in Mount Moriah. The covenant with Abram was given in three of these Divine manifestations. It was begun in the fourth theophany at Mamre, was enlarged in the fifth at Mamre again, and was confirmed in the tenth and last on Mount Moriah. According to Usher, the time that elapsed between Abram's departure out of Ur, to the sacrifice of Isaac, or the tenth theophany, was fifty-one years. The history of the giving of the covenant naturally distributes itself into three periods:—

I. From Abram's departure out of Ur, to the first stage of the covenant; ten years.

II. From the first to the second stage of the covenant ; fifteen years.

III. From the second stage of the covenant, to its final ratification in the theophany of the oath ; twenty-six years.

PERIOD I. : GEN. xii.-xiv. — This period begins with the migration of Terah to Haran, and his death, whereby Abram was finally separated from his country and his kindred and his father's house. Shortly afterwards the chosen family arrived at Shechem, and the second theophany informed Abram that he had reached the promised land. There he built his first altar. From Shechem he went southward to Bethel, and there he built another altar. Under the stress of famine he went into Egypt, where, according to Usher, he resided two years. Possibly, though nothing of the kind is intimated in the record, Abram may have purposed to abandon Canaan, a region smitten with famine, and make his future home in fertile Egypt. But he had passed off Sarai as his sister, not his wife, lest the king might take her and put him to death. She was seized, and transferred to the harem. In punishment of the indignity, Jehovah sent pestilence into the royal family. Pharaoh soon detected the fraud which had been practised upon him, sharply reproved Abram, and sent him out of the kingdom with all his family and possessions. Soon after his return to Bethel, Lot separated himself, and in himself his posterity, from the chosen family, and removed to Sodom. The distress of Abram at the loss of his nephew gave occasion for the third theophany, conveying to him and his posterity the whole of the fertile and beautiful region which was in sight from the heights near Bethel, and all that could be seen in an exploration of the country. To this gift was added the assurance that his posterity should be like the dust of the earth, innumerable. From Bethel, Abram removed his caravan about thirty miles southward to Hebron, in the plain of Mamre, a picturesque region opening down upon the pasture-land of Beersheba. Here a few years later he became the subject of a unique experience.

GEN. xiv.— Fourteen years before Abram's arrival at Shechem, Chedorlaomer, a warlike prince east of the Euphrates, had

formed an alliance with the sheiks of the neighboring tribes, marched upon the plain of the Jordan near the Dead Sea, and subjected the cities to the payment of an annual tribute. In the thirteenth year of this vassalage, the cities attempted to throw off the Assyrian yoke. Chedorlaomer, with his allies, undertook a new expedition into Canaan. The kings of the four principal cities of the plain gave battle to the invaders; but they lost the day, and with it their lives. The enemy ravaged the cities, and departed laden with plunder, and carrying off the women with the leading people, among whom was Lot. A refugee from Sodom brought the news to Abram, then encamped not far away at Hebron. The patriarch instantly gathered a force of three hundred and eighteen fighting men of his own household, together with warriors furnished by his neighbors. He pursued the retreating Assyrians, overtook them at Dan, one hundred and twenty miles distant, fell upon them when they were sleeping in the dead of night, put them to flight, and chased them about eighty miles to Hobah, a place north of Damascus. He rescued Lot and the women and the booty.

A joyful surprise awaited his return from the field of victory. He was met near the site of the future Jerusalem by Melchizedek, bearing bread and wine in token of honor and love. Melchizedek was a Canaanite, a holy man, a king of righteousness, and a priest of the most high God, holding a priesthood of an exceptional order among the heathen. He blessed Abram on God's behalf: "Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth;" and again he thanked God on behalf of Abram: "And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand." His act was an authoritative assurance to Abram that God had called him to take up arms, and had given him the victory. This is the only military expedition undertaken by the pilgrim father. We should miss its historical significance if we should recognize nothing in it except, first, an indication of Abram's courage and strategy as a fighting man, and, next, an impulse of affection for his underserving kinsman. It illustrates the faith of Abram: "he fights

once, as he walks always, by faith." Moreover, the Divine help which was granted to him in the campaign, and the blessing of God pronounced upon him by the royal priest, prove that he was, by the grace of God, the lawful heir, the lord paramount, of the land of promise; and that he held a Divine commission to protect, by force of arms, the sacred soil in which the plan of salvation for the world was to be matured.

GEN. xv. — The formula which follows, "after these things," introduces the reader to the first stage of the covenant of circumcision. Abram, on his return from the "slaughter of the kings," fell into despondency. Canaan had been secured to him, but he had been obliged to fight for his inheritance. He knew not how soon the enemy might resume hostilities. Moreover, he was alone in the land, and he was childless; even Lot, his natural heir, had gone to Sodom, leaving him with no other presumptive heir than Eliezer, his upper servant, not of his native region but of Damascus. To his lonely home Jehovah came to make with him a covenant, a boon which no mortal man had received since the days of Noah. The solemnities attending this benefaction were appropriate and imposing. They began with a theophany, the fourth of the series. Jehovah said, "Fear not: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward," — a shield to defend him, and a reward to exalt him to honor. Abram replied, "Behold, thou hast given to me no seed; and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir," i.e., Eliezer. The Lord rejoined, "This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth of thine own bowels shall be thine heir." The Lord added that his legitimate posterity should equal in number and glory the stars that glitter in the Syrian heavens. "Abram believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." His anxiety in regard to the promised seed being relieved, his thoughts turned on the promised land, — just before invaded by the Assyrians. He asked, "Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" The Divine answer to the inquiry is explained in ver. 18: "on that day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram." By the command of God, the patriarch killed a heifer, a goat, and a

ram, and two birds. He severed the carcass of each of the four-footed victims into equal parts, and laid one half of each over against its other half; but the birds he did not cut in two. When the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram. While he slept, God announced the things that were to come to him; the homeless position in Canaan of his near posterity, their servitude of four hundred years in a foreign land, and their return laden with spoils taken from their taskmasters. After nightfall, the Almighty entered into a covenant with Abram; giving to his posterity, when they should be delivered from bondage, the entire territory lying between Assyria and Egypt. After Abram had put in order the dissected pieces of the animals, the birds of prey came down on the sacrifice; but Abram drove them away. The vultures represented the foes of the chosen seed, and the act of Abram putting them to flight was a sign that God would enable his people to overcome their enemies. "For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant" (Ps. cv. 42). The "horror of great darkness" which fell upon the patriarch prefigured the hard and bitter bondage in Egypt; but the gloom was relieved by the prediction of the emancipation. The assurance to Abram that he should go down to his grave in peace, and in a good old age, was a guaranty that his eyes should not see his seed brought low. In the remark that "the iniquity of the Amorites was not full," we discover that a probation of four hundred years was granted to the Canaanites. As the night came on, "behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp passed between the pieces" of the severed flesh. In this symbol God revealed his presence, as afterwards in the burning bush to Moses, to Israel in the pillar of cloud and fire, and to Solomon in the glory filling the temple. The covenant was confirmed by Jehovah, who passed between the pieces, and was accepted by Abram, who arranged them in their proper order.

PERIOD II.: GEN. xvi.—Of the events which distinguished the interval of fifteen years, separating the first stage of the covenant from the second, none are narrated except the story of Hagar and Ishmael. Hagar was an Egyptian, brought to

Canaan, as one may presume, by Sarai, among her handmaids, on the return of the family from the court of Pharaoh (Gen. xii. 16). In the covenant above described, God had pledged to Abram a son from his own person. Sarai, in despair of offspring, thought to help God in the matter of the promise by giving Hagar to her husband as a wife in the second degree. Ishmael was born in this marriage; but the sin of Sarai and of her husband was avenged in one of the inevitable troubles which grow out of polygamy: Sarai saw that she was despised by her servant. Abram was eighty-six years old at the birth of Ishmael. Thirteen years afterwards, when he was ninety-nine years old, the covenant in its second stage, or enlarged form, was given.

GEN. xvii. — This event gave character to the fifth theophany. A great advance was now made on all the preceding revelations. Jehovah called upon Abram to walk before him and be perfect, saying that he would multiply him exceedingly, and make nations of him, and kings should come out of him. God now re-established his covenant with Abram, and his seed after him, for an everlasting covenant, gave to them all the land of Canaan for a perpetual possession, and promised to be their God. The Divine Being gave supreme dignity to the occasion by taking to himself a name never before uttered, and by changing the names of the two chosen ones who stood in his presence. He called himself El Shaddai, the Almighty; Abram he called Abraham, “the father of many nations.” Sarai he called Sarah, or Princess; for, said he, “she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.” Not only was the covenant at this time renewed and enlarged, but it was furnished with its sign and seal,—the sacrament of circumcision. Abraham received without delay the sacred sign in his flesh, and administered the same to Ishmael, and to all his man-servants of eight days old and upward. The Almighty finished the momentous transaction by assuring Abraham and Sarah that in their marriage a son should be born within the current year.

GEN. xviii., xix. — Three men appeared at the tent-door of

Abraham, one of whom was Jehovah, and the other two attending angels. The Lord announced to Abraham the approaching birth of Isaac, and then declared his purpose to destroy forthwith Sodom and Gomorrah. He listened graciously to the repeated intercessions of Abraham, beseeching him to spare Sodom if fifty, if forty-five, if forty, if thirty, or if twenty even, or if only ten righteous men, should be found there. Jehovah went his way as soon as he had ceased to commune with Abraham. The two angels who went to Sodom found, instead of ten righteous men in the city, only one. They saw that the corruption of the people was both universal and beastly. Sodom and the other cities of the plain were utterly destroyed. Lot and his family escaped. His wife, though plucked as a brand from the burning, suffered an awful and mysterious death, and her body was left, a pillar of salt, on the plain of Sodom and on the field of sacred history. Lot may be traced in his flight to Zoar, and then to the mountains of Moab. He is seen hiding himself in a cave. His unclean daughters made their father drunk two nights successively, in order to accomplish their incestuous purposes. A son was born to each of them, — to one, Moab, to the other, Ammon. Although neither the daughters nor Lot are mentioned again, we are not allowed to lose sight of their posterity. Long before the return of the chosen seed to the chosen land, Jehovah assigned to the children of Ammon and the children of Moab, in perpetuity, the country immediately east of the lower Jordan and of the Dead Sea. When the Hebrews, on their journey to Canaan, were passing through this region, they were expressly commanded not to harass their kinsmen; for, said God, "I will not give thee of their land for a possession" (Deut. ii. 9, 19). No reason is given for the providential arrangement by which the outcast race became the nearest neighbors of the chosen people. Among the obvious consequences of the arrangement were the severe blow which the presence of dishonored kinsmen dealt to the race-pride of the Israelites, the incurable antipathy that was certain to spring between natural enemies separated by a narrow river only, and the difficulty of preventing the parties

from coming to blows (Deut. xxiii. 3-6). The overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah is used by Moses and the prophets, and by Christ and his apostles, to enforce the righteousness of God's judgments. Very familiar to us is the warning of Christ, "Remember Lot's wife," together with his comparison of the guilt of the cities about the Sea of Galilee with the guilt of the ancient cities of the plain. Peter reminds his readers that God turned Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, making them a warning to the ungodly; and Jude sets them forth "for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." No event connected with the patriarchal history is more fully authenticated in the New-Testament Scriptures than this catastrophe.

PERIOD III.: GEN. xx., xxi. — Abraham went to Gerar, a city of the Philistines, of which Abimelech was the king. Here Abraham repeated the deception which he had practised on Pharaoh in regard to his relationship with Sarah, and was severely rebuked by the heathen king. Hengstenberg remarks that "the providence of God watches over his elect, delivering him from difficulties into which his own sin had led him, and from which human wisdom could never have found an escape." The birth of Isaac, which took place probably at Beer-sheba, is now recorded. This is followed by the seventh theophany securing the final exile of Hagar and Ishmael from Abraham's household, and by the covenant of peace between Abraham and Abimelech.

GEN. xxii. — The narrative is now brought down to the offering-up of Isaac, and the ratification of the covenant. This transaction was distinguished by three theophanies. In one, the eighth of the series, God commanded Abraham to offer his son as a burnt-offering; in the ninth theophany Abraham's hand, raised to slay Isaac, was arrested; and in the tenth, the promises made in the first and second stages of the covenant were recapitulated, and solemnly confirmed by the oath of the Almighty. The terms of the oath are these: "By myself I have sworn, saith Jehovah, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply



thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. xxii. 16-18).

This communication recapitulated several of the leading promises of the covenant, and guaranteed, by an oath, their specific performance: "By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah." Again, the covenant blessings are declared to be closely connected with the obedience of Abraham. The word of Jehovah begins, "Because thou hast done this thing;" and ends, "Because thou hast obeyed my voice." The promises culminate with the culmination of Abraham's growth in grace. His religious training began with his Divine call, and proceeded to his removal to Canaan, to his holy walk before God, to his intercessions for Sodom, and rose to its highest point in the surrender to God of a life dearer to him than his own life. Next, the occasion was made memorable by the oath of Jehovah, the first solemnity of the kind on record. Additional importance is given to this occasion by the circumstance, that while the oath was, so far as is now known, sworn to Abraham alone, it is treated as if it were sworn to Isaac and Jacob also (Gen. i. 24; Exod. xxxii. 13). So close was the connection, by virtue of the covenant, between the three old patriarchs, that the benefits bestowed on Abraham were transferred, in their abounding fulness, to Isaac and to Jacob; what was granted to him under the Divine oath was granted also to them, under the same sanction; and the best of the promises enter into the inheritance of the saints in all ages (Heb. vi. 13-19).

Two distinct elements enter, so we have now seen, into the history of the Abrahamic period. One of them is a series of Divine communications made to the patriarch, through the medium of ten theophanies, which were distributed through a period of about fifty years. They revealed to him, and through him to the human race, a series of promises and commands, entering vitally into the plan of redemption; and these were reduced to the form of a covenant between the Almighty and

Abraham. By virtue of its terms, and its inherent nature, that was an everlasting covenant. To this element in the history, a second is added; to wit, a running narrative of events in the life of Abraham, by which the theophanic revelations are united and interpreted. The Divine word calling Abram out of the mass of mankind is explained by the providences which separated him from his native country and his kindred, from his father, from Lot, and from his son Ishmael, from his six sons the offspring of Keturah, and from the heathen. The promise of a country is followed by the description of his sojourn in Canaan, and of the altars and wells, the groves, and the burying-place, which he left in the land as the monuments of his title to the inheritance. At the beginning God made known his purpose to bless the friends and afflict the enemies of his servant; and the subsequent narrative shows how this purpose was executed on Pharaoh, on Melchisedec, on Abimelech, on Lot, and on the confederate kings from the Euphrates. The repeated promises and commands of God are recorded; and these are explained by his personal experience, by his acts of obedience, down to the culmination of his career in his faith in the offering-up of his only son Isaac. Through the entire narrative the sacred writer holds the reader closely to the commands and promises of Jehovah, and the corresponding acts of faith and obedience performed by the patriarch.

The narrative is, moreover, so constructed as to show the progressive development of the promises. This may be traced in the revelations respecting the chosen land, the greatness of his posterity, his chosen seed, the future of that seed, and the guaranties of the Divine engagements. In regard to the chosen land, God said at Ur, "Get thee out of thy country, to a land that I will show thee;" leaving Abraham in ignorance as to the name and character of the new country. He went out, not knowing whither he went. On his arrival at Shechem, God said, "Unto thy seed will I give this land;" adding nothing as to the patriarch's personal title to the possession, or as to its territorial extent. About four years afterwards, having been sent away from Egypt, Abraham came to Bethel. The Lord

told him to lift up his eyes and look around him to the four points of the compass, and said, "All the land which thou seest will I give to thee, and to thy seed forever." If Abraham went to the top of "the mountain east of Bethel," his eyes rested towards the north upon the heights which separate Judæa from Samaria; towards the south, on the hills which overlooked the site of the future Jerusalem, and the more distant ranges of Hebron; towards the west, but not in sight, was the great sea; and towards the east he could trace the forests which lined the banks of the Jordan, and beyond them the long dark wall of Moab. Then the Lord added, "Arise, walk through the land in the length and breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." Still later, the wide and fertile domain was enlarged beyond the sphere of both his vision and journeys. At Mamre, in the fourth theophany, God granted to his seed the whole vast region, "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. xv. 18). In the fifth theophany, God gave to him and to his seed all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession," making the imperial gift perpetual. And finally the Almighty conveyed to the patriarch an eternal inheritance in "a better country, even a heavenly," whereof the earthly Canaan was only a type.

God's promises in regard to the number of Abraham's posterity followed the same law of progress. At Ur, the word of God to the childless old man was, "I will make of thee a great nation;" at Bethel, "I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth;" at Mamre, as the stars of heaven "so shall thy seed be;" at Moriah, "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore."

Not less remarkable were the gradual disclosures to the patriarch in regard to the paternity and legitimacy of the chosen seed. At Ur the word of God was, "I will make of thee a great nation." At Shechem, and later at Bethel, the promise was repeated, and made more definite: "Unto thy seed will I give this land," and "I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth." Abraham relied with implicit faith upon these repeated assurances; but year after year came and went, leav-

ing him childless in the very land which had been given to his posterity. In his perplexity he attempted to solve the problem in his own way, not knowing the power of God. Two or three times he reached an erroneous solution. He may, or may not, have conjectured that his nephew Lot should be his heir. But that delusion, if indeed it was entertained, was dispelled by Lot's departure to Sodom. In his disappointment he said to the Almighty, "What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?" He attempted to relieve his perplexity by adopting his steward Eliezer as his heir, though Eliezer was of a heathen stock from Damascus. The Lord corrected this mistake: "This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir." By way of confirming this promise, God gave another to the effect that Abram's legitimate posterity should equal in number the uncounted stars. Abraham "believed in the Lord, and he counted 'it to him for righteousness." But his faith did not take in the precise meaning of the Divine word. Sarah, despairing of offspring, conjectured that the birth of a son to Abraham in a marriage with another woman, an inmate of the family, would fulfil the terms of the oracle. She gave her maid Hagar to Abraham, and Ishmael was born. And all the parties seem to have treated Ishmael as the true heir to the promise until the lad was thirteen years of age. But their mistake was corrected by the terms of the covenant, "I will bless Sarah, and give thee also a son of her." Within the year following, the promise was fulfilled in the birth of Isaac. God's covenant was established in him, to the exclusion of Hagar's son; and both the pretender and his mother were separated from the chosen land. In due time Isaac was offered up in sacrifice to God, and Abraham received him, as it were, a second time from the dead.

The same law of progress governed the assurances of the Divine faithfulness. At the first, God gave a simple promise; in the two following theophanies, the promise was repeated; in the fourth, God exalted the promise into a covenant, which he ratified by passing between the fragments of the beasts slain in sacrifice; in the fifth, God completed the covenant in the sacra-

ment of circumcision; and in the tenth, he confirmed every thing that had gone before by an oath, wherein, when he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself. A promise indefinite at the beginning, rose through the stages of a covenant and of a sacrament to the sanction of the oath, "one of the two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie."

The record, by the form in which it is constructed, shows the number of years through which the revelations were distributed. The general rule is thus stated by Paul: "God at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets" (Heb. i. 1). This law controlled the giving of the commands and promises to Abraham; they were communicated not all at once, but in distinct portions, at eight different times, and in five different parts of the country. The period covered by these theophanic revelations may be estimated. The patriarch was seventy-five years of age when he entered the land of Canaan; on the supposition that Isaac was twenty-five years old when he was offered up, it appears that about fifty years elapsed between the first theophany at Ur and the tenth on Mount Moriah. And what is not less significant, the promise of a posterity was delayed twenty-five years in its fulfilment. Now, the effect of this leisurely movement in the plan of Providence was for Abraham a prolonged discipline. Its effect on the mind of the reader is to quicken his sense of the unbroken continuity of God's plan, and the coherence of the record.

The narrative, still further, is so constructed as to indicate the publicity which was given to the new beginning. Nothing was done secretly, or hidden in a corner. If, as is quite probable, Ur of the Chaldees was near the mouth of the Euphrates, Abraham conducted a caravan of nearly fifteen hundred souls through eight hundred miles to Haran; thence by slow journeys through the land of Canaan, from its northern to its southern boundary; thence through the wilderness of Paran to the capital city of populous Egypt; thence back again to Hebron. A few years later, he removed his immense following to Gerar, in the domain of Abimelech. "He sojourned in the Philistines' land many days." But he did not go into obscurity.

He asserted his title to the promised land by the slaughter of the kings in a military campaign beyond Damascus. The attention of the Canaanites was arrested by the presence among them of this wealthy and powerful stranger from Assyria. And the historical position of the new sheik was gradually disclosed.

In the first place, he assumed very early and openly the position of a religious reformer, introducing a pure and spiritual worship. The holy example of our first parents, of Abel, and Noah, had been forgotten. Terah and his fellow-countrymen were idolaters. But Abram, through Divine grace, repudiated the gods of the Mesopotamians, and abandoned their superstitious observances. As his first act, on reaching his new home, he built an altar to Jehovah, and offered upon it a holy sacrifice. On his arrival at Bethel, he pitched his tent, and built another altar. When he removed his tent to Hebron, he built an altar there also; tent and altar going together. The record says, significantly, that the Canaanite was in the land. In the devotions of this stranger, the heathen witnessed the extraordinary spectacle of a spiritual worship, unaided by any visible representation of Deity, whether idol or image. A victim was laid upon a rude altar builded under the open sky; the flesh was consumed by fire, and ascended towards heaven in dissolving smoke and in a sweet savor. The native-born idolaters saw before them a sheik who had come into their country to set up altars to the true God in the place of false gods, and to begin there the work whereby the knowledge of one God, only one, the sole object of worship, and invisible, should become the sure inheritance of the human race, the first truth and the basis of of true religion through all ages.

Secondly, Abraham was a prophet, a medium of Divine communications. The ten theophanies were not only manifestations of the glory of God, but vehicles for the communication of saving knowledge. Of the truths made known to Abraham, and through him to mankind, these are examples:—God is a hearer of prayer: witness the audience which he gave to Abraham's importunate entreaties for Sodom. God is just and good: "Wilt thou destroy the righteous with the wicked?"

That be far from thee. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The Almighty is entitled to receive from us the voluntary offering of the dearest and best of our possessions, but he abhors human sacrifices: witness the offering-up and the rescue of Isaac. The coming of a personal Messiah was revealed: "Abraham," said Christ, "saw my day, and was glad." Christ is the very seed of the woman, the One through whom all nations shall be blessed. The Redeemer's office as a royal priest was set forth in Melchizedek; his position as a suffering Messiah was represented in Isaac laid on the altar; atonement by substitution was signified in Isaac unbound, and the animal provided in his place and slain. The possibility of a resurrection was made known to Abraham, who accounted that God was able to raise his son, burned to ashes, from the dead. And, finally, the doctrine of justification by faith, without works, became a leading part of his personal experience. Mozley remarks, "that the creed of Abraham has become the creed of the civilized world, and has been victorious over the idolatry of the human race, and grown from a deposit in the breast of one man into a universal religion."<sup>1</sup>

Thirdly, Abraham was a party to a new covenant with God. His biography turns upon the giving of this covenant as the most decisive event of his life, and the instrument itself became the organic law of the kingdom of God. Very grave questions have arisen touching the nature, extent, and permanency of the Abrahamic covenant; wide differences of opinion exist in regard to the interpretation of its promises and stipulations, and in regard to the signification of its seal. Yet the covenant itself is one of the most, if not the very most, important of the documents preserved in the sacred records.

Fourthly, In Abraham the Church became a visible society. The Church had existed in its integral elements from the day when the first gospel was revealed; but its constituents were individual members scattered abroad. The ordinance of the sabbath had been instituted from the beginning. The word of life was published by preachers of righteousness, like Enoch

<sup>1</sup> Mozley: *Ruling Ideas*, p. 23.

and Noah. And yet, as a visible and organized society, the Church did not exist until it was established in the family of Abraham.

Fifthly, The Scriptures do not hesitate to declare that Abraham was, in a spiritual sense, the father of all true believers. He is expressly called "the father of all them that believe" (Rom. iv. 11). Gentile converts are repeatedly described as his children (Rom. iv. 12; Gal. iii. 29). And the promise that he should be the father of many nations is made good by the gathering together of the great company of the redeemed (Rom. iv. 16-18). True believers, though they be Gentiles, are the Israel of God, the real children of Abraham; and, as his children, they are the heirs to all the covenant promises that remain to be fulfilled.

Sixthly, He was the progenitor of a race, and the founder of a nationality, both illustrious. The most important branch of his posterity took, at first, the name of Hebrews. After the time of the Judges, they were known as the children of Israel, or Israelites, or simply Israel. At the secession of the ten tribes, the remnant took the name of Jews, from the tribe of Judah. Although they never bore the name of Abraham as a patronymic, they habitually referred to him as their progenitor, and began with him their genealogies. The unique and conspicuous position occupied by the Jews in all ages and in every country, their position in the history of other historical races, ancient and modern, give to Abraham a place among the most renowned of the illustrious few who have founded great kingdoms. But it must not be forgotten, that the existence and grandeur of the Jewish commonwealth were subordinate to the grander purposes for which it was called into being. It was the cradle of the Church of God in its infancy. The word of God was put into its keeping as a light to enlighten not only the Jews, but the larger multitudes of the Gentiles. A ritual of sacrifice was appointed, which should afterwards culminate, on the one hand, in the great atonement, and on the other, in a more spiritual worship. One family was chosen to be perpetuated in the male line through the ages, to provide for the



incarnation of the Saviour. Judaism, as a religion, was temporary and provisional; the Jewish commonwealth, in which Judaism was environed, was provisional likewise. Accordingly, Abraham as the founder of a great state was inferior to Abraham as a reformer of worship, as a prophet, a party with God to the covenant of circumcision, as the original member of the organized Church, a representative man, and the father of the faithful. Everywhere and always the friend of God, Abraham was both the progenitor and ideal representative of the chosen seed. Not only did he stand in the covenant of circumcision as well for his seed after him as for himself, but the course of his life foreshadowed the career of the new race of which he was the founder. His biography was at once a history and a prophecy; a narrative of God's dealings with him personally, and a revelation of God's purpose respecting those that should descend from him. "It is a general historical truth, that the character and pursuits of the nations are reflected in those of their patriarchs and heroes. From this principle, the history of Abraham gains a wider scope and a higher interest; and we are justified in interpreting it from that enlarged point of view."<sup>1</sup>

1. The position in Canaan as a pilgrim and stranger was prophetic. On his arrival at Shechem, God gave the country to him, not as a personal possession, but as a grant to his posterity: "Unto thy seed will I give this land." He himself, so Stephen remarked, gained "no inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on" (Acts vii. 5). In like manner, Isaac, and after Isaac Jacob, and after Jacob the twelve patriarchs, sojourned in Canaan as in a strange country. Instead of a personal title and ownership in the land, they received each in his generation the promise given to Abraham, "to thy seed will I give this land." Accordingly Paul describes Abraham as "dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise;" not heirs of an inheritance reduced to actual possession.

2. The sojourn of the Hebrews in Egypt was first foreshown

<sup>1</sup> Kalisch on Gen. xii.

to Abraham in his journey to that kingdom, and afterwards predicted in a theophanic vision (Gen. xv. 13-16). A famine in Canaan took both him and his posterity down to Egypt. He and they alike suffered indignities at the hand of the king. Both were, in turn, enriched with cattle and silver and gold, and were sent back to the promised land by command of the reigning Pharaoh. And, further, Abraham was born in one heathen land, and became the friend of God in another. In like manner, his posterity were born in idolatrous Canaan, and became a nation in idolatrous Egypt. Abraham also went forth from Chaldæa, not knowing whither he went. At the exodus, Israel went after God "in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown" (Jer. ii. 2). Abraham, moreover, was sorely tried, often disappointed, in the unfulfilled promises. The Hebrews, seeking a better country, endured the terrors of pestilence and famine in the wilderness.<sup>1</sup>

3. Not less prophetic was the isolation of Abraham. He was separated from his country, from his kindred in Chaldæa, from Lot in Canaan, from seven out of eight of his children, and from the native peoples among whom he dwelt. By virtue of the same law of segregation, Isaac and Jacob were in turn sent into Mesopotamia to be married, lest they should take wives of the inhabitants of Canaan; and Jacob was brought back into Canaan when it became likely that he might remain permanently in Mesopotamia. When Jacob's sons were in danger of becoming absorbed by intermarriage and social intercourse with the Canaanites, a famine sent them in a body to Egypt. The unconquerable antipathy between the Egyptians and the Israelites secured the isolation of the chosen seed through the whole period of their exile. On their restoration to the chosen land, God ordered the heathen to be exterminated for their sins. He established also, among the Hebrews, a system of ordinances, civil, social, and religious, the direct purpose and effect of which were to separate his people from the aborigines. By a multitude of minute regulations in regard to food and clothing and habits of life, by an exacting ritual, by a mass of

<sup>1</sup> Kalisch on Gen. xii.

traditions, and by prejudices which amounted almost to so many diseases, these people were hedged in from all the world.

4. The Divine revelations made to Abraham pointed forward to the office of his posterity in the composition of the Holy Scriptures. The word of God was communicated to mankind, not through Egyptians, or Assyrians, or Phœnicians, or Romans, or Greeks, but through the Israelites. Unto them were committed the oracles of God. The earlier revelations were given in the Hebrew tongue, and deposited with the Jewish Church. The later revelations, although given in the Greek tongue, and put into the keeping of the Christian Church, were reduced to writing by the direct descendants of Abraham. The remarkable fact is that every inspired author, without exception, — prophet, scribe, psalmist, evangelist, and apostle, — was a direct descendant of Abraham.

5. The theophanic appearances through which God made known his will to Abraham were in some sort forerunners of the coming wonders. Jehovah appeared to Jacob, first in the vision of the ascending and descending angels, then in the form of a wrestler at the brook Jabbok; to Moses, at Horeb, in the burning bush; and to the Church in the wilderness, in the pillar of cloud and of fire, the illuminated chariot of the Almighty. Five hundred years later, two theophanies were granted to Solomon. In one of these, at the dedication of the temple, “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 the Lord” (2 Chron. v. 13, 14). In the reign of King Uzziah, the prophet Isaiah “saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple” (Isa. vi. 1). By the River Chebar the heavens were opened, and Ezekiel saw divine visions. At one time “a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it.” At another time the house of the Lord “was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of Jehovah’s glory” (Ezek. i. 4, x. 4). At Babylon the king drew near to the furnace into which he had

cast the three worshippers of God; he exclaimed, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Dan. iii. 25). Daniel, too, in a night vision, saw one like the Son of man coming to the Ancient of days, and receiving "an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. vii. 14). In the fulness of time Jesus Christ appeared, "God manifest in the flesh." At his transfiguration a cloud overshadowed them, and the voice of God came out of the cloud. At his ascension a cloud received him out of sight. Stephen, at his martyrdom, saw the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God (Acts vii. 56). Paul, at his conversion, saw the glory of Christ, and heard his voice. Finally the theophanic era, which began with Abraham at Ur, closed with John at Patmos.

6. The purchase which the patriarch made of a burial-place at Hebron, and the burial of Sarah there, were acts of faith, looking forward to the occupancy of Canaan by his descendants. His own remains were afterwards laid with hers, by the pious care of Isaac and Ishmael. At the burial of Isaac in the same sepulchre, Esau and Jacob, like Isaac and Ishmael, united in an office of affection, for the last time, perhaps, before they were separated forever (Gen. xxxv. 29). By faith, Jacob, when dying, required Joseph to bury him not in Egypt, but in Canaan. The bodies of Jacob's twelve sons, though they all died in Egypt, were removed to Shechem for burial, and Joseph himself gave similar commandment concerning his bones (Acts vii. 16; Heb. xi. 22). In due time his entire posterity were colonized in Canaan.

7. God said to Abram at first, "Thou shalt be blessed," and "thou shalt be a blessing." Afterwards God said, "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed." Both he and they were the recipients of covenant mercies, and the vehicles by which these mercies were conveyed to the nations. The Israel of God received the living oracles, together with the ordinances of sacred worship, to be theirs as personal possessions, but to be

held in trust likewise for the outlying nations. The Hebrews were to have light in their own dwellings, and were to be the source of saving light to the Gentiles. The consummate gift to the race founded by Abraham was the Messiah, his ideal seed, the glory of Israel, and the Saviour of the world.

8. Abraham was the original representative of the true believer in all time to come. The gifts and graces of the Divine life became personal in him who was the ancestor of the chosen seed. The command to him was, "I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be thou perfect." The command to all who would be saved is, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation and godliness." The spiritual relation of Abraham to the believers is set forth in the places in which he is called the "father of all them that believe;" "the father of the faithful." They who receive Christ are said to "walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham;" they "which be of faith are the children of Abraham, and are blessed with faithful Abraham."

The lines of historical progress which proceed from the Abrahamic covenant, and run through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, give us a sense of the organic unity of the sacred record. This sense is strengthened by the representative position of the patriarch. In his experience, and in the revelations made to him, are contained the germs of what follows in the history of the other patriarchs, of the twelve tribes descending from them, of the theocracy, of the kingdom of David, and of the Apostolic Church.

## CHAPTER XV.

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE.

IN the choice and call of Abraham, God purposed to raise up a people to serve him, a holy seed whom he intended to take into a covenant relation with himself. He was engaged in founding not simply a civil state, but a church; not a society resting on the unwritten law of nature as its basis, and contemplating its subjects as natural and unrenewed men, but a spiritual society, the basis of which should be the covenant of grace, and the ideal members of which should be chosen out of the mass of mankind, redeemed from the curse of the law and regenerated. Abraham was, by Divine appointment, the root out of which the chosen and peculiar people were to spring, the father of all true believers to the end of the world, and a contracting party, as the representative of his posterity, to a covenant wherein the other party represented the Triune God. By the necessity of his position, he was to become not a great statesman or warrior, but an eminent saint, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. Close attention is due, therefore, to the spiritual culture by which he was fitted for his sacred vocation. It is made certain, from the record, that he received the regeneration. He was taken out of the apostate race of Shem, and the idolatrous family of Terah; and his life of faith and holy obedience cannot be accounted for except by assuming that he was the subject of supernatural grace. Jehovah said to him, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1). What were the means which God employed to cultivate the new life in him, and to equip him for the work set before him?

To this question the first reply may be that the complete separation of Abraham from his idolatrous country and kindred, his settlement in a distant land, his isolation there from the native heathen, and his estrangement from the dissolute court of Pharaoh and from the pagan tribe of Abimelech, contributed largely to his spiritual culture. Secondly, God, having separated his chosen one from a people of unclean lips, gave him direct communication with himself through the medium of the theophanies. In them, at ten different times, the patriarch saw the King, the Lord of hosts; they were distributed through fifty years; they marked the critical periods in his career; in them God talked with him as a man with his friend, and communicated to him a body of saving knowledge. Thirdly, the methods which were employed to strengthen his faith produced the best results. The revelations made to him consisted largely in promises; and the religious affection which corresponds to a Divine promise is faith. Hence, as Delitzsch observes, "a faith which laid hold of the word of promise, and on the strength of that word gave up the visible and present for the invisible and future, was the fundamental characteristic of the patriarchs."<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten points out what was peculiar in the faith of the three oldest of the pilgrim fathers: "Abraham was a man of faith that works; Isaac, of faith that endures; Jacob, of faith that wrestles."

The historian has preserved a multitude of minute details, showing how the faith of Abraham was encouraged, how it was tried, and how encouragement and trial were mingled together in his experience.<sup>2</sup> The substance of the promises encouraged his faith. A numerous posterity, the issue of his marriage with Sarah; a fertile and beautiful country for his inheritance and that of his posterity; his personal elevation to great renown, and the assurance that God would be his God, and that he should receive life everlasting; the blessing of God bestowed on him, and through him on the whole human race in the incarnation of the Son of God in the person of one of his direct descendants, — these were the promises which God offered to

<sup>1</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, vol. i. p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> Burt: *Redemption's Dawn*.

Abraham as the rewards and incentives of his piety. Again, his faith was re-enforced from time to time by the increasing fulness of the promises. The series of revelations, which began by encouraging a childless old man to expect a posterity, proceeded from stage to stage, until they made sure to him a legitimate offspring as numerous as the sands and the stars. The initial gift to a homeless Shemite, of a home in a strange land, was matured into a good and indefeasible title, conveying to him and his natural heirs the broad region between the river of Egypt and the Euphrates. And, further, the faith which rested at first on a simple promise was afterwards invigorated by a renewal of the promise once and again; then by a covenant; then by a sacrifice offered and accepted; and, lastly, by a Divine oath. Once more, Abraham's confidence in God was made strong by the fulfilment, in his own experience, of many remarkable promises. Among these may be mentioned his immense wealth, his retinue of servants, his easy victory over the confederate kings from the east, and the supernatural deliverance of Sarah from the indignity offered by Pharaoh and Abimelech. More than all else, the assurance of a posterity, which was left indefinite in the first theophany, was gradually unfolded in the course of twenty-five years, until it terminated in the issue of a son from the person of himself and Sarah, although both were "as good as dead." The exact fulfilment of proximate engagements gave him reason to trust in what God had said respecting those better things which were exhibited from afar (Heb. xi. 13).

The faith of the patriarch was also sufficiently tried. The Jewish writers specify ten of these trials: (1) His quitting his native country; (2) his flight to Egypt from famine in Canaan; (3) the seizure of Sarah in Egypt; (4) the war for the rescue of Lot; (5) his taking Hagar to gratify Sarah; (6) his circumcision; (7) the seizure of Sarah in Gerar; (8) the expulsion of Ishmael; (9) the expulsion of Hagar; (10) the sacrifice of Isaac.<sup>1</sup> Paul mentions only four (Heb. xi. 8-17; Rom. iv. 18-21). The first was in the command to quit Ur

<sup>1</sup> Hales.



of the Chaldees, and go to a country the name and character of which he neither knew nor sought to know. Committing it all to God, he went forth; nor did he recognize Canaan as his future home until his journey of faith brought him to Shechem. For the second trial, he was required to sojourn in the land of promise as in a strange country, obtaining no permanent home, but wandering about as a pilgrim and stranger over a region which was in the undisturbed occupation of the aborigines. But so strong was his confidence in the word of God, giving the land to him and his descendants, that he buried Sarah his wife at Hebron. The promise of a son in his marriage with Sarah put his faith for the third time to the test. The obstacles to the fulfilment of the Divine promise were his own advanced age, and the age and barrenness of his wife. But his faith gained the victory. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief. He encountered his fourth and final trial, and the sharpest, at the sacrifice of Isaac. He was directed to slay his son, his only son Isaac, whom he loved; and in him also to put to death the very person through whom a great posterity was to arise. But his faith, outrunning the deductions of reason, and perhaps the progress of revelation itself, solved the problem of Isaac's body reduced to ashes, and yet living again, "accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead."

Not only did God at one time encourage the faith of his servant, and at another put his faith to the test, but he connected closely together these two elements in his spiritual discipline. (1) The joy which filled his heart when he found himself in the promised land must have been weakened by the word of God, "Unto thy seed will I give this land," signifying that he himself had no personal inheritance there. He became a wanderer, going from Shechem to Bethel, from Bethel to Egypt, from Egypt back to Hebron. But his faith was strengthened again when he saw in the land the type of a better inheritance, even a heavenly. (2) Shortly after his arrival, a famine starved him out of his new home, a disaster which might naturally awaken in him the suspicion that the land of promise was after all but

little better than a land of hunger; but his faith rose within him when he came back from Egypt "very rich in cattle and silver and gold," to a region which had recovered from the drought, and was "a land flowing with milk and honey." (3) To the pain of separation from all his kindred was added his isolation in a country filled with Canaanites; but his loneliness was relieved by communion with God in wonderful theophanies, and by the readiness of the Almighty to bear with his importunate intercessions for Sodom, the home of his unworthy but much-loved nephew. (4) In a dark day, Lot, who had separated himself from the family and had gone down to Sodom, was taken captive by banditti from the East. But the darkness was turned to light by the victory which Abraham gained over the enemy, the rescue of Lot, and the blessing pronounced upon him by Melchizedek. (5) The promise of a great posterity, which cheered his early life in Canaan, was followed by twenty-five years of bitter disappointment; but when he was a hundred years old, Isaac was born. (6) God entered into covenant with Abraham, assuring him that his seed should be like the stars in number: "Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." His rising faith was instantly tried by the warning that his seed should be in bondage four hundred years in a strange land, and should be afflicted; and yet his hopes were revived again by the assurance that they should return with great substance to Canaan. (7) The encouragement and trial of Abraham's faith went hand in hand in the joy with which he received Ishmael as the seed of promise, and with his distress when required to cast out the lad. (8) His faith rose to exultation in the birth of Isaac; gave place to distress, but not to despair, when he was commanded to slay his son; and re-acted in exultation when the lad was spared. His faith, strengthened by the victory which he gained over himself, was crowned with glory in the last and most superb of the visions in which he saw Jehovah, and heard the word of his oath. His life was full of these vibrations between hope and despondency; like the interchange of night and day, day sinking into darkness, darkness giving place to

light, night returning again, but even then only to usher in the morning of a long and perfect day.

From the regeneration granted to the patriarch, the transition is natural to the benefits of pardon and justification. These were requisite to his position as a party to the covenant of circumcision, and as the father of the faithful; since these high offices would have been dishonored if intrusted to a Chaldæan under condemnation for sin, original and actual. The record not only affirms in direct terms the fact of his righteousness before God, but it clears up every part of the intricate subject. The inquiry is fourfold. It relates to the instrumental cause of Abraham's justification, to the time when he received the benefit, to the relation between his justification and circumcision, and to the specific object apprehended by his faith.

1. Faith alone was the instrumental cause of his justification. After the slaughter of the kings, he fell into a despondency; many years had elapsed, and he yet went childless. He proposed to solve the problem by adopting as his heir the son of his steward Eliezer. Jehovah came to him in the fourth theophany, and said to him, "This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir." And he brought him forth abroad, and said, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." Then follow the memorable words: "And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." This statement gives assurance that the ground of his justification was faith, not works. It is written, not that he obeyed God, but that "he believed in the Lord." In this precise sense, Paul received the words of Moses (Rom. iv. 1-8). The three ideas are expressed by the terms "faith," "imputation," and "justification;" the first being the ground, the second the mode, the third the benefit secured. That this benefit did not rest in his good works, appears likewise from the acts of prevarication of which he was twice convicted. In both instances, he, the father of the faithful, was put to shame by heathen princes; once by

Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and again by Abimelech, a Philistine chief. To Pharaoh he persuaded Sarah to say that she was the sister of Abraham, which was, in point of fact and in the intention, a denial that she was Abraham's wife. Many years afterward, Abraham repeated the falsehood to Abimelech. Nothing but the Divine interposition saved Sarah once and again from ruin (Gen. xii. 14-20, xx. 1-18). These incidents leave a most painful impression upon the reader, whether attention be directed to Abraham's prevarication in both instances, or to his humiliation in the presence of the heathen, or to the confession that this double dealing entered into his plan of life, or to his want of self-respect, or to his cowardly failure to protect his wife's honor, or to the strange distrust of God, in this one particular, by a man who in all things else was heroic in faith. The case is completed by the fact, that this sin was first committed not long after the arrival of the chosen family in Canaan, and was repeated, with many aggravations, twenty-five years later, after he had seen seven theophanies, in two of which he entered into covenant with God. The whole narrative supports the judgment of Paul, that Abraham had nothing whereof to glory before God, and was not justified by works.

2. There is hardly room for serious doubt upon the second point, — the time when this benefit was granted to the patriarch. From the fact that nothing is said of his justification until the giving of the fourth theophany, it should not be inferred that he was, up to that time, in a state of condemnation. It is expressly stated by Moses, that he obeyed God in the original call: Stephen confirms this statement, and Paul maintains that this primal act of obedience sprang from his faith (Heb. xi. 8). It is not to be supposed, that his justification lingered fifteen years behind his entrance on the new life: faith, holy obedience, and justification are inseparable. Abraham, therefore, was accepted as righteous in the sight of God, when he first believed; although the Divine declaration of that acceptance, instead of being recorded in the order of its occurrence, was reserved for another chapter in the history. "We are not here told," so Calvin remarks, "when Abraham first began to be

justified, or to believe in God; but in this one place it is declared, or related, how he had been justified through his whole life.”<sup>1</sup>

3. The relation in the order of time, between his justification and circumcision, is not an open question. The narrative makes it certain that he was declared to be just in the fourth theophany, and the sacrament of circumcision was first given to him in the theophany next succeeding (Gen. xv. 6, xvii. 24). And, on supposition that he received justification as early in life as his arrival in Canaan, he was a just man twenty-four years before he was circumcised (Gen. xii. 4, xvii. 24). The conclusions which Paul draws from this circumstance are substantially these: Circumcision was neither the ground, nor the condition even, of Abraham's acceptance with God; circumcision and justification are not tied together; the former was not the procuring cause, but the seal simply of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised; unbelieving Jews, though circumcised, are under condemnation; the believing Gentiles, though not circumcised, are just before God; and Abraham is the spiritual father, not of the circumcised peoples, but of them that believe, whether they be Jews, with the sacramental sign in the flesh, or Gentiles without it. These are weighty truths, fundamental to the doctrines of the sacraments, of the covenants sealed by them, and of the salvation set forth in them all. They furnish incontestable proofs that the sacraments have no inherent power to save, nor are they inseparable conditions of the work of grace (Rom. iv. 9-12).

4. It is more difficult to determine the precise object laid hold of by the faith of the patriarch. It is written, that when Jehovah assured him that his legitimate offspring should be as the stars in number, Abraham “believed in the Lord” (Gen. xv. 6). From this statement it might be inferred that the precise object on which his faith terminated was not the righteousness of Christ, but the promise of an immense posterity; or, as some would say, the posterity itself. Nor is the difficulty explained by the use which Paul makes of this incident. He

<sup>1</sup> Calvin on Genesis xv. 6.

remarks that the patriarch "against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. . . . And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 18-22). What was imputed to him for righteousness? Faith in Christ, or faith in the promise that he should be the father of many nations? Some writers teach that the patriarch's faith was, in its nature, saving faith, irrespective of its specific object; and that Abraham's faith was counted or regarded as, in and by itself, an equivalent to a perfect obedience to the law. But this explanation confounds the instrument of justification, which is faith, with the meritorious ground thereof, which is the righteousness of Christ. It has been held, also, that faith is simply confidence in God, and that God accepted Abraham for his inward piety, and for the elevated principles by which his life was governed. But justification on the ground of piety or goodness of any kind is at variance with the gospel way of salvation. Other writers hold that Abraham's faith was evangelical in its vital principle, and therefore saving, although the righteousness of Christ was not its specific object; in other words, his heart was prepared to receive the gospel whenever the gospel should be disclosed to him. "His faith was nothing more," says Professor Fairbairn, "nothing less, than the renunciation of all virtue and strength in himself, and a hanging in childlike trust upon God for what he was able and willing to do. . . . Transfer such a faith to the field of the New Testament, bring it into contact with the manifestation of God in the person and work of Christ for the salvation of the world, and what could or would be its language but that of the apostle?—'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;' 'not my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is of God through faith.'"<sup>1</sup> The better opinion, however, appears to be, that Abraham not only embraced the promise making sure unto him a great posterity, but he foresaw, also, that out of the bosom of his posterity the Redeemer should come forth; and his faith laid hold of the

<sup>1</sup> Fairbairn's *Typology* vol. i. p. 135.

righteousness of that Coming One as the meritorious ground of his own acceptance with God. Let it be considered, that God had already assured the patriarch that in his seed all nations should be blessed (Gen. xii. 3); next, the seed here promised was Christ (Gal. iii. 16); further, Abraham saw Christ's day, and was glad (John viii. 56); and, once more, the promise that he should be the father of many nations included the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, whereof Christ crucified was the foundation. To these considerations three others may be added. First, faith in the Divine veracity, although a grace, is not, strictly speaking, justifying faith, because this last takes its character from its peculiar object, which is none other than the mediation and merits of the Lord Jesus. "It seems to be absurd," as Calvin suggests, "that Abraham should be justified by believing that his seed would be as numerous as the stars of heaven, for this could be nothing but a particular faith, which could by no means suffice for the complete righteousness of man."<sup>1</sup> Next, Paul, in the fourth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, and the third chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians, shows that we are justified in the same way in which Abraham was justified; that, as he was justified by faith, so are we. But it is certain that we are justified by faith in Christ as a personal Saviour; from that, it follows that faith in Christ was specifically the faith by which Abraham was justified. Paul also taught that Abraham is the spiritual father of all true believers; and the ground of his fatherhood is their participation with him in a common way of salvation. But if Abraham's faith terminated on the promise of a numerous posterity, and the faith of believers in these last days terminates on another object altogether, even on the righteousness of Christ, how can it be rightly said that they "walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham"? Finally, the intimate persuasion of the Church from the beginning is worth considering; and that persuasion is, that while the faith of the Old-Testament saints was prospective, and that of the New-Testament saints is retrospective, the hearts of all holy men,

<sup>1</sup> Calvin on Rom. xv. 6.

from the very beginning, have turned towards the cross. Faith was then, as it is now, Christocentric.

In order to the formation of a just estimate of Abraham's character, it is necessary to take under reflection all the influences, both the evil and the good, by which it was moulded. On the one hand, it is to be considered that he received his birth and early training in an idolatrous family, that, during the forming period of his life, he was exposed to the contamination of Chaldæan immorality, and that, until he was nearly seventy years old, he had no other knowledge of God than what was common to his countrymen. On the other hand, it is to be remembered that he received the gift of the Holy Spirit, and that, for the period of fifty years, he was the subject of special means of grace, including specific revelations, Divine covenants and promises, special providences, and many trials which both strained and strengthened his faith.

The narrative points out the results of these opposite influences on his character. Duplicity was one of the characteristics of the race in the bosom of which this man was born and educated; and the infirmity which these unhappy associations entailed on the patriarch betrayed itself in his intercourse with Pharaoh and Abimelech. Such was he by the force of evil example. What was he by the grace of God? His altars at Shechem, at Bethel, and in the land of Moriah, were the monuments of the pure worship which he offered to God in the midst of idolatrous tribes. He proved his generosity and disinterestedness by the choice which he gave to Lot of all the land for a dwelling-place. He revealed his intrepidity by his campaign against the five confederate kings, in which, at the head of his trusty servants, he fell upon the retreating brigands, rescued Lot from their hands, recovered the prisoners and the booty they had seized, put them to an ignominious flight, and chased them to the country beyond Damascus.

On his return from this expedition, two princes of Canaan came out to salute him as the deliverer of their people. These were the pious king of Salem and the heathen king of Sodom. In the presence of Melchizedek, Abraham, though by Divine



right the lord of the whole land, laid aside his authority, gracefully accepted for himself and his exhausted warriors the bread and wine furnished by the king, and then modestly assumed the attitude of the less to the greater. The soldier bowed with reverence before the sacred person of the priest. Salem was a little city of Canaan, yet the most illustrious ancestor of Christ acknowledged his inferiority to its sheik; for that petty prince held an order, both sacerdotal and regal, after which Christ was made a priest forever. The heir of the world laid at the feet of this royal priest a tenth part of his hard-earned spoils; at once acknowledging the right of Jehovah, in whose strength he had conquered, to all that he had won in battle, and the right of the priest, as the representative of Jehovah in sacred things, to a tithe of all. "Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils." Then, also, he whom God had called to be a blessing to all the families of the earth, received a blessing from one who, though a Canaanite, was better than himself. For, "without any dispute, the less is blessed of the better" (Heb. vii. 7). But the patriarch, who was so modest and respectful in the presence of the king of Salem, became another man in the presence of the king of Sodom. The laws of war required Abraham to restore his recaptured prisoners to their several tribes, but allowed him, also, to retain the goods and cattle which he had recovered from the enemy. The sheik of Sodom, with an affectation of generosity, offered to give what he had neither the right nor power to withhold, saying to Abraham, "Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself." The patriarch, maintaining his personal dignity, refused to appropriate to himself the smallest portion even of the spoils. The cattle which his warriors had eaten on the march he would not pay for; the booty that his allies had taken was theirs by the right of recapture. As for himself, he called God to witness that he would not take a thread, not even a shoe-string, lest any should say that the king of accursed and impious Sodom had made rich the friend of God. His gentle courtesy to the three men who came to the door of his tent is described

with inimitable grace by the sacred writer, and the incident is universally accepted as one of the finest instances on record of genuine hospitality. Even the inspired apostle takes from it his beautiful aphorism, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. xiii. 2). At the destruction of Sodom this man, in order to save the city, approached Jehovah in a series of entreaties, wherein were united a true compassion for the guilty, and a godly jealousy for the Divine honor, — sentiments apparently incompatible, but reconciled in the pathetic intercessions of the humane and holy patriarch.

Nor is any thing in this part of sacred history more noteworthy than the sustained delicacy and self-respect with which he conducted his negotiation for a family burying-ground. Sarah died at Hebron. Abraham came thither to mourn for his wife, and to weep for her. In due time he stood up from before his dead, and asked the people of the land for a place of burial. They offered him the choice of all their sepulchres. Abraham bowed himself in courteous acknowledgment of their generosity, but entreated them to obtain, at its full value in money, the cave of Machpelah for his separate use. Ephron, the owner of the property, begged him to accept of the cave and the adjacent field as a gift. This was, perhaps, an act of pure liberality; perhaps it was an Oriental device to drive a better bargain, or to secure a princely gift in return. But Abraham met the proposal with perfect dignity, and insisted on paying the owner a fair price for the cave and the field. The purchase was made; the price was fixed by Ephron himself, and Abraham weighed to him the silver which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, — four hundred shekels current money with the merchant. And there Abraham buried Sarah his wife.

But the crowning virtue of the patriarch was his faith. By faith he went into exile at the command of God; "by faith he considered Canaan his own, although occupied by many and mighty nations;" by faith he endured, through fifty years, many heavy trials, and grew strong as he bore along towards

his grave the increasing burden, until at last this faith became consummate at the altar on which he offered Isaac, his son, in sacrifice to God. In all these things, and in all the incidents of his life, two only excepted, he proved himself equal to every occasion, — generous, brave, modest, hospitable, devout, and holy. His single infirmity stood apart from his general character: it was in itself inexcusable, but it did not wither his inborn virtue or implanted graces. He returned from Egypt and from Gerar with a spot upon the fringe of his garment: unsullied purity was spread all over the folds of the woven robe itself. Such was the man whom God was pleased to make the heir of the world. If he be judged by the standard of the Christian profession, he was a most eminent saint; if by the standard of his own age, he was a wonderful example of nearly every excellency possible to man.

The way is now open for an exposition of the Abrahamic covenant, — its promises, heirs, seals, and perpetuity; its relation to the covenant of grace, and the visible society established by virtue of its provisions. We shall be helped in our inquiries, if, on examination of the ten theophanies granted to Abraham, we recognize the intimate relation existing between the provisions of the covenant, as they are set forth in three of the theophanies, and the promises given in the seven other theophanies. The covenant was begun in the fourth theophany (Gen. xv.), was extended in the fifth (chap. xvii.), and completed in the tenth (chap. xxii.). Now, the significant fact is, that the promises which were put into the formal covenant, and made part thereof, are nearly identical with the promises contained in the seven other theophanic revelations. (1) In the first theophany, granted at Ur of the Chaldees, God said to Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation" (Gen. xii. 2); in the third theophany the words were, "I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth" (xiii. 16). This precise promise is incorporated in the formal covenant in its three stages. In the first stage we have: "Tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; so shall thy seed be" (xv. 5). In the second stage: "Thy name shall be Abraham, for a father of many nations

have I made thee" (xvii. 5). In the third stage, "the sand of the seashore" is added to the stars of heaven: "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and the sand which is upon the seashore" (xxii. 17). (2) The land of Canaan was promised in the second theophany, and then in the third (xii. 7, xiii. 17). This benefit was carefully secured in each of the three stages of the covenant (xv. 16, xvii. 8, xxii. 17). (3) In the second and third theophanies, Abraham's posterity are made joint heirs with him in the land of Canaan: "Unto thy seed will I give this land" (xii. 7). "All the land that thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever" (xiii. 15). Turning again to the covenant, we perceive that this gift is made one of its prominent provisions: "In the fourth generation they shall come hither again" (xv. 16). "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations; . . . and I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession" (xvii. 7, 8). "And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies" (xxii. 17). (4) In the first theophany, God engaged to bless Abraham. This engagement, also, was put into the body of the covenant, and enlarged so as to embrace his posterity (xvii. 7, xxii. 17). (5) The noblest and richest blessing of all was given to Abraham when he was in Ur of the Chaldees: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii. 3). In the theophany of Jehovah and the two angels, this gracious promise is reiterated by the Lord himself: "All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him," Abraham (xviii. 18). Now, this promise also appears as an integral element of the covenant in the final stage: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (xxii. 18). Long afterwards Peter, speaking as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, declared that this promise was part and parcel of the Abrahamic covenant (Acts iii. 25). Of what has been here declared, this is the sum: The five leading articles of God's covenant with Abraham guarantee to him an immense posterity; the land of Canaan; the joint heirship in the land of Canaan of himself and of his offspring; the Divine blessing on him and them; and salvation conveyed

through him to all the world. Now, all these benefactions appear in one and another of the theophanies, and are exalted to the rank of covenant promises in the three covenant engagements. The ten revelations are bound together in one coherent, eternal covenant, between God and the father of the faithful; and all who believe in Christ may take Peter at his word: "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our father."

The general events which are interspersed in the record, along with the covenant and the theophanies, do not disturb the unity. Indeed, one and another of the covenant-promises explain, or are explained by, the separation of Lot, the slaughter of the kings, the benediction granted by Melchizedek, the marriage with Hagar, the birth and exile of Ishmael, the intercession of Abraham for the cities of the plain, and their overthrow, together with the purchase of Machpelah, and the burial there of Sarah and Abraham. In what is to follow, therefore, the entire contents of the ten theophanic revelations will be treated as the pre-intimations or recapitulations of the one Abrahamic covenant, with which they are indissolubly connected. All the commands and promises will be treated as integral parts of the covenant, or explanations thereof.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE PROMISED LAND.

SOME of the leading promises of the covenant relate to the chosen land; other promises relate to the chosen seed. The covenant, in its first stage, deals chiefly with the inheritance; in the second, with the heirs of the blessing; although in each stage, the main benefit secured by the other is distinctly pointed out.

In regard to the chosen land, it is to be observed that Abraham was not required to quit his native city and go to a region of his own selection. Jehovah, having chosen for himself a particular family, reserved also to himself the designation of the country which should be its future home. There is reason to believe that this designation was made by the Almighty not later than the dispersion of mankind at the Tower of Babel. In the prophecy of Noah, the weight of the curse which became the portion of Ham was laid on his son Canaan. At the dispersion, Ham's posterity, at that time expanded into eleven families, took possession of the country which afterwards bore the dishonored name of their ancestor, and was called the land of Canaan. When Abraham, three hundred years later, came to Shechem, "the Canaanite was then in the land" (Gen. xii. 6). That race is identified in the record with the emigrants from Shinar (Gen. x. 15-18, xv. 21; 1 Chron. i. 13-16). Noah had declared that Canaan should be the servant of Shem, and Abram was a Shemite.

The Canaanites were providentially appointed, unconsciously to themselves, to serve Abraham and his seed by holding their country in trust for the use of his posterity. The trust ran

through about eight hundred years, from the dispersion at Babel to the conquest by Joshua. For this purpose, it was essential that no great nation should be established within its boundaries. Egypt on the south-west, and Assyria towards the east, were settled simultaneously with the future Palestine, and settled also by the posterity of Canaan's kindred. Egypt and Assyria became powerful and populous, and the seats of splendid material civilizations. Canaan was held by the native tribes as a simple pasture-ground. The land was scarcely less fertile, and as the home of a great and warlike population was not less inviting, than the banks of the Nile and the Euphrates. In after ages, the kingdom of David arose on its soil to dispute, in wealth and power, the position of all the old-world empires. Until Abraham and Joshua came, Canaan resembled New England and Virginia before the era of Plymouth and Jamestown, waiting for the coming of the white man. Now, if Canaan had antedated its brilliant future, and had, shortly after its first settlement, become a wealthy and populous nation, in that case the task set before Joshua would have been not less formidable than would have been the enslavement of the Egyptians by Moses, or the conquest of Assyria by Abraham. And yet, on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that the country was defended from the greed of both Egypt and Assyria. Before the arrival of Abram, the allied kings of the Euphrates had marched on the valley of the lower Jordan, and reduced the sheiks and cities there to vassalage. On a second raid, the marauders were utterly routed by Abram in what is known as "the slaughter of the kings." From that time forth, so far as can be ascertained, the Canaanites were never molested, but held the land in quiet possession for the Hebrews.

Under the plan of Providence in regard to the promised land, the Canaanites were not sufficiently advanced in civilization to form their separate families into a union for common defence. Their government was tribal, not national. In this respect they resembled the American Indians of modern times, who have never been able to combine their scattered tribes into a single nationality. Instead of massing their forces in a war

with the white race, they have wasted their strength in fighting one another, or in risking every thing on single-handed struggles with a compact government and a disciplined soldiery. In like manner, when the hosts of Israel crossed the Jordan, they gained easy victories over the disjointed tribes of the Canaanites, routing them in detail. It is easy to discover the plan of Providence in giving to the country a population strong enough to hold the ground against foreign tribes, but too weak to resist the Hebrew forces led by Joshua. This was the home so early selected, so safely kept, which Providence had provided for the chosen seed.

The process by which the inheritance was transferred, and made sure to the heirs of the blessing, is precisely set forth in the record. At the Divine command, Abram left his native Chaldæa, and went to another and unknown country. On his arrival at Shechem, Jehovah said to him, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." Abram immediately took possession of the domain in the name of the Almighty. In token thereof he built an altar unto the Lord, even as the explorer in modern times takes possession of a newly discovered region in the name of his sovereign, and as a monument of title sets up a column or a crucifix, or plants a flag upon the soil. The extent of the inheritance was indicated to Abram by the gift of all the territory that he could see from the heights of Bethel, and in a thorough exploration of the country.

In the first stage of the covenant, God pointed out the boundaries of the great estate, and that in two forms: the geographical, extending from the valley of the Nile to the valley of the Euphrates; and the tribal, describing by name the native tribes at that time in possession (Gen. xv. 18-21). In the second stage of the covenant, the gift was secured to Abram for "an everlasting possession." The royal charters of modern times, by which outlying provinces are conveyed to colonies or individuals, are not more explicit. Abram took his title directly from the Almighty; he held of the crown. The estate was vested in him and in his posterity forever. The metes and bounds were fixed. The land claims of the native tribes were,



in due time, declared to be subject to forfeiture. Proof of title was set out in a covenant between Jehovah, the party making, and Abraham, the party taking, the gift. A clause declaring the grant perpetual was inserted. To make it all sure, the agreement was sealed by both the parties; the Almighty appointing for that purpose the sign of circumcision, and Abraham putting the sign in his flesh. It was further stipulated that the same mark should be put upon his heirs male of every generation, showing that the estate was theirs by a direct inheritance, and for an inalienable possession. And to finish the transaction, a recital of all the facts and circumstances, together with a copy of the covenants, and a description of the seal, was, in due time, recorded on the pages of an inspired volume, and published to the world. From the pains taken in this transaction, it may be inferred that, in all ages, the chosen seed found in the chosen land a home precisely adapted to the destiny set before them.

One of God's purposes respecting the Hebrews was that they should dwell apart from all other races for long ages, and then be established in the highway of the nations. This purpose looked to the gradual preparation of Christianity for the world, and then, at the set time, for its universal diffusion. The isolation of Canaan, down to the schism of the ten tribes, was complete. It was, in a certain sense, an island on the edge of a continent. On the north arose the ramparts of Lebanon, and its redoubts were protected by the deep gorges of the river Litany, serving the purpose of the ditch in the plan of a modern fortress. On the east and south, inhospitable deserts, at that time rarely traversed by caravans, spread themselves away towards the Euphrates and the Nile; and the sea, never yet traversed by fleets, shut off the land from the regions of the West. Moreover, the position of Canaan, relative to the domains of other nations, contributed much to its seclusion. Egypt was far removed towards the south-west; the warlike tribes of the east were encamped on the distant Euphrates; Asia Minor, and Europe with its adjacent islands, were thickly peopled by barbarians. Britain was not discovered before the

days of Moses; Greece was but sparsely settled until the reign of David, and Rome was not founded until David had been dead two hundred and fifty years. Through all these periods the Hebrews dwelt alone in their home, and Jehovah was laying in the midst of them the foundations of his kingdom.

When Palestine had fulfilled its prescribed mission, and all things were ready for the ingathering of the Gentiles, the chosen land, instead of being an isolated region, had become central to all nations. Before the advent of Christ, flourishing and powerful kingdoms had risen in Lesser Asia, in Syria, on the Tigris and Euphrates, in the Peloponnesus, on the Tiber and the Nile, and on the shores of the Persian Gulf. Palestine was surrounded by the capitals of these kingdoms. It pushed itself out into the Mediterranean, holding the outposts of Asia, and fronting the coasts of populous Africa and Europe. The sea and the deserts were now no longer the barriers, but the thoroughfares of commerce and of war. Moreover, sixty-three years before Christ, Jerusalem was taken by Pompey, and Palestine became a part of the Roman Empire. In the age of the Antonines, Jerusalem became the eastern termination of a great road, which, according to Mr. Gibbon, issued from the Forum of Rome, and pervaded the provinces. This chain of communication was drawn out three thousand seven hundred and forty English miles from the north-west to the south-east point of the empire. It united Jerusalem by land and by navigable waters to Tyre, Antioch, Tarsus, Ancyra, Byzantium, Brundisium, Rome, Milan, Lyons, Rheims, Sandwich, London, and York, — a highway for the gospel, traversing every quarter of the known world. The Plain of Esdraelon was the natural route, to and fro, for the armies of the east and the west, — Assyria marching on Egypt, Egypt marching on Assyria, and Rome on the Parthians. As Mr. Stanley remarks: "Palestine became the high bridge over which the nations ascended and descended into the deep basins of the Nile and the Euphrates." While seclusion was needful in order that redemption might be prepared, the Holy Land was the most secluded spot on the inhabited globe. When publicity became necessary, in order

that the story of the gospel might be spread among all nations, the Holy Land became the *umbilicus terrarum*, the common centre around which the cities and empires of the three continents were gathered, waiting for the coming salvation. By the combination of these two opposite conditions, isolation and publicity, — the first in the earlier, the last in the later ages, — the words of both Balaam and Ezekiel were fulfilled to the letter. In the days of Joshua, Balaam said, “Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be numbered among the nations” (Num. xxiii. 9). A thousand years afterward, Ezekiel wrote, “Thus saith the Lord God: This is Jerusalem, I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her” (Ezek. v. 5).

Secondly, Canaan was well adapted, by its soil, climate, and productions, to the purposes for which it was intended. God himself described its fertility to Moses: “a good land, flowing with milk and honey.” Moses described it to the Hebrews as “a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and pomegranates; a land of olive-oil, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass” (Deut. viii. 7–9). The effect of these direct statements is heightened by contrasts with Egypt, whence the people had come. Egypt was a dry and dreary land; Canaan was a land of hills and valleys. Rain rarely fell in Egypt; the soil was watered by the Nile, or by the foot driving the pumping-wheels, like the treadmills which are still in use. In Canaan the earth drank the rain from heaven; both the former rain, falling in the autumn, the time of sowing, and the latter rain falling in the spring, when the wheat and barley were growing towards the harvest. And, further, Jehovah had taken Canaan under his special care; his eye was always upon it; to him the people should always look, and on him, as their first duty, they ought always to depend (Deut. xi. 10–12).

The productiveness of the soil may be measured, also, by the

immense population which it supported. The area of territory occupied by the kingdom of David is estimated by some at twelve thousand five hundred, and by others at eleven thousand square miles. According to the census taken by David, there were in his kingdom from one million three hundred thousand, to one million five hundred thousand men capable of bearing arms (2 Sam. xxiv. 9). If a population be reckoned at four times the number of its fighting men, there were at that time between five and six millions of inhabitants in the country, — or about four hundred to the square mile.<sup>1</sup>

Still further, the present aspect of the country, denuded and depopulated though it be, exhibits marked indications of former prosperity and populousness. Traces of ancient cultivation are visible on every available spot in the plains and mountains. "Above all other countries in the world it is a *land of ruins*." "In Judæa it is hardly an exaggeration to say, that whilst for miles and miles there is no appearance of present life or habitation, except the occasional goat-herd on the hillside or gathering of women at the wells, there is hardly a hilltop of the many within sight which is not covered by the vestiges of some fortress or city of former ages." "In Eastern Palestine, the ancient cities remain in like manner deserted, ruined, but standing: not mere masses and heaps of stone, but towns and houses, in a state of preservation which has no parallel except in the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii."<sup>2</sup> These countless ruins testify directly to the former populousness of Palestine, and indirectly to the productiveness of the soil which supported the Hebrews. The fertility of Canaan attracted the attention of the ancient Egyptians. One of them speaks, even before Abraham's day, of the cornfields, figs, vineyards, and fortresses of Canaan. Another of later date, but still earlier than the patriarchs, speaks of it as "abounding in wine more than in water;" "of the plenteousness of the honey and the palm;" adding that "all its trees were fruit-bearing, and that it yielded barley and wheat, and had no end of cattle."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Keil and Delitzsch: 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.      <sup>2</sup> Stanley: *Sin. and Pal.*, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> Geikie: *Hours, etc.*, vol. i. p. 347.

The conditions of physical geography, which remain unchanged from age to age, point to the same conclusions. Dr. Robinson says that the climate of Palestine resembles that of Northern Africa and the Gulf States of America. Nowhere is the sunlight brighter, or the atmosphere more transparent, or the air more bracing. Considering the smallness of the territory, no country on earth presents so many physical diversities. In shape and size, Palestine resembles the State of New Hampshire; and yet, within that narrow compass are held divers climates, — temperate in the region of Lebanon, semi-tropical in the valley of the Jordan, and wintry on the snowy summit of Hermon. The Holy Land has been described as the “epitome of the habitable world.”<sup>1</sup> Its varied aspects easily supplied the sacred writers with a wealth of illustration, and happy turns of thought, in striking contrast with the poverty of expression so conspicuous in the sacred books of India, China, and Arabia. From this remarkable microcosm proceeded a book for all lands. The Moravian missionaries in Greenland, in Jamaica, in South Africa, and Thibet, may find in the Psalms of David imagery for their songs of praise, descriptive of the scenery around themselves. So varied were the resources of the Holy Land, that they gave effect to the severity as well as the goodness of God.

The sacred writers, as late as Ezekiel, took delight in calling their country “a land flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands.” But they did not fail to recognize the instruments of punishment for the guilt of sin, and of chastisement for purification from sin, lurking in their native soil and climate. A famine drove Abram, and afterwards Jacob in his old age, into Egypt. The hot breath from the desert consumed the strength of the people. In the reign of David, a pestilence killed seventy thousand men in a single day, — a destruction of life, in so short a time, unknown elsewhere in the world. There were earthquakes in divers places. Swarms of locusts darkened the sun in their flight, and fell to the earth, devouring every green thing (Joel, chaps. i. and ii.). God himself

<sup>1</sup> Geikie: Hours, etc., vol. i. p. 347.

reminded the people that he had sent "cleanness of teeth" into their dwellings; that blasting and mildew and the palmer-worm had followed the famine; the plague from Egypt had followed the blasting, mildew, and palmer-worm; and the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, visited on some of them, had followed the plagues. So closely were they besieged by these destroyers, that, running away from one, they would run in upon another: "as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him" (Amos iv., v. 19).

The blessings and the curses of God upon the Promised Land were closely associated. Not only so, but the rabbins themselves clearly perceived that Canaan was adapted to both. The judgments of God upon the people took the form of the calamities which were natural to the country. In a certain sense, the mildew, the locust, and the pestilence were, like the leprosy, native born. It may not be proper to say that they were indigenous to the climate, like the corn, olive, and vine, because their occurrence was occasional only, not regulated by the course of the seasons. The use which the Almighty made of one or other of these inflictions for the purposes of chastisement, revealed his supreme dominion over all the elements and forces of nature, as well as his anger against sin, and his intention to purify his chosen people through suffering.

This train of thought enables us to explain the present denuded and depopulated condition of the Holy Land. From the day when the Lord was crucified, the curse which his murderers invoked on themselves and on their children has rested also on their native soil. After the fall of Jerusalem, the country was for many hundred years the battle-ground of the neighboring empires. At the Mohammedan conquest, in the seventh century, Palestine became a province of the Empire of the Caliphs. On the dissolution of the empire, the unhappy country was for five centuries laid waste by the Fatimites, the Seljookian Turks, the Crusaders, the Mamelukes of Egypt, and the hordes of Tartary, until in A.D. 1517 it fell into the hands of Selim, and became a part of the Ottoman

Empire, and so continues until this day. The Turk, by perpetual misrule, military conscription, forced labor; by the greed of the Sultan and the corruption of his pachas, aided by leprosy and the plagues, — has almost destroyed whatever of industry and thrift had survived the wars of the previous six hundred years. The terraces which once girdled the hills, and were clothed with the blush of flowers and with the vine, have been broken down, and the mould washed away, denuding long sheets of limestone rocks. Shade-trees and the forests have been destroyed, exposing the soil to the scorching Syrian sun. Malaria poisons the sweet air, and the holy and beautiful land is a perpetual desolation. And yet, in the midst of barrenness and poverty, vestiges of its former beauty and fertility remain, sufficient to justify the sacred writers in their frequent repetition of the assurance that Canaan was a land flowing with milk and honey, and was the glory of all lands. The irrepressible vigor with which nature asserts itself in the midst of desolation is set forth by Dr. Edward Robinson. He describes flourishing vineyards spreading over Lebanon and around the cities; gardens of fig-trees and pomegranates; the orange and lemon groves on the coast; and elsewhere the various fruits and vegetables, common some of them to the temperate and others to the semi-tropical latitudes of our own continent.<sup>1</sup> Other authorities speak of “oak forests still on Bashan; the evergreen shrubberies on Carmel; the rich pastures on Sharon, Moab, and Gilead; and the full blush of spring flowers all over the land.”<sup>2</sup> Dean Stanley draws a charming picture: “In the spring the hills and valleys are covered with thin grass, and the aromatic shrubs which clothe more or less the whole of Syria and Arabia. But they also glow with what is peculiar to Palestine, a profusion of wild daisies, the white flower called the Star of Bethlehem, but especially with a blaze of scarlet flowers of all kinds, chiefly anemones, wild tulips, and poppies.”<sup>3</sup> But it must be added, these spring flowers, with all

<sup>1</sup> Robinson : *Geog.*, pp. 379, 380.

<sup>2</sup> McClintock and Strong : *Encyc.*, vii. p. 773.

<sup>3</sup> Stanley's *Palestine*, pp. 137, 138.

their glory, wither and vanish before the first fierce rays of the summer sun; "to-day in the field, to-morrow cast into the oven."

We shall miss sight of the supreme blessings conveyed in the gift of Canaan if we limit them to the earthly inheritance of Abraham and his posterity, after the analogy of the new home made on this continent by the settlers of Jamestown and Plymouth. By the discoveries made to his faith, the patriarch looked beyond the temporal and the transient, to the eternal and the immutable. He perceived that Canaan was the symbol of a better land, even as the nation was the symbol of a spiritual kingdom; and the temporal, of an eternal inheritance. Paul to the Hebrews, chap. xi., shows that a heavenly country as well as the earthly was intended by the gift of the promised land, and that Abraham understood the supreme value of the gift.

1. Paul begins his exposition with the act of faith whereby Abram, at the command of God, left his own country, and went to another, the name and geography of which were unknown to him. 2. By another act of faith he was contented to "sojourn" in that country, not attempting to settle his family in any permanent home. He never forgot that he was living in a strange land. For the most of his life he dwelt in movable tents. He fed his flocks on the pastures which were free to all shepherds, through the period of more than a hundred years; but when he was an old man he did not own, nor had he sought to own, a foot of the soil, except a place of burial. But from the curtains of his tent he looked forward and upward to a permanent and eternal home, to a city resting on foundations, fashioned and built by the Almighty. 3. Abram's manner of life was followed by Isaac and Jacob: pilgrims always, and homeless. But they all died in faith, not having obtained actual possession of the inheritance. Instead thereof, they saw from afar the gift of a numerous posterity; the gift of the earthly Canaan to their remote descendants; the consummate gift to themselves of a heavenly inheritance. They were persuaded of the reality of the promises; they



embraced them; and in the joy set before them, they confessed that Canaan was not their home. Nor was their ancestral Mesopotamia their home. When they might have had opportunity to return, they refused to go; for they looked for a better country, even a heavenly. 4. We are plainly taught, that, while Abraham was happy in the goodly land of Canaan, he desired the heavenly country, and he interpreted the covenant as at once a revelation and a conveyance to him of that other country (Heb. xi. 16). It is right to imagine that Abraham in one of his journeys visited the heights of Gilead. There he beheld a view which Horsely Palmer declared to be the "finest he had ever seen in any part of the world."<sup>1</sup> Lebanon, Carmel, the Plain of Esdraelon, together with the bright waters of the Sea of Galilee and of the Mediterranean, graven themselves upon the picture. A greater joy, a broader splendor, were in reserve for him. By faith he was carried to a summit higher than Gilead. There the firmament was lifted up, the horizon was expanded, and the skies were flooded with a light above the brightness of the sun. His eyes were opened upon a vast illuminated sphere embracing "the heavenly inheritance, the heavenly rest, the heavenly city," the promised land indeed.

<sup>1</sup> Stanley: Palestine, p. 315.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE PROMISED SEED.

FROM time to time God said to Abraham: "Unto thy seed will I give this land." "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore." "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." "Of the son" (Ishmael) "of the bondwoman" (Hagar), "will I make a nation, because he is thy seed." The leading word here is "seed." It is applied to Abraham's posterity in four different significations: describing his legitimate offspring through Isaac and Jacob; his disinherited posterity through Hagar, Keturah, and Esau; his Divine seed, the Lord Jesus Christ; and his spiritual children among both Jews and Gentiles.

1. Isaac, Jacob, the twelve patriarchs, and their lineal descendants to this day, constitute the legitimate seed of Abraham. These are the people of whom is told the story of the monarchy, the captivity, and the dispersion. To them were given the legislation of Sinai, the land of Canaan, the tabernacle, priesthood, ritual, and holy seasons, together with the assurance of a Messiah. They were the seed of Abraham in a sense which excluded all the sons of Hagar and Keturah. Paul made a distinction between the natural descendants of the patriarchs, and the select portion of them whom he calls the "children:" "Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children; but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Rom. ix. 7; Gen. xxi. 12).

2. The offspring of Abraham, in his marriages with Hagar and Keturah, and his grandson Esau, became the progenitors of

disinherited races. Upon the peculiar blessings which God pronounced on Ishmael, he imposed this limitation: “But my covenant will I establish with Isaac” (Gen. xvii. 21). To the same effect God said to Sarah, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called” (xxi. 12). By the Divine command, Ishmael was banished for life from the land of Canaan, and “he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran” (xxi. 21). In his marriage with Keturah, Abraham had six sons. Before the patriarch died he gave them presents, and sent them into Arabia. He bequeathed his entire inheritance to Isaac. Isaac at his father’s death, and Jacob at Isaac’s death, became the sole representatives of the promised land, with reversion to their posterity. Abraham, therefore, had a seed and again a seed; one, a legitimate seed, the heirs of Canaan; the other a seed after the flesh, who had no inheritance whatever in their native land.

3. The Lord Jesus is, in the supreme sense of the term, the seed of Abraham. Paul’s explanation is: “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Gal. iii. 16). Paul is charged with having endeavored to support his argument by a verbal quibble on the words “seed” and “seeds.” And yet, in point of fact, he sets forth here two distinct declarations, in both of which he interprets accurately the Divine word. First, Jesus Christ is a direct descendant of Abraham, through Isaac, Jacob, and Judah. This declaration is supported by the genealogical registers set out at large by Matthew and Luke. In the second place, Paul declares that there is but one Saviour of sinners, and that is Christ. On the one hand, the term “seed of Abraham” is sometimes used collectively to describe the children of God, e.g., “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. iii. 29). On the other hand, the word “seed” in the singular number, never “seeds” in the plural, is employed when the posterity of the three patriarchs is spoken of as the efficient agent of salvation. God said to Abraham at the altar of Isaac: “In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. xxii. 18). To Isaac at Gerar,

he spoke similar words (xxvi. 4); and, again, to Jacob at Bethel (xxviii. 14). Now in Gal. iii. 16, Paul takes up this reiterated promise, and declares that the word "seed" used therein points distinctly to Christ; and that the word is not "seeds," as if there were many, but "seed," only one, — in the singular number. That is to say, men are redeemed, not by the posterity of Abraham collectively, nor by a commission, select and holy, taken out of Abraham's descendants; they are redeemed by one, a single one, of his offspring. This ruling idea is confirmed by what elsewhere Paul says of the supreme personal exaltation of Christ in the work of redemption. He is the one only representative of God's people in the covenant of grace; the sole mediator and intercessor between God and man; the single adorable Being in whom all God's children are comprehended and recapitulated; and the one supreme Head of the Church. The sum of the matter is briefly this: We are not saved by saviours "as of many," but by a Saviour "as of one," — only one. And thus we reach the ground of Paul's distinction between "seeds" and "seed," as applied to Christ.<sup>1</sup>

4. All who believe in Christ, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, are the seed of Abraham. He is called "the father of the faithful." The term "father" is applied to the founder either of a class of men, or of a literature, or of a nation. Jabal was the father of such as dwell in tents, and Jubal was the father of such as handle the harp and organ (Gen. iv. 20, 21). Herodotus is styled the father of history, and Washington the father of his country. Abraham is "the father of the faithful," because he was, by Divine appointment, the founder of the visible Church; because he entered, as a party, with God into a new manifestation of the covenant of grace, which became the organic law of the visible Church, and which embraced all who receive Christ. Moreover, believers resemble him as children the parent, in faith and holy obedience. They are his lineal heirs also, and they inherit all the spiritual blessings promised to him. The Apostle Paul shows clearly

<sup>1</sup> Hengstenberg: *Christology*, vol. i. p. 44; and Fairbairn: *Typology*, vol. i. p. 414.

that every child of God is one of Abraham's seed. "They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham" (Gal. iii. 7). "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. iii. 29). Abraham is "the father of them that believe, though they be not circumcised," and the father of them that are circumcised "who walk in the steps of his faith" (Rom. iv. 11, 12). "Gentiles are fellow heirs" (with the Jews), and of the same body, and partakers of his (the Holy Spirit's) promise by the gospel (Eph. iii. 6). In Gen. xvii. 5, Abraham is called "the father of many nations." In Rom. iv. 16, 18, Paul declares that the constituents of "many nations" are the spiritual as well as the natural seed of Abraham, and that the spiritual seed is made up of all who shall believe in Christ, Gentiles as well as Jews. Not only so, but the incomputable number of the redeemed is expressed by the words "many nations." The same thought is conveyed elsewhere. The patriarch's name was changed from Abram, or "high father," to Abraham, or "the father of a multitude of nations"<sup>1</sup> (Gen. xvii. 4). Again, Abraham became, by virtue of a Divine promise, "the heir of the world" (Rom. iv. 13). Moreover, as has been pointed out, God gave him at three different times the assurance that he would make Abraham's seed as the "dust of the earth" in number, as "the stars of heaven," and "the sand upon the seashore." There is doubtless a good and sound sense in which it may be said that these terms apply to the natural descendants of Abraham, including, with the Hebrews, the vast Bedouin tribes descending from Ishmael, from the sons of Keturah, and from Esau. And yet we are required to take these numerical estimates in the broader, the illimitable sense, which shall answer to the vision of John, who beheld, "and lo! a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Rev. vii. 9). The fourfold classification of Abraham's seed, above suggested, may help us to follow the Divine distribution of the promises.

<sup>1</sup> Revised Version.

Here the first place is due to the Lord Jesus Christ, because, as we have seen, he was, in the supreme meaning of the term, the seed of Abraham. All the larger promises to Abraham apply in the fullest sense to Christ (Gen. xii. 2, 3). Thus, "I will make of thee a great nation." The people which Christ is gathering is great in numbers, great in the knowledge of God, great in holiness, and in the hope of glory. "I will bless thee, and make thy name great." A promise which has been made good in the events which have already exalted the name of Jesus above every name on earth, and have set all things in their proper course towards the time when every knee shall bow to him on earth as now in heaven. "I will make thee a blessing." What greater blessing can come to us than "the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world"? "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee,"—a clause to the truth of which we are witnesses; for we see Christ's friends coming to honor and his enemies coming to shame. "And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." To this consummate promise Christ responded in his commission to the apostles: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Secondly, peculiar benefits are promised to the spiritual seed of Abraham. Justification by faith is one. "The scripture, foreseeing that God *would justify the heathen through faith*, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. iii. 8). Conversion to God is another. "Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in *turning away every one of you from his iniquities*" (Acts iii. 26). Adoption is included in the promise. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and *heirs according to the promise*" (Gal. iii. 29). "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are heirs according to the promise" (Gal. iv. 28; comp. Gal. iv. 5). So also with the gift of the Spirit: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the *promise of the Spirit* through faith" (Gal. iii. 13, 14). The heavenly rest belongs here.

The redeemed are represented as sitting "down *with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob* in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. viii. 11).<sup>1</sup> To which it should be added, that believers in Christ, being the seed of Abraham, are heirs of all the riches of grace enumerated in the call. The Church of the redeemed on earth is a great and growing nation; God blesses it, and makes it a blessing to mankind. He blesses him that blesses them, and curses all who curse them. And, in a manner inferior only to the Divine Son of Abraham, it may be said of the Church, which is his body, that in it "all families of the earth shall be blessed." Believing Jews and believing Gentiles have a joint and equal interest in these and in all other means of saving grace. No account has yet been taken of the particu- lar inheritance which God bestowed on Abraham and his legitimate offspring, to the exclusion of all other peoples.

This inheritance, thirdly, was the land of Canaan. On Abraham and his seed, and on them only, was the promised land bestowed. It should be borne in mind that some of the temporal blessings of the covenanted inheritance were given to Abraham, and not to his posterity. One of these was the birth of Isaac, and the restoration of the lad to his father at the altar on Mount Moriah; personal benefits these, conferred exclusively on Abraham. For another, the patriarch was constituted the "father of the faithful," a distinction which is nowhere conferred on either Isaac or Jacob, or any prophet or apostle. Other assurances, however, were given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob jointly. Of these, the most important was the declaration that God would give them an innumerable seed, and would make of them a great nation. This benefit was limited to the three older patriarchs; it was not extended to either Moses, or Joshua, or David, or John Baptist, or to any other person. Still further, thousands of the Israelites also, not having received the promise of a posterity, went childless all their days. Another and more remarkable limitation was imposed on the gift of Canaan to the seed of Abraham. Very few of the Hebrews who served the Egyptians four hundred years ever

<sup>1</sup> Turretin Inst., vol. i. p. 197.

saw the land of Canaan, and none of them dwelt in it, even as pilgrims and strangers. In the fulness of time, however, the chosen people entered the goodly land, and took a possession which continued for nearly fifteen hundred years. And yet Canaan was one of the least of God's blessings upon them. Jehovah became their God. He entered into an everlasting covenant with Abraham, with this provision, that he would be a God to him, and to his seed after him. This assurance is repeated in various forms nearly a hundred times in the Scriptures. It was renewed in some of the critical periods of the history. When the chosen people were in Egypt, he said to them, "I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians" (Exod. vi. 7). He said to Pharaoh, "Let my people go that they may serve me." He began the Ten Commandments by saying, "I am the Lord thy God," and he repeated the phrase three times in the body of the Ten Words. It ought not to be said that God was the God of the Hebrews who were regenerate, and of such only. He was the God of all Israel, the aggregate nation, the good and the bad taken as one great community. Whether obedient and devout, or wayward and rebellious, they were always visibly his people. Whether God was at peace or angry with them, he was always their God. His presence went with them in the wilderness, and into the land of promise. He guided and watched over them, and punished them. He dwelt with them, he established among them his kingdom and worship, and exalted them above all the nations. The blessings promised to Abraham came upon them as a people.

The history of the Israelites reveals the fulness in which God granted to them the means of grace and salvation. He established among them the only pure worship known on earth; to them he gave his spoken and written word, and gathered multitudes out of their habitations into the heavenly rest. The deliverance from Egypt, the conquest of Canaan, the wars of David, show how he cursed their enemies, and blessed their friends. And in them all nations were blessed, through the



plan of salvation that was matured among them, and the Messiah who became flesh in one of their families, and the apostles, all of them Jews, who went everywhere spreading the gospel.

The fourth class of Abraham's seed is made up of Ishmael and the sons of Keturah. At the expulsion of Ishmael from Canaan, Abraham's love for the lad expressed itself in the prayer, "Oh that Ishmael may live before thee!" In his answer God said, "I have blessed him and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation." "But my covenant will I establish with Isaac." The promise to spare Ishmael's life was kept, by a special interposition, when he was about to perish with thirst in the desert. God heard the pitiful cry of the child. He called to Hagar out of heaven, telling her to take her child into her arms; and he opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. His mother made his separation from his father's family, and his expatriation complete from the land of promise, by taking him a wife out of her native Egypt (Gen. xxi. 21). And, finally, the Divine assurance that he should come to great renown, was made good abundantly. Twelve sons were born to him, corresponding to the twelve sons of Jacob. They became "princes" or sheiks, and built cities and castles. The venerable patriarch himself died at the age of one hundred and thirty-seven years, having experienced all the temporal blessings that were promised to him in his boyhood. The sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine (Gen. xxv. 1-6), were also sent away with presents by Abraham, and, as is supposed, spread themselves over the deserts to the westward of Persia. Their descendants are confounded by the Arab writers with the Ishmaelites, with whom they were probably amalgamated.

Two circumstances are worthy of attention just here. In the first place, Ishmael and Keturah's children were the sons of Abraham, and distinctly recognized as such by Jehovah. Yet they were, both by Divine purpose and by the course of Providence, absolutely shut out from the chosen land, and from the peculiar benefits granted to the chosen seed. Ishmael was his seed according to the flesh, and Isaac was his seed according to the

promise. This circumstance furnished an illustration of the separation of the true from the spurious seed of Abraham. It showed, also, that one might be a descendant of Abraham, and still be cast away. Still further, it supplied Paul with an allegory, contrasting Ishmael, the son of the bondwoman, the type of servitude under the law, with Isaac, the son of the free woman, the type of perfect freedom; the freedom of Jerusalem which is above, and the mother of us all (Gal. iv. 22-26). Next, Ishmael and the sons of Keturah, although they had no place with Isaac in Canaan, retained a sure inheritance in the plenary promise to Abraham: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." That seed was Christ, the Saviour of the world. A thousand years are with the Lord as one day. The Scriptures are now in the native tongue of the posterity of these people. From the sacred pages the Bedouin will learn that Abraham is the spiritual father of all who believe, and that the promise of a Saviour is made to the Arabs. And to make it all sure, they find, in the record that contains the promise, the names of the twelve patriarchs, sons of Ishmael, and the region in which they made their home—from Havilah to Shur (Gen. xxv. 13-18; 1 Chron. i. 29-31). The names of the sons of Keturah are also preserved in the same chapters, showing that none of them are forgotten in the Divine plan of salvation. The living descendants of these two exiled branches of the Abrahamic stock may well believe that they are his descendants, although so long separated from their ancestral home. They may become his spiritual children; and if children then heirs, joint heirs to the inheritance of the just, even that better country, a heavenly, where they may sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

The promises, as unfolded above, indicate and enforce the duties and obligations imposed on all the human parties to these transactions. The giving of the covenant in the first stage was preceded by the word of the Lord to Abraham, saying, "Fear not, Abraham: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." To this word of good cheer, faith was the appropriate response. And so it is said, "He believed in

Jehovah, and he counted it to him for righteousness." The second stage of the covenant was introduced by a word of command: "I am the Almighty God; walk before me with a perfect heart. And Abraham fell on his face" (xvii. 1, 3). One has well said, "Just as righteousness, received in faith, was necessary for the establishment of the covenant, so a blameless walk before God was necessary for the establishment and confirmation of a covenant." After Abraham was dead, Jehovah renewed to Isaac the unqualified assurances which he had made to the father; the cycle of promises closing with the greatest of all, "that salvation should flow from him unto all nations." By way of a reason for this renewed assurance, Jehovah pronounced this wonderful judgment on the old patriarch: "Because that Abraham obeyed my *voice*, and kept my *charge*, my *commandments*, my *statutes*, and my *laws*" (Gen. xxvi. 5). The same duties were imposed on the legitimate seed of Abraham, and on all his spiritual seed. In the covenant, in the ritual given by Moses, in the prophets, and in the Gospels, the Gentiles are taught to receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith in his name and his atoning blood. Even Ishmael and Keturah and their descendants were, and the Arabs of their stock to this day are, encouraged to believe on the seed of Abraham, — "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE SEAL OF THE COVENANT.

BIBLICAL scholars have carefully considered the question whether circumcision was original with Abraham, or whether it was introduced into his family from other peoples. The weight of evidence appears to be with those who maintain that the rite had been practised by the Egyptians, and by some of the Syro-Arabians, before the time of Abraham. But this fact, even if well established, should not embarrass our conclusions. It has been already shown that the rainbow, a phenomenon well known before the Flood, was clothed with a new and sacred meaning, and appointed to be the sign of the covenant with Noah. By the same rule circumcision, even though it were a usage of the heathen, was chosen by the Almighty to receive the impress of revealed thought, and to become authoritative as the sign and seal of the covenant with Abraham.

Its relation to the covenant is somewhat peculiar. In Gen. xvii. 10, circumcision is called God's "covenant;" and in ver. 11, it is said to be the "token of the covenant." In like manner, in Exod. xxxi. 13-17, the sabbath is described, first as a sign, then as a perpetual covenant, and then, again, as a sign between Jehovah and the Israelites. By blending these two ideas, we gather that circumcision was a stipulated rite, and a sign and seal; not a ceremony separable from the covenant, but an integral part thereof. Hengstenberg remarks that "circumcision was the embodied covenant." The ordinance, being a sign or token, must represent definite realities. It is not a mere flesh-mark, like a wart or a discoloration of the

skin. The empty sleeve, the cork-leg, the scar, the unhealed wound, of an old soldier, are signs of courage. In like manner circumcision is the sign of a ruling idea. Nor is that all; inasmuch as the use of the sign was commanded to Abraham and to his posterity in all generations, we may not doubt that the idea signified was of special importance.

Now, the matter of the ordinance, the mark in the flesh, points first of all to the natural generation in sin of the race; secondly, to the necessity of spiritual renovation. In other words, circumcision has a double meaning. It assumes the existence in man of original or birth-sin, and is symbolical of inward purification by the Divine Spirit. What it assumes is made clear by many places in the Scriptures. The unrenewed are called "the uncircumcised in the heart." This expression is, in turn, applied to the peoples of Egypt, Ammon, Moab, Edom, and the apostate Israelites (Jer. ix. 26; Ezek. xlv. 7). Proud hearts are "uncircumcised hearts" (Lev. xxvi. 41). The ear that will not hear Jehovah is an "uncircumcised ear" (Jer. vi. 10). Stephen said to his murderers, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost" (Acts vii. 51). Moral obliquity is compared by Moses, and scandalous sin is compared by Jeremiah, with the foreskin of the heart, which must be taken away (Deut. x. 16; Jer. iv. 4). These vivid representations coincide with the words of David, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;" to the lamentation of Job, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" and to the saying of Jeremiah, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

Uncircumcision is, therefore, according to the Scriptures, a striking symbol of moral defilement. It is not less plainly declared that circumcision is the symbol of spiritual purification, and the new birth or the new creation: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" (Deut. xxx. 6). Here the work of spiritual renovation is sufficiently described. God is

the author, the human heart is the subject, the fruit is supreme love to God, and the reward is life. Again, the promise here is, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart;" in Jer. iv. 4, the command is, "Circumcise yourselves unto the Lord, and take away the foreskin of your heart." The expostulation and the promise meet together in Ezek. xviii. 31, and xxxvi. 26. "Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die?" is the expostulation; the promise is, "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." Paul sets forth not less clearly the spiritual import of the rite: "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter" (Rom. ii. 28, 29). "We are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 3; compare Col. ii. 11). The symbolical meaning of circumcision may be still further elucidated by considering the reciprocal character of the covenant and its sign.

A covenant presupposes reciprocity. In the case before us there is a double element: on the part of God, a duty enjoined and a promise made; on the part of Abraham, a duty undertaken and an obligation assumed. The duty which God enjoined on Abraham was declared first in the preface to the covenant: "The Lord said unto him, Walk before me, and be perfect;" next, in the command to introduce circumcision into his family. The words spoken required perfect obedience; the rite established represented inward purity. The promises contained in the covenant are these: Abraham should be the progenitor of nations and kings; God would establish an everlasting covenant with him and his seed in their successive generations; he would give to them the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and be their God (Gen. xvii.). These promises, explained by the sign, conveyed the assurance that God would bestow upon the chosen people the means of grace and the Divine efficiency needful to secure to them the fundamental benefits of the kingdom of God, — regeneration and life

eternal. The duty undertaken and performed by Abraham was a cordial acceptance of the promises, and the prompt administration of circumcision to himself and to his son and to the servants. This act was the token of his purpose to obey God, and to root out all sinful desires from his heart. The reciprocity was complete. The command of God in Deut. x. 16, "Circumcise the foreskin of thine heart," was followed by the promise in Deut. xxx. 6: "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." The gracious sequence of "Purify thyself" is "I will purify thee;" even as, in the New Testament, the sequence of "Work out your salvation" is "God worketh in you to will and to do according to his good pleasure."<sup>1</sup> Another step in this inquiry brings us face to face with the sacramental character of the ordinance.

The Scriptures contain neither the term "sacrament" nor its equivalent, nor do they define the act of worship itself. In order to frame a definition, we begin with the proposition, which is universally accepted, that baptism and the Lord's Supper are true sacraments. By comparison and analysis, we ascertain the properties which belong to these two sacraments, and which distinguish them from all other ordinances of holy worship. Out of these elementary ideas a definition is constructed, and the sacramental character of circumcision may be easily tested by the definition so obtained.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are universally accepted as sacraments, are: (1) Ordinances of Divine appointment. (2) They are of perpetual obligation. (3) In both of them there are outward visible signs, and spiritual graces signified thereby. (4) They are signs and seals of an existing covenant, and of the interest of the believer in its promises. (5) They are badges of the religious profession. (6) Baptism and the Lord's Supper are visible signs wherein the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to the believer. (7) The grace which is exhibited in or by these sacraments

<sup>1</sup> Hengstenberg: King. of God, vol. i. pp. 222-225.

rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them. (8) Baptism is the rite of initiation into the Christian Church, and opens the way to the Lord's Supper.

Now, circumcision exhibits all the characteristics of a true sacrament. (1) It was instituted by Jehovah. (2) Abraham and his posterity through all generations were ordered to observe the rite. (3) A mark in the flesh was the visible sign and seal; justification by faith, together with all the graces and benefits flowing therefrom, was the thing signified (Rom. iv. 11). (4) Circumcision was expressly appointed to be the sign and seal of the covenant with Abraham, securing to him and his offspring the right to all its promises (Gen. xvii.). (5) The flesh-mark identified him who carried it about with him as a son of Abraham, and as holding a definite religious position. (6) This mark was a sensible sign wherein the benefits of the covenant with Abraham were represented, sealed, and applied to those who followed Jehovah (Rom. iv. 11, 12). (7) The rite was not in itself a saving ordinance. (8) It was the door by which aliens came into the Old-Testament Church, and through which admission was gained to the passover.

The sacramental character of the ordinance will help us to point out its main design. Some writers have labored to show that circumcision was necessary to cleanliness and health, and that it was introduced among the chosen people mainly for this purpose, according to the usages of the Oriental nations. This theory overlooks three indisputable facts. For the first, the spiritual import and sacramental character of the rite is constantly asserted and not denied in the Divine Word. Next, circumcision is never treated in the written Word as a sanitary measure, but always as an act of obedience to God. Again, the ordinance was abrogated by the gospel, a proceeding which calls for explanation if circumcision was necessary to the health of the people. In point of fact it was repudiated by the apostles for another reason altogether, because of its repugnance to the progress of the gospel. So far as can be learned from the acts or letters of the apostles, nobody decried its abandonment as perilous to the health of the people. Others have thought



that the usage was designed simply to put a race-mark upon the Jews, not unlike the shaven crown or shaven temple or the "beard rounded at the corner" of the heathen, or the cue of the Chinaman, or the tattoo of the Polynesian. But this suggestion, like the foregoing, overlooks the spiritual import of the ordinance, and its meaning as the recognized sign of the Abrahamic covenant. It overlooks also the fact that the custom of circumcision existed to a certain extent among the neighboring heathen, and could not, therefore, serve the purpose of a distinctive race-mark for the Jews. The sacred record lifts us out of the range of these feeble ideas, and teaches us that circumcision is a seal of a solemn covenant between Jehovah and Abraham for himself and his legitimate progeny; an indelible badge of membership in the Hebrew Church, and of citizenship in the Hebrew commonwealth; a token that he who bore it was in possession of a birthright in all the prerogatives and privileges of the church and the commonwealth; a sign of redemption from sin and death; a sacramental seal of the righteousness that is by faith; a symbol of inward purification; an assurance that the covenant secured to the family the birth of a Saviour in its own household, and the promise of a salvation in which all the world should share. These definitions raise an inquiry in regard to the spiritual efficacy of the ordinances.

1. Following the analogy of other symbols of inward purification, and of other sacraments, it must be said, that circumcision had no inherent power to save, no efficacy *ex opere operato*. Ishmael was circumcised, and peremptorily cast out. Esau was circumcised on the eighth day, and forty years afterwards became a profane person, sold his birthright, and was rejected. Paul was never more positive and repetitious than when he demonstrated the worthlessness of circumcision in the absence of inward purity. He declared that the rite is profitable to him who keeps the law, but it becomes uncircumcision to him who breaks the law; that uncircumcision in one who keeps the law shall be counted for circumcision; that the Gentile by nature, if he fulfil the law; shall condemn the Jew who transgresses the law though he be in possession of both the letter

of the law and the mark of the ordinance ; that he is not a Jew who is one outwardly in the flesh, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly ; and that circumcision is that of the heart and of the spirit, and not of the letter (Rom. ii. 25-29 ; Gal. *passim* ; Col. ii. 11 ; Phil. iii. 3). It became Paul's duty to protest, in the strongest terms, against the dangerous heresy of the Jews to the effect that circumcision was clothed with an inherent and unfailing power to save. Some of their highest rabbinical authorities maintained these positions : "No circumcised man will see hell ;" "Circumcision saves from hell ;" "God swore to Abraham that no one who was circumcised should be sent to hell ;" "Abraham sits before the gate of hell, and does not allow that any circumcised Israelite should enter there."<sup>1</sup> Well might Paul exclaim, in the face of such heresy, "Behold, I say unto you, if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing !" (Gal. v. 2.)

2. Nor was this ceremony indispensable (*conditio sine qua non*) to salvation. Justification might be complete in its absence. Abraham was declared to be just about fifteen years before he was circumcised (Gen. xv. 6). Indeed, he was in possession of saving faith when he left his native country and went to Canaan (Heb. xi. 8), twenty-four years before the giving of the covenant. Paul says, "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had being yet uncircumcised" (Rom. iv. 8-13). From this statement it follows that the rite was neither the ground nor the condition of justification.

3. This ceremony and justification were not tied together ; they were not necessarily simultaneous. Abraham was first justified, and long afterward circumcised. Isaac was circumcised on the eighth day, but not justified until he believed. Many of the Jews of Christ's day were circumcised, and never received the gift of justification. Christ said to some of them, "Ye are of your father the Devil ;" to others, "At the judgment," I will say unto you, "I never knew you ; depart, ye cursed." The Gentiles, on the other hand, were justified by faith, although they had not been circumcised.

<sup>1</sup> Hodge on Rom. ii. 25, with the authorities fully cited there.

4. In regard to the spiritual character of this sacrament, it may be said in general terms, that it was the visible sign and seal of the covenant of grace between God and Abraham, and between God and every one of his spiritual children. In a special sense, it was the seal to them all, "of the righteousness of faith." The seal is the pledge; the righteousness is the state of acceptableness with God; faith is the instrument which lays hold of the promise. The sacrament conveyed to Abraham and to all his believing seed the assurance that God accepted them as righteous through faith. Not only did it confirm their justification, but it exhibited and made sure all the benefits which flow from the covenant of grace, in this life and in the life to come. It confirmed the promise of a Saviour to come in the posterity of Abraham. Circumcision was the symbol, also, of inward purification; and since purification points to a purifier, it pre-intimated the coming of the Holy Spirit, by which this saving work is accomplished. It engaged its subjects to a life of obedience, purity, and faith; manifesting, moreover, and cherishing their communion with one another.

The record points out the subjects of the ordinance. At the beginning it was administered to every man-child in the family of Abraham; to the patriarch himself, to Ishmael his son, and to all the servants, whether born in his house or bought with his money. It was further ordered to be imposed on every male child to be born to Abraham, and on every male child to be born to his servants throughout their generations. By that ceremony, the Church and kingdom of God on earth was erected into a visible community, on the basis of the covenant as its organic law. For two thousand years, beginning with the creation, the Church had existed as invisible; that is to say, it was made up of saints scattered abroad. By the giving of the covenant, the people of God were gathered into a visible society. It is to be borne in mind, that the Church was not only established in the family, but the family itself, as such, patriarch, children, and servants, was built up into a Church. The family was one of the primeval ordinances in Eden; in the days of Noah the family became a state; and in the days of Abraham

it became the visible Church. A civil and ecclesiastical era was begun, which changed the face of the world. And, further, the indiscriminate application of the rite to the servants of the family, including those "bought with money of any stranger" (xvii. 27), conveyed an intimation that the blessings secured in the covenant, and confirmed by the seal, should flow, in the fulness of time, beyond the immediate family.

Abraham was ninety-nine years old, Ishmael was thirteen, and the servants were of all ages, when they were circumcised. But it was ordained that thereafter every male child, whether descending from Abraham or from his servants, should receive the rite on the eighth day. Infant circumcision was the invariable rule. The reason for appointing the eighth day for the ceremony is not given. It is conjectured that the ordinance followed the sacred rule of sevens; or that the purpose was to anticipate the ordinance of purification in Lev. xii.; or that the eighth day was the beginning of the independent life of the child, according to analogies in Exod. xxii. 30, and Lev. xxii. 27. The latter explanation seems to be the most satisfactory.

Circumcision sealed to each of its subjects his personal interests in the covenant. To Abraham was sealed the promise that a son should be born to him, that he should be the father of many nations, and that he should dwell in the land as a pilgrim and stranger. It attested to him also the mass of blessings which were common to him and his seed after him, especially the promise of a Saviour, and justification by faith in his atoning blood. To Isaac and his posterity the same rite confirmed the promise of the land of Canaan, and of all the benefits which were connected with that promise, as they are set forth in the call to Abraham, in the ten theophanies, and in the covenant. Every one of his descendants through Jacob was called to walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham. He was reminded by the mark in his flesh, that he had a birthright in the means of grace to be provided for him; that he carried about with him an ineffaceable seal of righteousness by faith; and that he was entitled to all the covenant blessings, temporal and spiritual, present and future. The Apostle Paul enumerates these bless-

ings in glowing terms (Rom. ix. 4). The case of Ishmael was peculiar. He was circumcised, and then cast out. He did not share with Isaac in the promise of a chosen land and a chosen seed. But God was pleased to grant special promises to him, and to give them a place in the sacred record. To Abraham he said, "As for Ishmael, I have heard thee; behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac" (xvii. 20, 21). And, as if to show how mindful God was of these promises, he caused one of the ten "books of the generations," incorporated in Genesis, to be devoted to the names of Ishmael's twelve sons and to their dwelling-place (xxv. 12-18). Ishmael was also entitled to the spiritual blessings which were to flow to all the families of the world from the seed of Abraham; for in Christ redemption was provided for the posterity of Ishmael no less than for the other Gentiles. Now, as a sign and seal of these temporal blessings peculiar to Ishmael, and these spiritual blessings intended for his posterity, or a part of the race for whom Christ died, circumcision was administered to Ishmael. The sons of Keturah received in the rite a sign that they were entitled to be called the descendants of the far-famed Abraham, and to a special interest, through their remote posterity, in the spiritual blessings which should proceed from Abraham to all mankind. To the servants, the mark signified their personal interest in the immediate temporal prosperity granted to Abraham's family, — an interest to terminate, perhaps, when they should be separated from the household. It was a seal also of the spiritual blessings reserved for their posterity when Christ should appear. In general, it may be said that circumcision was to each recipient a sign and seal of whatever blessings were conveyed to him by the terms of the covenant. From what is set forth above, in regard to the symbolical meaning, sacramental character, spiritual efficacy, and subjects of circumcision, it would be easy to deduce its obligation. But we need not rest our convictions touching that point on any logical process, however valid.

Not only was the ordinance given in the form of a peremptory command, but it was made an integral part of the covenant between God and Abraham, and was re-enforced by a severe penal sanction. "The uncircumcised man-child shall be cut off from his people; for he hath broken my covenant." Among the authorities, both Jewish and Christian, there is a difference of opinion in regard to the nature of the penalty. Some insist that the punishment was death. This opinion is supported by the law of the sabbath, in Exod. xxxi. 14, where the phrase, "that soul shall be cut off from his people," is used interchangeably with the words, "shall surely be put to death." In Lev. xviii. 29, "cutting off" is the punishment of unnatural crime. As further explained, in Ex. xxii. 19, "cutting off" means death. Moses, also, was threatened with death for neglecting to circumcise his son Gershom, he having apparently conceded this point to the strong will of Zipporah, his Midianitish wife (Exod. iv. 24). Other interpreters hold that the penalty was exclusion from all the benefits of the covenant, including banishment from the promised land. In behalf of this explanation, attention is called to the fact that the Israelites who were not circumcised when they crossed the Jordan, instead of being put to death, were required to receive the mark, in order that their covenant right to the promised land might not be forfeited. We may perhaps combine both explanations, holding that the punishment of death was inflicted, or was commuted into excision from the commonwealth of Israel, according as the offence was more or less aggravated. And if we follow the rabbins, who generally understood that the penalty was always inflicted by the Almighty, we may be sure that this judgment actually enforced was righteous.

The reason for the penalty is assigned: "For he hath broken my covenant." This explanation, taken with the fact that circumcision is called "the covenant," shows that the token was inseparable from the covenant. The spiritual contents of both are identical. In giving the covenant God said to Abraham, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." For a sign of the covenant, he appointed a rite which was symbolical of

inward purification, and was also a seal of justification by faith. A neglect of the sign was, therefore, a breach of the covenant, of which the sign was an integral part. Hengstenberg extends this doctrine: "Circumcision was the embodied covenant. Whoever despised the former, made a virtual declaration that he would have no part in the promises of the latter; would not fulfil its conditions, — viz., that he had no desire that God should purify his heart, and would not himself strive after purity." For this reason he suggests that "the neglect of it was designated as so great a crime, and whoever was guilty of it was expelled, *ipso facto*, from the community of God, as one who had made his covenant of no effect."<sup>1</sup>

The two ideas brought together in this ordinance are, first, a religious observance resting on the peremptory command of God, and enforced by a penalty; and, secondly, the observance itself having no inherent power to save the soul. Wilful neglect of the ordinance worked death, or, at least, excision from the chosen people; and yet he to whom it had been applied might be damned, according to the word of Christ to the circumcised but blasphemous Jews. The grace symbolized is purity of heart; and yet, where that grace is present, the absence of the sign does not necessarily defeat the grace, and where grace is wanting, the presence of the sign is nothing worth.

<sup>1</sup> Hengstenberg, King. of God, vol. i. 225, 226.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## EXCISION AND ADOPTION.

Two principles, not yet expounded in these pages, were laid in the Abrahamic covenant, and reduced to practice through the generations. One of these may be described as excision, or the exclusion of the offspring, near and remote, of Abraham, from the rights and privileges of the covenant; and the other may be called adoption, or an incorporation into the chosen seed of peoples who were not the natural descendants of the patriarch. The terms used by Paul corresponding to excision and adoption are "broken off" and "grafted in" (Rom. xi. 17). The rule of excision is set forth in the covenant in two forms, penal and sovereign. The first is the punishment of disobedience; the latter is the exercise of God's good pleasure, resting on grounds not ordinarily disclosed.

Excision, as an act of Divine sovereignty, separated Ishmael and the six sons of Keturah, with their descendants, from the seed of promise, and sent them to Arabia. Isaac was in his generation the sole heir of the promises. Neither Ishmael nor Keturah, nor the fifteen hundred servants of Abraham, became progenitors of the chosen people. They were circumcised, and while they were members of Abraham's household they held a relation, somewhat indefinite, to the visible Church; but they had no inheritance with Isaac in the land of Canaan. Afterwards, Esau was excised with his posterity, and took up his abode in Mount Seir. If it be suggested that Esau's loss of the inheritance was due to his profaneness in the sale of his birthright, the reply must be, that this transaction was simply the occasion, like the insolence of Ishmael (Gen. xxi. 9), on



which the purpose of God to prefer Jacob was disclosed. The choice itself was made before the brothers were born: "neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth" (Rom. ix. 10-13). The effect of these sovereign acts of excision is worthy of notice. Seven of the eight sons of Abraham were excluded from the company of Abraham's seed. In the next generation only one of Isaac's two children, Jacob, was counted in. Of the third generation only one in sixteen of Abraham's natural descendants had any share in the promised land. But in the family of Jacob his twelve sons succeeded to the inheritance, and in due time became a great nation. Excision, as an act of sovereignty, was arrested after Esau went away to Mount Seir.

Penal excision moved in a wider sphere, and was inflicted on transgressors throughout the whole period of the Old-Testament Church. The rule was announced in the covenant: "The uncircumcised man-child shall be cut off from his people" (Gen. xvii. 14). It was also enforced on him who wilfully violated the law of the Passover (Exod. xii. 19; Num. ix. 13). Offences of *leze-majesty*, about twenty in number, of which idolatry, murder, and eating blood are examples, were punishable with excision by death or excommunication. The children of Israel, while at Kadesh-barnea on their way to Canaan, were guilty of inexcusable unbelief in the matter of the spies. The Almighty declared that the carcasses of all who had come out of Egypt, and were twenty years old and upward, should fall in the wilderness. He extended the period of their wandering by thirty-eight years, giving ample time for the full execution of the sentence in the ordinary course of nature. During all this period, up to the arrival of the Israelites in Canaan, the sacraments of circumcision and the Passover were withheld from the people (Josh. v. 2-8). Calvin, Hengstenberg, and Keil find in this suspension of the rite an indication that the covenant was annulled as to these people, in regard to the promised land, and that they were to that extent "discovenanted," and prohibited, therefore, from using the sacred sign.

About six hundred thousand men died under the sentence, and their destruction is a signal example of penal excision (Exod. xii. 37; Num. xxxii. 11).

About thirty-eight years later, the Israelites were encamped on the plain of Moab, almost within sight of the land of Canaan. They were visited by the heathen Balaam; and Balaam has been called the Judas Iscariot of the Old Testament, an inspired prophet and a traitor. He had found it impossible to curse Israel by word of mouth. He now resorted to a device more fiendish and fatal than imprecation. The temple of the obscene god Baal-peor was within easy distance of the camp. At the instigation of Balaam, the women of Moab persuaded a great company of the Hebrews to celebrate with them the festival of their god, during which the "fair idolatresses" were accustomed to prostitute themselves in honor of their deity. The Hebrews fell into the snare; they took part in the shameless rites, and the whole congregation stood polluted. The Almighty, in his indignation, ordered the guilty among the chiefs of the people to be "hung up before Jehovah against the sun;" in other words, they were to be put to death, and their dead bodies publicly impaled or crucified. A pestilence broke out in the camp, and twenty-four thousand died; this appalling mortality showing the extent of the apostasy. While the plague was raging, and the people were weeping before the door of the tabernacle, Zimri, a chief of the tribe of Simeon, and Cozbi, a princess of Midian, went into a tent in the sight of the congregation. Phineas, the high priest, followed them, found them lying in each other's arms, and with a single thrust of his javelin he pierced them both through and through. Phineas being the high priest, and as such the representative of all Israel, his act was accepted by the Almighty as an act of justice done on behalf of the congregation; and the plague was stayed. The men that died in their guilt were, for the most part, born after the formal sentence had been passed at Kadesh-barnea nearly forty years before. Their punishment is, therefore, a separate example of penal excision (Num. xxv.).

About six hundred years later the disruption of the king-

dom, at the accession of Rehoboam, separated ten of the twelve tribes from the theocracy, from the throne of David, from the priesthood, from the holy city and the temple, and from the ark of the covenant. The schismatical tribes founded an independent government called the kingdom of Israel, with Samaria for its capital. They established a new and illegitimate dynasty of kings; built unhallowed sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan; set up the idolatrous worship of calves; deposed the priests and Levites, and organized a spurious priesthood out of the lowest of the people. The sons of Aaron and Levi, together with the faithful among the people, abandoned the schismatical kingdom and went to Jerusalem. At the end of about two hundred and fifty years, the worship of Baal had displaced in the kingdom of Israel the worship of Jehovah. The seven thousand who refused to bow the knee to the false god had, for the most part, passed away. A few members only of the school of prophets, founded by the illustrious Elijah and Elisha, were alive; and these were raised up, failing to reform the religion or morals of the people, to forewarn them of their approaching doom. It could not be said that a single man of the nineteen kings who had reigned in succession, had done that which was right in the sight of the Lord. The mass of the population were abandoned to the most degrading vices,—murder, lying, stealing, drunkenness, and adultery.<sup>1</sup> Assyria, the scourge of Asia, marched its armies upon the kingdom, besieged Samaria three years, took the city by storm, and laid bare its foundations. The conquerors seized such of the people as were worth transportation, and carried them away, captives, into the remotest regions of Assyria. A double excision, or an excision followed by an extinction, was accomplished. It began in the revolt of the ten tribes cutting themselves off from the kingdom of God, and it terminated in a captivity from which the people never returned. They were gradually absorbed by the heathen nations whom they served. History knows nothing of them as Israelites. They are called the Lost Tribes.

Judah, or the residuary kingdom, was but a remnant of the

<sup>1</sup> Amos, *passim*.

wealthy and warlike kingdom of David and Solomon, shrunken within the narrow dimensions of Judah and Benjamin, and hastening to its overthrow. Ahaz, the tenth king of Judah, imported an altar, with its idolatrous rites, from Damascus, in order to propitiate the Syrians. He defaced the house of the Lord, profaned the sacred vessels, and robbed the treasury. The streets of Jerusalem and the cities of Judah smoked with strange incense, and were polluted by licentious rites. The image of Molech was erected at Tophet, in the Valley of Hinnom; and Ahaz made one or more of his children pass through its fires. Hezekiah, his pious son, introduced a thorough reform. But the reformation was brought to naught under the reign of Manasseh, Hezekiah's degenerate son. He set up at the fore court of the temple a statue of Ashtaroath, the Phœnician Venus, and surrounded it with a bevy of unchaste priestesses, bringing thither their sacrifices of uncleanness. He introduced, also, a reign of terror; slaughtering, day by day, the nobles and priests. If the tradition be credible, he ordered the venerable Isaiah, ninety years old, to be sawn asunder. Neither the tardy repentance of Manasseh, nor the second reformation introduced by Josiah, was able to check the overflowing corruption. About three hundred and ninety years after the kingdom of David was dismembered, the Babylonian armies executed the judgment of God on Judah. The city, the palaces, and the temple were levelled to the ground, or committed to the flames; the brazen pillars and sacred vessels were sent to Babylon; the chief priests were put to death; and the whole nation, with the exception of the obscure and ignoble, were swept into captivity. According to some computations, three hundred thousand or four hundred thousand souls were transported.<sup>1</sup> The sacred records do not specify the total number of exiles, but they testify to the complete devastation and depopulation of the country (2 Chron. xxxvi. 7; Jer. xlv. 22). It was no part of the plan of Providence to destroy Judah, root and branch, as he had destroyed the northern kingdom. Judah was the visible Church of God; the Hebrews,

<sup>1</sup> Milman: History of the Jews, vol. i. p. 409.

although degenerate, were the people of God, the direct heirs of the everlasting covenant made with Abraham, and to them was intrusted the blessing which was one day to visit all nations. God dealt with them after the manner in which he had dealt with the disobedient Church in the wilderness: he purified it. He excinded the disobedient and unbelieving, and raised up a better generation to serve him.

At the close of the wandering, all those who left Egypt being twenty years old and upward were dead, two only excepted; at the close of the captivity, nearly all of the same age who came out of Judah were dead. At the end of the seventy years, moreover, the larger number of the Jews who were born in the exile refused to abandon the fertile and luxurious Babylonia for Canaan, a country which they had never seen, and of which they were told that it was a rugged mountain covered with ruins. Although a vast multitude went to Babylon with King Jehoiachin, only forty-five thousand three hundred and sixty people of all ages returned with Zerubbabel to Jerusalem. Still further, of the twenty-four courses of priests, only four courses went back to Canaan; a circumstance which supports the conjecture that about five-sixths of the Jews remained in Babylonia (Ezra ii. 36-39). The remnant returned to Canaan, rebuilt the walls of the holy city, restored the temple, and with it the ordinances of worship. And yet the excision was enormous.

The period from the age of Malachi to the incarnation is a blank in the inspired annals. The history of redemption is resumed in the gospel. And the gospel is the good news, the tidings of great joy, good news from heaven; good news to sinners, of relief from the guilt as well as the punishment of sin; good tidings of salvation by a Divine Saviour, Jesus the Son of God; tidings of the resurrection of the dead, and the re-union of soul and body in life everlasting. And yet a pitiful undertone comes to us with the good news, setting forth the final apostasy and rejection of Israel. Paul describes the process as the "diminishing," "the fall," and the "eastings away" of the Jews. John the Baptist represents them by the figure of the fruitless fig-tree, and by the chaff on the threshing-floor.

He read their approaching doom in the tree cut down and burned, and in the chaff cast into the unquenchable fire. Our Saviour refused to recognize in them the true children of Abraham; they were, he declared, the children of those that had killed the prophets. They called God their Father, but they really hated the Father and the Son; and they hated his Son without a cause. Accentuating the warning of John, he exclaimed, "Ye hypocrites, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" The final excision of Israel from the kingdom of God was clearly connected with the crucifixion of Christ. This connection becomes more significant when it is remembered that Christ was rejected and killed not by a mob, nor by a conspiracy made up of individuals, nor by an alliance of his enemies, — the Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees, sects and parties among the Jews. His death was contrived and managed, from first to last, by the lawfully constituted rulers acting officially. The crucifixion was, strictly speaking, a national transaction, — the crime of all Israel; and this is its most prominent feature, its distinctive characteristic. The proof is complete.

A few months before the third passover, Jesus warned his disciples that he should be rejected and killed, and that this rejection and killing should be done by the elders, the chief priests, and scribes, — a precise enumeration of the three classes composing the supreme national council, or the Sanhedrim. On his last journey to Jerusalem, he repeated the warning; adding, significantly, that the chief priests and scribes should condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and spit upon and killed (Matt. xx. 18; Mark x. 33, 34). The words of Jesus were fulfilled to the letter. After Lazarus was raised from the dead, a meeting of the council was held, in which it was resolved, at the instigation of Caiaphas the high priest, that Jesus should be put to death. They ordered that any man knowing where the condemned could be found should make it known, that they might take him (John xi. 57). That question was soon settled, for Judas covenanted with the chief priests to deliver Jesus to them.

The victim was arrested by a rabble sent from "the chief priests and the scribes and the elders," and brought before Annas, and then before Caiaphas. With Caiaphas were assembled the members of the council, and after an examination of the accused "they all condemned him to be guilty of death." In the morning the whole council, after holding another consultation, bound Jesus, and sent him to Pilate. The rulers were there to watch the proceedings. When Pilate proposed to release some one prisoner to the people, the chief priests moved the people to demand Barabbas. These ecclesiastics followed Jesus to the cross; and there "the chief priests, mocking him with the elders and the scribes, said, He saved others, himself he cannot save." If they did not follow him to his grave, they besought Pilate to set a guard there, lest the disciples should remove his remains and then pretend he was risen from the dead; and after he was risen, the same implacable enemies of God bribed the guard to say that his disciples had stolen his dead body. In regard to the part which the representatives of the people took in the tragedy, the evidence is complete. In regard to the part taken by the people, it is sufficient to advert to their officiousness at the arrest of Jesus; to the cry of the populace, "Crucify him!" in the presence of Pilate; and to the taunts which they flung at him when he was dying. He was taken, and with the wicked hands of the rulers who contrived the crime he was crucified and slain. The crime was chiefly official, although partly popular; in the two aspects taken together, it was a national transaction. The connection between the rejection of Christ by the nation, and the penal excision of the Jews by the Almighty, is clearly set forth in the parable of the wicked husbandmen, propounded by Christ on one of the last days of his life. The Jews had been chosen of God, had been segregated from the Gentiles, and most carefully nurtured. But they had slain the prophets, and, last of all, had killed the Son of God. For this cause, said Christ, God would take the kingdom from them, and transfer its privileges to another people, a new community. This community was gathered from among the Gentiles not only, but from the Jews also. At the

ascension of Christ, there were about five hundred who had escaped through faith the apostasy and excision of Israel. In the days of the apostles, a few of the Jews were converted.

From the operation of excision which marked the history of the Jewish commonwealth, we may now turn to the operation of its antithesis, — adoption. By the terms of the Abrahamic covenant, some of its benefits were granted to others besides the descendants of the patriarch. Accordingly Abraham was ordered to circumcise “every man-child born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger not of his seed.” This usage may be called “adoption,” and many examples of its application are set forth in the record. One or more of the sons of Jacob married heathen women, and yet their children became incorporated into the promised seed. Joseph married an Egyptian wife. Her two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, enjoyed all the prerogatives of the twelve patriarchs, and became the ancestral heads of separate tribes; and the tribe of Ephraim, though he was the son of an Egyptian woman, became one of the greatest of all.

Additional importance is given to this law of adoption by its having been made a part of the original law of the passover, and given on the very night of the exodus, when the distinction between the chosen seed and the heathen was sharply drawn (Exod. xii. 48). The rule of adoption was afterwards repeatedly and broadly applied. For one example, the children of Israel, when they left Egypt, were followed by a “mixed multitude,” composed probably of slaves and disaffected Egyptians (Exod. xii. 38). It is right to assume that they became gradually fused down into the Hebrew race. Still further, during the war with the Midianites, thirty-two thousand female children were captured, and distributed among the Israelites (Num. xxxi. 35). Under the laws of Moses, these girls were probably reduced to servitude. And yet it can hardly be doubted that hundreds of them were, in the course of time, emancipated, were received into the congregation, were married, and became mothers in Israel. This is a conjecture, and yet some probability is given to it by the care that Moses takes to inform us



that none of these young females were either married or fallen women. This incident demands attention, because it furnishes an instance in which excision and adoption went hand in hand. Twenty-four thousand of the children of Israel were cut off, and thirty-two thousand of the daughters of Midian were grafted in (Num. xxv. 9, xxxi. 35). Further, by virtue of the law of Moses, adoption was granted to the children of the third generation of the Egyptians and Edomites living in the land of Canaan,—the very people against whom the Israelites cherished an hereditary antipathy (Deut. xxiii. 8). Not a few heathen women, moreover, came into the commonwealth of Israel, some of whom became the ancestors of Christ. The names of three of these are introduced into Matthew's genealogy,—Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth. They are made conspicuous by the omission from the table of all the Jewish-born women standing in the line of Christ, Bathsheba and Mary only excepted. Moreover, Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel, became, by her intermarriage with Jehoram, king of Judah, an ancestor of Jesus. These examples, and the prominence given to heathen women in the sacred genealogy, may be used to show that the blood of the older Gentiles flowed in the veins of the God-man who came to save Gentile and Jew. Or they "may be connected with our Lord's vicarious subjection to reproach, and his official share in the dishonor brought upon the race by sin."<sup>1</sup> Adoption as an element in the plan of Providence is clearly exhibited in these historical notices. And yet they are comparatively few, and, therefore, less significant than the settled law of formal proselytism, which was in force from the exodus to the downfall of Judaism.

In the ordinance of the Passover, provision was made for the admission to the holy feast of such strangers as had been duly admitted to the Abrahamic Church. Under the Mosaic law, this admission was effected by circumcising the males, and by shaving the head and paring the nails of the females (Exod. xii. 48; Deut. xxi. 12). The prominence of the proselytes in Israel is made known in the subsequent history. They were

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Alexander: Matt. i. 6.

called "strangers," and are mentioned some twenty or thirty times in four books of the Pentateuch. In the period of the monarchy, some of the highest offices in the civil and military administrations were filled by proselytes. The chief of Saul's herdsmen was Doeg, an Edomite. His extraordinary officiousness, and his passion for tale-bearing, are marked by the tautology in the title to Ps. lii., "Doeg the Edomite *came* and *told* Saul, and *said* unto him," and by the stinging epithets in the body of the Psalm. Among the officers of high rank in David's army were Uriah the Hittite, Ithmah a Moabite, and Zelek an Ammonite, both of the last-named being descendants of Lot's incestuous daughters. It is fair to assume that these men reached their rank in the army through conformity to Judaism. Further, proselytes are described by Isaiah as the "sons of the stranger that join themselves unto the Lord;" Nehemiah, on the return from Babylon, commemorates the piety and zeal of those "that had separated themselves from the people of the [heathen] lands unto the law of God" (Neh. x. 28); in the days of Esther "many of the people of the land [Persia] became Jews" (Esth. viii. 17). The law of proselytism was in full force in the age of the apostles. On the Day of Pentecost, "Jews and proselytes" heard the apostles speak with tongues (Acts ii. 10). At Antioch in Pisidia, "many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas" (xiii. 43). In Thessalonica, "a great multitude" of the Greeks, being men, also "not a few honorable women which were Greeks" (i.e., heathen) believed (xvii. 4-12). While Paul was preaching in Corinth, "he persuaded the Jews and the Greeks" (xviii. 4).

This array of Scripture testimonies authorizes the conclusion that the rule of adoption, by the extension of which the apostles opened the door of the kingdom to the Gentiles, was not for the first time introduced by them, but was recognized as one of the ruling ideas of the old covenant. The number of the proselytes in the age of the apostles, even the "great multitude" in Thessalonica and other places, indicate that a majority of the converts were not Jews. Isaiah so understood the plan

of Divine grace. He assures the Church of his day that "the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising," and that "the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee" (lx. 3-5). Well might the prophet so express himself; for the Psalmist had said to Jehovah, "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion," and, "So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory" (Ps. cii. 13, 15). This adoption by proselytism received its final authority from the Lord Jesus: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The co-ordinate operation of excision and adoption is described in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Paul deals with the subject, first didactically in a series of propositions, and then metaphorically under the figure of the olive-tree; showing in both methods how the unbelieving Jews were excinded, how the believing Gentiles were adopted, and how the apostate Jews should, through the ministry of the Gentiles, be led to Christ and re-adopted. Of Israel he says, "Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles." . . . "Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness?" . . . "If the casting-away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (Rom. xi. 11-15.) We have seen that the apostasy of Israel as a nation culminated in the death of Christ by the procurement of the national authorities. In punishment of that crime, God had rejected them, and they had fallen, they had diminished, they had been cast away, they lost their position as the chosen seed, they were discovenanted, their circumcision was counted for nothing. When Paul recorded the sentence which had been passed upon them, the commonwealth was on the verge of dissolution, the city and temple were doomed to a speedy overthrow, the daily sacrifice was about to cease forever, and the people were awaiting dispersion. Paul, taking them as he finds them, teaches us that by their fall salvation was to come to the Gentiles; the fall of them was the riches, and the

casting away of them was the reconciling, of the world. The record of the labors of the apostles coincides with these declarations. In the first place, the opposition of the Jews to the gospel constrained the apostles to give their attention to the Gentiles. To the contradicting and blaspheming Jews at Antioch, Paul said, "Seeing ye put the word of God from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts xiii. 46). To his hostile countrymen at Corinth, his words were, "Your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles" (xviii. 6).

Secondly, The fall of Israel restrained the foul spirit of persecution of which the Jews were possessed. "They please not God," said Paul, "and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved" (1 Thess. ii. 15, 16). The restraints that were laid by the Romans on this spiteful fanaticism called forth the complaint of the conspirators at the trial of Christ: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." And the fierceness with which, within the limits of the Roman law which hedged them in, they pursued the early Christians, may be seen, to look no farther, in the outrages which Saul of Tarsus inflicted on men and women, and in the outrages which Paul the apostle, in his turn, endured from his own countrymen. And so the diminution of the persecuting power of the Jews was the riches of the Gentiles.

Thirdly, The Jewish converts were very reluctant to allow the gospel to be offered to the Gentiles. The state of Peter's mind before he saw the vision at Joppa, and the dissatisfaction of the Jewish Christians with Peter, for what he did at the Pentecost of the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, support the conclusion, that, had a great majority of the Jews embraced the Christian faith, their combined opposition to the spread of the gospel among the Gentiles would have been almost strong enough to suppress the work. The Gentiles found mercy, not in the conversion and good-will, but in the casting-away, of Israel.

Fourthly, The Jewish Christians did their utmost to encumber the gospel with the ceremonies of the Mosaic law. They en-

deavored to enforce circumcision on the Gentiles. Long after the ritual of Moses had ceased to be obligatory, they maintained worship in the temple, and endeavored to bring everybody into subjection to the old law. But the destruction of the temple, at the fall of Jerusalem, abolished forever the distinctive ceremonies of the Jewish religion. That being done, they could neither impose these rites on the not-Jew, nor observe them for themselves. The extinction of these rites cleared the ground, moreover, for the introduction of the simple and spiritual worship of the gospel Church. And so again the fall of Israel helped the glad tidings.

Fifthly, The destruction of the nation led to the wide dispersion of the people throughout the world. The apostles, in their missionary journeys, fell in everywhere, in the persons of their countrymen, with outspoken or silent witnesses to the existence of one God, — only one. They found, in many of the cities, synagogues for public worship, the keeping of the holy sabbath, and the public reading of the Scriptures on every seventh day. These immense facilities for the work of missions to the Gentiles followed closely in the train of Jewish unbelief and dispersion. Once more, the preservation of the Jews as a separate people, and their sojourn in every land to this day, supplies Christianity with a wide-spread testimony to Moses and the prophets, which is not less persuasive because it comes from witnesses who are avowedly hostile to the gospel.

One other element in this plan of Providence completes the demonstration. Paul teaches us that the conversion of the Gentiles shall re-act on the Jews, securing their restoration to the kingdom of God. The gospel came from the Jews to the Gentiles; it shall return from the Gentiles to the Jews. The unbelief of the Jews became the occasion of mercy to the Gentiles, though the Gentiles were so long disobedient; so, also, from the Gentiles mercy shall come to the Jews, though now they are unbelieving. “For as ye [Gentiles] in time past have not believed God, yet now have obtained mercy through their [Israel’s] unbelief; even so have these also [the Jews] not now believed, that through your [Gentiles’] mercy, they

also may obtain mercy" (Rom. xi. 30, 31). The final solution of the mystery of "life from the dead" will appear when the *pleroma*, or the abounding blessings granted to the Gentiles, shall be completed by the *pleroma*, or abounding blessings to be communicated to the Jews through the ministry of the Gentiles. Well might the apostle who wrestled with the problem, "Hath God cast away his people?" commemorate the Divine solution with the doxology: "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

The apostle clears up still further the doctrine of co-ordinate excision and adoption, through the figure of the olive-tree, first suggested by Jeremiah (xi. 16). The "green olive-tree, fair and of goodly fruit," represents the Church of God, and the Jews are its natural branches. The olive-tree which is "wild by nature" represents heathenism, and the Gentiles represent its branches. The branches broken off from the green olive are the Jews excised from the Church for unbelief. The branches "cut out of the wild olive," and "grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree," are the believing Gentiles, incorporated by adoption into the Church. The natural branches, first broken off and then grafted in again, "for God is able to graff them in again," are the Jews, "if they abide not in unbelief" (Rom. xi. 17-24). This twofold process is not an afterthought, by way of amendment to the Abrahamic covenant, but one of its specific provisions: excision appearing, as we have seen, in the cutting-off of the uncircumcised man-child; adoption appearing in the circumcision of the man-child born in the house of the patriarch. Without pressing too far the metaphor of the olive-tree, we may take from it a fine illustration of the truth that the Church and kingdom of God is indestructible. The life in the trunk of the good olive-tree survives all mutilations. Even so the life which the Church, the body of Christ, has received from the inbreathing of the Holy Spirit, is an incorruptible seed, a living soul, ever-living, immortal. The Church has been diminished, and brought low by repeated excisions; but its losses have been made good, and more than that even, by repeated adoptions. On account of

the flagrant apostasies, Jehovah warned Isaiah of his purpose to bring successive devastations on Judæa. He would first lay waste the cities, then he would empty the houses, then turn the land into an utter desolation. Yet with the threatening came a promise, for a remnant should survive to the very last. After the entire desolation of this land, there shall remain a tenth; this tenth shall again be consumed — but not utterly — for like the turpentine-tree, and like the oak, which, when cut down, have substance or vitality in them; even so a holy seed shall be the vital principle, though it be only the small remnant, the tenth part, which appeared to be destroyed. “However frequently the people may seem to be destroyed, there shall still be a surviving remnant; and however frequently that very remnant may seem to perish, there shall still be a remnant of the remnant left; and this indestructible residue shall be the holy seed of the true Church” (Rom. xi. 26).<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, Jehovah likened the faithful Jew in the falling kingdom of Judah, to the ripe and juicy cluster of grapes in the midst of the unripe and rotten bunches: “Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servants’ sake, that I may not destroy them all” (Isa. lxx. 8). In the same sense, Paul declares that “some of the branches of the good olive-tree were broken off;” some, not all; and, that even in unbelieving Israel there was “a remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom. xi. 5, 17).

The identity of the Jewish and the Christian Church is an obvious conclusion from Paul’s treatment of the subject. The good olive-tree represents the Church which was instituted in the family of Abraham. At the introduction of the gospel, the unbelieving Jews were excluded from the ancient Church; believing Gentiles were admitted to its fellowship; and, finally, the Jews, if they abide not in unbelief, will be restored to its communion. As the good olive, now mutilated, now replenished by branches from the wild olive, and at last recovering the branches that were broken off, is one and the same good olive, so the Church of God maintains its continuous existence

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Alexander on Isa. vi. 12, 13.

and identity, through all its losses and all its gains, and in the recovery of all that it has lost. Paul re-enforced this identity by two other thoughts. The inexhaustible spirit of life in the old Church is represented by the perpetual vigor of the olive-tree. If we may so say, the trunk of the olive, which Abraham planted under the shadow of the oaks at Hebron, had not fallen into decay at the end of two thousand years. So full was it of vitality, that it was able to communicate life, a transforming life, to the branches of the olive which was "wild by nature, and grafted contrary to nature," and then supply a new life to the branches that had been broken off. After the same manner, the old Abrahamic Church was able, by virtue of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to nurture the Divine life in the believing Gentiles, and to revive the Jews if they abode not in unbelief; life from the living, *vivum e vivo*. Here is the identity we speak of. To this Paul adds a caution to the Gentiles not to exult over the Jews, but to remember that they were not the root, but the branches only; a remark which assumes that both Jew and Gentile rested on the same root, and received in common the same fatness; identity once more. Leaving the figure, we are taught that the Gentiles must look for eternal life in the communion of the Church founded in the family of Abraham. Christ did not create a separate society, side by side with the Jewish Church, for the converted Romans or barbarians or Scythians. He opened to them the doors of his one kingdom, as old as Abraham's day, the fundamental laws of which were the covenant of grace, and the covenant with the father of the faithful; a kingdom which in the beginning was, and henceforth forever shall be, one and the same.

The same doctrine of identity appears in the elementary principles of faith and practice and worship, which are common to both dispensations. The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Lord of the New Testament. The Triune God is in both the sole object of worship. The moral law, as the rule of life, is the same. The Jehovah-angel who entered into covenant with Abraham, who was with the Church in the wilderness, and to whom believers in olden times looked for salvation, is



the God who was manifest in the flesh in the days of John the Baptist, and who suffered under Pontius Pilate. The blood of redemption which was shed typically for transgressions under the first covenant, was actually shed, once for all, on Calvary. The plan of salvation is ever the same; so, also, is the gospel preached to Abraham (Gal. iii. 8), the gospel declared in the wilderness, and the gospel proclaimed to us. Whatsoever doctrines were published by Moses and the prophets, were republished by Christ and his apostles, — the fall and depravity of man, redemption by blood, regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit, the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, eternal life, everlasting punishment. The wail of repentance in the *miserere* of David is echoed in the cry of the publican who went up to the temple to pray. The faith of the patriarchs lived in the hearts of the apostles and brethren; being everywhere, in all ages, the same in its nature, object, and victory over the world. The spiritual significance of the covenant is the same in all ages; the promised seed are true believers, and the promised land is heaven.

Even the aspects presented by the two dispensations, although apparently diverse, do not affect their substantial identity. The old was temporary and insufficient; the new is permanent, enlarging and completing its predecessor. The first dispensation was administered by types and promises and sacrifices, by circumcision and the Passover. The last is administered by the preaching of the Word, by baptism and the Lord's Supper, and by a government purely spiritual. In the New-Testament Church, grace and salvation are held forth in a fulness, evidence, and saving power on the nations, unknown in the ages which went before. Yet none of these things cut in twain the kingdom of God. Here certain analogies present themselves. England did not cease to be England by the reception of the Anglo-Saxons, Danes, and Normans, or by the annexation of the American Colonies, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, British India, the West Indies, Australia, and Burmah. Nor was the identity of the realm disturbed by the loss of its imperial position on the Western Continent; nor would it cease to be England by

the loss of its forty colonial possessions. France has been the same France under the rapid succession of diverse administrations. Within less than a hundred years that nation has been an absolute monarchy; a republic under the directory; a consulate; an empire; a military despotism; a limited monarchy again, first under Bourbons, then under the House of Orleans; a republic under a prince-president; an empire for the second time; and for the third time a republic. In like manner, the Church and kingdom of God has been one and the same Church and kingdom, under one and the same great Head, through all its vicissitudes; through losses and gains, defeats and victories, apostasies and reformations, captivities and restorations, — always one, undivided, indivisible, indestructible Church.

## CHAPTER XX.

## THE COVENANT ENDURING FOREVER.

To the question whether the Abrahamic covenant was a temporary or a permanent institute, the first answer may be taken from the terms of the ordinance itself. God said to Abraham, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee." And again, "Sarah, thy wife, shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him." The perpetuity of these engagements is indicated by the term "everlasting." The case would be fully covered but for the circumstance that the term "everlasting" in the covenant is, in some places in Scripture, equivalent to "indefinitely," or "during the present order of things." We must give attention, therefore, to other scriptures, in which the question in regard to the perpetuity of the covenant is cleared up.

The covenant was in full force through the whole period from Abraham down to Nehemiah and Malachi. In the theophanies granted to Isaac and Jacob, the covenant was specifically renewed. Indeed, the engagement and the oath by which it was confirmed came to be called the "covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," and the oath "which God swore unto the fathers" (Exod. ii. 24, xiii. 5). The most critical periods in the history of the bondage in Egypt, and the wandering in the wilderness, were marked by the word of God acknowledging this agreement. After the return of Moses to Egypt, God

made known to the Israelites his incommunicable name *Jehovah*, and said, "I have also established my covenant with them, . . . and I have remembered my covenant" (Exod. vi. 4, 5). When the cry of the children of Israel "came up unto God by reason of bondage, God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob" (Exod. ii. 24, 25). When they worshipped the golden calf at Sinai, God's anger waxed hot against them, and he was about to destroy them all. Moses reminded him of the oath which he had sworn to the three old patriarchs, declaring that he would multiply their seed, and give to them the land of Canaan. "And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto the people" (xxxii. 7-14). Next, the law given at Sinai did not supersede this engagement. Such is the direct testimony of Paul: "And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of God of none effect" (Gal. iii. 17). Indeed, four several times during the wandering, God reminded the people of the oath which he had sworn to the three old patriarchs, making the land of Canaan sure to them: first, at Kadesh-barnea, when he turned them back to wander thirty-eight years in the wilderness; next, in the land of Moab, when they were approaching the end of the journey; again, at the second giving of the law by Moses, while the people were encamped in the plain west of the Jordan; and for the fourth time, just before the mysterious death of Moses (Num. xxxii. 11; Deut. i. 8, vi. 10, xxx. 20). Four hundred years later, David brought the ark of the covenant into the tent prepared for it. In the psalm which he sang on this occasion, these strains occur:—

"He hath remembered his covenant forever,  
 The word which he commanded to a thousand generations;  
 Which covenant he made with Abraham,  
 And his oath unto Isaac;  
 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law,  
 And to Israel for an everlasting covenant,  
 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan,  
 The lot of your inheritance" (1 Chron. xvi. 15-18).

Two centuries after David's reign, the covenant came to the surface unexpectedly, as it were. The ten tribes had become obstinate in their voluntary separation from the kingdom of God, and were in subjection to Hazael, king of Syria. In their extremity, Jehovah remembered his covenant with Abraham, the ancestor of these rebellious people. "He was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet." Hazael died, and the oppression ceased (2 Kings xiii. 22-25). In the latter part of the following century, Micah, the prophet of Judah, celebrated the truth to Jacob and the mercy to Abraham which God had sworn to the fathers from the days of old (Mic. vii. 20). After the return of Judah from captivity in Babylon, Nehemiah held a solemn feast. In the prayer on that occasion, devout mention is made of the calling of Abram, and of the covenant which God made with him to give the land of Canaan to his seed, — a recognition of God's faithfulness, most appropriate to the return of the chosen seed from an exile of seventy years (Neh. ix. 7, 8). Nehemiah is the last of the Old-Testament historians; showing that the Abrahamic covenant was in full force and effect at the latest moment of the time recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures. Inspiration ceased during the dreary interval of about four hundred years, which separated the age of Malachi from the incarnation; but, meanwhile, this imperishable constitution lost none of its vitality. On the very threshold of the New Testament we hear the *Magnificat* of Mary praising Jehovah, and saying, —

"My soul doth magnify the Lord,  
 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.  
 . . . . .  
 He hath holpen Israel his servant,  
 That he might remember mercy  
 (As he spake unto our fathers)  
 Toward Abraham and his seed forever."

(Luke i. 46, 47, 54, 55.)

Just before the birth of John the Baptist, his father, Zacharias, prophesied, saying, —

“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,  
 For he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people,  
 . . . . .  
 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers,  
 And to remember his holy covenant,  
 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham.”

(Luke i. 68-73.)

The testimony here is to the effect that the incarnation, so far from making void the covenant with Abraham, fulfilled some of its most significant provisions.

The perpetuity of the covenant is still further established by the places in the New Testament, wherein, instead of the word “covenant,” its spiritual promises are repeated. The word, for example, does not occur in the great commission, “Go, teach all nations.” Yet the command is simply an echo of the covenant promise to Abraham, “In thee shall all nations be blessed.” Nor does the word “covenant” appear in any of the places that follow: “Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So they that be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham” (Gal. iii. 7-9). “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal. iii. 13, 14). “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed” (Gal. iii. 29). It is clear that the blessings here enumerated are precisely those which are made sure in the Abrahamic covenant, and none other; and the apostle assumes that these promises were, when he wrote, outstanding. Now, the perpetuity of the provisions of the covenant carries with it the perpetuity of the covenant itself. From all this, the conclusion must be that the cove-

nant was confirmed from age to age as the constitution of the kingdom of God in the Old Testament and the New. Nor is the covenant ever described, in either Testament, as a temporary expedient which had passed away, or which should ever become obsolete. The case will be finished when it shall be shown that the covenant is in full force and effect to this day.

A contract between two or more parties cannot be abrogated until all its provisions are executed. A man enters with his son into an agreement, written, signed, sealed, and recorded in due form. He gives to his son several valuable estates, real and personal, with the provision that he shall come into the possession of the estates, one by one, at certain future periods; and with the further provision that such of the property as is capable of such transfer shall go to his heirs and assigns forever. It is obvious that the engagement is binding until the estates are all turned over to the son; and as to such of the property as may pass by sale or inheritance, the agreement runs against all time to come. Now, among the gifts conveyed by God's covenant to Abraham were a chosen seed, the chosen land, a blessing on him and on his offspring, a blessing on their friends and a curse on their enemies, and, finally, the transcendent promise of the Messiah, lineally descending from him. These promises have been fulfilled. Another, to the effect that the gospel preached to Abraham should be offered to the Gentiles, has been performed in part; and that is a connecting link between those that have been fully discharged and those that are outstanding. The argument is, that the covenant must stand good until all its outstanding provisions are executed. Here three lines of thought invite attention.

According to one of the most prominent provisions of the covenant, the salvation flowing from Abraham shall fill the earth. This stipulation appears in a variety of forms: "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed;" this blessing is the good news. "In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed;" and this seed is Christ. This covenant promise has not been fulfilled; nor will it be until the disciples of Christ shall have obeyed his command to evangelize all

nations, to preach the gospel to every creature, and to be witnesses for him unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Nor is this all. A cherished purpose of Christ, in regard to his own kindred, remains to be executed. The casting-off of the Jews was the occasion of the spread of the gospel among the Gentiles; and, when the fulness of the Gentiles is gathered in, the Jews, by the mercy of the Gentiles, shall be converted, and "so all Israel shall be saved." "For," says God, "this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins: as concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but, as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes" (Rom. xi. 25-28). That is to say, the covenant made with Abraham will secure the salvation of the Jews as a people. "I hold," remarks Calvin, speaking of the Jews, "that God is not unmindful of his covenant which he made with their fathers, in which he witnessed that he had lovingly embraced the race in his eternal counsel."<sup>1</sup> All these provisions of the covenant, in regard to the salvation of Jew and Gentile, remain to be executed; the covenant, therefore, which contains them, holds good to this day. We are taught by our jurisprudence that a law continues in force so long as the reason of it remains: "*Manente ratione, manet ipsa lex; cessante ratione, cessat ipsa lex.*" We are taught the same thing substantially by Paul: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto" (Gal. iii. 15).

Two other integral elements in the covenant have a similar bearing. One of these is God's oath for confirmation that was sworn at the sacrifice of Isaac. Paul treats this oath as still unrevoked, and as intended for the comfort of God's people in every age (Heb. vi. 13-18). He describes believers under the gospel as heirs of the promises made to Abraham, and the oath as intended to re-assure all, of every coming age, who love the Lord, in "the immutability of his counsel;" "that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold

<sup>1</sup> Hodge: Rom. xi. 28.



on the hope set before us." The oath is "immutable," and the perpetuity of the oath carries with it the perpetuity of the covenant whereof the oath is the supreme sanction. For another particular, we have already observed that the three pilgrim fathers understood the covenant to be, and it was in fact, a conveyance to them of the earthly Canaan not only, but of another country likewise, even a heavenly.<sup>1</sup> This stipulation secured the same inheritance to the posterity of the patriarchs after them, the earthly Canaan to their natural posterity, the heavenly to their spiritual. The covenant is a guaranty to all the redeemed, of every age, of their eternal blessedness. The covenant must continue until the guaranty is made good. The engagement with Noah supplies an analogy. God said to him, "I will establish my covenant with you; for neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood, neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth." Nobody doubts that this engagement is as binding to-day as it was on the day when Noah went out of the ark. That covenant by which God bound himself not to drown the world a second time, and that other covenant by which he promised to bless all nations in Abraham,—a covenant confirmed by an oath, and securing for his people a city which is yet to come,—both are everlasting.

The exalted position which is assigned to the Abrahamic covenant by proof of its perpetuity, casts light upon important heads of Christian doctrine. It defines, in the first place, the relation of the Sinai covenant, so called, to the Abrahamic. The commands which Moses received at his first interview with Jehovah on Mount Sinai were reduced to the form of a special agreement, were committed to writing, were read to the people, and were solemnly adopted by them as the rule of life. The central mass of these ordinances were the Ten Commandments. The ordinances, as a whole, were ratified by a sacrifice. Blood was sprinkled upon the altar, upon the book of the law, and upon the people. While Moses was sprinkling the blood upon the people, he said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xx.

the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (or "upon all these conditions," *Rev. Ver.*) (Exod. xxiv. 3-8; Heb. ix. 19, 20). This engagement is called the Sinai covenant, or the covenant made at Horeb. The record is known as the book of the covenant, the two tables of the law are the tables of the covenant, the chest in which they were placed was the ark of the covenant, the most holy place in which the ark was deposited was the tabernacle of the covenant, and the Hebrew writings into which they were copied are sometimes called the scriptures of the old covenant. It is nowhere intimated that the Sinai covenant superseded that given to Abraham. The first named is invariably treated as an extension or advanced stage of the other, and yet temporary and provisional, except only in the Ten Commands. Moses took care, in speaking of the Abrahamic covenant, to say, "Because ye hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them, the Lord thy God shall keep with thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers" (Deut. vii. 12). We are taught by Paul that "the law was added because of transgressions," to declare their heinousness and their just penalty, and to show man's need of Divine pardon and justification; and he insists that the law "cannot disannul" the covenant which was made five hundred and thirty years earlier (Gal. iii. 17). In the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul discusses the "new covenant" described by Jeremiah (xxx. 33, 34), and the "everlasting covenant" (xxxii. 40). Paul shows that the new and the everlasting covenant is the gospel dispensation, and the "old covenant" is the same that was given at Sinai. In Heb. viii. 13, he speaks of an "old covenant" "which decayeth and waxeth old and is ready to vanish away." By these terms, as he makes it plain, he describes not the Abrahamic but the Sinai covenant, so far as it consists of the ceremonial law; and he assumes that such is the sense of Jeremiah. The reader of the Scriptures should not lose sight of the broad distinction between the Abrahamic covenant and the "old covenant," to wit, the Sinai covenant. Much confusion of thought has arisen from a failure to notice that distinction.

Secondly, The identity of the Church in all dispensations — the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian — is established by the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant. On the basis of this engagement, as its organic law or charter, the Church was organized, and its affairs administered from the beginning. The charter itself, being in its terms and nature everlasting, gives perpetuity to the spiritual society resting upon it. Other arguments in support of this position have been already submitted to the reader of these pages: an argument drawn from the plan of Providence in regard to the conversion of the disobedient Gentiles and the unbelieving Jews, with an illustration supplied by the olive-tree (Rom. xi.); and an argument resting on the creed of the Church, one and the same in all ages.<sup>1</sup> The demonstration is threefold, and a threefold cord cannot be broken. The way is now open for another step towards the interior of the subject.

1. It will not be denied that the infant children of the chosen people were, with their parents, members of the Church by virtue of the covenant with Abraham, and the laws of Moses. We have proved that the Church — Abrahamic, Jewish, and Christian — is one and the same Church. From these two premises the conclusion must be, that the infant children of believers are, with their parents, members of the Church of God, unless they have been excluded by the same Divine authority which placed them there. The burden of proof rests with those who seek to deprive little children of the birthright of church-membership, which they enjoyed, without dispute or challenge from any quarter, through two thousand years, — from Abraham to Christ, — and which was confirmed to them by Christ and the apostles.

2. God entered into covenant with Abraham not only for himself, but for his seed. Circumcision, which was at once a sign and an integral part of the covenant, was, by Divine command, to be administered to the child eight days old. And the covenant was concluded with the patriarch not only, but with his seed after him “in their generations;” and it is de-

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xxiv., Excision and Adoption.

clared to be "an everlasting covenant." The spiritual rights of the parents and their children are put upon the same footing; "to thee and thy seed after thee," is the word of the Lord. Neither believers nor their children can be ousted of vested rights, unless by a Divine ordinance to that effect, no less explicit than the Divine ordinance by which the rights were acquired. No such revelation has been, none such can be, produced.

3. Silence never destroys, but supports, privileges once granted and reduced to the form of a covenant, confirmed by an oath, expressly declared to be everlasting, and never revoked. The silence of the New Testament, for example, touching the admission of females to the Christian passover, does not debar them from the privilege secured to them by the law of the Jewish passover. Nor does the omission of the Fourth Command in the New Testament abrogate the law of the sabbath. But the silence of Christ in regard to infant children is not wholly unbroken. He found them in the Church. Like himself, they were there by right of birth and by virtue of the covenant; and their right had been recognized, as vested in him and them alike, by the ordinance of circumcision. By no word or sign did he hint at their excision. Instead of that, he took them in his arms and blessed them; and said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." John Owen writes: "A spiritual privilege once granted by God unto any cannot be changed, disannulled, or abrogated, without an especial Divine revocation of it by God himself, or the substitution of a greater privilege and mercy in its room." "They who deny the right of the infant seed of believers to a participation of the covenant and the initial seal of it, which was granted to the infant seed of Abraham, cannot produce any revocation of it by God himself, nor any greater mercy and privilege granted unto them in its room, which they do not once pretend unto, but leave the seed of believers, while in their infant state, in the same condition as those of pagans and infidels, expressly contrary to God's covenant." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Owen: Works, vol. xvi. p. 259.

Thirdly, With regard to the relation of baptism to circumcision, we are taught in the Bible: (1) The sign of Church-membership under the Old Testament was circumcision, under the gospel it is baptism. (2) Circumcision and the Passover were declared to be perpetual: the former in Gen. xvii. 13, "My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant;" the Passover in Exod. xii. 24, "And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever." Now, it is admitted by everybody that the Passover is perpetuated in the Lord's Supper. In what is circumcision perpetuated if not in baptism? (3) Circumcision is not only the token of the covenant, but in some good and sound sense it is the covenant itself, — "a covenant in the flesh" (Gen. xvii. 13). What has become of that token and covenant if baptism be not, in the same good and sound sense, both the token and the covenant? (4) The sovereign dignity of the old ordinance is set forth in the penalty and denunciation incurred by its neglect: "And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant" (Gen. xvii. 14). Here is a ceremony, the neglect of which is stigmatized as covenant-breaking, and punished by excision from God's people. It is hard to believe that such an ordinance, so protected by the law of crime and punishment, was suddenly blotted out of the holy ritual, leaving in existence no other appointed act of obedience as its representative. In point of fact, the Almighty made circumcision an integral part of an everlasting covenant. Unless it was merged into baptism, even as the Passover was merged into the Lord's Supper, it has no survivor in the Church; it is an expunged and obsolete, not an "everlasting," ordinance. (5) Baptism has taken the place of circumcision as the sign and seal of the covenant. Otherwise the covenant is left, by the withdrawal of the original seal, without any sign or seal whatever, just as the covenant with Noah would be deprived of its token if the rainbow were removed. (6) From and after the beginning of the Abrahamic Church, circumcision was the initiatory rite. From and after the beginning of the

Gospel Church, baptism was, and still is, the initiatory rite. Our Lord in his last command settled the law of the case. He did not say, "Go teach all nations, circumcising them:" he did say, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them." And so baptism became the rite of initiation to Jews and Gentiles. At the Pentecost, Peter, speaking to an immense throng of Jews, exhorted them to repent, and be baptized; taking no account whatever of the mark in their flesh. "And as many as believed were baptized." Paul, long after his conversion, thought it proper to allege that he was "circumcised the eighth day" (Phil. iii. 5). But at his conversion he came into the Christian Church by another door; "he arose and was baptized," — his circumcision, as touching the Christian profession, going for nothing. Baptism was administered also to the Samaritan converts, to the Gentiles, to the Ethiopian, to the Roman soldier, Cornelius and his friends and kinsmen; to the several households of Stephanas in Corinth, of Lydia and of the jailer in Philippi. (7) The council at Jerusalem refused to lay upon the Gentile Christians the burden of the old ordinance. Only one instance of circumcision is found among the acts of the apostles. It was administered by Paul to Timothy, a Jew of the half blood, with the hope of conciliating the "Jews in those quarters." When pressed to administer the rite to Titus, who was a Gentile of the pure blood, Paul refused compliance, because the Gentiles were exempt from circumcision by the decree of the council at Jerusalem (Acts xv). When afterwards Paul perceived that the Jews were teaching that salvation was tied to circumcision, he summarily stamped out the heresy by declaring that circumcision, having become perverted, would work a separation from Christ: "I Paul declare unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing" (Gal. v. 2). At length the ceremony, being shut out as an act of false worship from the Gospel Church, passed over into apostate Judaism, leaving baptism in pure water as a part of the Christian worship, — its only initiatory rite. (8) Paul carried the doctrine still farther, showing that by baptism we become incorporated into the body of Abraham's spiritual children:

“For as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. iii. 27–29). (9) The resemblance between the two ordinances is very close. Circumcision signifies moral and inward purification; baptism is the emblem of the new birth, or the washing of regeneration (Jer. iv. 4; John iii. 5). (10) There is a vital connection between circumcision and baptism. In Christ “we are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands;” this operation is “the putting-off of the sins of the flesh,” and it terminates in burial with Christ in baptism (Col. ii. 11, 12). We conclude, therefore, that baptism has taken the place of circumcision. At the same time it is true that there is far more of the gospel in baptism than in circumcision. Baptism is circumcision “written large.”

It is worthy of notice, that, when circumcision was merged into Christian baptism, it shared in the amendments which were introduced into the ritual of gospel worship. The directory for worship was revised throughout. The first day of the week took the place of the seventh day as holy time, although the people were originally directed to observe the sabbath as “a perpetual covenant” (Exod. xxxi. 16). Instead of the roasted lamb and the bitter herbs used in the Jewish Passover, bread and wine are the matter of the Christian Passover. Prayer and praise, “the calves of the lips,” superseded the bloody sacrifice (Hos. xiv. 2). Ministers are ordained in the room and stead of priests, and the place where two or three are met in the name of Christ is as sacred as the temple. Nothing is more appropriate than a change in the seal of the Abrahamic covenant from a bleeding wound to the sprinkling with clean water, when the Church received from the Lord a thorough revision of its modes of worship, adapting it to a better covenant.

This course of thought suggests answers to certain objections which are urged against infant baptism. The words of Peter at the Pentecost are quoted: “Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins,” etc. (Acts ii. 38). Luke adds, “Then they that gladly

received the word were baptized" (ver. 41). The adverse argument is, that infant children are not entitled to baptism, inasmuch as they cannot repent of sin, or gladly receive the word. The reply is, that this mode of reasoning would hurry one to a more pitiable conclusion. For it is written that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36). The logic, therefore, that deprives the little ones of baptism for the lack of personal repentance, consigns them to the "wrath of God" for the lack of personal faith. The simple truth is, that God's promises and threatenings are addressed, not to helpless infants, but to those who have come to years of understanding. To this should be added that we decline to baptize the children of unbelieving parents, because the baptism of the infant is not necessary to its salvation, and because we have no authority from the Lord to administer the ordinance to children whose parents do not profess faith in Christ.

Other exceptions that are taken to infant baptism apply in full force to infant circumcision. Thus, circumcision is a sign of the Abrahamic covenant. But the child of eight days is destitute of self-consciousness, reason, will, affections. speech: how, it may be asked, can he enter into covenant with God? Again, circumcision is the seal of the righteousness that is by faith: with what propriety, one may demand, could the seal be imposed on a child, who, in the nature of the case, could not put forth the act of faith? Further, the rite bound him who received it, to purity of heart and obedience towards God. How unreasonable, one may say, — nay, how preposterous, — is the idea of binding an infant child to pious obligations! To these and all similar interrogations a sufficient answer appears in the command of God: "He that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you;" and, "The uncircumcised man-child shall be cut off from his people." The answer to questionings of a similar purport, in regard to infant baptism, is substantially the same, — the ordinance of God requiring us to baptize our children. Nor is the rational ground for the circumcision of



the child in the family of Abraham, and its baptism in the Christian household, unsound or obscure. We may find an analogy in the structure of human society.

The law of the land meets the free-born child at the entrance gate of life. At the moment of his birth he becomes, to the most important of all intents and purposes, a citizen of the commonwealth. The whole power of the state, even its magistracy, police, military force, and instruments of punishment, are pledged, in the sight of all men, to the protection of the person, estate, inchoate liberty, and happiness of that helpless child. To take away his property illegally is a fraud; to steal his property, or to kidnap his person, is a felony; and to kill him wantonly is a capital crime. Let it be imagined that some mark in the flesh, or some application of water to his person, should, by the law of the land, be made the sign of his citizenship and the guaranty of his rights: would it be reasonable to withhold this sign from him until he shall reach the age of twenty-one? Should it not rather be applied at the time when he begins life, and with life his citizenship? Now, it pleased God to follow that rule in his spiritual kingdom. At the moment of his birth into the family of Abraham, the child became an heir of the everlasting covenant, a member of the Church of God. He was of the stock from which should proceed nations, and kings, and priests, and prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, of whom the world was not worthy. Above all, he came into the race in which the Lord of glory, in the fulness of time, became incarnate. As the sign of his birthright, he received an indelible mark at the age of eight days. So also in the Christian Church. The child of believing parents is in that respect within the covenant of promise. In token thereof he is to be baptized without unnecessary delay, in token of an ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of the remission of sins, and of everlasting life. No reason can be given for withholding this ordinance from him until he professes faith in Christ at the age of ten or twenty or fifty; no reason, that is to say, that does not impugn infant circumcision in the Old-Testament Church; no reason that would not forbid a free-born child to receive a guaranty of his

citizenship until he is old enough to take the oath of allegiance.

Professor H. Ewald of Göttingen had but a feeble sense of the spiritual meaning of the Abrahamic covenant, but his fine historical insight led him into a course of thought in regard to circumcision, which applies in full force to infant baptism. "Circumcision," he held, "was the symbol of consecration for entrance into the community of Jehovah. Its meaning is extended far beyond its corporeal signification. It becomes itself sanctified, a sacrament. It furnished an image of the higher purity which the whole people of Israel felt they possessed by the side of other nations. The benefits of the community of the true God are not imparted for the first time at the fourteenth, or the twelfth, or the seventh year of their age." Speaking further of circumcision he says, "It was also well for the child, when it began to be self-conscious, to be always met by an image of the good which had been thought, vowed, and done for it, before it had any consciousness. It is well again for adults to recognize the child as always partaking, as far as possible for it, in every right and duty of the community."<sup>1</sup> The learned author could have said nothing more appropriate if he had been treating of the sacrament of baptism, and the rights in it of the children of believers.

It ought not to be forgotten that one-half of the members of the Old-Testament Church were little children. Their church-membership, and the token thereof, were secured to them by the covenant with their father Abraham. These were religious rights which they had enjoyed unchallenged through all the generations. By no word of Christ or his apostles were the children shut out of the New-Testament Church, or deprived of baptism, the new sign of church-membership. In the language of Lightfoot, "There was need of a plain and open prohibition against the baptism of infants, if our Saviour would not have them baptized." "His silence, and the silence of Scripture, on this matter, confirms pedobaptism, and continueth to all ages."<sup>2</sup> The apostles went everywhere preaching the gospel, and baptiz-

<sup>1</sup> Ewald: *Antiq. of Israel*, pp. 95, 96.

<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot: *Works*, vol. ii. 59.

ing their converts. Their refusal to baptize the children of believers, if declared and persisted in, if defended in sermons repudiating pedobaptism, would have awakened universal surprise. This new doctrine would, it is almost certain, have called forth from the Jewish converts remonstrances such as these: "The covenant with Abraham is everlasting, and it embraces little children; when has the Almighty revoked that benefit? Have our children lost their spiritual rights under the covenant, that they must be deprived of its seal? Christ came, so we are assured, to enlarge and multiply the privileges of the sons of God; when and where has he narrowed down the already narrow institutes of old Judaism, taking away what we had before he came, instead of giving more and more? Peter at the Day of Pentecost urged the multitude to be baptized, on the ground that the promise is unto us and to our children; and now, behold! we are told that the baptism which was offered to us is denied to our children. Jesus said of our little ones, 'Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven;' but now we hear that they are no nearer to the Saviour than the children of the heathen. Where is the better covenant, founded on better promises, that ye spake of?" The Gentile Christians also would, in the refusal of baptism to their infant children, have had their grievance: "Paul has taught the Corinthian Church that the faith of a believing parent makes the children holy, consecrated to the service of God (1 Cor. vii. 14): wherefore, then, should the outward sign of consecration be withheld from them?" Moreover, the unbelieving Jews standing by would have somewhat to say: "These apostles, so called, teach customs which it is not lawful for us to receive. They refuse to circumcise the little children of their sect; professing that they are commanded not to circumcise but to baptize, they will not even baptize these children. Declaring that the Abrahamic covenant is of perpetual obligation, they disregard its provisions for the children, treating them as aliens and strangers." It is safe to assume, in the case supposed, that such remonstrances would have been drawn from Christian parents, and such taunts would have fallen from the unbelieving world. The absence in

the records of any trace of such remonstrances and taunts remains to be accounted for on the assumption that infant baptism was not an ordinance of the primitive Church, and was peremptorily denied to the children of believers.

If any one asks a reason for the *silent* introduction of such a change as that from circumcision to baptism, the answer is at hand, and may well be stated as this chapter closes. The Lord Jesus was careful to avoid all needless disturbance of the feelings of the Jews. Whatever changes it was necessary to make in the methods of administering the affairs of his kingdom, he preferred to make quietly and without causing agitation. Therefore, instead of exasperating the Jews by expressly abrogating the Passover, and the seventh-day sabbath, and circumcision, he quietly instituted, or caused to be instituted, the Lord's Supper, and the Lord's Day, and baptism, and provided for their quietly and gradually taking the places, respectively, of the others. And the change being made, from circumcision as a seal of the covenant, to baptism as a seal of the same, it was sure to go without saying, as it obviously did go, that the seal should be applied to those to whom the promise came, viz., "unto you and your children" (Acts ii. 39).

## CHAPTER XXI.

## CHRIST IN THE COVENANT.

A THREEFOLD revelation respecting Jesus Christ is made in the historical development of the Abrahamic covenant. The Angel-Jehovah was a manifestation of Christ's Divine personality; Melchizedek was a type of his office as king and high priest; and the offering of Isaac was a symbol of his atoning work.

I. In the Pentateuch, and throughout the later scriptures, repeated mention is made of a Being distinct from Jehovah in his person, who yet bears the name, claims the prerogatives, and accepts the homage, which belong only to the Almighty. The distinctive name of this being is, in the Hebrew, *Mal-ahel*, and its equivalent is the Jehovah-Angel. The Church, at least since the Reformation, has generally held that the Jehovah-Angel was the Son of God. The proof of this doctrine is briefly as follows: (1) The Angel of Jehovah is called interchangeably Jehovah, Lord, God, and the Angel of God. In Gen. xvi. the Angel of Jehovah is represented as appearing to Hagar in the wilderness, and him she calls God: "Thou God seest me." In the same chapter, the sacred writer speaks of him four several times as the Angel of Jehovah, and twice as Jehovah. In Gen. xxii. we read that he who commanded Abraham to slay Isaac was God; he who arrested the patriarch's arm and knife at the moment of immolation was the Angel of Jehovah; and he who uttered the oath of blessing was Jehovah,—three Divine names given almost simultaneously to the same person. The being with whom Jacob wrestled at the River Jabbok was, according to Hosea, God,

the Lord God of hosts, Jehovah, and an angel; but Jacob called him God, saying, "I have seen God face to face" (Gen. xxxii. 30; Hos. xii. 3-6). The Angel of Jehovah who appeared to Moses in the bush, Jehovah whose eye was on Moses when he turned aside to see the great sight, and God who called to him out of the flame, were one and the same person (Exod. iii.). At the exodus God led the people out of Egypt; Jehovah went before them in the pillar of cloud and of fire; the Angel of God was in the cloud; and Jehovah looked through the pillar upon the Egyptians, and directed Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea (Exod. xiii., xiv.). In the narrative of Gideon's vision, the Angel of Jehovah is identified with the Angel of God, with the Lord God, and with Jehovah. Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of Jehovah face to face." And Jehovah said unto him, "Peace be unto thee; fear not; thou shalt not die" (Judg. vi. 22, 23). The story of Manoah (Judg. xiii.) applies the five titles to the same Divine Being, — the Angel of Jehovah, Angel of God, Jehovah, Lord, and God. The Jehovah-Angel, therefore, was the uncreated God.

(2) This Being claimed and exercised the Divine prerogatives. To Hagar he gave promise that he would multiply her seed exceedingly. Of Ishmael he said, "I will make of him a great nation." At the sacrifice of Isaac this Angel arrested the hand of Abraham raised to slay his son, and promised, with an oath, to bless the patriarch, to multiply his posterity as the stars and the sands, and in his seed to bless all nations (Gen. xxii.). Such promises proceed not from created angels, but from God only.

(3) He accepted holy adoration. When Hagar said to the Angel of the Lord, "Thou God seest me," he did not rebuke her (Gen. xvi.). At the bush Moses hid his face, "for he was afraid to look upon God." To Abraham, at the altar of Isaac, the Angel of Jehovah said, "Now I know thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." Hosea remarks that Jacob "had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him."

He was not a created angel, but the Lord God of hosts. Of these many testimonies this is the sum: The name Jehovah-Angel is used by the sacred writers interchangeably with other Divine appellations, including the incommunicable name Jehovah. He relies on no Divine commission, but speaks and acts as if he were the Ruler of the universe, and the covenant God of Israel; he controls the destinies of men and of nations; he assumes, as belonging to himself, Divine honor and majesty; he hears and answers prayer, and accepts worship at the altar, even the sacrifice of Isaac, as an offering made directly to himself. No created being was that Angel: he was the Lord God of hosts.

(4) The link that connects the Jehovah-Angel with the Lord Jesus is supplied by Malachi: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith Jehovah of hosts" (Mal. iii. 1). The advent of the two messengers or angels (*Heb., Mal-ahch*) is predicted here. One is the Angel of the covenant, who is also the Lord of the temple; the other is his forerunner. These words are explained by our Lord himself in Matt. xi. 10. He declares that the forerunner is John the Baptist. By necessary implications the other is identified with our Lord Jesus Christ, the Angel of the covenant, and the Lord suddenly appearing in the temple of which he is the Sovereign. A most authoritative declaration this is of the identity of the Angel of the covenant with Jesus Christ.

We come here upon a ready answer to the suggestion that the Angel of Jehovah is a Divine Being, but he is in all respects, in person as well as substance, identical with Jehovah himself, in nothing two, in all things one. To this the reply may well be, that, in the Old Testament, we are specifically and diligently taught that Jehovah and the Jehovah-Angel were the same in substance, and in the New Testament our Saviour declares that they are distinct in person. We have here an instance of the progressive character of the Divine

revelation. Upon an examination of the whole testimony we may safely conclude, with Vitringa, that he who in the history of the patriarchs and judges is the Angel of Jehovah, who in the wilderness is the Angel of God's presence, or the Angel of his face (Isa. lxiii. 9), who in the last of the prophets is the Angel of the covenant, — the same Person is revealed in the New Testament as the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person (Heb. i. 3), the image of the invisible God (2 Cor. iv. 4; Col. i. 15), in whose face the glory of God shines (2 Cor. iv. 6), and in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii. 9).<sup>1</sup>

II. (Gen. xiv.) Melchizedek is set forth by the sacred writers as an historical type of Jesus Christ in his offices of king and priest of the most high God. The sense of the mysterious which is awakened by the mention of this venerable name lies not so much in his personality as in his typical relation. In respect to his person it may be confidently said that he was not, as many have thought, a temporary incarnation of the Son of God, or an angel, or Shem or Enoch or Job, or any other patriarch risen from the dead. He was a man, a contemporary of Abraham, and the sheik or king of the city of Salem. He was, moreover, a priest of the most high God, one of the last of the holy men who, like Enoch and Noah, were witnesses of the truth and worshippers of Jehovah in the period of universalism which went before the establishment of particularism in the family of Abraham. Neither the sacred record nor contemporaneous tradition informs us whether he was a Canaanite or a Shemite, who were his parents or kindred, or when he was born and died. He appears on the field of history and soon vanishes, like a great light suddenly flashing out of the darkness of heathenism, and suddenly quenched. Hengstenberg remarks that he "stands severed from national development as a wonder in the midst of the apostate world." He is chiefly wonderful because, although not of the promised seed, he was chosen of God to stand as the type of the Lord Jesus Christ: "The Lord hath said unto my Lord, The Lord

<sup>1</sup> Alexander, Isa. lxiii. 9.



hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. cx. 1, 4). The wonder grows when we remember that his name is not mentioned from Moses to David, who records the oath, nor is it mentioned again from David to Paul. Paul expounds the oath, and points out the typical relation of Melchizedek to the Lord Jesus (Heb. vii.).

(1) Melchizedek, so Moses observes, was "king of Salem, and the priest of the most high God," both king and priest (Gen. xiv. 18). Christ, by virtue of the Divine oath, became a royal Priest after the same order. He was The BRANCH of Zechariah, bearing the glory of Jehovah, sitting or ruling upon his throne, being a Priest upon his throne (Zech. vi. 13). (2) Melchizedek was a righteous and peaceful king,—the king of righteousness and the prince of peace (Heb. vii. 2). As such he was the type of Him who is in the supreme sense the "Prince of peace" (Isa. ix. 6), and who effects our peace with God by the exercise of his offices of King and Priest. (3) The king of Salem was not of the Levitical order. He lived four hundred years before that order was created. His name cannot be found in the genealogy of any sacerdotal family on earth. Indeed, in contemplation of the law of the Levitical priesthood he "was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life" (Heb. vii. 3). The key to this problem is found in the sixth verse of the chapter. Speaking of Melchizedek, Paul says that "his descent is not counted from them,"—the sons of Levi; that is to say, he had no Levitical genealogy. None of Levi's pedigrees contains the name of Melchizedek, or the name of his father, or the name of his mother, or the names of his ancestors, or the date of his birth, or the date of his death; they do not show that such a man ever lived, or that he had any parents or ancestor, or that he was born and died. There was, therefore, in the days of Abraham, a royal priest utterly unknown to the Levitical priesthood; and Jesus Christ was after that order. Neither of them came of any sacerdotal family. That Jesus did not, is evident; for he was of the tribe of Judah, and Moses spake nothing which connects that tribe with the priest-

hood (Heb. vii. 14). The sum of it all is, that neither the type nor the antitype had a sacerdotal pedigree. (4) In the Aaronic order there were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death. Christ was a separate priest, made not after the order of Aaron in which there were many, but after the order of Melchizedek, in which there was only one. No priestly father went before him, no priestly son came after him; he was not a link in the chain of sacerdotal predecessors and successors. Christ, because he lives forever, holds a priesthood like that of Melchizedek, "which passeth not from one to another" (Heb. vii. 24, *margin*). (5) Christ's priesthood, like that of Melchizedek, was superior to that of Aaron. The proof of this begins with the fact that Abraham acknowledged his inferiority to Melchizedek. Abraham paid tithes to him, and received a blessing from him in return. Abraham's subordinate position is established by the rule that the inferior pays tribute to the superior, and by the rule that "beyond all contradiction the less is blessed of the better" (Heb. vii. 7). Paul extends this doctrine, showing that inasmuch as Levi was in the loins of Abraham it may be said that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek in the person of his ancestor and representative; and nothing is better understood than the decisive influence exerted on the position of a natural heir by the acts of a remote progenitor. From this it follows that Christ, being made a priest after the order of one who was superior to Levi's son Aaron, was Aaron's superior in the sacerdotal office. This inference was unwelcome to the Hebrews who read Paul, but not the less conclusive for all that. (6) Unlike Aaron, Melchizedek was competent to offer gifts and sacrifices in behalf of all men everywhere who worshipped God,—both for his countrymen the Canaanites, and for the Shemite Abraham. He was a high priest at large; and as such was a type of Christ, who holds a universal vocation, having made a propitiation for the sins of the world. (7) No limitation was put upon Melchizedek's term of service: he was high priest so long as he lived. In like manner, Christ's office of Priest will continue until the work of redemption is finished,

and he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. xv. 24; Heb. vii. 8). (8) Aaron and his sons were put into office without the solemnity of the Divine oath. But Christ was inducted "with an oath" by Him that said unto him, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. cx. 4; Heb. vii. 23, 24). From the teaching of the covenant history in regard to the intimate nature of Christ as Divine, and to his exaltation as a Priest sitting on his throne, the transition is natural to his death as an offering for sin represented in the sacrifice of Isaac.

III. Bishop Butler furnishes an appropriate introduction to this transaction: "If it were commanded to cultivate the principles, and act from the spirit, of treachery, ingratitude, cruelty, the command would not alter the nature of the case or action, in any of the instances. But it is quite otherwise in precepts which require only the doing an external action; for instance, taking away the property or life of any. For men have no right to either life or property, but what arises solely from the grant of God: when this grant is revoked, they cease to have any right at all in either; and when the revocation is made known, as surely it is possible it may be, it must cease to be unjust to deprive them of either."<sup>1</sup> Bishop Butler's position is, no doubt, impregnable. It raises, however, the question whether Abraham held a sufficient Divine warrant to offer up Isaac as a burnt-sacrifice. In reply to this question it may be said, first, that the command was intelligible and explicit. It was addressed directly to Abraham: "God said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Here I am" (Gen. xxii. 1). The thing to be done was described with distressing amplification: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering." The time was fixed, "take now;" and the place, "the land of Moriah;" and the person, "thy son Isaac;" and the proceeding, "offer him for a burnt-offering." Whilst this precision does not prove that the communication was from God, yet such precision uniformly enters into the Divine commands:

<sup>1</sup> Analogy, Part II., chap. iii.

they are not of doubtful interpretation. Next, the message came to Abraham through the medium of a Divine manifestation to his senses; the eighth of the series of the theophanies which God granted to him. The patriarch could not be mistaken in regard to the signs and tokens of a theophanic revelation; the sound of God's voice was no less familiar than the voice of Sarah or Isaac. Again, the test to which God brought his faith and obedience was in the line of his lifelong religious experience. The leading trial which he endured for twenty-five years, turned on his condition as an old man, childless, condemned, according to the course of nature, to perpetual childlessness; and yet, all along, he embraced an outstanding promise of a son to be born to him in his marriage with Sarah. He was left to try various expedients, one of them a plural marriage, in order to secure the promise; but they all failed. At first he was required to believe that, in spite of the unchangeable laws of nature, Isaac should be born; "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief" (Rom. iv. 20). At last he was required to believe that Isaac, in spite of the knife and the fire, would live to be the next progenitor of the chosen seed. He could hardly fail to believe that the command to slay Isaac was from God, inasmuch as it took the direction, so familiar to him, of the Divine plan of his life. Finally all doubt, if doubt there was in his bosom, was cleared up by the voice of the Angel of Jehovah, arresting his arm at the moment of immolation. The mystery in which the eighth theophany begins, "God did tempt Abraham," was cleared up by the ninth, "Lay not thine hand on the lad;" and again by the tenth, in which God swore by himself to reward his servant by a blessing on him personally, on his posterity, and on all the nations of the earth, because he had obeyed God's voice.

A conjecture, if it be reasonable, in respect to the state of Abraham's mind and conscience, may throw light on the transaction. In the days of Moses, the Canaanites sacrificed their children to their idols. Moses says, "For even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire of their gods" (Deut. xii. 31; Ps. cvi. 37). It is proper to assume that at an

earlier period Abraham saw the "sons and daughters of the Canaanites passing through fire;" "the first born for their transgressions, the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul." And it may have seemed to Abraham that if the heathen were resolute enough to give their children to Moloch, he ought to be able to offer up his son, even his only son, at the command of the Almighty; otherwise it might be said that a servant of the only living and true God had come behind his idolatrous neighbors in holy obedience. Moreover, the thought of the ancient mind the world over was, that the son was the property of the father, and the wife the property of the husband. The wife and children were personally identified with the head of the family, just as the flesh and bones and blood are held together in the unity of the body. "A man," say the Laws of Manu, "is perfect, when he consists of himself, his wife, and his son."<sup>1</sup> Upon this principle the whole family of a criminal or an enemy were put to the sword with him. The father, likewise, had the power of life and death over the son. This rule found expression in Reuben, when he said to his father, "Slay my two sons, if I bring him [Joseph] not to thee" (Gen. xlii. 37). The thought, if it was in the mind of Abraham, could not make Isaac any the less dear to him, or his struggle at the altar the less bitter, even if he was sustained both by a sense of obligation to obey God, and by his right as a father to dispose of the life of his son. Abraham could not love Isaac the less because the lad was at his mercy, but he loved God more.

Abraham's further persuasion was that God would, in some way, spare the life of Isaac. A dim presentiment to that effect appears in what he said to his servants at the slope of the mountain, "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you;"<sup>1</sup> and in what he said to Isaac, "God will himself provide a lamb for a burnt-offering." This hope, if at first only a presentiment, very soon became an assurance; for by faith "he accounted that God was able to raise his son from the dead," and that he would raise

<sup>1</sup> Mozley: *Ruling Ideas*, p. 37.

him from the dead. That was his solution of the problem, of which one condition was the Divine promise that Isaac should live to become the father of many nations, the other condition being, that before the sun went down Isaac should be slain, and his body reduced to ashes. In the gift of a Divine inspiration, revealing to him the resurrection of the dead, and in a faith not less Divine than inspiration, the wonderful old man found rest for his laboring heart and conscience. The sentiments that ruled the hour were parental tenderness, the total denial of self, the spirit of unquestioning obedience to God, and faith in the purpose and power of God to make good his word.

This transaction calls attention to the Divine command requiring Abraham to offer Isaac for a burnt-offering, to the Divine command arresting the immolation, and to the honest intention of the patriarch at the moment. A broad distinction is to be taken between what God required Abraham to undertake, and what God had resolved that he himself would do. He required the patriarch, on his part, to offer up Isaac; God resolved, for his own part, to interpose at the decisive moment, and to save the life of the lad. Kurtz suggests, that, in the case of any other than God, this would have been a dangerous experiment: not so in God, who held the issue in his own hands. Turning now to Abraham, when "he stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son," we may say that it was undeniably his intention to offer up Isaac. The conviction that God was able to raise his son from the dead did not hinder — it strengthened, rather — his purpose to put him to death. He surrendered his son to the will of God in good faith, without delay, hesitation, or reserve, silencing the sobbings of paternal love, offering no plea for the lad or for Sarah or himself. In his own inward and thorough purpose, the sacrifice was complete, although the offering did not pass over into an actual sacrifice of blood and fire. If ever there was an instance in which the purpose to do any thing was equivalent to the doing of it, such an instance is before us. Our Saviour extends this general doctrine, showing that the unchaste desire — and desire goes before intention — carries with it the guilt of the

overt act (Matt. v. 28). Even so, the actual slaughter of Isaac, and the burning of his dead body, would have added nothing to Abraham's resolve to part with what was dearest to him at this command of God, nothing to the fulness of his holy obedience, nothing to the heroism of his self-crucifixion. His sufferings were over when he raised the knife, and to him the boy was as good as dead. It is of the utmost importance here to observe that God accepted what his servant had done, as a substantial compliance with his requisition. The Angel Jehovah prohibited Abraham from laying his hand upon the lad; "for," said he, "now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou *hast not withheld* thy son, thine only son, from me." The Divine Being went still further, and made the act the basis of an oath of benediction: "By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, for because thou hast *done this thing*, and hast *not withheld* thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee," etc. To the same effect is the testimony of the Holy Spirit through Paul, saying, "By faith Abraham when he was tried *offered up* Isaac, and he that had received the promises *offered up* his only begotten son" (Heb. xi. 17). Putting together the *not withheld*, twice uttered by the Angel Jehovah; "*Thou hast done this thing*," the words of the angel; and the *offered up*, twice used by the Holy Spirit through Paul, — we have the highest possible authority for saying that the Almighty accepted the act of Abraham as a complete oblation. To the full extent of the sense which God gave to the command, the patriarch did not withhold, but offered up, the lad. Taking the will for the deed, accepting the intention to make the offering, as in itself an offering, Jehovah rescued the victim, in token that his command had been substantially obeyed.

The significance of this transaction is not exhausted when treated as an act of faith and holy obedience. It is most memorable as illustrative of the gospel, and is therefore a part of the Christology of the Abrahamic covenant. It should be premised, however, that Isaac and his sacrifice are not set forth in Scripture as types of Christ and his death on the cross. According to a widely accepted definition, a type is a person or thing in the Old Testament divinely appointed to represent

a person or thing in the New-Testament history. It is a species of inspired prophecy, a prediction set forth in an object-lesson. Whoever or whatever in the Old Testament is, in terms, or by good and necessary conclusion, declared in the New Testament to be a type, is to be accepted as such; nothing else is entitled to that distinction. Thus Adam as the federal head of his posterity, and David as the king in Zion, Melchizedek as king and priest, are in the New Testament set forth as types of Christ; so also are the serpent in the wilderness, the manna, the smitten rock, and, conspicuously, the office of high priest, and the atonement which he offered for sin. But no typical relation is anywhere authoritatively established between Isaac and Christ. Perhaps an explanation is to be found in a suggestion that the sacrifice of Isaac was not propitiatory, but simply and specifically a test of faith and obedience, while the death of Christ was specifically and emphatically a vicarious atonement for sin.<sup>1</sup> Whether or not this suggestion be accepted, the fact itself remains of the non-typical position of Isaac. But the resemblances between the offering made in his person, and the death of Christ, are obvious and instructive.

1. To begin with, the first step was now taken towards the prohibition of human sacrifices. The heathen burned their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods, to expiate crime, or to avert the wrath of their deities, or to secure their favor in important enterprises. By way of prohibiting this unnatural crime, the Jehovah-Angel uttered his peremptory command to Abraham, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing to him." In due time the Mosaic law denounced human sacrifices as an "abomination which Jehovah hates," and ordained that any Israelite or foreigner in Israel guilty of the offence should surely be put to death. Not only were these inhuman rites cast out of the worship of the Church forever, but the people were required to publish abroad their reprobation of the crime by stoning the criminal (Lev. xx. 2; Deut. xii. 31). Ewald describes Abraham as "the greatest hero of faith," and remarks that "the highest trial of faith ends with

<sup>1</sup> Mozley, *Ruling Ideas*, p. 74. Milman, *History of the Jews*, vol. i. p. 23.



the gain of a new and great truth, that Jehovah does not desire human sacrifices." <sup>1</sup>

2. The animal provided by the Almighty for Isaac's release sets forth the principle of substitution, and its ground in the Divine ordinances. Whether Isaac's sacrifice was, properly speaking, expiatory, or simply a test of faith, it remains true that an acceptable victim was put in the place of the man doomed to die; the lesser in dignity was taken for the greater, the animal for the son. Substitution enters as an essential element into the Mosaic ritual. If any man sins, the priest is directed to offer for him a lamb for a sin-offering; and so "the priest shall make atonement for his sin which he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him" (Lev. iv. 35). And substitution was one of the broad characteristics of the death of Christ: "In due time Christ died for the ungodly."

3. Abraham relinquished the best and dearest of all that he had, when he offered up Isaac. So also did the Almighty. The words of God, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him for a burnt-offering," are almost repeated in a verbal echo in John, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."

4. There is a good and sound sense in which it may be said that Isaac offered up himself on the altar. According to the received chronology, he was now twenty-five years old. There can be no doubt that he was in the strength of early manhood, for he carried up the mountain the wood for the burnt-offering. Although he could have successfully resisted any attempt on his life, he freely consented to be bound and laid on the altar; "as a lamb he opened not his mouth." In this he represented the self-consecration of Christ to the sufferings of the cross. "He gave himself for us." Christ said, "Abraham saw my day, and was glad." Through the vision of inspiration he beheld the day when what he and Isaac had done—he in the offering-up of his son, Isaac in consenting to the sacrifice—should pass over into the unspeakable gift which God made of his Son, and which his Son made of himself at the cross.

<sup>1</sup> Hist. Israel, i. 333.

5. The wonderful death-pang of Abraham was endured on a mountain in the land of Moriah. The Hebrew tradition, without a whisper to the contrary, identifies the scene of the sacrifice with the site of the temple at Jerusalem. The weight of Christian authorities supports this tradition, although a few scholars have selected Gerizim as the place.<sup>1</sup> In behalf of the Hebrew tradition it is shown, first, that the temple was built on Mount Moriah (2 Chron. iii. 1). Abraham went to a mountain in the land of Moriah. Next, Tristram alleges that, "travelling at the ordinary rate of the country, Jerusalem would just be reached on the third day (as required by the narrative) from Beer-sheba; to reach Moreh (Gerizim) in the same time, is *impossible*, at the pace of peasants with their asses" (Geikie, i. 399).

There is nothing, either in the reason of the case or in the comparative weight of the authorities, to disturb the cherished conviction that Abraham's altar consecrated the height which in due time became the site of the holy temple. "The primary object of the command," says Hengstenberg, "was to give this place a primitive historic consecration." Abraham called the place Jehovah-jireh, which being interpreted is, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be provided" (*Rev. Ver.*). We may take this as a prophecy that Jehovah would thereafter provide on that mountain, in the Lamb of God, a sacrifice which taketh away the sin of the world.

6. The virtues exhibited by Abraham are identical with those which Christ bestows on his disciples. His faith in the promises of God was not weakened by the command which apparently rendered those very promises null and void. His obedience to God also was implicit, prompt, unhesitating.

<sup>1</sup> FOR JERUSALEM. — Josephus, *Antiq.*, I. 13, 1; Ewald's *Hist. Isra.*, vol. iii. 331; Hengstenberg's *King. of God*, i. 165; Keil and Delitzsch; Tristram, *Land of Isra.*, p. 154; Milman's *Hist. Jews*, i. 24; Geikie, i. 399; Jacobus, Lange, Knobel, Kurtz, Kalisch, Bp. of Ely, all on Gen. xxii. 2; *Bib. Dicts.* of Fausett, Kitto, McClintock and Strong.

FOR GERIZIM. — Stanley's *Jewish Church*, i. 53; DeWette, Michaelis, Bleek, Tuch, Lieut. Gonder; Smith's *Dict.*

DOUBTERS. — Alford, Murphy, Fairbairn.

Again, his surrender to God of what was dearest to him shows that he was like God, who gave up his dearest for us sinners. And yet the likeness was partial only, because, as Hengstenberg remarks, "God gave in reality what he demanded from Abraham only in the intention, not in the accomplishment."

Here the history of the old patriarch culminates. Greater things he could not do; greater wonders he could not see; a more fiery trial could not threaten to devour him. He received thenceforth no new theophany, no new revelation. He had finished his course, he had kept the faith. And as an indication that the patriarchal office was about to pass over to Isaac, the narrative of the altar from which Abraham "received him in a figure" is immediately followed by a genealogy of the family in Mesopotamia, into which Rebecca, the wife of Isaac, had been born. The rest is briefly told. Sarah died, and is the only woman whose age at her death is preserved in the Scriptures. Her husband purchased a family burying-ground, and buried her within its enclosure. He showed thereby, as Calvin remarks, that "the promise of the inheritance would not be made void by his death or that of his people, but it rather came then and there into full effect." He died at the good old age of one hundred and seventy-five years, and his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him by the side of Sarah in the cave of Machpelah.

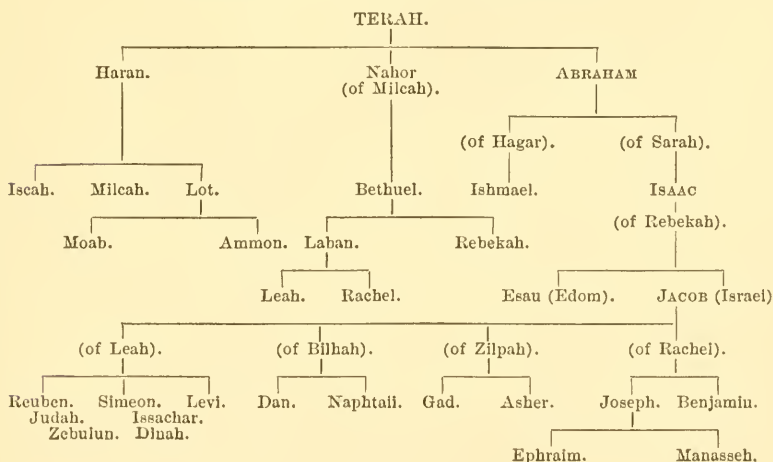
The close of Abraham's career opens the way for a survey of the progress of revelation from Adam and from Noah to Abraham. By comparing the revelations made to Adam with those made to Abraham, we perceive, (1) that the supreme gift to Adam took the form of a judicial sentence: his seed should be the serpent-bruiser, the conqueror, destroying the work of the Devil. To Abraham the revelation took the form of a promise: his seed should bless all the families of the earth. (2) To the father of the race, salvation is described as coming through the medium of his posterity at large; the father of the faithful was assured that salvation should be deposited in his particular family. (3) The heirs of promise were narrowed down from Adam through the generations. At first the chosen people

were in his posterity, then successively in the posterity of Seth, Noah, Shem, Terah, and Abraham, while the peoples living side by side with them were counted out. (4) The self-revelation of God made corresponding progress. To Adam he was known as Elohim the absolute or supreme God; next, as Jehovah, the God of salvation, the God who concludes and keeps covenants with his people; and shortly afterwards as Jehovah Elohim, the Lord God. To Abraham, God made himself known as the El Shaddai, the Almighty. In the theophanies the uncreated Jehovah-Angel revealed his glory, resting on the personal distinction and the substantial identity of the God invisible and the God-man seen face to face, and so laying the foundation for a true Christology. (5) Side by side with the progressive revelation of God, and the appointment of the ordinances of worship, vital piety was developed among believers. Of Adam we have reason to believe that he laid hold of the hope contained in the first gospel. In Abraham the graces of the Spirit were conspicuous,—faith in God, union and fellowship with him, disappointments and sorrows meekly borne, and holy obedience culminating in the complete surrender of self at the altar of Isaac. And with his growth in grace there was a growth in saving knowledge. He saw Christ's day, and was glad, and he apprehended the possibility of the resurrection of the dead.

A comparison of the covenant made with Noah and that made with Abraham shows, (1) that the preservation of the race from destruction by another flood, was in order to prepare the way for the establishment of the Church and kingdom of God in the family of Abraham. (2) In Noah's blessing on Shem, the idea of particularism is obscurely hinted at,—“Blessed be the *Lord* God of *Shem* :” in the covenant with Abraham, full effect is given to the principle. (3) In Noah's prophecy, Shem and Japheth are made heirs of the promised spiritual blessings; nothing is said of Ham's share therein. In the covenant with Abraham, all races, Ham included, are made heirs of the great redemption. (4) To Abraham, more distinctly than to Noah, faith is set forth as the instrument of

justification before God. (5) In Abraham's family, not in Noah's, the visible Church was organized, a long step in advance. (6) The covenant with the second father of the race was confirmed by a sign, the rainbow. The covenant with Abraham was confirmed by the sign of circumcision, and that sign was raised to the dignity of a sacrament. (7) The covenant with Abraham was a better covenant than that with Noah, and conveyed better promises. A beautiful and fertile country was given to him and his seed for a permanent possession. His seed should become a great nation; kings and princes should appear in its bosom. The Almighty was their God, and he would hurl back on the hostile kingdoms the curses which they should disgorge on his chosen people. And as the consummate glory of the Abrahamic race, Christ, the Saviour of the world, should be born in its bosom, and his gospel should subjugate the earth.

GENEALOGY OF THE CHOSEN SEED.



## CHAPTER XXII.

## ISAAC.

## ISAAC'S CHRONOLOGY.

*(According to Usher.)*

<i>Cir. B.C.</i>		<i>AGE.</i>	
1897	Isaac born.		
1892	Mocked by Ishmael . . . . .	5	
1872	Offered up . . . . .	25	
1860	Sarah died . . . . .	37	
1857	Isaac married . . . . .	40	Gen. xxv. 20.
1847	Shem (of Noah) died . . . . .	50	
1837	Esau and Jacob born . . . . .	60	xxv. 26.
1822	Abraham died, aged 175 . . . . .	75	xxv. 7.
1805	Esau sold his birthright . . . . .	92	
1804	Isaac went to Gerar . . . . .	93	
1796	Esau's plural marriage . . . . .	101	xxvi. 34.
1773	Ishmael died, aged 137 . . . . .	124	xxv. 17.
1760	Jacob and Esau blessed . . . . .	137	
1753	Jacob's plural marriage . . . . .	144	
1745	Joseph born . . . . .	152	
1732	Jacob's return to Bethel . . . . .	165	
1729	Joseph sold . . . . .	168	
1717	Isaac died . . . . .	180	xxxv. 28.

GEN. xxv. 11. "And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac." At the moment of Abraham's death, Isaac became the sole heir of the covenant, and the sole representative of the promised seed. And as a sign that the great inheritance which God had deposited with the father had descended to the son, "God blessed his son Isaac," even as he had blessed Abraham just one hundred

years earlier. Isaac had been already blessed in his birth and marriage.

He was by his birth (1) the child of a definite promise. Abraham was twice mistaken; once when he thought that Eliezer his steward would be his heir, and again when he believed that Ishmael would occupy that position. When he perceived that Ishmael was to be superseded by the birth of a son to Sarah, he prayed, "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!" a prayer that Ishmael might not be cast out, but share in the Divine favor and the covenant blessings. One might, though with some reserve, imagine that Abraham anticipated the early death of Isaac as possible, and that in such an event he looked forward to the accession of Ishmael to the great inheritance; taking what has been called "a double security for the fulfilment of the promises." But he was taught to acquiesce in the plan of Providence; for the Lord said to him that Ishmael should live, and be blessed, and be made a great nation, but God would establish his covenant with Isaac for an everlasting covenant (chaps. xvi., xvii.).

2. Isaac was the fruit of a supernatural interposition in the ordinary course of human nature. "God had chosen a people which as yet did not exist, which he was to call into being by his almighty power, *παρὰ φύσιν*, against nature, from a sterile body which was as good as dead."<sup>1</sup> At Isaac's birth, Abraham and Sarah were beyond the age when the human being becomes a parent. So thought the future father and mother. When God said to the husband, "I will give thee a son also of Sarah," the old man fell upon his face and laughed. According to Calvin, he "was partly lifted up with gladness, and partly carried out of himself with wonder." Paul recognized no sin of unbelief in Abraham's laughter: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Gen. xvii. 17; Rom. iv. 20, 21). The laughter of Sarah was an expression of incredulity, if not of derision. As such it was rebuked by the

<sup>1</sup> Kurtz: Old Covenant, i. 204.

Jehovah-Angel (Gen. xviii. 13). "This Divine interposition elevates the whole development above the sphere of mere nature, and transports it into that of grace" (Gen. xviii. 10, 14).<sup>1</sup>

3. Isaac was, undoubtedly, the legitimate son of Abraham. This is proved by the promise of God to him, often repeated. It receives a striking illustration from the incident related in chap. xx. During a visit of Abraham and his wife to Gerar, Abimelech, the heathen king, attempted to take Sarah as his wife. God threatened the king with death if he should come near to her; and afterward he added, "I withheld thee from sinning against me, therefore suffered I thee not to touch her." According to the general opinion of biblical scholars, this incident occurred within the year before the birth of Isaac (Gen. xx. 1; xxi. 2). But God, by a direct interposition, prevented the paternity of Isaac from being brought into doubt. A minute and exact account of the whole transaction was spread upon the sacred record, so that the posterity of Isaac, down to the latest generation, might be assured that they were the children of Abraham. Very significant is the well-considered account in Gen. xx. 5-11, of Sarah's narrow escape from the advances of Abimelech, when compared with the less precise, though sufficient, explanation of her relation with Pharaoh, twenty-five years earlier (Gen. xii. 15-20). In both cases her honor, in the last her maternity as well as her honor, were protected by the act of God.

4. Isaac was the sole representative of the chosen seed, and the sole heir of the chosen land. God said to the old patriarch, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." When God said to him, "Unto thy seed will I give this land," he meant Isaac. The people that should go into Egypt, and be oppressed there, and afterwards go out with great substance, and possess the promised land, were the posterity of Isaac. From Abraham through Isaac, the only son of Sarah, a race arose, unique in character and habits, whose historical position, through all their generations down to this day, has been the problem and wonder of the world.

5. Isaac was a child of the covenant. He was entitled to

<sup>1</sup> Kurtz: *Old Covenant*, i. 206.



this distinction on three grounds. First, he was the "son indeed," promised in the second stage of the covenant. "Abraham said unto God, Oh that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac." Next, he was made, by Divine appointment, a party to the covenant. God said, "I will establish my covenant with him [Isaac], and his seed after him;" "My covenant will I establish with Isaac" (Gen. xvii. 18-21). And, thirdly, he had an hereditary interest in all the promises. Heirship is one of the privileges of a child; and by virtue of his birthright as the sole child of the covenant in Abraham's household, he was entitled to hold the position of its representative. This circumstance justifies the Church, as it now is, in calling the offspring of believers "the children of the covenant." The name itself originated with Peter, after the Day of Pentecost: "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers" (Acts iii. 25). The unique and exalted position assigned to Isaac, in the plan of Providence, appeared not only in the incidents attending his birth, but it gave shape to the whole course of his life. It controlled, for example, the arrangements which were made for his marriage.

GEN. xxiv. — Abraham experienced a twofold anxiety in regard to Isaac's choice of a wife. His marriage with a Canaanitish woman would result in an intermixture of the chosen with the rejected race, and a doomed race, even if it did not weaken Isaac's loyalty to the covenant. If he should go to his kindred in Mesopotamia in search of a wife, he might never return to the promised land. The wise old patriarch made provision against both of these contingencies. He took his faithful old steward into his confidence, and exacted from him a threefold promise, under the sanction of an oath in the most solemn form. The steward swore that he would not marry Isaac to a daughter of the Canaanites; that he would bring a wife to him from Abraham's native country and kindred; and that he would in no event take Isaac to Mesopotamia, not even if the woman should refuse to go to Canaan before she should be

married. Abraham, as usual, solved the problem by his faith. He said to his steward, "The Lord God of heaven . . . shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence" (Gen. xxiv. 7). In due time the steward returned from his journey, bringing with him Rebekah. Isaac met her, and took her to Sarah's tent (xxiv. 67); and she became his wife. The minuteness of the story is justified, not only by its simple beauty, and the insight it affords into the customs and habits of the period, but by the consciousness awakened in Isaac of God's care for himself as the representative of the chosen seed. And in order to direct attention to the special providence in the marriage, Moses had already recorded the genealogy of Rebekah, showing that she was the second cousin of Isaac, being the granddaughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother (Gen. xxii. 20-23).

GEN. xxv. — Before entering on the public career of Isaac, the historian disposes finally of Hagar and Keturah, with their descendants, in order to clear the ground for the history of the chosen seed. Such is the uniform method of the writer. He had already given place in his narrative, first to the race of Cain, and then to the race of Seth. He speaks first of Japheth and Ham, and then of Shem. And here Keturah is dismissed from the record, and after her Ishmael, to make way for Isaac. Prominence is given to Ishmael, by assigning to him a separate section in the narrative. It is the eighth in the series, and is entitled, "The generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son." His twelve sons, twelve princes, corresponding to the twelve patriarchs of Israel, are mentioned by name, and their primeval home in Arabia described. In answer to the touching intercession of Abraham, God had promised to enrich Ishmael with temporal blessings, to build him up into a great and powerful nation under the rule of princes, and to assign a home to him and his posterity. Moses is understood to say that the Ishmaelites occupied the vast regions from the Persian Gulf and the Euphrates to the borders of Egypt; and Josephus confirms that statement.<sup>1</sup> They dwelt also "in the presence of all their

<sup>1</sup> Ant. i. 12, 4.

brethren," near the possessions of the Israelites, Edomites, Midianites, Moabites, Ammonites, and of the other descendants of Terah and Abraham. And no words could more accurately describe the character of the Bedouin Arab than the oracle at the birth of Ishmael, recorded in Gen. xvi. 12. He is a wild man, lawless and ungovernable, often cut to pieces or put to flight in battle, but never subjugated. He is the outlaw among the nations. His proverbial saying is, that "in the desert everybody is everybody's enemy."<sup>1</sup> Although the Bedouins have fulfilled the terms of the oracle, it is to be borne in mind that they did not derive their origin from Ishmael alone. At the dispersion of mankind, about three hundred years before his birth, Arabia was settled by the thirteen sons of Joktan of Shem, and a portion of the family of Cush of Ham.<sup>2</sup> The twelve tribes of Ishmael, with the offspring of Keturah's six sons, of Esau, and perhaps of Lot, became fused down with each other and with the aborigines. Their blood was still further adulterated by that of the many foreign races from Africa, from Abyssinia and other regions, which in later times gained a foothold in Arabia.<sup>3</sup> The student of Scripture prophecy should give due weight to these circumstances in the application of the oracle. With the help of these facts it is easy to dispose of the empty boasts of the Mahometan Arabs that they and notably their great prophet were Ishmaelites of the pure blood. The most that can be said of the Bedouins is that their mixed race is to a certain small degree Ishmaelitish. And yet Mahomet's direct descent from Ishmael is asserted by the Arabs with an intensity and passion bordering on ferocity. Even according to their own authorities, his pedigree, beyond its steps nearest to himself, is very doubtful. Mr. Gibbon, after examining the traditional genealogy, says, "At Mecca I would not dispute its authority; at Lausanne I will venture to observe, (1) *That* from Ishmael to Mahomet, a period of twenty-five hundred years they reckon thirty instead of seventy-five generations. (2) *That* modern Bedouins are ignorant of their history, and

<sup>1</sup> Kalisch: Gen. xvi. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Rawlinson: Orig. of Nations, pp. 246-249.

<sup>3</sup> Ency. Brit., 9th ed., art. Arabia.

careless of their pedigree.”<sup>1</sup> And yet the tradition, if taken as true, yields a remarkable result. Jesus Christ is pre-eminently the seed of the woman: no less notoriously does Mahomet represent the seed of the serpent. If both of them are the sons of Abraham, then in the family of the Friend of God and the Father of the faithful has arisen the longest and fiercest war ever waged by the seed of the serpent on the seed of the woman.

Here begins the ninth section of Genesis: “Now these are the generations of Isaac.” His life after his marriage was uneventful. He was little more than the connecting link in the chain of the promised seed between Abraham his father and Jacob his son. No new promise was made to him. No further development or explanation of the Abrahamic covenant distinguished his life. And yet he received from God decisive evidence that he was of the chosen seed, and the channel through which salvation was conveyed to the coming generations. Among the tokens of the Divine favor, two theophanies were granted to him: one at Gerar, the other at Beersheba (Gen. xxvi. 2-24). In these sacred phenomena, God renewed the covenant which he had made with Abraham; promising to be with Isaac and to bless him, and to give to him with his seed all the land of Canaan. As the consummate promise, God said that in Isaac all nations should be blessed. Just here, however, the record makes mention of two important particulars. In one of these the promises to Isaac are shown to be founded in the oath which God swore to Abraham. Isaac received no new covenant, but a renewal simply of that given to his father; showing that instead of a series of covenants, one to each generation, the original instrument was declared to be one covenant with a continuous life. Nearly eight hundred years later David described the covenant as a word which “God commanded to a thousand generations, even the covenant which he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac, and hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant” (1 Chron. xvi. 15-17). Moreover, God bound up his covenant

<sup>1</sup> *Decline and Fall*, ch. 1., note.

with the faith and obedience of Abraham. He declared that he renewed the promise to Isaac, because, said he, "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, and my laws" (Gen. xxvi. 5),—an encomium which God has not passed on any other human being. Righteousness, obedience to God, was the indispensable condition of the promises.

The close connection of Isaac with Abraham in the line of the chosen seed is set forth in the resemblance between the experience of the father and the son. During the life of both a famine fell upon the land. Abraham went to Egypt on the occasion; and Isaac intended to do the same, but was prohibited by the Almighty from going beyond Gerar. At Gerar he imitated the example of his father, resorting to a falsehood in order to protect his wife from the wicked purposes of the king. The Almighty delivered both Sarah and Rebekah from dishonor, while he left their husbands to the indignant and humiliating reproof of the princes whom they had deceived. To the older and younger patriarchs God gave great worldly prosperity in Gerar. Abraham received a thousand pieces of silver from the sheik. God gave to Isaac a harvest of a hundred-fold, showing that he need not go to Egypt, and that, even in a year of famine, the land of promise was a land of plenty. Abraham dug wells of water, and Isaac used them. The Philistines, for envy, took away the wells from the father, and afterwards filled them with rubbish to the annoyance of his son. The father digged a well in Beersheba, and made a treaty there with the king Abimelech. The son visited the old well, and renewed the treaty; and in memory thereof the well now a second time took the name of Beersheba, the "well of the oath." Abraham planted there a tamarisk, a long-lived evergreen tree, gathering its wealth of foliage in clusters,—an emblem of the everlasting grace of God. Isaac in his turn built an altar there, and called on the name of Jehovah (Gen. xxi. and xxvi.).

His life, as a whole, was not a life of adventure or striking incidents. He passed the first forty years of his life with his parents, and was subject to them. Not until the close of that

period, and after the death of his mother, was he married. Only two children were born to him, and they not until he had been married twenty years. Although a pilgrim and a stranger in the land, he was not migratory like his father and his son. He made but a single journey, going no farther than Gerar, a few miles from home. He returned, after a brief absence, to Canaan, and there he spent the last hundred years of his life. In regard to the activities or sufferings by which this long period was filled, the record observes a silence which is broken by the mention of two incidents only. When Isaac was seventy-five years old, Abraham died. After this we find Isaac at the well Lahai-roi, a secluded and solitary spot, far removed from the haunts of the Canaanites, and well adapted to his retiring disposition. Here, perhaps, at the age of one hundred and thirty-seven, he gave his final bequest to Jacob and Esau. Although greatly enfeebled in body and mind, he lingered forty-three years longer, and, lingering, died when he was one hundred and forty-seven years old.

Isaac's character is not without its charming traits. The virtues of constancy and tenderness were conspicuous in all his domestic relations. He mourned the death of his mother for three years, and until he found comfort in the society of his wife. Rebekah he loved at first sight, and with a double affection. Such was his conjugal fidelity that he never took another wife to her, showing a way of life more excellent than the way followed by his father and by his sons. For Jacob and Esau his affection was never stronger than when they were twenty-seven years old and he was a hundred and thirty-seven. The painful scene of his final benediction upon them shows that his affection for both was purer than the affection of either was for him. We have already seen that if he was twenty-five years of age when he was offered up by Abraham, it is right to imagine that the sacrifice was, on his part, voluntary,—a memorable act of obedience to his father and of self-devotion to God. Other evidences of the existence in him of a spiritual life are made known to us. He had gone to the field to pray when Rebekah arrived; he entreated the Lord that he might

have a son; he held intercourse with God at Gerar; he adhered loyally to the Abrahamic covenant; his life was exemplary as before God and man; though weak in body and mind, he refused to recall the blessing which he had unwittingly granted to Jacob, out of weakness being made strong by the conviction that he had expressed the will of Jehovah.

And yet his softness of character, and his patience under injuries, contrast the vigorous personality of his father. Isaac was not allowed, like Abraham, to go to Egypt in time of famine. Kurtz suggests that Abraham's moral strength protected him from the corrupting customs of the Egyptians, — a resistance to which Isaac, through weakness, would have been unequal.<sup>1</sup> Another series of incidents is more instructive than that. Abraham got possession of a well at Beersheba, and the servants of the sheik took it away from him. Thereupon Abraham "reproved" Abimelech for the bad conduct of his people. The sheik, by way of apology, protested that he had not heard of the outrage. He restored the well, and the parties entered into a treaty of peace under the solemnity of an oath. Abraham made presents to Abimelech; and the latter, by accepting them, acknowledged Abraham's possession of the well. About ninety years later, Isaac went to Gerar with his caravan. The natives, out of envy for his prosperity, filled the old wells purchased many years before by Abraham, with rubbish. Isaac, instead of calling the sheik to account, after the manner of his father, allowed himself to be sent away. Going farther up the valley of Gerar, Isaac cleaned out another well digged by his father; but the natives quarrelled with him, and he digged a third well. From that they drove him still farther away. At last his patience, not his resistance, conquered a peace. He called his newly dug well Rehoboth, — *room* or *breadth*. What the father had gained by resenting injustice, his son obtained by the Divine blessing upon patient submission. And yet, in all the essential particulars, he resembled Abraham. He believed God, obeyed his commands, and maintained his worship.

<sup>1</sup> Kurtz: Old Covenant.

Kurtz is of opinion that "elasticity of endurance, which does not resist evil or contend against it, but by patience and yielding overcomes it, constitutes the fundamental type of his character." Hengstenberg remarks that in Isaac "a pledge is given that a life which is not highly gifted, nor endowed with extraordinary powers, may yet be good and blessed; that faith and truth alone are indispensable." Kalisch says, "If Abraham's enterprising, unsettled life foreshadowed the early history of his descendants, if Jacob was a type of the careful, commercial, unwarlike character of their later days, Isaac may represent the middle period, in which they lived apart from the nations, and enjoyed possession of the fertile land of promise."



## CHAPTER XXIII.

## JACOB AND ESAU.

GEN. xxv. 21-24, xxvii.—Several particulars entered into the position assigned to Jacob in sacred history. In the first place, he was the representative of the covenant, and one of the three illustrious pilgrim fathers. Secondly, in his family the unit became plural. The promises were originally given to one only of Terah's children, — Abraham; then to one of Abraham's eight sons, — Isaac; and in the third generation to one of Isaac's twin children, — Jacob. In Jacob's family the headship of the chosen seed was vested jointly in all his sons, called by Stephen the twelve patriarchs (Acts vii. 8). Thirdly, in the lifetime of Jacob an important change took place in the outward condition of the race. He gathered his entire family, seventy in number, together with the servants, and went to Egypt. There his posterity were held in slavery through several hundred years, and there they expanded into a great nation. This emigration had been already foretold to Abraham. It was foreshadowed also by his visit to Egypt, and by the attempt of Isaac to go thither. Fourthly, Jacob became, by Divine inspiration, a prophet. He predicted the future character and destiny of the several tribes descending from his twelve sons; and he uttered a new Messianic promise, the third in the series to which the first gospel and the blessing of Noah on Shem belonged. Jacob's position gives importance to the incidents connected with his birth.

In the first place, his birth was not in the ordinary course of nature. His father, Isaac, was married at forty years of age, and was childless at sixty. The trial of Abraham's faith, rising

out of the delay for many years of the promise of a son, was repeated in the experience of Isaac. Instead of endeavoring to help God, after the unhappy example of his father in the matter of Hagar, Isaac resorted to prayer: "he entreated the Lord for his wife, and the Lord was entreated of him." Isaac owed his birth to a Divine interposition, so also did Jacob. This phenomenon, twice occurring, indicated that the chosen seed were a peculiar people, and that the spiritual seed of Abraham should be born, not of the will of the flesh, but of God.

Before she became a mother, Rebekah perceived signs in herself of evil omen, if not of personal danger. Two children struggled together within her person. She cried out with distress, and hastened to consult Jehovah. She was informed that she carried in her womb two nations; these should antagonize each other; one of them should be stronger than the other, and the elder should serve the younger. What occurred at the birth of the children explained the meaning of the Divine oracle. The first-born was covered with a suit of reddish-brown hair; him they called Esau, the "shaggy." The younger came forth grasping Esau's heel; him they called Jacob, the "heel-holder" or "supplanter," or "one who trips up his fellow."

This oracle, establishing the supremacy of Jacob over Esau, is used in the later scriptures to teach us that the selection which God makes of the objects of his favor has its ground, not in the objects themselves, but in his own sovereign will. Jehovah told Malachi that he had loved Jacob and hated Esau (Mal. i. 2, 3). Paul takes up the words spoken to the prophet, and remarks that before Isaac's children were born, or had done either good or evil, it was said that the elder should serve the younger; as it is written, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated." That was done, that "the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth" (Rom. ix. 11-13). The words "love" and "hate" are employed idiomatically, here and in other places, to signify simply preference. Thus, in Gen. xxix. 33, Leah

complained that Jacob hated her; and this is explained in ver. 30, "Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah." Again, our Saviour said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26; compare Deut. xxi. 15-17, Prov. xiii. 24, Matt. vi. 24). God preferred Jacob over Esau; that, in short, is the whole case. Now, this preference did not follow the law of primogeniture, for Esau was the oldest; nor was it governed by their parentage, for both of the brothers were born of the same father and mother, and at one birth; nor did it depend on any promise or prayer, for both were given to the parents under the same promise, and in answer to the same entreaty; nor was it secured by the good works of Jacob or the bad conduct of Esau, for the choice was made before they were born, or had done either good or evil. Paul declares that the choice was an act of sovereignty; the reason was not in the brothers, in either or both, but in God. His choice was not irrational, but rested on good and sufficient reasons, which were not revealed. Paul further declares that this selection establishes the doctrine that men are chosen to salvation not for their own merits, but according to God's own good pleasure. "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Rom. ix. 15). Moses does not dismiss the thought here. He goes on to show that the Divine preference of Jacob, as the heir of the promises, was fully justified by the course of events.

Esau's individuality announced itself in his birthmarks. His shaggy exterior was the sign of a rough and sensual vigor. His life fulfilled the sign: "He was a cunning hunter, a man of the field;" abandoning the pastoral life of his race for the perils and stratagems of the chase, and for the wild and roving habits of the Bedouin. He has been called the "after-play of Nimrod." "Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents." He preferred the life of the shepherd to the life of the hunter, pitching his tent quietly in the midst of his flocks and herds.

“Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his wild game;” and one might imagine that a superannuated Isaac would naturally lean for support on an impulsive and robust Esau. Rebekah loved the more gentle and domestic Jacob, taking pride haply in him as the counterpart of herself. So the brothers grew up together, each developing the nature that was in him.

At the age of forty, Esau followed his propensities in contracting a marriage, in a single year, with two daughters of the Hittites, a native tribé in Canaan (Gen. xxvi. 34). In this misalliance Esau disregarded the traditions of his family, identified himself with the rejected and accursed races, made it certain that his children would be born of idolatrous mothers, separating him and them from the land of promise and the blessings of the covenant. This marriage was from the first a grief to Isaac and Rebekah; and twenty years afterwards Rebekah complained that Esau’s wives made her life a weariness (Gen. xxvii. 46). Esau’s double marriage showed that he was controlled by his selfishness rather than by the proprieties of his position as a member of the chosen seed. About nine years later, if we may follow the received chronology, he took another step in the same direction, by the sale of his birthright. In a graphic description of this painful scene, the sacred writer points out the progressive fulfilment of the oracle at the birth of the brothers, establishing the supremacy of the younger over the elder; shows how events were shaped towards the recognition of Jacob as the successor of his father in the patriarchy; unfolds still further the disposition of Esau, and for the first time lights up the character of Jacob. Esau is seen returning from an unsuccessful hunt, tired and hungry. He found in Jacob’s hands a mess of lentils, just prepared, — a favorite dish in Syria and Egypt even to this day. The following conversation occurred: —

ESAU. — Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage, for I am faint.

JACOB. — Sell me this day thy birthright.

ESAU. — Behold, I am at the point of death; and what profit shall this birthright be to me?

JACOB. — Swear to me this day.

Esau confirmed the sale by an oath. "Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils, and supplanted him" (xxv. 29-34).

In this interview Esau appears faint and hungry; turning away from ordinary homely fare to a dainty dish, allowing his appetite to get the better of his self-respect, reckless of the future, greedy for the present; bartering the richest possible inheritance of blessings temporal and spiritual, for a paltry sensual gratification; consenting and swearing to a bargain which disinherited and humiliated him; and complaining, like a fool, that he was about to die, as if his death could excuse him for depriving his children of the patriarchal birthright. Jacob is seen over-reaching Esau, tripping him up. He is crafty, selfish, covetous, seeing instantly and seizing his advantage over Esau, suppressing the impulse, if any he felt, to relieve the hunger of his twin brother without fee or reward; taking from an only brother an inheritance of boundless honor, and giving for it a beggarly return; extorting from the hungry man an unrighteous bargain, and compelling him to bind the bargain by an oath in the name of a righteous God. The historian passes no judgment on Jacob's conduct in the transaction. But neither the writer nor Jacob appears, from any thing that is said afterwards, to have based his claim to the birthright on this bargain and sale. The judgment passed on Esau is made known in these graphic terms: "He did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright." Paul describes him as a "fornicator and profane person, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright" (Heb. xii. 16). The first epithet may be understood in its specific sense, or symbolically, to characterize him as a sensualist. The word "profane" intimates that the sale of his birthright was a kind of simony. The censures uttered by Moses and Paul are justified by the intrinsic value of the birthright, and the trifling price which he set upon it. The special privileges settled on the birthright, during and after the patriarchal age, are thought to be these: the office of the priesthood (Num. iii. 12, 13); supremacy in the

family, the first-born succeeding to the dignity and authority of the father (2 Chron. xxi. 3); and a double portion of the patrimony (Deut. xxi. 17). Moreover, Isaac's first-born was, apparently at least, the natural heir to the promises made to Abraham for his seed, including the land of Canaan, a great and powerful posterity, and the special favor of God. He should also in his generation be the progenitor of Jesus Christ, and the channel through which salvation should flow to the ends of the earth. The sin and folly attached to the sale of such a birthright, "for one morsel of meat," are not exaggerated in the Scriptures.

After an interval of forty-five years, our attention is called to another feud in the family of Isaac, which affords a new insight into the character of the parents and their sons; which brought to a crisis the destiny of Esau, and settled irrevocably upon Jacob the heirship to the covenant promises. Isaac was one hundred and thirty-seven years old, Esau and Jacob were seventy-four. The insidious approaches of old age had enfeebled the physical and mental powers of the patriarch. He was blind and bedridden, and he thought that his death was at hand. He requested his favorite son Esau to take his hunting-gear, and make from the wild game that he might kill, in his own words, "savory meat, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless thee before I die." This conversation took place in private, but was overheard by Rebekah. Rightly suspecting that Isaac was about to convey the Abrahamic blessing to Esau, she urged Jacob to take advantage of Esau's absence, and obtain the blessing by stealth. Here begins a chapter of frauds. Jacob hesitated, not because the proposal was perfidious, but because, if the plan should fail, he would draw down upon himself the curse of his father. Rebekah removed his fears by a reckless imprecation whereby she set an impious example too often followed by the Jewish race. She volunteered to take the curse upon herself. The historian relates how Jacob killed two kids of goats; how Rebekah prepared the dainty dish; how she dressed Jacob in Esau's clothes, and fastened the rough skins of the

young goat upon his hands and his neck; how Jacob offered the food to Isaac; how the blind old man suspected mischief, and interrogated Jacob as to his identity; how cleverly the deceiver answered or parried the questions; how he supported one of his falsehoods by taking the name of Jehovah in vain; how he permitted his father to feel his hands and neck; with what skill he disguised every thing but his voice; with what shamelessness, when Isaac, still suspicious, asked him, "Art thou my very son Esau?" Jacob replied, "I am;" with what honeyed words he persuaded the feeble old man to sit up, and eat the meat, and drink the wine. Then the supplanter kissed his father, and the father smelled the smell of the field upon the raiment of his son. The heart of Isaac was warmed towards Jacob by "the food and the wine and the kiss and the smell;" and he pronounced upon the pretender the final and irrevocable blessing. Jacob went out, and Esau came in.

The historian describes the dismay of the patriarch, and the grief and anger of Esau, at the discovery of the fraud. Isaac "was horrified, a great horror exceedingly" (*Heb.*); "Esau cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry." And yet Isaac perceived that the blessing already given to Jacob was from God. He told Esau that it did not admit of recall. Paul lends a vivid touch to the picture: "Esau found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (*Heb.* xii. 17); meaning that he could not prevail upon Isaac, no, not with persuasions and weeping, to take back his words. When the sense of his irreparable loss began to dawn upon Esau, he lifted up his voice and wept, exclaiming, "Hast thou but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father!" Isaac answered him with a poor remnant of a blessing which was yet no blessing, and the painful interview closed. Esau went out, carrying with him a hatred towards Jacob for which he could find no relief except in the hope of being able to kill the offender so soon as Isaac should die, and the days of mourning be ended.

Isaac's first benediction on Jacob secured to him some of the

temporal benefits, only, of the Abrahamic covenant; a reserve which is not explained. It was followed by a supplementary blessing recorded in the next chapter. He bequeathed to Jacob the possession of Canaan, a land refreshed with the dew of heaven, having a kindly soil, and abounding in wheat and wine. He gave him promise also of a posterity which should assume pre-eminence over the nations around them, and over their own kindred (Gen. xxviii. 3, 4). Isaac's legacy to Esau has been called "a modified sentence." It was a direct antithesis to Jacob's inheritance. The barren sands of Idumea were to be the home of Esau and his posterity, far away from the falling dews, the prolific soil, and the abundant fruits of Canaan. The people themselves were to be a nation of freebooters living by the sword. They should be subjugated, also, by Jacob's race, but afterwards they would assert themselves, and throw off the yoke. This prediction was an enlargement and explanation of the pre-natal omen, representing the brothers as engaged in a violent struggle for pre-eminence. The omen and the prediction were fulfilled. Esau's posterity, under the name of Edomites, settled in the Idumean deserts, were long afterwards defeated in battle by Saul and subdued by David. As often as they revolted, they were put down, until they gained their independence in the reign of Ahaz. About one hundred and thirty years before the birth of Christ, they were completely subjugated by John Hyrcanus, compelled to submit to circumcision, and incorporated into the Jewish state.<sup>1</sup> At a later period, Antipater and Herod, descendants of Esau, established an Idumean dynasty over Judæa, which continued until the dissolution of the Jewish polity; that the prediction of Isaac to Esau might be fulfilled: "When thou shalt have dominion, thou shalt break his [Jacob's] yoke from off thy neck" (Gen. xxvii. 40). The fulfilment of the predictions respecting Jacob will hereafter appear. Taken together they show that Isaac was a prophet, speaking by Divine inspiration. "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come" (Heb. xi. 20).

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, Ant. xiii. 9, 1, xv. 7, 9.



From the fact that he spake as a prophet, we take an answer to the question, why did he not recall his legacy to Jacob on the discovery of his having obtained it by false pretences? Doubtless fraud vitiates all gifts and agreements as between man and man. But Isaac uttered, unconsciously to himself, the will of God, not his personal wishes. When he ascertained that deception had been practised upon him, he perceived, also, that the blessing which he had intended to give to Esau was, in the Divine purpose, assigned to Jacob. He could not change that decree if he would. He perceived that he had spoken not as the father of Esau, but as the organ of Jehovah. He said sorrowfully but positively, "I have blessed him, and yea, he shall be blessed." And the hard destiny to which he left his oldest and favorite son makes it still clearer that he spoke not for himself, but for the Almighty.

In the disgraceful scene at the bedside of an aged patriarch, where we might look for the beauties of holiness and peace, we meet as ministering spirits, craft, perfidy, falsehood, and strife. All the members of the household are attempting to overreach one another. And yet, where there is so much to be censured, there is something to be commended. Isaac must have known that he was proposing to disregard the Divine oracle at the birth of his sons; that Esau had, by bigamy, voluntarily forsaken the chosen seed, and identified himself with the rejected races around him; and that he had despised his birthright. He endeavored, also, to transfer the blessing to Esau clandestinely; and he was unduly governed by his partiality for Esau and his love for the savory meat. But, on the other hand, although he intended to give the blessing to his oldest son, yet, as soon as the Divine appointment of Jacob was made known to him, he instantly brought his own intentions into subjection to the will of God. Rebekah and Jacob resorted to duplicity and falsehood to settle the inheritance, instead of waiting till God should bring about, in his own way, what they believed to be his fixed purposes. They would not only help God, but help him by the resources of ungodliness. Rebekah was the tempter; Jacob was willing to be tempted.

She devised the stratagem ; he gave it full effect. Few women could have contrived so unnatural a conspiracy against an imbecile husband ; few sons could so boldly execute the plan. Luther said, "I should have probably run away with horror, and let the dish drop." On the other hand, Rebekah and Jacob entertained a just sense of the surpassing value of the Abrahamic promises ; they kept in their hearts the Divine oracle choosing Jacob and rejecting Esau ; they could not doubt that Jacob was, by God's appointment, the representative of the chosen seed ; and they proposed no more than to secure to Jacob the patriarchal blessing which, in point of fact, belonged to him, and not to his brother. Esau might plead that he was not insensible to the value of the covenant promises, and to the honor of him whose name should stand with those of Abraham and Isaac in the roll of the three great patriarchs. He might contend that Jacob had gotten the birth-right by playing upon his ravenous appetite, stung by hunger, and that he was under no obligation to refuse the blessing of his father, who was ready to take upon himself the responsibility of disregarding both the bargain and the adverse oracle at Esau's birth. But Esau was not equal to the sturdy honesty of him "who sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." He knew, also, that he had forfeited the coveted legacy by his bad conduct, and that he had sought to recover it clandestinely. Moreover, his brutal instincts betrayed themselves in the avowal of his intention to kill Jacob, partly out of revenge, and partly, as it may be conjectured, in the expectation of inheriting the blessing at Jacob's death, Esau being the only living heir of his brother.

The sacred writer passes no formal judgment on the misconduct of these people. But what is more to the purpose, and falls in better with the plan of the record, he describes their guilt, and, as the narrative proceeds, he points out the punishment which was inflicted upon them. Isaac endured the indignities put upon him by the stratagems of Rebekah and Jacob ; the sons of his old age became enemies, and he was left alone in his last days, deprived of his children. Rebekah

parted with Jacob, never to see him again. Jacob, born to affluence, was compelled, at the age of seventy-four years, to flee for his life to a strange land, and to earn his bread by servile labor. There the cheater of his brother was cheated by Laban his uncle. Still later he was deceived by his sons, even as he had deceived his father. They sold his best-beloved son to the Ishmaelites, and then led him to believe that the lad had been torn and devoured by a wild beast. In process of time Esau abandoned his home in Canaan, for the desert of Edom. We shall do well to observe, as we proceed, that it is the way of the sacred writers to record faithfully the sins and follies of the patriarchs, to withhold comment or censure, and to show how, in due time, the Almighty visits their iniquities.

The main object of the historian was to explain how the purposes of God were accomplished, in opposition to the perverse will of man, and to trace out the course of Providence by which Jacob's position as the heir of the covenant was established. Much attention, however, has been given by biblical scholars to the comparative fitness of Jacob and Esau for this exalted destiny. It must be said that neither deserved the distinction. Their offences, if strictly marked, would have justly led to the rejection of both. But, as between the two, Jacob was wisely preferred. Not that Esau was without his attractive qualities; not that Jacob was without his faults. Esau was robust and athletic; he was manly; he honored his father; and, as will hereafter appear, he frankly forgave his brother. Jacob was wary, calculating, and crafty, he was quick to take advantage of the hunger of his brother in order to get the birthright, and of the feebleness of his father in order to get the blessing. It is a humbling task to balance what was good, forgetting what was evil, in Esau, over against what was evil, forgetting what was good, in Jacob. It is easy to challenge the Divine preference of Jacob over Esau as the representative of the chosen seed. But it should be borne in mind, that Esau's understanding was narrow, his appetites were clamorous, his disposition wayward. He grew up quite

naturally, not into a patriarch, walking by faith, but into a Bedouin chieftain, living by the sword. Michael Angelo could not hew a Moses, or Canova a Venus, out of a block of pudding-stone. Esau was a natural-born sensualist and profane person. Under any training, not supernatural, he would have remained Esau to the end. There was in him no ordinary possibility of a proper representative of the covenant, just as there was in Jezebel no ordinary possibility of an Esther. Like the rich man in the parable, he sacrificed all he had which was worth having to his lower appetites. The rich man said to his soul, "Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Esau "did eat and drink, and rose up and went his way." The vices of Jacob, his duplicity and craft, do not admit of disguise or apology; and yet, withal, he was gentle, thoughtful, patient, and full of resources. He believed God's promises to Abraham; he estimated their value as above all price, and he desired most earnestly to inherit them. Imperfect as he was, a worthy example of the chosen seed could be made of him. In Jacob there was the possibility of an Israel, just as in Saul of Tarsus there was the possibility of the Paul. He needed the training which comes with the grace of God and with severe chastisement. This training was applied to him. The grace of God came to him in the theophanic revelations and in the struggle at Jabbok. The chastisement was administered by his exile to Padan-aram, by the oppression, fraud, and privations which he suffered there, and by his unhappiness in Canaan, culminating in the loss of Joseph. Jacob stands in the patriarchy as the representative of those who by nature are no better than others, but who become the subjects of irresistible grace,—the sinning, repenting, struggling, suffering children of God.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## JACOB'S EXILE.

THE sacred writer now turns his attention to the period in the life of Jacob which occupied twenty years, and was marked by three events, — his flight from Beersheba, his exile in Padan-aram, his return to Canaan.

GEN. xxvii. 41–46. — His flight was brought about by the worldly wisdom of his mother. She told Jacob that Esau was taking comfort in the hope of being able to kill him. She was in terror lest both of her sons might be slain, — Jacob by the hand of Esau, and Esau by the hand of the avenger of blood. She urged Jacob to flee from the country, exclaiming, “Why should I be deprived of you both in one day?” It does not appear that she communicated her fears to her husband. But she reminded him of Esau's misalliance, and declared that her life, which had been a weariness to her because of the daughters of Heth, Esau's two wives, would become an intolerable burden if Jacob also should marry a heathen wife. She persuaded Isaac to send Jacob away.

GEN. xxviii. 1–7. — The old patriarch charged Jacob not to take a wife of the women of Canaan, but to go to Padan-aram, and marry a daughter of his uncle Laban, Rebekah's brother. In bidding his son adieu, Isaac pronounced upon him and his seed all the blessings, temporal and spiritual, conveyed in the covenant with Abraham, enlarging the promises which he had just before uttered. Isaac lingered forty-three years longer; but nothing more is said of him, except that he died, and was buried by Esau and Jacob, at the age of one hundred and eighty years (Gen. xxxv. 28, 29).

GEN. xxviii. 8, 9. — It was soon afterwards made plain that Esau's connection with the covenant had ceased. He saw that the advantage over him which he had given to Jacob by marrying two heathen women would be fatal to all his hopes if Jacob should marry one of their Padan-aram cousins. In the hope of propitiating his parents, and recovering the ground that he had lost among the chosen seed, he determined to marry in the family, as it were. He chose for his third wife Mahalath, a daughter of Ishmael. But she belonged to an excinded branch of Abraham's family; and in marrying her, instead of repairing his first error, he made it irreparable. It completed the proof that he was unfit to represent the people of God. "A three-fold cord is not quickly broken." Even so, Esau's triple marriage drew him away finally from the company of the chosen seed, and Jacob was left alone the true heir of the covenant. The latter was at that time seventy-seven years old. Here terminates the significance of Esau's history, and the career of Jacob is followed by the sacred writer.

GEN. xxviii. 10-22. — A journey of fifty miles from Beersheba towards Haran brought Jacob at nightfall to Luz. He chose a stone for a pillow, and slept in the open air. Here he saw, in a dream, his first theophany. A ladder appeared, reaching from earth to heaven. Upon it angels ascended and descended. Jehovah himself stood above it, and proclaimed himself to Jacob to be the God of his fathers. He confirmed to Jacob, in all their fulness, the blessings given to Abraham, even the land and seed of promise, and a salvation in that seed for the whole human race. God promised also to accompany and to protect him on his journey, and to bring him back to his native country. And, in foresight of the obstacles to his return which should be interposed by Esau, and by his many trials afterwards in Padan-aram, Canaan, and Egypt, God added, "I will not leave thee until I have done all that which I have spoken to thee." In this theophany, Jehovah for the first time distinctly declared Jacob's heirship to the covenant, and his Divine right to succeed Abraham and Isaac. Again, the promise in regard to the expansion of the spiritual seed of the patriarchs was greatly

enlarged. It should reach far beyond their natural posterity. It should overspread the limits of the promised land. It should be world-wide. "Thou shalt spread abroad" (*lit.*, break forth) "to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south." Further, the vision assured Jacob that communication was now opened between Jehovah in heaven and himself, a helpless fugitive, lying on the ground. But it has a broader meaning. It teaches the people of God that a way of holy fellowship and communion is established between God and man. The angels are the ministers of grace, passing to and fro, and bringing help in every time of need to God's chosen ones. But it was reserved for Christ to unfold its most profound meaning. Said he to Nathaniel, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man" (John i. 51). The vision so interpreted reveals the person and glory of Christ. The communication between heaven and earth, which had been closed by sin, was now opened by the Son of God. The glory of Christ was foreshown; and, as one of its signals, angels minister to him (Luke ii. 9-13, xxii. 43; Acts i. 10; Matt. xxv. 31).

In this theophany Jacob's spiritual training was begun. Such discipline was the first necessity of his position. Without it he could not be a true successor to Abraham and Isaac, or a suitable representative of the covenant. The Divine word to Abraham was: "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1). Jacob's conscience full of guilt, and his disposition full of deceit, must be rebuked. He must be born again; he must become an "Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." To this end a revelation of the majesty of Jehovah is now made to him, extorting the cry, "How dreadful is this place!" He was taught that the eye of God was upon him in his most unguarded moments: "Jehovah was in this place, and I knew it not." He was encouraged to pursue a life of obedience and faith, by the hope that the angels would bear up the knowledge of his wants to heaven, and return laden with mercies. In answer to the vision, he took the stone on which he had slept, and set it up for a memorial pillar. He

consecrated the place to the offices of worship, and called it Bethel, the house of God. He also made this vow: "If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall Jehovah be my God." The expression, "If God will be with me," is not a condition conceived in a mercenary spirit: it is the response of gratitude to the promise, "I will be with thee." Jacob uses the preposition "if" as an equivalent to "inasmuch as," or "since," and it might with propriety have been so translated. And, in order that God's worship might be sustained, he set apart to that object one-tenth of all the wealth that he should acquire; following the example of Abraham, who gave tithes to the priest of the most high God (Gen. xiv. 20), anticipating also the rule of giving to pious uses which was afterwards prescribed (Lev. xxvii. 32). In the courage and strength derived from the heavenly vision, Jacob resumed his journey.

GEN. xxix. 1-14.—The distance between Bethel and Laban's house is computed at four hundred miles. None of the incidents of the journey are recorded; but, in describing Jacob's arrival at Padan-aram, the historian draws a charming picture of primitive life "in the land of the children of the East." In the foreground is a well. The weary fugitive from Beer-sheba sits upon the curb. Flocks of sheep and goats are lying around him. The shepherds are standing idly by. A beautiful girl draws near, guiding her father's flocks to the watering. Jacob hears that she is his cousin, Laban's daughter. He rolls the stone from the well's mouth, and waters her sheep. He tells her who he is. Overcome by his emotions, the cloud of his sorrows breaking away, and thinking, perhaps, that in Rachel he sees his future wife, he kisses her, and bursts into tears. Rachel runs to bring her father word that her cousin, from the far-off land of Canaan, is at the sheep-well. Laban hastens to meet him, and brings him to his home. Jacob tells Laban his story. Laban has two daughters. Leah is the oldest, and her eyes are weak; Rachel is graceful and beautiful.

GEN. xxix. 14-30.—Jacob was now seventy-seven years of



age. He was a little beyond middle life, for he lived until he was a hundred and thirty-seven years old. He sojourned in Padan-aram not less than twenty years. The incidents which filled up this period were few in number, but marked by decisive indications of God's overruling providence, and man's weakness and unworthiness. Jacob became a servant to a hard master. From the moment of his arrival, his activity and industry made him useful to Laban. At the end of a month, Laban offered to give him permanent employment as a shepherd. He asked Jacob to name his wages. Jacob replied, "I will serve thee seven years for thy youngest daughter." Laban closed the contract on these terms, revealing thus early his greedy disposition. Bethuel, Laban's father, had freely given Rebekah, Laban's sister, to Isaac for a wife; in his turn, Laban disposed of his daughter by way of a bargain and sale. Rachel, as we shall see, never forgot the indignity. "Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed but a few days, for the love he had to her." At the end of seven years Laban made a marriage-feast. Instead of Rachel, he gave Leah to Jacob, by a fraud which owed its success to the darkness of the night, and the Eastern custom of concealing under a veil the person of the bride. Laban attempted to excuse his bad faith by appealing to the custom of the country, which, as he pretended, did not permit a younger sister to be given in marriage before the older. But this subterfuge does not excuse Laban's treachery, for he said nothing of the rule in the original agreement. In making the bargain, Laban betrayed his shameless avarice; in breaking the bargain, he betrayed his insufferable treachery; and in both, he showed himself to be a grasping and faithless master. It was not, however, open to Jacob to complain; for Laban had simply cheated him in the purchase of his wife, as he had cheated Esau in the purchase of the birthright. This was the first in a series of manœuvres, in which the older player gets the best of the game for nearly twenty years; but in the end the tables are turned. The record is not pleasant; it is the story of a match between craft and craft.<sup>1</sup> Laban then

<sup>1</sup> Candlish: Genesis, vol. ii. p. 21.

offered to give Rachel to him in consideration of another term of service for seven years. Jacob consented; and Rachel became his wife on the eighth day after his marriage to Leah (xxix. 28). It is right to conjecture that Jacob, with his usual shrewdness, demanded the reward of his labors in advance, lest he should be defrauded again by his father-in-law.

GEN. xxx. 25-41. — At the end of his second term of service, Jacob asked Laban to allow him to return to his own country, with his wives and children; for, said he, "thou knowest my service which I have done thee." Laban urged him to remain with this remark: "I have learned by experience" (or "I have divined," *Rev. Ver.*) "that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake." They came to an agreement in regard to the wages, and Jacob served Laban six years longer. The bargain was exceedingly profitable to Jacob; but Laban, with his characteristic bad faith, repeatedly changed the terms, for the purpose of repressing his nephew.

GEN. xxix. 31-35, xxx. 1-24. — The unhappiness in Jacob's family was a conspicuous feature of his sojourn in Padan-aram. His early and constant love for Rachel, the long service to which he submitted in order to secure her as his wife, and the fraud which Laban practised upon him at the marriage-feast, led Jacob into polygamy. Polygamy was one of the habits of the time. The marriage of two sisters, both living, to one man, however repugnant to the sensibilities, was not held to be incestuous until prohibited by the law given at Sinai long after Jacob's day (Lev. xviii. 18). But the unavoidable evils of a double marriage declared themselves very early in the family. Leah was hated, and Rachel was loved. Of the two women, Leah was the more worthy. She was vehement in her love to Jacob, notwithstanding his indifference to her. Leah became the mother of four sons in quick succession, but Rachel was childless. And so it happened that Leah was jealous of Rachel, and Rachel was envious of Leah. Rachel's impetuosity led her astray in two directions. She taunted Jacob with her childlessness, and Jacob reprimanded her angrily for casting on him the reproach which the Almighty had laid upon her.

Kurtz suggests that Rachel's sensitiveness arose from the fear lest she might be excluded, by her want of offspring, from any share in the blessings pronounced on the chosen seed. And yet it may be well said, that, by faith, Rachel should have waited patiently for the promised seed. She should have remembered that Isaac was not born until Sarah had been married twenty-five years, and Jacob was not born until Rebekah had been married twenty years. But in her impatience she gave her handmaid Bilhah to Jacob as a wife in the second degree, and adopted as her own Bilhah's two sons that were afterwards born to her. Jacob consented to the arrangement, perhaps in the hope of appeasing Rachel, and silencing Leah's boasts. But Leah, believing that Judah, her fourth son, was her last child, gave her handmaid Zilpah to Jacob as a wife in the same degree, and adopted the two sons to whom she gave birth. Thus the family troubles, arising from a double marriage, were aggravated by the mischiefs of a double concubinage. And these evils were the fruits of inexcusable unbelief, as was afterwards made clear. For, in answer to special prayer, Rachel became the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, and Leah became the mother of two sons and a daughter in addition to the four older children. The feuds and strifes, recorded and unrecorded, which entered the household through these open doors, turned it into a school of affliction and discipline for Jacob.

GEN. xxix. 31-35, xxx. 1-24. — Thirteen children were born to Jacob. They were distributed among his four families in the order of their mothers: thus, —

LEAH'S.	ZILPAH'S ( <i>Leah's maid</i> ).	RACHEL'S.	BILHAH'S ( <i>Rachel's maid</i> ).
Reuben.	Gad.	Joseph.	Dan.
Simeon.	Asher.	Benjamin.	Naphtali.
Levi.			
Judah.			
Issachar.			
Zebulun.			
Dinah.			

This family register casts light upon various particulars in the narrative. The thirteen children were born in Padan-aram, Benjamin only excepted, whose birth near Bethel cost Rachel her life (Gen. xxxv. 18). They were all born within the period of thirteen years; for Jacob was married seven years after his arrival in the country, and he sojourned there twenty years (Gen. xxxi. 38). The name of only one daughter, Dinah, appears in the register; but it is conjectured that other daughters were born to Jacob (chap. xxxvii. 35, xlvi. 7). Two of Leah's sons became the progenitors of the most prominent tribes in the commonwealth of Israel: Judah, the ancestor of Christ; and Levi, the founder of the sacerdotal order. The tribe of Rachel's son Joseph was hardly inferior to these in historical significance. The twelve sons were put upon a footing of equality, without regard to the position of their mothers, whether wives or servants. They were all the children of Jacob, and the promise was to him and his seed after him. In a few instances only was any discrimination made among them, grounded on the rank of their mothers. Their names are twice arranged according to that rank (Gen. xxxv. 23-26; Exod. i. 2-4). Again, by way of accounting for the hostility of the brothers against Joseph, it is mentioned that the lad had reported to their father the bad conduct of the sons of the concubines Bilhah and Zilpah. In one other instance regard was paid to the rank of the brothers. When the children of Israel were in the wilderness, Moses divided the twelve tribes into four "camps," three tribes in each. To these camps he assigned positions in the order of march when the host was in motion, and posted them around the tabernacle when they were at rest. In making up the camps, Moses took care to put three of the tribes descending from the maids together; and the tribe of Gad, son of Leah's maid, was associated with the tribes of Leah's sons Reuben and Simeon, Gad's half-brothers. But on every important occasion the perfect equality, each to each, of the twelve tribes, was not disturbed by the accident of birth. The exceptions are introduced here to show the studied accuracy of the historian, and to point out a few of the links, too often unnoticed, which give unity to the narrative.

This register is valuable for the light which it casts upon the inner life of the family. Jacob's alienation from Leah, shortly after her marriage, is to be referred to her participation in the fraud whereby she became his wife, and to his preference for Rachel. Her unhappiness discovers itself in the name which she gave to her first-born son. She called him Reuben (behold, a son!), for she said, "Surely Jehovah will look upon my affliction; now, therefore, my husband will love me." How sharp was her disappointment in this hope, appears at the birth of her second son. She called him Simeon (hearing), "because" said she, "Jehovah hath heard that I am hated, he hath therefore given me this son also." The poor wife took courage when her third son was born, saying, "Now this time will my husband be joined to me;" therefore was his name called Levi (attachment). The cloud was lifted at last. When her fourth son was born, her heart broke forth in praise: "Now will I praise Jehovah," therefore she called him Judah (praise). Still later we discover the joy of Rachel when she named the first son of her maid Dan (judge); "for God hath judged me, and given me a son." We hear her exultations over Leah when she called the second son of her maid, Naphtali (wrestling); "wrestling with my sister." And the unamiable reply to Rachel comes from Leah in the names which she gave to the two sons of her maid: Gad (fortune) and Asher (happy am I). Afterwards Leah called a son Issachar (my hire), "because I have given my maid to my husband." To another she gave the name Zebulun (dwelling), saying, "Now will my husband dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." The list ends with Rachel's two sons, — Joseph (adding), so called because in his birth his mother saw the promise of another son; and Benjamin (son of happiness). It so occurred that the names of these children, and of the tribes which they founded, perpetuated the memory of the jealousies, strifes, and unseemly exultations which prevailed in the bosom of this unhappy family. The melancholy story vindicates the subsequent prohibition of polygamy as inevitably hostile to the marriage relation and to the peace and purity of the family.

GEN. xxx. 25-43. — The worldly prosperity which at last came to Jacob is a leading feature in his story. At the end of his second term of service, he asked Laban to permit him to return to Canaan, taking with him his family. Laban, we have seen, urged him to remain; not that he was reluctant to part with his daughters, but for a reason wholly mercenary, — the pecuniary value to him of Jacob's services. At Laban's urgent request Jacob consented to remain, on the condition that he should receive for his wages all the speckled and spotted goats and sheep in Laban's flocks. Laban had some good reason to believe that he himself had gotten the best of the bargain; party-colored cattle being at that time, though not now, rare in the East. The sheep were anciently white, and the goats black or brown, rarely were any of them spotted. Jacob, however, resorted to artifices whereby he gradually secured to himself by far the larger part, as well as the most thrifty, of the animals. The secret of his devices is not divulged. To what extent he availed himself of his knowledge of animal economy, cannot be determined. Jacob himself referred his success to the interposition of Providence (xxx. 9-12). As it turned out, Laban got no advantage of his nephew. Although he changed the conditions of the employment as many as "ten times" according to Jacob's statement, the grasping old man took nothing by his dishonesty. At the end of six years Jacob was wealthy. "He increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-servants and men-servants, and camels and asses." More definite information is contained in Gen. xxxii. 14, 15, where it appears that Jacob sent a present to Esau of more than five hundred and fifty cattle. Jacob's prosperity led to an important crisis in his history.

GEN. xxxi. 1-21. — The time had now fully come for the return of Jacob to his native country. His permanent settlement in Mesopotamia was forbidden by the plan of Providence which had assigned the land of Canaan to the promised seed. And yet the life of Jacob seemed to be taking a turn out of harmony with that plan. He had been an absentee for at least twenty years. He had become identified with Mesopotamia by

his plural marriages and by the birth of eleven children there. A man of his thrift might be sorely tempted to make a permanent home in the midst of luxuriant pastures covered with flocks and herds. He might reasonably expect to become a wealthy and powerful sheik. Peculiar dangers, withal, threatened his family. His kindred were native-born idolaters, and so were his wives. Rachel, it is certain, clung for a season to her false gods. Six of his children were from five to twelve years of age, and they and their younger brothers as they grew up would be exposed to the contagion of idolatry. Jacob could not return too soon to his native land. Happily for himself, as the representative of the covenant, he was led in good time to quit Mesopotamia.

Angry words uttered by Laban's sons in regard to his increasing wealth were repeated to him. He discovered, also, in Laban himself, always a hard master, signs of hostility towards him. And, what was decisive, he received from the Almighty a peremptory command to go back to Canaan without delay. He called his wives into the field where he was feeding his flocks, for a private conference. He said to them, substantially, "Your father is no longer my friend. I have served him faithfully, and in return he has changed my stipulated wages ten times. God, who has protected me from harm and has transferred to me all these flocks, now commands me to return to the land of my own kindred." Rachel and Leah replied, not without bitterness, that they had no longer any inheritance in their father's house; their father, instead of generously endowing them with marriage gifts, had sold them to Jacob long before they became his wives, as if they were servants to be bought and sold; the property which God had taken from him and given to Jacob belonged to them and their children. "Now, then," said they, "whatsoever God hath said to thee, that do."

GEN. xxxi. 22-55. — The manner of Jacob's departure was not such as became a manly man, least of all one who knew that he was obeying the direction of the Almighty, and was under his special protection. Dr. Candlish says, "He must needs play the part of a cowardly fugitive, escaping as a thief

under the cloud of night." This severe comment is borne out by the record, "And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled." Laban at that time was gone to shear his sheep. Jacob stole away, taking with him his wives and children, and the many herds of cattle which he had gathered during his last term of service. He crossed the Euphrates, and went towards the region east of the Jordan. Rachel in her father's absence from home, without Jacob's knowledge or consent, robbed Laban of his teraphim, and hid them in the luggage carried by the camel on which she rode. The teraphim were small images, worshipped in the family and consulted as oracles, not unlike the *penates*, or household gods, of the Romans; "such as Æneas carried out of Troy." Rachel took, also, other objects of superstitious observances; for example, rings and armlets (xxxv. 2-4). Laban did not hear of Jacob's escape until he had been gone two days. Taking with him a troop of his kinsmen, he set off in the pursuit. On the seventh day he overtook the fugitives at Mount Gilead. He tried to pick a quarrel with Jacob. In a tirade of mingled hypocrisy and parental emotion, he charged Jacob with having hurried away his daughters as if they were captives taken in war, and with having prevented him from doing honor to their departure, and bidding them farewell in a feast, with music and song, and a parting kiss. Laban added that it was in his power to avenge himself; but he had been deterred from doing that by a warning from the Almighty. In a bitter sarcasm he said to Jacob, "You went away because you had such a longing for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?" Jacob replied that he had fled clandestinely because he was afraid that Laban would take his wives away from him. He then challenged Laban to search the tents for his idols. Jacob threatened death to the offender; revealing both his ignorance of Rachel's theft, and the power of life and death claimed by the patriarch. A thorough search was made in the tents of all the family; but Rachel, who was more than a match for her father in craft, contrived to hide the sacred plunder. Thereupon Jacob, being himself deceived by



Rachel, turned in anger upon Laban. He resents his insulting search, in terms which it was proper for him to use, believing, as he did, that Rachel was innocent as charged by her father. Having done that, he turned upon Laban with becoming boldness, and said in effect, "I have been with you twenty years. Through my watchfulness your ewes and she-goats have not lost their young. I have not eaten the rams, according to the habit of the faithless shepherds [Ezek. xxxiv. 3]. I did not charge to your account the cattle that were killed by wild beasts: I bore the loss myself. You required me to make good all that were slain by day or by night; even though by day the heat consumed me, and the frost by night, and sleep departed from mine eyes. I have been twenty years in your service, — fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your cattle, — and you have changed my wages ten times. Except the God of my father had been with me, you had sent me away a pauper. God has seen my labor and afflictions; you he rebuked last night." This is no doubt a manly utterance; and yet it would have been not less manly if Jacob had frankly acknowledged that he had met craft by craft, and deceit by deceit. He had come far short of the rule laid down in Prov. xx. 22. Laban, however, intimidated by the Divine warning of the night before, proposed to Jacob a covenant of reconciliation. The offer was accepted. The kinsmen of both parties present built a cairn of stones. Laban called it in the Chaldee, a "heap of witness;" and Jacob called it in Hebrew, Mizpah, a "watch-tower." The parties exchanged promises of perpetual good-will and amity. The ceremony was closed with a sacrifice and a feast of love. Early in the morning Laban kissed his daughters and his grandsons, and blessed them, and went to his own land. The separation was final; the isolation from his kindred which was enforced on Abraham entered into the experience of Jacob, and into that of his wives and children.

GEN. xxxii. 1, 2. — We hear nothing more of Jacob until he reached the borders of Eastern Palestine. He encamped a few miles north of the River Jabbok, now known as the Zerka,

which flows into the Jordan about midway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Here he became conscious of an impending danger more formidable than the displeasure of Laban,—the wrath of Esau. When he parted from his mother, twenty years before, she promised to send for him when Esau's anger should be appeased. But it would seem that she had never encouraged him to return to Canaan; and she was now dead. The danger was imminent: Jacob knew that Esau was in Mount Seir, distant only a few days' journey. At that moment the angels of God met him, and the visit was in good time. Their presence reminded him, perhaps, of the ascending and descending angels which he saw at Bethel; and of the voice of God promising protection on his journey, and a safe return to his own land. He said, "This is God's host." He called the place Mahanaim,— "two camps;" one camp for himself, and the other pitched near by for the angels. The war-like terms, "God's host" and "Mahanaim," point to an outstanding controversy, an impending conflict, and a sure protection.

GEN. xxxii. 3-12. — With his habitual forethought, Jacob sent word to Esau announcing his return. After the manner of Oriental courtesy, he directed his messengers to address his brother as "my lord," and to express the desire that Jacob might "find grace in his sight." They brought back the unwelcome news that Esau was marching upon him at the head of a column of four hundred men. Jacob sought to meet the emergency by measures of precaution, prayer to God, and conciliation towards Esau. By way of precaution, he divided his caravan into two companies, and posted them apart from each other; so that, if Esau should fall upon the one, the other might escape. He then betook himself to God; and his prayer is exceedingly comprehensive and beautiful, a model of Old-Testament prayer in all its parts. The invocation is: "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, Jehovah which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee." The confession is: "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant." Then

follows a thankful acknowledgment of God's mercy: "For with my staff I passed over this Jordan, but now I am two bands." The supplication is: "Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children." The plea is: "Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."

GEN. xxxii. 13-23. — In the hope of conciliating Esau, Jacob selected from his herds more than five hundred and fifty animals, — goats, sheep, camels, beeves, and asses judiciously assorted. These he divided into three separate droves, and sent them as gifts to Esau. In order, by successive appeals, to mitigate the anger of Esau, Jacob directed the drivers to put a certain distance between drove and drove, and to present one by one, at proper intervals of time, to his brother. Each driver, in turn, was to say, "These be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau; and, behold, also he is behind us."

Jacob followed the caravan which conveyed these magnificent presents, as far as the torrent Jabbok. Under cover of the night, he conveyed his entire family with all his possessions across the stream, and then returned to the northern shore. He was alone, and the darkness was over him. Here he was taught that Jehovah had a controversy with him far more alarming than that waged by Esau. This controversy had been of long standing, and was now to be settled. God would not suffer him to return to Canaan while he was the double-dealing Jacob who had fled long since from Beersheba, and who had now, under cover of the night, escaped from Aram. He was not fit to inherit the blessings and responsibilities of the covenant so long as he was in the habit of resorting to crooked ways to accomplish his purposes, instead of relying on God, who had repeatedly promised to keep him in all his journeys. The night which Jacob spent at the Jabbok is memorable for the course of Divine discipline by which he was fitted for the land of promise.

GEN. xxxii. 24-32. — There are mysteries in this transaction which remain unexplained. And yet it was marked by certain intelligible incidents. It is plain, for example, that the struggle of might and main which occurred was no hallucination, no subjective vision or troubled dream. Its objective reality is proved by the fact that Jacob came out of it with a dislocated thigh, and was lamed for life. His antagonist was at first The Unknown. Jacob thought him to be a man; but he is called the angel by Hosea (xii. 4), and was recognized by Jacob at the break of day as God: "I have seen God face to face." His acts and words, moreover, were Divine. At his supernatural touch, the hollow of Jacob's thigh was "strained," so the last revision translates the text. His hip-bone was dis-jointed, according to the reading of the Authorized Version, supported by Keil, Kurtz, Alford, and Murphy. He blessed Jacob, and gave him a new name, Israel; "for thou hast striven with God and man, and hast prevailed." We have before us, therefore, a true theophany, and a new proof of the identity of the angel with Jehovah.

The conflict passed through two stages,—one, outward or physical; the other, inward or spiritual. In the first instance, described by the phrase "there wrestled a man with him," the encounter was almost, but not altogether, a bodily struggle. The second stage, introduced by the touching of Jacob's hip-bone, was altogether a spiritual wrestling. In the earlier part of the night, the Divine Being made as if he would allow Jacob to conquer; but at the break of day the angel touched his thigh, and the lever of his strength was broken at the fulcrum. Jacob could not stand alone. He was overmastered. This was the crisis, the turning-point. Jacob's self-confidence was rebuked, crushed out. The conflict, which in the first stage was outward and physical, gave place, in the second, to the inward and spiritual; the stout-hearted and muscular athlete became the broken-hearted and crippled suppliant. He clung convulsively to the angel; he would not be shaken off. He put on a new strength,—the strength that comes of tears and entreaties. Hosea describes the spectacle: "He took his brother by

the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him" (Hos. xii. 3, 4). We hear the angel saying, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." We hear Jacob's reply, "I will not let thee go till thou bless me." The Divine wrestler could paralyze the sinews and dislocate the bones of his intrepid adversary; but he could not resist the entreaties of the helpless, clinging, weeping sufferer. When Jacob contended with the Almighty, in a match of muscular strength, he was defeated hip and thigh: when he turned from muscle to prayer, he conquered. He won the blessing of God, and with it a new name: "Thou shalt be called no more Jacob" (the supplanter), "but Israel" (the prince of God); "for as a prince thou hast power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." The profound remark of Ewald on the narrative is, "Man knows no real or inalienable possession but that which he has won rather from God than from man, and which is thus made a part of his very life and soul."

The memory of this theophany is perpetuated by many historical monuments. First, the place was called Peniel by Jacob, and was known as such for nearly eight hundred years: Peniel is the face of God. Gideon, in his campaign against Midian, found a tower standing there which he destroyed (Judg. viii. 17). Long afterwards, Jeroboam fortified the place (1 Kings xii. 25). Next, these incidents explain the refusal of Jacob's posterity to eat, as animal food, the "sinew which shrank;" an abstinence which is religiously observed by the Jews to this day. Again, the chosen seed took from that good hour new and honored patronymics, — Israel, Israelites, the children of Israel. In the subsequent scriptures, the names Jacob and Israel are used interchangeably; with the difference, that, to a certain extent, when the patriarch is spoken of individually, he is called Jacob; when the community is spoken of, they are called Israel. Further, the traces which Jacob's experience at Peniel left upon his person and character are plainly marked. He "halted upon his thigh" to the end of life; a memento of his past weakness, of his mortal combat and signal

defeat. And yet this incident is hardly worthy of mention, compared with the supernatural change which was wrought upon his character. He represented, in his person, the two men described by Paul, the old man and the new man (Eph. iv. 22). The old man was the fruit of the natural birth, the other was the fruit of the new birth. The old man in Jacob was tricky, deceitful, timid; the new in Israel was open, frank, courageous. Dating from Peniel we can discover little or nothing of the guile by which he won the blessing from his father, or of the cunning by which he got the better of Laban. Into his plan of life he incorporated steadfastness of purpose, purity of motive, and uncalculating submission to the Divine will. His humility expressed itself in the prayer: "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant" (Gen. xxxii. 10).

GEN. xxxiii. 1-17. — The historian proceeds at once to the reconciliation of the brothers. The narrative fills the imagination with a beautiful picture in Oriental coloring. Esau approaches with his four hundred warriors. Jacob draws near, bowing seven times to the ground before Esau. Esau runs to meet him, and embraces him, and falls on his neck and kisses him, and they both weep together. Jacob presents his wives and children to his brother, and they offer the usual obeisance. Jacob urges his present upon Esau; Esau accepts the gift with kindly reluctance, and offers in return to escort Jacob into the land of Canaan. Jacob declines the courtesy in friendly terms, and engages, after he shall be settled in Canaan, to visit his brother in Mount Seir. Jacob undoubtedly ascribed to the interposition of Jehovah the sudden change which had occurred in his brother's disposition. He had prevailed with God, and by the help of God had prevailed with Esau. Esau returned to his encampment in Mount Seir. Jacob, in peace with his brother, proceeded to Succoth (or the Booths), on the east side of the Jordan, near the mouth of the River Jabbok. That Jacob, for reasons not recorded, spent several months here, appears from the fact that, instead of dwelling in tents, he

built a house for his family and huts for his cattle. From Succoth Jacob ultimately crossed the Jordan, and came "in peace to the city of Shechem in the land of Canaan."

The cases of Jacob and Peter present some points in common if the inner significance of events is noticed. Jacob at Bethel and at the ladder's foot may be likened to Peter at Cæsarea Philippi (Matt. xvi. 13-18); though Jacob did all those wrong things, and Jesus was obliged to call Peter Satan afterwards. And then Peter at the denial and repentance (Luke xxii. 60-62) may be likened to Jacob at the wrestling. And if Christ spake to Peter, saying, "When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself," etc. (John xxi. 18), "in order that he might know that henceforth an entire reliance upon the leading and protection of God must take the place of his sinful feeling of his own strength, and his attachment to his own way; so, doubtless, the lameness of Jacob's thigh has the same significance, with this difference, that as Peter must be cured of the self-will of his rash, fiery temperament, so Jacob of his selfish prudence, tending to mere cunning." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lange's Genesis, p. 555.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## JACOB AT HEBRON.

## CHRONOLOGY OF JACOB.

*(After Usher.)*

<i>Cir.</i> B.C.		AGE.	
1837	Jacob born.		
1822	Abraham died . . . . .	15	Gen. xxv. 8.
1805	Birthright bought . . . . .	32	
1796	Esau married . . . . .	40	xxvi. 34.
1760	Jacob's flight . . . . .	77	
1753	His double marriage . . . . .	84	
1752	Reuben born . . . . .	85	
1751	Simeon born . . . . .	86	
1750	Levi born . . . . .	87	
1749	Judah born . . . . .	88	
1745	Dinah born . . . . .	92	
1745	Joseph born . . . . .	92	
1739	Jacob left Aram . . . . .	98	
1739	Wrestled at Peniel . . . . .	98	
1732	Slaughter of the Shechemites . . . . .	107	
1729	Rachel died . . . . .	108	
1729	Jacob at Hebron . . . . .	108	
1728	Joseph sold . . . . .	109	
1716	Isaac died, aged 180 . . . . .	120	
1715	Joseph promoted . . . . .	122	xli. 46.
1707	Jacob in Egypt . . . . .	130	xlvi. 9.
1690	Jacob died . . . . .	147	xlvi. 28.
1635	Joseph died, aged 110 . . . . .	1. 22.	

GEN. xxxiii. 18-20.—When Abram left Padan-aram to go to the promised land, he came first to a place afterwards called Shechem, and there he built an altar. About one hundred and



eighty years afterwards Jacob, returning from Padan-aram, came also to Shechem, and builded another altar there, and called it El-elohe-Israel, "*God (the Mighty) is the God of Israel.*" Shechem became, next to Jerusalem, the most famous city in Palestine. Jacob bought a parcel of ground there, and dug a well within its borders. At his death he bequeathed the field to his son Joseph. The sons of Jacob all died in Egypt. Their remains were not allowed to moulder in the land of bondage, but were brought over to Shechem for burial (Acts vii. 16). At the exodus the Hebrews took the bones of Joseph, and on their arrival in Canaan deposited them in Shechem. Ebal and Gerizim, the mountains of blessing and cursing, guarded the spot. It was near the site of the future Samaria, the capital of the kingdom of Israel. There Rehoboam, the last monarch of the undivided kingdom, was crowned; there Jeroboam, the founder of the kingdom of the ten tribes, reigned; there Ahab and Jezebel polluted the throne; and there Elijah and Elisha kept the faith. About eight hundred and fifty years still later, our Lord sat on Jacob's well, and gathered to himself the first fruits, reserving the fuller harvest of souls for Philip the evangelist (Acts viii. 5).

GEN. xxxiv. — Jacob pitched his tent near the city of Shechem, of which Hamor was the prince. Dinah, Jacob's daughter, was robbed of her honor by Shechem, a son of Hamor. In an interview with Jacob and his sons, the sheik declared the love of his son Shechem for Dinah, and made proposals of marriage between them. He offered to Jacob's sons a joint possession with himself of the region, granting to them the full liberty to trade and acquire property. Hamor warmly urged his suit for Dinah's hand, promising an ample dowry. Her brothers, with shameless duplicity, consented to the marriage, on the condition that all the males of the city would submit to circumcision. The terms were accepted and fulfilled. Thereupon Simeon and Levi, the full brothers of Dinah, at the head, no doubt, of their brothers and other fighting men, rose upon the Shechemites, when they were feverish and prostrated from the effects of circumcision, put them to the sword, plun-

dered the city, and their wives took them captive. Hamor and Shechem were among the slain. Jacob expressed his horror of the crime, and his fears lest he and his family should be destroyed by the survivors of the slaughtered princes. Well might he so express himself. His sons pleaded as their excuse the indignity inflicted on their sister. But this could not excuse a slaughter which bore the marks not only of perfidy and ferocity, but of a double sacrilege likewise. His sons had used their Divine election as a cloak for revenge (vs. 7 and 14), and had employed the sacramental sign of the covenant to serve their bloody purposes. When the old patriarch was on his death-bed, fifty-two years afterwards, he could not suppress his horror at the deed. The houses of Simeon and Levi, said he, were filled with merciless weapons; his very soul would fly from companionship with them; cursed be their fierce anger, cursed be their cruel wrath; let them be dispersed forever (Gen. xlix. 5, 7).

GEN. xxxv. — A wiser than Jacob might have recognized the necessity to the plan of Providence of another and more prolonged expatriation of the chosen seed. Jacob himself was not slow in reaching the conclusion that he must once more seek safety in flight. Jehovah came to his relief, directing him to go to Bethel and erect an altar on the spot where he had seen God in his flight from the anger of Esau. There he had beheld the ladder and the angels, and had received the benediction of Jehovah. But how could he return to that "dreadful place" which was "none other than the house of God, the gate of heaven"? To enter the sanctuary would be a mortal sin, a sacrilege; for his family, in the persons of his wives, was defiled with the sin of idolatry. In his weakness, and with his tacit consent, they had brought strange gods with them from Aram. He now required them to bring to him all these idols and objects of false worship, with their rings and armlets; and he buried them under an oak at Shechem; the very oak, perhaps, under which Abraham had pitched his tent (xii. 6). He then required Leah and Rachel to wash their persons, and exchange their garments for clean and festal robes, as signs of their puri-

fication and the sanctification of their hearts. This being done, the patriarch and his family made a safe journey to Bethel. The cities round about did not dare to pursue the holy family, for the "terror of God was upon them."

On his arrival at Bethel he remembered the vow which he had made, more than twenty years before, to the effect that if God would bring him back to Canaan he would establish on the spot the house of God. He made haste to build an altar, and called the place El-beth-el (*the God, the house of God*). Jehovah appeared to him the second time, blessed him, confirmed to him his new name Israel, and renewed in plenary fulness the promises first made to Abraham. His seed should swell into a congregation of nations, kings should come out of him, and his posterity should possess the land. Jacob set up a pillar of stone on the place where Jehovah had talked to him, and poured upon it consecrated oil and a drink-offering. By so doing the chosen family, in the person of their patriarch, acknowledged Jehovah to be their God.

From Bethel the caravan journeyed slowly towards Hebron, resting by the way for the benefit of the flocks. Near Ephrath, Benjamin was born, and Rachel gave her life for his. Jacob erected a monument over her grave. How tenderly he loved her, down to the day of his death, may be known from his last words to Joseph's sons (Gen. xlviii. 7). Near the shepherds' watch-tower of Edar, Reuben was guilty of incest with Bilhah, Rachel's maid and Jacob's wife in the second degree. The historian says significantly, "and Israel heard it." Nor did he forget the indignity until he had opportunity to take away Reuben's birthright (Gen. xlix. 4). Jacob at last, after an absence of about thirty years, — twenty in Padan-aram and ten on the homeward journey, — came to his father in Hebron. Rebekah is not mentioned here: she was probably dead. Isaac was now one hundred and sixty-three years old. He survived Jacob's return to Hebron thirteen years, and the sale of Joseph twelve; and died at the age of one hundred and forty-seven years. Esau, reconciled to Jacob near the Jabbok, was present at his funeral; and the two brothers buried him by the side of

Abraham at Machpelah. From the time when Isaac gave his parting blessing to Jacob to the day of his death, an interval of forty-three years, nothing is said of him in the record. His significance in the history had ceased; and Moses dealt with his closing years as he had dealt with the closing years of Abraham, — he passed over them in silence. Here ends the ninth section of Genesis, beginning at chap. xxv. 19, and entitled “the generations of Isaac.” Here also a new period in the life of Jacob begins. But the historian, adhering to his invariable plan, clears the way for the career of Jacob and his family by disposing of the race descending from Esau.

GEN. xxxvi. — Moses devotes the tenth and eleventh sections of his narrative to “the generations of Esau, who is Edom.” This chapter undoubtedly contains the most ancient and accurate genealogy now in existence, of the famous Idumean races. An abstract of the same register appears in 1 Chron. i. 34–50. Esau’s family were originally settled in Mount Seir, — the region which extends from the Dead Sea to the eastern branch of the Red Sea, including what is now known as *Petræa*. In later times the Edomites spread their habitations through the region south of Palestine. The register in Moses traces the social progress of the sons of Esau, showing how their families multiplied and prospered, how the families expanded into dukedoms, how the dukedoms became consolidated into an elective monarchy, and how the monarchy became renowned “before there reigned any king over the children of Israel” (ver. 31). The fickle and violent temper of Esau perpetuated itself in his posterity. Josephus describes the Idumeans of his day as “a turbulent and unruly race, always hovering on the verge of revolution, always rejoicing in changes, roused to arms by the slightest petition or flattery, rushing to battle as if they were going to a feast.”<sup>1</sup> The sacred record preserves only a few minute details of their history; none, indeed, except such as were needed to explain their relation in the after ages with Israel.

It is notorious that the hostility of the seed of the serpent to

<sup>1</sup> Bel. Jud., iv. 4, 1.

the seed of the woman, which broke out in paradise, was twice renewed in the family of Abraham, the father of the faithful. At the birth of Isaac, Ishmael gave expression to his jealousy by mocking his half-brother, or, as Delitzsch interprets the text, by "making fun of him;" or, as Paul has taught us, he "persecuted" Isaac (Gal. iv. 29). His posterity, as we have seen, fulfilled the bad omen. And now, as if to preserve all the unities, the war was renewed in the family of Isaac. Esau, first in his person and afterward in his posterity, perpetuated these hostilities through the period, first and last, of two thousand years. Edom would not permit the Israelites in the wilderness to pass through his border, and drew the sword to enforce his refusal. In the time of David, Edom marched in force on the land of Israel. David met him in the "valley of salt," on the Dead Sea, gave him battle, and defeated him with the slaughter of eighteen thousand Edomites (2 Sam. viii. 13); a victory which the king celebrated in the sixtieth Psalm. And so it occurred that in the days of Moses the heel of the woman's seed was bruised, in the days of David the head of the serpent was crushed. But the race of Esau seems to have brought out all its reserved forces of malignity and strength for an assault on Christ, the ideal Seed of the woman, and on his disciples. Herod the Great was, it is supposed, Esau's lineal descendant, and Herod began the bloody war by seeking to kill Jesus in his cradle. Herod the tetrarch, "that fox" (Luke xiii. 32), was the son of Herod the Great. He slew John the Baptist, and mocked the Son of God on the morning of the crucifixion. His wife was the grand-daughter of the first Herod; she contrived the murder of John. Herod Antipas killed James, the brother of John, with the sword; he intended to kill Peter. "He was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost" (Acts xii. 23). What effect the crimes and punishment of this man had upon his son,<sup>1</sup> the King Agrippa of Paul, is not known. We hear only that he was graciously lifted out of this brood of serpents so far as to declare himself an "almost Christian." This story, among its useful lessons, calls

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, War, ii. 11, 6.

our attention to threads running in and out, and giving unity and coherence to the narrative.

The biography of the patriarch Jacob, between his return from Aram and his death, may be distributed into three periods. (1) His journey from the river Jabbok to Hebron occupied about ten years. From the circumstances that he built a house for himself, and that he bought a piece of ground at Shechem, we may infer that he spent the larger part of these ten years in those places. (2) He sojourned in Hebron about twenty-two years, and then went down into Egypt. (3) He remained in Egypt seventeen years, until he died, aged one hundred and forty-seven years.

During the second of these periods, Jacob's residence in Hebron, his sons were shepherds, leading their flocks in search of pasture-grounds and water-springs as far as Shechem and Dothan (chap. xxxvii. 12-17). From the sheaves of wheat which figured in the dreams of Joseph, it appears that they also tilled the soil. Jacob remained at home superintending, as best he could, the wanderings and labors of his sons, and communicating with them from time to time. Joseph brought to Jacob intelligence of the misconduct of some of his half-brothers, the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. Jacob sent Joseph also to Shechem on a visit to his brethren there. In the twelfth and last section of Genesis, the historian enters anew upon the biography of Jacob.

GEN. xxxvii. — This section is entitled "the generations of Israel," and it extends to the death of Joseph and the end of Genesis. It opens with a narrative of the sale of Joseph, which was made within a year after Jacob came to Hebron. It has been thought that "Joseph might be described as the moving principle of the subsequent history." But it remains true that Jacob was the head of the family, the third of the three older patriarchs; and Joseph, with all his prominence in the removal of the family to Egypt, did not take the birth-right from Judah, nor Judah's place in the genealogy of Christ, nor did Joseph at his death pronounce the patriarchal blessing on his own sons and on his brothers. The true representative

of the chosen seed was Jacob. And Jacob comes before us in several important relations to the history of redemption.

(1) He left Canaan, a fugitive and an exile, with his staff only. He returned to his father's house, bringing with him twelve sons, great riches, repeated assurances of the Divine blessing, and the confirmation of his patriarchal position. Meanwhile he had received the regeneration: the old nature that was within him, filled with selfishness and duplicity, had been emptied of those vices, and filled with the graces of the Spirit. He was a new man; no longer Jacob, but Israel. (2) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were, each in his generation, the sole heirs of the covenant, their brothers having been laid aside. In Jacob's family, the covenant seed expanded into the company of twelve tribes of Israel, the tribes to be consolidated in due time into a single commonwealth. (3) The chosen family, having been called to this high destiny, were separated from the peoples around them by the sign of circumcision, by their worship at the altar of one God, the most high Jehovah, and by their purification at Shechem of the last traces of idolatry. (4) The removal of the chosen seed to Egypt, one of the salient points in the history of redemption, occurred in the old age of Jacob. The first decisive step towards this migration was taken in the sale of Joseph into Egypt. The word of God to Abram, uttered about a hundred and thirty years before, foreshadowed the enslavement and affliction of his posterity in some strange land, for the period of four hundred years (Gen. xv. 13). Jacob did not take in the meaning of this warning. It did not, apparently, occur to him that this exile would take place in his day, or that it should be experienced in Egypt. Least of all did he anticipate the noble position assigned to his son Joseph in this epoch. His ignorance in regard to the whole case followed the general rule, according to which no prophecy can be unerringly interpreted until after it shall be fulfilled. There is no reason to suppose that he understood, in whole or in part, the providential plan to be accomplished by the removal of the chosen seed into Egypt. That important information is communicated by Moses to his readers.

1. Certain occurrences in the land of Canaan show that the removal thence of Jacob's family was necessary in order to prevent unrestrained intermarriage between the Israelites and the heathen, leading to a fusion of the races. Both Abraham and Isaac took special precautions against such misalliances. Simeon, Judah, and Judah's oldest son married Canaanitish women; and it is probable that some or all of the brothers took wives of the daughters of the heathen, or of Ishmael and Esau. Forty-six grandsons went with Jacob into Egypt, and it is right to imagine that many of them had done likewise. The exposure of Judah's disgusting dissoluteness, in Gen. xxxviii., shows still further the necessity of some measure which would effectually prevent the chosen seed from being polluted and finally absorbed by the natives. The expedient which God adopted was the removal of the whole chosen family into another country. The suitability of Egypt as a refuge from the perils here mentioned will be recognized, when it is remembered that there was no ordinary possibility of intermarriage between the Hebrews and the Egyptians. There could be no common table for husband and wife in a mixed marriage: "The Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians" (xliii. 32). Some writers have referred this antipathy to the general aversion of the Egyptians towards all foreigners, others to repugnant customs in the preparation of food, and others to the circumstance set forth in xlv. 34: "Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." It may be conjectured that their refinement was offended by the coarse manners of the nomadic races, for they habitually resented the inroads of the Bedouin shepherds and robbers of the adjacent deserts by refusing to eat with any shepherd. We approach still nearer the distinct ground of the aversion, when we remember that the Hebrews slaughtered for their daily food and for their burnt-offerings the animals which were worshipped in Egypt (Exod. viii. 26). One or all of these particulars make it plain that the barriers to the intermarriage between the Hebrews and the Egyptians were well-nigh impassable. Indeed, not more than two or three instances are on record in which the



barrier was overleaped; the case of Joseph being every way exceptional. So far as the preservation of the Hebrew stock in its purity entered into the Divine plan, the object was fully accomplished by the removal of Jacob's sons to Egypt.

2. The expansion and consolidation of the chosen seed into a nation was conditioned on their expatriation. The problem to be solved was, how to develop the twelve patriarchs into a great people, in such manner as to secure their organic unity as one commonwealth, and to preserve their organic diversity as twelve tribes. It is difficult to see how this could be brought about, if the people had remained in Canaan. For their unity as a single people was liable to dissolution from two causes: first, their nomadic pursuits dispersed them over the whole land in search of pasture-grounds, and wells or pools; and, next, dissensions among themselves, like those which separated Lot from Abraham, and Esau from Jacob, might be expected to spring up. The effect of these disturbances would be, to split them into small and perhaps hostile clans, and to defeat their consolidation into one nation, severed from all other peoples and united in themselves. This problem was readily solved in Egypt. The Hebrews were settled in one compact body in Goshen; they were alienated from the Egyptians and from the Bedouin tribes in the deserts, by the prejudices of race. Their pursuits also, their traditions, the oppressions which they endured, and their expectations for the future, gave them the position and character of a peculiar people, and perpetually reminded them that they were one in origin, in history, and destiny. In Goshen it was that the sense of unity was planted in the Hebrew mind, which has remained inextinguishable through the ages. And while this organic unity was maintained, the integrity of the tribal organization was protected during the sojourn in Egypt. The method by which the twelve tribes were kept distinct is not described; suffice it to say, the object was attained.

3. The relations of the Hebrews to their neighbors in Canaan were exceedingly critical. If the Canaanites of Jacob's day, dwelling in tents and watching their flocks, be compared with

the Canaanites of Joshua's day, living in walled towns and protected by fighting men, it will be seen that they were rapidly growing in numbers and power. The time was at hand when the land could no longer accommodate both races; one must give way, or be subjugated to the other. Collisions between the parties, engendered by accident or malice, were inevitable. A serious controversy had already sprung up between the servants of Isaac and the Philistines, in regard to the wells in Gerar. The seduction of Dinah, Jacob's daughter, by the young prince of Shechem, had been avenged by her brothers in the cowardly slaughter of a whole city. There is reason to believe that wars of races were impending, out of which the sons of Jacob, if they escaped with their lives, would have emerged with the temper of the Bedouin — more Ishmaelites than Israelites. Moreover, the chosen people were appointed of God not only to supplant, but to destroy, the Canaanites; to the end that these people might be punished for their iniquities, and that the country might be cleared for the occupancy of the chosen people. Neither Jacob's sons, nor his grandsons, nor their sons, would be strong enough to drive out the native tribes. Accordingly, they were lifted up in a body and sent to Egypt, and kept there until they could return to the promised land with six hundred thousand fighting-men, able to overrun the country in a single campaign.

4. The plan of Providence in this exile contemplated a change in the habits of the people, suited to their destiny. The pilgrim father tilled the soil (Gen. xxvi. 12), but, for the most part, the chosen people were shepherds, dwelling in tents, and leading their flocks throughout the whole land, from the wells of Beersheba to the slopes of Hermon. Their nomadic habits remained unchanged through two hundred and fifteen years, — from the arrival of Abram at Shechem, down to the migration of Jacob to Egypt. But for the fear of God that was in them, the patriarchs resembled the Arab sheiks, surrounded by their herdsmen and warriors. This stereotyped form of society had accomplished the purposes for which it had been ordained, and "the simplicity connected with it made them susceptible of

Divine revelation." The time had come when the plan of Providence required a radical change in their mode of life, looking to an exalted theocratic civilization. It was appointed to the descendants of these wandering shepherds, to found a great commonwealth; to build, in the wastes of Canaan, cities and palaces, and a temple for Jehovah, all of them fenced about with walls and towers. They must also construct streets and roads, conduits, fountains and sewers, prisons and tombs; invent instruments of music, and the implements and chariots of war. This transformation in the habits of the people was easily effected in Egypt. In the fertile province of Goshen the children of Israel, while they were few in number, were taught how to combine the cultivation of the soil with special training in the useful arts. Towards the close of the sojourn, they became skilled in agriculture (Deut. xi. 10), and they dwelt in houses framed with door-posts (Exod. xii. 4, 7). They built cities for Pharaoh, and in that employment they acquired a practical acquaintance with domestic and public architecture. Still further, they became skilled in the elegant arts. The generation which went out of Egypt set up in the wilderness a tabernacle for Jehovah, adorned with curtains of fine twined linen, blue, purple, and scarlet. Its furniture was decorated with gold, beaten out into knobs and almond blossoms and crowns. They clothed their priests with holy garments; even robe, brodered coat, mitre, ephod, with the curious girdle thereof, woven for glory and for beauty. They engraved the names of the tribes in onyx-stones, and set them in gold; they made a breastplate for the high priest, of twelve gems, — the diamond, and the ruby, and other jewels rare and precious, — graven with the names of the tribes of Israel, like the engraving of the signet. They compounded costly spicery, holy oil and incense, a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy, — the whole made after the pattern of heavenly things. They established a sanctuary, a ministry, and a worship, not unworthy of the sacred Presence (Exod. xxviii., xxx.). Now, this thorough transformation of simple nomads into husbandmen, architects, engineers, weavers,

artists, and jewellers, could scarcely have been effected in Canaan. Egypt became, on a large scale, a school of industry and the arts for the Hebrews. The discipline was severe, but the education was thorough.

5. Israel was to receive, at the proper time, a Divine law, moral, civil, and ceremonial, and was to establish a sanctuary, a priesthood, and ordinances of worship wholly unknown on earth before. This was a work of extraordinary difficulty, even under the most favorable circumstances. The obstacles were insuperable in Canaan; and this by a double tendency, — the propensity of the Hebrews, as discovered in the wilderness and even in the promised land, to adopt the religious usages of the heathen, and the reciprocal willingness of the heathen to adopt the religious usages of the Hebrews. The absence of the family from Canaan, until it should become a great people, able to receive a Divine ecclesiastical polity, was indispensable.

6. By the removal of the chosen seed into Egypt, the kingdom of God was planted for a season in the heart of a great pagan empire. Once near the beginning and once near the end of the Old-Covenant dispensation, God was pleased to send his visible Church, as a whole, into the bosom, first of Egypt, then of Babylon. In the part of the history now before us, mighty and powerful Egypt, the representative of the seed of the serpent, is brought into contact with Israel, the representative of the seed of the woman. By the oppression which God's chosen people endured, by their trouble and anguish, was fulfilled the prophecy of the heel of the woman's seed bruised; by the terror of the ten plagues, and the overthrow at the Red Sea, was fulfilled the prophecy of the head of the serpent crushed. We now come upon the assaults which the world-powers have made upon the kingdom of God, and upon the judgments by which these hostile forces shall be paralyzed, one by one, until the last day. To Moses, God said, "The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch my hand upon Egypt" (Exod. vii. 5). By Ezekiel he said of Babylon, "I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid

upon them" (Ezek. xxxix. 21). Nothing further needs to be set forth showing that the removal of the promised seed from the promised land was wisely ordered. Nor could that measure be effected too soon. Just before the arrival of Jacob at Hebron, the slaughter of the Shechemites and the beastly behavior of Judah (chap. xxxviii.) made it plain that the time for quitting Canaan was rapidly approaching. About that time another painful occurrence, the sale of Joseph into Egypt, pointed to the country to which the chosen seed were to go.

GEN. xxxvii.—The story of Joseph begins with Jacob's preference of Rachel to Leah, his undisguised partiality for her son Joseph over all the other children, and the natural jealousy of Leah and the other sons. This jealousy towards Joseph was aggravated by the unwise favoritism which Jacob displayed for Joseph; and it rose into hatred when the foolish boy told them his two dreams, and his interpretation of them. "They hated him yet the more for his dreams and his *words*" (ver. 8). It is easy to see the hand of God in the indiscretion of Jacob, sending Joseph on a visit to his angry brothers in Shechem, in their removal from Shechem to Dothan, directly in the route of ordinary traffic from Syria to Egypt; in the conspiracy of the brothers to put Joseph to death so that his dreams might come to nothing; in the stratagem of Reuben to gain time with the hope of saving the life of the lad; in the timely arrival at Dothan of the travelling merchants, on their way, not to Syria, but to Egypt; in the distant relationship between the Ishmaelitish traders and Joseph; in Judah's proposal to sell him to the merchants, thus enabling them to avoid fratricide, and yet get rid of the lad; and, finally, in the hypocrisy and falsehood whereby they made Jacob believe that Joseph was dead, a deception which effectually prevented Jacob from sending to Egypt for the purpose of redeeming and recovering his son, albeit it was divinely ordained that Joseph should live and die in Egypt. What Peter said of the envious Jews is applicable to the angry brothers: they did whatsoever the hand and counsel of God determined before to be done (Acts iv. 28). The attempt of the Jews to defeat, by the

death of Jesus, the Divine purpose concerning him, was the means of carrying that purpose into execution; even so the attempt of Joseph's brothers to defeat his dreams by selling him into Egypt helped to bring the dreams to pass. Afterwards the accusation made by Potiphar's wife had a similar effect; and the resistance of Jacob to the journey of Benjamin into Egypt finally secured the removal thither of Jacob himself.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## JOSEPH IN EGYPT.

## CHRONOLOGY OF JOSEPH.

*(After Usher.)*

<i>Cir. B.C.</i>		<i>AGE.</i>	
1746	Born.		
1729	Sold . . . . .	17	
1729	In Potiphar's house . . . . .	17	
1729	Imprisoned . . . . .	17	
1718	Tells Pharaoh's dreams . . . . .	28	
1716	Promoted . . . . .	30	Gen. xli. 46.
1716	Married . . . . .	30	
1712	Manasseh born . . . . .	34	xli. 51.
1711	Ephraim born . . . . .	35	
1707	First visit of his brothers . . . . .	41	
1707	Second visit . . . . .	41	
1706	Jacob goes to Egypt . . . . .	42	
1689	Jacob died . . . . .	56	xlvi. 28.
1635	Joseph died . . . . .	110	l. 26.
1427	Buried at Shechem . . . . .		Josh. xxiv. 32.

JOSEPH himself gave the clew to his career in Egypt, when he said to his brothers, "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me, but God; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler in the land of Egypt" (Gen. xlv. 7, 8). The efficient agency in his career was Divine. It was not his brothers, but God, who had sent him to Egypt twenty years before they came. The Divine purpose was to save the chosen seed from extirpation by a signal deliverance; and to this end

God had made him the second author of life to Pharaoh, and the prime minister of Egypt. He made no mention of his services to the Egyptians, because, with his nice discernment of the plan of Providence, he perceived that the preservation of the Egyptians was incidental only to the preservation of the Israelites. Joseph understood also his true position in the sovereign plan.

He was not, like Jacob, the sole patriarch, but was simply one of the twelve patriarchs. He wrought no miracles, he saw no theophany; he was inspired only for the interpretation of the dreams of his two fellow-prisoners and of the king. He received no new promises in regard to the progress of the kingdom of God. He was neither prophet, nor priest, nor sole representative of the covenant; he was simply a man of affairs, viceroy, statesman. And yet, in the history, he is scarcely less conspicuous than Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, and Daniel. The narrative of Joseph's early life in Egypt reveals the preparation which he received, from the grace and the discipline of Providence, for his illustrious career.

GEN. xxxix. — Joseph was, in the first place, the special object of the Divine favor. While he was in the service of Potiphar, the record says that "Jehovah was with Joseph, and he was prospered," and that "Jehovah blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of Jehovah was upon all that Potiphar had in the house and in the field." Potiphar himself saw that Jehovah was with him, "and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hands." The use of the ineffable name, Jehovah, the covenant-keeping God, five times repeated here, is most significant. It prepares the way for the story of Joseph's deliverance from the temptation which he endured in Potiphar's house, and of his escape from death. The crime laid to his charge was, under the laws of Egypt, punishable with one thousand blows, — a horrible death. Whether, as is quite possible, Potiphar was led to doubt the guilt of Joseph as charged, is not material. The accused was, no doubt by Divine interposition, rescued from death, and cast into prison. He was treated at first with



great severity. "His feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in chains of iron" (Ps. cv. 18). "But Jehovah was with Joseph, and showed him mercy." He became the under-warden. The governor of the prison did not supervise Joseph, "because that which he did, Jehovah made it to prosper." His release from prison, his promotion to the position in Egypt next the throne, the rapidity with which he grew into the favor of the king and the priesthood and the people of Egypt, were among the signal tokens of God's favor.

Moreover, Joseph was from his youth the servant of the God of his fathers. In Potiphar's house he was protected from sore temptation, not only by the nicest sense of honor towards the man who had committed every thing to his hands except his wife, but by the fear of God. "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" and "he fled, and got him out." He had been sold and delivered when he was but a stripling. His piety is to be traced to his early training in his father's house. The idea of the true God was never absent from his mind. He declared to the baker and butler in prison that the interpretation of dreams belongs to God. When the king demanded the interpretation of his two dreams, Joseph said, "It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer in peace;" and again, "What God is about to do, he showeth to Pharaoh;" and yet again, "The thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass." His promotion quickly followed.

GEN. xli. 25-45. — By virtue of the Divine inspiration that was in him, Joseph told the king that his royal dreams pointed to seven years of great plenty in Egypt, to be followed by seven years of famine. He also suggested, by way of provision against the impending calamity, that one-fifth part of the grain produced in the years of plenty should be laid up in store-houses. Joseph's interpretation of the dream, and his advice, won the confidence of the king and his court. Pharaoh, though an idolater, openly declared that the "spirit of God" was in the prisoner, and said to him, "Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou

art; thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled. Only in the throne will I be greater than thou." Pharaoh's good confession in regard to the only living and true God was not a piece of affectation: it is one of many incidents showing that the knowledge of God still lingered in the memory of mankind. The Pharaoh of Abraham's day recognized the hand of God in the plagues which fell upon his household (Gen. xii. 17). Abimelech, the Philistine chief, acknowledged that the God of Abraham and Isaac was to be feared and adored (xxi. 22, xxvi. 28). Even so the Pharaoh of Joseph's day was seized with the conviction that the prisoner before him was the servant of a true God, that his prophetic warning must be heeded, and that the young prophet himself was the divinely appointed savior of the people. He raised Joseph to the office of the grand vizier, and gave orders for his inauguration with imposing ceremonies. The signet-ring used in sealing royal edicts was put upon his finger, his person was adorned with the robe of byssus, and his neck was encircled with a golden chain, to which the scarabæus was usually attached. A royal procession was formed. Joseph rode in the chariot next to the king's chariot; and heralds went before the new ruler crying, *Abrech*, "Bend the knee." As if to emphasize the dignity and honor of the first minister of state, Pharaoh gave to him a new name, Zaphnath-paaneah, the "support of life," and procured his marriage with the daughter of the priest of the Temple of the Sun at Heliopolis. Besides all this, the belief of the king in regard to the true God secured to Joseph, to the end of his life, liberty of conscience and worship. It is worthy of mention, also, that his elevation from obscurity to honor and power has its counterpart in the subsequent advancement of Daniel by Darius, and of Mordecai by Ahasuerus. In fidelity to the faith and worship of the chosen seed, these men did not exceed the example of Joseph.

Although in close contact with heathenism, he escaped its contagion. He had been separated from the people of God in early life, and yet he kept the faith of his boyhood. He

was the confidential minister of a pagan king; his wife was the daughter of the high priest of an idol temple; his duties, we may believe, required him, from time to time, to be present at the celebration of false worship, yet there is not the least reason to suspect that he conformed or pretended to conform to its rites. He walked by faith in the promises to the older patriarchs. To his first son he gave the name of Manasseh, a word of gratitude, signifying that his past sorrow was swallowed up in present joy. He called his second son Ephraim,—a sign of longing for the promised land: “For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of affliction.” Towards the close of life, his vague longing gave place to an assured hope. Jacob was with Joseph in Egypt seventeen years. The son must have taken from the lips of the father the story of all the theophanies that had been seen in Canaan, together with the promises respecting a chosen seed and a chosen land, the blessings that were to abide there, and the greater blessings that were to flow thence throughout all the world. Looking unto these promises, Joseph brought his sons to Jacob when he lay a-dying, that they might receive the patriarchal blessing. Jacob adopted the youths as his own sons under the Abrahamic covenant, and assigned to them separate and princely inheritances in Canaan; so that Joseph through them obtained a double portion. And finally, Joseph at his death “made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones” (Gen. l. 24, 25; Heb. xi. 22).

GEN. xli. 46–56, xlvii. 13–26.—The practical wisdom displayed by Joseph in his official position must be ascribed to the Divine guidance. He was sold into Egypt at the age of seventeen, and was thirty years old at his promotion. According to Usher’s chronology, his stewardship in Potiphar’s house occupied less than a year, and his imprisonment lasted twelve years. He rose suddenly from the condition of a prisoner to the dignity of the grand vizier. And yet it cannot be said that he took office wholly unprepared for its duties. For Jacob had brought him up in the fear of God, the source in him of incorruptible purity and integrity. Next, he got the

needed spiritual purification from the discipline of adversity and suffering. This thought is contained in Ps. cv. 17-19. He had been stolen and sold for a slave, tempted to sin, falsely accused, cast into prison without cause, his feet were bound in fetters, anguish entered his soul, his intimate faith was sorely tried. The arrogance of the stripling had disappeared from the chastened man of mature age and piety. And, further, his administrative ability had been partially developed by his experience as the overseer in Potiphar's house, and as the deputy warden in the prison. But, with all that, he was a stranger in Egypt, with little knowledge of its manners, customs, and public affairs; and now the whole duty of making provision for a famine of seven years was suddenly cast upon him.

GEN. xli. 46-57, xlvii. 13-26. — A few paragraphs, in all no more than twenty verses of our English Bible, are devoted to his plan for the accumulation, from the whole land, of food in seven years of plenty, and its distribution throughout the whole land in seven years of want. He began his official duties by making a personal inspection of all Egypt. He selected certain cities as centres of his administration. In them he ordered storehouses to be prepared, and appointed officers to superintend the work in the adjacent districts. By a royal edict the farmers were required to deliver one-fifth part of the wheat, produced year by year, to the cities near them. The accumulation was immense; its abundance was like the sands of the sea. The record of receipts which was begun was finally abandoned for want of time. The distribution of the food when the famine came was not less systematic and judicious. Owing to the improvidence habitual in a fertile region, like the banks of the Nile, the people soon exhausted their own meagre stores of food, and began to cry to Pharaoh for bread. Joseph removed the people from their homes to the cities where the grain was kept, and to the suburbs; a precaution lest any of the needy should be overlooked. In order to prevent waste and extravagance, the grain, instead of being given gratuitously to those who were

able to buy, was sold to them for money. The rule of sale and purchase was rigidly enforced. When the money of the people was spent, Joseph took their cattle and other property, and then their farms, in payment. Thus Pharaoh became the absolute and sole owner of the soil, and of the movable property of the people. An exception, however, was made by the king in favor of the priests: they received gratuitously their portion of food, and "sold not their lands."

Joseph's character and administration have been sharply criticised. Kalisch, for example, labors through eight closely printed pages to show that Joseph was "despotic, cruel, and heartless, anxious only for the aggrandizement of the regal power, and unfeeling for the miserable condition of the people," and that his character is "at once stained by the execrable meanness of sacrificing the happiness of the nation to subservient sycophancy of a tyrannical dynasty."<sup>1</sup> In the defence of Joseph it is not necessary to suggest that his discretion in the matter may have been controlled by Pharaoh and his advisers. He had supreme authority, and was responsible for his policy. It is proper to say, however, that, until more is known of the condition of the peasantry of Egypt before and after the famine, Joseph's accusers are not justified in aspersing his character or his administration; least of all are they at liberty to assume that the sacred writers intended to cast reproach upon him. The indignation of Kalisch is somewhat robbed of its virtuous quality by an examination of the public policy adopted by Joseph. The worst possible land-law for America or England may have been the best possible land-law for semi-barbarous Egypt. Joseph lost no time, after the famine ceased, in providing adequate relief for the peasantry. He encouraged them to cultivate the farms that they had once owned. He supplied them with wheat for their first crop and for the support of their families until the harvest. He fixed the rental at one-fifth of the crop from year to year; not an exorbitant charge, for the product of the soil was about thirty-five fold. Moreover, the revenue derived from the rent enabled the king

<sup>1</sup> Kalisch on Gen. xlvii. 13-26.

to support a standing army for the protection of his subjects from the raids of the Bedouins roaming about the deserts, and to construct machinery and canals for the irrigation of the wheat-fields. And, as a still further return for the taxes and rents, the government undertook one of the greatest public works on earth, the artificial sea of Mœris. This immense reservoir received the superfluous water of the Nile in the time of its great floods. When the overflow failed, or the river ran low, the country was watered by canals and trenches leading from the artificial sea to the thirsty soil. By this means the recurrence of the famine was effectually prevented. The further defence of this great minister of state against modern censoriousness is furnished by the joint testimony of Pharaoh and the peasants. Before the famine the king said to his councillors, "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?" After the famine, when Joseph made known his land system, the Egyptians said, "Thou hast saved our lives. Let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants" (Gen. xli. 38, xlvii. 25). The success of his administration presupposes in him the highest gifts of organization and administration; the ability to solve a bread question which was complicated by obstinate conditions; the wisdom which enabled him to preserve a steadfast loyalty to his royal master, and to secure the confidence of a starving population; the sagacity to enforce obedience to his single will throughout a wide public service, and to guide the discretion of the king and the priesthood and the court. By a marvellous statesmanship he effected a revolution in the land-laws which first impoverished the people with their own consent, and then led them on to prosperity.

GEN. xlii.-xlv. — The critics who can see nothing to commend in Joseph as a ruler ought not to be expected to admire him as a son and brother. In character-drawing, as in a picture, all the unities should be preserved. When Ucalegon's house is on fire, the adjacent house of Priam must also burn. Kalisch charges Joseph with duplicity, cruelty, and heartlessness towards his brothers when they came to Egypt to buy food. He con-

cealed his identity, called them spies, and threw them into a dungeon without cause, and released them without an examination. In the case of Benjamin and the cup, he devised a new stratagem with almost demoniac cruelty. He assumed the part of a retaliatory Providence towards his brethren, and acted as a judge and avenger. In his desire to see Benjamin, Joseph "almost designedly tormented" his aged father, and made himself the medium of dispensing the justice of God on the helpless old man. The duplicity of Joseph is established by a curious process of thought. While he is engaged in harassing his brothers, he cannot well suppress his tears when he sees their repentance, and hears the confession of their guilt; the fervent and almost passionate love for his father and for Benjamin breaks forth in every part of the transaction, and when he can no longer refrain himself, he makes himself known to his brothers with the most loving, the most touching tenderness. And this, we are taught, was a remarkable duplicity. Thus far the hostile critics.<sup>1</sup>

Now, in explanation of Joseph's course it is not necessary to deny what cannot be well proved, that, in his first interview with his brothers, he intended to rebuke them for their cruelty in selling him as a slave. But it is evident that he began very early to consider the propriety of removing his father's whole family to Egypt in order to preserve them alive through the famine. But before doing that, he must subject the dispositions of his brothers to repeated and decisive tests. He must be assured that they were not in the same temper that led some of them, twenty-two years before, to desire to kill him, and all of them to sell him into slavery. If they should be settled in Egypt, would they recognize his official authority over them, and so voluntarily fulfil the dreams of his boyhood, or would they give way to their former impulses of jealousy and hatred towards him? Were they capable of repeating their former merciless deceptions on their father? There too was Benjamin, the youngest son of Rachel. Had Jacob transferred to him the unwise partiality that he had lavished on Joseph, and had the

<sup>1</sup> Kalisch on Gen. xli.

ten brothers transferred to the youngest-born their old jealousy towards him whom they had sold? And, finally, were these men at peace among themselves? Unless their behavior, and in some good sense their hearts, had been changed, their removal to Egypt would have introduced a turbulent population which would disturb if it did not paralyze Joseph's administration. He was at the head of Pharaoh's government; he must rise to the dignity of his responsible position, and do nothing which might compromise him with the king, or work disaster on his family. It was his first duty to prove his brothers.

He was helped in his investigations by perceiving at the very first, that while he identified the persons of his brothers, and understood their native tongue, they were in ignorance of his person, and of the language which he spoke. When they saw him last, he was a mere stripling: now he was a swarthy, careworn official, in the fortieth year of his age; his head and beard were shaved; he was clothed in princely attire; and he spoke a strange tongue,—addressing them always through an interpreter (xlii. 23); and his brothers were sure that he was dead (xliv. 20). Joseph availed himself of his advantages. At the first interview he spoke roughly to them, he told them that they were spies, and reiterated the charge upon their denial of its truth. Having ascertained that Benjamin was at home with their father, Joseph told them that he would hold in custody nine of the ten there present until one of them should produce Benjamin. He sent them all to prison. At the end of three days he modified his order, telling them all to go home, except one whom he would hold as a hostage for the appearance of Benjamin. This severe discipline took effect. When they received Joseph's final order, they said to one another in his presence, but in their own tongue, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." Reuben added, "Therefore, also, his blood is required." Joseph overheard and understood it all. The brothers were penitent and humble, and worthy of his confidence. Overcome by emotion, he suddenly withdrew,



and burst into tears. It is right to imagine that among his conflicting emotions, joy was predominant; not only the joy of a good man over a sinner that repents, but, in Joseph's case, a peculiar joy in discovering the change which had been wrought by Divine grace in the hearts of his brothers. But he must prove them still further. So soon as he regained his composure, he selected Simeon as the hostage, and bound him before the eyes of the brothers. He then ordered his servants to fill their sacks with wheat, to provide them with food for their journey. And because he could not consent to extort payment for the staff of life from his own famishing flesh and blood, he ordered their money to be put into their sacks.

GEN. xliii.—On their second visit, Benjamin came with them. Joseph nearly lost his self-control when he saw his mother's son: "Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn for his brother; and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there." He made a feast for his guests, and seated his brothers at the tables in the order of their seniority. And as if to see whether they would show jealousy towards their younger brother, he gave to him the largest and daintiest morsels on the tables. The historian describes with glowing word-painting the final test to which he put them, in the story of the sacred goblet found in Benjamin's sack; the dismay and anguish of the brothers when crime was, as they thought, brought home to Benjamin; the inimitable pathos of Judah, beseeching Joseph to reduce him to slavery, and allow Benjamin to go home, lest their old father's gray hairs should go down with sorrow to the grave. Joseph could stand it no longer. He threw off his reserve; he said, "I am Joseph," he fell upon Benjamin's neck, and kissed him, and kissed all his brothers, and wept upon them. He knew now that his brothers respected him, and loved their father and one another, and that the way was open for their happy settlement in Egypt.

In due time Jacob and his entire household, with his servants and cattle, were transported with Pharaoh's full consent to

the fertile and beautiful plains of Goshen. And so was fulfilled the word of God to Abraham, that his seed should go down into the land of Egypt. Jacob was assured that his removal was in the plan of Providence; for when he reached Beersheba, on the border of the desert, Jehovah appeared to him once more, and encouraged him to proceed on his journey, with the repetition of the patriarchal promises. And if Jacob thought that Joseph had been unmindful of his distress in demanding the presence of Benjamin in Egypt, he might well excuse his son for what was simply incidental to the wisest possible method; and he might easily forget the sorrow of a few days in the comfort of a serene and honored old age.

One of the truths most clearly revealed in this history is the sovereignty of God and the freedom of man, in whatsoever comes to pass. God said to Abram, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them" (Gen. xv. 13). Here was God's decree. The sale of Joseph into Egypt was in pursuance of that decree. For he himself said to his brothers, "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance" (xlv. 7). It has been already shown that the removal of Joseph to Egypt was brought about by events which are easily traced as far back as the birth of Jacob and Esau. To this it may now be added that Joseph's imprisonment, his Divine gift of inspiration in the interpretation of dreams, his release from prison, his promotion and brilliant administration, the visits of the brothers, and the removal of the family to Egypt, are successive links in the chain of events, wherein God was the efficient cause, and the settlement of the chosen seed in Goshen was the issue.

The narrative brings before us also the many persons, in many lands, through whose instrumentality the Divine purpose was brought about. Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, Jacob, in Canaan; Laban, Leah, and Rachel, in Mesopotamia; Reuben, Judah, and the Ishmaelitic merchants, in Dothan; Potiphar and his wife, the butler, the baker, and Pharaoh in Egypt, — appear one by one in the story. Each of them in his turn wove his own separate

thread into the tapestry, and stepped aside to give place to another, knowing nothing of the rare and luminous device, even the Divine ideal, which was gradually coming out on the hidden side of the canvas. Each of them, also, revealed some personal motive or passion : Rebekah her maternal pride, Esau his revenge, Jacob his partiality for Rachel and Joseph, the brothers their jealousy, Reuben his lingering kindness towards Joseph, Judah his moderation, the merchants their love of gain, Potiphar's wife her desires, Pharaoh his superstition in regard to dreams, Jacob's sons their renewed natures, and Jacob his love for the long-lost Joseph. These many men and women, differing in race and customs, good and bad, heathen and Israelites, distributed through many countries and many years, known to each other or unknown, wrought unconsciously together unto one definite end, the foregone and predeterminate purpose of God. On the part of man was the absolute freedom of his will, choosing and refusing, doing and not doing, at every step, according to his own good pleasure. On the part of God was his providence executing his own absolute decrees. He prompted all that was good, overruled all that was evil. He adjusted both the good and the evil to his general plan ; he suffered no link in the chain to be misplaced or lost ; he allowed neither undue haste nor undue delay ; and he bound together events as remote as the sale of a mess of pottage and the sale of a human being, and events as natural as the dreams of a lad in Canaan, the dreams of the prisoners and of the king in Egypt. At last, through the intricate and tangled maze, God brought to pass every word that he had spoken, never once interfering with the liberty of man. Aside from the value of this part of the record as a development of the plan and promise of salvation, it is invaluable as an example of the supreme dominion of the Creator, interwoven, if we may so say, into the freedom of the creature.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## THE CHOSEN SEED IN EGYPT.

GEN. xlv. 17-21, xlvi. 28-34, xlvii. 1-12. — Having ascertained what had passed between Joseph and his eleven brothers, Pharaoh cordially invited Jacob and all his household to remove to Egypt. His offer, by way of inducement, was, "I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat of the fat of the land." He sent carriages to convey them from Canaan; he urged them to leave behind them their household effects, for, said he, "the good of the land of Egypt is yours." On their arrival, the king greeted them with a warm welcome. He gave audience to a delegation of the brothers, and, at their request, he assigned to the family the land of Goshen. He intrusted to their care the royal droves of cattle that were kept there. He also invited Jacob to a personal interview, treated him with the utmost veneration, and accepted from him a blessing. These incidents indicate the special favor of Providence towards the chosen seed, and the unlimited confidence which Pharaoh placed in the wisdom and integrity of Joseph. His confidence was not misplaced, for Joseph dealt frankly with his royal master. Remembering that all shepherds were an abomination unto the Egyptians, he required his brothers to be frank with the king, and tell him that they had been shepherds from their youth, they and their fathers.

The land of Goshen, or the land of Rameses (xlvii. 11), lies between the desert of Arabia Petræa on the east and the Tanitic arm of the Nile on the west. The modern traveller looks in vain for the attractions which it offered to Jacob's

family. Dr. Geikie quotes a remark of Napoleon, to the effect that under a good government the Nile invades the desert; under a bad one, the desert invades the Nile. The neglects and abuses of wretched misgovernment and of degraded peoples have reduced the region which, in Jacob's day, was "the best of the land," to a desert of sand and loose stones covered with ruins. What it was, as the Hebrews knew it, is described by an Egyptian scribe writing at the time. The chief city, in its borders, "is a pleasant place to live in. Its fields are full of good things, and life passes in constant plenty and abundance; it has a daily market; its canals are rich in fish; its lakes swarm with birds; its meadows are green with vegetables; there is no end of the lentiles, and melons which taste like honey grow in its irrigated fields; its barns are full of wheat and durra, and reach as high as heaven; onions and leeks grow in bunches in the enclosures; the vine and the almond-tree and the fig-tree grow in the gardens; there is plenty of sweet wine, the produce of Egypt, which they mix with honey."<sup>1</sup> Robinson adds, that while the western district was the garden land of the Nile, the eastern portion was suited for pasturage, — two advantages seldom found united. There the Israelites lived together as one family, and were separated from the Egyptians by religious and social peculiarities. Joseph's residence was near by; and when the time for the exodus came, the people found themselves on the very edge of the desert through which they were to pass on their way to the promised land.

The family became, very naturally, fond of their new home. They had exchanged famine in their native Canaan for plenty in Egypt. After the famine ceased, Joseph was perhaps still in power, certainly in a position to protect their persons and property. But there is reason to believe that neither Jacob nor his sons contemplated a permanent residence in Egypt. Joseph urged his father to come to him, on the ground that there were yet five years of famine (xlv. 11). The deputation of the brothers told the king that they had come simply "to

<sup>1</sup> Geikie: Hours, etc., vol. ii. pp. 3-5, and the authorities cited there.

sojourn" in the land, and because "the famine was sore in the land of Canaan" (xlvii. 4). But although they held their possessions by a good title,—a gift from the crown,—and though their numbers were multiplied, and their riches increased, they were not allowed to forget that they must return at some future time to Canaan. The burial of Jacob, and after that, the burial of one after another of his sons in Canaan, and the arrangements made for the transfer thither of Joseph's remains when they should go back to the land of promise, indicate that the earlier generations did not look upon Egypt as their home. After Joseph's death they were suddenly enslaved, and closely confined to the house of bondage. Then their eyes were opened, and they saw that the time of oppression in a strange land had come, of which Jehovah had spoken to Abraham.

The duration of the sojourn in Egypt raises one of the most intricate problems of sacred history. Many of our most approved authorities compute the period at four hundred and thirty years; many, equally distinguished, reduce the computation by one-half, to two hundred and fifteen years. Josephus is quoted on both sides of the question, showing how early the difficulty was perceived.<sup>1</sup> Among Christian scholars, the longer reckoning is supported by Rosenmueller, Hoffman, Ewald, Keil, Hengstenberg, Kurtz, Kalisch, George Rawlinson, Geikie, and Canon Cook. The shorter reckoning is adopted by Augustine, Usher, Murphy, Baumgarten, J. A. Alexander, Ellicott, and Jacobus. From this conflict of opinion it may well be inferred that the question cannot be solved by the information now before the world, and that no great importance is to be attached to the subject, else it would have been cleared up by the sacred writers. As the case now stands, the only treatment called for by the problem is a fair statement of its conditions, and of the solutions which have been proposed.

The evidence, as of record, is as follows (Gen. xv. 13): "And God said to Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them;

<sup>1</sup> Antiq., ii. 15, 2; ii. 9, 1. Wars of the Jews, v. 9, 4.

and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance." The four hundred years was, according to the usage of prophecy, a round number for four hundred and thirty years (Exod. xii. 41). Some have thought that these years covered the period of the sojourn of the patriarchs in Canaan, and the period of their posterity in Egypt. And yet the prediction points to an enslavement, not a sojourn simply, but an enslavement in one land by a single nation. God would visit that nation with sore judgments; the enslaved should come out of the place of bondage, should come out laden with treasures, at the end of four hundred years. Egypt alone, not Egypt jointly with Canaan, was distinctly and exclusively pointed at in the vision of Abram. It was made known explicitly at the giving of the covenant in its first stage; it was exactly fulfilled at the exodus.

Moses, describing the departure of Israel from Egypt, writes: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years" (Exod. xii. 40). This language, taken from the Authorized Version, supports the longer computation. All doubt, if any there be, is removed by the Hebrew text, as it is understood by the Revisers. Their reading is: "Now the sojourn of the children of Israel, which they sojourned in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years." It should be added that the advocates of the shorter chronology rely on the readings exhibited in the two oldest versions of the Pentateuch, — the Septuagint and the Samaritan. The text in the Septuagint, the gloss being here printed in *Italics*, is: "The sojourning of the children of Israel, which they sojourned in Egypt and *in the land of Canaan*, was four hundred and thirty years." The reading in the Samaritan is: "The sojourning of the children of Israel, *and of their fathers*, which they sojourned *in the land of Canaan and* in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years." The rejoinder is to the effect, that the original Hebrew text is of paramount authority; that the LXX. are notorious for the liberties they take with the Hebrew Scriptures; and that, in this instance, they may have sought to harmonize

their chronology with the system then prevalent in Egypt. In regard to the Samaritan reading, it is shown that the translator has followed the Septuagint, introducing an additional gloss.<sup>1</sup>

With respect to Paul's statement in Gal. iii. 17, to the effect that the law was given four hundred and thirty years after the covenant with Abraham, it is to be borne in mind that Paul was writing to the Jews, who used no other Bible than the Septuagint version. He chose, in his argument, to follow that reading, rather than confuse the matter which he had in hand, with a vexed problem in chronology.<sup>2</sup> The apostles and evangelists frequently quoted the Septuagint, even when that version deviated from the Hebrew text.

Next, on the hypothesis of the shorter computation, the interval which separated the birth of Moses from the death of Joseph is reduced to sixty-two years. Joseph was about thirty-seven years old when Jacob removed to Egypt. Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten, or seventy-three years after Jacob came. Moses was eighty years old at the exodus; leaving, of the two hundred and fifteen years, only sixty-two years for the interval between the death of Joseph and the birth of Moses. Usher assigns sixty-four years to the interval. It may well be doubted, whether within so short a period as sixty-two or sixty-four years the restoration of the old Pharaohs was firmly established; the services of Joseph forgotten; the Hebrews enslaved not only, but so thoroughly unmanned and demoralized, as to submit to pitiless drudgery, to the degradation of the lash, and to the smothering of their newly-born children.

Something may be learned in regard to the length of the sojourn in Egypt, from the number of the Hebrews at the exodus. The number of men capable of bearing arms at that time was about six hundred thousand, yielding a population of at least two millions. Jacob's following when he came into Egypt may be estimated at, say, two thousand. Now, it is difficult to believe that within two hundred and fifteen years two thousand persons could, under any natural law of increase, expand into one thousand times that number. Upon a review of the whole

<sup>1</sup> Keil and Delitzsch on Exod. iii. 37. <sup>2</sup> Rawlinson's *Egypt and Babylon*, p. 198.



case it may be said that the longer computation is sustained by the testimony now within our reach.

Jacob lived seventeen years after his settlement in the land of Goshen, and Joseph survived his father fifty-four years. The narrative of this period is limited to a few leading events. The prosperity of the Hebrews is described. Then follow the blessings which Jacob pronounced on Joseph's two sons, and the prophetic outline which he drew of the future career of the twelve patriarchs and of their descendants. The Book of Genesis closes with the death of Jacob at the age of a hundred and eighty-nine years, and his burial in Hebron, and with the death of Joseph at the age of a hundred and ten years. A single paragraph describes sufficiently the condition of the family during the life of Joseph. Under his protection, and the favor of the Egyptians for his sake, the Hebrews grew rapidly in numbers and wealth. They were not impatient to return to the land of Canaan. And yet, that Canaan was to be their future home, was made clear by the dying words of both Jacob and Joseph.

GEN. xlviii. — Jacob pronounced his patriarchal blessing upon Joseph's two sons in the retirement of his sick-chamber. Contrary to Joseph's remonstrance, his father gave the preference to Ephraim over his older brother Manasseh. Jacob followed the example of his father Isaac, except that Jacob did intentionally what Isaac did unwittingly. Jacob adopted Ephraim and Manasseh as his own sons, and assigned to each a separate portion in the land of promise. He declared that the tribe of Manasseh should become a people, and should be great; but the tribe of Ephraim should be greater, and his seed should become the fulness of nations. Nothing is better established in the subsequent history than the supremacy of the tribe of Ephraim over the tribe of Manasseh. It should be noticed here, that in the beginning of the chapter it was Jacob who talked with Joseph, but it was Israel that pronounced the benediction, for it was as Israel that he was the bearer of the promises; and what he uttered was not a pious wish of the patriarch Jacob, but the inspired prediction of the prophet Israel.

GEN. xlix. — Shortly after this interview, and just before his death, Jacob summoned his sons into his presence, and predicted what should befall them in the distant future with special reference to the time of the Messiah. His death was about to remove the last of the three patriarchs who had each in his turn been the sole representative of the chosen seed, and the sole organ of inspiration. His command was: "Gather yourselves together and hear, ye sons of Jacob, and hearken unto Israel your father." Here again the distinction appears: Jacob was his name as their natural father, Israel was his name as their spiritual father and the prophet of Jehovah. And to him they listened while he foretold to each his destiny, beginning with the oldest. Reuben, being his first-born son, was entitled to the birthright; and the birthright consisted, as we have already seen, in a double portion of the patrimony, the headship over the family, and the office of the priesthood. But the indignity which he had put upon his father (xxxv. 22) cost him that great inheritance. The double portion passed to Joseph's two sons, the chieftainship lapsed to Judah, and the priesthood to Levi. The later Scriptures show that the portion of Reuben's posterity in Canaan was on the east of the Jordan. They were a feeble people; and neither judge, prophet, nor ruler sprang from the tribe.

Simeon and Levi were full brothers by birth. "They were joined together in the brotherhood of treachery and cruelty" at the slaughter of the Shechemites (xxxiv.). By these crimes, they had forfeited not only the right of primogeniture which had lapsed from Reuben, but their right also to a distinct share in the land of Canaan. Jacob said, "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." This oracle was explained and fulfilled when Simeon received in Canaan, not an independent inheritance, but a few scattered cities in Judah's lot (1 Chron. iv. 27); and to Levi were awarded forty-eight cities in different districts. And yet neither of these tribes was excluded from the community, or from the spiritual blessings of the chosen seed; although they lost, by reason of

the sin of their ancestors, an independent landed estate with definite metes and bounds. And, still further, the tribe of Levi, as a reward for its loyalty at a later period, in the midst of general apostasy, regained the favor of God, and obtained the birthright of the priesthood which had lapsed from Reuben (Exod. xxxii. 26-29; Deut. xxxiii. 8). The dismembered tribe of Simeon dwindled into insignificance, and soon became almost extinct.

The leading feature in the prophecy comes out in the Messianic promise respecting Judah. Israel assures him (1) that he shall enjoy an unchallenged supremacy over his brethren. "Thy brethren shall bow down to thee;" that is to say, the chieftainship which Reuben lost fell to Judah. (2) He will maintain his supremacy by force of arms. He shall be the "ancestor of the lion-tribe." His prowess and power shall ripen into irresistible strength. He is the young lion, then the full-grown lion, then the old lion (or, as some read the text, the lioness fierce in the defence of her young), going up to the lair in the mountains, and who will dare to beard the lion in his den? (3) This dominion shall continue till Shiloh come.

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,  
Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,  
Until Shiloh come;  
And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be. (*Revision.*)

Who is Shiloh? Some receive it as a personal term pointing to Solomon; others as impersonal, describing a restful or peaceful age; others as local, referring to a town of that name in Canaan, so that the phrase may read "till he shall come to Shiloh." Neither of these conjectures is satisfactory. The last of them, although entertained by respectable authority, is liable to three exceptions: the town did not exist in Jacob's day; the tribe of Judah never came to Shiloh as the seat of government; nor did the loss of their supremacy occur in that city. The great body of interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, apply the title to the Messiah. The later Scriptures show

that Judah became the most powerful tribe of the twelve; that out of Judah came David and Solomon, who reigned over all Israel, that David's sons in an unbroken line succeeded to his throne, and that their right to reign, although long in abeyance, was never lost, in contemplation of law, down to the birth of Christ. In point of fact, the sceptre did not depart from Judah's family till this Shiloh came. And when the Son of the Highest came, Jehovah gave to him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end (Luke i. 32, 33). He was the true rest, or Shiloh: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John xiv. 27). Afterwards when the elder told John to behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, he looked, and behold a Lamb! He was in Jacob's prophecy both the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," and the Lamb, the emblem of innocence and patient suffering, and gentleness,—the Shiloh.<sup>1</sup> Judah became, therefore, the ancestor of Christ, and the fourth Messianic prophecy was made a part of his legacy. To the crowning glory of the tribe, Jacob adds the assurance of consummate worldly prosperity. So productive shall be his inheritance, that the ass will be allowed to browse on the tendrils of the choicest vine; so profuse shall be the vintage, and so prolific the flocks, that Judah shall wash his clothes in the blood of the grape; his eyes shall sparkle with wine, and his teeth shall be white with milk.

Upon Joseph the patriarch poured out the fulness of a loving heart. He had already adopted Ephraim and Manasseh as his own sons, had assigned to each a large inheritance in the land of promise, and foreshown the future exaltation of Ephraim. Now Israel invokes upon Joseph by name, and, through him, on Joseph's sons, special blessings. In his worldly prosperity he shall resemble the luxuriant vine, its roots moistened at the well, and its branches overrunning the wall. He shall be an archer also, at first sorely wounded, but at last his bow and his right arm shall abide in strength derived from the mighty God of Jacob,—the Shepherd and Rock of Israel. Divine blessings

<sup>1</sup> Hengstenberg: *Christology*, vol. i. pp. 47-90.

shall rest upon Joseph from the heavens, from the soil and streams, — blessings greater than those that came upon his fathers, rising even to the tops of the everlasting hills. These profuse benedictions were partly the expressions of Jacob's love as a father for his son, and partly the oracle of Israel, as a prophet, in regard to Joseph's renowned posterity in the person of his younger son Ephraim. But such was his nice prophetic sense, that he did not intimate that either of the tribes of Joseph's sons should rise to supremacy in the commonwealth, or give birth to the Messiah. This distinction was reserved for Judah. From him the covenant seed were called Jews; and "salvation is of the Jews."

Jacob disposed of the six tribes which were of subordinate importance in the history, with a few touches of word-painting. Zebulun dwells by the seashore in the promised land. Issachar is a bony beast of burden, choosing to lie down in rich pastures rather than to struggle for liberty. Dan is a formidable and wily enemy, a serpent in the way, biting the heels of the horse so that its rider falls backward. Gad is fierce and warlike, driving back the foe, and then harassing his rear. Asher luxuriates on dainties fit for the tables of kings. Naphtali runs like a deer on the hills, and is eloquent in prose and verse. Benjamin is a wolf; a warrior eager for booty, and chasing his prey from morning till night. These six oracles are left somewhat obscure by their brevity, and the metaphorical forms in which they are expressed. Dr. Candlish says that they "are so brief and enigmatical as to defy, at this distance of time, any thing like a really discriminating application of them, or a trustworthy historical vindication of them." "They doubtless suggested marks and badges, of which a college of heralds might have made good use in emblazoning the escutcheons and banners of the tribes."<sup>1</sup> In other words, we may say that the strong ass of Issachar, the horned viper of Dan, the swift deer of Naphtali, and the wolf of Benjamin served in some actual or ideal way the purposes answered by the eagle of the United States, the lion and unicorn of England, the flying

<sup>1</sup> Candlish : Gen., vol. ii. p. 301.

dragon of China, and the white elephant of Siam. But their prophetic significance should not be overlooked. Biblical scholars have pointed out certain historical events corresponding with some of these utterances. Jacob's foreknowledge of the warlike character of Dan, Gad, and Benjamin, is verified by the subsequent history; Naphtali's words of beauty appear in the song of Barak (Judg. v.); and the inheritance as signed to Zebulun and Asher corresponds to the terms of the oracle. Since their locations were determined by lot, they could not have been foreknown except through the gift of prophecy.<sup>1</sup> Still further, the six tribes which are most prominent in Jacob's address are most prominent also in the subsequent history; whereas the six tribes which are put in the background by Jacob occupy the background in the history. Undoubtedly Jacob spake as a prophet. And any fair comparison of his utterances respecting his four older sons and the two sons of Joseph, with their historical position and career in the promised land, will abundantly establish his Divine inspiration. That gift in him cannot be impeached, except on the pretext of rationalism that all prophecy is impossible. And what will the rationalists do with Shiloh? What, indeed, will they do with all the benedictions and discriminating oracles uttered by Jacob?

From first to last, in every word and syllable, Jacob's utterances presuppose the return of the chosen seed to the chosen land. It is impossible to explain them on any other supposition. In reading them we have the sense, not of Jacob an old man dying in Egypt, but of Israel, the prince of God, standing with his sons around him on the heights above Samaria, mapping out the country into twelve portions, and leading them in a journey through the length and the breadth of the land, establishing each of his sons in his inheritance. In these oracles Jacob responds by faith to the theophany at Beersheba on his journey into Egypt: "I will go down with thee [said God] into Egypt, and I will also surely bring thee up again" (Gen. xli. 4). That expectation dictated the oath which

<sup>1</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, Canon Cook, Murphy, on Gen. xlix.

Jacob exacted from Joseph, and the charge which he laid upon his sons, to bury him with his father in Hebron. He would not consent that his body should moulder in a strange land; he would be buried with his fathers, and make his grave where his children might be buried around him.

GEN. l. — Jacob is dead. The imagination is filled with the picture of his burial. We witness the grief of Joseph, bathing the face of his father with tears; the process of embalming the body by the Egyptian physicians, and the mourning through seventy days in the court of Pharaoh. We observe the order of the funeral procession, composed of Joseph and his brothers and sons, and of the officers of the palace and the rulers of the land. We follow the stately cavalcade, guarded by chariots and horsemen, making its way slowly through the wilderness, around the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, and over the fords of the Jordan. We reverently wait upon the funeral ceremonies through seven days at Atad, and sympathize with the respectful wonder of the Canaanites at the “grievous mourning of the Egyptians.” We proceed to the cave of Machpelah, where Jacob’s sons buried him with “all Egyptian and Hebrew honors.” Fifty years afterwards Joseph died. He had taken an oath from his brothers, “God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.” They might not build a pyramid or a pictured corridor in Egypt to receive his remains, nor adorn his tomb with the story of his exploits and honors. They might not, shortly after his death, bury him in Canaan. They should embalm his body, and keep it safely in Egypt, and carry it with them to the promised land when they themselves should go thither. The significance of the immediate burial of Jacob in Canaan, and of the retention in Egypt of Joseph’s body, are every way remarkable. When Jacob died, his sons were happy and prosperous in Goshen. Joseph was their protector. Yet they were strangers in the land of plenty and peace. Egypt was not their dwelling-place, for all the promises were bound up with Canaan. Jacob taught them that lesson, by directing them to bury him in Hebron. The lesson was repeated as often as his sons, one by

one, were carried over into Shechem, and laid in the sepulchre there (Acts vii. 16). When Joseph died, fifty-one years later, the long years of oppression and misery were at hand. By faith in the promised deliverance, Joseph "gave commandment concerning his bones" (Heb. xi. 22). The possession of his remains reminded the Israelites of the promises of God which were associated with them. While they were passing through the furnace of affliction, the sacred mummy, bearing on its bosom the effigies of Joseph, the great deliverer, was in some sort the prophecy and guaranty of an escape from the fires. The sight of the coffin gave them courage when the sunshine of Egypt was turned to darkness, when its riches were corrupted, when its luxuries became privations and woes, and the people sighed and groaned by reason of their bondage.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## BONDAGE.

A NEW epoch in the kingdom of God is marked by the separation in the Pentateuch of the Book of Genesis, the history of the patriarchate, from the Book of Exodus, the history of the growth and maturity of the embryo which was planted in Egypt, and struggled to its birth as a great nation in the night when the hosts of Jehovah went out from the land of bondage.

The narrative in Genesis ends with the death of Joseph, and is resumed in Exodus with the accession to the throne of a new king who knew not Joseph. De Wette calls attention to what he calls the "immense gap" between the two books, and is of the opinion that it is "useless to attempt to restore the history and establish any connection." Bauer says that "the historian leaps over the lengthened period without the slightest suspicion of its importance."<sup>1</sup> To these strictures, the first reply is that a minute history of the interval was not within the plan on which the Pentateuch was composed. The time was occupied by the natural expansion of the people in numbers, wealth, and power, and by the process of training them for their destiny. No importance was given to the period by the disclosure of any new promise, or covenant, or theophany, or Messianic prophecy, or of any truths before unknown. The prediction in Gen. xv. 13, to the effect that the chosen seed should dwell in a strange land, covers the ground. The second answer is that the historian fills up the "gap" by the recapitulation with which he opens his narrative in Exodus. He repeats the names of Jacob's sons, notices the death of Joseph, and of his brothers,

<sup>1</sup> Kurtz : Old Cov., ii. 145.

and of all their generation, and intimates that up to that time the children of Israel were at the height of their prosperity. He then introduces the story of the oppression by mentioning that a new king came to the throne, who was ignorant of Joseph. The narrative of the intermediate period, though brief, is sufficient, and the continuity of the history as a whole is maintained.

EXOD. i. 8-22. — Here begins the narrative of the bondage in Egypt: "and there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." This remark may mean that the new king intentionally ignored, or "remembered to forget," the services of Joseph. But, according to the commonly received interpretation, the lapse of time, together with a change of dynasty and other revolutions, had obliterated the memory of Joseph and of his superb administration. The task of identifying the new king belongs less to biblical science than to Egyptology. From the days of Eusebius (A. D. 270-340), it has been thought that the accession of this new king is accounted for by Manetho's story of the Hyksos. The Hyksos were shepherd-kings from the East, who overran Egypt, expelled the royal family, and raised one of their own sheiks to the throne. At the end of five hundred and eleven years the Egyptians drove away the invaders, and restored the native Pharaohs to power. The suggestion therefore is that the new king was either a Hyksos, or a legitimate Pharaoh who came to the throne after the shepherd-kings were deposed, under one of whom Joseph had ruled in Egypt. A true Pharaoh would naturally refuse to know him. But the name of this new king and his dynasty has not been identified; for the question whether he was a Hyksos or an acknowledged Pharaoh belongs to an obscure period of more than five hundred years. Nor is it certain that the shepherd-kings reigned in the Delta, the region occupied by the Hebrews. And, further, the truth of Manetho's story in regard to the Hyksos is vigorously impeached. Keil declares that "not a single trace of the Hyksos dynasty is to be found either in or upon the ancient monuments."<sup>1</sup> Hengstenberg asserts

<sup>1</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, i. 420, note.

that "the more recent and solid Egyptian researches have not discovered the smallest trace of the supremacy of the Hyksos in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> Among others, Uhlmann has shown this." Havernick defends at large this position.<sup>2</sup> These authors hold that the story of the Hyksos is a distorted account of the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt and their expulsion, a clever device invented by Manetho to hide the chagrin of the Egyptians at the overthrow of Pharaoh.

A discovery in Egypt made in 1883 seems to have determined the questions so long debated in regard to the dynasty which was in existence near the close of the bondage, and in regard to the names of the kings who were concerned in the oppression and deliverance of the Hebrews, and, proximately, the date of the exodus. Excavations were made in the mounds of Tel-el-Maskhutih, not far from Tel-el-Keber, where the Arabi-Pasha war ended. The mounds were identified as the ruins of Pithom, one of the "store-cities" built by the Hebrews. The fact was also brought to light, that Rameses II. was the Pharaoh who compelled the Hebrews to build the town.<sup>3</sup> This discovery supports the opinion that the bondage and exodus took place under the nineteenth dynasty. From these and other sources we gather that Seti I. was the Pharaoh under whom Moses was born; that Rameses II., the son of Seti, was, when young, associated with his father on the throne; that he reigned sixty-seven years; that he is the king whose death is recorded in Exod. ii. 23; and that he was succeeded by his thirteenth son, Manephtah. By the slaughter of the innocents, Seti became the Herod of his dynasty; Rameses II. was the Pharaoh of the oppression, and Manephtah was the Pharaoh of the exodus. Moses was born in the reign of Seti, fled to Midian from the wrath of Rameses II., and returned from his exile during the reign of Manephtah.<sup>4</sup>

Rameses II. was raised by his father Seti I. to the joint occupancy of the throne at the age of sixteen, and reigned sixty-seven years, as is supposed. His reign covered the hot-

<sup>1</sup> King. of God, i. 240.

<sup>2</sup> Havernick, *Introd. to O. T.*, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. S. H. Kellogg in *Pres. Rev.*, 1883. <sup>4</sup> Osborne: *Ancient Egypt*, pp. 71-79.

test period of the bondage. This young king became the greatest of all the Pharaohs. By his subjects he was known as Rameses the Great, and as Miameon, the beloved of Ammon, Jupiter Ammon, Lord of the Diadems, God of both Horizons, Son of Ra; by the Greeks he was called Sesostris the Great. He waged innumerable wars, and that means the slaughter of thousands. He was the most enterprising builder of all the Pharaohs, and that means the sacrifice of tens of thousands. His insatiable passion for public works ought to be taken into account in any conjecture we may form in regard to the labors which he exacted of the Hebrews. He built temples and reared monoliths and colossal statues. His temples were approached through long avenues of sphinxes. Out of the solid rock at Ipsambul he hewed two spacious subterranean temples, and set up at their doors four human figures sixty feet high. Monuments of the despot in countless numbers cumber the ground in Egypt and Nubia. Benonin says that of the thirty-two obelisks which yet exist in Egypt and elsewhere, twenty-one are either wholly or in part due to him. One of the huge granite columns which he set up in Thebes is now in Paris. The magnificence of his palace was rivalled by the solemn grandeur of his tomb. Among his public works was a chain of fortifications along the entire north-eastern frontier of Egypt, for one hundred and sixty miles. By his command immense dikes were built on the Lower Nile and in the Delta. Canals were dug, and cities were built. His domestic relations are brought to light by his marriage with his daughter, the Princess Bent-Anat, and by the number of his children, one hundred and seventy.<sup>1</sup> His long and cruel reign gives emphasis to the notice of his death in Exod. ii. 23: "And it came to pass in process of time" (in the course of many days, *Rev.*) "that the king of Egypt died." It is well said by Lenormant, that "the calm judgment of history confirms the account of his tyranny given in Exodus." Moses says that the Hebrews built for Pharaoh treasure-cities, or magazines, for the materials of war and for

<sup>1</sup> Milman: *Hist. Jews*, vol. i. p. 115. Osborn: *Ancient Egypt*, pp. 70 seq. Geikie: *Hours, etc.*, vol. ii. pp. 74 seq.

provisions, in Pithom and Rameses. The Egyptians "made their lives bitter with hard bondage in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field" (Exod. i. 11-14). Mr. Stanley Pool, in describing the recent excavation at Pithom, states that the ten-acre area within the walls, which are twenty-two feet in thickness, is full of large square pits, separated from each other by square partitions, the bricks made both with and without straw.

The narrative in the Book of Exodus, although very brief, furnishes sufficient information in regard to the leading events of the times. The numerical increase of the Hebrews; their growing wealth; the change which occurred in the policy of the Pharaohs towards them, together with its occasion, causes, and results; the relations of the Hebrews to the dominant race and to each other; their social and religious condition; the stern discipline by which they were educated for the future; the means by which their amalgamation with the Egyptians, or, as an alternative, their extermination, was prevented; the preparation made for the inevitable exodus,—all these essential points are cleared up, together with the name of the royal oppressor, the dynasty to which he belonged, and his place in that dynasty.

Pharaoh avowed the motives which induced him to afflict the Hebrews. Their prodigious growth in numbers and power awakened in him the apprehension that they would soon become greater and mightier than the Egyptians; that they would make common cause with his enemies, and would in the end quit Egypt forever. If, as it is altogether likely, the king was aware of the hope cherished by the Hebrews in regard to their return to the fatherland, his fear of losing them is explained. He adopted, in the first instance, the policy of repression; and when that failed, he resorted to wholesale infanticide. For the purpose of repression, he reduced the Israelites to compulsory service, under the command of overseers, upon the public works; his intention being to utilize their skill and labor, and at the same time to check the increase of their population, and extirpate their love of liberty and their spirit of inde-

pendence. Severities like these were no novelties in Egypt. Homer says they regarded all strangers as enemies, and either killed or enslaved them. According to Herodotus and Diodorus, the Egyptians, as a matter of pride, employed prisoners and slaves, instead of the natives, in building their monuments.<sup>1</sup> One might, with a certain satisfaction, accept the tradition that their kings, after death, were called to account for cruelty to their serfs.

The Hebrews did not, as has been imagined, labor on the Pyramids. These piles were standing in the days of Abraham. The "treasure-cities," Pithom and Rameses, were built in Goshen, and the toils of the laborers were in some degree modified by the nearness of their homes. So it was that the king saw, to his chagrin, that the bondsmen multiplied in proportion to their afflictions. Their oppressor was thwarted, though he knew it not, by the supernatural powers that took the side of the oppressed. And yet, instead of accepting the omen, he ventured on another expedient. He imbittered the lives of his unhappy victims with a more cruel bondage, in mortar and brick not only, but in the irrigation of the land by use of the tread-wheel, — a drudgery which gradually paralyzed the most strenuous muscle, and filled the springs of life with malarial poison. Ebu-Ezra sees in these labors the progress of the cruel exactions. From the public works in Goshen, the people were sent far away into the service of irresponsible masters scattered throughout Lower Egypt. Rosellini, a celebrated Egyptologist, describes a picture discovered in a tomb at Thebes, in which workmen, whose physiognomy and beards show that they are not Egyptians, are represented as making brick, whilst two Egyptians are shown standing by and armed with sticks, ready to fall on the laborers. Copies of the picture may be found in the books. An abundant caution may lead us to hesitate in regard to Rosellini's confident opinion that these slaves are Hebrews; but the picture may be taken as a fair representation of the sufferings which in all probability were inflicted upon them by these pitiless taskmasters.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Hengstenberg: *King of God*, ii. 24, i.2.

<sup>2</sup> Hengstenberg: *Egypt and Books of Moses*, pp. 80, 81.

mortality which might be expected to pursue the miserable bondsmen may be estimated from two circumstances. In the century of Rameses the Great, the Pharaoh of the oppression, thirty thousand laborers died in constructing the Mahmoudieh Canal with their hands, without picks or spades or wheelbarrows. In the reign of Pharaoh Necho, one hundred and twenty thousand men died in excavating the canal to unite the Nile and the Red Sea; and, after all, the scheme was abandoned in obedience to an adverse oracle.<sup>1</sup>

It would seem, however, that no such mortality fell upon the Israelites; for the king, as if disappointed by the failure of his policy of repression by hard labor, resorted to infanticide, in order to reduce the numbers and break the spirit of the people. He directed the midwives to kill all the newly-born male children of the Hebrews; and when the order was evaded by a clever device of these women, he commanded the mothers to drown their infant sons. By a refinement of cruelty to which the Herod of the future was not equal, he required parents to execute the sentence of death on their own children. But the plan failed through the maternal tenderness of the women, and the faithfulness of God to his promises. As if to emphasize the defeat of the heathen king, the historian is careful to mention that Moses, the future deliverer of Israel, was born and saved alive in the midst of the wholesale infanticides.

This part of the history is, in some sort, prophetic of the future. The slaughter of the Hebrew children under one Pharaoh was avenged in the destruction of the first-born in Egypt, in the reign of another Pharaoh; and the hardening of the heart of the first oppressor, under the repeated failures of his plans to diminish the numbers and to subjugate the will of the people, re-appeared in the hardening of the heart of his successor when the plagues poured their fury upon him. The birth of Moses gives intimation of the purpose of Jehovah to rescue his people from bondage. Their spiritual servitude called not less urgently for Divine interposition. The moral and religious degeneracy of the chosen seed is fully exposed in the

<sup>1</sup> Geikie: Hours, etc., ii. 79, 80.

record. They served the gods of Egypt, descending even to the disgusting goat-worship of the heathen. The Lord said to Moses, "They shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils" (*lit.*, shaggy ones, he-goats) "after whom they have gone a-whoring" (Lev. xvii. 7). At Sinai they set up the calf, a favorite Egyptian idol. The inveterate crime of idolatry did not disappear until the captivity in Babylon, when, by a singular course of providence, the Hebrews were cured in pagan Chaldæa of a moral leprosy contracted in pagan Egypt. The worship of Jehovah by the bondsmen in Egypt went gradually into disuse. What Moses said to Pharaoh (Exod. viii. 26) indicates the entire suspension of the Hebrew sacrifices in Egypt, at least as a public service. Nor is it probable that the bondsmen were allowed to rest from labor on the sabbath; the phraseology in Exod. xvi. 22, 23, indicates the renewal of an appointment of the holy day which had fallen into neglect. The spiritual degeneracy became desperate. That it became hereditary, as it were, is shown by the repeated murmurings and insurrections in the wilderness, and more decisively by the judgment of God, under which every grown man who came out of Egypt, two only excepted, died in the wilderness.

Yet, in the midst of this apostasy, a certain number served the Lord. Paul mentions the parents of Moses, and Moses himself, among those who were illustrious for their faith (Heb. xi. 23-25). There were midwives, also, who "feared God, and did not as the king commanded them." Besides these instances of piety among individuals, there are several indications of a religious conscience in the body of the people. One is to be recognized in the proper names used among them, in which the syllable *EL*, the Hebrew term for God, appears; as in Elzephan, Eleazar, Jemuel, and Uzziël (Exod. vi. ; Num. iii.). Another indication is found in the scrupulous observance of circumcision in Egypt (Josh. v. 5); and what is still more decisive, Moses, as the ambassador of Jehovah, the God of their fathers, got a hearing among them (Exod. iii. 15, vi. 3). How far these circumstances are to be referred to a lingering recognition of Jehovah as their God, and their own covenant relation to him,



and how far they are to be resolved into an attachment for traditional ideas, cannot be known; but the true heirs of the covenant were not extinct. There was an Israel according to the spirit, as well as an Israel after the flesh; there was "an election within an election."

The double bondage of the chosen seed — a bondage to the taskmasters, and a bondage to false worship — was in some sense prophetic of a new development in the history of redemption. True, the Church is almost apostate, but it is the only visible kingdom of God on earth. The sincere worshippers of God are in its bosom; these he will not forsake. They are his people by covenant with Abraham; he will not be unmindful of his covenant. To Abraham he said, "That nation whom they serve will I judge, and afterwards they shall come out with great substance;" and to Jacob, "I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will also surely bring thee up again." The case, as made, demands the interposition of Jehovah, lest his word and covenant and oath should fail, and the plan of redemption which is inextricably woven into the career of the Hebrews should come to naught under the wondering stars. The *dignus vindice nodus* was taken into God's hands. He will, in his own time, loosen it by making bare his arm for the deliverance of his people.

The nature of the deliverance is foreshown in the condition of Israel. The vine must be brought out of Egypt, and transplanted in a new region. The Church must be removed to a place where the knowledge of the true God may be revealed within it, and where all the institutes of true religion may be established. Not only this, but a work of spiritual renewal must be wrought within the Church. Of what avail were it to transplant, unchanged, these degraded bondsmen? There are idolaters enough in Canaan already; why add two millions to their number? They must be taught to fear the Lord, and to worship him only; a new heart and a new spirit must be given to them. A twofold deliverance was indispensable: on the one part, external, from slavery in Egypt; on the other, spiritual, from their native and acquired depravity. In short,

there must occur a national exodus and a national regeneration. These are the two luminous points in the history of the departure from Egypt, and the discipline of the wilderness.

The basis, the rule, and the end of the approaching deliverance are set before us. The basis was the grace of God. If it be asked, Why did not God cast off this rebellious people? the answer must resolve it into his distinguishing grace; first choosing, then redeeming from bondage, then planting in Canaan, this particular stock of the race. The same grace, meanwhile, secured the salvation of such of them as were ordained unto eternal life. The rule of the deliverance was the covenant made four hundred and thirty years before with Abraham. This instrument is steadily brought forward in the history as its controlling element. When God heard the groaning of the children of Israel, "he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and Jacob" (Exod. ii. 24). "I have established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan;" . . . "I have remembered my covenant;" . . . "I will bring you unto the land concerning which I swore to give it to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob" (Exod. vi. 3-8; comp. Ps. cv. 8, cvi. 45). It is impossible to comprehend the meaning of these events, except by observing how thoroughly they were controlled by the stipulations of this covenant, the organic law of the forces which shaped and ruled the entire future of the chosen seed. The end of this deliverance was the glory of God in the salvation of the race. The final purpose of God's dealings with Israel was not to set up an opulent and powerful nation, nor to secure the spiritual welfare of the Hebrews alone, but the salvation of the Gentiles as well. The Jews were the beneficiaries not only, but the vehicles also, of saving grace; the dispensation which was granted to them was preparatory to that which is more glorious, and which is this day the inheritance of us all. The way for the coming of Christ was prepared in the period before the bondage, and in all the events which marked every succeeding era, through the golden age of Judaism in the reign of David, thence onward to the

decline of the commonwealth in the period of the monarchy, and its fall in the reign of Herod.

Towards the close of the sojourn in Egypt, the providential plans for the exodus approached maturity. When the family went into Egypt, they expected to remain there no longer than the continuance of the famine. Before the new king arose, and while the people were free, some of Ephraim's sons attempted to anticipate God's appointments, and to take possession of Southern Palestine, but were repelled with heavy losses (1 Chron. vii. 20-22). But as the set time approached, the signs of its coming appeared. By way of outward preparation, the population had swelled to numbers sufficient to encounter the hostile tribes in the wilderness, and to gain, with the help of God, by an easy victory, the conquest of Canaan. To a large extent the chosen seed were, even to the last, isolated both locally and socially from the Egyptians, gathered in a compact body, and dwelling on the edge of the wilderness through which their journey was to be made.

The Hebrews were fully equipped for the march. Instead of an organization founded on the Egyptian idea of caste, they received a form of government founded in the idea of a family. Tribal distinctions, proceeding from the original patriarchal unity, were established. These tribes lived under the rule, not of a common sheik, but each tribe was governed by its own ruling elders. While Moses was in exile in Midian, God said to him, "Go and gather the elders of Israel together," etc.; "And thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt." Again we read that Moses and Aaron, on their arrival in Egypt, "went and gathered together also the elders of the children of Israel" (Exod. iii. 16, 18, iv. 29). Afterwards it is said that "Moses called for all the elders of Israel," and gave them directions in regard to the passover. Still later, he smote the rock "in the sight of the elders of Israel" (Exod. xvii. 5, 6). Notices to the same effect occur, over and over again, in the subsequent history. This organization was peculiar to the Hebrews, and contributed largely to the success of the exodus.

Next, by way of the preparation of will and heart for the journey, all the traditions of the people, religious and national, pointed to Canaan as their future home. The gift which God made to Abraham of Palestine as the sure and everlasting possession of his posterity; the promise that the fourth generation should actually enter on the inheritance; the oath which Jacob when dying had exacted from Joseph respecting his burial in Hebron; the funeral caravan of the family, with the pomp of Egypt and Israel, fulfilling the terms of the oath; the commandment which Joseph gave concerning his bones, and the presence among them of the coffin waiting for the exodus, — were memorials which had neither passed away nor lost their power.

And yet influences more potent than traditional ideas were needed to loosen the attachment of the Hebrews for Egypt. The problem of an emigration, such as was contemplated in the plan of Providence for this people, has been mastered but once in the history of the world, and that instance is in this record. Colonies innumerable have been planted by adventurers like the Phœnicians, by survivors of a ruined country like the Trojans, by exiles for conscience' sake like the Pilgrim Fathers of New England, by trading companies, by gold-hunters, and land-hunters. Indeed, the race has spread over the earth, from its original centre in Asia, by a series of successive migrations. These, however, have been offshoots simply from their native stocks, a few departing from the many. Armies of picked and disciplined soldiers have marched through vast regions in flying columns, cut off from the base of supplies, and leaving the rear unprotected; but when, before or since the days of Moses, has an entire nation, counted by millions, with its helpless ones, the young, the old, the sick, been taken up in a body, formed into a caravan, and transplanted to a distant region? When has a whole people voluntarily quitted a country like Egypt, at that time the garden and granary of the world, unrivalled for its rainless sky and perpetual verdure and inexhaustible soil and luxurious climate? When did such a nation willingly abandon a region like the Delta of the Nile, and

boldly strike out into a region like the Desert of Arabia? The attachment of the Hebrews to Egypt is shown in their murmuring in the wilderness at Moses for bringing them away, and their attempt to return (Exod. xvi. 3; Num. xi. 5, xiv. 4). The problem of the departure was solved partly by the rod of oppression; and yet not wholly, for the experience of the American Colonization Society shows how difficult it is to persuade even an enslaved race to leave the soil on which they have been born, for the home of their ancestors. The afflictions of the Hebrews in Egypt were intolerable, and they threatened to become perpetual. The death of the tyrant who murdered their infant sons brought no relief, and the bondage was as cruel as ever (Exod. ii. 23). But their sufferings did not lead them to make insurrection with one accord, and to fly self-emancipated out of Egypt. Their cry came up unto God, and God heard their groaning. Their sufferings prepared them to depart at the time when God would plague the Egyptians until the oppressors themselves should, for very terror, send his people out of the land (Exod. xii. 30-33).

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## MOSES.

EXOD. ii., iii., iv. 1-17. — Stephen divides the life of Moses into three equal periods (Acts vii. 23, 30, 36). He was in the Egyptian court forty years, in Midian forty years, with the Israelites in the wilderness forty years.

EXOD. ii. 1-10. — “When the tale of bricks is doubled, then comes Moses,” saith the proverb. In his person, the future of the chosen seed was at this time represented. This one man was the deliverer of Israel, the commander of the people through forty years, the inspired historian, the Divine oracle, and the type of Christ as a prophet. His biography shows how he was prepared by his birth, his preservation from death in infancy, his education in Egypt, and his discipline in Midian, for his great offices. He was a Hebrew child, of the tribe of Levi; Amram was his father, and Jochebed his mother. Like the greater Prophet of whom he was the type, he was a partaker of the flesh and blood and of the reproach of the people whom he served and saved. His birth took place when Pharaoh’s edict of infanticide was in full force. The Assyrian mythology supplies a curious parallel with the story of the infant Moses: “I am Sargina, the great king, the king of Agani. My mother gave birth to me in a secret place. She placed me in an ark of bulrushes, and closed up the door with slime and pitch. She cast me into the river.”<sup>1</sup> Pharaoh’s edict secured not the untimely death of the child, but his adoption as a son by a princess of the blood-royal. She is identified by the latest authorities with Thermouthis. She was the daughter of Seti I.,

<sup>1</sup> Fausset: *Bib. Cyclo.*, p. 485.

and the sister of Rameses the Great; Rameses and Moses having, as is supposed, been born about the same time. According to this chronology, Moses flourished in the nineteenth dynasty; its date being not earlier than B.C. 1462, nor later than B.C. 1340.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Moses was born in the reign of Seti I., the Pharaoh of the bondage; fled from Egypt in the reign of Rameses II., the Pharaoh of the oppression; and returned to Egypt in the reign of Menephtah I., the Pharaoh of the exodus.

The parents of Moses, and the princess who adopted him, resided, as is supposed, near Tanis, or Zoan, now San, east of the Tanitic branch of the Nile. His Hebrew mother became his nurse. We must presume that she did not fail to pre-occupy the mind of her child with Hebrew ideas and sympathies. In due time he became an inmate of the palace. The absence of self-consciousness, which was one of the leading characteristics of Moses, led him to withhold an important fact supplied by Stephen: "He was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." The Hebrew and Egyptian traditions agree in saying that he was educated at Heliopolis, and grew up there as a priest under the name of Osarsiph or Terithen.<sup>2</sup> This tradition cannot be fully verified. But it is well known that the learning of Egypt in the age of Moses, besides the arts of reading and writing, embraced the sciences of arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, and astronomy. The pyramids and other colossal structures, which still exist in their integrity or ruins, point to the knowledge of architecture and its kindred arts. That some branches of animal and vegetable chemistry and of medicine were cultivated, is proved by the practice of embalming the bodies of the dead, at that time a familiar but now a lost art. The ease with which Moses reduced to powder the golden calf in the wilderness indicates in him a practical acquaintance with the working of metals. Among other ornamental arts, the Egyptians excelled in the use of bright and enduring colors in painting. Music on many instruments gave animation to their religious ceremonies. The song of Moses at

<sup>1</sup> Osborn: *Ancient Egypt*, pp. 70-77.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley: *Jewish Ch.*, i. 117.

the Red Sea shows that he was educated in the art of poetry, and the instrumental accompaniment of Miriam and the women reveals the invention of the timbrel and the dance (Exod. xv.). Stephen's estimate of the attainments of Moses is justified by the breadth of his understanding, by his educational advantages as the foster-son of Pharaoh's daughter, and by the length of his residence in Egypt, forty years, before his flight into Arabia.

The overruling providence of God is conspicuously set forth in the narrative. The birth of Moses, under the rule of a typical forerunner of Herod, would seem to be ill-timed: he was exposed at the Nile to premature death. "The pleasures of sin" and the "treasures of Egypt" lavished upon him in the palace of the royal princess threatened his manliness and purity. His education as an Egyptian, possibly as a priest, separated him apparently from the Hebrews, and identified him with their oppressors. And yet the providence and grace of God shaped all these influences towards the vocation that was in reserve for him. Schiller's remark is, "An Egyptian by birth would have lacked the requisite patriotic impulse, the national interest for the Hebrews, to attempt their deliverance. A mere Hebrew, on the other hand, would, under his oppression and thralldom, scarcely have had the energy and courage indispensable for such an arduous undertaking. What device, therefore, did Providence choose? It selected an Israelite, but withdrew him in early infancy from the miseries of his people, and enabled him to store his mind with all the treasures of Egyptian wisdom; and thus the Hebrew brought up as an Egyptian became the instrument by which the nation was redeemed from slavery."<sup>1</sup>

EXOD. ii. 11-14; ACTS vii. 23-28; HEB. xi. 24-26. — When Moses was fully forty years old, he entered on the second epoch of his life. "It came into his heart" — doubtless it was a Divine suggestion — "to visit his brethren, the children of Israel," for the purpose of looking into their unhappy condition, and of ascertaining what he could do for their relief. Accounts

<sup>1</sup> Die Sendung Moses, x. pp. 414, 415.



of this visit are given by Moses very briefly, by Stephen more in detail, and by Paul who describes also the gracious influence by which Moses was guided. It so fell out that he saw an Egyptian, no doubt a taskmaster (Exod. ii. 11), flogging a Hebrew. The officers were armed for that purpose, according to some, with the bastinado; according to others, with the long heavy scourge made of tough and pliant wood, a growth of Syria. Moses doubtless knew that the castigation was not of exceptional but of habitual cruelty (Exod. v. 6-14). The remark of Moses, that the victim was "a Hebrew, one of his brethren," explains the natural indignation under which he slew the Egyptian on the spot, and hid his dead body in the sand. On the next day he attempted to restrain a Hebrew who was wrongfully maltreating another Hebrew. The assailant resented the interference of Moses: "Wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?" Moses perceived that the man whom he had protected from cruelty had betrayed the secret. Pharaoh heard what Moses had done, and sought to slay him. With a full appreciation of all that was noble in the impulse of Moses, it must be said that he put himself in the wrong. The brutal taskmaster deserved punishment, possibly death. But the conscience of Moses accused him of unjustifiable homicide. He did not slay his man until he had looked this way and that way, and saw that there were no witnesses; he hid the body in the sand; he made no defence when charged with the act, and he fled the kingdom. That he identified himself with his brethren, not on his own motion but under a Divine impulse, may be assumed. That his position in Pharaoh's court clothed him with a certain authority, may also be assumed; for the taunt of the angry Hebrew, "Who made thee ruler or a judge over us?" may imply that Moses was asserting some legal right in his first visit to protect his kinsmen, and in his second visit to require the Hebrews to keep the peace among themselves. And yet it must be said, that, in killing his man, he acted without color of authority, either from God or the king. Augustine utters the dictates of an enlightened conscience when he says, comparing this act with that of Peter in smiting Malchus, "Each of them,

not by blamable cruelty, but by excess of a brave spirit, passed the ordinary rule of justice; each through hatred of another's wickedness, the one through love of his brother, the other of his Lord, — carnal in both cases, yet love, — committed a sin.”<sup>1</sup>

Stephen points out the error of Moses and the error of the Hebrews in this transaction: “He smote the Egyptian, for he supposed his brethren would have understood how God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not” (Acts vii. 24, 25). Moses erred in attempting to enter prematurely on his vocation as the liberator of the Hebrews, running before he was sent. He was also presumptuous, thinking that by “his hand,” by his personal wisdom and strength, God would deliver the people. The Hebrews were stupid and unbelieving. They failed to see in the boldness of Moses, and in God's special care over him, the evidence that he was divinely chosen to be their deliverer. He risked every thing in striking a blow for their emancipation. They, in their want of manliness, abandoned him. Judgment took effect upon both parties. Moses was driven into exile for the term of forty years, and the bondage of the Hebrews was prolonged through the same period, — the lifetime of a generation. After the same example of unbelief their posterity wandered in the wilderness forty years. It should be added that Stephen used this incident to show that the Jews had rejected Jesus just as their fathers had rejected Moses; God having appointed Jesus to save them, just as he had before appointed Moses to break the yoke of their bondage.

Paul celebrates in glowing terms the heroic faith exhibited by Moses, when he identified himself with the people of God. He voluntarily abandoned his position as the adopted son of the royal princess; he renounced the pleasures of sin, and all share in the wealth of Egypt. Nor was this done by a youth in a moment of enthusiasm, but by a self-poised man, forty years old. When it is said that he rose above the pleasures of sin, it is not intimated that he was chargeable with the vicious indulgence of his senses or appetites or passions, but simply that he resisted all the seductive temptations to which he was

<sup>1</sup> Alford: *Exod.* ii. 12.

exposed in a semi-tropical climate; in a luxurious home on a soil of boundless fertility; among a people who neither loved nor feared God, and who, if we may give such a turn to the words of Peter, were walking "in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries." The value of the treasures of Egypt, an expectation of which he relinquished, may be measured by the magnificence of the Hall of Columns, begun by Seti in the early life of Moses, and finished by Rameses the Great after Moses was grown. The Egyptologists invite us to imagine a forest of towers; columns a hundred and forty in number, the highest seventy feet high and eleven feet in diameter, covered with bas-reliefs and hieroglyphics, the hall three hundred and forty feet long and one hundred and seventy wide. Champollion says of it, "Were I to attempt a feeble sketch, far from highly colored, I should pass for an enthusiast, and perhaps for a fool." "No language," says Ferguson, "can convey an idea of its beauty."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in order to estimate the faith by which Moses was controlled, we must consider what he chose in place of what he refused. For he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin; and he considered reproach like that which Christ, or that which Christ's disciples, endured, to be greater riches than all the wealth of Egypt. Paul closes his eulogium on Moses with the remark, "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing him who is invisible" (v. 27). The first clause refers not to his early flight from Egypt, but to his triumphant departure in command of the Hebrew hosts at the exodus. The last clause should be taken in connection with the end of verse 26: "He had respect to the recompense of the reward," — even life everlasting, a place by the side of Elijah with Jesus at the transfiguration, and the authorship of a song to the Lamb, sung by the glorious company of martyrs.

EXOD. ii. 15-22. — On his escape from Egypt, Moses fled into the deserts east of the Red Sea. The narrative is silent in regard to the journey until it brings him to a sheep-well, the

<sup>1</sup> Osborn: *Ancient Egypt*, pp. 153, 154.

sign of a country inhabited by Bedouin shepherds. Moses sat down by the well. Here the story of Jacob's arrival at Padanaram repeats itself. The daughters of a neighboring sheik bring his flock to the well. With his characteristic manliness, Moses protects the shepherdesses from the rudeness of a party of untamed hirelings, and assists them in watering their flock. The Egyptian, as the maidens call him, was immediately welcomed by their father to the hospitalities of his tent; and there he found a home. The region to which Moses had come was Midian, situated in the eastern and south-eastern regions of the peninsula of Sinai, and within easy reach of Horeb, whither Moses afterwards led his flocks (Exod. iii. 1). The people were the distant kinsmen of Moses; descendants of Midian, one of the sons of Abraham in his marriage with Keturah (Gen. xxv. 2). The chief was Reuel, the Ragnel of Num. x. 29. The syllable *El* defines his name, — the friend of God. He was not only the sheik, but the priest also, of Midian. His name Jethro, or "his excellency," was a title indicating his princely and priestly dignity. He had seven daughters, among whom was Zipporah, the future wife of Moses. Hobab, who was long afterwards the counsellor and companion of Moses in the wandering, was either the son or the younger brother of Reuel. It would seem that the sheik and his family were, in some sense, the worshippers of the true God. The position of their renowned ancestor Abraham, his theism, and the revelations made to him, lingered in the traditions of these people. Yet they dwelt under the shadows of approaching heathenism. The sacrament of circumcision had fallen into disuse, if not disrepute (Exod. iv. 24–26). Their indifference to the promises made to Abraham may be inferred from the little that Moses thought it worth while to communicate to them respecting the destiny of the chosen seed, until the appearance of the Israelites at Horeb (Exod. xviii. 1).

We have only meagre information of the life of Moses in Midian. Yet enough is divulged to show, that, unconsciously perhaps to himself, he was trained for the work that he was to do. He had been forty years in the school of human wisdom

in Egypt; thence he went forty years to the school of Divine wisdom, within sight of Mount Sinai. Ample opportunity was afforded him for spiritual culture. Not a few men of broad understanding, and uncommon force of character, have been providentially sent into retirement for calm reflection and prayer. Paul, after his baptism by Ananias in Damascus, spent three inactive years in Arabia. Augustine, after receiving baptism from Ambrose in Milan, passed several silent years in Tageste, Africa. In like manner, Moses became a shepherd, leading his flocks, forty years long, as far as Horeb. In those solitudes, isolated from kindred and enemies and from all the world, it is right to imagine that he meditated profoundly on the history of the chosen seed, beginning with the call of Abraham; on the theophanies which God had granted to the older patriarchs; on the everlasting covenants which he had made with them; on the mysterious bondage in Egypt, and on the promise of deliverance. His personal experience also taught him the much-needed lesson of humility. He could not forget that he was the adopted son of the king's daughter, the inmate of her palace, bred in luxury, taught in sufficient learning. Now he is a fugitive from the wrath of the king, if not from public justice, separated also from his kindred; he is a stranger in a strange land, the servant of a Bedouin chief, eating the bread of dependence or of servile toil. He was not understood, perhaps misunderstood, by the family of Jethro. The exalted position to which he was destined, the masterful capacities that were in him, and his proficiency in Egyptian learning, were hidden under the menial position of a hireling.

He was unhappily married. The incident recorded in *Exod.* iv. 24, shows that Zipporah was self-willed and quarrelsome; that she was not in sympathy with his religious convictions; that she had persuaded him to neglect the circumcision of their youngest son; and that she was capable of expressing contempt for that sacrament, even when the life of her husband depended on its observance. The names which he gave to his children in Midian tell the story of his discipline. He called his first son Gershom; for, said he, "I have been a stranger in a strange

land" (Exod. ii. 22). But this despondency in due time gave way to a more grateful memory and to a better hope for the future. He named his second son Eliezer; "for the God of my fathers," said he, "was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh."

EXOD. ii. 22-25. — Moses devotes a few words only to his residence of forty years in Midian. He mentions his introduction to Jethro's family, his marriage, and the names of his two sons, and is done with the subject. Meanwhile Rameses II., by whom, jointly with his father Seti I., the Hebrews were enslaved, had died; and Manephtah, the thirteenth son of Rameses, had come to the throne. If the Hebrews had expected relief on the accession of a new king, they were sorely disappointed. Deliverance was about to come from a higher source. For their "cry came up unto God;" "and God heard their groanings, and God remembered his covenant." The thoughtful reader will not overlook the importance which God himself invariably attached to his everlasting covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Here the mention of the engagements opens the way for a copious narrative of the measures which the Almighty adopted to make them good.

EXOD. iii. — The Hebrew shepherd had led Jethro's flocks to the juicy herbs and grapes, and aromatic shrubs, and to the springs of water, which abounded near Horeb, the future mountain of God. He saw in the distance a thorn-bush apparently on fire. The fire was not a consuming, but a shining flame. He turned aside to see why the bush was not consumed. God called to him out of the bush, warning him not to draw near, but to put his shoes from off his feet, for the place where he stood was holy ground. This "great sight" was a true theophany, the first that had appeared since Jacob was at Beersheba nearly four hundred years before; the first, also, that had assumed the form of a flame, since a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between the pieces of Abraham's sacrifice in the day when Jehovah made his covenant with the patriarch. The place of the vision cannot be identified. In the sixth century of the Christian era, two thousand years

after the exodus, Justinian built the convent of St. Catharine on the spot where, according to the traditions then received, Moses removed his sandals. The monks assert that the great altar of the convent marks the precise place made holy by the burning bush. Very few visitors are disposed, while enjoying the hospitalities of the monks, to challenge openly their innocent traditions.

The significance of the miracle which Moses saw corresponded to the verbal message which he heard. The bush was probably the wild acacia, indigenous to the desert; an insignificant shrub, — a symbol, therefore, of the Hebrews in their humiliation. The unconsuming flame which glowed in the bush was the symbol of the chosen seed cast into the iron furnace of Egypt (Deut. iv. 20), but saved from destruction. Even so, in the after-ages, three Hebrew children walked uninjured in the furnace at Babylon. In modern times the Church of Scotland adorned her banner with the picture of a burning bush, and the legend "*Nec tamen consumebatur*," — the sign of a church persecuted, *ecclesia pressa*, and victorious, *ecclesia triumphans*. The awful presence in the bush at Horeb, filled with undestroying fire, was a notable Divine manifestation. The name of the Almighty appears twenty-four times in eighteen verses. He is called interchangeably God, Jehovah, the Angel of Jehovah, Jehovah God, I AM THAT I AM, and I AM. The identity of the Jehovah-Angel with Jehovah himself and with God is established: he who appeared to Moses in the bush is the Angel Jehovah (Exod. iii. 2), he whom Moses turned aside to see is Jehovah (ver. 4), and he who called to Moses out of the bush is God (ver. 4). Some authors, holding to the documentary hypothesis, maintain that the chapter is Jehovist, although the name Elohim occurs seventeen times, and the name Jehovah six times only. In order to meet this difficulty, some of the writers propose to break up the chapter into fragments, and distribute them to suit the theory; notwithstanding the internal evidence of the organic unity of the narrative. The hypothesis can take nothing from this chapter.<sup>1</sup> Lest

<sup>1</sup> Speaker's Com., in Exod. iii. 1.

Moses should be in doubt as to the Being who was calling to him out of the bush, the voice added, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." While the shepherd stood speechless, his bare feet rooted to the ground, and his face hidden in his robe, Jehovah told him that he had seen the affliction of his people in Egypt, and knew their "sorrows," and that he had come down to lead them to the land of Canaan. Jehovah then appointed him to be the liberator of the Hebrews: "Come now, therefore, and I will send thee to Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

EXOD. iii. 11-22, iv. 1-23. — Moses frankly confesses his unworthy reluctance to meet the responsibilities and difficulties of his great office. The excessive self-confidence which had led him forty years before to undertake unbidden the liberation of his kindred, had given place to a painful self-distrust. He offered a series of excuses for declining the work to which God was calling him. "Who am I," asked he, "that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Jehovah graciously replied, "Surely I will be with thee;" adding the assurance, every way significant, that the Hebrews should come out of Egypt, and offer sacrifices to God at that very mountain where God was talking with him. Moses still hesitated. How should he answer the challenge of the Hebrews, "Tell us who sent you to us?" God replied, "I AM THAT I AM;" and he said, "Thus shalt thou say, I AM hath sent thee." And then, by way of bracing up the resolution of Moses, he authorized him to assure the people that the God of their fathers had marked well their sufferings, and that he was resolved to bring them out of the brickyards of Egypt to a land flowing with milk and honey. Moreover, he assured Moses that the elders should go with him to Pharaoh to demand the liberation of the Hebrews; that he would use the resources of omnipotence to put down the opposition of the king; and that he would see to it that they should go out of Egypt not empty-handed, but loaded down with the riches of their oppressors. Moses started a third difficulty.



The people, he said, would refuse to listen to him; they would say, "Jehovah hath not appeared unto thee." This suggestion was not without some color of plausibility; for God had not appeared to any Israelite since the theophany which Jacob saw on his way to Egypt, several hundred years ago. Now, however, God removed the scruple of Moses by furnishing him with credentials of his Divine vocation in the form of three supernatural signs, two of which were forthwith shown to Moses for his encouragement; and these two, together with the third, were to be exhibited in Egypt to the Hebrews and to Pharaoh, proving that God had sent Moses to them. For the first sign, God directed Moses to cast his shepherd's staff to the ground. He did so; the staff became a viper, and Moses fled. At God's command, he took the serpent by the tail, and it became a staff again. In the spitefulness of the serpent, Moses was forewarned of the anger with which Pharaoh would repel Aaron and himself; Moses was reminded by his flight, of his unwillingness to encounter the anger of Pharaoh; and in the paralysis of the reptile, he recognized the impotence of the king. For the second sign, the hand of Moses put into his bosom became "leprous as snow;" put into his bosom a second time, it was "turned again as his other flesh." A symbol this was of the degradation and defilement which had happened to Israel in idolatrous Egypt, and of the purification which should be wrought in them by the grace of God. For a third sign, the power which should be given to Moses, to turn the waters of the Nile into blood, was reserved for his mission in Egypt. These three miracles were to be shown to the enslaved Hebrews, for whom, indeed, they were primarily and chiefly intended. The wonders of the staff and of the blood were to be shown also to Pharaoh, as evidences of the supreme power of Jehovah, and as credentials of the Divine mission of Moses and Aaron. The details will be considered hereafter. Moses interposed another objection. He could not talk to the king; for, said he, "I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." He was, perhaps, a stammerer like the young Demosthenes; or he thought his "speech was contemptible," as long afterwards

Paul described his own utterance. But the answer and rebuke of God was, "Who hath made man's mouth? . . . Have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." Moses was silenced. His scruples had been met and removed one by one, and nothing was left but to yield them frankly, or to fall back on the real source of them all,—an unwillingness to undertake the work which God had given him to do. He chose the latter course, and begged that some one, other than himself, might be sent to Egypt. Jehovah was angry, and sharply rebuked his disobedience. But seeing that it proceeded from nothing more blameworthy than excessive self-distrust, God condescended to tell him that his brother Aaron should go with him to Egypt, and he should take with him his shepherd's staff. Aaron, who was fluent in speech and eloquent, should be his spokesman, and address Pharaoh and the people under the dictation of Moses; the staff should be his instrument in the working of penal signs and wonders. Moses instantly accepted his vocation, and thereupon he became another man. The impetuosity with which forty years before he had, unbidden, espoused the cause of his people, and the despair with which he abandoned the cause after striking a single unsuccessful blow, now gave place to waiting upon God, and boldness in doing his will. Instead of the rash and impatient son of Pharaoh's daughter, at forty years of age, the shepherd of Midian, at eighty, was ready to meet the provocations of an unbelieving and stiff-necked people with meekness and long-suffering. It is worthy of notice, moreover, that, among the excuses which he urged for declining to go to Egypt, there is not one that carries with it a symptom of personal fear. In his many interviews with the king and people of Egypt he exhibited, though in the quietest way possible, a courage which never flinched and never vaunted itself. What Paul says of the close of the brave man's mission to Egypt, is true of its entire history: "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." Moses returned without delay to the tents of Jethro, and made preparations for his departure to Egypt. He gave to his father-in-law no other

reason for his journey than a desire to see his kindred. Jethro had never understood Moses or his position. In his ignorance of the plan of Providence respecting the chosen seed and their destiny, he was not prepared to comprehend the Divine vocation which his son-in-law had received at the burning bush. Moses, therefore, offered no explanation of his proposed journey.

In the theophany of the bush, God said to Moses, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exod. iii. 6). We ought not to overlook the light which this oracle, as interpreted by Christ, casts upon the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the plenary inspiration of Moses, and the doctrine of the resurrection of those who die in the Lord. The Sadducees, who said there was no resurrection, proposed to our Saviour their favorite puzzle of the woman who had been married to seven husbands. The Master gave the well-known and complete solution of the problem. He then cited the oracle of the bush, thus: —

"But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you" (i.e., the descendants of Abraham) "by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. xxii. 31, 32).

"And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" (Mark xii. 26.)

"Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all five unto him" (Luke xx. 37, 38).

Our Lord asserts that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, for he called it the "book of Moses" (Mark). He assumes that Moses was inspired to the extent of a verbal accuracy; for he rests his argument on the very words in which the oracle was conveyed. Still further, the great Teacher declares that certain words were spoken by God (Matthew and Mark), and that Moses uttered them (Luke). That is to say, what God said, Moses

said ; what Moses said, God said : expressions pointing directly to the plenary inspiration of Moses. Next, our Lord's discourse related specifically to the resurrection of the dead ; not, as some have thought, merely to the continued existence of the soul after death. The Sadducees attempted to discredit the fact of the resurrection ; and Christ's answer was directly responsive to that, and to no other question. The three Evangelists agree in this. Matthew says that Christ introduced the oracle at the bush with the words, "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not heard," etc. Mark quotes Christ thus : "And as touching the dead, that they rise, have ye not read in the book of Moses?" etc. Luke cites him thus : "Now, that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush," etc. The continued existence of the soul after death is involved in the statement ; but the precise truth which our Lord deduces from the words spoken to Moses is the fact of the resurrection. That, says Christ, is the meaning of the oracle, its true and real sense is there. The Master proceeds to clear up the subject.

The word of Jehovah is, "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Christ's exposition of the word is, "For God is not the God of the dead, but of the living : for all live unto him" (Luke). Of the testimony this is the sum. (1) The expression, "I am the God of Abraham," etc., points to the covenant which God made with the three patriarchs. The first promise in the Abrahamic covenant is in these words : "I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee" (Gen. xvii. 7). This covenant was renewed to Isaac and to Jacob. When God heard the groaning of his people in Egypt, "he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob" (Exod. ii. 24). At the bush God recalls the promise, and with the promise the covenant containing it ; saying, "I am the God of Abraham," etc. (2) This covenant was, as we have seen, a manifestation of the covenant of life, delivered to our first parents. Its consummate promise was life, — life to the body, life to the soul. Christ declared that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living ;" not the God of the disembodied spirits only of the patriarchs, but

of their total personality; not the God of Abraham dead and turned to dust, but of Abraham alive in the body, and alive in the soul. The living God gives, by his power, life to his own; but Abraham's soul is not the entire Abraham, and without the body Abraham is not entirely living. So long as the body lies dead in the earth, the divided man is still reckoned among the dead. While his body is mouldering in the grave, "the expression, I am thy God, cannot be fulfilled *in the man*; for God is not a God of the dead, but of the living."<sup>1</sup> (3) It may well be said, that Abraham received in his flesh the seal of the promise, even circumcision, showing that the plan of redemption extends to the body as well as to the soul; and that God is, to the whole extent of the proposition, the God not of the dead man, but of the living,—the man alive all over, alive throughout and throughout, and alive for evermore. (4) The same is true not only of the patriarchs, but of all true believers. By virtue of the covenant between God and his people, they are always living beings; they possess the life that proceeds from God. When the bodies moulder in the ground, the soul of the righteous is received into the highest heavens, waiting for the redemption of the body. And more than that: under the foreseeing eye of God, the patriarchs and all saints stand forth in their resurrection bodies. That eye looks beyond the narrow grave, and beholds them risen from the dead, and reinstated and rehabilitated in angel-like glory. (5) Some of our learned interpreters go a step farther. They hold that the promise of the land of Canaan to the patriarchs, for an everlasting possession, is still outstanding, and will be fulfilled by the power of God raising the three pilgrim fathers from the tomb at Machpelah, and putting them in personal possession of the land of Canaan. But the belief which has gained more general acceptance is, that this promise is to be made good by the ingathering of all the people of God, after the resurrection of the just, into the "better country, even a heavenly," unto which the patriarchs looked forward while they were pilgrims and strangers in the earthly Canaan.

<sup>1</sup> Stier: Words of Jesus, iii. 173.

It ought not to be said that our Lord gives the oracle an interpretation which no one would have ever thought of on any principle of biblical exegesis. A knowledge of the meaning of the covenant, which God made with the fathers, would lead an intelligent believer to the conclusion announced by Christ. It was obscure to the Sadducees; but the difficulty was not in the words of Jehovah, but in their own twofold ignorance. "they erred not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God." Undoubtedly, the inward illumination of the Spirit of God is necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word of God; and yet it is right to believe that such an illumination is not beyond the reach of a devout and humble disciple. To this it may be added, that, in point of fact, the meaning of the oracle lay so near the surface, that a few words from Christ put the Sadducees to silence; drew from certain of the scribes, who were the official expounders of the Scriptures, the tribute of admiration, "Master, thou hast well said;" and filled the bystanders with amazement at the brightness of the light that Christ had now cast into their darkness (Matt. xxii. 33, 34; Luke xx. 39). Nor is there any occasion for the surprise with which some have noticed that our Lord passed by passages in the Old Testament, such as Job xix. 25-27, Ps. xlix. 15, Isa. xxvi. 19, Dan. xii. 1-3, where the doctrine of the resurrection is more explicitly taught. This criticism overlooks the manner in which the Sadducees opened the conversation: "Master, Moses said, If a man die," etc. Our Lord quoted against them their own witness, thus: "Now, that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush," etc. (Luke). He showed that the very authority, Moses, from whom the difficulty was taken, furnished the answer.

The history of the doctrine of the resurrection follows the analogy of the other revelations. It is planted in the germ in the earlier scriptures; and in its complete disclosure, it obeys the law of growth and progress. We have seen that the redemption of the body is among the promises of the first gospel. Proof of its future existence was afforded by the translation of Enoch. Abraham, when he offered up Isaac, believed

that God was able to raise him from the dead. The oracle at the bush builds the salvation of the body upon the foundation of an everlasting covenant. The sublime song of Moses takes from Jehovah the declaration, "I kill, and I make alive,"—words in which Hengstenberg finds the same blessed hopes.<sup>1</sup> If it be said, that in all these places the doctrine is taught not by way of assertion, but inferentially only, the answer may well be that the conclusion is unavoidable; and whatever is deduced from scripture by the Lord Jesus Christ is of equal value and authority with that which is expressly set down in his written word. In Moses, therefore, we find the beginning of an argument which ends, in the Gospels and Epistles, in a demonstration so thorough, that, in the words of Paul, he who disputes it falls heir to the epithet, "Thou fool."

Upon the question whether the doctrine of the resurrection is to be found in the books of Moses, upon which some Christian scholars express doubts, the best Jewish authorities have fixed convictions. Rabbi Manasseh Ben Israel says, "The faith of the resurrection of the dead is one of the chief articles of our law, and whoever says it cannot be proved from the law is a heretic and an epicure, and shall have no part in the world to come."<sup>2</sup> The Book Menerath says, "Whoever denies the resurrection of the dead, or one of all the wonders written in the law, denies the whole law, and shall have no part in the world to come."<sup>3</sup> Maimonides says, "The resurrection of the dead is the foundation of the foundations of Moses, our teacher, peace be to him! and he who believes it not has no religion, nor does he belong to the Jewish religion."<sup>4</sup> Professor Drummond shows, by quotations from the Mishna, that the following persons have no part in the world to come: "he who says there is no resurrection of the dead according to the law" (i.e., taught in the Pentateuch), "and that the law is not from heaven, and the despiser of the law;" "Three kings and four ordinary persons have no part in the age" (the world) "to come: three kings,—Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh; four

<sup>1</sup> Contributions, etc., iii. 570.

<sup>2</sup> Nishmath, fol. 39, col. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Tal., 6. col. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Com. on Tract. Sanhedrim, fol. 20, col. 1.

ordinary persons, — Balaam, Doeg, Abithophel, Gehazi. The generation of the Flood, and of the dispersion” (the builders at Babel), “and the men of Sodom, are excluded; the spies, the generation of the wilderness, also, shall not stand in judgment; and the assembly of Korah shall not come forth again.”<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of the rabbins appears to be, that none of these wicked men shall rise from the dead; a judgment which would be feeble-minded if there were no resurrection.

<sup>1</sup> Drummond: *Jewish Messiah*, 383, 384.



## CHAPTER XXX.

## THE TEN WONDERS.

THE scene of the sacred action is now transferred to the land of Egypt. At the accession of Pharaoh Menephtah, the Hebrews hoped for some amelioration of their sufferings, but they were bitterly disappointed: "They sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God." In answer to the cry, Moses came. God said to him at the bush, "Come now, I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt." God directed him on his arrival in Egypt to gather the ruling elders of Israel, and announce to them the approaching deliverance. That being done, he was required to take with him a delegation of the elders, and to say to Pharaoh, "The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us; and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God." Moses was told that the king would obstinately refuse to grant the request; that the Almighty would smite Egypt with all his wonders; that thereupon the king would let them go; and they should leave Egypt laden with spoils. Moses returned to Midian, and made arrangements for the journey. Jehovah now assured him that he might safely return to Egypt, all the men being dead who had sought his life. He was directed to take the "rod of God" in his hand, and to display before Pharaoh his miraculous gifts, the credentials of his mission. He was told to forewarn the king that if he should refuse to let the people go, God would slay his first-born son. Moses was allowed to see the end from the beginning.

EXOD. iv. 24. — By way of preparation for his mission, Moses was taught a lesson of humility and obedience. The plight in which he left Midian brought his exile to a pitiable close. His wife and sons rode upon an ass, while he trudged along on foot, as best an old man of eighty could, supported by his staff. He came to Midian a fugitive, he departed penniless. Nor were his troubles ended. God had a controversy with him. He had allowed his youngest son to go uncircumcised. He had, perhaps, given way to the prejudices of Zipporah against the sacrament; but God could not pass by an open breach of his covenant in the man who was to be the instrument of executing the provisions of that covenant in Israel. He met Moses at a resting-place on the journey, and threatened to kill him. Zipporah, to save the life of her husband, performed the ceremony with her own hand, though with passionate reproaches upon Moses. Soon afterwards she returned to her own home, leaving her husband to pursue his journey alone (Exod. xviii. 5). But he went to his work purged from known sin. His distress was soon relieved by a joyful experience.

EXOD. iv. 10-16, 27-29. — At the bush God promised to unite his brother Aaron with him in the commission to Pharaoh; Moses to be the leading spirit, Aaron to be the spokesman. "And behold," said God, "he cometh forth to meet thee." When Moses set out from Midian to go to Egypt, the Lord said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." The brothers met at Horeb. We are left to imagine what passed between them, descriptive of the life of one in Egypt and the other in Midian through the forty years of their separation, and with what confidence or misgivings they looked forward to the work set before them. We are told simply that they received each other with kisses, and that Moses repeated to Aaron all the words that God had spoken to him, and described the miraculous signs which were in his hand.

EXOD. iv. 29. — All went well with the brothers in their first interview with the Israelites. Aaron, being the chief speaker, repeated to them the communications which God had made to Moses, and wrought the supernatural wonders in their presence

which Moses had done in Midian. The miracle of the rod turned to a serpent was a sign to the people that Jehovah, the God of their fathers, had appeared to Moses, and had sent him to Egypt; and a sign, also, that the dangers to which his mission would expose them should be removed. The hand miraculously covered with leprosy represented the moral defilement which the chosen seed had contracted in the bosom of Egypt; the hand miraculously cleansed represented the spiritual purification which should follow their release from the house of bondage. When the people heard Aaron, and saw the signs, they believed that Jehovah had visited them, and had looked on their afflictions; and they bowed their heads and worshipped. These interviews went far towards the preparation of Moses and Aaron for their arduous labors, although they may not have anticipated the obstacles which they were to encounter.

EXOD. v., vi. — The liberation of the bondsmen was to be not gradual but immediate, not temporary but final, it was to redeem, not a favored few, but Israel as a whole. To this extent, the emancipation of the slaves in the United States, and of the serfs in Russia, resembles that of the Hebrews. But never before and never since the exodus of the Hebrews, have two millions of bondsmen suddenly quitted their native country in one body, never has the dominant race passionately urged them to depart; never have the fugitives gone away laden with spoils taken from their masters. This wonderful social revolution was effected in spite of many apparently insurmountable obstacles.

First, a people like the Egyptians could not be expected to submit, without a struggle, to the loss of six hundred thousand able-bodied slaves. The more robust were employed in the fields, canals, and brick-kilns. The tabernacle built by the Hebrews in the wilderness shows that among them were skilled workmen in woods and metals, in spinning and weaving, in embroidery and jewellery, and other useful and ornamental arts. The dominant race would naturally resist the attempt to deprive them of this immense productive industry, even if the

Egyptians had been able to rise above the pride of authority and irrational obstinacy often exhibited by the masters of a slave population.

Account must be taken, secondly, of the servility engendered among the Hebrews by their long servitude. Forty years before, instead of standing by Moses when he struck a blow for liberty, some of them betrayed his secret, and compelled him to flee for his life. Nor had the oppressions of forty years more roused them to resistance. Moses and Aaron required the king, in the name of God, to allow the Israelites to hold a sacrificial service in the wilderness. Pharaoh replied, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go?" He gave orders that the laborers should gather straw for themselves, and make the daily tale of bricks. By way of enforcing the new rule, he ordered the bastinado to be applied to the Hebrew overseers. The wretched serfs, instead of resenting the outrage, charged Moses and Aaron with having put a sword into the hands of the oppressors to slay them. For the purpose of re-assuring them, God immediately revealed himself by the name of Jehovah; a name the significance of which they had never understood. They were familiar with the pronounciation of the word; but they had not yet apprehended its breadth and grandeur as a description of the covenant God, the self-existent, eternal, and unchangeable Redeemer of Israel (Exod. vi. 3). Jehovah announced, also, that he held himself bound by his covenant engagements to transfer his chosen seed from Egypt to the heritage which he had sworn to bestow upon them. And yet, so thoroughly was the courage of the people broken, that "they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit and cruel bondage." The reader looks in vain through the history of the period for a single instance in which they rallied to the call of Moses. From first to last they were "faint and spiritless, dull and dead of look."

The enterprise was embarrassed, thirdly, by the misgivings of Moses himself, arising not from any personal fear of Pharaoh, but from the probable effect of cruelty on the timid bondsmen. When he saw that Pharaoh had, on his first

demand, defied Jehovah, and redoubled the anguish of the Israelites, he said unto the Lord, "Wherefore hast thou so evil entreated the people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all." Even after God had revealed his new name, and reiterated the promises of his covenant in regard to the deliverance of Israel, Moses hesitated to go in again to Pharaoh. "Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?" (heavy, slow-speaking lips.)

Fourthly, the idolatry of the people hung like a dead weight upon the scheme of emancipation. The hand of Moses defiled by leprosy was a fair representation of their spiritual condition. They worshipped the gods of Egypt, stooping even to the worship of devils (Lev. xvii. 7; Josh. xxiv. 14). From the day when they set up the golden calf at Sinai, to the Babylonish captivity, — a period of a thousand years, — idolatry was the inveterate crime of Israel. It was therefore a first necessity of their condition, that the bondsmen should be brought to perceive that the gods of Egypt were a lie, and that the supremacy of one God, only one, the very God of the patriarchs, the Almighty, the El Shaddai, the I AM, should be brought home to the public conscience. Until this could be done, the people would not respond to the plans of Providence for their liberation.

Fifthly, of all these obstacles, the hardest to deal with was the stubbornness of Pharaoh. His refractory temper was distinctly considered by the Almighty, and gave shape to his counsels. He said to Moses at the bush, "I am sure the king of Egypt will not let you go." Not only that, but God had resolved to exasperate his stubbornness. "I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go." The issue between Jehovah and the Pharaohs was squarely made up. God commanded the king to let the Hebrews depart; the king refused to obey. The command was unambiguous, peremptory, reiterated; the refusal was direct, positive, contemptuous. Next,

the Almighty had resolved to compel obedience by the use of supernatural terrors. He would not attempt to persuade the king, or to appeal to his reason or conscience; nor would he instigate the people to fly to arms, and rise upon their oppressors. Moses had tried that experiment forty years before, and it had come to nothing. God said, "I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders, and after that he will let you go." "I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments." God himself would be their deliverer.

EXOD. v. 1-19. — The impending judgments were introduced by two preliminary demands. By the first, a test was applied to the temper of the tyrant. Moses and Aaron told him, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." Pharaoh's insolent reply was, "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go." Moses endeavored to gain his consent by limiting the absence to three days, and by declaring that its only purpose was to offer sacrifices to Jehovah. It was a reasonable request. The Hebrews might not offer in Egypt a sacrifice to the God of Israel; neither could they safely, in the presence of the Egyptians, slay for the altar and the sacrificial feast the animals which were set apart as objects of worship by the law and usage of the land. The king uttered the insulting taunt, "Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to Jehovah." He remanded the people to the double toil of making the brick, and finding the straw as best they could. The tyrant's refusal to remit a few days' labor made it certain that he would resist to the last the departure, never to return, of the laborers. By both word and deed he betrayed also his open contempt for Jehovah, and made it necessary for the Almighty to assert his adorable majesty.

EXOD. vii. 1-13. — The second preliminary measure established the Divine commissions of the messengers of Jehovah. Pharaoh demanded a supernatural proof or sign of the power of their God. Aaron threw down the rod of Moses, and it

became a serpent. Pharaoh sent for his magicians, who were adepts in the art of serpent-charming. They appeared, and threw down their rods. These also became serpents, but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. Pharaoh would not acknowledge the defeat of his sorcerers. God hardened his heart, so that he would not hearken to the Divine command. The way was now prepared for the judgments upon Egypt. The miracle of warning was like the word going before the blow, the blank cartridge discharged in the presence of the mob before the fatal order to fire is given.

A general view of the wonders which followed will disclose their nature. The number of the wonders was ten. This is one of the perfect numbers, so called, of Scripture, a symbol of completeness. The decimal system of numbers prevails almost universally among the nations. Indeed, it owes its origin to the structure of the human hand, as the very term "digits" indicates. The number of the plagues, like the equivalent number of the Divine commandments, was the signature of a work fully done.

They were, without exception, miraculous. The word "miraculous" is here used to describe not only a supernatural event, but a wonder wrought by God through the instrumentality of man (Acts ii. 22). In this sense of the word, no miracle was done from the creation to the age of Moses, a period of twenty-five hundred years. Enoch had this testimony, that he pleased God, but he wrought no miracle; nor did Noah, who walked with God; nor did Abraham, who was the father of the faithful. The translation of the first of these patriarchs, the Deluge in the days of the second, and the destruction of Sodom in the presence of the third, were supernatural; yet they were brought about directly by God himself. Through all these early ages the Almighty revealed his being and his will by visions, from which the period derives the name of the theophanic era. The age of miracles, as distinguished from theophanies, began with Moses. At Horeb God clothed him with a commission to deliver the church from bondage, and endowed him with supernatural gifts as the credentials of his Divine vocation. On

his arrival in Egypt he exhibited the signs in the presence of Pharaoh and the people. Afterwards the plagues took the form of miracles, or wonders wrought by God, in immediate connection with certain things done and said by Moses and Aaron. God forewarned these messengers of the judgments which he intended to send upon Egypt, and he told them what they must do by way of showing that the judgments were forthcoming.

The signs were varied. A Jewish writer observes that the wonders of the blood, frogs, and gnats, were introduced by Aaron; three others, hail, locusts, and darkness, by Moses; three others, the beetles, the pestilence, and the death of the first-born, by God himself, without the medium of Moses or Aaron.<sup>1</sup> So, also, in six of the plagues, the rod was used by Moses or Aaron. In one, Moses stretched forth his hands; in others, he simply warned Pharaoh of the impending calamity. Nine of them were directly or indirectly associated, both in their infliction and removal, with the actions of the two brothers, showing that they were the true ministers of God; yet these actions showed that there was no inherent power in Moses or Aaron. The tenth, the destruction of the first-born, was purely supernatural. Here, then, was the beginning of miracles in the history of redemption. Moreover, each plague differed from all the others. Their variety was adapted to convince the parties concerned that God, who never repeats himself, and never exhausts his resources of mercy or judgment, had stretched out his own arm over the land. Some might be convinced by one of the ten signs, and some by another. The proof from the whole was cumulative and overwhelming.

They fell upon the land in swift succession. It appears from Exod. vii. 25, that seven days elapsed between the first and the second. The last four occurred within a single month; for when the hail fell, which was the seventh wonder, "the barley was in the ear, and the flax was balled," a state of vegetation which in Egypt appears early in March (Exod. ix. 31); but

<sup>1</sup> Kalisch on Exodus, p. 89.



the tenth plague came in the middle of the month Abib, or about the first of April, giving an interval of nearly four weeks between the seventh, which occurred early in March, and the tenth, which came early in April (Exod. xiii. 4). Assuming a week's interval as the rule for the entire series, the conclusion is that they began about the first of February, and closed about the first of April, the whole occupying, let us say, sixty days. The rapidity with which the plagues ran their career was one of their most frightful concomitants.

The judgments were both cumulative and progressively severe. In the first, the sweet water of the Nile, turned into blood, mocked their thirst; in the second, myriads of loathsome frogs covered the land, and when they died the carrion poisoned the air; in the third and fourth, lice like dust and swarms of flies tormented the people; in the fifth, their cattle perished by the murrain; in the sixth, filthy boils on man and beast degraded the man to a fellowship of suffering with the beast; in the seventh, hail fell from heaven, and lightning ran along the ground, killing man and beast and herb and tree; in the eighth, countless myriads of locusts devoured the residue in the fields that had escaped the hail-storm, and then pressed their way into every open door and window; in the ninth, an awful darkness fell upon the desolated land; and in the tenth, at midnight, a frantic wail over the dying first-born of the Egyptians smote the air. The blows fell thick and fast and furious.

Three of the plagues fell upon the Hebrews as well as upon their oppressors; showing that, because the people of God partook in the idolatry of the Egyptians, they must also partake, to a certain degree, in the sufferings of the heathen. Thenceforward the Israelites were severed from the Egyptians, and suffered no more. During the prevalence of the murrain the king ascertained, through messengers sent by him to Goshen, that not one of the cattle of the Israelites had died. Hail fell in Egypt, but in the land of Goshen there was no hail. In the time of darkness, "all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings" (Exod. ix. 7-26, x. 23). Their exemption from seven

of the plagues indicated that they were the chosen seed. While God chastised them for their sins, he would not destroy them with the heathen.

The primary design of the judgments was to break the bondage of the promised seed, for the purpose of removing them from Egypt to the promised land; but they yielded other results hardly less important. The wonders could hardly fail to inspire the bondsmen with faith in the promise and power of God to break their chains. Next, the mighty works wrought by the two brothers accredited them to the Hebrews as the ministers of God, bearing a Divine commission to lead them from Egypt to Canaan. Nor were these miracles less serviceable to Moses and Aaron. God had assured Moses at Horeb, "Certainly I will be with thee." The fulfilment of the promises strengthened the two brothers in all their gifts, both natural and supernatural, and in the confidence of the people, — advantages which they would need in the wilderness. Many of the Egyptians, even, were brought to a better mind, by what they suffered under the hand of God. On one occasion at least, the officers of state remonstrated with the king in his futile resistance to the Divine power; and a mixed multitude of the natives cast in their lot at the exodus with the Hebrews, in their journey towards Canaan.

Still further, by those wonderful works, Jehovah asserted his supreme dominion over all the provinces and orders of nature in Egypt. Pharaoh's challenge, "Who is Jehovah? I know him not," expressed the theology of the Egyptians. Their thought was, that the God of the Hebrews was no more to them, and no other, than Bel the national god of Babylon, or Moloch the tutelary deity of Ammon; Bel, Moloch, and Jehovah were all alike, so they imagined, strange gods, and powerless on the Nile. Jehovah forewarned the king that he was about to assert his authority as the supreme God, ruling over Egypt with free and complete omnipotence. All the elements of nature in Egypt were converted into so many scourges. The waters turned to blood, frogs out of the Nile, lice swarming in the dust, swarms of stinging insects, carbuncles, hail,

fire, locusts, darkness coming in the air or from the sky, death falling on man and beast, came in quick succession. The blows fell rapidly upon the property of the people, on their growing crops, on their cattle, upon their persons in vermin and boils, and finally upon all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, to the first-born of the captive in the dungeon (Exod. xii. 29). These lessons were emphasized in the exemption of the Israelites from seven of the ten plagues. The oppressors were taught that the Being who inflicted upon them penal sufferings was not an Egyptian deity, but was Israel's God; that Jehovah was supreme over all Egypt, over that which he scourged, and that which he spared; that his supremacy was exclusive and absolute; and that there was no god in all the earth like the God of the Hebrews.

These lessons were enforced, still further, by the nature of the wonders. They were not miracles of power chosen, perhaps, at random, but were, with two exceptions, aggravated forms of calamities indigenous to the banks of the Nile. The exceptions are the turning of the waters into blood, and the death of the first-born. The eight other plagues, as to the matter of them, were evils natural to Egypt. The presence of the supernatural in the forms given to them is immediately apparent. It is true that the Nile assumes a reddish color at the period of its overflow; but the overflow occurs in July, whereas the plague of blood took place in February. At the word of Moses, the river became blood; it stank, the fish died, the people loathed the taste of its waters. At the word of Moses, also, the blood was turned to water. It is impossible to eliminate the quality of the supernatural from this judgment, or from those that followed. Their intensity cannot be otherwise explained. Vermin of all kinds were multiplied by myriads, and diseases had never before been so malignant. The plagues occurred in quick succession, falling within the period of about two months; they appeared and disappeared promptly at the time predicted by Moses; many of them came and went in obedience to the motions of his hands or his rod, or at the word of his

mouth. The union of the natural and the supernatural in the visitations served a purpose which could not have been otherwise gained. It demonstrated the sovereign dominion of Jehovah over all the land of Egypt; a truth which was derided by the scoffing king and dissembling priesthood.

Again, Jehovah declared open war against the gods of Egypt. In contemplation of the tenth plague he said, "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am Jehovah" (Exod. xii. 12; Num. xxxiii. 4). In smiting the beasts he struck down the objects of Egyptian worship. The sacred bullocks, Mnevis and Apis, sons of the creative Nile, were installed as deities in many a temple. In all the great cities, divine honors were paid to four-footed animals, as the incarnations or proxies of the Egyptian gods. The bull was worshipped in Memphis, Heliopolis, and Hermopolis; the goat in Mendes; the ram in Thebes; in other cities, the cow and the cat. Their sacred carcasses were smitten with the rinderpest in the fifth plague; and in the tenth, by the destruction of the first-born of the deified beasts, the anger of Jehovah once more smote the gods of Egypt. The River Nile, also, was worshipped under the name of Osiris, as the bountiful deity of Egypt. A temple was devoted to the Nile-god, and a distinct order of priests was consecrated to his service. No expression of the Divine contempt could exceed the act of God turning the waters of the river into blood until they stank, and gave forth myriads of disgusting reptiles, which forced their way into the houses, and even into the kneading-troughs of the people. The exuberant soil of Egypt was supplied with its deities, but the dust arose from its surface in clouds of lice. The translucent atmosphere and brilliant sky were the glory of Egypt; yet the atmosphere was filled with winged insects, tormenting man and beast and magician. In spite of the gods and goddesses who inhabited and guarded the skies, ulcers fell out of them on the people; a storm of hail mingled with fire followed the ulcers; a cloud of locusts overspread the land; and

after the locusts, a darkness that might be felt hid the face of the great Sun-god through three days. So thoroughly defeated and defiled were all the gods of Egypt, that Pharaoh himself, a boasted demigod, sought refuge more than once in the mercy of Jehovah (Exod. ix. 27, 28, x. 16, 17).

Another leading design of the plagues was to expose the system of Egyptian magic. That system entered as an integral element into the false religion of the country, and its adepts belonged to the sacerdotal order. The purpose of Jehovah to execute judgment on all the superstitions of Egypt brought the miracles of Moses and Aaron face to face with the enchantments of the magicians. Accordingly, the first three signs wrought by the servants of God—the rod changed to a serpent, the water turned into blood, and the production of frogs—were imitated by Jannes and Jambres; for such, probably, were the names of the chiefs among the magicians (2 Tim. iii. 8).

Several prominent features appear in this notable conflict. It took place, for example, in the sphere of the sorcery that was specifically Egyptian. The ten plagues, as we have seen, were for the most part aggravations of evils native-born to Egypt; the supernatural resting on the basis of the natural not only, but on what was peculiar to the land of the Nile,—its soil and climate, its sky, air, and water, its boasted advantages, and its acknowledged limitations. By way of preserving all the unities, the sorcery which was generically Egyptian was delivered over to power Divine. Next, the wonders wrought by Moses and Aaron were incomparably superior in variety, number, and sufficiency, to the counter wonders of the magicians. The rod of Aaron turned to a serpent swallowed the rods of the impostors; he changed the Nile and all the waters of Egypt into blood, the magicians did so upon a little water; he produced myriads of frogs, they a few only. He removed all the plagues: they removed none, not even those which they imitated; they could do no more than increase in a small way the volume of blood and the number of frogs. Aaron used the simple word and the staff: the magicians used their secret en-

chantments. His word was invariably followed by the appearance of the plague: at the third plague they failed ignominiously with their enchantments, and confessed, "This is the finger of God." The impostors themselves became the victims of the subsequent visitations, for "the boil was upon the magicians" (Exod. ix. 11), and doubtless their fields were ravaged by the hail and the fire and the locusts, their houses were filled with the thick darkness, and their children perished in the destruction of the first-born. Nothing could be more complete than the defeat which was suffered by the arts of magic, except the judgments which were executed on the gods of Egypt.

Various explanations of these counter wonders have been proposed. It has been suggested that both the ministers of Jehovah and the sorcerers were "wise men" in science and art beyond their age, working by some laws of nature at that time known only to themselves. Thus the chemist, setting phosphorus on fire under water, might appear to the ignorant to work a miracle. This suggestion is liable to two exceptions. The first, which will be fatal in the opinion of the Christian scholar, is that the proposed solution leads up to the conclusion that the wonders wrought by Moses were not necessarily supernatural, but were within the competency of an accomplished manipulator; and that Moses, who was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, may have been after all only a more clever artist than either Jannes or Jambres. The second exception will at least give pause to the rationalist. The progress of science, through the twenty-five hundred years which have elapsed since the days of Moses, has not enabled any expert to change a dry stick into a serpent and back into a stick, or to turn all the waters of Egypt into blood, or to convert ashes into swarms of lice, or to reproduce any one of the eight other plagues of Egypt, and to remove them, at his will. Nor can these phenomena be classed with the Greek fire, or with the art of embalming, or with any of the lost arts.

Another solution is obtained by supposing that God was pleased to bestow miraculous powers on the magicians to the limited extent indicated in the record; the Divine purpose

herein being to try the faith of his people, to afford to Pharaoh a temporary triumph to be followed by a signal defeat in the withdrawal of his assistance. But this theory does not account for the existence of the system of Egyptian magic, of which these few artifices were the products. It presents, also, the Almighty in the attitude of setting miracle against miracle; supporting with Divine credentials a system of fraud and imposture; using his infinite power at one and the same moment to verify and to expose a lie; bearing witness for the time being to the emissaries of Satan, with signs and wonders and with divers miracles. No analogy in support of this explanation can be drawn from the gift of prophecy in Balaam, and of miracles in Judas Iscariot. These men were not allowed, in any one instance, to use their Divine endowments to the prejudice of the truth. Balaam could do nothing but bless Israel, and Judas wrought no miracles on the side of Christ's enemies.

The opinion best supported by the Scriptures, and most commonly received, is that the magicians were adepts in legerdemain, and their enchantments were simply due to their cleverness in their profession. This opinion rests on the well-known skill of the Orientals in jugglery; on the circumstance that Aaron, in the miracles of the blood and the frogs, had supplied them with abundant materials for imposture; and especially on the singular gift of serpent-charming to this day even employed in Egypt. The jugglers are able, as is said, to throw a particular species of reptile into a torpor, by spitting into its throat, and closing its mouth, so that it lies stiff and motionless on the ground. In order to revive it again, they seize it by the tail, and rub it vigorously between the hands. Hengstenberg describes the trick, and relies upon it as an explanation of the matter in hand.<sup>1</sup> Dr. W. L. Alexander is authority for the statement that "the jugglers of India will for a few pence do tricks with serpents far more wonderful than making them rigid so as to resemble staffs; and any clever juggler could make water in a tank resemble blood, or, when the country was already swarming with frogs, could cover some place, that had

<sup>1</sup> Hengstenberg: *Egypt and the Books of Moses*.

been cleared for the purpose, with these reptiles as if he had suddenly produced them.”<sup>1</sup>

Some attention is due to the suggestion that the magicians were the ministers of Satan with power to deceive by their sorceries, and that the wonders wrought by them at this juncture, though spurious as miracles, were beyond the competency of mere legerdemain. This explanation has found favor with eminent and orthodox scholars well represented by Professor Kurtz.<sup>2</sup> The facts by which it is supported are drawn from the mysterious background of Divine inspiration, the region whence proceed false Christs, false prophets, deceitful workers, privily bringing in damnable heresies; the man of sin, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders. On the other hand, in behalf of the opinion that the counter wonders in Egypt did not rise to the bad pre-eminence of the “lying wonders” described by Paul, it may be said that the resources of Oriental jugglery afford a satisfactory explanation of all the phenomena. To this it may be added that any suggestion is inadmissible which involves the idea that the dry rod of the magicians was turned into a real serpent, — an act of creative power which belongs only to God, and ought not to be ascribed to Satan or to any other finite being. Pharaoh was perhaps deluded by the trickery of his servants; but Pharaoh was himself a party to the pending contest with the Almighty, and for this cause God sent him strong delusion, that he should believe a lie.

<sup>1</sup> Alexander. Kitto, i. 750.

<sup>2</sup> Kurtz: Old Covenant.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

## PHARAOH MANEPHTAH.

ONE of the leading characteristics of the transactions in Egypt which led to the exodus is the prominence given to the reigning monarch. At the bush God said to Moses, "Come now, I will send you to Pharaoh." Moses replied, "Who am I, that I should go before Pharaoh?" On their arrival in Egypt, Moses and Aaron, by the Divine direction, exhibited to the king the miraculous credentials of their commission, and required him to let Israel go, on the penalty, if he should refuse, of the death of his first-born son. The brothers held negotiations with the king in person through the period of about sixty days. The magicians were defeated before his eyes; the approach of the plagues, one by one, was announced to him. Several of them were removed at his entreaty, and on his promise to let Israel go; and his heart was repeatedly hardened so that he was false to his promise. The story, with Manephtah left out, would be unintelligible.

His prominence was derived from many sources. He stood in the illustrious line of the Pharaohs, who, with Ptolemies of a later age, were the Cæsars of Egypt. He was the son and immediate successor of Rameses the Great. Egypt, moreover, was an absolute monarchy of the Oriental type of absolutism. The dignity of the kingdom was identified with the person of the king, to a degree hardly asserted by Louis XIV. in his boast, "The king is the state." His will, his caprices even, gave law to the realm. Nor is this all. With the throne of his fathers, Manephtah inherited their Divine honors. The name Pharaoh is derived from an Egyptian word signifying the sun.

Wilkinson is of the opinion that the name was probably given in the earliest times to the Egyptian kings, because they claimed to be the chiefs on earth, as the sun is the chief among the heavenly bodies; and afterwards, when this luminary became the object of idolatrous worship at Heliopolis, it was the representative of their Sun-god.<sup>1</sup> "Son of the Sun" came to be the title of every Pharaoh, and Manephtah inherited this divine honor. An ode by one of his poets-laureate calls him the image of his father the Sun, and the merciful lord and creator of breath.<sup>2</sup> Still further, in the struggle on the Nile, the most formidable adversary of the true religion was not Pharaoh as a man, or as an official representative of Egypt, or as a king-god, but heathenism itself incarnate in his person, and endeavoring to strangle the Church while it lay in the womb of Egypt. In his ignominious death by drowning in the Red Sea, the king, and with him the kingdom, was brought low; and more, the very head of the old serpent of the Nile was crushed.

Pharaoh's position explains a message from Jehovah in the interval between the sixth and seventh plagues. Moses was instructed to say to the king, that, unless he would let the people go, the Lord God of the Hebrews would smite him and his people with pestilence, and cut him off from the earth. Moses repeated to Pharaoh the warning words of Jehovah: "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth" (Exod. ix. 16; Rom. ix. 17). God had "raised him up," had given him a place in the royal line, had supplied him with wealth, armies, munitions of war, and a priesthood skilled in magic wonders, had allowed him to receive the heathen apotheosis, in order to make of him an example, set on high, to suffer a righteous retribution, and to declare the adorable majesty of Jehovah in all the earth. Then came the end. A storm of hail, and of fire mingled with hail, swept over Egypt. The hail was followed by the locusts; "this death," Pharaoh called it; "*pestis iræ deorum*," "the

<sup>1</sup> Wilkinson: *Ancient Egypt*, iv. 267.

<sup>2</sup> Geikie: *Hours*, etc., i. 129.

pestilence of Divine wrath," so Pliny styles it. After the locusts came a mighty west wind, after the wind the darkness, and after the darkness the destruction of the first-born, and the catastrophe of the Red Sea. Tholuck remarks that the report of the display of God's power went to the nations round about (xv. 14), thence to the Greeks and Romans, and now, by the Holy Scriptures, Jehovah's power over Pharaoh is "declared in all the earth."

The temper of the king was disclosed by his treatment of a Divine requisition which was very early laid upon him. To Moses at the bush God said, "Thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met us; and now let us go, we beseech thee, that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our God" (Exod. iii. 18). The communication was respectful; it was conveyed to the king as a message from the God of the Hebrews, and presented by their acknowledged chiefs. It took the form of a petition, "We beseech thee." The request was reasonable; if neglected wilfully, the Hebrews would incur the Divine displeasure (v. 3). Moderate was it also, contemplating nothing more than a short leave of absence. The request carried with it the promise of a return of the people at the end of three days. There is no intimation that the king imputed any want of good faith to Moses. Again, the proposal was an act of mercy to Pharaoh. It gave him opportunity to show a kindness to his Hebrew subjects, and a spirit of obedience to God. His consent might have opened the way to a friendly agreement, by virtue of which Israel would depart in peace, Pharaoh receiving a blessing from God, and Egypt spared from the terrors of the Almighty. While it was an offer of kindness to the king, it was a test of character. He was not asked to send his laborers to Canaan, or even to set them free. Will he, at the command of Jehovah, grant an indulgence so small as a three-days' rest from labor, for the purpose of religious worship? Here the least involved the greatest. The refusal to grant so small a favor made it clear that he would treat with contempt the demand to let the

people go, never to return. His answer was an insolent fling at Jehovah: "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey his voice?" "Get you to your burdens." "Ye be idle, ye be idle."

What followed might have been anticipated. God told Moses that he would crush the spirit of Pharaoh, so that the king would not only let the people go, but would "with a strong hand drive them out of the land." Moses never renewed the request for the three-days' visit to the wilderness; he simply communicated to Pharaoh the command of God to let the people go out of the land, never to return (Exod. vi. 11, viii. 1, ix. 1). As the series of terrors went forward, the king attempted to meet the proposition of Moses by counter proposals. While the flies were swarming in the land, Pharaoh consented that the Hebrews might offer sacrifices in Egypt. No, answered Moses, for our worship is an abomination to the Egyptians, and they will stone us. When the king was threatened with the locusts, he said that the Hebrews might go to offer the sacrifice, if they would leave their wives and children in Egypt. Moses replied again: No, for the law of sacrifice required all the people to be in attendance. In the midst of the plague of darkness, the king proposed that all the people should go, leaving in Egypt their flocks and herds. No, replied Moses finally, for the question, what victims and how many, would be needed for the burnt-sacrifices, must be referred to Jehovah, making his will known at the time and place of the solemnity. Pharaoh became enraged, and drove Moses from his presence (x. 28, 29). Moses returned shortly, to announce the impending destruction of the first-born. High words arose, and Moses went out in great anger (xi.). The Almighty then took the case into his own hands.

EXOD. xii. 29-36. — At midnight there was a great cry in Egypt; Jehovah smote all the first-born, from the first-born of the king on the throne, to the first-born of the prisoner in his dungeon. There was not a house where there was not one dead. Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron by night, and ordered them peremptorily to leave Egypt, they and all the children of Israel. He made no condition whatever looking to a limited

absence. He granted fully all that they had demanded: "Take your flocks and herds as ye have said, and be gone, and bless me also." His subjects joined in the entreaty. They did not allow the Hebrews time to bake the dough which was in the kneading-troughs; and at the demand of the Hebrews, the Egyptians loaded them down "with jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment," and sent them away with all possible haste.

Neither Maneplitah nor his people expected them to return. That question had been settled by the obstinacy of Pharaoh himself. Jehovah told Moses that the king would "surely thrust them out altogether" (xi. 1). In his turn the king said to Moses, "Get you forth from among my people;" and these words, uttered in that awful night, can mean nothing less than an order to depart, never to return. His piteous request for a blessing was a final farewell. And the Egyptians thought of nothing except how to be rid of them before daylight if possible; for they cried out in agony and despair, "We be all dead men." They willingly, if not "joyfully, took the spoiling of their goods," to induce these dangerous people to go away and be gone forever. Nothing that was said or done is inconsistent with this statement. The words of the king, "Go serve the Lord as he hath said," refer to the flocks and herds mentioned in the next clause (xii. 31, 32). Pharaoh's pursuit of Israel after they were gone is explained by two circumstances, — first, his heart was hardened; and next, he was informed that the fugitives were "entangled in the land, and the wilderness had shut them in." And that the king and his people intended to thrust them out, for good and all, is conclusively proved by their own words when they heard that the Hebrews had fled: "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" (Exod. xiv. 5.)

The process known as the hardening of Pharaoh's heart gave a peculiar color to these transactions. Before Moses left Midian, he was forewarned that this induration would surely occur, and would enter into the plan of Providence. "The Lord said to Moses, When thou goest to return to Egypt, see that thou

doest all these wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put into thine hand ; but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go" (Exod. iv. 21). The number of places in the history of the exodus, in which this hardening is mentioned, is twenty ; indicating the prominence given to the incident. The agencies by which the process was effected are distinctly mentioned.

God's agency appears in Exod. iv. 21, vii. 3, ix. 12, x. 1, 20, 27, xi. 10, xiv. 4, 8, 17.

Pharaoh's agency appears in viii. 15, 32, ix. 34, xiii. 15.

The hardening is described impersonally in vii. 13,<sup>1</sup> 14, 22, viii. 19, ix. 7, 35.

The synopsis shows that in ten places out of the twenty, one-half of the whole, the hardening is ascribed to God ; in four only, to the king himself ; and in six places the term is used impersonally, intimating that his heart was simply hardened. Next, it is declared that Pharaoh hardened his own heart through four of the plagues, but after the sixth plague that sin is not distinctly imputed to him. Again, the first and the last instance is ascribed to God ; or, as Hengstenberg remarks, "Pharaoh's hardening is enclosed, as it were, by God's." "It also appears to proceed from design, that the hardening is attributed at first, in a preponderating degree to Pharaoh, and toward the end to God. The higher the plagues rise, so much the more does Pharaoh's hardening assume a supernatural character, so much the more obvious is its supernatural causality."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the synopsis may help us to estimate the value of the various explanations of the process which have been proposed.

Some have ascribed this induration to the direct operation of Divine power on the king's heart. God stood by him, and moved him to refuse to let the people go, and to exult in his obstinacy under respite, and finally to pursue the Israelites after their departure with increased malice and revenge. By way of preparing Pharaoh for his final state, God continually

<sup>1</sup> Revised Version, in Exod. vii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Genuineness of the Pent., ii. 380.

hardened his heart from the beginning to the end of his days.<sup>1</sup> This explanation is not consistent with the fact that the king hardened his own heart, nor with the generally accepted idea of human responsibility and of the Divine administration.

The opposite extreme is reached by those who resolve the Divine agency in this process into something merely incidental. The analogy in nature is taken from friction in machinery; it is an unavoidable incident in the best possible models. The analogy in moral government is the injury done the son by domestic discipline; the parent's proceedings are all good, but they lead incidentally to the ruin of the child. Thus, also, in the sphere of the gospel, Christ designed to bring peace, but incidentally strife and dissensions come in. It is held, accordingly, that Pharaoh's heart was hardened not by any Divine act looking to that result, but as an event incidental to what God did in Egypt with other intentions. Now, it may well be said that this theory, instead of explaining, crowds out the agency of God ten times distinctly asserted.

God permitted Pharaoh to harden his own heart; such is the thought of some of the Lutheran divines. They rely on the places, four in number, in which he is said to have hardened his heart; and on the usage of the Bible, according to which events are ascribed to God, which in his wisdom he allows to occur. This solution is not satisfactory. Ten times out of twenty the active agency of God is affirmed in terms as precise as those used in the four places which affirm the active agency of the king. Besides, this theory makes the Divine purposes dependent on the human will, perverting the relations of God to his creatures. And, further, God announced to Moses at first, and repeatedly afterwards, that he intended to harden the king's heart for purposes such as these: that he might bring Israel out of Egypt with great judgments; that Israel might know that he is Jehovah; that their posterity might hear what signs and wonders he had wrought in the land. He said also that when Israel should depart, he would harden Pharaoh's heart that he should pursue them, and God would be honored; and the king

<sup>1</sup> Dr. N. Emmons: iv. p. 327.

and all his hosts and the Egyptians should know that he is Jehovah. These are the fore-ordained results of the induration. They cannot be explained upon the theory that Pharaoh was simply allowed to harden his own heart. They were essential to the Divine plan, so also was the operation by which these important ends were secured (Exod. vii. 3-5, x. 1, 2, xi. 9, xiv. 4).

The solution commonly proposed by the Calvinistic theologians is taken from the doctrine of judicial abandonment. They teach us that we are to deny, on the one hand, that God merely permits evil, and, on the other hand, to deny that he is its author. We must hold fast the doctrine that evil is of man, and that God bounds it most wisely and powerfully. And yet it is to be remembered, that the hardening of the sinner's heart is itself punitive.<sup>1</sup> It presupposes sin, and is its reward. According to this thought, God, in punishment for the sins of Pharaoh, withheld from him the restraints of his grace, and abandoned him to the dominion of his own malignant passions. This is the basis of the true explanation, as appears from Rom. i. 24-32, where we read that God, by way of punishing the wicked, gives them up unto "vile affections;" and this "reprobate mind" is both a retribution and a distinct, aggravated sin. The solution contemplates the three aspects presented in the record. God hardened Pharaoh's heart by giving him over to his own wicked passions; Pharaoh hardened his own heart by following his evil impulses; and his heart was hardened by the joint agency of God abandoning the man to himself, and of the king going on in sin.

But may we not inquire whether this explanation, in order to cover the case, does not need to be extended? The active causality of God, so often asserted in the record, seems to imply somewhat more than a mere abandonment of the king to his own rebellious nature. Another and further idea is suggested; the hypothesis, to wit, of a judicial active agency. That is to say, God, in judgment for his sins, not only withheld gracious restraints from Pharaoh, but he ordered and arranged particu-

<sup>1</sup> Hodge on Rom. ix. 14.



lar events which made his heart, already disposed to evil, still harder, although these very events would have led a righteous man to do right. Here the order of thought should be noticed. First, the king had oppressed the chosen seed, and had refused to let them go at God's command. Next, God resolved to punish the cruel and disobedient monarch. Again, the particular punishment awarded was hardness of heart. Further, this sentence was carried into effect not only by the withdrawal of the restraints of providence and grace, but by placing the king in circumstances which, owing to his own perversity, served to harden his heart, although his heart ought to have been softened by them. The induration, let it be noticed, did not precede, but followed after, the impiety of the king, and was its fruit and retribution. Still further, this obduracy is to be contemplated under two aspects; under one it was a grievous sin, under the other it was a severe punishment. As a sin, it was the act of Pharaoh; as a punishment, it was an act of God. Looking at the author of the sin, one must say Pharaoh hardened his own heart; looking at the avenger of his crimes, one must say God hardened his heart. Guilt and wrath were mingled in the bitter cup; the guilt was Pharaoh's guilt, the wrath was God's wrath. Toward the close of this remarkable struggle, the insolence of the king became insufferable, and this hardening as a direct judgment of God came out in bolder relief; the fact being, that in the last eight places in which the hardening is mentioned, seven times out of eight it is ascribed to the Almighty.<sup>1</sup>

The circumstances which were arranged by Jehovah, and were adapted to produce the result, confirm this view of the case. One of these was the character of the first three miracles wrought by Moses; they were such as the magicians were able to counterfeit. When the king witnessed the success of their enchantments, his "heart was hardened," and he turned away in contempt from Moses and his demands (Exod. vii. 22, 23). Secondly, certain of the plagues which annoyed him excessively were attended with the like effect. When the dust of the earth

<sup>1</sup> See Westminster Confession, chap. v. sect. iv.

became lice or gnats on man and beast, on Pharaoh himself perhaps, the magicians said to him, "This is the finger of God," and "his heart was hardened" (viii. 19). When the boils broke out "upon the magicians and all the Egyptians," on Pharaoh probably as well, it is added, "The Lord hardened his heart" (ix. 12). Thirdly, the respites from the plagues were followed by similar results. When the frogs were removed, "he hardened his heart;" when the flies were taken away, "he hardened his heart at this time also;" and "when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more and more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants" (viii. 15, 32, ix. 34). He took offence, fourthly, at the exemption of the Hebrews from the visitations of God. During the prevalence of the murrain, "Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened" (ix. 7). Fifthly, he resented the refusal of Moses to accede to any compromise respecting the festival in the wilderness. Moses, having declined two counter propositions, rejected the third also. Thereupon "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go" (x. 27). Finally, when he was told that the people, at the exodus, were shut up between the wilderness and the Red Sea, his heart was hardened once more (xiv. 8). It should be mentioned that his obduracy led him more than once to ask Moses to intercede for him while the plagues were raging, promising, if they were taken away, that he would obey the Divine command; and yet in every instance he was false to his word. Two of the elements entering into these transactions are the Divine appointment of all the destructive agencies, and their specific effect on the heart of the king. But a third element is not less vital. These inflictions would, but for his obstinate unbelief, have constrained him to yield to the demands of Jehovah. The failures of the magicians ought to have convinced him that they were either impostors, or the ministers of some lying spirit; the annoyance which he suffered from the gnats and the boils should have humbled his pride; the goodness of God in removing the terrors ought to have led him to

repentance; the protection given to the Hebrews should have rebuked his unbelief; the refusal of Moses to grant any concessions should have persuaded him to yield to the inevitable; and the entanglement of Israel in the wilderness should have taught him, in connection with what had already occurred, that Jehovah's of hosts was encamped not far away.

The foregoing observations on the hardening of Pharaoh's heart indicate the proper interpretation of Isa. vi. 9, 10, and its paraphrases in the New Testament. The ninth verse in Isaiah draws attention to the agency of the Jews in bringing insensibility and blindness on themselves: "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." The words resemble the rebuke of Christ to the Jews: "Fill ye up the measure" (the iniquity) "of your fathers" (Matt. xxiii. 32). The tenth verse goes further, and affirms the agency of the prophet in their induration: "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy." The guilty agency of the people, and the instrumental agency of the prophet, are the two aspects of the case presented by Isaiah. Christ in Matt. xiii. 15, and Paul in Acts xxviii. 27, dwell on the first of these aspects, showing that the Jews fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, by their self-inflicted callousness: "For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and *their eyes have they closed,*" etc. Finally, in John xii. 40, Christ reveals the third factor in this operation, namely, the agency of God: "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts." We are taught, therefore, by the words of God through Isaiah, and the interpretation put upon them by Jesus and Paul, that the three parties to this proceeding are the sinner himself, the prophet, and the Almighty. On the part of the sinner it is an act of aggravated guilt; on the prophet's part, an instrumental agency; on the part of the Almighty, it is a just retribution. Michaelis states it thus: "*Deus sic præcepit judicialiter, populus criminaliter, propheta autem ministerialiter.*" J. A. Alexander says, "In this fearful process there are three distinguishable agencies expressly or implicitly described: the ministerial agency of the prophet,

the judicial agency of God, and the suicidal agency of the people themselves.”<sup>1</sup> A fine instance this is of the way in which the Scriptures exhibit, progressively and harmoniously, the various phases of a many-sided truth. It illustrates, also, the perfect wisdom with which Christ developed and enlarged the profound spiritual meaning of the old prophets.

By the same rule the place in Rom. ix. 18 is to be explained: “Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.” The discrimination here set forth rests on the distinction between the dealings of God which are judicial, and those which are sovereign. The reason why he punishes any man is found in the bad behavior of the man, and the punitive act is judicial. The reason why he punishes one sinner rather than another is to be sought not in that other, but in God himself, and the discrimination is sovereign. The hardening presupposes the existence of flagrant sin, and is both the fruit and the punishment thereof. The order of thought to be observed in clearing up this method of Divine retribution is pointed out in what is said above, of the sin and punishment of Pharaoh.

<sup>1</sup> Alexander on Isa. vi. 9, 10, and on Acts xxviii. 27.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## THE EXODUS.

BEFORE the series of plagues began, Jehovah gave this commission to Moses: "Thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born; and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me; and if thou refuse to let him go, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born" (Exod. iv. 22, 23). This message defined the relation of the people to Jehovah. Israel was his son, having received an adoption flowing from Divine grace. The sonship in its highest sense was spiritual. They were chosen to be a holy nation, and they owed to their Father love, reverence, and obedience. The term "first-born son" is both a term of endearment, and an intimation of the adoption of many other sons from among the heathen; just as the change of Abram's name to Abraham, "the father of many nations," pointed to the ingathering of the Gentiles. The message shows, also, that the destruction of the first-born was the death-wound of the ten blows about to be laid upon Egypt. The nine were preliminary to the tenth, and in the nature of warnings; the tenth was the work of final judgment. That infliction, moreover, returned like for like,—that is to say, the leading characteristic of the sin of Egypt was reiterated in the leading characteristic of the punishment, upon the principle involved in "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." The oppression of Israel, God's first-born son, was the sin; the destruction of the first-born sons of the oppressors was the punishment. The visitation was, further, thoroughly supernatural. Unlike most of the preceding wonders, the destruction of the oldest son was not a calamity

indigenous to the country, under a form intensely aggravated by the Almighty; but it was altogether a strange terror, never before inflicted, never since repeated. Finally, the tenth plague was not introduced by human instrumentality. During the progress of the wonders, the ministries employed rose in dignity. In the first three, Aaron used the rod; at the fourth, and thence onward, Moses was prominent; but in the tenth, Moses warned Pharaoh and the Hebrews that the disaster was approaching, and then stepped aside at the coming of the Jehovah-Angel. God had said to Moses, "About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt;" and to the king, "I will slay thy son, even thy first-born son." This plague, as Kurtz remarks, was of such a kind that even hardness and unbelief could not refuse to admit the interposition of the personal, living, supreme, and almighty God.

Several Divine institutions, established at the time of the exodus, bring out its memorable significance. One of these was the appointment of a new era. The Hebrews had been accustomed to begin the year with the month Tisri, corresponding very nearly with our October. The exodus occurred in the month Nisan, corresponding very nearly with our April; and, by the Divine direction, the year was thenceforth to begin at that time. According to Josephus, this change determined the beginning of the ecclesiastical year only; the civil year began six months later, as before.<sup>1</sup> The ecclesiastical year began with the Passover, the civil year with the sabbath and the jubilee (Lev. xxiii. 5; Num. ix. 3). This arrangement gave to the Hebrews a double computation of time, not unlike the method adopted in the United States, whereby important state papers bear two dates; one running with the vulgar era, and proceeding from the first day of January, and the other governed by the Declaration of Independence, and beginning with the fourth day of July. By the exodus, Israel acquired a spiritual, in addition to its natural, character;<sup>2</sup> and it was a turning-point in the history of redemption, changing the face of the world. Many eminent historians, though failing to recognize the reli-

<sup>1</sup> Antiq. Jud., i. 1, chap. iii. 53.      <sup>2</sup> Hengstenberg: Kingdom of God, i. 278.

gious significance of that event, agree in clothing it with the dignity of an epoch. Ewald says that "the month of departure became the commencement of the whole national freedom, and Moses was fully justified in placing in the spring the festival of the deliverance of Israel, and the commencement of a new era."<sup>1</sup> "History," says Bunsen, "was born in the night when the children of Israel went forth out of Egypt."<sup>2</sup> President Edwards, with a finer sense of the place of the exodus in the history, says, "This was quite a new thing that God did towards the great work of redemption. God had never done any thing like it before (Deut. iv. 32, 34). This was a great advancement of the work that had been begun and carried on from the fall of man; a great step taken in Divine providence towards the preparation for Christ's coming into the world, and working out his great and eternal redemption: for this was the people of whom Christ came."<sup>3</sup>

The feast of the Passover was now instituted. Each family of the Hebrews was required to procure a lamb or a kid without blemish, a male of the first year. On the fourteenth day of the month the animal was killed; the blood was sprinkled on the door-posts and lintels of the house; the body of the lamb was roasted whole, and eaten by the family, parents and children, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They partook of the repast in haste, with their garments girded about their loins, sandals on their feet, and staff in hand, ready at a given signal to set off for Canaan. At midnight the Almighty passed through the land, smiting the first-born of the Egyptians, but passing over the houses the door-posts of which were marked with the blood of the paschal lamb. The ceremony was "Jehovah's passover;" for, said he to the Hebrews, "I will pass over you." The "passing through" was in judgment on the Egyptians, the "passing over" was in mercy to the Hebrews. The feast was established as a perpetual ordinance. It was kept sacred by the Jews down to the destruction of their commonwealth at the fall of Jerusalem; it has even survived that catastrophe among the Jews, and appears

<sup>1</sup> Antiq. Israel, p. 344.

<sup>2</sup> Egypt, i. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Hist. Red., p. 208.

to this day in Christendom under the name of the Easter festival.

The Passover was, in the first place, a commemorative institution. Said God to the Hebrews, "This day shall be unto you for a memorial." "When your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt; when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses." Moses said, "It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt" (Exod. xii.). Much importance was given to the exodus by an alteration in the Fourth Commandment. According to the text given at Sinai, the sabbath day is to be remembered because God rested on that day from the six days of creation. In the recapitulation of the law in Deut. v. 15, that reason was omitted for the time being, and the Hebrews were directed to keep the sabbath in remembrance of the exodus; perhaps their flight was on the sabbath day. But with the fall of the commonwealth, the sabbath, considered as a Jewish ordinance, lost its significance; and the Church of God came back to the ground for its observance which was laid at the creation, and hallowed in the Fourth Command.

The Passover was, moreover, a teaching institution. The doctrine taught is salvation by the shedding of blood. The Hebrews had partaken with the Egyptians in their idolatry, and in the liabilities which that sin draws after it. A community in guilt brought the first three judgments on both peoples alike. Thenceforth they were made to differ, and the plagues fell only on the Egyptians. But inasmuch as the Hebrews were better neither by nature nor by behavior than the heathen, their exemption from the death-blow could be secured in no other way than by the shedding and sprinkling of blood. They had been chosen by the election of grace, they must be redeemed by an atonement. "And the blood," said Jehovah, "shall be a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you" (Exod. xii. 13, comp. ver. 23). Some of the cardinal ideas which enter into the gospel are expressed in



this transaction. God will have a chosen people to serve him; they must be chosen not only, but redeemed as well; this redemption is effected by the blood of the Lamb of God; the shed blood must be appropriated by an act of faith on the part of the sinner, even as the Hebrews sprinkled the paschal blood on their door-posts; when the Almighty, coming to judge the wicked, sees "the blood," he will pass over his chosen, redeemed, and believing people; and the destruction of the wicked goes hand in hand with the salvation of the righteous.

Next, the Passover was a sacrifice. Many of the earlier Protestant theologians held that it was a sacrament only, not a sacrifice. They were driven to this position by a polemic of the Roman-Catholic divines, contending that the Lord's Supper, being the substitute and continuation of the Passover, is, like the Passover, a sacrifice for sin. To this suggestion the sufficient answer is, that the quality of a sacrifice cannot appear in the Lord's Supper, for the reason that since the death of Christ there remains no more sacrifice for sin; and for the further reason, that the supper is simply, by Christ's appointment, a commemoration of the atonement, not the atonement itself. That the Passover was a sacrifice, is evident. It is called in Exod. xii. 27, the "sacrifice of the Lord's passover;" in xxxiv. 25, the "sacrifice of the feast of the passover;" in Num. ix. 7, "an offering of the Lord;" and in Deut. xvi. 2-6, the term "sacrifice" is four times applied to the ceremony. After the building of the Temple the paschal lamb was, by Divine command, to be slain at the sanctuary, and in no other place (Deut. xvi. 5). Both the blood and the fat of the paschal victims were offered by the priest on the altar, according to the invariable law of atonement (2 Chron. xxxv. 1, 11, 14). And, further, Paul puts into the same category the slaying of the paschal lamb and the death of Christ: "For even Christ our passover" (our paschal lamb, Mark xiv. 12) "is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7). Moreover, the ritual of the ordinance was sacrificial. The victim was a lamb or kid without blemish; the officiating priest, in the absence of a sacerdotal order, was the patriarch of the family; the altar, in the absence of a public sanctuary, was the doorway

of the house; the sprinkling of blood upon the door-posts and lintel was an act of obedience to God and of faith in his promise; the passing over of the houses marked by the blood was an act of God administering his own rule of salvation; and the whole was a true expiation for sin, offered by the sinner, and accepted by the sovereign Judge. Nor is any importance to be attached to the particulars wherein the first Passover differed from the ritual of sacrifice prescribed at Sinai. The imposition of hands, the ministry of Aaronic priesthood, the offering of the blood and fat on the altar, were necessarily omitted in Egypt, because neither a consecrated priesthood nor altar of burnt-offering was in existence. The attitude of the worshippers on the night of the exodus, eating the flesh of the lamb in haste, with girded loins, the feet in sandals, the staves in hand, were actions which were afterwards laid aside. They were accidents attending the rite celebrated in Egypt, not substantial characteristics of the ordinance.

The feast of the passover was also a sacrament,—one of the two sacraments of the Abrahamic covenant. Circumcision was the first in order, and was given as a part of that covenant. Four hundred and thirty years had elapsed since that sign and seal was instituted. Nearly two hundred years had passed since Jehovah had made any communication of his will to the chosen seed, whether by vision, by covenant, or by oral revelation. Through many generations the seed of Abraham had been enslaved by the heathen. When Jehovah came to bring them out of bondage in Egypt, he is said to have remembered his covenant. In order to give dignity to the new epoch, he appointed a new sign of his ancient covenant, in the form of the second sacrament. The relation of the Passover to the Abrahamic covenant is easily defined. It was in due time incorporated with circumcision into the Mosaic institutes; but it is older than the Sinaitic covenant, older than the Levitical priesthood, older than the ceremonial law. It pertains, therefore, to the covenant made with Abraham four hundred and thirty years earlier, and was a new sacrament added to the initiatory rite of circumcision. The sacramental character of

the Passover is to be recognized (1) in the fact that it was of Divine appointment, in the absence of which no observance can be a true sacrament. (2) The two essential parts of a sacrament, the visible sign and the inward grace signified thereby, were present in the Passover. The lamb, killed, roasted, and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, made up the sign. Exemption from the destruction of the first-born, and deliverance from slavery, were the immediate blessings represented; but redemption from sin by the blood of Christ was the spiritual grace signified in the ordinance. (3) The ministers of the ordinance were divinely designated,—in Egypt the head of the family, and in the final form of the ritual the priest jointly with the head of the family. (4) The truths proper to a sacrament were set forth in the paschal symbols. The killing and roasting of the lamb conveyed the idea of an offering made for sin by the knife and fire. Its body laid on the table whole and entire, not a bone being broken, expressed the unity of the chosen seed, and of the one sacrifice for sin. The burning of what remained after supper, and the giving it back to God by fire, indicated that all the flesh of the lamb was set aside from a common to a sacred use. (5) The gracious affections proper to a true sacrament were demanded in the observance of the Passover. Repentance for sin was represented by the bitter herbs; the entire exclusion of inworking corruption was expressed by the putting-away of the leaven (Exod. xii. 15; 1 Cor. v. 5-8); a joyful sense of union and communion with God was awakened by the sight of the unbroken body of the lamb; and a living faith in the coming one, the Lamb of God, was set forth typically in the paschal sacrifice.

The intimate nature of circumcision and the Passover, and their relations to each other, might be set forth somewhat thus: Both were signs and seals of the covenant of grace which was manifested in the covenant with Abraham. Both were of perpetual obligation by virtue of the Divine command; and both were sacredly observed by the chosen seed, with certain intervals of guilty neglect, down to the death of Christ. Circum-

cision was administered to the Master himself when eight days old, and he kept the Passover with the disciples on the night in which he was betrayed. The particulars wherein these ordinances differed are: (1) Circumcision left a mark in the flesh of the subject, certifying to his birthright under the covenant: the Passover had no such personal sign. (2) Males only received circumcision: all persons of suitable age, male and female, were admitted to the Passover. (3) Circumcision was applied to its subjects severally, one by one: the Passover was a social festival, a family re-union, expressing the communion of saints. (4) In circumcision the subject was passive: in the Passover he was active; he ate the flesh of the lamb and the bitter herb, and drank the cup of blessing. (5) Infant circumcision was an act of faith on the part of the parent: the eating of the Passover was an act of faith on the part of the communicant. (6) Circumcision pointed to the corruption of fallen man, and was a sign of regeneration: the Passover pointed to his guilt, and was the sign of pardon through atoning blood. (7) Inasmuch as regeneration can occur but once, it was well represented by circumcision, which can be applied but once; inasmuch as the believer needs continual pardon and saving grace, the Passover was offered year by year continually. The particulars wherein circumcision and the Passover differ, and the particulars wherein baptism and the Lord's Supper differ, need not be stated here.

There is a close connection between the Passover of the old covenant and the Lord's Supper of the new covenant. While Christ was celebrating the Passover with the eleven, he took the bread and the wine that were before him, and blessed these elements, and gave them to his disciples, repeating the words of a new institution. The feast which began as the old Passover terminated by a gentle and beautiful transition in the sweeter and holier sacrament, even as the morning brightens into the perfect day. There is, moreover, a close resemblance between the Passover and the Lord's Supper. Both were instituted a few hours previous to the events which they were appointed to commemorate. Both are festal, social, and sym-

bolical. Each sustains similar relations to its fellow ordinance : none but the circumcised might come to the Passover, none but the baptized may approach the Lord's table. Both are monuments of a great redemption ; both are prophetic, — the Jewish Passover foreshowing the first coming of Christ, the Christian Passover pointing to his second coming. The Lord Jesus slain for sin was set forth in both, — in the old sacrament by the lamb, in the new by the bread and the wine. The sacramental action in the two are the same ; the communicant eats the flesh of the lamb in the first, and in the latter he partakes of the symbols of Christ's body and blood. Repentance for sin, faith in the sufficiency and efficacy of Christ's blood, and communion with God and all the saints, are the graces suitable to the one and the other. It is to be distinctly borne in mind, however, that the two sacraments of the Christian Church are far more precious as means of grace and vehicles of saving truth than the two sacraments of the Jewish Church ; just as the Christian Scriptures are richer than the Jewish Scriptures in the same grace and truth.

Besides the feast of the Passover, two other Mosaic institutes took their origin from the destruction of the first-born. The sacerdotal order is one of these. From the story of Cain and Abel we learn, that, in the beginning, every worshipper offered gifts and sacrifices for himself. From the history of Noah, Abraham, and Melchizedek, we gather that the office of the priest was put in the head or patriarch of the family. During the period of the bondage, worship at the Hebrew altar was suppressed by the Egyptians (Exod. viii. 26). At the exodus, God prepared the way for a sacerdotal order, by setting apart for that purpose all the first-born sons of the twelve tribes. He declared, that on the day when he smote all the first-born of the Egyptians, he separated unto himself all the first-born of Israel, both man and beast : " Mine they shall be. I am Jehovah " (Exod. xiii. 2 ; Num. iii. 13). By this appointment the first-born male, both of man and beast, was reserved for the altar ; the former as the priest, the latter as the victim. The designation of the first-born of all Israel to the priestly office

was provisional only. About six months later the law was amended at Sinai by Jehovah. Aaron and his sons were set apart to the priesthood; and shortly afterwards the males of the whole tribe of Levi, to which Aaron belonged, were constituted in perpetuity the sacerdotal order. The circumstances amidst which this change was effected appear in the record. The cruelty of Levi in the slaughter of the Shechemites, described in Gen. xxxiv., moved Jacob, when he was dying, to exclude the tribe of that son from any separate inheritance in the land of Canaan (Gen. xlix. 7). At the exodus, therefore, Levi's descendants set out for a country in which there was not an acre that they could call their own. But when the people worshipped the molten calf at Sinai, the warriors of the disinherited tribe of Levi flew to arms at the call of Moses, and slew three thousand of the idolaters. In acknowledgment of their piety and courage, they were raised to the dignity of a holy tribe (Exod. xxxii. 25-29; Deut. xxxiii. 8-10). A census was taken showing that the number of males, first-born and after-born, in the tribe of Levi, was 22,000; and the number of first-born males in the other eleven tribes was 22,273. Jehovah ordered 22,000 of the sons of the tribe of Levi to be taken, instead of an equivalent number of the sons of the other tribes; and he directed, that the excess of the males in the eleven tribes, being 273, should be redeemed at the rate of five shekels each; the redemption-money to be deposited in the treasury of the sanctuary. By this proceeding Jehovah took the Levites to himself, instead of all the first-born of Israel. Aaron and his sons in all generations held the priesthood; and the other Levites, in perpetual succession, discharged the inferior offices of public worship (Num. iii. 12-51, viii. 16-18). And so the act of God at the exodus, consecrating to himself the first-born, terminated in the establishment, for all time to come, of a priesthood for Israel. In order to complete this part of the history, it should be added, that in the settlement of Canaan the family of Aaron received neither part nor lot in the sacred soil; the Lord was their inheritance, that is to say, he charged himself with their maintenance (Num. xviii. 20). To the Levites were assigned the tithes of

all Israel, together with forty-eight cities distributed throughout Palestine. By these measures, ample provision was made for their support, while the forfeiture long before announced in the prophecy of Jacob was enforced: "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."

The destruction of the first-born of the Egyptians, and the preservation of the first-born of the Hebrews, extended not only to the families of both people, but to their beasts likewise. The ordinance by which Jehovah consecrated the first-born of the chosen seed to the priesthood, provided victims for the altar in their flocks and herds (Num. iii. 13). The firstling of the clean kind, as of oxen, sheep, and goats, was brought to the altar, the offspring of an unclean beast, as the foal of an ass, might be redeemed by a lamb, or its neck broken, at the option of the owner (Num. xviii. 17; Exod. xiii. 13). It is probable, moreover, that the rule by which God reserved to himself the first-fruits of the earth of every kind, rested on the principles involved in the sanctification of the first-born (Exod. xxii. 29, 30).

The Mosaic institute, known as the redemption of the first-born, is another memorial of the events. When a first-born child attained the age of a month, the parents were required, by the Levitical law, to pay five shekels — say two dollars and a half — into the sanctuary. The ordinance is set out in Exod. xiii. 15. and in Num. xviii. 16; and it rested on the rescue of the first-born in Egypt. The Passover commemorated this event once a year; the redemption of the first-born kept alive the memory of that deliverance throughout the entire year. The usage associated the departure from Egypt with the joy of the parents in the birth of their first-born; it afforded a steady revenue to the sanctuary; it was not a burdensome tax, because it was levied on a family only once, and at a time when its other expenses were comparatively light. The ordinance was in force down to the end of the dispensation. Jesus was himself redeemed by his parents, as a part of the righteousness which they were required to fulfil on his behalf (Luke ii. 23, 24). The idea of redemption, and the kindred idea of the separation

of the redeemed to the service of God, pervaded the institutes of Judaism. He reserved to himself the first-fruits of the earth in all their kinds, in token that every returning harvest and vintage belonged of right to him. The redemption of the first-born, and the oblation of the first-fruits, carried into every dwelling, and every harvest-field and vineyard, the doctrine of a signal redemption and a complete consecration. "They are mine," said Jehovah.

Israel left Egypt in triumph, laden with the spoils of their oppressors. When God announced to Abraham the future enslavement of his posterity, he added this promise: "That nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and they shall come out with great substance." The conspicuous fulfilment of this promise was a necessity, both of the faithfulness of God, and of the dignity of the occasion. Nothing could have been more inappropriate as the conclusion of the wonders wrought in Egypt, nothing more unsuitable to the character of the God of Israel, than the escape of the Hebrews under the cover of the night, after the manner of a gang of runaway slaves. They were not a ragged and starving rabble of mendicants and miscreants: they were the heirs of a superb inheritance; they were a redeemed Church, God's own son, even his first-born. A future of consummate glory was before them. Prophets, kings, and priests, not only, but One in whom the offices held by prophets and priests were to obtain their illustrious consummation, were borne in their loins; and the whole company of the elect, then and thereafter to be born, were represented in their array. Their departure from Egypt was in keeping with their position and destiny. "They went out with a high hand" (of Jehovah) "in the sight of the Egyptians" (Num. xxxiii. 3). "They went up harnessed;" that is to say, armed and in order of battle. They marched out of Egypt a victorious, not a retreating, host. Not only so, but their sons and daughters went out clothed with the best spoils of war; "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold and raiment" (Exod. iii. 21, 22).

The value of the treasures taken from the Egyptians may be estimated from the contributions subsequently made by the



Hebrews, first to the support of idolatry, and then to the service of God. The calf worshipped at Sinai was molten out of the golden earrings worn by the people. The profusion of the precious metals which were lavished upon the tabernacle, is set forth in the twenty-fifth and thirty-seventh chapters of Exodus. The foundation was of silver; the walls were plated without, and coupled together, with gold; the crown of the altar of incense, and of the table of shew-bread, together with their wings and bowls, were of gold. The mercy-seat and the overshadowing cherubim were of beaten gold. The candlestick and its seven branches were made of gold "pure and beaten," of a talent, or about eighty pounds, in weight. Embroidered curtains were hung within and without the sanctuary; rare and precious jewels were set in the breastplate and shoulder-strap of the high priest; and munificent gifts of gold and silver vessels were offered by the twelve princes at the dedication of the sanctuary. The value of the gold and silver expended, and the building and appointments of the tabernacle, are estimated by Canon Cook at \$1,165,550, by Arbuthnot and Boekh at somewhat less than a million dollars, and by Keil at about three-quarters of a million in our money.<sup>1</sup> The vast depreciation in the value of the precious metals since the days of Moses is to be taken into the account. Dr. John remarks that their value in the fourth century before Christ was to their value in England in A.D. 1780 as ten to one. The ratio in the problem, between the sixteenth century before Christ and the present time, must be greater. If the estimate of one million dollars be put upon the treasures used in the tabernacle, and if, furthermore, that estimate be increased by a moderate formula, representing the depreciation in the precious metals during the lapse of thirty-five centuries, the same total will rise into the millions. After all proper deductions are made for the contributions which the Hebrews made to the tabernacle out of their own earnings in Egypt, it will remain true that the spoils taken from their oppressors were immense, and that they were well applied to the service of public worship.

<sup>1</sup> Speak. Com. on Exod. xxxviii. 31. Keil and Delitzsch, Id.

Indeed, the tabernacle, not invested with the grandeur of a cathedral, but clothed with the beauty of a gem, stood for five hundred years, first in the wilderness, and then in Canaan, a monument of the night in which the fathers came out of Egypt "with great substance."

The method by which the Hebrews obtained the spoils presents, so it has been thought, a difficult problem. According to the Authorized English Version, the Hebrews "borrowed," and the Egyptians "lent," their jewels and raiment. The question of morals raised here would be of little importance if it involved the Israelites alone, their virtues at the time being somewhat shrunken. But it goes deeper. The Almighty told Moses in Midian that his people should be set free, and should "borrow" jewels and raiment from their oppressors (Exod. iii. 19-22). Just before the tenth plague, God commanded them, through Moses, to "borrow" of their Egyptian neighbors the property already described (Exod. xi. 1-3). On their departure from Egypt, the Hebrews "borrowed," and the Egyptians "lent" unto them, such things as they required, and "they spoiled the Egyptians" (Exod. xii. 35, 36). This transaction has been alleged by the sceptics to be an impeachment either of the inspiration of the Pentateuch or of the righteousness of God.

But the difficulty is removed by the fact that the Hebrew word *shahal*, here translated "borrow," means primarily, and well-nigh universally, to *beg*, to *ask*, to *demand*; and the Hebrew word *hishail*, here translated "lend," means to *grant a request*, to *give what is asked*. The proof of this assertion is ample. (1) The word *shahal* occurs one hundred and seventy-five times in the Hebrew Scriptures. Its precise meaning appears in such places as these: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance" (Ps. ii. 8). "He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him" (Ps. xxi. 4). "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after" (Ps. xxvii. 4). "And God said to him" (Solomon), "Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself

understanding," etc. (1 Kings iii. 11). The use of the word "borrow" in these places would introduce utter confusion of thought. (2) There are only two places, out of the one hundred and seventy-five, in which it can be plausibly affirmed that *shahal* is correctly translated "borrow": "If a man shall borrow aught of his neighbor" (Exod. xxii. 14). "Alas, master! for it was borrowed" (2 Kings vi. 5). Many of our most competent scholars maintain that the word in the first of these places means to *hire*, and in the last to *beg*. (3) The Hebrew expresses the idea of *borrowing* and *lending* by other specific terms. The word most commonly used is *lahvah*: "Thou shalt lend" (*lahvah*) "to many nations, and shalt not borrow" (Deut. xxviii. 12; comp. Prov. xxii. 7. xix. 17, Isa. xxiv. 2). (4) The word *hishail* is an inflection called the Hiphil, or cause form of *shahal*, and takes its meaning therefrom. It signifies, therefore, to *give* what is asked. There is but one other place in the Hebrew Scriptures where *shahal* and *hishail* occur together. Hannah said of her son Samuel, "The Lord hath given me my petition which I have asked of him: therefore I also have granted him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he is granted to the Lord" (1 Sam. i. 27, 28). So it stands in the Revised Version; the act of Hannah was not a lending, but a lifelong consecration, of her son to the Lord. In the three places quoted above from the Book of Exodus, the Revisers use the word *ask* instead of the word *borrow*, and the words *let them have* instead of the word *lent*. (5) It has been already shown that the Egyptians had thrust out the Hebrews altogether, and desired never to see them again. That being the case, the borrowing and lending of jewels and raiment were out of the question. (6) "The text," Wener observes (Exod. iii. 21), "shows clearly enough that the command was an act of Divine retaliation, a just spoliation of the oppressors."

This judgment touching the nature of the transaction is confirmed by the motives which led the Egyptians to part, voluntarily, with their treasures. First, "the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked" (Exod. xii. 36). Next, the commanding in-

fluence of Moses among the Egyptians is assigned as a leading inducement with them in the transaction (Exod. xi. 3). Moreover, the asking and giving occurred when the first-born were destroyed. The wailing and terrified Egyptians rose up in a body; and "they were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste, for they said, We be all dead men." Their cry might well be: "Go away quickly; take bracelets and rings and vessels of gold, take raiment, take what you will, take every thing, and go at once; we are all dead men; begone! begone!" They went forth not as borrowers abusing the confidence of their former masters, but as conquerors laden with the spoils of war. They took the jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment, and put them upon their daughters, and marched away in brilliant and festal procession.

The literature of this inquiry conveys several useful lessons. The erroneous translation of *shahal* appeared first in the Septuagint; thence it passed into the Latin version of Jerome, was adopted by the Vulgate, and crept into the English text. The Latin Fathers, and the theologians of the Middle Ages and of the Reformation, neglecting the Hebrew text, received without debate the mistranslation, and dealt with the terms "borrowing" and "lending" as best they could. Resort was had, by some of the most eminent of them, to the doctrine of Divine sovereignty. Augustine contended that the command of God ought to be obeyed, not canvassed, and that the gold and silver which had been used in idolatrous worship were, by command of God, applied to the building of the tabernacle. Calvin said that the judgment of God should not be weighed by ordinary rules, because the wealth of the world belongs to him, and may be distributed according to his good pleasure. Pfeiffer held that the Israelites borrowed the property with the intention of restoring it, and were directed by the Almighty to retain it. But the question is not whether the ultimate ownership of property is in the Almighty, with right of distribution, but whether we are taught that God commanded the Hebrews to secure its transfer to themselves by an act of fraudulent borrowing. Tertullian and Grotius found satisfaction in the rule of reprisals, arguing

that the Hebrews were justified in repaying themselves for their life-long and unrequited labors. But if a man is robbed, may he rob back? Justin thinks that they took away the treasures in exchange for the fixed property which they left behind them. But the record shows that it was a matter of asking and receiving, not of bargain and sale. Michaelis' explanation proceeds from the bad faith of the Egyptians. He suggests that the jewels were golden and silver bowls, and that the Hebrews borrowed them for the proposed festival in the wilderness; that they expected to return to Egypt, but the pursuit which Pharaoh set on foot in violation of his agreement released them from all obligations. To this the reply is, that in point of fact the Israelites did not intend to go back, nor did the Egyptians expect or desire them to return. Nor is the theory more tenable which assumes that the Hebrews became at the exodus an independent nation, that the Egyptians made a wicked war upon them, absolving them from their obligations as borrowers; for it is a kind of knavery for men to repudiate in war, debts which have been, in good faith, contracted in time of peace, and it is a kind of atheism to charge the Almighty with connivance at such practices.<sup>1</sup>

The practical lessons which may be drawn from this curious history of opinions are such as these: The difficulties in the word of God, which have for ages baffled the best interpreters, may at any time be solved by some simple circumstance which has been overlooked, and the solution will be complete; a blunder may lurk in the translation, and yet be conspicuously absent from the Hebrew and Greek texts which were immediately inspired of God; in dealing with outstanding problems, we should patiently wait for further light, meanwhile searching the Scriptures; and finally, in the presence of unsettled questions, it is far safer to confess our ignorance, than to resort to solutions which are frivolous and inconsistent with the principles of immutable and eternal morality and with the righteousness of God.

<sup>1</sup> Kurtz: *Old Cov.*, vol. ii. pp. 319-323.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## HOREB AND THE LAW.

THE Hebrews might have reached the promised land in forty days, going by way of the south shore of the Mediterranean Sea, thence to Gaza and Hebron, the distance being less than two hundred and fifty miles. Napoleon marched his army from Cairo to El Arish, about one hundred and fifty miles, in less than six days. This near route was closed to the Hebrews by the hostility of the Philistines who dwelt about Gaza. "God led them not through the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt" (Exod. xiii. 17). It was, moreover, the purpose of God to assemble the people at Horeb, that they might receive his law. From Horeb two routes were open to them. One of these lay by Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea, a journey ordinarily made in eleven days (Deut. 1. 2); this way was chosen by Moses, on his departure from Horeb. The other led to the head of the Gulf of Akabah, thence to the eastern border of the Dead Sea, to the plains of Moab, and to the fords of the Jordan. This route was finally taken by Moses. The procession which conveyed the remains of Jacob to Hebron, and, in due time, the hosts of Israel, passed this way. Although the journey of a few months might have brought them to their new home, yet, in punishment of their ignominious revolt at Kadesh, in the matter of the spies, the Lord turned back the congregation into the wilderness thirty-eight years; forty years in all after the exodus. Now, it is not difficult to ascertain the ends that were answered by this long wandering.

First, time was given for the old and wayward race to pass from life, and give place to a better generation. While the Hebrews were waiting to cross the Red Sea, they were so much frightened by Pharaoh's advance upon them as to cry out, "Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians." After the passage of the sea; at Marah, because the water was bitter; in the Wilderness of Sin, because the people were hungry; at Rephidim, because they were thirsty,—they taunted Moses, and tempted Jehovah with their murmurings. At Horeb they danced to the music of calf-worship. Beyond Horeb one of their camping-grounds took the name first of Burning, and then the Graves of Lust. The fire that burned among them, and the pestilence that filled the graves, were sent by Jehovah in punishment of their insolence. Finally, at Kadesh, their unbelief and cowardice made up a problem which admitted of only one solution. That was expressed by the Almighty: "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness . . . from twenty years old and upward" (Num. xiv. 29). Forty years afforded time for the execution of this sentence, and for the rearing of a resolute and godly race in the persons of the children. The younger men escaped the imbecility begotten in their fathers by servitude in Egypt, they were inured to hardship in the desert; they were trained to warlike habits by their conflicts with the Bedouins, who harassed their march,—a discipline which prepared them for the wars of the conquest. Moreover, they were alone with Jehovah. They saw his mighty works. He walked with them in the pillar of cloud, he fed them with manna, and gave them water out of the sweetened fountain and smitten rock. The discipline was effectual. Never in the history of the world has a change so radical been wrought upon a people in forty years: never did two successive generations contrast each other more thoroughly than the sons who crossed the Jordan, and the fathers who crossed the Red Sea. The fathers were, for the most part, in hopeless apostasy: the sons made up perhaps the purest of all the generations of Israel from Abraham to Christ (Josh. xxiv. 14-31; Jer. ii. 2, 3).

It entered, secondly, into the plan of Providence, to afford to the Israelites time and opportunity for education in the law given from Sinai. That was a comprehensive and compact code, both civil and ecclesiastical. Such are its supreme merits, that to the question, "Where did Moses get that law?" no sufficient answer has been returned which does not recognize the all-wise God as its Author, and Moses as its divinely inspired mediator and recorder. The ceremonial institutes are both complete and complicated. Complete they are, because they provide for the four parts of worship, the sanctuary, the priesthood, the ritual, and the calendar; prescribing, that is to say, the place, the officers, the forms, and the times of Divine worship. They are complicated. Many of those who read cursorily the ceremonial law find it wearisome, and not a few of those who profess to have investigated the system have failed to master its intricacies. But it was indispensable that the Hebrews should thoroughly understand the ritual before they came to the promised land. These ordinances were to be established in Canaan, and religiously observed. They were to express for fifteen hundred years the devout affections of the people, and were to lead up to Christ, of whom they were typical. It was needful, therefore, that the people be thoroughly educated into the law. The wilderness afforded the facilities for that education. The Hebrews were alone with Jehovah in the awful solitude of the desert. During thirty-eight years, being miraculously fed and clothed, they had little else to do than to study the law, and attend on the solemnities of public worship. The tabernacle was pitched in the centre of the encampment; the brazen altar and the laver stood in open sight. The tribes witnessed the order of the ceremonial, — the service of the priesthood, the shedding of blood, the unquenched fire on the altar, and the smoke of the victims ascending night and day. Moses and Aaron, through whom the law was given, were their teachers, able to expound the sacred mysteries; and Jehovah himself answered out of the cloud the prayer of Moses and the elders seeking further knowledge of his will. This grand school of instruction yielded two results. The people



were taught in holy things; and the conviction was wrought within them, that they were the chosen people of God, and that they should enter the chosen land. These impressions were renewed in them day by day, as they experienced the mercy of God. "He was their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them and carried them all the days of old" (Isa. lxiii. 8, 9).

Thirdly, the heathen were not overlooked in the providential design of the wandering. The Bedouin tribes, through the borders of which the Hebrews passed, saw the wonders in the desert. The daily miracle of the manna was wrought in their presence; and they beheld, near at hand or afar off, the pillar of cloud and of fire. The profound impression of the majesty of the true God, received by the heathen through the broad desert of Arabia, was foreshown in the song of Moses at the Red Sea: "The people shall hear and be afraid; sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestine. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them" (Exod. xv. 14-17). Jethro, when he saw the hosts from Egypt, said, "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods." Balaam also confessed that God had brought the Israelites out of Egypt. "He hath as it were the strength of the unicorn." The tidings from the wilderness went far in advance of the people into the land of Canaan. Rahab of Jericho said to the spies, "We have heard how Jehovah dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt. . . . And as soon as we heard these things our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you; for the Lord your God he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath" (Josh. ii. 10, 11). Joshua himself declared that the sea and the Jordan had been dried up "that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord that it is mighty" (Josh. iv. 24, v. 1). It is worthy of notice, that, although the Old-Testament Church sent no missions to the

heathen, the Church itself dwelt for a time in pagan Egypt and Moab and Babylon.

The spiritual discipline of the people, and their preservation through the wandering, were secured by certain mighty acts of God, which may be called the wonders in the wilderness. These began at the Red Sea. The place at which the sea was crossed has not been satisfactorily ascertained. The record shows that from Rameses, which was the starting-point, they went to Succoth, thence to Etham, thence they turned and encamped before Pi-hahiroth between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon. Not one of these localities has been satisfactorily identified; with the possible exception of Succoth, which is thought to be Pithom the recently discovered "treasure-city." The subject is still further embarrassed by our unavoidable ignorance respecting the changes which sand-storms and other disturbances have wrought in the shoals and shores of the sea, during the last thirty-five hundred years. It is believed, for example, by many Egyptologists, that the Gulf of Suez formerly extended far to the north of its present shore, embracing the shallows now known as the Bitter Lakes.

With these uncertain elements before them, the authorities have differed widely in regard to the place where the passage of the sea was effected. Brugsch found it at the Serbonian bog of antiquity, a miry lake lying along the Mediterranean between Egypt and Palestine, —

"that Serbonian bog  
Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old,  
Where armies whole have sunk." <sup>1</sup>

Reginald S. Pool and Hitsig judge that the evidence points to the Bitter Lakes, thirty miles or more north of the Gulf of Suez, as the scene of the wonder. Edward Robinson, Kurtz, Canon Cook, Geikie, and Kalisch, some of whom have visited the region, designate the shoals near the present head of the Gulf at Suez as the place which best meets the conditions of the problem. If the question could be settled by the weight

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost*, ii. 293.

of authority, we might be led to believe that the sea was opened at Ras Atakah, about six miles south of Suez. The names of nearly twenty reputable travellers and historians are quoted in support of this conclusion. Dr. James Strong, who has carefully investigated the subject upon the spot, is led by diligent inquiry to say, "Among the localities named, the choice really lies between Suez and Ras Atakah; and of these we decidedly prefer the latter."<sup>1</sup> Most of his readers will probably rest in that opinion pending the discoveries that may come to us in the near future. The Exploration Company of Egypt in the year 1883 discovered Pithom, one of "the treasure-cities" built by the Israelites, in a ruin a few miles only from the modern Ismailia. The company now propose to excavate the vast mounds at San, the Zoan of the Scriptures, and the Tanis of the Greeks, the birthplace peradventure of Moses, and without peradventure the place where God did "marvellous things" and "wonders," "in the sight of the fathers" (Ps. lxxviii. 12, 43). An expedition also from Marseilles "proposes to drag the Red Sea and the Bitter Lakes in hope of finding some remains of Pharaoh's army, particularly jewels and gems, which are supposed to be imperishable."<sup>2</sup> We shall be encouraged to await with patience the fruits of those labors, by bearing in mind that the important feature in the catastrophe is not the exact place where it occurred, but the supernatural agency by which it was brought about. The naturalists have endeavored to reduce the event to the ordinary competency of the wind and tide. They begin by assuming that it took place at the head of the Gulf near Suez. They take for granted that the sea at that point was as narrow then as it is now, and that the broad shoals were at that time, as now, left bare at the ebb tide. These have been forded, occasionally, by caravans: notably by Niebuhr in 1762, and in 1779 by Napoleon Bonaparte and his staff, where he made a narrow escape with his life. By assuming that the tide was out, that the shoals were bare, that the Hebrews took advantage of the "strong east wind"

<sup>1</sup> McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopaedia*, art. "Red Sea — Passage of."

<sup>2</sup> Dr. A. H. Kellogg in *Presby. Rev.*, October, 1883.

described by Moses, these critics profess to solve the problem without the help of any Divine interposition. They might as well cut the knot by assigning the Pentateuch and the destruction of Pharaoh to a place in legendary literature, side by side with the *Æneid* and the drowning of Palinurus.

The record shows that the wonders in the wilderness were in continuation of the wonders in Egypt. Several of the plagues were introduced and then removed by the rod of Moses; in the eighth plague, the Almighty brought the locusts upon Egypt by an east wind, and he drove them away by a mighty, strong west wind. In like manner, at the Red Sea the waters were first divided at the signal of the outstretched arm of Moses, and Jehovah caused the sea to go back by an east wind. Both in Egypt and in the wilderness, it pleased God to execute his purposes sometimes by a supernatural use of the laws of nature, even by a veritable miracle. The winds and the waves came and went at the Divine command; the sea stood up as a solid wall on the right and the left of the Hebrews; the pillar of cloud and fire gave light to the Israelites, and left the Egyptians in darkness; the people of God passed over on dry land, the Egyptians were drowned. It is impossible to torture the supernatural out of these facts. Moreover, the sacred writers treat the dividing of the sea as an unquestionable manifestation of omnipotence. Moses and the children of Israel, in their songs of triumph, use language which exceeds the bounds of even poetical license if it describes nothing other than an ebb-tide, an easterly wind, the retreat of the waters from the shoals, and then the return of the tide, the lulling of the winds, and the drowning of those who were caught beyond their depth (Exod. xv. 4-12). Joshua treats the parting of the Jordan and the sea as miracles of the same kind (Josh. iv. 23). David and Asaph and Isaiah speak of the event as one of the "terrible doings" of God; they celebrate the "strength by which he divided the sea," and made the waters to "stand up as a heap," "dividing the water before his people" (Ps. lxxiv. 13; lxxviii. 13; Isa. lxiii. 12). Either Moses exaggerates the facts, or both poet and prophet overdraw the picture.

The second wonder was a theophany. On the arrival of the Israelites at Ethom, on the edge of the desert, a pillar of cloud and of fire appeared in their encampment, and accompanied them through their journey to the land of promise (Exod. xiii. 21, 22; Neh. ix. 19). The phenomenon assumed the form of a lofty column hovering in mid-air, its base approaching, perhaps touching, the earth, the cloudy pillar not disturbed by the heat of the sun or by wind-storms, and resembling a distant conflagration, or the torch of a volcano, opaque by day, luminous by night. The cloud at its summit expanded like a canopy, protecting the Hebrews from the burning sun (Ps. cv. 39). The breadth of the canopy may be computed by the broad space, several miles square, which was occupied by the tribes and their flocks.

The pillar was the dwelling-place of Jehovah. "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire" (Exod. xiii. 21). It was a true theophany, and it followed the law of progress according to which the self-revelations of God proceeded; the smoking furnace in the vision of Abraham became a burning bush in Horeb, and now a flaming fire, traversing the wilderness with undimmed majesty for the period of forty years. God revealed his presence herein, says Sartorius, "not by causing the light of his countenance, which is unapproachable, to burst forth unveiled, but by his weaving out of the natural element a holy, transparent veil, which, like the fiery cloud, both shines and throws a shade, veils and unveils; so that it is equally true that God dwells in light, and that he dwells in darkness (2 Chron. vi. 1; 1 Tim. vi. 16), as true that he can be found, as that he must be always sought."<sup>1</sup>

While the leading design of the pillar was to reveal Jehovah to the senses of the people, by an open and perpetual vision of his majesty, it served other important purposes. (1) It has been already intimated that the cloud shielded the people from the fierce rays of the sun. (2) The motion of the cloud gave direction to their journey. The desert was like the wild

<sup>1</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, on Pent. ii. 42, notes.

prairies of Western America, like the surface of the sea: paths and highways there were none. The Greek and Persian armies used smoke and fire as signals of their marches. Alexander guided his army by torches lifted high in the advance, indicating the route in the day by the smoke, and at night by the flame. Even so "Jehovah went before Israel in a pillar of cloud, to lead them by the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night." (3) The people in the distant wings of the camp, or in the rear, or going aside to find pastures for their flocks, needed a signal showing the location of the tabernacle: this signal they had in the cloud visible from afar. (4) The movements of the wandering Israelites were controlled by the same phenomenon. In the place where the cloud stood still, they pitched their tents; so long as the cloud abode in any place, there they rested; and when it was taken up, whether by night or by day, they struck their tents and fell into the line of march. (5) The holy oracle was established within its folds. "He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar" (Ps. xcix. 7). At the giving of the law the vision arose and stood on the summit of Horeb, and Jehovah gave his law to Moses in the midst of the cloud. When the tabernacle was set up for the first time on the adjacent plain, the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and Jehovah talked with Moses (xxxiii. 9-11). He appeared in the cloud to bestow on the seventy elders the spirit of Moses; and as the day drew near on which Moses was to die, the Lord spake with Joshua and Moses from the midst of the cloud (Num. xi. 25; Deut. xxxi. 15). (6) That nothing might be wanting to the majesty of the Shechinah, the Almighty made it his throne of judgment. From its bosom the Divine wrath flashed forth upon the Egyptians in the midst of the Red Sea. When Miriam, and, at her instigation, Aaron, became seditious, the Lord called them into the bosom of the cloud, and rebuked them; "and behold Miriam became leprous, white as snow." Fire went out from the Lord, and devoured Nadab and Abihu, who had put "strange fire" into their censers; and in the rebellion of Korah and his company, fire came out again and

consumed two hundred of the conspirators. Forty years long this "glory" stood in the sight of Israel; at once a revelation and presence-chamber of Jehovah; a guide and an advanced guard, a canopy by day, and a torch by night; a holy oracle, and a judgment-seat. When the Hebrews reached the borders of Canaan, it was taken up, and in the after ages it was rarely seen. At the dedication of Solomon's Temple, "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. v. 14). Ezekiel also, in vision, saw the "brightness of the Lord's glory filling the temple" (Ezek. x. 4); and thence going up and standing upon the mountain east of the city (xi. 23). The same theophany was a conspicuous factor in the miracle at the Red Sea. The historian tells us how the Hebrews were led by Divine guidance to the sea; how they were shut in between the deep waters and the entanglements of the wilderness; how bitterly they reproached Moses for bringing them to die into the wilderness, as if there were no graves in Egypt; how calmly Moses urged them to stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah; how they went through the sea on dry land; how the pillar of cloud took its position between them and their pursuers, giving light to the former and benighting the latter; and how "the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore."

Among the wonders in the wilderness, not the least conspicuous are those by which the daily wants of the Israelites were supplied. The extent to which these supplies were derived from natural sources should be recognized. First of all, the people took with them from Egypt great flocks and herds (Num. xi. 22); and there is reason to believe that through the whole period of the wandering the people were largely furnished by their sheep and goats with milk and flesh for food, and hair, wool, and leather for clothing. Next, the natural resources of the wilderness are to be taken into account. At the beginning of their journey, the Hebrews encamped many days at the waters and palm-trees of Elin. During their stay

near Sinai it is right to imagine that Moses did not fail to use for the advantage of his people the acquaintance which he had formed, when in Jethro's service, with the pastures and water-springs and wells of Horeb. Towards the close of the wandering the Israelites purchased food and water from their remote kinsmen, the sons of Esau (Deut. ii. 6, 7). It should also be said that the fertility, wealth, and population of the peninsula were in ancient times far greater than they now are. According to Ritter, the "traces of a more thorough cultivation of the soil reveal themselves in the period of the ancient Egyptians by their mining operations and settlements, and in the Christian period by episcopal foundations, and the remains which are scattered everywhere of cloisters, hermitages, gardens, fields, and wells." A comparison between the population of the region in ancient and in modern times leads to the same conclusion. At the period of the wandering, the Amalekites alone were sufficiently numerous to make open war on Israel; and five hundred years later, Saul thought it necessary to despatch an army of two hundred and ten thousand in order to subdue this single tribe. But at present not more than six thousand Bedouins with their flocks are supported by the reluctant soil of the entire peninsula. Still more remarkable are the forces which have turned the once-luxuriant region of Petra into a desert waste, and have left without inhabitant a city sufficiently populous in its best days to muster an army eight thousand strong, and to support a theatre accommodating three thousand spectators. The causes which have laid waste the peninsula are well known. The winds have covered the soil with sand; floods have denuded the hills; fires have consumed the shrubs and the trees; the idleness and the recklessness of the barbarians have destroyed what has been spared by the wind, flood, and fire. And yet, after every allowance has been made for the progressive desolation of Arabia through the period of thirty-five centuries, it must be said that the peninsula, at the exodus, was well described as "a waste, howling wilderness, a land of deserts and pits, a land of drought and the shadow of death;" "that great and terrible wilderness wherein there were scor-



pions and drought, where there were no waters ;” “a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt” (Deut. viii. 15, xxxii. 10 ; Jer. ii. 6).

EXOD. xvi. — About thirty days after the exodus, the supply of food which the Israelites had brought from Egypt was exhausted. Moreover, the people were encamped in the Wilderness of Sin, a desert region between Elim and Sinai. The hungry people murmured against Jehovah and against Moses and Aaron. They whined out the childish regret that they had not died among the flesh-pots of Egypt, rather than be left to starve in the wilderness. Jehovah met the discontent by a flash of his glory from the pillar of cloud, and by a promise of immediate relief to the people. The relief came at once, and was purely supernatural. A double wonder was wrought. Before nightfall, a vast flight of quails fell into the camp, covering the ground. On the following morning, manna from heaven lay with the dew around about the host. The supernatural element in the flight of the quails was conspicuous in the announcement of their coming, in their appearance at the appointed time and place, and in their numbers, sufficient to satisfy the appetites of the half-starved millions of the Israelites. The miraculous character of the manna is indisputable. It fell at the camp of Israel, and not elsewhere in the wilderness. It followed them forty years, and ceased only when the journey was finished (Josh. v. 12). It had not been seen before, and has not been since seen ; that which remained ungathered was dissolved by the heat of the sun ; if kept beyond one day, it became corrupt ; a double quantity fell on the sixth day, none fell on the seventh. The manna which was gathered on the sixth remained sweet through the seventh day, and a portion laid up in the ark of the covenant was preserved unchanged for ages.

The critics who reject the Church doctrine of plenary inspiration and of the supernatural have found in this part of the narrative their toil and sore travail. Here are two millions of people, of whom fourteen hundred thousand are old men, women, and children, with thousands of cattle ; they strike out boldly into the interior of Arabia ; they wander there forty

years. These facts are to be accounted for; and rationalism gains nothing by denying the miracle of the manna, while it leaves the journey unexplained. Some of the German critics have put a bold face on the matter, and denied that the Hebrews crossed the desert. But whence came the indelible traces of the wandering which appear upon the Hebrew tradition and literature? Even Ewald holds that the truth of the journey must be admitted, or the truth of the subsequent history must be denied. Hitzig meets the difficulty by reducing the forty years to four, and Von Bohlen amends Hitzig's proposition by striking out four and inserting two years. But how were the helpless millions sustained even two years in the desert? Colenso endeavors to solve that problem by reducing the number of the Israelites first to fifty-seven thousand, then to sixteen thousand, then to eight thousand. Laborde brings the six hundred thousand armed men down to six hundred. But how was it possible for six hundred or ten thousand slaves to escape from Egypt, traverse the wilderness, and achieve the conquest of Canaan? If this inquiry be determined by the record, the element of the supernatural is most conspicuous. If it be determined by the nature of the case, it is certain that the journey could not have been made if the Almighty had not fed them by bread from heaven.

The scarcity of water was not so urgent as the scarcity of food. Springs were found in the course of the journey, and wells were occasionally dugged (Num. xxi. 18). In two instances water was miraculously supplied by the smitten rock; once at Horeb, and once at Meribah. Although the miracle of the water was not so constant as the wonder of the manna, yet the memory of the smitten rocks found expression in the psalmody of David and Isaiah (Ps. cv. 41; Isa. xlvi. 21).

On several occasions, moreover, God inflicted chastisements on the people after methods strictly supernatural. At Taberah, the fire of the Lord burned among them; at the Graves of Lust, the plague raged in the camp; at Hazeroth, Miriam was smitten with leprosy. The earth opened and swallowed up Korah and his company; fire from the Lord consumed two hundred

and fifty of their fellow-conspirators; and a plague destroyed several thousand of the less violent mutineers. In the fortieth year of the wandering, the Lord scourged them with fiery serpents; and finally, on the plains of Moab, twenty-three thousand perished in punishment for whoredom and idolatry. These were not ordinary visitations of God. The property of the supernatural appeared either in the punishment, as in the fire that came out from the Lord and consumed the guilty; or in the relief afforded, as when the plague was stayed by the burning censer of Aaron; or in both the nature of the calamity and the remedy provided, as in the fiery serpent and the brazen serpent. Although none of these mighty works were wrought before the giving of the law, yet they are not out of place in this summary, inasmuch as an account of the wonders in the wilderness would be incomplete without them. They were, like the pillar of cloud and the manna, manifestations to the senses of the being and authority of Jehovah, and instruments in the spiritual discipline of the Israelites.

On an examination of these wonders, it will be seen, first, that they were adapted to the exigencies of the chosen seed. The miracle at the Red Sea delivered them from the vengeance of Pharaoh; the cloudy pillar led them safely along the blind pathways of the desert; manna from heaven gave them bread to eat, and the smitten rock water to drink; and the frowns of the Almighty rebuked their iniquities. These wonders, like the miracles of Elijah and of Christ, were none of them intended for mere effect; but every one was answerable to some grave emergency in the history of the chosen seed. Moreover, several of these wonders were continuous. The other miracles of the Old Testament, and the mighty works of Christ, were begun and finished at once. But the manna fell six days out of seven, and the pillar of cloud and fire hovered over the camp through forty years continuously. Next, these signs of God's presence bound the people together, and held them to their journey. Finally, the wonders of mercy and of judgment prepared the Hebrews for their calling. They brought home to the people the lesson of the being and

supremacy of Jehovah, teaching them that he was a God nigh at hand, and not afar off; that the faith and worship received from the patriarchs were the only true religion and lawful worship; that the Hebrews constituted the sole Church of God on earth, and that they were called to be both the heirs and channels of salvation. Moses summed up the whole case in words which are worthy of perpetual remembrance (Deut. viii. 2-5).

EXOD. xvii. — From the Wilderness of Sin they marched to Rephidim, near Horeb. Here, although the manna continued to fall, the water failed; and the people, ever filled with the spirit of discontent, began to complain. Their impious murmurings were silenced by the stream that flowed from the smitten rock of Horeb. Near by, the rapacious tribe of Amalek fell upon the exhausted rear of Israel, and “smote the feeble, the faint, and the weary” (Deut. xxv. 18). Under the direction of Moses, Joshua, whose name now appears for the first time in the history, put himself at the head of a body of picked men, to drive back the barbarians. Moses took position on a hill in sight of the field of battle, and gave himself to prayer. While Aaron and Hur supported his uplifted hands, Joshua gave fight to the enemy, and “discomfited them with the edge of the sword.”

EXOD. xviii. — Horeb was not far from the tents of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. Hearing of the arrival of his son-in-law at Horeb, with the hosts of the Lord, Jethro came to the camp, bringing with him Zipporah and her two sons. Moses received them with every demonstration of joy. He related the story of the exodus, the wonders by which it was accomplished, and explained the purpose of the journey. It was a surprise and a revelation to Jethro. Praises to Jehovah burst forth from his lips. “Blessed be Jehovah.” “Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods.” Being a priest of the true God, and, like Melchizedek, a representative in the heathen world of the primitive faith, he offered burnt-offerings to the God of Israel, and brought Moses and Aaron and all the elders together to a sacrificial feast upon the flesh of the victims that

remained unconsumed at the altar. Jethro soon perceived that the strength of his son-in-law, now eighty years old, was giving way under the weight of his cares and labors, and that the people would be likely to suffer from the unavoidable delay of his counsels. He advised Moses to appoint a body of intelligent men from the various tribes, whose duty it should be to determine all questions of minor importance that might arise from day to day, reserving the more difficult cases to be laid by Moses before the Lord. Moses adopted the suggestion. The people by free vote elected, and Moses commissioned, the new judges (Deut. i. 9-18). The sagacious sheik having, unconsciously to himself, planted the germ of a permanent ordinance in the civil institutes of Israel, departed to his home.

NUM. x. 29-32. — Moses requested Hobab, his brother-in-law, to go with him to the land of Canaan. He supported the invitation by the assurance that Hobab should share in all the promises made to Israel. "Come with us, and we will do thee good." Hobab at first declined to go, declaring that he must return to Midian. Moses would not be denied, saying that he needed one to traverse the wilderness with him who "might be eyes" to the wanderers. Indeed, Hobab was necessary to them, on account of his personal acquaintance with the mountains and valleys and pastures and water-springs of the wilderness. The pillar of cloud determined the general route to be taken, the time and place of encampment, and the periods of rest; but its movements did not afford the minute information which a native of the wilderness, like Hobab, could supply. He finally yielded to the solicitations of Moses, and identified himself with Israel. He chose the good part for his sons, even if he himself did not share in the inheritance of the chosen seed (Judg. i. 16, iv. 11).

An easy journey from Rephidim brought Israel to Horeb, and they "camped before the mount." An exposition of the law given at Sinai does not fall within the scope of these pages. But the course of thought already touched upon would be incomplete in the absence of a distinct recognition of the incomparable dignity of the law given from Sinai, and the rela-

tion which it sustains to what went before it in the history of redemption. Signs of this dignity appear first in the consummate grandeur of the theophany through which the law was delivered. Next, the record in which it is embodied is the central mass of the Hebrew scriptures. All that goes before is simply introductory to the legislation at Sinai, and all that follows describes its administration. And, further, the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Scriptures take their name from the covenant wherein the law was given by Jehovah and accepted by Israel (Exod. xxiv. 7). We call the volume the Old Covenant, or the Old Testament, a designation which rests on the authority of inspiration (Heb. ix. 15).

There was a vital connection between the law given from Sinai, and the preceding revelations. First of all, the Mosaic law was reduced to the form of a covenant between God and Israel. A sacrifice of burnt-offering and of peace-offering was made; the law was read in the audience of the people; they promised to obey it; and the whole was ratified by blood sprinkled on the altar, on the people, and on the book of the law (Exod. xxiv.; Heb. ix. 19, 20). This is called the Sinai covenant. The idea of a covenant was not new to the Hebrews. Nothing was more familiar than the covenant concluded with Noah, and its sign, the bow in the clouds; and the covenant concluded with Abraham, and its sign in their flesh. They accepted the Sinai covenant, not as some new thing, but as one in a series of covenants which began with Abraham,—itself a manifestation of the covenant of grace.

In like manner the germs of the ceremonial institutes were planted in the religious worship of the chosen seed many centuries before the law was given at Sinai. These institutes relate specifically to sacred places, or the sanctuary; to sacred persons, or the priesthood; to sacred rites, or the ritual; to sacred times, or the calendar. In the altars built here and there between the gates of Eden and the wells of Beersheba, described by Moses, we have the genesis of the holy place and of the future tabernacle and temple. The minister at the altar is the basis of the priesthood; Moses teaches that the sacerdotal

offices had been rightly performed by Abel, Noah, and the three patriarchs. He shows also how the prophecy of Jacob in regard to Levi, and the consecration of the first-born of Israel at the tenth plague, prepared the way for the establishment at Sinai of the Levitical order. The basis of the ritual is the burnt-offering, giving rise to the *Olah* or whole burnt-offering; and the burnt-offering originated with Noah. The law of clean and unclean revealed to Noah; tithes for pious uses paid by Abraham to Melchizedek; the redemption of the first-born of men, and the consecration of the first-born of cattle, in the midst of the tenth plague, were made parts of the law of sacrifices. God's covenant with Abraham appointed the sacrament of circumcision, and the exodus supplied the sacrament of the passover to the coming ritual. Finally, the sabbath is the basis of the calendar, and the ordinance of the sabbath was as ancient as the creation. The ceremonial law was, to a certain degree, a systematic arrangement of ancient Divine ordinances. Similar observations apply to the law of segregation, first enforced on Abraham; to the ordinance of marriage, which was instituted in the Garden of Eden; to the right of man to the soil and to the service of the lower animals, secured by ordinances given to Adam and Noah; and to the protection of human life, made sure in the covenant with Noah. The Hebrews, who were familiar with the past, were not taken by surprise when they found these sacred usages in their Divine law. That law was in some good sense, in its fundamental principles, a summary of past revelations; and it is an illustration of the fore-ordaining providence of Him who sees the end from the beginning, and who works from afar toward the consummation of his plans.

Another example of the kind is the position assigned at Sinai to the elders of the people. In his first interview with Jehovah in the mount, Moses was directed to communicate a preliminary message to the people. He obeyed this direction by repeating the words to the "elders of the children of Israel" as their acknowledged representatives (Exod. iv. 29). By the legislation of Sinai the elders were joined with Aaron in receiving the

law (Lev. ix. 1) ; with Moses in delivering it (Deut. xxvii. 1) ; and with Aaron and his sons in the ceremony of imputing, by the imposition of hands, the sins of the whole people to the victim at the altar (Lev. iv. 15). At this time, also, the great council of the seventy elders, the original of the sanhedrim, was organized (Exod. xxiv. 1). The Hebrews of the exodus were familiar with the persons and the official position of the elders. At the bush God had said to Moses, "Go and gather the elders of Israel together" (Exod. iii. 16) ; "and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt" (ver. 18). In Exod. iv. 30, 31, we read that Moses and Aaron did the signs "in the sight of the people ;" but in verse 29 it is said that they gathered together for the purpose "all the elders of the children of Israel," showing that the elders were authorized to represent the people. When the first Passover was about to be kept, Moses gave the necessary orders "to all the elders of Israel" (Exod. xii. 21). He smote the rock, also, in the sight of "the elders of Israel" (xvii. 5). The later scriptures show that the government of elders continued down to the days of Christ, thence down to the dispersion of the Jews. It is perpetuated to this day, and yet it owed its origin to a period anterior to the giving of the law.

Another step towards the interior of the subject leads to the conclusion, that, although the ruling eldership was competent to the ecclesiastical government of the chosen seed, a settled form of civil government was a necessity of their position. Six hundred thousand Hebrews, transported to a distant region and permanently settled there, must have perished like sheep scattered abroad, in the absence of a civil magistracy, and a body of laws regulating their social, municipal, and international relations.

Now, the establishment among the chosen seed, of a civil government, was presupposed by the covenants with Abraham and Noah. The land of Canaan was given to them as their permanent home. The metes and bounds of the inheritance were settled, and made matter of record (Gen. xv. 18-20). The people were to become a great nation ; their numbers were



to equal the stars and the sands; and God would bless their friends, and curse their enemies. Here the way is opened for an inquiry into the characteristics of the new Hebrew commonwealth. It was not a pure civil commonwealth like the United States of America, nor distinctively a spiritual society like the Presbyterian Church in this country, nor a union of State and Church like Russia or Spain; it was the product of a fusion of the spiritual and temporal, and therefore rightly called a theocracy. The very beginnings of the Hebrew community show that it was intended to be first a Church, then a State. It took its origin with Abraham and in the covenant which God gave to him, that covenant being a manifestation of the covenant of grace. The organization took, of necessity, a spiritual character from the spiritual ordinances by virtue of which it was formed, just as a state or a city takes its municipal character from its constitution or charter. Next, the seal which made a part of its organic law was circumcision; and circumcision was a symbol of inward purification, "a seal of the righteousness of faith," and a true sacrament. It was a sign instinct with spiritual ideas. Hardly any thing could be more incongruous, not to say grotesque, as the seal, or coat-of-arms, of a pure civil commonwealth, than such a mark in the flesh of its people. Moreover, the covenant was given in imposing theophanies, and ratified by bloody offerings, — elements which enter into an organic law wherein religious ideas are the controlling forces. The society of the circumcision, in which these conditions met, bore the distinctive marks of a community of Jehovah, a true theocracy. The word "theocracy" (*Θεός κρατεῖν*) defines itself, after the manner of its cognates; monarchy being the supreme rule of one man, aristocracy the rule of a privileged few, democracy the rule of the people at large. The theocracy of the Old Testament may be described as the fusion of the civil and ecclesiastical government in one undivided society, that society being taken by Jehovah under his own immediate and supreme control. He was something more and other than the providential Governor of the Hebrews in the manner and forms in which he is the sovereign Ruler of

all other nations; he reserved to himself the whole power of administration, both civil and religious. There was in Israel no legislative body with power to frame or amend or to repeal the laws of the land. The Hebrew magistracy was not clothed with the complete and unrestrained power to judge and to execute judgment which is in modern times committed to civil tribunals. Isaiah covers the whole ground with admirable precision: "For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king; he will save us" (Isa. xxxiii. 22).

The Hebrew polity was impenetrated and shaped by this ruling idea. By virtue thereof, for example, the distinction was obliterated between sin as an offence against God, and crime as an offence against the state. God was himself the state. Murder was not only a vulgar crime, but a sacrilege, a blow aimed at the image of God in man. Idolatry was high treason, *leze-majesty* against God the reigning King. Sabbath-breaking was in defiance of the Creator, who had reserved that day to himself. Blasphemy was contempt expressed for his adorable name. Witchcraft, and intercourse with evil spirits, were alliances with his enemies. Further, the magistracy was, in the early period of the theocracy, in the hands of the elders of the people and the priesthood. In later times, the judges were no more than temporary regents or dictators, appointed to repel the invasions of the heathen; and the kings were viceroys only, reigning in the name of the only sovereign King, Jehovah. Still further, the sacrifices were both national and religious ordinances. The Passover was a solemn sacrament; the great day of Atonement was a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer; the Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles were not "sunshine holidays," but holy days, in which Israel as a nation and a church paid homage to their divine Sovereign. There was no civil polity or religious polity, the one independent of the other or separable from it; both were fused down into one indivisible polity. Loyalty apart from religion was unknown to the Jews; the two were one virtue. Piety and patriotism were convertible terms, the good citizen was a devout worshipper. The commonwealth was the Church in the

form of a nation, and the nation was the environment and fortress of the Church.

The fusion of the civil and religious government in the theocracy casts light on many of the leading peculiarities which are found in the sacred records. The functions of the prophets are here explained. They were not only inspired teachers and seers looking far into the future, but messengers sent from God to the rulers and kings, bearing explicit orders as to the administration of public affairs. The reason is shown, also, why the civil and religious codes are contained in the same volume, and why their provisions are not classified, but mingled together in the sacred pages. In this fusion an explanation is also supplied of the fact that temporal punishments were inflicted on those who were guilty of what are commonly called ecclesiastical offences, such as idolatry and sabbath-breaking. Every sin was a crime against God, who was the state. And, still further, to the question, Wherefore does Moses say so little of the rewards of piety and obedience in the world to come? one answer, though not the leading answer, is, that laws of crimes and punishments rarely hold out the rewards of good behavior. The Church, which was the first care of Jehovah, became a nation, in order that, through the forces and institutes of a nation, he might fulfil his purposes in the founding of the Church. These institutes gave support to the moral and ceremonial systems, preserved the sacred oracles, suppressed idolatry with a strong arm, held at bay the enemies of God and his Church, and led the people up to Christ through the teaching and discipline of their schoolmaster, the law. The civil was in service to the spiritual. From first to last it was held in the subordinate relation of the servant to his master. Its office was to stand and wait. The commonwealth as a nation was worth nothing except as an environment to Israel considered as the Church of God.

Some of the historical lessons suggested by the course of thought may be expressed in a few words. For example, the legislation of Sinai in its inception follows the rule of progressive development which is one of the characteristics of sacred

history. The Mosaic law was more a growth than a special creation. Its germs were planted in the days of Adam and Abel and Noah and Abraham and Joseph. One by one the ruling ideas of ecclesiastical and civil law were revealed to the early patriarchs, were unfolded and worked out, and, in their mature form, were properly adjusted and incorporated in the law. Moreover, the people were prepared all the better to receive the law, because they were familiar with its most important provisions. So far as they recognized in it the usages, both religious and civil, to which they and their fathers had been addicted, they were ready to receive the ordinances with the hospitality which all people accord to their own cherished traditions.

The inherent dignity of the law shines forth from the ordinances which, enforced by Divine authority, reduced a turbulent mass of manumitted slaves into an orderly church, state, and body politic; which gave to the new politico-ecclesiastical society, a written directory of worship and a written civil code; which erected a theocracy, — a form of government never before, never since, successfully established; which gave to mankind, in the Ten Commandments, an infallible rule of immutable and eternal morality; which, through these commands, brought to mankind a knowledge of sin, and, through the ritual, a knowledge of salvation, by virtue of an atonement from the guilt of sin, and of purification from the pollution of sin. The system, considered simply as an exposition of the fundamental principles of ecclesiastical and civil jurisprudence, takes the first place among all other contributions to the science of government, — a place, also, to which there is no second.

We have here, still further, a persuasive argument for the historical unity of the Pentateuch. The Book of Genesis and the first half of the Book of Exodus contain, among other things, a constitutional history of the Hebrew Church and commonwealth. The lawgiver is the historian. He begins by explaining the origin of Divine ordinances which were published, one by one, to the fathers, beginning with Adam, and by describing the influence which they exerted upon the early

career of the chosen seed. Then he shows how these ordinances were made part and parcel of a permanent code of laws. The record contains, therefore, the scattered elements of a complete legislation, together with the legislation itself in its final form. As such, it furnishes sufficient internal evidence of the historical unity of the record. In one of the prayers used by the early Christians at the Lord's Supper, they recognized a symbol of the unity of the Church in "the broken bread scattered over the hills, and, being gathered, becoming one." Even so the thoughts of God were revealed one by one to successive generations, and then recapitulated at Sinai. And to crown all, the law was committed to record, marking thereby a new era in the science of government, — the era of the *first written constitution*; the idea, and the earliest example of that instrument, being products of Divine inspiration.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## SINS OF THE PATRIARCHS.

ONE of the well-known problems of sacred history brings into notice the sins of holy persons. The problem embraces three conditions. The first recognizes the heinous nature of these delinquencies. Noah, the preacher of righteousness, was found uncovered and intoxicated in his tent. Righteous Lot is chargeable with the sins of Sodom itself, — drunkenness and incest. Abraham, the friend of God and the father of the faithful, was twice convicted of falsehood in the presence of heathen princes. Isaac, in whom the chosen seed was called, repeated that offence. Jacob, with the connivance of Rebekah his mother, practised a preconcerted fraud on his blind old father, and upheld the fraud by deception and falsehood. Such are the painful facts. Secondly, no animadversion is distinctly passed upon this misconduct. The historian describes in a few words the delinquencies of Noah, Lot, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but he does not in terms condemn the conduct of either as derogatory to them, or to their position under the covenants, or as offensive to God. Moreover, — this is the third condition of the problem, — the offenders were undoubtedly the objects of God's special favor and grace. God held frequent intercourse with Noah, saved him and his family from the Deluge, entered into covenant with him as the second father of the race, and even after his scandalous fall God bestowed on him the gift of prophecy. Abraham was chosen to be the founder of the Church, the recipient and channel of boundless blessings. Yet after he had beheld the Son of God in two theophanies, he equivocated to Pharaoh; repeating that grave offence after God had granted to him

other theophanies, and had entered into covenant with him, the patriarch misled Abimelech in regard to his marriage with Sarah, bringing into peril her chastity within a year before the birth of Isaac. But in spite of all that, God gave Isaac to him, and confirmed his promises by an oath, saying, "Blessing I will bless thee, and in thy seed shall all nations be blessed." Isaac's denial to Abimelech of his relation to Rebekah as her husband was followed by the theophany at Beersheba; the Lord said, "Fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake" (Gen. xxvi. 24). The deception which Jacob practised on his helpless old father was followed by the magnificent vision of the ascending and descending angels, the Almighty granting to the deceiver all the blessings bestowed on Abraham, with the special promise, "I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again to this land; for I will not leave thee" (Gen. xxviii. 15).

The sceptical critics have made diligent use of these circumstances. Noah and Lot were, they are quite sure, no better than the people who were drowned and burned up. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were quite as unworthy as Pharaoh, Abimelech, and Laban. "Who," demands Less, "would not rather be Esau than Jacob?" De Wette exclaims, "The Greeks have their crafty Ulysses, but how much nobler and more exalted is he than Jacob!" Inferences unfavorable to the character of the God of the Old Testament are drawn from the representations of his having held special communion, and having entered into solemn covenant, with these men, conveying to them consummate favors. One of the critics says, "I take it to be a manifest contradiction, that God could have communion with such impure souls, and that he could choose such an impure, wicked race in preference to others, for his peculiar people." Another remarks: "With the idea of God as a holy Being, the distinction conferred on Jacob ill accords with him whom the Scripture charges with so many immoral actions." Nor does this school of unbelief fail to impugn the inspiration of the sacred writer, on the ground that he relates the facts simply, without animadversion. We

are told that his failure to censure the patriarchs according to their demerits indicates in him either an indifference to their bad conduct, or an approval of their delinquencies. Tuch ventures to say that "the cunning and calculating character of Jacob, which might appear objectionable to a stricter moralist, is represented as wholly blameless."

The problem was not satisfactorily solved by the rabbins or by the early Christian Fathers. Noah, for example, say the Jewish doctors, was unacquainted with the strength of the wine; or he was old, and unable to bear it. Lienthal, a modern writer, with the best intentions no doubt, asks the question, "Is it not possible that just when the earth had been manured by the rich soil of the Deluge, and by so many dead bodies [*sic*], such generous wine might be produced that a quantity which Noah would at any other time have taken with impunity, now intoxicated him?" Lot is excused for his double immorality on the ground that he was led astray by his daughters. Abraham and Isaac attempted to pass off their wives as their sisters; and the apology offered for them is, that, according to the usage of the Hebrew tongue, Sarah and Rebekah were, respectively, their sisters. But the suggestion overlooks the circumstance that the two husbands intended to create the impression that these women were not their wives. Even Augustine allows himself to resort to this sophism. He expresses the opinion, also, that Jacob's personation of Esau was justified by his purchase of the birthright. Origen, Chrysostom, and Jerome excuse Jacob by the plea that his fraud proceeded from an intent not to do evil, but to secure the greatest good. Lot's daughters, it is urged by way of apology for their unnatural crime, fancied that there was not another man left on earth besides their father, and they sought to become the ancestors of Christ.

It was reserved for John Calvin, in his commentary on Gen. xx. 12, to point out the principles which should govern the question. The labors of Hengstenberg, Havernich, and Kurtz, and of our own illustrious Joseph Addison Alexander have cast so much light upon the subject that little remains to



be done, beyond a restatement of the case.<sup>1</sup> And the ground will be covered by satisfactory replies to three inquiries: Why were these immoralities recorded by Moses? Why are they mentioned without direct animadversion? Why were tokens of the Divine favor bestowed on the sinning patriarchs?

I. To the first inquiry an obvious answer might be, that Moses recorded these allegations because they are true. He might have suppressed them altogether; if suppressed, they would not have come to the knowledge of mankind; and the record of the sins of God's people shows that the Bible is the most honest book in the world. These, no doubt, are important considerations. And yet it may be doubted whether these were among the primary designs of this record, because Moses is not in the habit of going out of his way for the purpose merely of establishing his reputation as a candid historian. A better reply is that the facts were necessary to the plan of the narrative. The mention of Noah's sin explains the impiety of Ham and the reverential grief of Shem, and Japheth; that, again, explains the prophecy of Noah respecting the three great stocks of the race descending from the three brothers; and this prophecy, in its turn, contains the second Messianic promise, which is one of the luminous points in the history. The Moabites and Ammonites were the descendants of Lot and his daughters. Their relations to the Israelites, both geographical and historical, were so intimate that their origin and the consanguinity of the two peoples were essential parts of the history of the chosen seed. As instances of the fulfilment of God's engagement with Abraham to bless them that blessed him and curse those that cursed him, the author describes the interviews of the patriarch with Pharaoh and Abimelech, which, in their turn, could be explained only by the mention of his prevarications. In order to an intelligible account of the lapse of the birthright from Esau to Jacob, the writer was obliged to set forth the profaneness of Esau, and the fraud of Jacob. Joseph's transfer to Egypt was rooted in the envy of his

<sup>1</sup> Hengstenberg: *Auth. Pent.*, vol. ii. p. 432 seq. Havernich: *Introd. to Pent.* p. 187. Kurtz: *Old Cov.*, i. p. 211 seq. *Princeton Review*, 1855.

brothers; and the historical position among the twelve tribes held by Levi, Simeon, and Reuben, could not have been understood in the absence of a record of the cruelty or vices of their patriarchal ancestors. Moses did not turn to the right to escape the mention of these immoralities, nor to the left to lug them into his narrative. Every incident introduced bears a definite relation to the history; nothing essential is suppressed, nothing irrelevant is admitted.

As a further answer to the first inquiry, it may be said that the mention of the sins of holy persons answered several spiritual purposes. The Pentateuch was written primarily for the Hebrews of the time of Moses, and of the after-ages. They were arrogant, boastful of their own piety, and of the virtues of their ancestors, and especially of the three patriarchs. Our Saviour's parable of the Pharisee and publican draws a picture, wonderfully life-like, of their self-conceit and vainglory. No corrective to these evil thoughts more humiliating could be devised than the statements of Moses, convicting Noah of intoxication; Lot of intoxication and incest; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of falsehood and deception; the incest of Reuben in his father's bed; the incest of Judah in his son's bed; the treachery and cruelty of Simeon and Levi at Shechem; and the sale of Joseph by his brothers. Eighteen hundred years later Stephen recalled the bargain and sale in these stinging words: "Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs; and the patriarchs, moved with jealousy, sold Joseph into Egypt." A second lesson brought home to the people by these painful reminiscences is the delusiveness of justification by works. The Jews established themselves in that heresy by resting, not in saving faith, but in the merits of their ancestors. "We have Abraham to our father," was the ground of their title to the favor of God. Paul met the argument by showing, from Moses, that even Abraham was justified not by works, but by faith. The transgressions of that patriarch, and of the other holy persons, warned the Jews continually that they all, patriarchs and posterity, were concluded under sin, and that justification could come by faith only. And, thirdly, these delinquencies taught

the Jews that their fathers and themselves, the children, became the chosen seed by the sovereign act of God. Why did God bestow upon them his supreme blessings? The Jews said that their fathers were holy men, and deserved them all. But Moses opened another lesson altogether; proving by the immoralities of their ancestors, from Noah to Moses, that the ground of their selection, and of the silent rejection of the whole human race around them, was not in the men chosen, but in God who chose them; so that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand not of works, but of Him that calleth.

II. It is also alleged, and not to be denied, that the sacred writer contents himself with mentioning these misdeeds, and fails to pass any judgment whatever upon them or their authors. But is not the simple record a sufficient rebuke? When a man of high character falls into flagrant sin, and his misconduct is perpetuated in the history of the Church or the country, he suffers a censure of terrible severity. The shame of the patriarchs, like their faith, is described in the pages of the most honest and public record on earth. It is held by millions to be the word of God, and, therefore, absolutely unerring in every particular. Not a jot or tittle thereof can perish; it is to go down to all generations; it is to be translated into hundreds of languages, and distributed among all families; repeated publicly in religious assemblies everywhere; opened from the pulpit in sermons and expositions; discussed from the press in commentaries, criticisms, and eager controversies; the text guarded with the keenest jealousy against gloss, erasure, and interpolation. Such is the publicity given to the misconduct of the holy men. And more than that, these scriptures reveal the Divine abhorrence towards these very transgressions, — towards intemperance, impurity, and falsehood; they educate the conscience of their readers to partake in this abhorrence; and they are accompanied by the Holy Spirit, whose work it is to establish in the soul a hatred of sin, — a hatred the more active when sin defiles the character of the just. What need was there that Moses should rebuke in epithets the sins of the

patriarchs, after he had administered the reprimand of a candid, unimpassioned statement of the facts?

Next, the narrative is so constructed as to reveal, incidentally, the direct connection between these delinquencies and their retribution. Moses does not go out of his way to point this moral, but it is clearly discoverable in what he says with other intents. Noah was punished by the contempt which Ham expressed for him, by the curse which fell upon that unnatural son, and by the mortification experienced by Shem and Japheth. Lot must have been indescribably humiliated by the disgusting offence of himself and his daughters. Abraham incurred by his duplicity the severe rebuke of the king of Egypt, and of the Philistine chief. The sin of Abraham and Sarah in the matter of Hagar found them out in the mockery of Ishmael. Isaac, who deceived Abimelech, was himself deceived by his wife and his youngest son. Rebekah was punished for contriving Jacob's theft, by her final separation from him, so that she died without seeing him again. Jacob was ignominiously chased out of his native country; was cheated and robbed by Laban, as he had cheated and robbed Esau; the wife whom he hated became the mother of the royal tribe of Judah, and, according to the flesh, of the Son of God; the wife whom he preferred died early, and her son, whom he loved more than he loved all his other children, was seized and sold into slavery by his sons. Jacob had deceived his father, and was in turn deceived by his children. The old man, overwhelmed by woes, the most bitter of which can be traced to his delinquencies, cried out, when he was one hundred and thirty years old, "Few and evil have been the days of my years." Why should it be thought strange that the historian, having recorded the Divine chastisements on the holy men, reverently withheld his own gratuitous censures? Even the heathen writers were silent in the presence of their Nemesis. These conclusions are strengthened by the other characteristics of the record. One of these is its treatment of the sins of wicked men. The fratricide of Cain, the indecency of Ham, the shamelessness of Lot's daughters, the profaneness of Esau, and the bad faith of Laban are mentioned without

direct animadversion. Nor do the shining virtues of the patriarchs call forth from the author expressions of admiration. Noah alone, of all the living, walked with God; Lot was the only righteous man in the cities of the plain; the generosity, hospitality, and piety of Abraham, and his many acts of obedience, crowned by the sacrifice of Isaac, are every way memorable. The wrestling of Jacob with the Jehovah-Angel is the highest example in the Old Testament of importunate and prevailing prayer. And yet Moses treats with impartial reserve all these acts of faith and piety, and the infirmities and sins with which they were associated. He set forth the facts, and says no more. Indeed, the plan of the history precluded him from passing judgment on either the virtues or delinquencies of mankind. Not that he was insensible to virtue, but it was not made his duty to praise the righteous, not that he was indifferent to crime, but it was no part of his province to stigmatize the wicked.

If the Spirit of God had assigned to Moses the task of composing biographies of the men of olden times, including in detail the incidents of their lives and an estimate of their characters; if he had been required to write a treatise on ethics, with illustrations drawn from real life,—we should have reason to expect that he would discuss Cain and Abel, Esau, Jacob, and Laban. But he wrote with widely different purposes. His immediate design was to set forth the history of redemption, to show how the first gospel, the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, was progressively unfolded. His final purpose was to exalt Jehovah of hosts, to show his power and his glory, and to declare his mighty acts. The product of inspiration is strictly historical. The Pentateuch is a history composed on a pre-conceived plan; it adheres closely to its primal thought, its ideal,—the glory of God in the redemption of man. No place was left in the plan for a dissertation on the sins of the patriarchs. The facts in regard to them are related because they were essential to the narrative, it could not be understood without them, but comments on them were superfluous and therefore omitted. Hengstenberg

tells us that Hendework, a commentator on Isaiah, in expounding the passage, "The ass knoweth his master's crib," entertains his readers with the natural history of the ass, pointing out at large the difference between the Occidental and Oriental breeds; just as if the prophecy of Isaiah was, among its other excellences, a herd-book of asses.<sup>1</sup> This is only a ludicrous exposure of the delusion that the Pentateuch was intended to be a biographical dictionary. It is impossible to read the book aright unless we be guided by the design of inspiration in its structure and composition.

III. The remaining condition of the problem raises the question whether, in the peculiar blessings granted to the patriarchs, the Divine Being connived at their sins. The precise state of the question should be apprehended. The question does not call attention to the spiritual blessings common to the patriarchs and to all the children of God, such as justification, the new birth, and eternal life. These gifts are in no sense a connivance at sin, but they look to a deliverance therefrom. Nor does the question take into account the remaining infirmities of pious men, which are not incompatible with a state of grace. In that sense the long-suffering and favor of God have been extended both to the patriarchs and to all other true believers. The difficulties which are now to be considered emerge from the peculiar benefits which were bestowed on Abraham and his successors in the patriarchy. God appeared to them in imposing theophanies; he made them parties with himself to special covenants; he declared their family to be his Church and kingdom on earth; he gave to them and their posterity the land of Canaan, and made promise that their race should give birth to the Messiah, and that in them and in their seed all nations should be blessed. The question is: Did not their delinquencies disqualify them for a position and destiny so exalted? Is it credible that God, the Most Holy, would so far wink at sin as to choose such men to be recipients of his solemn covenants and revelations, and the founders of his Church? To these inquiries, several answers may be proposed.

<sup>1</sup> Hengstenberg: *Genuineness, etc.*, ii. p. 437.

In the first place, these men were not recipients only, but channels also, of blessings. If they had been called for their merits only, if God's mercies had terminated on them, the problem would have been insoluble. But it was quite otherwise. The promises were made not only for themselves, but for their offspring after them. Indeed, it may be said that they were more the trustees than the beneficiaries of the inheritance. To Abraham the word of God was, "To thee and to thy seed will I give this land,"—the land of Canaan. He obtained no fixed possession in the country, except a place for the burial of his dead. Isaac his son and heir, instead of coming fully into the possession, received only a renewal of the promise, and died a pilgrim and stranger there. After Isaac Jacob, and after Jacob the twelve patriarchs, and after them their sons and sons' sons, instead of enjoying the inheritance, died exiles and slaves in Egypt. Not until the days of Joshua, five hundred and thirty years after the original grant, did the chosen seed enter the chosen land. Abraham, and the several generations following him, were heirs only for the purpose of transmitting the estate, the title passing through them without resting in them: not actual settlers on the soil, but channels they were, through whom the goodly land was conveyed to their posterity. The same is true of the consummate blessings conveyed in the covenant. "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed." The *seed* here promised is Christ, and the blessing flowing from him unto all nations is salvation (Gal. iii. 8-16). Both the Saviour and the salvation are made sure not to Abraham only, not to the offspring, near or remote, of Abraham alone, but through them to all true believers also, whether Jew or Gentile. The original grantees were not sole proprietors, but joint heirs with the people of God, born and to be born, in every saving mercy granted to Abraham. Trustees they were, holding every word of truth and every hope of eternal life as sacred deposits, to be enjoyed by them, and then transmitted with accumulating riches to their natural descendants, and to the outlying millions also of the human race. On supposition that the covenant promises were, in the Divine purpose, the

sole and separate possession of the patriarchs, like money given to an heir with liberty to spend it all, the objection is formidable. So soon as it is seen that they were the channels through which these benefits flowed to their posterity, even the most remote, and to the wide world of mankind through a thousand generations, the objection not only loses much of its force, but ceases to be even plausible.

In the second place, the patriarchs were holy men, and, as such, were better qualified to be the representatives of the covenant than any of their contemporaries. No account has yet been taken in this inquiry of their faith and piety. But these are integral elements in the problem, and their real value should be estimated. Abraham was more holy than any other man of his day, so far as we have knowledge of him and of them. His character was adorned with the best graces of human nature. So conspicuous were his generosity, hospitality, courage, and gentleness, that he would easily pass for a model of these manly virtues. But these qualities were less remarkable than his faith and obedience. Paul points out several occasions which called forth these gracious affections, closing the series with that wonderful manifestation of faith, the sacrifice of Isaac. Whatever may be thought of his sins, it ought to be borne in mind that he was, of all his contemporaries, the best qualified by Divine grace to be the organ of Divine revelations, the human party to the covenants, and the special vehicle of the true religion. In like manner, Isaac was better adapted to the Divine purposes than Ishmael, and Jacob than either Laban or Esau. We have before proved that the character of Jacob was not without its redeeming traits. Both Jacob and Rebekah, as Calvin remarks, exhibited a certain kind of faith in the purposes and promises of God, in the purchasing of the birthright from Esau, and obtaining the blessing from Isaac. The conduct of Jacob in early life was unworthy of his position as an heir to the covenant; but in his latter days, his obedience to God, his spirit of prayer in his wrestling with the angel, his faith indicated by his prophecies respecting his twelve sons and his blessings on the sons of Joseph, and the



commandment which he gave respecting his burial in Canaan, all show that the grace of God was in him, though mingled with human weakness. A fair comparison of the gentle and humane Jacob with the boisterous, sensual, and reckless Esau, will vindicate the choice of Jacob over Esau. In point of fact, "before either was born, or had done good or evil," God chose Jacob rather than Esau. He formed the younger for his service, then he bestowed upon him grace which fitted him for his vocation, notwithstanding his duplicity. In the matter of the birthright, Esau was profane and Jacob deceitful. But God, who does not allow his plans to be defeated by the imperfection of his instruments, confirmed his covenant in Jacob, rebuked and chastened him sharply for his sins, and granted to him repentance unto a better life, so that he died in peace with God. Esau renounced his interest in the offered salvation, married heathen wives, and went away into the mountains of Edom, to found a race of barbarians, who waged merciless war against the people of God.

Perhaps the validity of the foregoing argument ought to be still further tested. That may be done by applying it to the dealings of God with the persons, good and bad, whom he called into his service in the after ages. These may, for the present purpose, be distributed into three classes. One class is made up of godly men who were nevertheless overtaken by temptation; such as Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Eli, David, Peter. Their story is closely analogous to that of the patriarchs as to their misbehavior, the record made of it, and the explanation. The sacred writers describe with perfect impartiality the virtues and faults of these men, when the dominant idea of the history requires that to be done, rarely, however, rendering any judgment of their own upon the facts. But the history is so constructed as to humble the vainglory of the Jews in their prophets, priests, and kings, and to show that they were saved by grace, through faith, which was the gift of God. Further, the record, by exposing the weakness and sinfulness of the distinguished servants of God, proves that the choice which God made of them, as the instruments for the accom-

plishment of his gracious purposes, rested, as to the ground of it, not on their merits, but on his own sovereign will; that this choice looked not to the exaltation of the chosen vessels, but to the salvation of the race, and, as its chief end, to the glory of Jehovah. Finally, as if to exclude the conclusion from the blessings bestowed, that God shut his eyes on their sins, the sacred record points out the direct connection between their sins, and the retributions which pursued them. The calamities which overwhelmed David in his old age afford a striking instance of Divine retaliation. What was peculiar in his sufferings stood face to face with what was peculiar in his crimes in the matter of Uriah. His child, and the child also of Uriah's wife, died; Amnon his son outraged Tamar his daughter; another son, Absalom, assassinated the culprit; Absalom himself formed a conspiracy against his royal father, seduced Ahithophel into treason, chased his fallen father out of Jerusalem, polluted his marriage-bed, and was himself ignominiously slain, and dragged to a dishonored grave. With what pitiless fury did lust, treachery, and murder, even in David, avenge lust, treachery, and murder!

Other persons, although destitute of the fear of God, came to honor in the patriarchy and theocracy. These fall into the second class, and are to be recognized among the twelve patriarchs, and among the judges and kings of Judah. The relation of the sons of Jacob to the covenant of circumcision differed from that of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. At the first, the chosen seed was in the patriarch severally, and his personal faith was an indispensable requisite. In Jacob's household the chosen seed began to expand into a multitude, and a distinction arose between those among them who represented the covenant visibly only, and those of them who were also the true children of God. There were ever afterwards an Israel according to the flesh, and an Israel according to the spirit; they were not all Israel who were of Israel; there was an election within an election (Rom. ix.). In Jacob's family, Joseph represented the spiritual seed; if the last days of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi were no better than their earlier days, their relation to

God was the same with the relation to God of the unbelieving Jews in all generations. God showed extraordinary favor to them, notwithstanding their sins, to the end that they might become channels of salvation to the spiritual children of Abraham, Jews and Gentiles. The judges were not persons ecclesiastical, nor was the office recognized in the Sinaitic legislation. They were extraordinary regents or dictators, divinely appointed to repel the raids of the barbarians. They sustained to the theocracy, for the time being, the relation held by military chiefs to modern states. God bestowed upon them supernatural wisdom, courage, and physical strength, for the protection of his people against the heathen. Their virtues and their vices are treated in the record according to the principles already defined. There were also in the dynasty of David three classes of kings: those like Asa, whose hearts were perfect with the Lord; those like Amaziah, who did right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart (2 Chron. xxv. 2); and those like Ahaz and Manasseh, who did wickedly. All of them wore the crown of David, were the viceroys of Jehovah, and the ancestors of Christ. But the wicked kings may be dismissed from our thought, with the observation that they were little more than links connecting David and David's Lord; that their renown was an accident of their birth into the royal family, that their throne was upheld by the Almighty for his own gracious purposes, and that their crimes did not go unpunished.

Besides these, God used, as his instruments, such men as Cyrus, Balaam, and Judas Iscariot. Cyrus was a heathen soldier selected by the Almighty to release his people from captivity in Babylon. He was an idolater, and did not know Jehovah, yet God called him his shepherd, his anointed; he promised to break in pieces the gates of brass, and to cut in sunder the bars of iron before the advancing legions. To what end? To the renown of Cyrus and the glory of the Persian army? Not so; but to the end that God's chosen people might be delivered from their enemies, and that all men from "the rising of the sun, and from the west," might know that he is Jehovah, and

there is none else (Isa. xlv. 28, xlv. 1-6). God bestowed upon Balaam the gift of prophecy, and on Judas the power to heal the sick and cast out devils. It would be a waste of words to frame them into an argument denying what nobody believes, that these endowments, albeit they were unquestionably from God, were tokens of the Divine favor towards the strolling magician of Midian and the traitor among Christ's disciples.

In the work of redemption, an everlasting kingdom is established, an irresistible power is developed, and a supreme glory floods the firmament. But the kingdom and the power and the glory are of God. Patriarch, prophet, apostle, martyr, these are but worms of the dust. God, the uncreated, unbegotten, unchanging, unending One, is all in all. Herodotus composed a history, so he himself declares, in order that the deeds done by man might not be forgotten, and that the great and wonderful exploits of the Greeks and the barbarians might not go into oblivion. But so humbling was the impression left on Daniel by the study of the Old-Testament Scriptures, that he exclaimed, "O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses." Herein is discovered the radical difference between the sacred school and the profane school of ancient history.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## SUPPLEMENTARY.

THAT Moses was the author and writer of the Pentateuch, is proved by the concurrent testimony of the book itself, of the later historians and prophets of the Old Testament, and most distinctly by the testimony of the Lord Jesus, his evangelists and apostles. Christ introduces Father Abraham in the heavenly world as linking together the writings of Moses with the writings of the prophets (Luke xvi. 29). Our Lord also certifies to the authorship of the book, cites the witness of Moses to his own Divine authority, and couples the writings of Moses with his own infallible words (John v. 46, 47). The best Jewish authorities, with Josephus and the Christian Church through its ancient Fathers and most approved modern scholars, ascribe the work to Moses. Such is the sufficiency of the external evidence; the internal evidence is not less convincing.

The greatness of the man and of his work is distinctly recognized by biblical scholars, and by every writer who has considered his place in history. Bishop Wilberforce—and few were better qualified to be heard on the subject—speaks of Moses as “the sage learned in Egyptian lore; the great soul mighty in word and deed; the deep philosophic intellect furnished with all transmitted wisdom . . . subjected to a mighty change,” making the man of power into the man of God, the noble philosophical patriarch into the prophet of the Lord.<sup>1</sup> If this estimate of Moses be accepted, the treatment which his character receives from the author of the Pentateuch, if the author was other than Moses, is inexplicable. Nothing is said

<sup>1</sup> *Heroes of Heb. Hist.*, pp. 110, 111.

by this writer of the time when Moses was removed from the house of his Hebrew mother to the palace of Pharaoh's daughter; nothing of his learning in all the wisdom of Egypt; nothing of his age when he fled from Egypt. That these facts were worth preserving, is made plain by the diligence of Stephen in supplying them nearly two thousand years later (Acts vii.). The Book of Exodus describes, in the smallest number of words, his flight to Midian, his reception in the family of Jethro, his marriage, and the birth of his two sons; omitting every thing else that occurred during an exile of forty years, down to the theophany of the bush. What passed between Moses and Aaron when they met at Horeb, and in their journey to Egypt, is condensed into six lines of the narrative. If we ascribe its authorship to Moses, bearing distinctly in mind his characteristic modesty and self-forgetfulness, all this reserve in regard to his early life and training is accounted for: otherwise it remains to be explained.

Still more remarkable is the co-existence, in the record, of a recognition of the weaknesses of Moses with an apparent unconsciousness of his greatness. The historian, whoever he was, is alive to the vainglory of Moses in thinking that God would by his hand deliver the people from slavery; to his impetuosity in striking the first blow; to his act of unjustifiable homicide; to his flight from the anger of Pharaoh. But how shall we account for the omission by the writer of the other aspects of the case? Nothing is better established than the presence in Moses, amidst all his indiscretions, of an heroic faith, by force of which he renounced his position as the adopted son of the Egyptian princess, identified himself with the afflicted people of God, preferring the reproach of Christ to all the treasures of Egypt, and looking for the recompense of reward. Such an exposure of his weaknesses, and suppression of his greatness, we might expect if assured that Moses was the author, but not if we suppose that the narrative was composed by one of his successors.

The text describes, moreover, the almost irreverent pertinacity with which he resisted the Divine call at Horeb. He

was, he said to Jehovah, unworthy of the honor; Israel would not know who had sent him into Egypt; they would not believe that God had appeared to him in the bush; he was a stammerer. After the Almighty had removed all his scruples, and clothed him with the power of miracles, he confessed that, in point of fact, he was unwilling to go to Egypt. Thereupon the "anger of Jehovah was kindled against Moses." Even on his way to Egypt the Lord threatened to kill him for having neglected to circumcise his youngest son (Exod. iii., iv.). Still further, his courage in confronting Pharaoh is not commended in terms; but his impatient remonstrance with God, when his first application for the relief of the people brought upon them increased sufferings, is recorded (Exod. v. 22, 23). The writer is careful to say that Joshua, not Moses, repelled, with force of arms, the attack of Amalek in the wilderness; and Jethro, not Moses, organized the tribunal of associate judges. He relates, also, how Moses shrunk from self-defence when assailed by Aaron and Miriam. His despondency at the Graves of Lust, and his impiety at the waters of Meribah, are faithfully set forth, together with the sentence which shut him out of the promised land (Num. xi.; Exod. xvii.), and the execution of the sentence. The exposure of his faults is nowhere attended by distinct commendations of his courage, wisdom, and forbearance, or of his readiness at any moment to lay down his life for the glory of God and the welfare of Israel. The contrast is instructive between the studied reserve of the Pentateuch in regard to the greatness of Moses, and the last chapter of the book describing his mysterious death and burial, closing with the eulogy, "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deut. xxxiv. 10-12). Accepting the book as the production of Moses, breathing everywhere his characteristic self-abnegation, and treating the last chapter as an addition by another hand, the case is cleared up. But on supposition that the five books were composed by another, we have an inspired author in whom the historical spirit, exceedingly clear-sighted elsewhere, is strangely blind to that glory which, as Ewald observes,

“rose as never sun rose before to be perfectly and permanently manifested in Moses.”<sup>1</sup>

The accuracy of Moses in his treatment of the manners, habits, laws, and religion of Egypt, furnishes additional proof of the authenticity of the Pentateuch and of the Divine inspiration of its author. Traces of the language spoken in Egypt appear in the proper names, — Pharaoh, Potiphar, Zaphnath-paaneah (Joseph’s new name), and Asenath his wife. The name of the Hebrew lawgiver himself is Egyptian, — Moses signifying “drawn out,” as from the water. Canon Cook has prepared a list of about thirty-five words derived from roots, either common to Egyptian and Hebrew or found only in Egyptian.<sup>2</sup> The sacred writer perpetuates a minute but noticeable sign of Jacob’s residence in Egypt. In the blessing on Joseph’s sons, he said, “Let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth” (Gen. xlviii. 16). Instead of the word “grow,” the margin of the English Bible reads, “*Heb.*, as fishes do increase.” According to Keil, the Hebrew word for “grow” or “increase” is used nowhere else, and from it is derived the Hebrew word *dāy* or fish, on account of their rapid multiplication. In the parts of Canaan with which Jacob was familiar, there were beasts and birds, but no fish. In Egypt the streams were alive with fishes, and they supplied him with a happy metaphor in which to clothe his thought.

The acquaintance of Moses with the geography of the country is shown in his allusions to the principal towns, as Zoan, Migdol, Pithom, Rameses, and On; in what he says of the Nile, of the bulrushes and marsh-grass on the brink or “lip” of the river; of the fertile meadows and wheat-lands; of the “streams and rivers, and ponds and pools of water” supplied by the parent Nile; of the fisheries; of the barley, wheat, leeks, onions, melons, figs, grapes, and pomegranates. The narrative is illustrated by pen-and-ink pictures of life in Egypt. The position of Joseph in the family of Potiphar, with his access to the house and wife of his master, is true to the usages of the people. A papyrus in the British Museum deciphered by

<sup>1</sup> Speak. Com., i. p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> Speak. Com., vol. i. p. 244.



Brugsch tells the story, written for a prince of Rameses II., of a temptation almost exactly in form and result like that to which Joseph was exposed. Ebers declares that the sacred record contains nothing which does not accurately correspond to a court of the Pharaoh in the best times of the kingdom.<sup>1</sup> The autocracy of the king, the position of the priesthood, the art of magic and serpent-charming, the influence of the adepts therein, the vast public works, the labors upon them of foreigners and slaves, the habits of the taskmasters, the preparation of sundried bricks out of clay and straw, are thoroughly Egyptian. The ruling classes abhorred all shepherds; they habitually suspected foreigners to be spies; the women, although dissolute, were not locked up after the Oriental custom; the magicians divined by the use of cups (Gen. xlv. 5); the people sat, rather than reclined, at the table; in years of plenty they stored up grain against years of scarcity; they used horses, and chariots of war. Moses is no less exact in his allusions to the now lost art of embalming the bodies of the dead; to the importation of spices used in the art; to the time (forty days) required for the process; to the period of seventy days, devoted to the offices of mourning for persons of rank; and to the vociferous lamentations of the survivors. The minute fact is stated, that Joseph applied through others, not in person, to the king for leave to remove Jacob's remains to Hebron; the explanation being that according to the manner of the Hebrews the mourner allowed his beard and hair to grow, but according to the etiquette of the court none might come unshaven into the royal presence. In the dream of the chief butler, the vine with its clusters; in the dream of the chief baker, the wicker baskets of bakemeats borne upon his head; and in the dream of the king, the lean and the fat kine and the thin and the full rows of wheat, — are all true to the Egyptian use and wont.

The record affords persuasive evidence of its Divine inspiration in the Egyptian coloring which it excludes, as well as that which it employs. Moses received a complete education in the various branches of Egyptian learning (Acts vii. 22). It is no

<sup>1</sup> Ladd: *Doctrine, etc.*, i. 390.

impeachment of his inspiration, to suggest that he received as true the errors, and even the absurdities, current in his day. But the errors and extravagances under which he may have labored in regard to science, and to the impossible ages and fabulous dynasties of Egypt, serve only to illustrate the Divine quality in the inspiration which prevented him from giving place, among the sacred oracles, to any of these fictions and follies. Nor do we discover a trace in his pages of any faith in the mythology of the Egyptians, in their dogma of the transmigration of souls, or in the dependence of the soul for its future life on the preservation of the body. Although these ideas ruled in the thought of Egypt, built the Pyramids, inspired the art of embalming, transformed the remains of the dead into undecaying mummies, and set them in pictured walls or gorgeous tombs, yet not one of the religious errors involved in these customs finds its way into the writings of Moses. As a scholar he may have been egregiously misled in his private opinions, but as an inspired prophet he was unerring in his utterances.

It is too late in the progress of biblical learning, to question the position of the Pentateuch as a veritable history. It is not a collection of unrelated fragments like the newspaper, nor a mosaic of annals or memoirs or miscellanies; nor is it the work of two or more authors. It is a history written by one person, upon a preconceived and orderly plan. Such is the deliberate judgment of some of the highest authorities among the rationalists. Ewald, the celebrated Göttingen professor, does not believe that the book was written by Moses, or that its historical statements are all true. He does not scruple to assert that the "name of the author will probably be veiled from us in eternal obscurity." But on the same page he declares that "rarely has so great a mind devoted itself to the composition of history." On another page he remarks that the Book of Genesis, "above all other books, displays a grand, fixed arrangement, and a masterly disposition, of the immense subject."<sup>1</sup> The conjecture is plausible, although it cannot be proved, that

<sup>1</sup> Ewald: *Hist. Israel*, i. pp. 95-97, note.

Moses, in composing the Book of Genesis, made use of certain documents far older than his time, containing memoirs, biographies, and genealogical registers; and that these documents were themselves inspired, or, in default of that quality, were rewritten by Moses, under Divine guidance, and reduced to the form of a methodical and consecutive narrative.<sup>1</sup>

In no other history are the sequences closer or more obvious. The succession of events is not simply chronological: it traces the progressive unfolding of the plan of redemption. The creation of the world and of man connects itself with the history of Eden, beginning with man's first disobedience, proceeding thence by natural sequences to the sentence passed upon him and his expulsion from paradise, and to the first promise of the Saviour, with the prophecy of the antagonism between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. This prophecy prepares the way for the murder of Abel, the seed of the woman, by Cain, the seed of the serpent; the substitution of Seth for Abel; the multiplication of the Sethites and the Cainites; the moral antagonism between the sons of God among the former, and the children of the Devil among the latter; the untoward amalgamation of the two races; the inevitable corruption of all mankind; terminating by the necessities of Divine justice in the Deluge. To Noah, the second father of the race, and to his three sons, the renovated earth is granted as a possession. The history now starts afresh with the appearance of the seed of the woman in Shem, and the seed of the serpent in Ham. The story shows how another apostasy arose with the birth of heathenism at the Tower of Babel, how that degeneracy was avenged by the confusion of tongues, and the dispersion of mankind, and how heathenism became dominant in all the families and nations. This prepares the way for the introduction of a new era in the kingdom of God, the segregation of Abraham from the idolatrous Chaldees, the removal of himself and his wife to the land of Canaan, and the establishment with him and his posterity of the covenant of circumcision, — the formative principle of the new era.

<sup>1</sup> Rawlinson: *Aids to Faith*, p. 289.

Then follows, by natural sequence, the transfer of the inheritance to Isaac and Jacob as the sole heirs, and to Jacob's twelve sons as the joint heirs, of the covenant. The sojourn in Egypt began with Jacob and his sons, and lasted four hundred and thirty years. Reversing here the chronological order of the history, it is easy to tell off the links in the chain of events which united the end with the beginning of this period. The exodus is explained by the ten wonders in Egypt. The wonders were occasioned by the bondage in Egypt, and the obstinacy of the reigning king. The bondage of the Hebrews presupposes their removal from Canaan to Egypt, and that could not be understood without information in regard to the seven-years famine in both lands; and that leads back to the story of Joseph, to the bargain and sale in virtue of which he was carried into Egypt, and the favor of God whereby he was exalted to power. Ewald's estimate of the masterly disposition of this immense and complicated subject is not excessive.

The reader's sense of the unity and progress of the narrative is quickened by an examination of the Messianic promises recorded in the Book of Genesis. They are four in number. The series is introduced by the first gospel, and is to the effect that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15). Noah, speaking by inspiration, uttered the second: "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem;" "He [the Lord God] shall dwell in the tents of 'Shem'" (ix. 26, 27). The third was revealed by God to Abraham: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;" "And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gen. xxii. 18; Gal. iii. 16). The dying Jacob made known the fourth: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. xlix. 10). These promises exhibit several noteworthy characteristics. First, they were made to representative men, in recognition of the principle of headship abundantly asserted in the word of God. Adam was the progenitor of the race, and a contracting party to the covenant of works; Noah was the second father of the race, and a contracting party to the

covenant of forbearance; Abraham was the father of the faithful, and a contracting party to the covenant of circumcision: Jacob was the patriarch of the promised seed, the progenitor of the royal tribe of Judah, which gave David and Solomon, and the long line of kings their lawful successors, to the visible kingdom of God, and which got the crowning glory of giving birth to the Redeemer of the world. Next, the promises served to mark the great epochs in sacred history, — the Fall, the Flood, the call of Abraham, and the sojourn in Egypt. Each of these significant points in the history is illuminated by a distinct promise of the Messiah. Again, these promises were uttered in the gloomy periods of the primitive ages. The apostasy of our first parents plunged the race into an estate of sin and misery apparently remediless; but a remedy was immediately indicated in the first gospel. Another apostasy, all but total, occurred; the race, eight souls excepted, perished in the Flood; but Noah, standing amidst the ruins of the old world, was inspired to utter a new word of hope for the guilty. Then, afterwards, the groups of nations descending from Japheth and Ham forgot God in their dispersions; and Shem, though in the line of promise, established idolatry on the banks of the Euphrates (Josh. xxiv. 2). God interposed once more, appointed Abraham to found the visible Church, giving to him a new promise of the Saviour. About two hundred years later, when the people of God were strangers in the land of Egypt, and were doomed to a hard and bitter bondage, Jehovah opened the lips of Jacob to pronounce the word Shiloh, the name of the Prince of peace. Lastly, these several promises become more and more distinct as the series proceeds. The first gave a general assurance of victory to the seed of the woman, and there rested. Noah informed his children that this deliverance should come in the family of Shem. God told Abraham that the salvation should spring up in the bosom of his posterity, and flow thence to all the world. Jacob revealed for the first time the assurance that the redemption should be wrought out, not by some favored and holy company of people, but by the labors and suffering of one Saviour, even Shiloh. These prom-

ises disclose, still further, the process by which the promised seed was limited. In the first of the series, it is declared that the Deliverer shall proceed from the seed of the woman, or from the human race as a whole; in the second, the line of descent is narrowed down to the line of Shem; in the third, it is still further narrowed down to the postèrity of Abraham; in the fourth, to that of Judah, all the side branches in every generation being broken off.

Abram, leaving Ur of the Chaldees to go to another country, went out, not knowing whither he went: the Hebrews quitting Egypt at the exodus were better informed. Abram arrived at Shechem, a stranger and a pilgrim in his new home: the Hebrews entered the promised land, rejoicing in their assured inheritance. Traditions respecting the old patriarchs had been kept alive among their descendants. Great companies of them had visited Canaan for the burial of Jacob, and repeatedly afterwards for the burial of eleven of Jacob's sons; and the mummy of Joseph was with them in their journey through the wilderness. But, what was far more valuable, they were in possession of the writings of Moses; for his death before the Jordan was reached renders it certain that his five books were finished during the wandering. The Book of Genesis was in some sort a word-map, pointing out the spots where the patriarchs had built their altars, — altars divinely hallowed by theophanies: Shechem, Bethel, Hebron, Beersheba, and Moriah. In the distribution of the promised land, Shechem fell to the tribe of Ephraim. Moses told these people that at Shechem Abram had built his first altar, under the majestic oak of Moreh; that the well which they found there had been dug by Jacob; that Jacob had given to his son Joseph yonder parcel of ground; and that Joseph lay buried there, side by side with his brothers. The sanctuary of Bethel was in the lot assigned to the tribe of Benjamin. The people read in Moses that Jacob, in his flight, saw at Bethel the theophany of the ascending and descending angels, and on his return to Canaan Jacob built an altar there, and called it El-beth-el. Hebron was in the inheritance of Judah. The descendants of Judah learned

from the Book of Genesis that Hebron was the third resting-place of Abram, and the sanctuary with which the history of the patriarch was most closely identified. As late as the arrival of the Hebrews with Joshua, the oaks of Mamre may have been standing, near which Abram built his altar and his tent. There the old patriarch saw six theophanies; there he rallied his fighting-men for the pursuit and slaughter of the kings; there he received the covenant of circumcision; there Ishmael was born; there his tent was visited by the three angels, one of them Jehovah, on their way to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah; there the forthcoming birth of Isaac was announced; and there Sarah died. We are left to imagine the eagerness with which the record was scanned by the Hebrews for these memorials of the past, and for others equally significant, — even the distant and then inaccessible Moriah, where Isaac was offered up; Mahanaim and Jabbok, east of the Jordan, where Jacob wrestled, was defeated, and prevailed; the groves which the patriarchs planted at Gerar and Beersheba, to shield their flocks from the Syrian sun, and the wells which they dug near by to quench their thirst; together with the graves at Shechem and Machpelah, where their illustrious fathers were waiting in silent expectation the resurrection of the dead. We may safely recognize in these minute details, and their value to the people of God, one of the leading designs of Moses in the Book of Genesis.

In contemplation of the permanent settlement of the Israelites in the land of Canaan, Moses pointed out their consanguinity to their nearest neighbors. Padan-aram, towards the north, was the home of Nahor, the brother of Abraham. These family ties were strengthened by the marriage of Isaac and Jacob with the descendants of Nahor. The Moabites and Ammonites, the posterity of Lot, Abram's nephew, dwelt in the region south of Damascus and east of the Jordan. Ishmael's twelve tribes spread themselves over Arabia, south of Canaan, and afterwards far towards the east. Keturah's six tribes went into the region towards the south-east; and Esau's eleven tribes took possession of Mount Seir, and in process of time occupied

Arabia jointly with their kindred, the sons of Keturah and Ishmael. The Hebrews in the promised land were almost surrounded by their kindred. The Book of Genesis spread out before them in detail the pedigree of these peoples. The genealogy of Nahor is recorded in Gen. xxii. 20-24; that of Lot, in xix. 36-38; that of Keturah, in xxv. 2-4; Ishmael's, in xxv. 12-16, and Esau's, in chap. xxxvi. These registers settled for the Israelites in Canaan every question of importance which could arise touching their relations to the inhabitants of the borderlands. The practical lessons embodied in these environments are sufficiently obvious.

The immense and powerful tribes grouped around the land of Canaan, twenty-nine in number, with their sheiks and castles and towers, all of them the offspring of Abraham, made good God's promise to him, "Thou shalt be a father of many nations;" although in a higher sense the promise looked forward to the kingdom of David and Solomon, and will receive its consummation in the ingathering of all nations into the kingdom of Christ. The moral lessons were such as these: First, the Israelites were admonished by these memoirs not to despise their neighbors. Moab and Ammon proceeded from the family out of which Abraham came; Ishmael and Keturah's six sons were Isaac's half-brothers; and Esau was the twin-brother of Jacob. The antipathy between the Israelites and their neighbors might have been better controlled if they had remembered their common origin. Next, such of the Jews in after-ages, as looked for salvation because they had Abraham for their father, ought to have learned from the condition of the rejected races, that those only who follow the steps of faithful Abraham are counted for his seed. And further still, the family pride and arrogance of the Hebrews were severely rebuked by the degradation of their kindred in Padan-aram, in the mountains of Moab, in Mount Seir, and in Arabia. And, once more, the Israelites should have recognized the affinities which bound them to their kindred, and through their kindred to the human race as a whole, and should have remembered that the chosen seed were appointed to be not only the subjects



of God's blessings, but channels also through which the same blessings should go forth to all nations. They should have behaved themselves, not as if they were the sole heirs of the covenants, but as the servants of God holding these blessings in trust for all mankind. These observations furnish a sufficient explanation of the large space which Moses afforded to the genealogies of the rejected races. It is surely a mistake to treat them as so much surplusage encumbering the record. They are indispensable to its sufficiency.

The Israelites accepted eagerly their position as the heirs of the promises, and repudiated vehemently their position as the channels of salvation to the outlying peoples. This was the cardinal vice in their way of thinking. They and their posterity were to be, so they flattered themselves, the sole heirs of the covenant down to the end of the world; and all other races were to be outcasts forever. Their own Dead Sea, receiving all the waters of the Jordan, and parting with none of them to refresh the neighboring deserts, fairly represented their conception of Judaism. But in the Divine intention Judaism was explained by Ezekiel's vision. A stream issued from the threshold of the sanctuary, flowed near by the altar of atonement, and made its way down the mountain slopes towards the east. The waters swelled as they flowed, until they were waters to the ankles, then successively waters to the knees, waters to the loins, waters for swimming, a river which could not be passed over. The river poured its floods into the Dead Sea until the sea overflowed its banks. Its desolate waters were healed. They were soon alive with fish of many kinds, like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea, "exceeding many." The fishermen spread their nets from En-gedi on the western shore, to En-cglaim near the borders of Moab. The Valley of Salt put on tropical beauty and luxuriance. Wherever the river went, every thing sprang into life. On its banks were many trees. They bore their fruit every month. Their leaf did not fade, nor their fruit fail, for the waters issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit was for food, and the leaves were for healing (Ezek. xlvii. 1-12). The Old-Testament kingdom of God was

like these temple waters. Salvation, which was of the Jews, should come forth from the house of the Lord, should take its efficacy from atoning blood, and should spread from family to family, from nation to nation, gathering strength and fulness from the increasing multitudes of the saved. The moral deserts should be made glad. Regions of corruption, putrid masses of humanity, should put on incorruption; death and the curse should give place to life and blessing; and the trees which bear their fruit every month, whose leaves are for healing, and their fruit is for food whereof if a man eat he shall never hunger, should be planted by all waters.

One might reverently imagine that he stood at the east gate of the temple, and heard the singers with their instruments, surrounding the altar, accompany the outflow of the waters with the Psalm of David:—

1. *God be merciful unto us, and bless us,  
And cause his face to shine upon us; Selah.*
2. *That thy way may be known upon earth,  
Thy saving health among all nations.*
3. *Let the peoples praise thee, O God;  
Let all the peoples praise thee.*
4. *O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy:  
For thou shalt judge the peoples with equity,  
And govern the nations upon earth. Selah.*
5. *Let the peoples praise thee, O God;  
Let all the peoples praise thee.*
6. *The earth yielded her increase:  
God, even our own God, shall bless us.*
7. *God shall bless us:  
And all the ends of the earth shall fear him.* (Ps. lxxvii.)

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