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*H. B. Pratt*

# STUDIES



ON THE

# BOOK OF GENESIS

BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH

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*"God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world" (Gr., "in order that the world be saved through him"). John 3: 17.*

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*To the memory of my sainted wife*

JOANNA FRANCES GILDERSLEEVE

*companion of my youth and partner of my years of missionary service; whose crippled hands aided in the preparation of this book, both in its Spanish and its English forms, and whose unrummuring and cheerful "patience in tribulation," through years of protracted and intense suffering and of often disappointed hopes, has been to me a daily lesson, and her serene trust in God her Saviour a daily inspiration, I dedicate this volume.*

*H. B. P.*

*Jan. 25, 1906.*

## “THE GLAD TIDINGS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

(A WORLD-SALVATION).

“We have seen and do testify that THE FATHER SENT THE SON TO BE THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.” 1 John 4: 14.

“God was in Christ RECONCILING THE WORLD UNTO HIMSELF.” 2 Cor. 5: 19.

“The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for THE LIFE OF THE WORLD.” John 6: 51.

“Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done; AS IN HEAVEN, SO ON EARTH.” Matt. 6: 10.

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, THEN *shall he sit upon the throne of his glory*, . . . and THEN *shall the King* say unto them on his right hand: Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit (= take possession of) the Kingdom prepared for you (the just) FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.” Matt. 25: 31, 34.

“Blessed are the meek: for they SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH.” Matt 5: 5.

“We (Christians) according to his promise, LOOK FOR NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH, WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS.” 2 Pet. 3: 13.

“For *yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be*; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and he shall not be (there—Alexander); but the meek SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” Ps. 37: 9, 10.

“Why should it be esteemed a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?” (*Gr., raise up dead men.*) Acts 26: 8.

“The Scripture preached beforehand the Gospel unto Abraham, saying: In thee shall ALL THE NATIONS (OF THE EARTH) be blessed.” Gal. 3: 8.

“God will restore THE WORLD, NOW FALLEN, into perfection.”—Calvin.

“I learn by inevitable inference from one of the most distinct articles of my creed, that as certainly as the dynasty of the fish was predetermined in the scheme of Providence to be succeeded by the higher dynasty of the reptile, and that of the reptile by the still higher dynasty of the mammal, so it was equally predetermined that the dynasty of responsible, fallible man should be succeeded by THE DYNASTY OF GLORIFIED, IMMORTAL MAN.” “Instead of one, we see many footprints, each in turn in advance of the print behind it, and on a higher level; and founding at once on an acquaintance with the past, extended throughout all the periods of the geologists, and on that instinct of our nature whose peculiar function it is to anticipate at least one creation more, we must regard the expectation of “new Heavens and a new Earth wherein dwelleth righteousness,” as not unphilosophic, but, on the contrary, altogether rational and in accord with experience.”—Hugh Miller, *Testimony of the Rocks*, pages 261 and 223.



## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The story of this translation is quickly told. After a half century of acquaintance with the Spanish tongue and more than fifty years of daily study of the Bible (during which time he translated the Bible—"La Versión Moderna"—from the original tongues into the Spanish language, for the American Bible Society), the author proposed, when retired from active missionary service, to continue his foreign missionary work in the preparation of *Spanish Commentaries on the Old Testament*. The need could not be greater. Nothing of the kind had ever existed in the Spanish language till the publication of his *Estudios sobre el Libro del Génesis*, in Aug. 1902; and that volume stands today, together with his *Estudios sobre el Libro del Exodo*, just issued from the press, as the only commentaries on any part of the Old Testament, for use among the 60,000,000 of the Spanish-speaking world. Roman Catholic commentaries are only found in Latin.

Important as Scripture Commentaries are, and indispensable as they must be to the rapid progress of the gospel in Spanish-speaking lands, it will be readily seen that the demand for them among the possible 50,000 Evangelical communicants (most of them very poor) found in Europe, America, North Africa and the former Insular possessions of Spain, including ministers and students for the ministry, is not sufficient to induce any publishing house to risk money in a work like mine; so that I am reduced to the necessity of doing all the work, and then raising all the money to print it.

This I have found so difficult of accomplishment, in the two volumes already issued, that I have been led to translate the former into English, at the suggestion of esteemed friends, who represent that a volume so warmly received and commended in Spanish would be worth translating into English, and that the larger sales to be hoped for in this form would materially increase my own meager resources for contributing to the success of this, the most needy department of the work of Spanish Evangelization.

This fact would of itself be an insufficient, and perhaps an unworthy motive for asking the patronage of the religious public, were it not that the book is believed to be one of intrinsic merit—as the reader may see for himself by reading the commendations appended at the close of the volume—and as such, deserving of translation; since there is nothing of just this kind in our religious literature. So it may be serviceable to the cause of Bible Christianity at home as well as abroad, it being thoroughly Evangelical and *wholly unsectarian*; as the hearty commendations of my brethren of all the different communions sufficiently attest.

In addition to these, I may be permitted to quote the following from a private letter sent me by the Rev. Dr. G. Frederick Wright, of Oberlin College, Ohio (whom I have never met, and on whose favorable regard I have no claim whatever),—a scientist of world-wide reputation, and second to none in his own special department, “The Harmony of Science and Religion.” Dr. Wright was kind enough to examine part of my work, and he writes me: “I have looked over your *Study of the Book of Genesis* with great interest. It is one of the best treatments of the subject that I have ever seen. Your critic who said that your statement on page 4 was not up to date did not know what he was talking about. Your original statement is correct. . . . I hope you will succeed in publishing your work, so as to bring your interesting and able discussion of this subject before the English-speaking public.”

To which the Rev. Dr. Daniel S. Gregory, General Secretary of The American Bible League, and Editor of *The Bible Student and Teacher*, adds: “It gives me peculiar pleasure to indorse what my friend Dr. Wright, of Oberlin, has said of your Commentary on Genesis. It is not only sound and instructive, but also eminently interesting; an immense advance on the works of Professor Marcus Dods and others, upon which the Christian public are now obliged to depend. The American Bible League, of which I am General Secretary, is waiting for just such works as this, and stands ready to do its best to aid in calling the attention of its readers to them. . . . It meets the needs of a large class who are just now looking about for something satisfactory on the Books of Moses. Your connection with those interested in the work among the Spanish-speaking peoples ought to add materially to the popularity of the work. The effort you have devoted to the task of presenting the comments in such language as to reach the minds of

Spanish-Americans should also make the work much clearer to all ordinary readers."

The reader will find these STUDIES ON THE BOOK OF GENESIS different in many respects from all commentaries of our own, being designed for use in Roman Catholic countries, where nine-tenths of the people never saw a Bible, or ever heard it read in church or out of it, and who therefore need instruction over the whole field of Scripture teaching: but this very circumstance is calculated to lend it additional interest to the general reader, and at the same time render the scope, purpose and purport of the divine revelation much clearer to his own mind. I have found it sometimes convenient to omit words and sentences, and at times an entire paragraph, which are of little or no interest to the English reader; and sometimes, for his better understanding of the matter in hand, I have added, in like manner, to the Spanish translation. These additions usually, but not always, are indicated by brackets, and the sign "Tr." after them.

Of the views of Bible truth presented in these STUDIES, I need say but little here. Besides the general endorsement of my brethren of the different Evangelical Churches, contained in the commendations published at the end of the book, I may be permitted to say that the author is a strict constructionist of the word of God, viewed as a supernatural revelation of his will for our salvation, given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by the pens of inspired men; and as such it is to be interpreted, under the guidance of the same Spirit, according to the laws of a sanctified common sense and a believing heart, without regard to any one or other of the various theories of inspiration which men have devised and thought out. After more than fifty years of daily study of the Bible, and after translating it into the Spanish tongue, and writing commentaries on the two first Books of the Old Testament, I have found no occasion to change or even modify the old orthodox belief in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, in which I was brought up by my revered parents, who knew and had tested their value and truth; and which was well-nigh universally held by Evangelical Christians fifty years ago.

As regards the *verbal inspiration* of the Scriptures in the original tongues, so often asserted, and with every variety of expression, in the Bible itself, I do not think that any other is deserving of the name of "inspiration"; though I do not by any means accept all the *inferences* drawn therefrom either by the friends or the enemies of inspiration. Whatever its adversaries

may think or say, *inspired speech is as flexible and elastic as uninspired*; as seen in the personal utterances of Jesus Christ. The arguments arrayed against it by its opponents will, I think, find their simplest and most effectual refutation *by testing them on Christ himself*. One and all they will be found to prove as much against the plenary inspiration of Jesus Christ, and the verbal inspiration of his personal utterances, as they do against that of Moses and the Prophets; and thus they refute themselves. And if any man would deny the verbal inspiration of "God manifest in the flesh," he might with propriety write his name "UNBELIEVER" at once, and wake up to a better understanding of Christ's own words: "He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent him." John 5:23. To deny the plenary and verbal inspiration of the teachings and sayings of Jesus, is in effect to deny it of the Father who sent him; for he says: "*The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself, but the Father dwelling in me, he doeth his works.*" John 14:10. And again: "*For I have not spoken from myself; but the Father that sent me he gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak.*" John 12:49. So also in John 17:8: "*And the words that thou gavest me I have given them; and they have received them.*" And if a man purposely or practically denies plenary inspiration of the Father and the Son, it is a matter of small importance what he may think of the prophets and apostles.

As regards *the record*, it is sufficient to say that nothing short of a perpetual miracle could have prevented errors of transcription (especially in the numbers of Scripture), or mistakes, and even well-meant alterations of the text, on the part of the copyists, during the long ages in which the inspired writings were preserved and propagated by the pens of uninspired men;—the wonder is that they are so few, and in general of so little importance. But there is an infinite difference between this admission, to which the author repeatedly calls attention in his comments whenever the occasion presents itself, and the allegation that they are in great part the errors, mistakes or mis-statements of the original writers.

As to *the plan* of these STUDIES, it will be important to remark that the comment is not on words and phrases, or even on verses, but on *paragraphs*, and that consequently the Bible text enters into the commentary as an essential part of it. It should therefore always be read before the comment, unless the reader is already perfectly familiar with all its details.

The author of this volume does not pretend to make an exposi-

tion of the Book of Genesis as it was understood by Moses and the prophets in the ancient time, but as he thinks we ought to understand it, "upon whom the ends of the world are come"; who should consequently reflect back upon it the light of a completed revelation (since God's plan has been unchangeably one from the beginning), and who possess moreover the accumulated wisdom and experience of nineteen centuries of grace. The book thus may become an important contribution to our *Evidences of Christianity*, and will prove a useful addition to all Sabbath School and Y. M. C. A. libraries; a stimulating and awakening study to all Bible Classes; a *Vademecum* to large numbers of intelligent artizans and other working men, who, realizing the dangerous tendencies of religious skepticism, are feeling after a solid ground on which to build a secure and satisfying faith in the Bible as a revelation from God; a partial discovery to American Roman Catholics of what "Romanism at Home" really is, and to candid and thoughtful Jews a valuable "Introduction" to the study of New Testament Christianity.

The Scripture text employed in this translation is that of the American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible, copyright 1901, by Messrs. Thomas Nelson and Sons, and is used by their permission.

With these prefatory remarks and explanations, I commit the volume, in its English dress (fully sensible of its defects as a translation, though the author's own) to God, and to the good will and benevolent regard of my brethren of all the Evangelical Churches; praying only that it may be as indulgently received in the latter form as in the original, and that it may assist some of his people, the heirs of the promised redemption, to obtain clearer and more satisfactory views of that "*eternal salvation*," of which the crucified and risen Jesus "*has become the Author unto all them that obey him.*" Heb. 5: 9.

Hackensack, N. J., April 30, 1906.

## NOTES ON GENESIS.

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	PAGE
1. On Chaos.....	3
2. On the Days of Creation.....	6
3. On Moses and the Scientists.....	12
4. On "Living Souls".....	15
5. On the Observance of the Seventh Day.....	23
6. On the Patriarchal Traditions and the Documents of which Moses may have availed himself in the composition of this Book.....	26
7. On the Covenant made with Adam.....	33
8. On Death.....	41
9. On the Character and Destiny of Our First Parents, Adam and Eve.....	49
10. On the Death of Abel.....	57
— <i>Translator's Note 1.</i> —On Old Testament Eschatology.....	59
11. On the Wife of Cain.....	63
12. On Biblical Chronology.....	72
13. On the Longevity of the Antediluvian Patriarchs.....	77
14. On the Antediluvian Civilization.....	80
15. On the Time which Noah Occupied in Building his Ark.....	89
16. On the Bible Testimony with reference to the Universality of the Deluge.....	100
17. On the Flood in General.....	108
18. On the Miraculous Character of the Deluge and of Creation ..	111
19. On the Essential Unity of all the Different Races of Men.....	131
20. On the Plain of the Jordan, the Vale of Siddim and the Cit- ies of the Plain.....	156
21. On the Servitude and Oppression of the People of Israel in Egypt, and on the Time of their Sojourn there.....	179
— <i>Translator's Note 2.</i> —On Exodus 12:40.....	183
22. On the Angel of Jehovah.....	187
— Remarks on Baptismal Regeneration.....	198 to 201
23. On The Elder.....	274
24. On Marriage.....	288
25. On the Sins of Old Testament Saints.....	330
26. On Jacob's Vow.....	347
— <i>Translator's Note 3.</i> —On the Tithe.....	349
27. On "Sheol" or "Hades".....	430
28. On the Use of Wine in Egypt.....	453

# STUDIES ON THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

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EMBRACING A PERIOD OF 2369 YEARS; FROM 4004 TO 1635 B. C. (ACCORDING TO THE COMMON CHRONOLOGY), RECKONING FROM THE CREATION OF MAN. ACCORDING TO THE LXX, FROM 5503 (HALES, 5411) B. C., TO THE SAME DATE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### VR. I. CREATION AND ITS AUTHOR.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

This sublime announcement teaches us that the universe was not *ab eterno*, but a creation, whose author is God—the God of the Bible, Jehovah: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” It is understood, of course, that this was originally a creation out of nothing, as is taught us in Heb. 11: 3: “The things that are seen were not made of things which do appear”; but it is not true, as is frequently asserted, that the word *create* of itself signifies to *make out of nothing*; although the Hebrew verb *bara*, in Kal (which is here employed), is used exclusively of the works of God, as distinguished from those of men. In verses 21 and 27 of this very chapter, the same word is used in regard to the creation of animals and of man, who were not made out of nothing.

The *epoch* of the creation was “*the beginning*.” It is an error, which we often hear repeated, to affirm that according to the Bible, this world of ours is about 6,000 years old. According to the common chronology, such was the epoch of the creation of the first man; but it is the emphatic declaration of Holy Scripture that God created the heavens and the earth (which in this place means, of course, the making out of nothing the material of which the heavens and the earth were subsequently formed) “IN THE BEGINNING.” The epoch indicated by Moses bears a notable resemblance to, or, better said, a complete cor-

respondence with that indicated by John in his Gospel, as the remotest point of time to which it is possible to carry back the creative work of the second person of the Trinity: "*In the beginning* was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was *in the beginning* with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made, that was made." John 1: 1—3. This undoubtedly means to say that yonder, in the depths of eternity, before time began, the Word existed, the second person of the Trinity, with God, and as God; and that he was the Agent by whose means God created the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, as is plainly asserted in Col. 1: 16, 17: "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." For this reason, the Biblical phrases "before the world was," and "before the foundation of the world," without any doubt (for nobody disputes it) mean to say, *from eternity*; before there was man or angel, earth or heavens.

According to Moses, then, the earth, that is to say, the substance of the earth, is of very ancient date, and *in general terms and a wide sense* it may be affirmed that the heavens and the earth have one and the same date; be it one million years away, or be it a thousand millions, it is all one. *In the beginning of things*, when God began the work of creating, "he created the heavens and the earth." "The beginning" is elegantly determined in Prov. 8: 22, 23, where the divine Wisdom, who personifies the second person of the Trinity, Author and Architect of all created things, says:

"Jehovah possessed me *in the beginning of his way*,  
before his works of old,  
I was set up from everlasting, *from the beginning*,  
before the earth was."

Modern science is hard to please if this does not leave it completely satisfied in reference to the time necessary for the slowest and most lengthened transformations through which this world of ours has passed.

In the text, vr. 1 forms a separate paragraph; and according to the interpretation of the best accredited expositors, an abyss of unknown duration mediates between the first verse and second; during which absolutely nothing is affirmed here with regard to the heavens and the earth.



## 1: 2—5. THE FIRST DAY. LIGHT.

2 And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon\* the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light; and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

\*Or, was brooding upon.

Fixing our attention now upon the earth alone—for the text leaves the heavens entirely aside—the book of Genesis affirms that at the beginning of this epoch, which Moses calls “the first day” the condition of the earth was *a complete chaos* (“without form and void,” or “waste and empty”), in which the constituents of air, earth, fire, water, and all the elements and potentialities, chemical and mechanical, which they contain, were in an embryonic condition, mingled in unspeakable confusion; which with admirable propriety is called the “abyss” (“the deep”), wrapped in impenetrable darkness; and over this formless, watery mass the Spirit of God “brooded,” as a bird sits upon its eggs, brooding upon them, to bring forth its young. Thus according to the figurative expression of the sacred text, the Holy Spirit, third person of the Trinity, and immediate Author of life in all its forms, fecundated the chaotic mass of the earth, in order to produce this beautiful “earth which God has given to the children of men.” Ps. 115: 16. How many ages this process of *incubation* may have lasted, let science say, if it be able; for the Bible affirms nothing about it, one way or the other; but the *visible* result was that *light* entered slowly, to interrupt the eternal reign of darkness.

[NOTE 1.—*On Chaos—the original condition of the earth.* It is the opinion of the greater part of scientific men, that originally the earth, with all the planets that revolve around our sun, were a part of it; at a time, almost infinitely remote (“in the beginning,” as says vr. 1), when this existed in the form of an extremely subtle matter which filled all the compass of the planetary spaces. This, according as it went on condensing by the attraction of gravitation, continued to increase in temperature—the indispensable effect of the compression of matter—until it became a heated and luminous but extremely rarefied body, which turned then, just as it does now, upon its own axis. The effect of this rapid, gyratory movement of so immense and so light a mass, was that the

different planets separated themselves successively from the mother sun, as it went on condensing and heating, forming themselves gyratory heated globes of the same material, and of much greater size than at present. These bodies, in condensing more and more were first converted into globes of fire, and later, on losing part of their heat (thrown off into the cold abysses of space), there formed on their surfaces a solid crust, which inclosed those fires under enormous pressure. The earthy crust of our globe, very thin at first, continued to thicken more and more; and this being an admirable non-conductor of heat, mitigated more and more the ardors of those internal fires.

Such appears to have been the condition of things in our earth at the point indicated as the "first day." Owing to the heat, not even water could exist in its present form; and everything was kept in ebullition and incessant movement, by the action of the internal fires; while only a thin crust of solid matter separated between the fires within and "the waters" of vr. 2 without.

It will help the reader to understand this, if he will bear in mind that in the opinion of most scientific men, the earthy crust of this our globe at the present time does not exceed forty or fifty miles in thickness; which, in virtue of its action as an admirable non-conductor, reduces the heat on the surface and allows the existence of those forms of matter that we know, and of organic life, both vegetable and animal. The planet Jupiter, the largest of our system, has at present the temperature of boiling water; and although much older than our earth, it has not yet arrived at such a reduced temperature as that the forms of vegetable and animal life which we know would be able to bear it. The planet Saturn, though of greater age than Jupiter, is believed to be still in a state of chaos.

The elevated temperature of the first day kept "the waters" of vr. 2 in such a state of ebullition as filled the dense and watery atmosphere (if such it may be called) with clouds so formidable and of such thickness, as that the light of a thousand suns could not possibly have penetrated them. The gradual reduction of these heats, the condensation of those aqueous vapors, and the gradual purification of the embryonic atmosphere, at last would give this result, that the light of the sun (the source of light then, the same as now, to the earth), could gradually penetrate and illumine that scene of universal desolation. The work of the first day was this; and the mere declaration of what was *chaos*, will be sufficient to

accredit the statement that the entrance of light was very slow, and the first day very long. There are other theories regarding chaos and the light of the first day, but this, I believe, is the most generally accepted, and the most comprehensible. I do not give it for established fact, but only to clear up as best I can the meaning of the sacred text.]

*“And God said: Let there be light, and there was light.”* Accustomed as we are from childhood to believe that this was done in less time than it takes us to speak the words, there are many who find it very difficult to accept the idea that the work was slow. *Poetically* the Psalmist has said:

“He spake, and it was done;  
he commanded, and it stood forth.” Ps. 33: 9;

or as the Modern Spanish Version has it (the italics are found in the text):

“He said: *Be!* and it was;  
he commanded and *the universe* stood forth.”

But the work was no less divine for being slow; as I believe the reader will see before he ends the chapter. The version which some prefer, “Let light be, and light was,” is not correct; because as “God is light” himself, and “dwelleth in light inaccessible,” it is clear that Moses is not speaking of the creation of light, but of the advent of light in this terrestrial scene of impenetrable darkness—caused probably by the gradual thinning of that envelope of extremely dense vapors which covered our earth in its embryonic condition.

Even in its condition of chaos, the shapeless mass of the earth revolved daily on its axis, then just as now; and to this is due the fact that ever since light entered, there have been co-ordinate and ceaseless alternations of day and night. “And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.” The light of those days, nevertheless, would be like the light of a densely cloudy day; and neither sun, nor moon, nor stars would appear anywhere. To the eye of a supposed spectator it would be as though they did not exist.

The inadequate and inadmissible translation of the last part of verse 5, which is repeated as the close of the work of each of the six days, “and the evening and the morning *were the first day,*” “the second,” etc., has given occasion for the unfounded idea that the six days of the creation were composed each of several hours of darkness followed by others of light; but the correct translation, as given in the Revised Version, (and in the Modern Spanish Version), “and there was even-

ing and there was morning, one day," or "the first day," etc., teaches us that during those days, however long or short they be considered, there was an *uninterrupted succession* of night and day, such as the daily rotation of the earth upon its axis would necessarily produce. Moses ordained (Lev. 23: 32), and it is the use and custom of the Jews until this day, that their feast days should be reckoned *from evening to evening*; and this is perhaps the reason why the evening here precedes the morning.

[NOTE 2.—*On the Days of Creation.* It will be convenient for us to stop at this point, in order to consider the question of the duration of those Six Days of Creation; and as we have disproved the old misleading opinion that the Bible teaches that they were composed precisely of two parts, one of darkness and the other of light, it will not be difficult to demonstrate that, just as the Last Day, the Day of Judgment, will be a very long period of time, so the six days of creation were periods of vast duration, in each of which God executed slowly a certain part of the work of preparing the earth to be the habitation of man, and the scene of human redemption. The very slowness of this preparatory work will help us duly to appreciate the immense and eternal destinies which, according to the Bible, still await this world of ours; the redemption of which brought down the Son of God from heaven, in order to rescue "the world," which God had made for himself, from the power and dominion of Satan, and to make it the future habitation of the just. John 3: 16, 17; 1 John 4: 14; Rom. 8: 19-23; Matt. 25: 34. These long and successive periods of preparation teach us also to await with earnest desire, but without impatience, the Second Advent of our Lord, and the inauguration of the "New Heavens and New Earth wherein dwelleth righteousness," for which, says Peter, "we—Christians—according to his promise are waiting." 2 Pet. 3: 13. Let us note then:

1st. That it is totally foreign to Hebrew thought and usage to say that one day and one night, taken together, constitute a day of 24 hours; and in fact the Bible says no such thing, as has been shown.

2nd. The work of creation, which in ch. 1st, is apportioned among six days, is said in ch. 2: 4 to have been effected in one:—"in the day when Jehovah God made earth and heaven." It is undeniable, then, that the sacred writer himself makes use of the word "day" to signify a time, epoch, or period; as if he wished to furnish us the key to his use of the word in the previous chapter.

3rd. It is the common use of the Bible to employ the word "day" to express a period of undetermined extension. In the prophets of the Old Testament *it is their almost unvarying use of the word.*

4th. "THE LAST DAY," "the Day of the Lord," "the Day of Judgment," is undoubtedly a period of immense duration. See what Jesus himself says about "the last day" in John 6: 39, 40, 44, 54; 12: 48; [Matt. 12: 36, 31, 42; Luke 10: 12-14; and Paul: 1 Cor. 4: 3-5, and Jude vr. 6.] Besides this, "the last day" is also *the epoch of the "new creation"*—"the regeneration" (see Matt. 19: 28; Rev. 21: 5; Acts 3: 21, 22; Rom. 8: 19-23), and of the installation of that "new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." In correspondence, then, with "*the last day*" it is but natural that *the first six days*, the days of creation, be likewise regarded as long periods.

5th. The words of the fourth commandment, in which the obligation to work six days and rest on the seventh, carry as the reason annexed thereto the example of God in his six days' work of creation, are not opposed to this view of the case; because His days are "as a thousand years" compared with ours; as Peter says with special reference to "the day of judgment\* and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Pet. 3: 7, 8.

6th. In a word, no man can believe, or in fact does believe, that "God made the heavens and the earth and all that in them is," in six days of 24 hours, and that Gabriel and Satan and all the hosts of heaven and hell are no more than six natural days—one hundred and forty-four hours—older than Adam.

The most ingenious theory, if not the most probable, with regard to the days of creation, as Moses speaks of them, is that of the eminent scientist Hugh Miller, who supposed that God caused the scene of creation to pass before the mind of Moses, under the form of six distinct *panoramas*, which glided slowly before him, the one dissolving into the other; the different days being determined by the periods of darkness which interposed between them severally; and that Moses described (as later was the usage of the prophets in visions of God) what he saw before him. So then the writer related only *what was visible*; and what was going on beneath the surface of the waters, in its invisible depths, goes without record, until in the fifth day the

\*The great Robert Hall says that "the day thus designated signifies *a portion of duration set apart for this purpose*; for which [according to our present ideas] one might suppose an eternity would scarcely be too great, when we consider the immensity of the subject, and the multitude of the persons concerned." Hall's Works, Vol. IV., Sermon 40.—Tr.

great sea monsters and other aquatic animals became visible on the surface of the waters.]

1: 6—8. THE SECOND DAY. THE EXPANSE. HEAVENS.

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament\* in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

\**Heb.* expanse.

It is much to be regretted that our Bibles, with the exception of the Modern Spanish Version, have appropriated from the Latin Vulgate the word "*firmament*" (instead of "*expanse*," given in the note), founded on the ancient and erroneous notions of astronomy which were current in Europe until the middle of the 17th century. Moses says nothing about "firmament"; and the word which he uses, which signifies "expanse," does not even suggest the idea of *solidity* and *firmness*. Compare its use in Ezek. 1: 22; 10: 1, where it represents an aerial *platform* or "*float*," a species of chariot, borne by the cherubim, and on which they carried the God of Israel, seated above it, on his throne.

It is to be observed that the work of the first three days of creation was very simple and extremely slow. The result of what was done on the first day was *light*. Whatever may have been the operations which were going on in the depth of that dark abyss of waters, under the fecundating influence of the "Spirit of God, who brooded upon the surface of the waters," the inspired record fixes attention only on *what became visible*, when "God said that the light should shine out of darkness" (2 Cor. 4: 6); and considering the chaotic condition of the earth, that was work enough for the first day, although it may have occupied many thousands of years. The work of the second day was also simple and slow, but grand—the expansion of what we call the "terrestrial heavens," which we now know do not reach more than fifty or sixty miles above our heads. God made the atmosphere to serve as a vehicle to bear upwards the aqueous vapors of which the clouds are formed, and separate them thus from that form of the same substance which we call "water"; dividing in this way between "the waters which are below the expanse from the waters which are above the expanse": which expanse God called Heavens. These terrestrial heavens should be carefully distinguished from the "heavens" which God created "in the

beginning," and from the heavens of the stars and other astral bodies which became visible on the fourth day. To an observer, standing on the surface of the earth, the atmospheric or terrestrial heavens appear to be identical with the heaven of the stars; but Moses, without being an astronomer, distinguishes carefully between the two, when he says the heavens of vr. 8 are that apparent expanse above the seas, where float the clouds that discharge their waters upon the earth. To say that Moses believed that there were oceans of waters up yonder in the regions of ether, which at the Deluge fell to inundate the earth, is an indication of much ignorance, of much thoughtlessness, or of much malice.

Such then, was the work of the second day; and with it the earth made another stride forward; and it was a great stride.

What was then seen, at the end of the second day, was *waters and waters*: the waters which floated in the air in the form of clouds and dense mists, which allowed the light to pass, but excluded the sight of the sun which emitted it; and here below condensed and black waters, an ocean without limits and without a shore, which enwrapped the earth completely around. Beneath this universal ocean, as we know by the discoveries of modern science, primitive forms of life, of low organization, were being created, both vegetable and animal; beginning in the form of elementary seaweed and of simple, minute shells; but as they were not visible, nothing is said of them. The fossil remains of these shells are found in the rocks that form the foundations of continents, or which by volcanic upheavals have been elevated in the form of hills, mountains and cordilleras. Many enormous masses of such rock are composed in their totality of these marine shells.

#### 1: 9—13. THE THIRD DAY. SEAS. EARTH. VEGETATION.

9 And God said, let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

11 And God said, Let the Earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, *and* fruit-trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so.

12 And the earth brought forth grass, herbs yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after their kind; and God saw that it was good.

13 And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

A globe of water below, and above an opaque heaven, likewise

charged with water,—such we may suppose was the aspect which the earth presented at the beginning of the third day. Moses was no scientist, but the scientific man of today, who deserves the name, cannot less than admire the accuracy with which the Bible presents step by step, the same order of creation which human science has been able to gather up from “the testimony of the rocks,” at the close of the 19th century of the Christian Era. Moses was neither a philosopher nor a scientist, nor was there a human observer when these things happened, to give an account of them; how then, except by divine revelation, was he to know of them, and to speak of them with such sublime simplicity, brevity and precision, not as theories, but as facts which admitted of neither doubt nor dispute, 1500 years before Christ, and which human science had scarcely begun to trace 1800 years after Christ? Let the reader compare with the first chapter of Genesis the ideas of the sages of antiquity, including the most illustrious of the Greeks, Aristotle and Plato, relative to the earth which they inhabited, and confess that here we see the hand of God. And let the *honest* sceptic consider whether this is a beginning worthy of that divine revelation which God has made of his will for our salvation.

The work of the third day was undoubtedly effected by what we call volcanic upheavals. As the huge bulk of the earth, at one time an incandescent mass, gradually cooled down, by the continual radiation of its heat into the interplanetary spaces, a thin but constantly thickening crust of solid matter would gradually form on its surface, and this in turn become gradually covered with a universal ocean of waters, condensed from the aqueous vapors, in which form they first existed. At the same time, our globe, contracting more and more in size, under the double action of the reduction of its heat and the law of gravitation, that thin but gradually thickening crust of solid matter beneath this universal ocean would necessarily *break into folds*, not in confused masses, but necessarily, as such breaks always do, in some general order; and in their successive upheavals from beneath the waters, under the directing hand and providence of God, would form the systems of hills, and mountains and great cordilleras of the world; while the corresponding depressions of other parts of the earthy crust would form the vast abysses of the ocean; which in the time of its universal dominion was not so deep as at present. To this, as we understand it, refer the following words: “And God said, Let the waters which are under



the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear. . . . And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas." Vrs. 9-10. No scientist of today can tell it with so much grandeur, or with greater precision! Such was the work of the former part of the third day; and in this case, as in the former ones, it was of slow operation, and prolonged through many ages—a slow operation which still continues to change in some degree the topography and configuration of lands and seas.

As the mountain chains and continents were thus being slowly elevated, or sometimes rapidly, out of the depths of this universal ocean, God continued to stock them with grass, plants, and trees, each "according to its kind," and which "yielded seed, each according to its kind." It is probable that in those illimitable ages of the past, God created the different families of the vegetable world, and later, those of the animal world, not in great forests and in immense herds, but as at last he did the human family, one by one, as individuals, or pairs, leaving them to propagate, and thus to fill the earth. In all the miracles of the Bible we observe this *economy of divine power*; and it is in keeping with God's other works and in agreement with the conclusions of human science, that every family of plants and animals, which are identical in their characteristic features, had also the same origin. And the law of identical reproduction, which Moses lays down with regard to plants here, and in vrs. 24, 25 repeats with regard to the animal creation, appears categorically to exclude the theory of *Evolution*, which would subvert the doctrine of an original creation of plants and animals by the wisdom and power of God, and establish in its stead the atheistic or pantheistic view that the world, as it exists today, *has developed itself*, by means of an evolution of the lower forms of vegetable and animal life into others more complex and perfect. This the sacred text seems to contradict completely; and all human experience and observation condemn it no less, showing that each family or race reproduces itself "after its kind." All the world recognizes and practices evolution within the limits of each particular family (or genus), and an intelligent selection, in accordance with the laws of reproduction, is the way in which florists, horticulturalists and cattle breeders improve the different species; but all human observation goes to prove that the reproduction of every family "*according to its kind*" is the utmost that nature is capable of; and the natural variations from this rule are *always from good to bad, and never from bad to good.*

The deterioration, the degradation of species, is the law of our world, and not the opposite.

[NOTE 3.—*On Moses and the Scientists.* Moses did not propose to write a natural history of the creation, but a narrative which should serve as a preface to the history of human redemption; and he shows us how God made the world, “the footstool for his feet,” as a habitation for that human race which he *made* for himself, and which after it became *lost* by its horrible apostasy, he has proposed to *redeem* anew for himself. It is therefore only losing time to occupy ourselves with the endeavor to harmonize the brief and sublime words of the Bible in reference to the work of creation in its six days, with some one or other of the different systems, confessedly imperfect and incomplete, and often contradictory, which the geologists are elaborating, with more or less skill, from the study of the earth itself. It is a vain endeavor to try to extract from the writings of Moses what he himself never thought of putting into them. It is enough to know that the conformity of the first chapter of Genesis with the real and certain discoveries of science is notable in the highest degree, and does not admit of any reasonable explanation whatever, aside from that which the Scripture itself affirms, viz., that Moses and the other prophets of the ancient time did not write according to the promptings of their own will, but “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Peter 1: 21.]

The first form of life of which this record treats is vegetable life; and this on the third day, after God had formed the dry land. Science also discovers to us the fact that upon the mineral kingdom is founded the vegetable, and upon the vegetable kingdom, the animal, and between each of these kingdoms is interposed an impassable abyss. The inorganic matter of the mineral kingdom is totally incapable of life; but transmuted by means of vegetable life into a different kind of matter, which we call “vegetable,” it answers not only its own legitimate and proper uses, but serves also as a basis for the existence and nutrition of individuals of the animal kingdom. Dead inorganic matter is vitalized, when transmuted into the vegetable, and is elevated to still higher forms of life, when the vegetable is transmuted into the animal; so that in the natural order, the mineral kingdom necessarily precedes the vegetable, and this the animal; and such is precisely the order which Moses describes. It has already been said that, underneath the waters, forms of vegetable and animal life existed long ages before there was dry land for terrestrial plants and animals; but even in this case, vegetable life necessarily preceded the animal.

## 1: 14—19. THE FOURTH DAY. CELESTIAL LUMINARIES.

14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years:

15 and let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

16 And God made the two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* the stars also.

17 And God set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth,

18 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

19 And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

It is a thing well known to-day, even by school children, that the earth revolves around the sun, and that it is the force or attraction of gravitation that holds the earth and the other planets of our solar system in its powerful grasp, while, with prodigious rapidity, they perform their annual revolutions around the sun. This paragraph, therefore, serves as a stumbling-block to many humble Christians, and as a laughing-stock for the enemies of the Bible; as if it showed that Moses, for the lack of scientific knowledge, had fallen into the egregious blunder of saying that God made the sun, the moon and the stars three days after the light existed and the regular alternations of night and day. But that is a very safe rule which Paul lays down for our guidance in 1 Cor. 1: 25: that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." The sacred writer had already said that the "heavens" were created "*in the beginning*," and as the terrestrial heavens were the work of the second day, what "heavens" were those which existed from the "beginning" except those which we call "sidereal"—the place of the sun and of the other celestial orbs? In this relation Moses describes things, not as they are in themselves, but *according to the appearance they would present to the eye of an observer*, or as they would be seen in a panorama of creation presented to his eye in a vision. And if the light of vr. 3 was, as we suppose it to have been, the dawning and increasing light of the sun as it penetrated more and more the envelope of dense vapors which completely covered the earth, in proportion as it became gradually thinner, from the first day until the fourth, the veil of clouds and vapors would at last be completely dissipated (precisely as happens now, after several days of clouds and rain); and the clear light of the sun would present itself to the sight by day, and the moon with its accompaniment of stars by night, *as if it were a new creation*; and the phenomenon so surprising

could not be more exactly described than in the sublimely simple words which Moses uses.

Such was the work of the fourth day—the causing that the sun and moon and stars should present themselves to the sight, and the appointing them to be luminaries for the earth; and as this resulted naturally from the gradual purification of the atmospheric heavens (a process which was in constant operation ever since the first day), it is not probable that the fourth day could compare in point of duration with any other of the six. Its distinctive mark was the apparition of the sun and moon and stars, which existed long before. But during the fourth day, however long or short it may have been, the processes already inaugurated in the waters and on the earth, in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, would continue in their natural and invariable course, and the earth would go on slowly preparing itself to be the habitation of him who was to be the end and consummation of the work of creation— Man: whom God was to constitute owner and lord of all created things.

1: 20—23. THE FIFTH DAY. AQUATIC ANIMALS. BIRDS.

20 And God said, Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures,\* and let birds fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

21 And God created the great sea-monsters, and every living creature† that moveth, wherewith the waters swarmed, after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind: and God saw that it was good.

22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.

23 And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

[\**Heb.* living souls.]

[†*Heb.* living soul.]

Modern science reveals to us with indubitable certainty the fact that in remote epochs, represented conveniently by the third, fourth and fifth days, and the former part of the sixth, the earth was not habitable for man; and that in epochs still more remote, the air and the seas were so charged with carbonic acid, lime and other hurtful substances, that the earth was not habitable for any of the animals of superior organization, nor the water for articulate fish, nor the air for birds; and that the lime was eliminated from the waters principally by the gradual deposition of the enormous limestone rocks, several miles in thickness, which now exist, and the carbonic acid was eliminated from the air principally by the formation of the immense forests of those times which went to form vegetable soil for our fields, and the inexhaustible mines of mineral coal for our workshops. Modern science also demon-

strates that the first forms of vegetable and animal life were of very low organization, and that as the conditions gradually became more propitious, fishes, birds and animals of superior organization went on presenting themselves in the world; not, however, by the slow transformation of inferior into superior orders of being, but complete and entire, each "after its kind," and to reproduce "after its kind," by the powerful hand of the Creator.

Thus it happened that on the fifth day, the conditions of the water and of the air being now favorable, the waters began to swarm with new animals of higher organization, and many of them of extraordinary bulk; "great sea-monsters," and fishes of higher order; and the air began to be peopled with winged fowl, of every kind: "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and let fowl fly above the earth in the open firmament (*Heb.* expanse) of heaven. And God created the great sea monsters," etc. Vrs. 20, 21.

The fossil remains of those times in fact show that there were then "great sea-monsters," of forms now unknown, which were the lords of the seas, and terrible beyond all exaggeration; precisely as Moses says with regard to the fifth day: for although we now have some great fishes, as whales and sharks, nobody would speak of "great sea-monsters" as a distinctive trait of our modern seas. The "swarms of living souls," we indeed have; although it may be in less abundance than at that time. The original of vr. 20 is "Let the waters swarm forth swarms of *living souls*"; and it has reference to the innumerable and incredibly prolific hosts of animated beings which inhabit the seas and the rivers. Nothing of all that is known on the earth, or in the air, is comparable in point of fecundity with the fishes: the female of the salmon in a single season spawning near a half a million of eggs. Such is the fecundity of fishes, that if it were not for the destruction that is made first of the eggs, and then of the little fish after they are hatched, in a short time they would literally fill the seas and the rivers.

[NOTE 4.—On "*Living Souls*." All the infinitude of fishes and other aquatic animals are called "living souls" in the original text of vrs. 20, 21. In vr. 24 of this chapter, the beasts, and cattle, and reptiles ("creeping things") which inhabit the dry land, are likewise called "living souls." In vr. 30, of "every beast of the earth and every bird of the heavens" it is said that they "have in them a living soul." And in ch. 2:7 it is affirmed that when Jehovah God breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of the man he had formed of clay, "the man (also) became a living

soul." The inspired text makes use of the identical phrase with regard to all of them. To change, therefore, arbitrarily the words into "living creature" (or animal) in the case of birds, reptiles, fishes, "cattle," and wild beasts and reserve "living souls" as a distinctive trait of man alone in the animal creation, is in my opinion totally unwarranted, and gives room for very false inferences: as for example the very common error of believing that "living soul" is the same as "immortal soul." Of this erroneous translation those who call themselves "Christian Evolutionists" seize hold in order to affirm that man descended from a long line of animal forefathers, and that he himself would have continued to be a mere animal, if (as they say, "according to the Bible") God had not superadded to him a "living soul," the which differentiated him at once from the animal creation. But this *is not according to the Bible*, but rather according to an inadequate and incorrect rendering of what the Bible says. That which Moses affirms in the clearest and most emphatic language, is that God communicated life—"a living soul"—to all the different orders of the animal creation; and when he breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of the clay which he had formed to be man, the dead matter came also to be what birds, reptiles, fishes, cattle, and beasts had been before him, to wit, "a living soul," *and participated in the same animal life as they*. As Calvin says in this place, there is nothing in the Hebrew text, outside of the circumstantial relation of the *distinguishing manner* in which God communicated to him the breath of life, which suggests the idea that together with the animal soul, which we have in common with irrational creatures, God also communicated to him a rational and immortal soul.

The correct apprehension of this phrase is indispensable to the proper understanding of the use which Paul makes of it in regard to the resurrection of the body in 1 Cor. 15: 45 (A. V.): "And so it is written, The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit"; which leaves the ordinary reader completely bewildered, who understands "a living soul" to be *an immortal soul*. What the apostle really gives us to understand is, that with the breath of God Adam *came into possession of an animal life*; but Christ, raised from the dead, came to be "a life-giving spirit" (without ceasing to have a material body), and the Author of spiritual life, in soul and body, to all his lineage. Life is in itself the greatest of all mysteries; and wise men confess their complete ignorance as to what it is, and in what it consists; and it is much better where we know nothing, to leave the Holy Spirit, who spake by Moses, to

speak of it as he pleases, and not as we would have him speak. It is also to be noted that the Spanish Dictionary attributes "soul" to plants as well as to men and other animals: to all of them the "soul" is the principle of animal and vegetable life. In this, the Modern Spanish Version follows faithfully the Hebrew text. The R. V. more correctly translates the passage: "So also it is written: The first man, Adam, *became* a living soul. The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit." 1 Cor. 15: 45.]

1: 24—31. THE SIXTH DAY. TERRESTRIAL ANIMALS. MAN.

(4004 B. C. According to the LXX, 5503 B. C.; Hales 5411.)

24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures\* after their kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind: and it was so.

25 And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food:

30 and to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, † *I have given* every green herb for food: and it was so.

31 And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

[\**Heb.* living souls.]

†*Heb.* a living soul.

The sixth day, like the third, falls naturally into two parts or divisions. In the former part of this day God made terrestrial animals; but it is not to be supposed that, having on the third day created grass, plants and trees, he should allow the fourth and the fifth days to pass without creating any terrestrial animals to make use of their proper aliment, so provided. Nor is it to be believed that the plants, fishes, birds and land animals were created precisely and only on the day indicated for each class. Before the third day, plants and animals existed in the illimitable ocean, which then covered the entire globe: and it is known by the "testimony of the rocks," which is as certain in its own department as is the testimony of the Book, that God did not create the finer plants and grains for the use of man, together with the most precious

flowers and fruit, which serve for the use of man, rather than for the beasts, until the sixth day, and about the same time that he created the human race. The simpler plants and animals, and those of powerful rather than delicate organization, were first created, and in remote epochs; while those of superior quality and organization were gradually introduced according as the physical conditions of the world continued to improve. The Mosaic relation in no respect contradicts this: for it only indicates, first, the *visible changes* effected in the order of creation; and second, the *great characteristics* which were distinctive of the different days or epochs.

Animals, therefore, of lower order, and principally those which we call "cold-blooded," capable of existing under the most unfavorable conditions, as, for example, reptiles like toads, frogs and other amphibious animals, inhabited the dry land from the time it was raised out of the waters, and provided with grass and plants and trees; and others also were introduced in the fourth and fifth days, without being really characteristic of them. But the sixth day was that which had for its distinctive peculiarity the animal creation—"beasts and reptiles, and wild beasts of the earth, according to their kind." Here also modern science, in its most certain discoveries, reveals the fact that the stronger animals, and often of gigantic size, were first created and afterwards those of finer organization and superior race: the which (like our domestic animals, sheep, goats and neat cattle) began to exist but a short while before man; the necessary conditions for their existence being more or less the same.

The word "reptiles" (creeping things), vrs. 24, 25 (which in the Modern Spanish Version is used for lack of a better), will not adjust itself to our classification of this name, embracing cold-blooded animals; which existed many of them in the preceding epochs. The Hebrew language knows little of scientific classification. These terrestrial "reptiles" are called in the Hebrew text "*crawlers*" or "*creepers*," and besides those that properly crawl or creep, include those which walk on four or more short legs, and go squat, close to the earth. In Lev. 11: 29, 30, under this denomination ("creepers" or "crawlers") are mentioned "the weasel, the mouse, the tortoise, the porcupine, the crocodile, the lizard, the locust and the chameleon."

When the air and the waters had become thus purified, and the land fertilized and beautified, and provided with all its animals, and all the products of the vegetable kingdom, and a garden of delights had been prepared for the alimentation and recreation of Man, in the second part of the sixth day God made



him also, and constituted him lord and owner of all created things, and placed him in the paradise which he had already prepared for him. Ch. 2: 8—15.

The language in which Moses represents to us the creation of man is very striking: "And God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Vr. 26. Most notable is this consultation. Says the prophet Isaiah: "*With whom took he counsel?*" (Isa. 40: 14); but here we have the consultation of the Most High God with himself; and this in regard to the creation of that Man who has so ill fulfilled the high designs of his Creator. Take special note of the words "*Let us make,*" "*our image,*" "*our likeness.*" With the exception of ch. 3: 22, where there seems to have been another consultation upon the fall of man, and ch. 11: 7, where it is repeated with regard to the proud pretensions of men, on building the city and tower of Babylon, I believe that this form does not again occur in all Holy Scripture. With whom then did he consult? It is unnecessary to say that it was not a consultation with angels. A plurality of dignity (according to the magniloquent style of Bishops and Popes, who say: "We, So and So, ordain," etc.) is completely outside the use of the word of God, which never affects grandeur of any kind. But there was One who afterwards "became flesh," being born of the Virgin Mary, who is expressly called, "Wonderful, COUNSELLOR, Mighty God, Father of the Eternal Age (Mod. Span. Ver.)—*Latin Vulgate*, 'Father of the Future Age,' or World to Come—Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9: 6), of whom we know full well that "he was in the beginning with God" (John 1: 2): and with express reference to this same work of creation, he says, under the pseudonym of Wisdom:

"Then was I by him, as a master workman [or  
architect of all];  
and I was daily his delight,  
rejoicing always before him:  
rejoicing in his habitable earth:  
and my delight was with the sons of men."

Prov. 8: 30, 31.

*Two* persons, then, took part in this consultation, the Father and Son, which interested them personally most deeply; and we do not hesitate to affirm, having the open Bible before us, that that Divine Spirit who brooded over the face of the waters, and

was and is the immediate Author of life in all its forms, was the *third* person in said consultation.

"Image and likeness of God" cannot be understood of corporeal form, speaking of him who is pure spirit. In Col. 3: 10 and Eph. 4: 23, 24, Paul explains the meaning of the words perfectly, where speaking of our renovation into the lost image of God, he says: "And have put on the new man, who is being *renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him*"; and again: "And that ye be *renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who after [the image of] God, hath been created in righteousness and true holiness.*" The image and likeness of God, then, consisted in the possession of a spiritual nature (besides his corporeal and animal part); and this consisted in intellectual and moral faculties, and also in a holy, spiritual and immortal life.

This human being, in part animal, in part spiritual (perhaps the first experiment which God had made of uniting in one subject brute matter and immortal soul), the representative and image of God who created him, was to have the dominion over all created things, animal, vegetable and mineral; and he received commandment "to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it." It is therefore but an absurd and ridiculous notion, invented by celibate priests and friars, and universally disseminated in Spanish-speaking lands, that the woman was herself the forbidden fruit, and that the use of marriage it was by which man fell, bringing ruin upon himself and his posterity. From the beginning it was, and still is the will of God that "every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband." 1 Cor. 7: 2. Those who hold to the monastic and semi-manichean idea that the marriage state is in itself impure, or that in any case it is less holy than the celibate condition, will do well to observe that the first commandment which God imposed upon the man and the woman in their state of original holiness (being then as holy as the angels), was: "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth" (vr. 28); and if they had refused to do this, taking upon themselves, on the contrary, the monastic vows of the so-called "angelical life," they would have sinned and fallen, just as certainly as by eating the forbidden fruit.

CH. 2: 1—3. THE SEVENTH DAY. THE REST, AND ITS COMMEMORATION.

(4004 B. c. According to the LXX, 5503 B. c.; Hales, 5411.)

1 And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2 And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

3 And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made.

“The heavens and the earth, and *all the host of them*” (or, as the same thing is expressed in Ex. 20: 11, “*all that in them is*”), having been thus finished, God “rested”; which means that *he ceased from his creative activity*;\*—a positive declaration, which bounds, and distinguishes between, the works of Creation and Providence. So that the words of our Saviour in John 5:17: “My father worketh hitherto and I work,” do not allow of the use which some “Christian evolutionists” desire to make of them, in order to accredit their contention that “the work of creation” is still going on. The certainty is that according to the theory, or theories, of Evolution, whether “Christian” or unchristian, there never has been any work of CREATION, but a work of PRO-CREATION from the beginning of life in the world,—which is a work of providence, if there be one; so that “creation” and “providence” are confounded, according to this system. The Bible, on the contrary, emphatically declares that the work of creation had already ceased with the sixth day, and God entered on the period of rest (= suspension or cessation of his creative activities) on the seventh day. Moses says that God commemorated this rest of his with the institution, for the benefit of man, of the weekly sabbath, or rest-day. This sabbath, or rest, fell on the seventh day; but *that was not the name of the seventh day*. In the Bible the days of the week are called by their numbers, first, second, etc., and not by any distinguishing name; and it is to be lamented that in Spanish the seventh day should be called “Sábado” (= Sabbath), which is not a day of rest. In the Old Testament any day of the week was a “sabbath” which was of strict religious observance, as the Day of Expiation, which fell on the tenth day of the seventh month. Lev. 16: 29, 31. At the pass-over and the feast of unleavened bread, three “sabbaths” usually occurred in the eight days of the combined feasts. Passover fell on the 14th of the month Abib; and the 15th, whatever the day of the week, was a “sabbath” = *rest-day*, by positive statute (Lev. 23: 5—8), and is called “sabbath” in vr. 11 (the 22nd, seven days later, being a rest-day also); and when the weekly sabbath coincided with this, the Jews called it a “double sabbath.” The same thing happened in the feast of tabernacles (or booths), which

\*The same Hebrew verb, “*shabath*,” is translated “*cease*” in Isa. 14: 4; 24: 8, twice; 33: 8; Lam. 5: 14, 15, and other times not a few.

began on the 15th day of the month and lasted eight days, of which the first and the last, whatever the day of the week, were days of strict observance: "No servile work shall ye do therein." Lev. 23: 34—36. It is to be observed that not only was the tenth day of the seventh month ("the day of expiation") a rest-day, whatever the day of the week, but it is called "a sabbath of solemn rest," in Lev. 16: 31, and also in Lev. 23: 32; *Heb.* "a sabbath of a great sabbath."

Since then, this is the usage of the Old Testament, it was natural and proper that in the New Testament *the rest of Christ from his atoning work of human redemption* should be called the "Lord's day," and should be observed as the Christian Sabbath, or rest-day. Rev. 1: 10; Acts 20: 6, 7; 1 Cor. 16: 2.

It is also noteworthy that in this narrative of the six days of the creation (commencing with ch. 1: 1, and extending to ch. 2: 3), each paragraph closes with the repeated declaration "that there was evening and there was morning the first day," "the second," "the third," and so on to the "sixth." But the seventh day, the day of the Divine rest, has no such conclusion; which many think is intended to teach us *that his rest still continues*; and this rest of the Creator will last until the epoch of the "New Creation," whose glories and other wonders will utterly eclipse all the glories of the first. Matt. 19: 28; Rom. 8: 18—25; Eph. 2: 7; 1 Pet. 1: 5, 7, 13; 2 Pet. 3: 13; Rev. 21: 1—5. [In Delitzsch's translation of the Greek Testament into Hebrew (which gives us the nearest representation we can have of the words our Saviour actually used), Matt. 19: 28 is rendered: "IN THE NEW CREATION, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory;" being seated, till then, on his Father's throne, as he says in Rev. 3: 21.—Tr.]

Hardly had the work of creation been finished, when, by the artifice and malice of Satan man fell into apostasy and ruin\*, giving occasion to the divine work of redemption, which still con-

\*There is a profound and impenetrable mystery involved in the ruin and redemption of this world, which only the revelations of the Day of Judgment (when Satan and his angels, as well as all mankind, are to be judged) will suffice to explain. The reader may perhaps find a clew to it in Luke 3: 3. It is as easy as it is common to say that this claim of Satan was "an impudent falsehood"; but had there been no foundation in fact for it, asserted as it was before Christ himself in his temptation, it does not seem possible that Jesus would or could have allowed it to pass unchallenged. Yet he was so far from stamping it as a falsehood, that three times over he himself calls Satan "*the prince of this world*" (*Gr.* *kosmos*, John 12: 31; 14: 30; 16: 11); Paul once calls him "*the god of this world*" (*Gr.* *age*,— or present disordered state of the *kosmos*; 2 Cor. 4: 3); and he says furthermore that "our Lord Jesus Christ *gave him*-

tinues, and fills the pages of the Bible from the 3rd chapter of Genesis to the 20th of Revelation. This work of redemption corresponds temporally with God's rest from his work of creation; and the two will end together in the work a thousand times greater, of "the New Creation," which angels yonder in heaven, together with the material creation, cursed for man's sake, the saints in glory, and Christians who know "the hope of their calling," and Jesus Christ himself together with them (Heb. 10: 13), *wait for with longing desire*. 1 Pet. 1: 12, 13; 2 Pet. 3: 13; Rom. 8: 19—23. Paul, in heaven, no longer "groans," but is still "*waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of his body.*" Compare Luke 20: 35, 36.

[NOTE 5.—*On the observance of the seventh day of the week.* Before there was sin and death in the world, God ordained the observance of the seventh day as a weekly rest, or sabbath. "He blessed the seventh day and *sanctified* (or hallowed) it." The statement in Gen. 2: 3 does not mean anything different from what is required in the fourth commandment of the Decalogue in Ex. 20: 8, which says "Remember the sabbath day (=rest-day) to *keep it holy*" (= "sanctify" it)—a change of translation merely. There can be no reasonable doubt, then, that God ordained that it should be observed and kept both before and after the fall, and that it is his law for all the nations of the world.

The observance of the seventh day was ordained in commemoration of the work of creation. But scarcely had God concluded the work, and hardly had he ordained its commemoration, when, by the artifice of Satan, the world fell into apostasy and ruin; and from then till now *little enough is the glory which God has got from that his work of the first creation*. Without the purpose and the work of "the New Creation," commenced in the person of Christ himself, when he arose from among the dead to immortality and life, after that he had made the atonement for our sins in his own blood, and which he will finish "*in the regeneration* (= the new creation), *when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory*" (Matt. 19: 28), the first creation would have served only for the eternal reproach and dishonor of the Creator, and *little worthy would it have been of any commemoration at all*. It is clear, therefore, that this is a thousand times more worthy than that of its commemoration, which the *self for us, that he might deliver us from this present evil world* (Gr. age), according to the will of our God and Father. Gal. 1: 4. When that mystery is solved, we shall doubtless clearly see that the end to be accomplished was not disproportionate to the infinite price paid for the world's redemption from the thralldom of Satan. Had ALMIGHTY POWER sufficed to effect this, no "blood divine" would ever have been shed for it.—Tr.

apostles instituted in the name of Christ himself (Rev. 1: 10), and which, with very rare exceptions, the whole Christian world has observed, observes and until the end of the Age will continue to observe in weekly commemoration of the resurrection of him whom God has made the eternal life of men. John 20: 19, 26, taken together with Rev. 1: 10; 1 Cor. 16: 2 and Acts 20: 6, 7, manifests that from the beginning the apostles observed the first day of the week as "the Lord's Day"—the Day of the Lord Jesus. The last citation (Acts 20: 6, 7) is particularly strong; for it puts in boldest relief the circumstance that Paul and his companions "*remained seven days*" in Troas; but without making any special account of the Jewish Sabbath, they chose "*the first day of the week*" for the celebration of the Holy Supper and the most solemn preaching of the word.]

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## CHAPTER II.

VR. 4—6. ANOTHER COMPENDIOUS ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF CREATION.

4 These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that Jehovah God made earth and heaven.

5 And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up; for Jehovah God had not caused it to rain upon the earth: and there was not a man to till the ground;

6 but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

Some interpreters understand the phrase with which this paragraph begins, as referring to the preceding section (ch. 1, 2: 3); and so Amat translates it, "Such was the origin of the heaven and the earth." But the identical phrase occurs eleven times in the book of Genesis, and three times more in the rest of the Bible; and each time *as the beginning of a new paragraph*, with reference to what follows, and not to what precedes. Ch. 2: 4; 5: 1; 6: 9; 10: 1; 11: 10, 27; 25: 12, 19; 36: 1, 9; 37: 2; Num. 3: 1; Ruth 4: 18; 1 Chron. 1: 29. It is therefore probable and even certain, that in this case, as in the other thirteen, the phrase "these are the generations" does not refer to the preceding relation (however much it may look like it here), but to what follows, and that it introduces a new subject—another compendious account of the work of creation; as if it were said: "These, which follow, are the memoirs (*Heb.* generations) of the heavens and the earth, when they were created." The word "generations" in vr. 4 has no such sense in Spanish or English as will agree with "heavens and earth"; but its ordinary

use in the passages cited, and notably in ch. 37: 2 (in which nothing whatever is said about *genealogies*), is equivalent to "*memoirs*," or family history; it being usual in the ancient times to associate the family history with its genealogical descent.

I take for granted, then, that vrs. 4—6 are not the continuation, or a compend, of the preceding relation, but begin a new division of the book of Genesis, which extends to the end of the third chapter, and includes the creation in general, the creation of man, paradise, the creation of woman, the temptation and fall of man, the curse on account of his sin, together with the first promise, and the expulsion of our first parents from paradise.

The use of the word "day" in this fragment is interesting, since it embraces the entire extension of what in the previous relation is distributed *among six days*; and by such use of the word, the writer himself authorizes us to understand it in ch. 1: 1—2: 3 with the same breadth of meaning, as signifying not days of twenty-four hours, but epochs, or periods of indefinite duration, yet characterized by particular facts or circumstances.

The condition of things which is presented to us in vr. 5 is certainly hard to comprehend,—an epoch in which no shrub or plant of the field was yet in the ground; in which God had not yet made it to rain upon the earth; before there was any man on the earth; and when, for the lack of rain, dense mists watered all the face of the ground. It is noteworthy that Moses (as it happened with other prophets after him, 1 Pet. 1: 10, 11), introduces here into his narrative a seeming fragment, which probably neither he nor any one else among the ancients were capable of explaining, and the meaning of which the discoveries of modern science, within the last hundred years, have only begun to reveal to us, by bringing to our knowledge the real facts of the case. The words seem to point to those extremely remote geological ages, during which there was in fact no man, nor trees, nor plants, such as we now know; when in an opaque light, in the midst of a densely humid atmosphere, of excessive heat and perpetual mists, which excluded the rays of the sun, there began that luxuriant and most abundant vegetation, of low types, which formed the vegetable mould of the earth, and which the beneficent hand of Divine Providence was converting into inexhaustible mines of mineral coal for the future use of man.

But whatever may be the difficulties of this fragment (vr. 4—6), the passage seems to unanswerably refute the allegation of a creation effected in six natural days; because, in the midst of much that is incomprehensible, it speaks of a period (and by im-

plication a long period) *anterior to the creation of man*, in which it had not yet rained, and instead of rain an abundant and dense mist went up from the earth which watered the whole face of the ground. Now then, it is certain that God made the earth to arise out of the midst of the waters on "the third day," and on "the sixth day" man was created. It is most evident, therefore, that if these had been days of twenty-four hours, *the soil would have been wet enough without any further need of either rain or mists for a very long time*. But according to this passage, during that epoch mists supplied the lack of rain.

[NOTE 6.—*On the patriarchal traditions and the documents of which Moses may have availed himself in the composition of this book.* Some suppose that the inspiration of Moses implies that the Holy Spirit revealed to him the facts which he relates, besides guiding him in the arrangement and writing of them. Such a supposition is not only incredible in itself, but sins grievously against that principle of *the economy of supernatural power* which we observe always in the Bible; viz., that of *not doing by divine power what man is well capable of doing for himself*. Luke informs us in the introduction to his Gospel (ch. 1: 2, 3), that before setting about to write it, he "had accurately traced the course of things from the first," applying for information, no doubt, to those who had been eye-witnesses of what he was about to relate. In the first ages of the world, before the art of writing and the composition of books, histories and stores of useful knowledge were preserved by means of oral tradition, which was in many cases *verbal* as well. It is well known that the long poems of Homer were by this means preserved and propagated textually, during many ages, before they were committed to writing. In the days before the Flood, when men lived almost a thousand years, this would be easier still, and the trustworthy communication of historical facts from fathers to children was better attested and was more reliable than happens oftentimes in our days of printing, when it is as easy to disseminate and preserve falsehood as truth. According to the common chronology, Adam lived contemporaneously with Methuselah for 243 years; and Methuselah with Noah for 600 years. Noah died two years before the birth of Abraham; and Shem, Noah's son and companion in the ark, was contemporary with Abraham for 150 years. *Overlapping* each other in this way, as did the lives of the patriarchs, and giving each other the hand, so to speak, for the communication of historical facts, there were not more than four steps to take between Abraham, "the father of believing men," and Adam, the father of the human race: Abraham, Shem



Noah, Methuselah, Adam. (See *Note 13* on the longevity of the antediluvian patriarchs.) It is scarcely possible, therefore, that Abraham should have failed to have direct and trustworthy information of much that is related in the first eleven chapters of Genesis; and equally impossible that this information, or much of it, should not reach to the times of Moses, in a straight and unbroken line: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Kohath, Amram, Moses.

At one time the rationalists who deny that Moses was the author of the books that bear his name, had the characteristic valor to say roundly that the art of writing was not known in the days of Moses; without imagining that the "monuments" of Egypt and of Babylon were in a little while to be published to the civilized world, and prove that in those countries, the art of writing, and even of engraving historical documents on stone, was known and practised many years before Moses and Abraham. In Babylon there have been deciphered Babylonian accounts, on tablets or cylinders of baked clay, of the creation of man and the institution of the rest of the seventh day, of the temptation and fall of man, of the deluge, etc., which, for substance, are very much like the accounts we find in the Bible. It is therefore altogether probable that Moses had at hand not only many particular traditions, but perhaps some documents of the greatest interest and importance, which he may have incorporated with his history; the Spirit of inspiration that guided him, vouching for the accuracy of all that he may have so admitted.

The first section of the book, with its narrative of the creation (ch. 1—2: 3), may have been of this nature,—a verbal or perhaps a written tradition, already old in the days of Moses. The second section of the book (ch. 2: 4—ch. 3: 24) bears indications of having been a document, or special history. In the first section, the Supreme Being is called always and only "God"; in the second, he is called always and only "JEHOVAH God," except in the interview between the Serpent and the Woman. So far as I can ascertain, "Jehovah God," as a designation of the Supreme Being, does not again occur in the writings of Moses (except in Ex. 9: 30); for "Jehovah, God of Shem," of "Abraham," etc., is a different matter. And I do not find it any more in the Bible, except in Ps. 80 and in the prophecy of Amos. The history of the Deluge and of the tower of Babylon may belong to the same class, without detracting anything from the prophetic character and inspiration of Moses.]

It is also worth our while to note in passing the absolute negation which in this passage is made of the existence of any

man in the earth prior to Adam: "*And there was no man to till the ground.*"

2: 7—14. A MORE CIRCUMSTANTIAL NARRATIVE OF THE CREATION OF MAN. THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

(4004 B. C. According to the LXX, 5503; Hales 5411.)

7 And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

8 And Jehovah God planted a garden eastward,\* in Eden: and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9 And out of the ground made Jehovah God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from thence it was parted, and became four heads.

11 The name of the first is Pishon: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

12 And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.

13 And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Cush.

14 And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: † that is it which goeth in front of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

[\*Or, of old time.]

†That is, Tigris.

The sacred writer having referred to a period when there was no man in the earth, proceeds now to relate how Jehovah created him. The Bible contains several very clear and explicit allusions to what vr. 7 declares in the most positive manner; to wit, that the first man was *formed of the dust* (or clay) of the ground; as in ch. 3: 19; Ps. 90: 3; Eccl. 12: 7; 1 Cor. 15: 47, 48, 49. And Moses in this place affirms in the most emphatic manner that this dust or clay, wrought into human form, had neither respiration nor semblance of life, until "Jehovah God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," when man came to be what birds, and reptiles and fishes and quadrupeds had been before him, to wit, "a living soul." See Note 4, on "living souls," page 15. This is what Moses in the Hebrew text (which the Modern Spanish Version exactly follows) affirms, and the science best deserving of the name reaffirms; and it goes to show that the contention of evolutionists, that the human race was descended from a line of bestial progenitors, is altogether lacking in solid basis. When Luke is giving, in ch. 3 of his Gospel, the genealogy or descent of Jesus Christ our Lord, according to the flesh, tracing it backward to its source, he comes in vr. 37 to Methuselah, and continues thus: "Methuselah, who was the son of Enoch, who was the son of Jared, who was the son of

Enosh, who was the son of Seth, who was the son of Adam, who was the son of" . . . Of whom shall we say? "Of a four-handed beast ("quadrumana"), of the limurian or monkey family," answers the evolutionist. But Luke, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit affirms—"who was the son of Seth, who was the son of Adam, WHO WAS THE SON OF GOD." How deep must be the native antipathy of the human heart to God and to godliness, when men of the highest scientific standing would some of them PREFER to expunge the words "who was the son of God," and write instead, "*who was the son of an anthropoid ape!*"

In preparation for the advent of this man, so highly privileged, "the image and likeness," not of a beast, but of his Maker, God had already provided for him a place of delicious habitation, the Garden of Eden. Eden was not the Garden, but the country or district in which the Garden was located, in the eastern part of which was situated this earthly paradise. Instead of to the "eastern part," which has for us no particular signification, some prefer the equally legitimate sense, "of old," or "of ancient time"; giving us to understand, that God for a long time past had been preparing a place for man. The word "paradise" is Persian, and is only used three times in the Bible, and that only in the New Testament, as a designation of the heaven of the people of God, both in death and in the resurrection. Luke 23: 43; 2 Cor. 12: 2—4; Rev. 2: 7. Ezekiel speaks several times poetically of "Eden, the garden of God" (ch. 28: 13; 31: 9, 16, 18). Isaiah (ch. 51: 3) and Joel (ch. 2: 3) also use "Eden" as a term of comparison, with allusion to this garden of delights. There, with an abundant provision of natural food and of fruits and flowers, in innocence and highly favored with the daily company of God, without the need of other clothing than the "robe of righteousness" and the "beauty of holiness," with no consciousness of shame, and without the need of any other domicil than the shelter of the dense boughs, or some fresh grotto, the human race began its existence. Two trees in particular call our attention at the outset: "the tree of life," which in ch. 3:24 disappears from our sight, when man lost the right to its use, to present itself anew at the end of the human redemption, when through Jesus Christ he has recovered "the right to the tree of life" (Rev. 22:2, 14; 2:7); and "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," which has cost Adam and his posterity so dear.

It is possible or probable that the Deluge of Noah caused very great alterations in the configuration and topography of those countries; but the Euphrates and Tigris (*Heb.* Hiddekel) of vr. 14, are undoubtedly the same rivers which in ancient and

modern times bear these names; and it seems probable that Eden, with its garden, was situated near the confluence of these rivers, which at that time was very close to the Persian Gulf, if not, in fact, at the point where they emptied into it. The other two, if they were in fact "*rivers*," must have been lost in the time of the Deluge. But it is the opinion of many interpreters that the word "*river*" is here used in the sense of the Spanish "*ribera*," and means a "*shore*," whether it be of the sea or of some river—a sense which it has in several passages of the ancient classics—to indicate *the coasts of the Persian Gulf*; which near the union of these two rivers take the one towards India, with its great river, the Indus, and the other towards Africa, with its great river, the Nile. In those remote times, when the knowledge of geography was very limited, and maps did not yet exist, there would naturally be much confusion in matters of this kind.

Others suppose that Eden with its paradise was on the high lands of Armenia, where the Euphrates and the Tigris have their source, and that its climate has changed greatly since that time. See Conant on Gen. 2: 10—14. But the other is the ordinary opinion.

2: 15—17. THE TRIAL OF MAN. (4004 B. C.)

15 And Jehovah God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it.

16 And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Even in paradise was found the law of labor. Man was not placed in the garden of Eden to live a self-indulgent and indolent life, but "to dress it and to keep it." And as God had from the beginning "blessed the seventh day and hallowed—or *sanctified*—it" (vr. 3, that is, set it apart from a common to a sacred use), it is a good and legitimate inference that there, in Eden, and before there was sin in the world, or death, man was expected to observe the rule of working six days and observing a holy rest on the seventh; a rule which has given such beneficent results in the Christian lands which observe it.

Of all the trees of Eden, including the tree of life, man might freely eat, with but the single exception of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." On the tree of life, see the comment on ch. 3: 22. It is enough to say here that since man had full right and liberty to eat of this tree every day, it seems evi-

dent that its special virtue to give life did not consist in his eating of it once, nor twice (for Adam and Eve must often have eaten thereof), but in eating of it constantly, and in "having a right to the tree of life." Rev. 22: 14.

"The tree of the knowledge of good and evil," from the use of which he was to abstain under penalty of death, some suppose to have been a tree that was naturally poisonous; for which cause God admonished him not to touch it. But it is morally impossible that God should have placed a poisonous tree in paradise. It is rather to be supposed that the tree was in itself good, and that any other tree of paradise would have had the same name and effect, if God had forbidden its use. Man knew the good, but he did not know it thoroughly, because he did not know its opposite. There is therefore this biting irony in the words of the Serpent: That by eating of this tree, he would know the good, by his loss of it; and he would know the evil, by his own experience of it. The distinction, therefore, of good and evil he did not know, because he had no conception of what evil was. But

"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

It seems evident, also, that the angels, each for himself, had, after his creation, to pass through a period of probation; and that some of them fell from their original estate, and now form the "kingdom of darkness," under Satan their king, in antagonism with the "kingdom of God"; while those who remained faithful were confirmed in holiness and glory (2 Pet. 2: 4; Jude vr. 6), and are called by Paul the "elect angels," 1 Tim. 5: 21. It seems probable that the possession of personality, intelligence and free-will makes it necessary that every rational being should have to pass through such a trial, either in his own person, or in that of his representative; as we passed ours in our first father Adam. From the operation of this rule not even the eternal Son of God could be exempted, when he became man. Matt. 4: 1; Heb. 2: 10, 18; 5: 8. It is possible that the trial of a self-propagating race, where the individual members of it are born incapable of doing anything, and their character and destiny are determined principally by the teaching, example and training of their parents—it is possible,—I say more, it is even probable, that only *as a race* could its trial be equitably made. In any case, it is certain that God, who loves us better than we love our children (John 3: 16—18; Rom. 8: 32), who could not err in his infinitely wise counsels, and being himself the infinite Reason, could not act arbitrarily, chose

that it should be so, and deposited in the hands of our first father the character and destiny of his posterity, together with his own. We readily believe that as this was the counsel and purpose of God, and as the sin of mankind was to cost him the sacrifice of his beloved and only-begotten Son (John 3: 16, 17), this was the most just and reasonable trial that the case admitted of, and that it was verified under the conditions most favorable for us; for while it is certain that, if Adam fell into apostasy and ruin, all his posterity would fall with him; it is not less certain, that if he had preserved his primitive integrity, by keeping the covenant of his God, during the limited time of such trial, he would have been confirmed in the righteousness and true holiness in which he was created, and his posterity would participate in the same happy condition, as their inalienable patrimony. All Christians understand, with little variation, that such was the relation which Adam bore to his posterity; and for this cause we call this transaction a "covenant"; because results of such transcendent importance, embracing the welfare or the ruin of innumerable human beings, could not have been left to chance, nor to the natural laws of hereditary descent. See *Note 7*, on the Covenant made with Adam.

It is also to be supposed, as we gather from the condition and transformation of the just who are alive at the advent in glory of Jesus Christ (who in the twinkling of an eye will be transformed, without dying, into the physical condition of the dead raised up in immortality and life, in power and glory, John 21: 23; 1 Cor. 15: 51, 52; 1 Thes. 4: 16, 17), that if our first parents had victoriously resisted the subtleties and solicitations of the Tempter, as says Dr. Charles Hodge, an analogous change would have passed on them, and that their descendants would have been *born into the same privileged condition*. A thousand times better this, than that each individual of the race should pass through the trial for himself, under conditions vastly more unfavorable. In any case, we accept this most certain maxim, that *whatever our God does, is, and must forever be, holy, wise, just, good, and fitting*.

It will be important to add at this point, that we Evangelicals believe that when Adam violated the condition of life and incurred the penalty of death, if God had not had in view the purpose of redemption for us, he would at once have put an end to the race, assigning to the guilty pair their part with the angels who sinned. 2 Pet. 2: 4. We do not believe, nor is such a thing taught in Scripture, that God would have left the children of Adam to perish for this his sin, without their active partic-

ipation in his apostasy. We further believe that the infant children who have died from the beginning of the world, as they participated in the sin and fall of Adam, without act or consent of their own, so in like manner, without act or consent of their own, they are saved by Christ, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, who works when, where and how he pleases. So that the propagation of a lost race was permitted only in view of the prospective work of the redemption of Christ, who, with allusion to this, is called "the last Adam" (1 Cor. 15: 45), and "the Lamb that was *slain from the foundation of the world.*" Rev. 13: 8.

[NOTE 7.—*On the Covenant made with Adam.* This transaction is called a covenant in Hos. 6: 7: "Like Adam they have transgressed the covenant." R. V. So then it has the *name of covenant* in the Holy Scriptures. But besides this, we so designate it—

1st. Because the penalty and the promise, as also the tremendous consequences involved for good or evil, declare that it was a covenant. Only the penalty is mentioned; but the failure to mention *the promise* does not cause any one to doubt that there was such a promise, and a promise of eternal life. 2nd. Because all the great transactions of God with his people, and with regard to his people, have been always by way of covenant. 3rd. The remedy of our evil, through *the Second Adam*, is precisely by way of covenant, as the Scriptures many times declare. Paul, in that parallel which he traces in Rom. 5: 12—19, between Adam and Christ, between the man who damned the world and the divine man who saves the world—between him who lost all his race, and him who saves all of his—says nothing about a covenant; but it would be very inconsistent to assume that Paul did not believe in the covenant of redemption, which he so extensively treats of in other places under that name. Gal. 4: 24; Heb. 12: 24. Well then, if *this* was a covenant, the agreement with Adam was no less a covenant.

The *condition* of the covenant was that of perfect obedience; the express prohibition was that of eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man fell, not by the act of "eating an apple," as it is often flippantly said, *but by the act of sinning against God*; the particular act of disobedience by which he sinned and so fell, being that of eating the forbidden fruit. It is important to observe this distinction. Any other sin that Adam might have committed would undoubtedly have produced the same result; but as it was morally impossible that one who was holy, and loved righteousness, should choose to do what was

wicked in itself, and abhorring what was evil, should resolve to commit it, the trial, *in order to be a trial*, could not turn on things that are in themselves right or wrong, but on something which is in itself of indifferent quality—precisely like the act of eating, or not eating, of a certain tree which God had forbidden him to use.

The *penalty* of the violation of this covenant was *death*; a word whose full significance man could not then comprehend, nor is it yet given to us to penetrate fully its meaning. It is very important to observe that the covenant was made with Adam, *before the creation of Eve, and was conditioned on his obedience, and not on hers.*]

2: 18—25. THE CREATION OF WOMAN. MARRIAGE.

(4004 B. C.)

18 And Jehovah God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for\* him.

19 And out of the ground Jehovah God formed every beast of the field, and every bird of the heavens; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them: and whatsoever the man called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

20 And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the heavens, and to every beast of the field; but for man† there was not found a help meet for him.

21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, 22 and the rib, which Jehovah God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And the man said, This is now‡ bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

\*Or, answering to [=the counterpart and completion of himself].

†Or, Adam.

[‡*Heb.* "this time (it is) bone," etc.]

It would be ignoring the genius and usage of the Hebrew tongue to infer from vr. 19 that God made to pass before the man, in interminable succession, the totality of the animals of the field and of the fowls of heaven. He gained his object by making to pass before him, in pairs, all, or the greater part of known animals and birds. As they passed thus before him, the man gave to each pair its proper name. A circumstance of great importance is this, and makes clearly manifest that the gift of speech was natural to man; that he was not a savage, nor a half brute, who slowly acquired the possibility of communicating with his fellows; but that before God had formed his companion Eve, he possessed it in such perfect degree, that he



was able to perform the extremely difficult office of giving names to all the animals.

While Adam thus in succession designated by name the different families of the animal creation, he could not fail to notice that each had a companion meet for it, and that he was the only exception. So God, as is his wont, made him to have a deep sense of what he most needed, before he supplied his want. Causing then a deep sleep to fall upon him, he took from his side one of his ribs, and made it into a woman, and presented her to him when Adam awoke. It is a very significant fact that he who made man of the dust should have made woman of that dust refined, forming her out of a part of man himself. The commentator Matthew Henry says "that the woman was formed out of man—not out of his head, to rule over him; not out of his feet, to be trod upon by him; but out of his side, to be his equal; from beneath his arm, to be protected; from near his heart, to be loved."

"A help meet for him" means, according to the Hebrew, *answering or corresponding to him*—the counterpart and completion of himself. In a racial sense, the two halves (corresponding to each other) make one whole. "They twain shall be one flesh."

Adam, when he saw her, made in the image and likeness of himself (1 Cor. 11: 7), exclaimed, with allusion to the former occasion, when successively every kind of animal was accompanied by its mate: "This time (Mod. Span. Vers.), it is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because out of man was she taken." The Hebrew words for "man and woman" are "Ish and Isha," the masculine and feminine forms of the same word.

There and then God instituted *marriage*—the union of one man and one woman in *lasting and inviolable bonds*. See Note 24, on marriage, in comment on ch. 24: 67. The union is lasting while it remains inviolate, and because inviolable, it is dissolved by being violated. Jesus clearly teaches in Matt. 19: 3—9, that while it is not lawful for a man to *put away his wife for every cause* and take another in her stead (as the Jews practiced it, and as is the use in Roman Catholic countries, with the vast multitudes called in Spanish "amancebados"\*) never-

\*In all Roman Catholic countries—unless R. C. Ireland, under Protestant rule, be an exception—the shameless exactions of the priests in the celebration of their so-called "sacrament of marriage" (of which they have the complete monopoly), have forced an incredible proportion of the people to adopt the easy expedient of "*amancebamiento*" (self-constituted marriages of convenience)—in which (in Latin America certainly) the

theless "fornication"—a word which frequently is used in the Bible for matrimonial infidelity, see ch. 38: 24; 2 Kings 9: 22—forms a valid and legitimate cause for so doing. Of this union of the sexes, instituted in paradise, Jesus says: "What God has joined together let not man put asunder" (Mark 10: 9); and the apostle Paul says: "Because of fornications, let every man have his own wife, and every woman have her own husband." 1 Cor. 7: 2.

"Naked." In their state of innocence, modesty did not require clothing as a covering for shame; and in that delicious climate of Eden it was not necessary for protection. Of God it is said: "He covered himself with light *as with a garment*" (Ps. 104: 2); and it is a probable opinion that in paradise their very holiness and innocence served Adam and Eve for a covering; a covering of which they divested themselves when they sinned against God. This verse bears on its face the evidence of being true history. To whom but God, or the holy angels, would it ever have occurred to say: "And they were both naked, the man and his wife; and they were not ashamed"? vr. 25.

### CHAPTER III.

VRS. 1—7. THE TEMPTATION. THE FALL. (Of uncertain date.)

1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat:

3 but of the fruit of the tree 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.

priests too often take the lead; an arrangement which lasts only so long as convenient, when the union is dissolved with or without consent of parties, and they are then free to enter into new arrangements of the same sort. *El Faro* (Mexico City, Feb. 15, 1904) says editorially that in some of the States of that Republic "the number of families living in this immoral way is *seventy per cent.*" Ancizar, in his *Peregrinación de Alpha*, mentions district after district in the Andine region of Colombia S. A., in which the illegitimate births are 50 per cent and upwards. Things may be better in Roman Catholic Europe; yet even there, in many cities they average from one third to one half of the total population, and sometimes more: 33 per cent in Paris; 35 in Brussels; 51 per cent in Vienna, and 65 in Gratz. See Seymour's *Evenings with the Romanists*, Preliminary Chapter on *The Moral Results of the Romish System*, for the official figures. *Seventy-five* per cent is said to be a common average in Venezuela; and yet many American Protestants think it is a waste of time and money, and "a gratuitous wrong to a Christian Church," to send missionaries to Roman Catholic lands!—Tr.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her,\* and he did eat.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons.†

[\*M. S. T., *when he was with her.*] †Or, girdles.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 11:3): "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted"—subtleties of Satan! The very same in both cases is the Serpent whom Paul feared. Even more expressly John speaks in Rev. 12:9 of "that old Serpent that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world." Satan, therefore, was that malignant spirit, who, under the form of a serpent, with subtlety deceived the woman, and by her means secured the fall and ruin of the man, and of his posterity. The woman was where she ought not to have been, near to the forbidden tree. Satan with malicious banter began to jeer her about the much beautiful fruit that she had around her, of none of which she was permitted to eat, by the positive prohibition of God. Instead of repelling the unworthy and God-dishonoring suggestion, which awakened in her breast doubts of his pure benevolence and disinterested love, and withdrawing at once from the dangerous presence of her tempter, the woman (like multitudes of her tempted daughters) allowed the conversation, and went on with it, until that happened which was to be expected. Finding her communicative, although she showed that she perfectly understood the divine command not to eat of the fruit of that tree, nor even to touch it, under pain of death, the tempter went further and denied that what God had said was true, alleging that, instead of dying, they would become like God himself, having their eyes opened to know good and evil; insinuating into the ear of the woman, already half disposed to admit the blasphemous imputation, that God, envious of their happiness, wished to deny to them a good which he himself possessed. Having already gained so much, Satan pressed the siege, until the woman, desirous now of satisfying "the lust of the eye," and aspiring to wisdom, where igno-

rance was bliss, put forth her hand and took of the fruit of the tree, and ate, and fell into sin.

It seems that Satan improved the opportunity of finding her alone, beneath the fatal tree, where she ought never to have been. Paul says: "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived fell into transgression." 1 Tim. 2:4. If Adam had been with her, it is to be supposed that Eve would not have done it; but having already yielded to temptation, she herself seduced her husband to break the covenant by his fatal act. It is impossible for us to penetrate the motives which operated with Adam to do with his eyes wide open, what the woman had done "being deceived." The poets have imputed to him as his motive that of joining his fate with that of his beloved Eve, believing her to be already lost. In that case, the temptation was to choose between the homage and obedience which he owed to God and the tender love he felt towards the woman,—fatal temptation which still leads many to their eternal ruin. But the act of Eve did not cause our ruin; perhaps, being herself "deceived," the act in her case was not irreparable. The covenant was made with Adam for himself and for his posterity, including possibly Eve also; and until he sinned, the covenant remained intact. She apparently was still in ignorance of the gravity of the act she had just committed; she did not know or feel her nakedness; in any case, she had compromised herself only; but the man, with full knowledge of what he was doing, instead of beseeching pardon for her, and for himself the protection of his God, chose to unite himself with her in her rebellion, and from her own hands accepted the fatal fruit, and ate; and they both fell together. In the act itself their eyes were opened, and they knew (what she seems not to have noticed before) that they were naked; and sewing together an ill-made clothing of fig leaves, they endeavored to conceal their shame and nakedness from each other, and from the eyes of God. Not "*aprons*," as says our English Version, which would go only partially around them; but "*girdles*," as the R. V. gives in a marginal note: "*girdles (or girders) which should cover them*"—the last words in italics—is the Modern Spanish Version: *a covering that girded them all the way round*, is the sense of the Hebrew text.

3: 8—19. THE CURSE. THE PROMISE. (Of uncertain date.)

8 And they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselves from

the presence of Jehovah God amongst the trees of the garden.

9 And Jehovah God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art thou?

10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

13 And Jehovah God said unto the woman, What is this thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

14 And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou 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:

15 and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18 thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19 in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Jehovah was accustomed, in the cool of the day, to visit and converse with Adam and Eve; but what had before been to them a delight, now causes them terror; and they hide themselves, self-condemned, among the thickest of the trees of the garden. Jehovah calls him, and the man confesses his shame and his fear. "Who hath told thee (Jehovah God answers him) that thou art naked?" Who hath taken from thee that veil of innocence which hid thy nakedness from thine eyes? "Hast thou eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" The man (an example which his sons and daughters faithfully follow), instead of confessing and deploring his sin, casts the blame on the woman; and the very form of his words reveals not merely resentment against his companion, but the blackest ingratitude against God, who had made him so incomparable a gift, inculcating *him* with *his part* in the blame; "*The woman whom thou didst put with me* [Span. Ver.], she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." So it happens always with sinners, until true repentance touches their hearts. In like manner, the woman casts the blame on the serpent; and then Jehovah pronounces sentence

upon each one of the three, beginning with the serpent.

*The serpent* was to be of all the animal creation the most accursed. The subtlety of the serpent, of which *vr. 1* speaks, refers primarily to *this* serpent in particular: the curse fell on it, and on all its kind; putting, as is seen and always has been seen, implacable hatred between men and this reptile;—a singular hatred, more than against any other part of the animal creation; a hatred for which we shall with difficulty find a reason without attending to this curse. It is not easy to explain to ourselves the universal fame which this diabolical reptile has had for *wisdom* among all the nations of antiquity, without reference to this act of treason against God, effected by the cunning of that “old Serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world.” *Rev. 12: 9*. There is no reason for believing, as some say, that prior to this time the serpent walked erect. With regard to “eating the dust,” it is sufficient to say that it is a part of his vile condition, and is best explained by reference to *Ps. 72: 9*,

“His enemies shall lick the dust”;

and in fact, *Micah 7: 17*, in this very sense of degradation, says:

“They shall lick the dust like the serpent;

like crawling things of the earth, they shall come forth trembling out of their close places.”

*The woman* was to suffer many, prolonged and bitter pains of maternity, such as did not belong to her original condition: this is the sense of the Hebrew text, and not that God would *increase them*; and she who was to have been the companion and equal of man, in his state of innocence and perfection, was placed in subjection under him: “He shall rule over thee” [*Span. Ver. “He shall be thy lord”*]. Let the degradation and slavery of woman for 6,000 years testify of this, and her condition till today, in all non-Christian countries; a degradation, from which only the Gospel of Christ has freed her. Even the apostles of Christ told him roundly that if the man had not the liberty of dismissing his wife *for every cause* (much as one would dismiss his house-servant or his cook), without anything more than writing and giving her the three or four lines of a bill of divorcement, without the intervention of judge or jury—“if such be the condition of the man with his wife, *it is not good to marry!*” *Matt. 19: 10*. Lost to right reason must that woman be who does not know how to love and appreciate her Benefactor and Liberator, who restored her to the place of liberty and equality, to which God

from the beginning has destined her, as the companion, but not the slave of man. See Matt. 19: 3—10; Deut. 24: 1.

*The man:* on him, rather than on the woman, the curse fell with concentrated force:—it being understood, however, that she participated in the curse that fell on Adam and his posterity. For his cause the earth itself was to be accursed, and instead of the grateful labors of Eden, there began for Adam and his descendants the hard struggle for existence. Without arms, without tools or instruments of any kind, without clothing, without habitation, cast out from the paradise which had been formerly his own, he entered upon the unequal contest, gaining his bread in the sweat of his face, until he should return to the ground from whence he was taken.

[NOTE 8.—*On Death.* Adam lived 930 years; but according to the penalty of the broken covenant, *he died in the very day that he ate the forbidden fruit*; showing that “death” in the proper and full Bible meaning of the word, is not merely or chiefly the death of the body; but is rather to suffer the loss of the favor of God which is life, and to partake in all the temporal and spiritual ills involved in that unparalleled loss. It is frequently alleged, that so extensive and complete a ruin could not have resulted from an act as simple as the eating of the forbidden fruit. The allegation is specious, but false. It was not the eating of a certain fruit which caused so much ruin; it was *the sinning against God*; and it ought to be confessed at once, that we, as sinners, are totally incapable of judging with reference to the criminality or the necessary consequences of such an act. If we were in some cavern of deepest darkness, exposed to fall at every moment down fearful precipices or into dangerous pits, and our whole security and the hope of escaping from thence depended on a lighted candle which we carried in the hand, with the strictest injunctions to guard it as our very life; it would be an act of fatuity after it had been extinguished through our own carelessness, to complain that it was *not a hurricane* but a simple breath of air which put it out! Thus it was that our welfare and life depended entirely on the favor of God; and his favor depended on the keeping of his covenant; for once the condition was violated on which depended “his favor which is life,” man was submerged in death temporal, spiritual, eternal.]

Nevertheless we believe, as has been already said (p. 32), that if there had not interposed the purpose of God in Christ to redeem us as fallen, at once the sentence of death, in its whole extension, would have overtaken these two sinners, be-

fore they had children to partake of their ruin. Besides this, with respect of the greater part of the descendants of the first transgressor, that part which has died in tender infancy, we believe that, as they were made partakers of the sin of Adam without any act of their own, so also, without any act of their own, they are made partakers of the righteousness and redemption of Christ. With regard to those who arrive at the age of personal responsibility (whatever that may be), and by their own act are sinners, there remains for them the choice of justifying and applauding the act of the first transgressor, by refusing to abandon his way of sin, or of condemning and repudiating it, and taking refuge in Christ, the second Adam, whom God has made the eternal life of men. Those who in Christian lands shut their ears against God's many and tender invitations, and refuse to repent and abandon their sins, do in effect say: "Well done, Adam! well done! We will faithfully follow in thy footsteps!"

*The promise.* Enwrapped in the curse which fell upon the serpent, is found the first promise—the germ of all the other promises. It is clear that there is found here a curse upon the whole race of snakes, and a prophecy of the implacable hatred which exists between them and men. The words of this prophecy (for it is a prophecy as well as a promise) have, as many other prophecies have, a double application and a double fulfilment; as there was there not merely a serpent, but that "Wicked One," who availed himself of that disguise to disarm the suspicions of Eve, and to awaken her curiosity and interest. Eternal hatred, then, God put between the serpent and Eve and between the descendants of the one and the descendants of the other; but at the same time he put eternal hatred between Satan and "the Woman," and between his seed and her seed. Who then was "the Woman"? In the natural sense of the words, as we have already said, the woman was Eve and the serpent was the reptile of this name; and the two seeds are men and snakes respectively. But in symbolical usage, *a serpent cannot be a serpent, nor a woman a woman*; nor can the two respective seeds be snakes and men in general. The serpent is Satan as has been already shown, but who is "the Woman," and who are the seed of each respectively? It is not Eve; and for the same reason it cannot be Mary, the mother of Jesus. Who then can it be? The twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation paints this woman with wonderful clearness, together with her first-born Son, and also "*the rest of her seed*, against both of whom—the woman and her seed (the first born



and *all the rest of "the seed of the woman"*)—"that ancient Serpent, called the Devil and Satan," makes unceasing war. According to the constant use of both the Old and the New Testaments, *that woman is the Church*, who is one and the same throughout all the ages, the mother of Christ, "according to the flesh," and of us; he being "the first-born among many brethren." Romans 8: 29. Paul, speaking allegorically of the two wives of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar,—the free woman and the slave—says: "For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to the Jerusalem that is now; for she is in bondage with all her children. But the Jerusalem which is above is free; *who is our mother.*" Gal. 4: 25, 26.

This is then "the Woman" of this prophecy—the mother of all the people of God, *including Jesus Christ* in his human nature, who is the first-born of them, the Chief, the Head, the King, and Redeemer of the other children. The Church, then, is neither Jewish, nor Protestant, nor Anglican, and still less Roman; for her also John portrays in the Revelation as a "woman," but very different from the former;—*an unfaithful spouse* (and therefore not a heathen power), seated upon the seven hills of Rome, Rev. 17: 3—6, 18.

Between the Church, then,—the Church of the believing people of God in all ages and countries—and Satan, and between her seed and his seed, God has placed enmity (comp. Eph. 2: 2, 3; 2 Cor. 4: 3, 4); the which two seeds divide between themselves the whole race of Adam and Eve. And so Jesus says in Matt. 13: 38: "The good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the Wicked One"; and again, he said to the unbelieving Jews: "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do." John 8: 44. Those misguided Christians, then, who believe that they are doing a meritorious work in trying to harmonize the Church and the world, by minimizing the essential distinction which exists between the two, are in open conflict with God, who says: "*I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.*"

False and very pernicious is the favorite error of the Roman Catholics (which contradicts also the notes of their own Bible [Amat's certainly] upon chapter 12 of the Revelation), in applying to Mary the second part of this verse, making it to read: "SHE shall bruise thy head," etc., and representing Mary (as she is everywhere to be seen pictured) with the babe in her arms, and the serpent under her feet. In Spanish, *woman* and *seed* are both alike of the feminine gender, so that the relative

pronoun "she" is equivocal, as it can be referred to either of the two; but in the Hebrew text the word translated "seed" is masculine, and the relative pronoun is "he", and not "she"; so that the Hebrew says explicitly: "HE shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise *his* heel." The word "*wound*", used in Spanish, and "*bruise*" in English, are neither of them fully adequate to the occasion: it is not an ordinary blow that is spoken of, but a *mortal blow* in both cases. "*Break*" is the word employed in the Modern Spanish Version; it being understood that if to *break the heel* means death, to *break the head* means utter destruction.

I believe also that it is very inadequate to say (though this be the ordinary form of statement) that "the seed of the woman" is Jesus Christ our Lord, as such: he is more properly *one individual of the Woman's seed*: the first and chiefest, and the Redeemer of the rest of the seed, but by no means the totality of it. In the very striking presentation of the matter in the passage already quoted, he was her first-born (Rom. 8: 29; Rev. 12: 5) "*the man child who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron*"; who is carefully distinguished in vr. 5 from "*the rest of her seed*, who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus", against whom the Dragon (= the Serpent) went to make war, in vr. 17. Christ has died and risen again; and "has obtained (in his own person) *eternal redemption for us*" (Heb. 9: 12); but Satan is still "the prince" and "god of this world" (Eph. 2: 2; 2 Cor. 4: 4), and will continue so till the "end of the Age",—when his time shall come. Matt. 13: 49, and 8: 29. The Serpent's head is wounded unto death, but still far from utterly broken. He is yet *the head over the kingdom of darkness*, and is untiringly active and of terrible power. He still holds, as Paul says, "the power of death" (Heb. 2: 14), and as a mighty lord, which he is, "he worketh in the children of disobedience and holds them captive to do his will," Eph. 2: 2; 2 Tim. 2: 26. Strictly understood, this is a prophecy rather of *the redemption*, than of *the Redeemer*; as generally happens in the prophecies of the Old Testament; and if we look at it rightly, we shall see that Christ, when he placed himself in our stead, and when "*Jehovah laid on him the iniquity of us all*," HAD NECESSARILY TO REDEEM HIMSELF *through the efficacy of his own blood*, together with his people. [So Paul unmistakably teaches where he says that "the God of peace *brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep*, our Lord Jesus, *through the blood of the everlasting covenant*." Heb 13: 20. And as our sins were *laid on him*, not in a fictitious, but in a very real judicial sense, he could not get quit of them at all, except by atoning for them with the

efficacy of his own blood. If it had been as impossible for his blood to take away sins, as it was for that of bulls and goats, he would today be dead as Judas Iscariot,—Judas for his own, and Jesus for the sins of others. On this fact *and on the certainty of his resurrection* we base our ASSURANCE of pardon and eternal life.—Tr.]

The saints of the ancient time embraced fervently the promise of redemption (Heb. 11: 10, 13, 16, 35, 39, 40), and they believed in Jehovah as their Redeemer and the God of their salvation; but it was little that they understood (nor was it necessary that they should understand it), of the person of that Redeemer, who was to give effect to the promise, by dying for our sins and rising again for our justification: if it had been otherwise, John the Baptist and the apostles of Christ would not have been so completely ignorant as they were, and until after its accomplishment continued to be, of the expiatory death of Jesus and his resurrection to immortal life.

“The seed of the woman” then, ought to be understood of *the totality of the people of God*—all the seed, including Christ, as “the first-born” and the Liberator of the rest. The promise yet fails of great part of its fulfilment. So Paul said to the Christians of Rome: “The God of peace *shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly*”. Rom. 16: 20. He bruised (or broke) the heel (according to the usage of snakes) of Christ at his death, and of the rest of the seed of the woman, when they die: but Christ, for himself and for all his, has broken the Serpent’s head, or commenced the good work, with his own death and his resurrection to life eternal; and he will make an end of it with the “redemption of our body,” at the last day. As Paul says, Christ, by his death and resurrection, “abolished death” (2 Tim. 1: 10), for himself, in the first place, and potentially for all his people together with himself, “destroying by means of death him that hath the power (= dominion) of death, that is the devil, and delivering them who through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage.” (Heb. 2: 14, 15.)

### 3: 20, 21. EVE. THE COATS OF SKINS. (Of uncertain date.)

20 And the man called his wife’s name Eve: because she was the mother of all living.

21 And Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them.

Adam called his wife Eve (= Life), because she was (or was to be) “the mother of all the living”;—another undeniable proof that according to the Bible, all mankind, in all its different races, tongues, colors and types, proceed from one and same stock. It is natural that Adam and Eve should have believed that the

penalty of the broken covenant would have taken effect at once, in the strict letter of the word, and that they would be destroyed immediately; and it is possible that when Adam called his wife "Life" (= Eve), he gave expression to the relief they both felt on seeing that it did not so happen.

The coats of skins, in the opinion of the best interpreters of Scripture, ancient and modern, give us the first intimation we have of the divine origin of the rite of sacrifice. It is morally impossible that by an act of original creation God should have provided the skins to make these coats. It is no less impossible that he should have killed the animals to take off their skins, and then cast out their carcasses to the vultures. It is highly improbable that, having taken off the skins, he should have given the flesh to Adam and Eve to eat. There does not remain, therefore, any other possible supposition but that God himself instituted, then and there, the rite of sacrifice (in token of his mercy, thus shadowed forth, when he accepted the death of the innocent victim in the stead of man the sinner), causing the flesh to be burned upon the altar, and converting the skins into coats, which should answer the double purpose of covering their nakedness and protecting their persons. According to the levitical law, the skin was not consumed with the burnt-offering, but was for the priest who offered the sacrifice. Lev. 7: 8. When God, therefore, instituted this first sacrifice, there remained to him the skins of the burnt offerings to make into coats. And only thus can we reasonably explain the words of the apostle in Heb. 11: 4: "*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain*"; because if the sacrifice had been something of his own invention, it could not have been "by faith"; since in the Biblical and Evangelical sense of the word, *faith is a loving confidence in and acceptance of the word and promise of God*; and Christ establishes for us this general principle of worship: "*In vain do they worship me, teaching doctrines which are the precepts of men.*" (M. S. V.) Matt. 15: 9. It is also interesting to notice how both the sacrifice at Eden's gate, and its great antitype on Calvary, furnished not only expiation for sin, but clothing which serves both for our protection, and to cover our nakedness and shame. From the poor lamb was taken away his covering and protection, to bestow them on the sinner. Thus it was with the "robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61: 10) which Christ bestows on us, and with which Paul desired evermore and only to be clothed. Rom. 3: 21—24, and Phil. 3: 9. See also Rev. 3: 18.

3: 22—24. THE BANISHMENT OF OUR FIRST PARENTS FROM PARADISE AND FROM THE VICINITY OF THE TREE OF LIFE. THE CHERUBIM. (Of uncertain date.)

22 And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever—

23 therefore Jehovah God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

In form, this banishment manifests the wrath of God on account of their sin; and it is often supposed that the denying them access to the tree of life was depriving them of a real good; but in reality, it was just contrary. Whatever may have been the tree of life (mentioned here, and also in Rev. 22: 2, speaking of paradise regained), and whatever may have been its virtue to give life, it ought to be considered that immortality is not a good except for the pure and holy, and that *an immortality of sin is necessarily eternal perdition*. It is not conceivable that a race of sinners, like ourselves, at enmity with God and his law, his kingdom and his righteousness, loving what is evil and totally corrupted (spiritually) in mind and heart, "hateful and hating one another" (Tit. 3: 3), could exist in society under any other conditions than those which God imposed upon it in the day of its sin. Let the law of enforced labor in order to gain one's bread be revoked; let the law of sickness and other physical infirmities be removed; let there be taken away from man the fear of death and the fact of death, without *changing his depraved nature*, and the result would be . . . well, the infidel and free-thinker shall say the word—"A HELL." Besides this, it is altogether probable, or better said, it is altogether certain, that only by means of the death of Christ could there be made a satisfaction to divine justice, an atonement for our sins. Physical death, therefore, on the one hand, makes social life possible to a race of sinners, during the brief space of time which we spend as a shadow on the earth; and on the other, only this made it possible to pay the ransom of our souls: "By means of death he (Christ) destroyed him who had the power (or dominion) of death, that is, the devil, and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. 2: 14.

Those two sinners, therefore, having been banished from paradise, Jehovah placed at the gate of it "the cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." It is difficult to determine the nature, class and office

of the *cherubim*. Besides this case, the word occurs 73 times in the Bible; 44 times with reference to the symbolical figures standing at the two ends of the Ark of the Covenant, between which dwelt the God of Israel, and embroidered on the curtains of the Tabernacle, and likewise sculptured on the woodwork of the Temple; and 19 times it is used in the book of Ezekiel (chapters 1 and 10), with respect of those mysterious beings that bore, and in part formed, the "chariot" of the God of Israel. There were four of them, inseparable from the platform and the wheels; and all that apparatus, with its platform, throne, wheels, cherubim, animated by the same life, spirit and purpose, *went to form one living being*; by these circumstances says Ezekiel, "I knew that they were cherubim." Ezek. 10: 15—20. They each had four faces, that of a man, a lion, an ox and an eagle; they each had also four wings, and a hand, or an arm with a hand, beneath each wing. In the book of Revelation, chapters 4, 5, 6, etc., we have four living beings—again four—"in the midst," between the four and twenty elders and the throne of God; which also must have been cherubim; although this is not expressly said. But this time the four had six wings each (like the *seraphim* of Isa. 6: 2), and they were each one of a different form; one like a lion, one like a calf, another had the face of a man, and the other was like a flying eagle. Rev. 4: 7, 8.

The cherubim which overshadowed the ark of the covenant (Ex. 25: 18—22) had two wings and one face each; those of olive wood, ten cubits high, which were in the Holy of Holies of the Temple of Solomon, were probably of the same form; as also seem to have been those that were embroidered on the curtains of the Tabernacle and sculptured on the wainscoting and the doors of the Temple. Once only Ezekiel (ch. 41: 18), in the representation he gives of his ideal Temple, depicts for us cherubim of two faces—of a man and of a lion. Once David, in high and resonant poetry, (Ps. 18: 10), represents to us Jehovah as mounted upon a cherub and flying with impetuous sweep to the aid of his servant. From all this it seems evident that the cherubim were not an especial order of the celestial hierarchy, but that, like as the "twenty-four elders" of the Apocalypse were *symbolical representations* of God's redeemed people, rather than individual persons, so also the cherubim were *symbolical representations* of those celestial intelligences of high rank, that were charged in a special manner with the affairs and the interests of the human redemption; and who also served as the accompaniment of the God of Israel, under

the particular aspect of his relations to his people, manifested in the *shekinah* of glory on Mount Sinai, in the Tabernacle, and in the column of fire and cloud which guided and defended them in the desert.

The common opinion that the cherubim grasped and wielded the flaming sword, is entirely without foundation. On the contrary, *there were several cherubim and only one sword*; the former, representing or manifesting the divine presence, and the latter, the sword of his justice which forbade those two sinners to approach the tree of life. In Rev. 22:14 (R. V.) we see that only those who "have washed their garments" in the blood of the Lamb have "the right to come to the tree of life," yonder, in paradise regained.

At this point the tree of life completely disappears from human history, to reappear once more, in the consummation of the ages, in apocalyptic representation of redemption completed. The intermediate chapters of the Bible, from Gen. 4 to Rev. 21, are filled up with the dark, sad history of the errors, sins, crimes, calamities, wars, famines, diseases and deaths, which have resulted from that one woeful act of that one man (Rom. 5: 12—19) which put out in our heavens the light of God, and consigned us to darkness, and death,—that darkness illumined, nevertheless, with the promises of the divine mercy and of the coming redemption; while the sacred volume closes, as it began, with A NEW CREATION—"behold I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5)—"new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:13); and the dwelling of God is again and forevermore with men. Rev. chapters 21 and 22.

[NOTE 9.—*On the character and destiny of our first parents, Adam and Eve.* God has left us in the most complete uncertainty with regard to this; and it ill befits us to endeavor to bring into light what he has purposely enshrouded with darkness. Not only in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, but in all Holy Scripture, the list of believing men begins with Abel, and not with Adam. It is clear that to them (Adam and Eve) God gave the first promise, and instituted for them the rite of sacrifice, covering their nakedness with the skins of the victims of sacrifice; which vividly represents the garment which the Lamb of Calvary has provided for us; but this does not prove that they accepted with faith and sincerity the offered mercy. The exclamation of Eve (ch. 4:1) when she embraced her first son, makes undeniable allusion to the promise; but does not necessarily imply an evangelical faith in it, any more than the still clearer exclamation of Lamech signifies it, when Noah was born (ch. 5: 29); since it is almost

certain that Lamech was one of those sinners for whose cause the deluge came upon the world of the ungodly, dying as he did, according to the common chronology, only five years before that catastrophe. More appearance of faith and piety has Eve's exclamation when Seth (=Substitution) was born, and the name which she gave him (ch. 4:25): but that is not decisive. It is altogether possible, that, as in the case of the angels who fell, sinning with full knowledge, so also the sin of Adam and Eve had no remission, and that in the last day, when they shall see the innumerable multitudes who will "go away into everlasting punishment" as a result of their first transgression, they themselves will desire to "go away" with them. Their sin has no resemblance to ours, that it should be treated in the same way. But however this may be, the Bible observes an absolute silence with regard to their repentance and faith, with regard to the pardon of their sins, and with regard to their character and destiny; with the object, perhaps, of placing in the most vivid contrast Adam and Christ; the man who damned the world and the divine Man who saves it. John 3:16, 17; 1 John 4:14.]

#### CHAPTER IV.

VRS. 1, 2. CAIN AND ABEL. (Of uncertain date.)

1 And the man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with *the help of Jehovah*.

2 And again she bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

The trial of Adam and Eve must necessarily have lasted some considerable time. In the formerly prevailing belief that the animals were created simultaneously with mankind, and a single pair of each species (just as it happened in the case of man himself), the opinion was well founded that our first parents passed several years in their state of probation, allowing time for a single pair of sheep to multiply sufficiently to provide the sacrifices whose skins served for the coats with which God clothed them. And although we now know for certain that the domestic animals (the last of the animal creation) had had opportunity to increase in number before man was created, nevertheless, Adam and Eve must have passed weeks and months in their state of innocence, and perhaps a year or two, before they fell into the transgression; and by the particular providence of God they had no children until after that; just as it happened to the sons of Noah, who, being all married before the flood, had no children till after it. Ch. 10:1.



When Eve looked with admiration and maternal affection upon the new creature, her first-born son, she called him Cain (=Acquisition), saying: "I have gotten a man with the help of Jehovah,"—with undoubted allusion to the promise of God as to the "seed of the woman;" although it is impossible to penetrate the meaning which she herself would give to her words. Some say that the words ought to be translated: "I have gotten *the man Jehovah*;" but although the words are perhaps susceptible of this translation, it is wholly improbable, not to say impossible, that Adam and Eve should have had such knowledge of the doctrine of the incarnation of the second Person of the Trinity. But certainly it is natural that Eve should have believed that the promised "seed" was born, who should break the serpent's head: if so, how sad her error! how woeful her mistake!

"Abel (=Vanity)" was the name given to the second son, with allusion to the misfortunes of his pious life, which ended only with his tragic death. 1 John 3:12. Cain was a tiller of the ground and Abel a pastor of sheep; a circumstance which comes to dissipate into smoke the idea, founded on very insufficient evidence, that it was not lawful to eat of flesh until after the deluge. Comp. Gen. 1:29 with 9:3. The fact that in paradise Adam was not to kill animals in order to eat them, does not imply that he was not to do so afterwards. Abel kept sheep for sacrificial purposes, no doubt, and to use their skins for clothing; but undoubtedly also to eat. This is shown in vr. 4, where it is said that Abel offered in sacrifice to Jehovah "the firstlings of his flock, *and the fat thereof*" [Mod. Span. Ver. "the firstlings of his sheep, *and their suets*"]. According to the usage of the ancients, the firstlings of the flock and of the herd were for Jehovah, and when offered in sacrifice, it was probably as whole burnt offerings, all except the skin, which was for the priest (Lev. 7:8); while in the case of peace offerings, *the blood and the suet* were offered in sacrifice to Jehovah (Lev. 3:16, 17), but the flesh was to be eaten. See Lev. 7:11-34. Abel, therefore, brought to God—for it would be an indication of much ignorance of the language and usages of the Hebrews to suppose that once only in his life-time, did he offer a sacrifice to God—the firstlings of his flock entire, less the skin; and of the rest, *the suet and the blood*; but he and the other members of the family ate the flesh.

The translations of Valera and Scio, and of the English Versions as well, which all say, "and of *the fat*," or "of *the fats*," instead of "*suet*" or "*suets*," is unfortunate, and renders impossible,

as I think, the proper interpretation of this passage. God did not forbid the Jews to eat "the fat," nor require them to live on *lean meat*. The same thing happens in Lev. 3:16, 17 and 7:23-25, which absolutely prohibit under the severest penalty, the eating of the "*suet*," or *sacrificial fat*, but surely did not forbid the use of the fat"! This was the law: "*All the suet* [as it should be read] is Jehovah's. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, in all your dwelling places, that *ye shall eat neither suet nor blood*." The suet is the solid and hard fat that clings to the kidneys and the loins. This Abel gave to God in sacrifice, besides the firstlings of his flock; a clear indication, as I see it, that the flesh and the ordinary fat served him and the rest of the family for food.

#### 4:3—7. THE TWO SACRIFICES. (Of uncertain date.)

3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah.

4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat\* thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

5 but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

6 And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth and why is thy countenance fallen?

7 If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up?† and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door;‡ and unto thee shall be its desire; but do thou rule over it.||

[\**Mod. Span. Ver.*, firstlings of his sheep, and of their suets.]

[†*A. V.* and *M. S. V.*, shalt thou not be accepted?]

[‡*A. V.* and *M. S. V.*, sin lieth at the door.]

[||*A. V.*, his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. *M. S. V.*, thou shalt be his lord.]

On a certain notable occasion—for it is not supposable that this was the only sacrifice that Abel ever offered—the two brothers brought their offerings in sacrifice to Jehovah. We know that prior to this Cain was wicked and Abel was just (see vr. 7, and 1 John 3: 12); but in this particular sacrifice we find the culminating point in the character and destiny of each. On comparing the business and occupation of the two brothers, we would say that Cain's was every way superior to that of Abel; and yet from that very circumstance came the temptation to despise the institution of God and those sacrifices which, since the fall of man, prefigured the expiatory death of Christ. Rev. 13: 8. Cain "through the pride of his countenance, would not seek after God" (Ps. 10:4), nor did he care to seek in the flock of his brother an offering acceptable to Jehovah. In the Levitical law are prescribed the circumstances and conditions necessary in order "that the offering may be accepted" (Lev. 1: 3, 4; 7: 18);

and it is not to be supposed that in the beginning of the error and sin of the race, God was less concerned about the manner in which sinners should approach him. See Heb. 11:6; Lev. 10:3.

“Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to Jehovah”—the produce of his own especial industry; grains, fruits and flowers; but Abel presented the blood and the palpitating flesh of his slaughtered sheep. In itself, and judging according to the light of nature and the appearance of things, Cain's offering ought to have been in every sense more fitting and artistic, and more pleasing to any person of good taste, than that of Abel; which, in itself considered, was shocking to good taste and even repugnant to all right feeling. If it were a matter of his own invention, it ought to have been condemned as cruel and horrible. Nevertheless Jehovah accepted the offering of Abel; but he would not even look at the beautiful offering of Cain! From Heb. 11: 4 we know that in this sacrifice testimony was given to Abel that he was righteous, God himself testifying his acceptance and approbation of his gifts and sacrifices—for, according to both texts there were several. We do not know in what manner God testified his acceptance and his displeasure; but it was manifested in a marked and unequivocal way. According to the analogy of the word of God, it is natural to suppose that he answered Abel by fire from heaven (see Jud. 13: 20-23; 1 Kings 18: 37-39; 1 Chron. 21: 26-28); leaving in neglect and dishonor the beautiful and artistic offering of Cain.

We already know that Abel was a holy man and that Cain was wicked (1 John 3:12); but it is certified to us that it was not for his holiness that the offering of Abel was accepted, but for his FAITH (Heb. 11: 4); nor was Cain rejected as a sinner, but for the entire lack of that “faith, without which it is impossible to please God.” Heb. 11: 6. Evangelical faith is not holiness, nor goodness, nor any good work of our own, although it is the fruitful source of all of these; but rather, it is the full assurance of the truth and certainty of *the testimony which God has given us*, simply because it is his testimony, and a hearty confidence that he will fulfil his declarations and his promises (which we accept), in spite of whatever obstacles may interpose. So that *where there is no testimony and promise of God there can be no evangelical faith*. Since it is so, then, that “*through faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain*” (Heb. 11:4), it is clear that this was not a sacrifice of his own invention, as was that of Cain, but was *based on the word and promise of God*;—an undeniable proof that the sacrifice of slaughtered animals had been established by God

himself, with probable allusion to the promise regarding "the seed of the woman," and in vivid representation of the Sacrifice of Calvary. Abel was a type of the true servants of God, who square their lives, their hopes and their worship by his express word and promise, trusting in the unmerited mercy of God in Christ; while Cain, in his self-appointed sacrifice, was a type of rationalists and semi-rationalists on the one hand, and of Ritualists and Romanists on the other, who arrange their worship according to their own pleasure, and with whom a beautiful ceremony of human invention is worth more than all the positive institutions of God. The sacrifice of Cain was marked also by this special circumstance (in common with the ideas and usages of the irreligious of today), that it manifested his full satisfaction with himself, and said nothing of sin, nor of repentance, nor of expiation; while that of Abel speaks of all this, pointing as it were with the finger to the sacrifice of "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world". John 1:29; Rev. 13:8.

Cain was very angry on account of the preference which God gave to his brother and his offering of faith; but Jehovah taught him that the fault was his own; for if he did well he would be accepted, but if not, the sin lay at his own door. And yet, in spite of the past, this was not to alter the natural relations which existed between the two, for, as God told Cain, the rights of primogeniture were still his own: "To thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt be his lord" (M. S. V.)—or "rule over him"—the very same words spoken to Eve in ch. 3:16, to indicate her subjection to her husband. When Isaac conferred on Jacob Esau's birthright, he said to him: "*Be thou lord of thy brethren*, and let the sons of thy mother bow down to thee". Ch. 27:29. So simple and satisfactory is this sense of the words, that it seems unreasonable to seek for intricate explanations; as that which refers the word to sin, under the figure of a wild beast, crouching at his door to devour him; but which it was in the power of his hand to subdue, if he so desired.

#### 4: 8—15. THE FIRST MURDER. (Of uncertain date.)

8 And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

9 And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper?

10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

11 And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened\* its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

12 when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth.

13 And Cain said unto Jehovah, My punishment is greater than I can bear.†

14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the ground; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it will come to pass, that whosoever findeth me will slay me.

15 And Jehovah said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And Jehovah appointed a sign for Cain, lest any finding him should smite him.

[\**Heb.* opened violently.]

[†*Mod. Span. Ver.*, mine iniquity is too great to be forgiven.]

"And Cain told his brother Abel"; that is he told him what Jehovah had said. More correct is this translation, and it better suits the case, than "Cain spake to his brother Abel." It seems as though Cain began a dispute about this matter with his brother; and when the two were together in the field, he rose up against his brother and killed him.

According to the chronological system of Ussher, which is found in our Bibles, this happened in the year 129 in the life of Adam, one year before the birth of Seth, when Cain was 128 years old, and Abel a little less. But it is impossible to believe that Cain and Abel should have lived to be 125 years of age without being married, having sisters who answered for this purpose, and there being urgent necessity to populate the earth; according to the first command which God laid on Adam and Eve: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." Gen. 1: 28. The extreme brevity of these ancient histories makes it impossible to determine with any certainty points of this nature; but I believe that fifty or perhaps eighty years passed between the death of Abel and the birth of his "substitute," Seth, in which time many children were born to Adam and Eve. To believe that chapter five teaches us that in those ages men arrived very slowly at their maturity, and married very late in life,—as at 100, 120 or 180 years of age, is an extravagance; as we shall see in the following chapter. It would be as proper to believe that Noah did not marry till he was 500 years of age (ch. 5: 22), or to hold for certain that the antediluvian sinners passed a very long and a very chaste period of youth; for in Bible language to "take a woman" is to "take a wife."

We note here the insolence with which the murderer replies to the interrogatory of Jehovah: "Where is Abel thy brother?" It is always the natural effect of sin to harden the heart, and fill it with arrogance towards God. Jehovah told him that he

had a perfect knowledge of the case, and said that the shed blood (*Heb.* "bloods"—blood unjustly and violently shed) of his brother was crying to him for vengeance from the ground, which he had profaned with a brother's blood. *Comp. Heb.* 12: 24. This personification of the blood which clamors for vengeance against him who shed it, is in *vr.* 10 transferred to the earth, or ground, outraged by the innocent blood shed upon it (see *Num.* 35: 33), which lifts up its voice in energetic protest, to curse him. In *Numbers* 16: 30 and *Deut.* 11: 6, the same Hebrew words are translated in the Modern Spanish Version "the earth *opened with violence* its mouth", when the ground clave asunder beneath Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and swallowed them up with their families; and according to the lexicographer Gesenius, the Hebrew word *patsah* bears in its very form the idea of *violence*. In this case, however, the violence must be of a moral character; as if against its will and with utter repugnance, the earth opened its mouth to receive the innocent blood which Cain had shed upon it. In *vr.* 12 the personification is carried still further,—signifying that the earth would give him an unwilling return for his labor as a cultivator of the soil, and indignant, would grudgingly yield him its fruit; and he should become a fugitive and a wanderer upon the earth. Like to this is the curse which, in his heart, comes to every murderer, from that day to this; and not a few of them carry in their very faces "the mark of Cain." *Vr.* 15.

The reply of Cain admits perfectly of two different translations, of which some accept the one and some the other, according to what they consider to have been the state of his mind. In the alternative translation, which is given in the margin of the Modern Spanish Version, but here is in the text, his selfish thought is always turned on himself, and he complains against God that the punishment of his sin is excessive, and beyond his power to endure it. But a literal and exact translation is that of the Spanish text; and it appears to me to indicate that Cain, seeing at last the irreparable effects of his crime, and overwhelmed with a sense of its enormity, and knowing (as every murderer must know it) that he well deserves death as a satisfaction to offended justice, exclaims, desperate, but not repentant; "My iniquity is too great to be forgiven!" and believes that he sees in every person he meets the avenger of his crime. I take it that this is the likelier sense, and more adequate to the occasion. Although God afterward ordained inexorable pain of death for every wilful murderer, in this case he passed it by (probably in view of the very scant population

of the earth), threatening seven-fold punishment on any one who should kill Cain; and he placed a certain *mark* on him, lest whoever found him should kill him, in obedience to that natural instinct found in every human bosom, in all lands, and from the most primitive times,—the innate consciousness that the murderer is deserving of death. See Acts 28: 3—6.

This fear of Cain furnishes us also with unquestionable proof that after the death of Abel there were *many more people in the world* besides Adam, and Eve, and Cain. The fear that haunted him, the belief that every one who met him would wish to kill him, was not a fear of phantasms. Although nothing has been so far said about the wife of Cain, it is probable that fifty or eighty years had elapsed since the creation of Adam and Eve (the date in the margin of our Bibles says 129); and it is certain that they had many children, and even grandchildren, before Seth was born (in the line of the promise), when Adam was 130 years old. Ch. 5: 3.

[NOTE 10.—*On the Death of Abel. What was the object of his faith and his hope?* It is a horrible truth and was of evil omen for the coming generations of our race, that the first man born into the world was a murderer, and the second was his victim. What prospect then of any good remained for men in such a world? And as to Abel's future, *what hope was there for him, and of him*, in his untimely and unlooked-for death?

Death was to him, and to all others, something completely unknown, since he was the first of the race to die. It is impossible, therefore, that the expectation of "dying and going home to heaven" (which to so many nowadays is about the sum total of the promised "salvation") had any part whatever in his faith and his hope. His ideal of the promised deliverance and salvation would almost necessarily be that of restoration to the happy condition from which his parents had fallen, and the complete recovery of the lost favor of God; and his faith, *in order to be faith*, would rest necessarily on that sure first promise of the Seed of the Woman, enlarged no doubt with verbal explanations. Peter tells us (Acts 3:21) that "*Since the world began\**—and therefore before the death of Abel—God had *spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, of the times of the restoration of all things*", *when he will send (the second time) the risen Jesus, who is now in heaven: so that the hope of the restoration of the lost good*, would perfectly suit the case of Abel. Nobody

\*The American Revision translates it, "by the mouth of his holy prophets *that have been from of old*"; but Peter certainly means to say, *SINCE PROPHECY BEGAN*; and therefore, *since the first prophecy and promise was given*. Gen. 3: 15.—Tr.

knew, however (nor does anybody yet know), when this was or is to be; and the repeated notices that we have of the hope of Eve (ch. 4: 1—25), and that of Lamech (ch. 5: 29), prove that, just as the first Christians waited for the early return of Christ in power and glory, so, in those primitive times, men looked for the early advent of that Seed of the Woman, who was to break the Serpent's head. And, in substance, this is the very hope which Christ our Lord has left for us against the time of his return. See Rom. 16: 20: "*The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly*". In Old Testament times, it was *the intermediate condition of death* which disquieted the hearts of the ancient servants of God—that unknown state of being which ensues immediately upon death, on which God, neither then nor now, has desired to shed more than a very little light; involving as it does a mystery incomprehensible to mortal men. That intermediate state, therefore, of incorporeal existence, and not the final inheritance of redemption, of glory and immortality, was what filled them with doubts and uncertainty (see Job 10: 21, 22; Ps. 6: 5; 88: 10—12; Isaiah 38: 18; Ps. 49: 15); just as would happen to us, if Christ by his death and resurrection had not dissipated great part of the darkness of the grave.

The faith of Abel was set on God as his Redeemer, and on the sure promise which he had given. But the common opinion is certainly ill-founded that the pious servants of God believed then in a Saviour who should come to suffer and redeem us with his blood, just as we believe in such a Saviour, who has already come and suffered. If that had been the hope of the saints of the Old Testament, it is morally certain that John the Baptist, the greatest of the prophets, as Christ says, would also have looked at the matter from this point of view, *which he did not*; and with equal facility and certainty the disciples of our Lord, after three years of intimate fellowship with him, would have readily understood (*as we are repeatedly told they did not*) his frequent declarations that it was necessary for him to be put to death and after three days rise again. What those ancient worthies looked for was in substance what the New Testament teaches us that we also are to wait for at the coming of Christ, the second time, in "the day of redemption", for the salvation of his people (Acts 1: 6; Eph. 4: 30; Heb. 9: 28), and the saints in heaven wait for it more truly and earnestly than we do on earth. 1 Pet. 1: 4, 5, 7, 13; 4: 13; Matt. 16: 27; Acts 3: 20, 21; Rom. 8: 18—25; 1 Cor. 1: 8, 9; 1 Thes. 1: 9, 10. I repeat, therefore, that what Peter calls "*the times of the restoration (or restitution) of all things*", expresses better than any



other phrase, the hope of Abel—"restitution", "restoration"; the which we also wait for, but with a distinct hope (which for Abel was not distinct) of passing the intermediate time of death "with Christ, which is very far better" (Phil. 1: 21, 23), while he also waits, *seated at God's right hand*;—"from henceforth expecting—waiting—till his enemies be made his footstool". Heb. 10: 13. "The hope of the Gospel" has been one and the same thing from the days of Abel till now; although we see it, or ought to see it, with greater clearness and with far greater abundance of "exceeding great and precious promises." 2 Pet. 1: 4.]

[TRANSLATOR'S NOTE 1.—*On the Eschatology of the Old Testament.* In regard to the increasingly important matter of *Eschatology*, as it necessarily comes out in these STUDIES, it will promote a good understanding between the reader and the writer, to say at once that he has no novelties to propose or defend, but holds simply and sincerely to the fundamental principles of the Reformation theology. The Christian salvation, in all its gradual unfoldings, has been one and the same in all the ages of the present, past and future. Although, as the apostle says, "the way into the holiest of all was *not yet made manifest* while the first tabernacle was yet standing" (Heb. 9: 8)—that is, so long as the Jewish Dispensation was in force (Heb. 9: 8); the obscurity that *in the conception* of Old Testament saints rested on "the way," wrought no uncertainty *in the divine procedure*, and "the souls of believers were at their death made perfect in holiness, and did immediately pass into glory" then, just as they do now;—before Christ's death, just the same as after it; the darkness that rested on the state of death, under the Old Testament, was not so much that of the state itself, or of "the way" itself, as it was the *darkness of apprehension* of the saints then living; dark, as it would be to us, if Christ by his death and resurrection had not "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Tim. 1: 10. The obscure and hard to understand is always *dark* to us.

The proof of their immediate entrance into glory is, I think, not hard to find. No man who duly considers the case can believe that *He who requires of us faith in his divine promises*, as the one great condition of salvation, *would himself have so little confidence in his own purpose and performance*, that he should deny to "Abraham his friend" and to the other Old Testament saints admittance into his immediate presence, until the price of their redemption had been actually paid on Calvary's Cross. This is in fact as absurd as it is unreasonable, in speaking of

*the ever living Jehovah*, "the high and holy One *who inhabiteth eternity*", to whom the past, the present and the future—our past, present and future—are one and the same thing. To him necessarily, by the laws of his own nature and his (to us) incomprehensible *mode of being*, Christ was, without a figure of speech, "*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*". Rev. 13: 8. *The accepted sacrifice of Calvary was to him as present in the days of believing Abel, and its blood as efficacious, as it was ever going to be.* So then, there was nothing for him to wait for, nor any reason why the martyred Abel should not at once have the benefit of it. "His place" was already prepared. "The dying thief" was with the disembodied human soul of Jesus "in Paradise," before that eventful evening's sun was set (Luke 23: 43); and according to 2 Cor. 12: 3, 4 and Rev. 2: 7, "paradise" is "heaven," if there be a heaven. According to the teachings of Christ himself, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob "*is not the God of the dead but of the living (Gr., not of dead men but of living ones)*"; FOR ALL LIVE UNTO HIM (though dead to us and to themselves as well), to whom our past and future are eternally present. Luke 20: 38. Their dim and doubtful apprehension of the "*blessedness of the dead* who die in the Lord" no more affected the reality of the blessed translation in their case, than do the distorted and erroneous views of godly Roman Catholics now send them to "Purgatory" rather than to Glory, when they die. Their dimness of vision had no more to do with it in the one case than it has in the other.

But, on the other hand, let it not be forgotten, as so many do forget, that the holy dead, whether under the Old or the New Dispensation, are not receiving their kingdom, their reward and their crown, but rather *waiting for them*, "*with Christ*," while "*he waits*, till his foes be made his footstool." Heb. 10: 13. *Dead men do not wear a crown of life*; nor do any "*reign in life* with Jesus Christ," while yet "*death reigns*" over their mortal bodies. Rom. 5: 14. The Bible does not speak after that fashion. The holy dead wait for "the day of redemption" as truly, and no doubt far more earnestly in heaven, than we do here on earth. Paul no longer "groans within himself," but he is still "*waiting for the adoption*, to wit, the redemption of our body." Rom. 8: 23. See also, and particularly, Heb. 11: 39, 40, where the apostle teaches that the numberless multitudes of the holy dead (vrs. 12, 13) "*received not the promise*; God having provided some better thing for us [better far than the "heaven" of the departed], that they (the dead) apart from us (the living) should not be made perfect."

This is in strict accordance with Christ's own teaching:—"The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his mighty angels, *and then (but not till then) shall he render to every one—the living and the dead, those who follow him and those who reject him—according to their deeds.*" Matt. 16: 27. "Thou shall be *recompensed at the resurrection of the just*" (Luke 14: 14); and the saints, whether in heaven or earth, have of course to wait for it till then; and no wonder, if Christ himself is waiting on his Father's throne, for his kingdom, his throne and the day of his power and glory! Heb. 10: 13; Rev. 3: 21; 2 Tim. 4: 1. The Judge of the living and the dead it is who teaches us that "*when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory,*" and then shall he bestow "the kingdom" on the just, for whom it "was prepared from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25: 31, 34. And again, he teaches that it is "when, *in the regeneration, the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory,*" that all who have suffered the loss of anything for his name's sake "*shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit eternal life*" (Matt. 19: 28, 29):—"life" in Bible language, as well as in our own, is always a thing of bodily manifestation. Paul no less explicitly teaches that "we must all—the living and the dead alike, saints and sinners alike—appear (or 'be manifested') *before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body,* according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." And in that last "Revelation" of the things that must shortly come to pass, which he sent and signified unto his people by the hand of his servant John, we read that "*when the seventh angel sounded*" (and therefore near to the consummation of all things) it is said that "the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and *the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give their reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, both small and great;* and shouldst destroy them that destroy the earth." Rev. 11: 15—18. That does not imply that the holy dead lie in unconscious slumber and get no reward till then; for they do (Luke 16: 25; 23: 43; Phil. 1: 21, 23); yet that state of disembodied life is, as Calvin says, *an abnormal condition* of being, a temporary expedient, which "the infinite counsel of God has devised," to meet the special case of those who must needs die, before "the day of redemption" dawns. *Institutes*, Book III. ch. 25, Sec. 9. But it does imply that the resurrection unto the life everlasting (Dan. 12: 2) is a thousand times better, and

as far transcends the "blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord," as life itself surpasses death; and therefore the New Testament says little about it, and generally leaves it out of view.\*

Now therefore, as God's plan of the human redemption is one and the same from the beginning, and as "the gospel preached beforehand unto Abraham" (Gal. 3: 8) was identically the same gospel that is preached to us, so also I believe that from the days of holy Abel, the salvation of the disembodied souls of God's people was identically the same as it is now; in spite of the fact that "the way into the holiest of all *was not then made manifest*" to them, as it is now to us; but the faith of God's servants in those days was occupied with the *final salvation*, rather than with the shadowy and intermediate state of death; just as Peter says *our own ought to be* perpetually occupied with "*the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,*" and with the "*praise, honor and glory*" in which our faith is to issue at the *appearing of Jesus Christ*. 1 Pet. 1: 5, 7. We are fully warranted, therefore, in tracing the faith and hope of that salvation, however faintly discovered, from the days of believing Abel down to the times of John the Baptist;—with no flights of fancy, be it understood, but according to what is written in the Scripture of truth. See Job 19: 23—27; Ps. 16: 6—11; Isa. 26: 19—21.

This is, in my view, the key that unlocks this mystery of the Old Testament Scriptures; and the gradual unfolding of this hope is one peculiarity of this volume, which in its Spanish form has delighted so many, both among the missionaries and their converts. The author is neither a pre-millenarian nor a post-millenarian, and will leave the reader in undisputed possession of his own preferences in this regard;† but I think that he will find "a more excellent way," if he will habituate himself to leave the intermediate possibilities with God, who is well able to take care of them, and duly heed Peter's exhortation to his

\*About all that the New Testament teaches as to the state of the dead, both holy and unholy, will be found in Luke 16: 22-25; 23: 43;—the sum total of Christ's recorded personal teaching; Acts 7: 56, 58; 2 Cor. 5: 1, 8; 12: 4; Phil. 1: 21, 23; Heb. 6: 12; 11: 39, 40; Jude vr. 7; Rev. 14: 13.

†Neither Luther, Calvin, Knox, Samuel Rutherford, nor Richard Baxter found any place for "the Millennium" in their theology; and I do not see why it should have any necessary place in ours. No fulfilled prophecy of the past was ever accomplished at the time or in the way the godliest of men expected; of which John the Baptist is perhaps the most conspicuous example,—himself a prophet, the last, and in some respects the greatest of them all. Matt. 11: 11. And if this has been an unvarying rule in the past, how can any one reasonably expect that it will not be so in the future as well?

readers: "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and set your hope perfectly (R. V.) on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;" with which things also he says that the prophets were chiefly concerned, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto us; which things moreover he says that "*the angels desire to look into.*" 1 Pet. 1: 10—13. See also Note 27, on "Sheol," or "Hades," in comment on ch. 37: 35.]

4: 16—18. THE LINEAGE OF CAIN DOWN TO LAMECH.  
(Of uncertain date.)

16 And Cain went out from the presence of Jehovah, and dwelt in the land of Nod,\* on the east of Eden.

17 And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded† a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

18 And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael; and Mehujael begat Methushael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

\*That is, Wandering.

[†M. S. V., was building.]

Cain withdrew at once from the presence of Jehovah. That presence, which for the pious servants of God is the sum of all good (Ps. 73: 28; 16: 11; 36: 7—9), was now to him insupportable. "The presence of Jehovah" would seem to mean in this place the vicinity and view of the cherubim, and of the altar that stood before the gate of paradise, where God revealed for the first time his mercy, and opened to sinning men a "door of hope." Of the "land of Nod" whither Cain withdrew, we know nothing more than its name (which signifies *Wanderer* or *Wandering*), and that it was situated on the "east of Eden;" Cain withdrawing as far as he could from the presence of God and from intercourse with men.

To suppose that Cain found a wife in the land of Nod, is an extravagance. He doubtless carried her with him: a good wife will bear with a wicked husband more than anybody else will. There is nothing to indicate that he did not take her with him, or that they did not take with them several older children. It is not to be supposed that Cain had no other sons except this Enoch, who was born to him in the land of Nod; who is not mentioned as his only son, but as that one from whom the city or fort which Cain was building at the time of his birth, took its name; and also with the object of presenting to us those notable descendants of his with whom the rest of the paragraph is occupied.

Cain undoubtedly had, as Adam did, many sons and daughters.

[NOTE 11.—*On the wife of Cain.* The question frequently asked as to who was the wife of Cain, has no interest or importance, aside from the allegation that the fugitive Cain met

with her in the land of Nod; and the consequent inference that there were in the days of Adam, and in a region remote from him, another race or races of men, of nature so identical with his own, that a woman of that stock became the wife of Cain. On the contrary, it is altogether probable that when he went into the land of Nod, Cain was fifty to eighty years of age; and it is to be supposed that at that age he had already a wife and children, that wife being his own sister; and who else was he to have for wife, if Eve was the "*mother of all the living?*" Ch. 3: 20. To us there is something repugnant in the idea of such a union; but in the beginning of the race it was not so. In Egypt, where there was no lack of women, it was the usage of the Pharaohs, the kings of the country, and still later of the Ptolemies, for the king to marry his own sister. And Abraham said without repugnance of Sarah: "Indeed she is my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife." Ch. 20: 12. There is nothing, therefore, strange, or in itself repugnant, in the fact that the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve should have married each other, for the lack of others with whom to marry.]

When therefore a son was born to Cain in the land of Nod (who without being his only son, is the only one of whom we have any notice), he called him Enoch; and because he was building at the time "a city," he called his city after the name of his son, Enoch. This does not mean to say that Cain had around him so many people that it was necessary to build a *city* to accommodate them; but, on the contrary, that such was the dread which took possession of his guilty soul, after killing his brother, that not even when he had withdrawn as far as possible from the society of men, did he regard himself as secure; and so he at once set about to build a stockade, or palisade, for his defense. "City" (Span. "*ciudad*,") in its ancient use and signification was a *fortified place*, as still is seen in the word *ciudadela* (= fortress); or in English, compare *city* and *citadel*. It is to be believed also, that when Cain withdrew from paradise and from the society of men, the wild beasts would be a perpetual menace to him, by day and by night; and his "stockade" would perhaps serve him principally as a defense against them.

It is important to observe here the Hebrew usage of tracing descent down to a given point without making any account of the collateral lines. Cain had many children, but only Enoch is mentioned. In this genealogical table there are five generations of Cain, but we have only one individual in each generation, until we come to Lamech (Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Mathushael,

Lamech),—the writer's objective point, at which the list stops; a notable man of whom Moses had something important to relate.

4: 19—24. LAMECH. POLYGAMY. ORIGIN OF THE ARTS. POETRY.  
(Of uncertain date; perhaps 3500 B. C.)

19 And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

20 And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents and *have* cattle.

21 And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and pipe.

22 And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, the forger of every cutting instrument of brass\* and iron: and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

23 And Lamech said unto his wives:  
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:

24 If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,  
Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

\*Or, copper.

Lamech, the great grandson of the grandson of Cain, began the practice of polygamy by taking two wives. Wherever polygamy exists, the more powerful and influential men taking for themselves a plurality of wives, many men must necessarily have to go without any. Paul says, by the Holy Spirit: "To avoid fornications, *let every man have his own wife and every woman her own husband.*" 1 Cor: 7: 2. This was undoubtedly the purpose of God in creating only one woman for only one man; as Jesus explains the case in opposition of the Judaic usage of putting away one wife to take another, in Mat. 19: 4—6:—*Only one woman for one man only.* The prophet Malachi (ch. 2: 15), who saw the thing at its worst, speaks to the same effect: "And did he not make one, although he had the residue of the spirit (or vital breath)?" One of each sex did God make, and these two he made "one flesh," although he had a superabundance of vital breath to make many women for only one man.† And this continues still his purpose, as it is seen in that particular providence, which in all ages and in all countries,

†Polygamy, so common in all Oriental countries, both in ancient and modern times, and among pagan peoples generally, was gradually extinguished among the Hebrews by the operation of the Mosaic law and subsequent divine revelations, and seems to have been completely superseded in the days of Christ by the more convenient system of putting away one wife to take another. It is never once mentioned or referred to in the New Testament. Among the Greeks and Romans (and European peoples generally), polygamy seems never to have existed; but wives were put away, or got rid of, for very trifling causes, or for none; just as in China or Japan today.—Tr.

ordains, and always has ordained, that the births of the two sexes be, on an average, in equal number, one half male and one half female; the males having a certain excess, since a larger number of them die in wars and by accidents, in which men suffer more than women. Most admirable providence, where we do as it were see the very hand of God interposed! for as there are families in which all are born males, and families in which all are born females, this persistent equality of the sexes in the aggregate, God alone is able to maintain. And universal observation proves that the human species most rapidly increases where that primordial disposition of Heaven is best regarded—*only one man for one woman only, and only one woman for one man only.*

The scarcity of women, and not the good morals of the men, prevented, for six generations, the usage of having a plurality of wives. But at last Lamech, of the family of Cain, introduced it, when he took two wives, Adah and Zillah; beautiful women, it is to be supposed from their names; the former meaning "Beauty," and the latter, "Shade"—something delicious in a warm country. Nor is it to be supposed in this case that Adah had no more than two sons, nor Zillah more than one. The sacred writer omits all the other children in order to fix attention on these three, famous in their day, as persons with whom wealth and the mechanical and fine arts had their origin. Jabal was the first who was a keeper of cattle on a large scale; which is the real signification of "father of such as dwell in tents and have cattle"—something very different from the humble office of Abel. His brother Jubal, another son of Adah, was the "father of all such as handle the harp and the pipe;" which, in Hebrew, means that he was the originator of instrumental music and a teacher of it. Comp. 2 Chron. 2: 13; 4: 16, there "my father," and "his father" mean *architect* or *master builder*.

The son of Zillah—the only one who is mentioned—was Tubalcain, more famous still, a worker in iron and in copper (or brass, which is the same in Hebrew), and who was the inventor of all kinds of cutting instruments, made of these metals.\* So that the mechanical and fine arts, and the possession of material riches began among the Cainites; while the descendants of the pious Seth and the humble Enosh, who were "called by the name of Jehovah," remained in a mediocrity of temporal blessings, maintaining the simple customs of their forefathers.

\*As cutting instruments were not made of brass, *copper* is what is intended here. The ancient Egyptians used an alloy of copper (of which the composition has been lost), said by some to be superior even to the best of our steel, especially for working in stone.—Tr.



The sister of Tubal-cain would seem from this mention to have been a celebrated woman in her day, of whom there remains to us only the memory of her name—Naamah (= Sweetness). So pass away the glories of this world!

Vrs. 23, 24, besides the fact which they relate, are interesting on account of their poetry—the beginning of the art; which also, like all ancient poetry was a song; and the musical instruments of his son Tubal would serve him as accompaniment. And *this first song celebrated a murder*, which the singer had committed, perhaps with one of the keen edged instruments which another of his sons, Tubal-cain, had made; and in point of arrogance and cold-blooded insensibility, it leaves far behind the crime of Cain. The words may be understood either as a bravado, to celebrate his prowess, or, as given in the text, as implying that he committed it in revenge for some injury done to his own person. And the impious wretch claims a divine protection ten times more sure than that which God had granted to Cain in order not to paralyze the movement of population in the world, at a time when it was almost uninhabited. A sad promise does this Lamech give of the times of violence that were fast coming upon the earth. If the generations of Cain corresponded with those of Seth in ch. 5 (which is not to be supposed, as these were not genealogies of first-born sons, but of the sons who came in the line of the promise) Tubal-cain would have been a contemporary of holy Enoch, “the seventh from Adam” (Jude, verse 21), in whose days the impiety of the earth was reaching its culminating point. The cutting instruments of copper and iron which Tubal-cain invented, were a great blessing for men in the rude conflict which they then sustained with the elements and the wild beasts (which must have been exceedingly numerous and very defiant in those days), and also to clear the land, and aid in the cultivation of the soil; but in malevolent hands they inaugurated that epoch “of violence of which the earth was full” in the days of Noah. It is to be noted that “the age of stone,” of which geologists say so much in our day, and often so erroneously, was, according to Moses, the condition of the world from the fall of Adam till Tubal-cain; and with him began “the age of iron.” It is also to be noted that in vr. 22, instruments of copper seem to take precedence of those of iron.

4: 25, 26. SETH, HEIR OF THE PROMISE, IS GIVEN IN THE PLACE OF ABEL, TILL THEN VACANT. (3874 B. C.)

25 And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For, *said she*, God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel; for Cain slew him.

26 And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enosh. Then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah.\*

[\**Mod. Span. Ver.*, to call *themselves* by the name of Jehovah." Ch. 6: 2; 2 Chron. 7: 14; Isa. 43: 7; 44: 5; 63: 19; Dan. 9: 19; Eph. 3: 15, 16; Acts 11: 26.]

These events took place during 130 years. Ch. 5; 3. It is to be believed that "Abel the just," the first of the heroes of faith (Heb. 11: 4), would also have been the first in the line of the promise of redemption, had not the fratricidal hand of Cain quenched this "light of the world" (Matt. 5: 13, 14); and the other sons and daughters of Adam, it seems, walked in corruption and darkness, following the godless example of Cain; for which reason they are conveniently called *Cainites*, even though they were not personally his descendants. Adam and Eve saw with bitterness of soul the immediate and terrible results of their apostasy from God; and, if in fact they themselves were the possessors of genuine evangelical repentance, so as to truly turn to God, undoubtedly they continually cried to him in the calamitous times, that so early had come to supplant the delightful days of Eden; as seems to be indicated in vrs. 25 and 26. Eve, with the heart of a mother, was still lamenting the loss of the pure and gentle Abel, after the lapse of many years, and she accepted the birth of Seth as a special gift of God, besought, perhaps, from Jehovah with anxious desire; as Samuel was in after days. 1 Sam. 1: 27. She therefore named him Seth (= Substitution) saying: "Because God has given me another seed instead of Abel whom Cain slew." As it is undoubtedly true that Eve had other sons, younger than Abel (and if Abel was as much as fifty or sixty years old at the time of his death, many other sons), her words "another seed instead of Abel," would seem to manifest clearly that she was looking to the promise of "the Seed of the Woman," frustrated by the death of Abel, but which at last lived again with the birth of Seth. Of Cain and his impious race, and of his imitators, it is clear that she had no longer any hope whatever. Seen in this light, two classes of persons, and even two distinct races, rise conspicuously into view from the beginning of the history of mankind,—a distinction which Paul traces in the family of Abraham himself, "between him that was born after the flesh" and "him that was born through promise" (Gal. 4: 23); and also in the family of Isaac, between "the children of the flesh" and the "children of the promise." Rom. 9: 8. With rare delight Eve received Seth as a "child of the promise"—a "substitute for Abel, whom Cain slew."

The name of "Enosh," the son of Seth, is significant, meaning

"feeble man," "mortal," "weakly," etc.; a name which may have had something to do with him personally; or according to others, with the character of the race, which had now very clearly revealed itself; just as David composed a Psalm "on the prevailing sickness" ("upon Mahalath"), in order to set forth the general impiety of men. See Alexander on Ps. 53, title. We know nothing of his individual character, which some Jewish rabbis hold in ill-esteem, he being, as they say, the author or promoter of idolatry—of which nothing is said in the text; and it seems to me probable that material idolatry began after the deluge and not before; for those were times of impiety, of sensuality and of violence, of oppression and bloodshed, rather than of idolatry. Enosh was not the only son of Seth, nor necessarily the first-born son, but he came in line of the promise—the line of the descent of the covenant. In this history "the covenant" is mentioned first in the case of Noah (Gen. 6: 18); but the manner in which it is mentioned *takes for granted its previous existence*; and since "the covenant" is equivalent to "the promise," which likewise existed without being called by that name, I shall continue to use the two terms in this equivalent sense. In no part of this book is anything said about the covenant made with Adam; but, nevertheless it existed, according to the testimony of the prophet Hosea, who speaks of it as a matter well known in his day, "*that Adam transgressed the covenant.*" Hos. 6: 7, R. V. And although neither *covenant* nor *promise* of redemption is mentioned after the fall, everybody confesses the existence of the latter, and there is no less reason to confess the former, in the light of the chapters which treat of Abraham, and thenceforward; and also in the light of the contrast which Paul institutes between Adam and Christ, in Rom. 5: 12—19, and that, without mention of either covenant or promise.

We incline to the belief also that Enosh was one of those "poor in spirit (and pure in heart) of whom is the kingdom of God," because of the circumstance mentioned in the text, that in his days began the usage of men's "calling themselves by the name of Jehovah" (Modern Span. Version). This phrase, it is true, is translated in different ways. Those who blacken the name and character of Enosh, understand it that in those days men began to *profane* the name of Jehovah with idolatrous practices:—a sense which it is hard to extract from the words. Others prefer to say: "Then men began *to call upon* the name of Jehovah." While this is a very ordinary sense of the Hebrew words, it is not easy to see its appropriateness here. Since *prayer*

is at least as old as *sacrifice*; so that those who contend for this sense qualify it to mean *in public assemblies*. Others still will have it mean "to *proclaim* the name of Jehovah,"—in public assemblies also. But the Modern Spanish Version is in full accord with the Hebrew text; and it gives, as does the old Valera Version, the most satisfactory sense. Consult the references. It is given also, in the margin of our English Bible, as an alternative rendering: "Then began men to call themselves (or to be called) by the name of Jehovah." We have already seen that before the birth of Enosh there were found two distinct classes of people, and even two different races of men, in the world, conveniently named *Cainites* and *Sethites*; and here we are informed that in the days of Enosh the race of the pious Seth (as we understand it) began to call themselves (or to be called) by a characteristic name; taking for their distinctive badge the venerable name of *Jehovah*; already cast aside and despised by the impious Cainites; as also by the worldly and wicked of today. This sense also gives the most satisfactory explanation of the distinction made in ch. 6: 2 between the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men." In Isa. 43: 7; 44: 5; 48: 1; 65: 1, we have just this use of the words. And Daniel beseeches God that he will hasten to have mercy upon them, because "*thy city and thy people are called by thy name.*" Dan. 9: 19. Very frequent is this usage in the Old Testament; and in the New we find the same thing, where the disciples of Christ were *called by his name*, "Christians." Acts 11: 26.

Most interesting and important it is to keep always present in our minds that, from the beginning of the history of human redemption, there has existed this distinction between the good and the evil (in a spiritual sense), between saints and sinners, between those that fear God and those who make no account of him. Mal. 3: 18. To blot out the distinction, then, is to sin grievously against Him who says, "*I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.*" Ch. 3: 15.

## CHAPTER V.

VRS. 1—20. THE DESCENDANTS OF ADAM, IN THE TIME OF THE PROMISE, DOWN TO ENOCH. (From 4004 until 2582 B. C.)

1 This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him;

2 male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

3 And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth:

4 and the days of Adam after he begat Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters.

5 And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.

6 And Seth lived a hundred and five years, and begat Enosh:

7 and Seth lived after he begat Enosh eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters:

8 and all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died.

9 And Enosh lived ninety years, and begat Kenan:

10 and Enosh lived after he begat Kenan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters:

11 and all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years: and he died.

12 And Kenan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalalel:

13 and Kenan lived after he begat Mahalalel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters:

14 and all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died.

15 And Mahalalel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared:

16 and Mahalalel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters:

17 and all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died.

18 And Jared lived a hundred sixty and two years, and begat Enoch:

19 and Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:

20 and all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died.

Chapter 5 is occupied with a list, or genealogical table of the descendants of Adam, in the line of the promise—the line of Christ (Luke 3: 36—38)—the promised Seed of the Woman, Saviour of his people, and Liberator of the world, down to Noah, an eminent type of him. It is to be noted in vr. 2 that “Adam” was the name of the race, and so it is used very often, particularly in the book of Ecclesiastes (ch. 1: 3; 3: 11—22), and not alone of the head and father of it.

It is important to fix attention upon the omission of two well known names, Cain and Abel, and of several unknown persons who come before and after that of Seth. In this list no account is made of them, exclusive attention being given to that son who came in the line of the promise of redemption. By the failure to notice this circumstance, many have fallen into the error of believing that the antediluvians either arrived very late at their maturity, or for unknown causes married at a very advanced age; for neither of which inferences does there exist a vestige of proof. Adam did not arrive late at his maturity, nor did he marry late; but he had Seth when 130 years of age; and there does not exist any more reason for saying so with regard to Seth and the other antediluvians (and notably of Noah, see vr. 32), than there is in the case of Adam and Noah.

In vr. 1, we are reminded of what is said in ch. 1: 26, 27, that Adam and Eve were created in the likeness and image of God. But they had "transgressed the covenant" (Hos. 6: 7); they were now fallen beings, mortal, sinners; and *into that likeness* we are told in vr. 3 that at 130 years of age Adam "begat a son in his own likeness, and after his image." Seth, then, was born, in the new and fallen image and likeness of his father; and such have all his posterity been born; fallen, mortal, sinners. The same thing was true of Cain and Abel; but the sacred writer reserved the declaration for this place, as more agreeable to his design, on treating formally of the descendants of Adam in the line of the promise.

The sum total of the years of Adam was 930 years; of Seth, 912; of Enosh, 905, 84 of which he passed contemporaneously with Noah, according to the Hebrew chronology. The sum total of Methuselah's, the oldest of men, was 969, he dying in the 600th year of Noah, the year of the flood,—according to the common chronology; in which case his longevity was a doubtful blessing. Lamech, the father of Noah, lived 777 years, and "died before his time," it was said in his day; but it was five years before Noah entered the ark.

[NOTE 12.—*On Biblical Chronology.* We say "according to the common chronology," which is that of Ussher, founded on the Hebrew text. But the Samaritan text (of the five books of Moses, the only ones which the Samaritans admitted), contains some very remarkable variations from the Hebrew text; and the Greek translation, called that of "the LXX," and executed between the year 280 and 150 B. C., followed in general by the Jewish historian Josephus, has the Hebrew chronology completely altered in this chapter, with the exception of Jared and Noah. The alteration consists in adding 100 years to the age at which each one had the son mentioned, and taking away the same number from the years that he lived afterwards. It seems to me that all this was done with a deliberate purpose of removing some grave difficulties which are found in the Hebrew text; as the reader will have already noticed in the case of Methuselah and Lamech. By adding to these, 100 years before the birth of the first son mentioned in the list, and taking away 100 years afterwards, Methuselah would come to die 100 years before the flood and Lamech 105. The object of adding and taking away 100 years in the case of Adam (making it so that he was 230 years old when Seth was born), seems to have been that of observing a certain ratio of equality between Adam and the rest; making it appear, perhaps, that he also was one hundred years

old before he had his first son, Cain, and 230 when Seth was born, preserving the 130 years of the Hebrew text as interposed between the two. In the case of Jared and of Noah, the Hebrew text already made the one to be 162 and the other 500 when the first son mentioned was born; and there was no cause to add anything more in their case. But whatever may have been the object of making them, these discrepancies exist not only here, but in the corresponding list in ch. 11: 11—26, where there seems to have existed the analogous difficulty of believing that the Hebrew text *did not grant sufficient time* between the deluge and the calling of Abraham, but only 427 years. Since, then, "the LXX interpreters" were Egyptian Jews and perfectly cognizant of the long periods claimed for the twenty-six or more dynasties of the kings of that country, they not only added 586 to the 1656 years which the Hebrew text gives before the deluge (making that period 2242 years instead of 1656), but they added 100 years again to the 35 years at which Arphaxad had his first mentioned son, and insert between Arphaxad and Selah, the name of Cainan with 130 years (which is only given in the LXX and in the Greek of Luke 3: 37, which cites it from the LXX), and they go on adding uniformly 100 years to the given age of Selah, of Heber, of Peleg, of Reu, of Serug; and 150 to that of Nahor, making out that instead of 29 he was 179 years old when Terah was born. As Terah was 130 years old when Abraham was born (see comment on verse 26), nothing is added in his case. In this way, and showing so manifestly the purpose of *gaining time*, they make it appear that, instead of there being 427 years between the deluge and the calling of Abraham, at 75 years of age, there were 1307—a difference of 887 years. Joining together the two periods, we have, according to the Hebrew text 2083 years between the creation of Adam and the calling of Abraham, and 3549 according to the LXX; a difference of 1466 years.

Chronology is always and of itself a very difficult matter; and all the more, because the ancients paid very little regard to it, having no common and determined epoch from which to compute it; the classical authors were even more careless in this regard than the sacred writers. We moderns, on the contrary, lay great stress on chronology, and especially on the correct *temporal sequence* of events, to which the ancients ordinarily paid very little attention. Chronology is almost a modern science. It is therefore unreasonable to complain that the Bible does not conform in this to our modern usage. What comes to increase the difficulties of biblical chronology is the circumstance that in

the ancient Hebrew manuscripts the exact notation and preservation of numbers was almost an impossibility, these being indicated by letters of the alphabet, and by combinations of these letters; the tens and hundreds being varied by means of particular accents which were added to the letters.

The effect, therefore, of these variations of the Greek text and of the Samaritan Pentateuch, and of the different systems of chronology founded on them, has made it impossible to determine with any degree of precision the age of the world from the creation of Adam to the present time. The principal difficulty rests upon the period before the calling of Abraham. From then to the present (excepting the time of the sojourn of the people of Israel in Egypt), they are few, and the difficulties of very little importance; and these are due almost exclusively to errors of transcription.

With this explanation, we shall govern ourselves ordinarily by the common chronology, not as being accurate, for it is often confessedly uncertain (though it is sufficiently correct for all practical uses), and to distinguish clearly between the different epochs in the current of the history, and the temporal relations that exist between them. Nevertheless some dates in our Bibles are so hazardous, or in my judgment so unfounded, that I purposely mark them in the heading of the paragraphs as of "uncertain date." In other cases I give the date with an interrogation point, in order to indicate how uncertain it is. But with regard to the numbers given in the text of the Bible itself, it is in my opinion the only safe rule to attend always to the Hebrew text—the inspired word of God, numbers and all—except in the few cases where there is good reason to suspect there is some error of the copyist.]

5: 21—24. ENOCH, THE SAINT WHO NEVER EXPERIENCED DEATH.  
(From 3382 to 3107 B. C.)

21 And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah:  
22 and Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:

23 and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years:

24 and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

Of this great man ("the seventh counting from Adam"), the father of Methuselah, we know very little, outside of the brief notice we have here. Times of impiety, of sensuality and of violence were those in which he lived, and as they could not overcome him, they impelled and even obliged him to seek closer communion with his God. Jude in his epistle cites the



following prophecy of Enoch, which, whether it be taken from the (apochryphal) "Book of Enoch" or whether it be that both of these took it from the oral tradition of the Jews (as in the case of Paul, who gives from Jewish tradition the names of the two principal opponents of Moses, Jannes and Jambres, at the court of Pharaoh, 2 Tim. 3: 8), the Spirit of inspiration guarantees its accuracy; and in truth every line of its energetic utterances bears on its face the marks of authenticity: "And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied saying; Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness, which they have ungodly committed, and of all the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Jude vrs. 14, 15. He says, that Enoch prophesied in this manner not only to the impious of his day but *to the impious of all ages*, as a class of persons found in apostolic times, who are found today, and who will perhaps abound still more in the last days, when the Advent of the Lord and the Day of Judgment are drawing nigh. See Jude vrs. 18—25. It is a prophesy of the last Judgment, which the prophet foresaw, and he paints it in most vivid colors; and nevertheless the judgment which was hastening on was the deluge of waters, rather than that second deluge, of fire, of which the former was a type. 2 Pet. 3: 6—10. This prophecy of Enoch is of the greater interest, because of the light it sheds on the *prophecies of double fulfilment*; like that of Jesus with regard to the destruction of Jerusalem and of the end of the Age; in which the judgment of the Jewish Church and State is inextricably involved with the final judgment of the world; and also like many others of the prophecies. Enoch saw the judgment of God coming upon the world of the ungodly, but it was not given to him to distinguish between the first and the last judgment. This is very easy to comprehend if we suppose that it, like many other prophecies, was given to the prophet *in vision*; and that he saw (as Paul says in Romans 1: 16) "the wrath of God revealed from heaven against every form of impiety and unrighteousness of men," which wrath will culminate in that coming day of wrath and retribution for the enemies of God, which is likewise the day of glory and salvation for his people. Rom. 2: 5—16; 2 Thes. 1: 5—10. We suppose that like Isaiah (ch. 1: 1), he *saw it all in vision*, down to "the time of the end," and described what he saw, without being able to distinguish the less from the greater, nor the nearer from the more remote; it was *a picture of coming judgments*, including the

most remote and the last; but, as has been happily said, prophecy (like all pictures made before the days of Raphael) was like a *picture without perspective*. The same thing is true with regard to the ancient prophecies of the Advent of Christ. The prophets *saw it in bulk*, in vision perhaps (see Isa. 1: 1; 2: 1; John 12: 41; 8: 56), with all its train of consequences; but it was not given them to distinguish between the first and the second Advent. The Jews did not wish, nor do they now wish, to allow of any other advent but the last; while, on the contrary, many Christians are fully content with the first advent, and make little or no account of the second, the Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty.

This great saint "walked with God," keeping his way and maintaining communion with him in times of extreme wickedness, atrocious sensuality and impious atheism; and in recompense of his fidelity, and in order to animate the hope and fortify the faith in the invisible of the few who in that day strove to live holy, and also for the purpose in clearing up for all the future ages *the form and the security of the final redemption*, "Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had witness borne to him that he pleased God." Heb. 11: 5. It has been aptly said that "to the antediluvians, Enoch's translation afforded the clearest evidence of immortality, as that of Elijah did to those of his day, and the resurrection of Christ does to us." In what form this precious testimony was given to him, we do not know; or in what way his translation was effected, giving thus testimony upon testimony, that God was pleased with him, we do not know; but doubtless the godly and the ungodly alike had trustworthy notice of it; and this would serve as divine testimony for both classes.

We ought not to pass without notice vr. 22: "And *Enoch walked with God* after he had begotten Methuselah 300 years, and begat sons and daughters." It seems as if, in their very form, the words were intended to reprove the error of Romanists, and of others like them, who allege that the state of marriage is less holy than that of celibacy,—and this in spite of the notorious immoralities of that unnatural and unscriptural system, as thoroughly tested in papal lands. The sum total of the days of Enoch was 365 years; so that for those times his life was short.

5: 25—27. METHUSELAH, THE OLDEST OF MEN. (FROM 3317 TO 2448 B. C.)

25 And Methuselah lived a hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech:

26 and Methusaleh lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters:

27 and all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.

If we accept the common chronology, Methuselah died in the very year of the deluge; but whether he died in his bed, or was drowned in the waters, the conclusion would seem to be inevitable that he was one of those "forgetters of God" whose sins brought on the world the waters of that divine judgment. See ch. 6: 18; 7: 1. It cannot in any case be affirmed of him, as it was of Abraham, that "he died in a good old age, an old man and full of days." Ch. 25: 8.

[NOTE 13.—*On the longevity of the antediluvian patriarchs.* It is asked with frequency if the many years of the antediluvians were years of twelve months, and if these men really attained to almost a thousand of our years. If we duly consider the case, and look at it from the proper point of view, the supposed difficulty will, I think, vanish of itself. The physical constitution of Adam and Eve was adapted to a life without end. They were created *provisionally immortal*, and a great part of this extraordinary vitality remained to them and to their posterity, even after their fall: this was one of the most prolific causes of the frightful corruption of those times. The diminution of human life was very rapid after the flood until the times of Abraham, and from that to the days of Moses; when it seems that 70 or 80 years came to be the ordinary limit of human life, as happens in our own days. See Ps. 90: 10.

Besides the Bible, all the nations of antiquity have had their traditions as to the great age to which human life attained in times long passed. Nor does there exist in nature any reason whatever why the vital force should be exhausted in 70 or 80 years, any more than in 700 or 800. The wisest and most skilful scientist can only say, without giving any reason, that we observe that ordinarily it happens so. But there are persons of less vital force who exhaust it in 20, 30, or 40 years; and others who possess it in such abundance that, even in our day, their life is prolonged to 130, and even to 150 years. In which we clearly see that by increasing sufficiently human vitality you obtain any age you please. But so terrible were the moral consequences of this extraordinary vitality, and consequent longevity, in our race of sinners before the flood, that God in mercy has cut short the term of human life from then till now.\*

\*Our physical life depends on the constant operation of the two laws of *waste* and *supply*. For 20 years the *supply so far exceeds the waste*, that the body develops and grows; from 20 to 50, or even to 60, the two

Nevertheless, the advanced age to which men lived in those primitive times was very important, not only for the rapid population of the world, but for the preservation and propagation of useful knowledge, historical, mechanical, intellectual and religious. According to the common chronology, Adam died 726 years before the deluge,—126 years before Noah was born. Seth died 614 years before the deluge; Enosh 516, and for the space of 84 years was a contemporary of Noah. Adam for the space of 243 years was a contemporary of Methuselah, who for 600 years was contemporary with Noah; and after the deluge, Noah lived on for 350 years, reaching to the 56th year of the life of Terah, the father of Abraham. So it was that historical knowledge passed with the greatest facility and security from parents to their children, in those times when the art of writing was perhaps unknown, and the stores of useful knowledge were carefully guarded in the memories of man:—Adam, Methuselah, Noah, Terah, Abraham. See *Note 6, on Patriarchal Traditions, page 26.*]

5: 28—32. LAMECH, NOAH (= REST)—A TYPE OF "JESUS, WHO DELIVERS US FROM THE WRATH TO COME." 1 Thes. 1: 10.

(From 3130 to 2248 B. C.)

28 And Lamech lived a hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son:

29 and he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us in our work and in the toil of our hands, *which cometh* because of the ground which Jehovah hath cursed.

30 And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters:

31 and all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died.

32 And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Lamech, the father of Noah, lived after the latter was born 595 years, dying five years before the flood; and as "Noah was 600 years old when the deluge of waters came upon the earth" (ch. 7: 6), it follows seemingly of necessary consequence, that when, a hundred years before the deluge, or say one hundred and twenty (ch. 6: 3), "Noah (alone) found grace in the eyes of Jehovah," vr. 18, and when with him (alone) God established his covenant, and ordained that he and his sons and his wife and are so nearly in *equilibrium* that the healthy subject feels no sensible decline of bodily vigor; from 50 or 60 to 70 or 80, *the waste exceeds the supply*, and the body gradually declines till life goes out in death. But we can conceive of the *equilibrium of waste and supply* being maintained for *hundreds* of years as readily as for *scores*: and thus it was in the days before the Flood. It was as simple a matter then as now; there is nothing unnatural or unreasonable about it.—Tr.

the wives of his sons with him—these eight and no more—should enter into the ark which he commanded him to make; and when, the ark being finished, God commanded him to enter, saying: “Because thee (only) have I found righteous in this generation” (ch. 7: 1), it seems, I repeat, to be the inevitable conclusion that his father Lamech, (as also his grandfather Methuselah) was numbered with the unjust, and that only an “untimely death” (he died at the age of 777) saved him from a watery grave. I say “it *seems* the inevitable conclusion,” because there are many circumstances of the case of which we are ignorant. Well indeed has the wise king said: “The hoary head is a crown of glory *when it is found in the way of righteousness.*” Prov. 16: 31. We see here the strong temptation to which the LXX appear to have yielded in adding and taking away, as we have said, a hundred years, in the case of most of these antediluvian patriarchs (see *Note 12*), in order to lengthen out the time as given in the Hebrew chronology.

It would delight us not a little to understand the exclamation with which Lamech gave the welcome to his new born son, Noah, as an expression of pious faith and hope in the promised Seed of the Woman; but in view of *the universal corruption* (ch. 6: 12, 13) of those times it seems to us difficult to do so, even according to the chronology of the LXX. Notwithstanding this, so evil were those times and so bitter the fruit of man’s impiety, when iniquity was reaching to its fill (as in the worst excesses of the French Revolution, from 1789 to 1795), that neither faith in God nor holiness of life were necessary in order that Lamech should sigh for the promised period of rest; just as the Jews of the first century sighed for the advent of the Messiah, at the very time they were seeking to imbrue their hands in his blood.

It is difficult to believe that Lamech had no son before Noah, who was born to him when 182 years old; but however that may be, this particular son he named Noah (= Rest); and the reason that is given for it manifests that, as the promise of the Messiah was universally disseminated among the Jews before the coming of Christ, so also the promise regarding the “Seed of the Woman” was a thing well known in the years before the flood, and was the hope of all serious-minded people “This same,” exclaimed Lamech, “shall comfort us in our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which Jehovah hath cursed!” Ch. 5: 29. These words may be understood spiritually, or in a purely worldly sense, according to the character which we ascribe to Lamech; but, in any case, they point as with the finger to the promise of the Liberator, and of his longed-for

rest; as in his day Isaiah said: "*And his rest shall be glorious.*" Isa. 11: 10. See also the argument of Paul about this rest *which remaineth* (= is yet to come), in Heb. 4: 2—9.

As has been already said, it is not credible that Noah should not have married until he was 500 years of age, nor, that having married early he should have had no children till that age. If he had children before this, it is probable that they died young. The pen refuses to write the alternative supposition. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that he had brothers and sisters, the children of Lamech who perished. Vr. 30. Shem was the oldest of Noah's three sons (ch. 10: 21, A. V. and M. S. V.), Ham the youngest (ch. 9: 24). In ch. 11: 10, we read that "Shem was a hundred years old when he begat Arphaxad, two years after the flood"; from which we infer that the eldest son of Noah, or the oldest of these three, was 98 years old at the time of the deluge; and that when Noah received commandment to build the ark, 100 or 120 years before, he had no son, or at least none of these three.

[NOTE 14.—*On the antediluvian civilization.* It is but a very few years (in 1898 or 1899 perhaps) since our newspapers, both secular and religious, contained startling notices of the discovery, 30 or 40 feet below the ruins of the ancient Nineveh, of the buried ruins of another city anterior to that, which with no little confidence they published as the ruins of *an antediluvian Nineveh*, submerged by the waters of Noah's flood, and covered with the enormous deposits of sediment which must have accompanied that unparalleled catastrophe. According to the best information I have been able to gather, these were premature and distorted reports of the discoveries of Prof. Hilprecht, at Nippur, supposed to be the ancient Calneh, more than a hundred miles distant from Nineveh. But the fact that Noah was able to build such a structure as his ark, plainly reveals the existence of a very advanced civilization, and of great riches at that time; and as the cities of that day were destroyed instantaneously (as were Herculaneum and Pompeii by an eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, in the year 70 of our Era), it is altogether possible that there is reserved for the 20th century the discovery of the remains of antediluvian cities, buried in like manner beneath the alluvial soil of the plains of the Tigris and Euphrates—rivers which existed from the days of Eden. Ch. 2: 14. Nobody need be surprised at this, who reflects on the astonishing manner in which God is now confirming his written word by means of the "monuments" of Egypt, Babylon and Assyria, which during the last fifty years are being brought to light, from out of the

pyramids, and the tombs of Egypt, and the mounds of rubbish of the ruined cities of Assyria, Chaldea and Babylonia.]

## CHAPTER VI.

VRS. 1—8. MIXED MARRIAGES, AND THEIR TERRIBLE RESULTS.

(Of uncertain date.)

1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born unto them,

2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose.

3 And Jehovah said, My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh: yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years.

4 The Nephilim\* were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown.

5 And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

7 And Jehovah said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man, and beast, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah.

\*Or, *giants*. See Num. 13: 33.

This paragraph assigns the reason for the terrible corruption of men which brought the deluge of waters upon the world. We have already seen that after the death of "Abel the just" by the fratricidal hand of Cain, Seth was given and accepted as a substitute for him—"another seed" in the stead of that frustrated hope. We have seen also that in the days of Enosh, the son of Seth, godly men "began to be called by the name of Jehovah" (ch. 4: 26); it was not necessary that the other class should have any distinctive name. But a thousand years passed, and here we have two classes of persons notably characterized as "the sons of God" and "the daughters of men", the union of which, co-operating with their long and vigorous life, and the correspondingly strong animal passions of the people of those days, cast down to the ground the last vestige that remained among men of piety and the fear of God. It is likely, and such is the ordinary belief among serious and religious persons, that those who in the days of Enosh began to be called by the name of Jehovah, are here called "sons of God," as is common usage in the Old and New Testaments (Ex. 4: 22; Deut. 14: 1; Isa. 43: 6; 63: 16; Hos. 1: 10; John 8: 41, 42; Rom. 9: 8; 2 Cor. 6: 18;

1 John 3: 1, 2); while those of a purely worldly character rejected then, just as they do now, that character and name, and considered themselves more honored with the title "the sons (and daughters) of men." The subject of the paragraph is confessedly thorny and difficult, because so extremely brief. But the exposition now given of the former part of it is much more satisfactory than the extravagances which some have allowed themselves to imagine or defend; and it is also the common explanation of the words "sons of God" and "daughters of men." On points of this nature it is better to *suspend judgment* until, in another and better life, we can consult Noah and Moses on the subject, rather than give loose rein to wild imaginations. Christ gives to his people an "eternal life"; so that *they can well afford to wait*. Augustine used to say: "*God is patient because he is eternal*"; and his children may well imitate him therein.

There are, for example, those who suppose here, just as in the case of the wife of Cain, that there were two distinct races of men in the world, the Adamic and the Pre-Adamic—a race perhaps half bestial; the mixture of which two races caused the moral desolations that are mentioned; and that when the Hebrew text says in vr. 9 that "Noah was a just man and *perfect in his generations*," instead of meaning, as said in the text of the Modern Spanish Version, that he was "perfect among his contemporaries" (a very proper and legitimate use of the word, according to Gesenius), it means to say that he was of pure stock and uncontaminated descent. An old Jewish opinion was that "the sons of God" were angels, or fallen angels, who by their union with women of human stock, produced the giants, or "Nephilim"; of whom the mythology of the Greeks and Romans brings us many fantastic, wicked and impure stories. Extravagances are both of these explanations, which have no basis in reason, or in science, or in Scripture; although we cannot satisfactorily explain the difficulties of the passage, nor resolve the doubts which vr. 4 awakens, nor elucidate the reference to the powerful antediluvians, "men of renown;" to whom there are several allusions in Job and other books of the Old Testament, as being buried beneath the waters of Noah's Flood. See, for example, Ps. 88: 10; Job 26: 51, compared with Job 22: 15—18; Prov. 2: 18; 9: 18; 21: 26. It was very natural that an event which so deeply and powerfully affected the minds of the ancient world, should come to give form and coloring to the popular ideas of those times with regard to the mysterious subject of *hell*, the end and destiny of the wicked (a subject little less mysterious for us), and that it should give not only much occu-



pation to the imagination and inventive faculty of the Jewish doctors, as we have seen, but that those heroes of wickedness, the "mighty men that were of old, the men of renown," with many fabulous inventions, should be converted into the gods and demi-gods whom the pagans of antiquity worshiped, and of whom Paul says: "The things which gentiles offer in sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God" (1 Cor. 10: 20); it being understood that "demons" in the mouth of the Greeks, were *the spirits of dead heroes*, converted into divinities; all which differs but little, except in name and in the personal character of those so deified, from the worship of the saints, which Romanism baptizes with the name of "Christianity." It is likely also that these were "the demons," or "devils," whose worship, frequently obscene, the ancient Israelites often substituted for the worship of Jehovah. Deut. 32: 27; Ps. 106: 37.

It serves to increase the difficulties of this passage that the "Nephilim", or giants, were not the product of the mixed marriages of vr. 3, as is frequently represented. The Hebrew text will not sanction such a meaning. The correct translation of the Hebrew makes a marked distinction between the two. The progeny which came of those unholy unions is mentioned as something additional, which was "*and also*" and "*after that.*" We, who are the children and heirs of God and have the promise and security of an endless life, in the case of involved and difficult passages like this, will do well to suspend judgment, until we have the opportunity of consulting the case with those who can give us the certainty of it at first hand.

In the midst of these difficulties, then, and of the scanty information which God has been pleased to give us about the matter, we content ourselves with the explanation already given, as the common opinion, and the only one that is satisfactory to most serious persons; to wit, that the act of completely blotting out the distinction between the just and the unjust, "the children of God" and the "children of men," by means of matrimonial alliances (using the word "matrimonial" in a wide sense, to include sexual relations in general), resulted in the complete ruin of the cause of God in the world, and in the complete triumph of the cause of that "old Serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan." With reason, then, in all the ages of the past, God has admonished his people to beware of this. Moses said to them: "Ye are the children of Jehovah your God" (Deut. 14: 1), and as such he commanded them very often that they should have no family relations with the pagan nations that were around them; to the same effect, and as speaking to "sons and daughters of the Lord

Almighty," Paul solemnly admonished the Christians of his day about the same matter. 2 Cor. 6: 14—18. Polygamy, or universal and unbridled lewdness, is indicated by the words, "they took to themselves wives (*Heb.* women), of all that they chose." Another necessary result of such dissoluteness was violent discord and strife, and even wars, on account of the women thus carried back and forth. In ancient Greece the abduction of the beautiful Helen caused the long and disastrous Trojan war; and among the greatest of good things that a pure Christianity has brought to us, is the inviolability of the family, and the quiet and secure possession of the most precious treasure of the home.

In those days of portentous wickedness, the Holy Spirit, by means of the natural conscience, strove or contended with men in their error; but with so little success, that Jehovah said: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man in his error; he is flesh" (*Mod. Span. Ver.*);—words which seem to imply that those carnal sinners were so unbridled and shameless in their excesses and violences that the case no longer admitted a remedy; notwithstanding which, God granted them a respite of 120 years, before he made an end of them. The words "My Spirit shall not always strive with man in his error," rationalists and semi-rationalists would wish to deprive of their evangelical meaning, in order to give them some insipid sense which they regard as more convenient. The former sense is confirmed by Isaiah, who to the same effect says: "But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; wherefore he was turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them." Isa. 63: 10. And in times of the New Testament, Stephen said to his murderous opponents: "Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit; *as your fathers did, so also do ye.*" Acts 7: 51. Although the words are in fact susceptible of several other translations, that given is the best and the one most generally accepted; and in these STUDIES I regard it most convenient ordinarily to attend to a single meaning which is good, Scriptural and of common approval, rather than occupy ourselves with others of doubtful quality, which only serve to distract the reader's attention with various and contradictory senses.

The word "Nephilim" (vr. 4) is in Num. 13: 23 translated "*the giants, sons of Anak*"; and such is probably its meaning in this place—whether speaking of men of prodigious stature, of prodigious strength and rapacity, or of prodigious pride and wickedness. The Hebrew word signifies "*fallers*" and some suppose that it refers to the rapacious and violent, who *falling* upon the defenceless, made of them and of all they possessed

a prey. Others translate it "*fallen*," and understand it as referring either to *fallen* angels or to apostate men, *fallen away* from God. In this uncertainty, it seems best and most secure, to preserve the word in its Hebrew form, as in fact is done by the Revisers of the English Bible. In vrs. 5, 6, 7, the historian seems to labor painfully to find words adequate to duly set forth the extreme impiety of those times, and the pain and disgust with which God looked on that human creation which interested him so deeply, and which, at its beginning, caused him so great satisfaction: "And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented Jehovah that he had made man upon the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And Jehovah said: I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man and beast and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; for it repenteth me (or grieves me) that I have made them." The word "it repenteth me" may also more properly be translated "*I am sorry*" or "grieved," as given in the Modern Spanish Version, which is the primitive meaning of the verb "*naham*," and there is no good reason for adopting the more difficult sense of the two. Here the sacred writer avails himself of our manner of speech in order to convey to us an idea of the utter disgust of God, and to declare his solemn and deliberate purpose of sweeping the earth of its impious inhabitants, and of washing it clean of the crimes and uncleannesses committed upon it; commencing anew the history of mankind in Noah, as a new Adam;—the only man among his contemporaries who had kept himself faithful to God and pure in his manner of life;—his three sons were not yet born, as said before.

In all this, it concerns us to see what we are ourselves by nature, and of what our fallen nature is capable when deprived of divine help, and bereft of the example and influence of those who love and serve God. Such was the world when only one just man was found in it. Compare the case of Sodom. Ch. 18: 32; 19, 16.

In the midst of this frightful corruption, "Noah found favor (M. S. V., 'grace') in the sight of Jehovah." The word "grace" here and in all the Bible signifies *unmerited favor*; and it is important to hold always before us that man, as a sinner, can merit nothing before God except the punishment of his sins. The pardon of sin was to Noah, as it is to us, an unmerited grace. Eph. 1: 7. Notwithstanding this, "to find grace" may likewise express the pleasure with which God looked upon this his serv-

ant, who confessed his name and was found faithful before him in the midst of the universal corruption of his contemporaries: see this use of the word in ch. 39: 4, 21. It is hard enough in a Christian land, and surrounded by great numbers of pious people, to keep ourselves from the corruptions of the world; how great, then, was the faith of Noah, and how worthy was he of our praise and imitation, who "walked with God," and held faithfully to his paths, when "all flesh had corrupted its way," and he only was found "righteous before God!" Divine grace alone made him capable of doing this, as it does us; but not on this account did God regard him with any the less favor, but on the contrary, with yet greater favor; because it was all "to the glory of his grace which he freely bestows on us in his beloved (Son)." Eph. 1: 6.

6: 9—12. THE UNIVERSAL AND FRIGHTFUL CORRUPTION OF THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE. (2468 B. C.)

9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, and perfect in his generations: Noah walked with God.

10 And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11 And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

12 And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

"The *generations* of Noah" in this passage means *memoirs*, or *family history*, as we see in many places, where there is no allusion to genealogies or lineal descendants. This we have seen in ch. 2: 4; and here also, where it does not pass beyond Shem, Ham and Japheth. We see it also in ch. 11: 27; 25: 19, and particularly in ch. 37: 2, which introduces to us the history of Joseph. This secondary sense was easily derived from the primary sense of a genealogical list. Some suppose that "perfect in his generations" in vr. 9 (a different word in Hebrew from the other), means that Noah was of pure and unmixed blood; but as the word "perfect" never has such a sense in the Bible, it is more proper to understand that *generations* is used as a designation of time, (= ages), and signifies those of his age, or as the text of the Modern Spanish Version says, "his contemporaries",—the sense as given by Gesenius.

This great man, who was like another Adam—the second progenitor of the human family "walked with God," as walked his grandfather, Enoch; the same who prophesied of the judgment that was fast coming upon the earth (page 75); and the extreme wickedness of those of his time impelled him to yet greater intimacy with his God.

“Violence” and total corruption of morals formed the distinctive characteristics of the wickedness of those times; the first, referring to oppression, injustice and murder and the other, to the unbridled passions of men and women. It is probable, and almost certain, that the arts and sciences had reached a very high degree of perfection before the deluge; otherwise Noah would never have been able to build an ark like that he made; but as it happened in Rome, in the time of its greatest achievements and grandeur, the arts and sciences, and its highest civilization were prostituted to the service of human wickedness. Material idolatry does not appear to have existed, but on the contrary, pure atheism and a complete negation of God.

6: 13—22. THE ARK. GOD ESTABLISHES HIS COVENANT WITH NOAH.  
(2468 B. C.)

13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

14 Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

15 And this is how thou shalt make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

16 A light\* shalt thou make to the ark, and to a cubit shalt thou finish it upward; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

17 And I, behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is in the earth shall die.

18 But I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

19 And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female.

20 Of the birds after their kind, and of the cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.

21 And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

22 Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

[\*M. S. V., skylight.]

In view of the extreme wickedness of men, God resolved to destroy them completely, and begin the race anew in the family of Noah; with the additional advantage of the terrible example made of the impious world of the antediluvians. There had already failed two experiments\* which God was making with the

\*This figure of speech is not original with the author, but was a favorite one with my old preceptor (in 1852-1855), the late Dr. J. Ad-

fallen race of Adam: the first, which ended with the violent death of Abel; and the second (that of the formal separation between the wicked *Cainites* and the pious *Sethites*, who from the days of Enosh were called by the name of Jehovah), which was wrecked by the mixed marriages that put an end to such separation;—experiments made, not that God might be assured of the hopeless depravity of men, but that in all coming ages the race might know its own utter ruin, and the native wickedness inherent in it, and turn to the remedy which God, at infinite cost to himself, has provided for us.

Now then, at this point God began still another trial or experiment, the third, to see whether a divine judgment such as can only be compared with the final judgment (of which it was in fact a vivid type and representation), would bring the race to take warning, and to amend its perverse way before him. He said therefore, to Noah: "The end of all flesh is come before me;" and he commanded him to "prepare an ark for the saving of his house."

The manner of this communication it is not given us to understand. With Adam, with Eve, with the Serpent and with Cain God had spoken in a manner perfectly comprehensible by them. The holy Enoch "walked with God," and without any doubt (being a prophet), he had more or less frequent communication with him. And God communicated with Noah in such a manner that he had no more doubt of it than of the voice of his wife or his sons. The allegation, then that (when there is occasion for it) God cannot communicate his will with infallible and indubitable certainty, reduces him to a condition of less dignity and power than a mortal man. Any governor, or magistrate, or county sheriff, without the least difficulty, is able to send out his proclamations, edicts and notices, in such a way that in all parts of the country, people shall know with absolute certainty what has been ordered or decreed; and if the King of Heaven cannot do as much, he is no better than the dumb gods of wood and stone. So that the denial of the possibility of a divine revelation, well accredited, certain and absolutely sure, is equivalent to the negation of God himself. What does it matter to us that God exists, if it is impossible for him to communicate with us? Without entering, therefore, into the inquiry of *how* he did it, we take for granted that he did in fact communicate with him, with such clearness and abundance of evidence that Noah no dison Alexander, of Princeton Seminary, N. J.; and when properly and reverently used, it sheds great light on the divine procedure with our fallen race.—Tr.

more doubted of it than of his own existence; and this, as regards all the details of the plan and arrangements of the ark which we have now before us. "By faith"—and faith is the simple and explicit confidence which we have in the word and testimony of God—"by faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." Heb. 11: 7.

[NOTE 15.—*On the time that Noah was occupied in preparing the ark.* Only three sons of his, Shem, Ham and Japheth are mentioned in this history, and all three were born when he had already passed his five hundredth year. It is therefore difficult to suppress the suspicion that Noah had other sons besides these, who had already died, or who were united in character and destiny with the impious, who perished in the Flood. If, as we have already indicated (p. 80), Shem, the oldest of the three, was only 98 years old at the time of the Deluge, then it is evident that Noah did not occupy the 120 years of the divine forbearance with a reprobate race (vr. 3), in building his ark, as is often represented; because when God commanded him to "prepare an ark for the saving of his house," he ordered, that when finished, "his sons and his son's wives" should enter into it, as well as himself and his wife (vr. 18); unless we suppose that vrs. 13—21 embrace the substance of several communications which he had in the course of the 120 years; as was true of Abraham and of others. See comments on ch. 12: 1.

Peter tells us (2 Pet. 2: 5; 1 Pet. 3: 20) that Noah was "a preacher of righteousness"; but that his wicked contemporaries "were incorrigible, when the long patience of God waited while the ark was preparing." This seemingly has given occasion for the belief that Noah employed the 120 years of the divine longsuffering in building the ark; but for reasons just given I believe that such an inference is ill-founded, unless we suppose that Noah commenced the work twenty-two years before the eldest of his three sons were born; but it is probable, as has already been suggested, that what is related in vrs. 13—21 was not a single communication, but the substance of several.]

The ark was not a ship; it is even doubtful whether sea-going ships were known at that period, in which it would seem that the centres of population were still remote from the sea. And the name given to this structure ("ark" or "box") seems to confirm the idea that there were no "ships" in those times; otherwise it would naturally have taken the form and also the name

of the great vessels of ancient times, whose largest dimensions it exceeded almost beyond computation.

Many ages passed after Noah's day before maritime cities were founded; all which leads us to believe that there were not at that period ship-yards and ship-carpenters; a circumstance which notably increased the difficulty of Noah's enterprise, and sets in bold relief his faith, in obeying without delay, and to the very letter, the order which he had received from God:—"And Noah did so; according to all that God commanded him, so did he." Vr. 22.

The tediously slow and unheard-of enterprise which Noah undertook, and in which, being undoubtedly rich, he invested not only his time, but all his worldly estate, was nothing less than that of building a great "box" 300 cubits long, 50 wide and 30 high; or 450, 75 and 45 feet respectively, estimating the cubit at eighteen inches, or a foot and a half. It was made of pine, or cypress, or fir, or cedar; for it is not known positively what class of wood is represented by the word "*gopher*," and probably the word designates a family of incorruptible woods, rather than any one class exclusively. The ark was to consist of three stories, 14 or 15 feet high, with a door in the side, and a *skylight* (*Heb.* "light") all around, at a distance of one cubit from the upper part of each story—formed perhaps by the omission of one plank in the external sheathing of the ark—for light and ventilation. Besides this, each story was to be divided into rooms, cells or stalls (*Heb.* nests), for the accommodation of the different classes of animals, and storing provision for their maintenance. We know also, from ch. 8: 6, that he made a window in the ark, probably in the roof; guarding it thus against the impact of the tremendous waves which it would have to suffer, particularly at the beginning of the deluge. A heart less valiant and full of faith than that of Noah, would have been appalled at an enterprise so superior to all his resources, and so foreign to his business, whatever that may have been. Peter calls him "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet. 2: 5); but with reference doubtless to his character; rather than his office. God made every kind of bird and beast to come in to Noah, male and female; but of clean birds and animals, such as would serve for sacrifice (ch. 8: 20) seven of each class, three pairs and one odd one, both to offer them in sacrifice, and also to eat, after the deluge, without making an end of the race.

With regard to the possibility of accommodating so many animals in so small space, there is no real difficulty, when we bear in mind that the ark contained 33,750 square feet of surface in



each one of its three stories, or say, 101,250 square feet in all; and when we also bear in mind that the animals were not the totality of animals which we know in all the world, but those known to Noah in that day, which, according to the rude classification of the ancients, would be much less extensive than our own. With regard to the food which he was to provide (ch. 6: 21), there will be no difficulty for him who receives the testimony of God, and who remembers that on a certain occasion of need, Jesus furnished food to 5,000 men with the short supply of five loaves and two small fishes; and as for him who does not receive the testimony of God, it is all one whether we can satisfactorily explain the various problems of the deluge or not. The wild beasts and birds of prey here, as in ch. 1: 30, need not cause us any difficulty, if we remember that to the believing man one explicit testimony of God is sufficient to remove the most formidable difficulties and objections; besides which, it should be considered that in histories so extremely brief as these, we cannot expect that all difficulties which present themselves are to be explained, in order that we may receive and believe them. We receive and believe them, not because they are reasonable or probable, but *on the authentic testimony of God who cannot lie*. The Bible is a revelation of the will of God for our salvation, and *he who does not care to believe the testimony of God, cannot be saved*. Mark 16: 16; John 5: 10. If we wish to oblige God to explain everything to us before we believe him, what room will there be for faith? We believe that God, who gave to Noah (who was not a ship-builder) particular directions as to the construction of the ark, would so guide him in all the details of the work, that he might have strength and endurance to reach the proposed end; and that in like manner, by his providence, he would bring the animals, of their own accord to the ark, at the opportune time, and would make provision for their maintenance, causing the wild beasts in the ark to be as tame as the lions in Daniel's den (Dan. 6: 22); and as for those who do not believe the history of Daniel, accredited to have been a "prophet" by Jesus himself (Matt. 24: 15), it matters very little whether we leave them satisfied or not with regard to the story of Noah.

Nevertheless it is to be remembered that, as Noah's Flood was probably caused by the depression of the crust of the earth, in its inhabited part, rather than by the simultaneous and universal elevation of the seas above the whole earth, as will be seen in the comments on ch. 8: 1—14, it would not be necessary that animals, wild beasts and birds of all classes known to us, should enter. It is certain that there was no "*sloth*" there from

South America, which in a thousand years could not travel on foot to Asia, even though it had an overland route provided with daily rations of fresh leaves; nor yet the *kangaroo* of Australia. It would be the less necessary, therefore, to suppose that there was there the polar bear from North America, the Bengal tiger and the elephant of India, nor the African lion. The narrative of the deluge is popular in form, and as in the story of the creation, here also the facts are presented according to the appearance that things would have to an observer of that day, rather than as they would present themselves to our eyes, who occupy a very different position and take in with one sweep of vision a much vaster horizon.

*"I will establish my covenant with thee."* Vr. 18. For the first time we meet here the word "covenant;" which figures in such a remarkable way in the Bible, and in every well co-ordinated system of Bible religion; from which some leap to the conclusion that now, for the first time, God made a covenant with men. But there is no reasonable doubt that this is the same covenant which, without mentioning it by that name, God made with regard to "the Woman and her Seed," when he gave to men the first of all the promises; which also, without calling it by the name of "promise," was yet the promise of human redemption; according as is believed and accepted by Christian people of every name. Nobody doubts that God made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and yet, although it is many times repeated, *only twice is it called a covenant* in the history of Abraham, *once* in that of Isaac, and *never* in that of Jacob. For the most part it is spoken of as "the promise given to Abraham," and also "the blessing of Abraham." I do not hesitate, therefore, to affirm that the covenant which God celebrated with Noah was not a new thing, but that he confirmed with him *the covenant which he had always had with his people*, who, for this cause, and only for this cause, from the days of Enosh were "called by the name of Jehovah"; a covenant based on the primeval promise as to the Seed of the Woman. The same promise and covenant God confirmed with Noah, the only earthly representative of the people of Jehovah that remained to him in the world; and in order to give effect to the promise, he took the necessary steps that the race should not perish.

The antiquity of this covenant in the days of Noah is clearly attested in the Revised Version of the English Bible, which explicitly recognizes the covenant made with Adam, in the words of the prophet Hosea; *"like Adam, they have transgressed the covenant."* Hos. 6: 7. See also *Note 7*, on the covenant made with Adam.

The *crimson thread*, dyed in the blood of sacrifice, runs through the whole of the Old Testament; and here, in this covenant, we see it reduce its sphere of operation to the family of Noah alone, leaving to perish that whole generation of "forgetters of God." Indeed, the words: "*My COVENANT will I establish with thee*" give us clearly to understand in this place, as also in the many others in which God uses the phrase, that *it was not a new thing, but well known and recognized in the world*, and of all things most precious; and that it now came to be deposited in the hands of the patriarch Noah.

More noble testimony could not be given as to any man's character and work than that which we read respecting Noah, at the close of the directions which God gave him for the salvation of his family, lineage and race: "AND NOAH DID SO; ACCORDING TO ALL THAT GOD COMMANDED HIM, SO DID HE." Vr. 20. Moses celebrates the work of Noah, and Paul his faith (Heb. 11: 7); but the two amount to the same thing; because *his work without his faith would have been an act of madness, and his faith without his work, a lie!*

## CHAPTER VII.

VRS. 1—5. NOAH AND HIS FAMILY ENTER THE ARK.  
(2340 B. C. Year of the World, 1656.)

1 And Jehovah said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

2 Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee seven and seven,\* the male and his female; and of the beasts that are not clean two, the male and his female:

3 of the birds also of the heavens, seven and seven,\* male and female, to keep seed alive upon the face of the earth.

4 For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the ground.

5 And Noah did according unto all that Jehovah commanded him.

[\*A. V., by sevens.]

When the ark was finished, and the preparations which were to be made had been completed, on the seventh day before the flood began, God commanded Noah and his sons to enter the ark; and without delaying till he saw any indication of the great catastrophe, nor even waiting for the animals to enter before them, "Noah did according to all that Jehovah had commanded him." Vr. 5. Such are the operations of faith; so God tries and proves that incomparable jewel which saves our souls—"faith which worketh by love." Gal. 5: 6.

7: 6—24. THE DELUGE. (2348 B. C. Year of the world 1658. According to the LXX, 3261 B. C. Year of the world, 2242.)

6 And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

7 And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.

8 Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creepeth upon the ground,

9 there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, male and female, as God commanded Noah.

10 And it came to pass after the seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

13 In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark;

14 they, and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort.

15 And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh wherein is the breath of life.

16 And they that went in, went in male and female, of all flesh, as God commanded him: and Jehovah shut him in.

17 And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth.

18 And the waters prevailed, and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters.

19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered.

20 Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

21 And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both birds, and cattle, and beasts, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man;

22 all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of all that was on the dry land, died.

23 And every living thing was destroyed that was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only was left, and they that were with him in the ark.

24 And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days.

When God commanded, Noah, without waiting for anything more, entered with his family into the ark, and the animals came in after them, seven days (vr. 10) before there was any sign of the approach of the great catastrophe. In plain sight of the people who for many years had laughed at the folly of building that immense and ugly "box" on dry land, many leagues away from the sea, and still, no doubt, suffering the ridicule of those impious men, they entered the ark; "and Jehovah shut them in."

The words "all the fountains of the great deep (M. S. V. "the

abyss") were broken up" may signify that the dikes which defend the earth against the invasion of the seas were broken through (see Job. 38: 8—11; Ps. 104: 8, 9; Jer. 5: 22); or it may signify that the waters, from beneath, apparently burst through the surface of the earth. "The windows of heaven" is a phrase much used in the Bible, and in such different senses, that it is an indication of much ignorance or much perversity to insist that Moses believed that hidden up yonder in the skies there were oceans of water, which, through these windows, suddenly fell.

The exact date at which the flood began was in the 600th year of the life of Noah, in the second month, and on the 17th day of the month. Vr. 11. In those days when there were no calendars nor any recognized epochs from which to compute time, and when of necessary consequence nobody cared about questions of chronology, it was the natural method to determine the dates of history according to the years of the life of some great actor in it, as did all the other nations of antiquity. The heavy rains lasted only 40 days and 40 nights (ch. 7: 4, 10, 12, 17); but the waters kept on rising higher and higher until, at the end of 150 days, they passed over the tops of the highest mountains. Vr. 24, and ch. 8: 3. These two points are worthy of our special attention. The waters continued to rise for 110 days after the great rains ceased, and *for that very reason the rains could not be the cause of their rise.* The word "prevailed," in vr. 24, seems to signify that for the space of 150 days the waters *continued to advance* and overwhelm the earth, as it is clearly stated in vrs. 18, 19, 20; and that there they stopped rising, at an elevation of fifteen cubits above the highest mountains known to the writer. As it was not a matter of guess-work, the 15 cubits (or 22½ feet) clearly implies that he makes no allusion to the Himalayas and the Andes, of whose existence or height nothing was known in that part of the world, but rather, to *mountains of known elevation.* After the end of the 150 days the waters began to subside. Ch. 8: 3. The deluge lasted 313 days (ch. 6: 11; 8: 13); although Noah and his family remained still in the ark (ch. 8: 14, 15), in order that the earth might become well dried before they went forth. So that the waters rose for 150 days, and they subsided in 163 days; the abode of Noah and his people in the ark lasted for one year and ten days after the deluge began, with seven days more in which they waited for it, shut up in the ark; or altogether, the space of one year and seventeen days.

The purpose and effect of the deluge was the utter destruction of every animal on dry land, and the birds of heaven, *and every man*; for whose sake alone that terrific destruction was sent.

In Gen. 3: 17, we read that the earth, or ground, was cursed for man's sake; here the inhabited world was destroyed for man's sake; and in Rom. 8: 19—23, Paul teaches us that it still "groans beneath the bondage of corruption," longing, with outstretched neck, for the day of its liberation, and of its admission into the glorious liberty of the children of God—the day of "the redemption of our body." *The deluge was universal with respect to men*; its commission was to destroy utterly the ungodly race, whose insupportable sins had provoked beyond endurance the wrath of heaven; in order that the human race might begin afresh in the family of Noah, that second Adam. The question whether the whole earth, inhabited and uninhabited—our terraqueous globe, was submerged, we reserve for consideration in the following chapter.

### CHAPTER VIII.

VRS. 1—14. END OF THE DELUGE. (2347 B. C.)

1 And God remembered Noah, and all the beasts, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged;

2 the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained;

3 and the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of a hundred and fifty days the waters decreased.

4 And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.

5 And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

6 And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made:

7 and he sent forth a raven, and it went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.

8 And he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground;

9 but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him to the ark; for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: and he put forth his hand, and took her, and brought her in unto him into the ark.

10 And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark:

11 and the dove came in to him at eventide; and, lo, in her mouth an olive-leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.

12 And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove; and she returned not again unto him any more.

13 And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dried.

14 And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dry.

The words "God remembered Noah," etc., in verse 1, is a Hebraism, which means that he had them present in his mind and mercy, and commenced to work for their deliverance. The result of it was that after 150 days "he made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters abated." "The windows of heaven" were closed at the end of the 40 days and 40 nights (ch. 7: 4, 12, 17); for the words refer to a steady, extraordinary and unexampled down-pour of water, limited to the 40 days and 40 nights; although, without doubt, it rained much, though not incessantly, after that. The threefold repetition of the words "40 days and 40 nights" clearly indicates that those 40 days and nights were something altogether unexampled; days in which the waters *fell in sheets* or *in cataracts*, according to the translation of the LXX. The inundations of waters, falling perhaps like *cloudbursts*, formed and always have formed a most notable feature of this cataclysm, and the one which most vividly impressed the senses; although it was not the most efficient cause in producing the deluge, as we shall see farther on. Job says (ch. 26: 8) that God "binds up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them." But here the clouds rent asunder and the waters fell in cataracts. "The fountains of the great deep" were not shut until the end of the 150 days, and upon this the waters were detained in their triumphant course and did not rise any higher. The two phenomena commenced simultaneously, seven days after God had shut up Noah and his family in the ark (ch. 6: 10, 11); but the operation of the second, the true cause of the deluge, lasted for 110 days after the efficient operation of the first had ceased. This fact is very palpable; but it seems to escape the attention of most readers of the book. The fall of one foot of water in twenty four hours is a phenomenal event, even in tropical regions; but this would not in 40 days give more than 40 feet of elevation, even though it uniformly covered the earth and the seas. And although *six feet* of water should so fall in the twenty four hours, this would give only 240 feet in the 40 days and 40 nights. *It is impossible therefore, that the rains should have had any great part in the producing of the deluge.* Not only so, but we also know (what Moses and Noah probably did not know) that in times of continued rain, the rainfall of today was produced by the evaporations of yesterday; so that, although the great and continued rains would produce inundations on land and in the rivers, they could not elevate at all the surface of the ocean. But it seems evident that Moses himself did not attribute an exaggerated importance to the rain, except only as a terrifying accompaniment

of the flood; because he joins together the two causes, and makes the second to continue in active operation for 110 days after the great rains had ceased; during which time the waters continued to prevail more and more in their ascendant course, until they swept over the tops of the loftiest mountains. It is clear and undeniable, therefore, that according to the Bible itself, the true cause of the deluge of Noah, was "the breaking up of all the fountains of the great deep," and not the falling of oceans of water from the heavens, where they had been mysteriously hidden from the second day of the creation (ch. 1: 6, 7), as Bishop Amat says; and others also have said, who are not bishops. How well, then, did the Spirit of God guard the pen of Moses, and of the other writers whom he inspired, that they should not fall into the great errors of many of their most illustrious commentators! "*Whoso is wise let him observe these things.*" Ps. 107: 43.

Let us investigate, then, what were those "fountains of the great deep," the breaking up of which, in all their extent, was the efficient and principal cause of the production of waters sufficient to cover the inhabited earth, with its valleys and mountains, to an elevation of fifteen cubits above their highest summits. Here (as in the narrative of the creation) the sacred writer describes things not as they are in themselves, but according to the appearance they would offer to the eye of an observer. It cannot be doubted that on the breaking through of the dikes of the sea, the earth itself, as if from inexhaustible abysses, would appear to vomit forth seas of water; a thing little less horrifying, to one who should witness it, than the falling of the "cataracts" of heaven. We know that no such great abysses of water existed beneath the dry land; as illustrious commentators, even at the beginning of the 19th century have imagined; but we also know that *the appearance* of the thing would be the same, if the crust of the inhabited earth were depressed until it allowed the waters of the seas and oceans to rush toward the center of that depression; which we would naturally understand to be the center of the population of the world (undoubtedly immense) of that day. Contrary to the popular belief, it is not the sea level which is unstable; it is the dry land that is subject always to the movements of elevation or depression, due to its interior agitations; whose seething entrails are separated from the surface of the earth by a very thin crust of earthy matter, which serves also as a non-conductor of its inconceivable heats. On a small scale, this crust of the earth, which is scarcely one five-hundredth



part of the diameter of the globe (see *Note* on Chaos, p. 3), in many places is in visible movement, rising or falling; and not infrequently it has been raised in one day or in one night to a great height, or it has sunk many feet beneath the surface of the ocean. It was not necessary, therefore, that God should have done more than to cause the inhabited earth, with its rivers, mountains and cities, to sink some hundreds or some thousands of feet, in order to give as its result the deluge which Moses describes, with all the appearances of an inundation caused by cataracts of water from the heavens (a constant accompaniment of great earthquakes), and seas of waters vomited forth from the bowels of the earth; and this by causes purely natural (though directed by God's especial providence), and without in the least interfering with the established laws of nature, or causing any serious variation in the ordinary level of the sea. This cataclysm, therefore, may be believed to have been caused by the gradual submersion of the crust of the earth, in the part then inhabited, beneath the level of the ocean; and the termination of the deluge would be effected by just the reverse of this; to wit, the gradual elevation of the crust of the earth, more or less to its former level. Under such circumstances, the waters of the deluge, in proportion as the surface of the earth was gradually elevated, would "*return from off the earth* continually," as says the text (vr. 3), to the seas and oceans from whence they had come; the absolute quantity of water on our terraqueous globe remaining unaltered and unalterable, before the deluge, during the deluge, and after the deluge.

[This is in fact what has often happened in the geological ages of the past, during which ocean and dry land have changed places repeatedly and successively, in almost all parts of the world. Of this, the coal deposits found in all countries (and in England mined profitably to a depth of 4,000 feet beneath the surface), buried under mountains of rock, gravel, clay and earth, afford us the simplest and most tangible evidence; they being the product of forests and fens that once flourished on the surface of the earth; while mountains and cordilleras bear up into the regions of the clouds, the rocky remains of deposits long ago formed in the bottom of seas and oceans. The fact that these alterations have been for the most part slow in their operation, does not materially alter the case. On a smaller scale, these alterations of sea and land, even in our own day, are sometimes very rapid, being effected in one day, or a single night.—Tr.]

The reader should not regard this supposition as extravagant or incredible; for, taking in his hand a large orange, and with his two thumbs depressing the rind on one side until it forms a cup, capable of containing one or two tablespoonfuls of water, he will have before his eyes a vivid representation of what probably happened to the earth in the days of Noah; and with God, it would be as easy, and an operation as natural (though not so ordinary), to depress many thousand square leagues of the surface of the earth, as it is for the reader to make his cup in the rind of the orange. He ought, on the contrary, to bless the sustaining and patient hand of God, that he does not permit so thin a crust to sink beneath the weight of the abominations of men, and give at once occasion to that deluge of fire which threatens the world of the ungodly in the last day. 2 Pet. 3: 6—14.

The terms in which Moses describes the end of the flood correspond exactly with the supposition that the cause of the catastrophe was the depression of the crust of the earth in its inhabited part, and that its end was brought about by the contrary operation,—the gradual elevation of the depressed crust: “*And the waters returned from off the earth continually; and after the end of 150 days the waters decreased.*” Vr. 3. Here we can almost see the waters as they returned to where they had formerly been, withdrawing from off the surface of the earth with a constant movement, as its gradual elevation threw them from off its surface. But according to the other and the ancient belief, that the whole globe was covered with water sufficient to bury oceans, seas, mountains, valleys, hills and plains in a winding sheet of waters, which passed 15 cubits above the tops of the Himalayas and the Andes, it would be necessary *to create* for this purpose a quantity of water many times greater than the totality of what exists, or has ever existed in the world, in order to bury it thus; and this for the purpose of destroying a race of sinners who occupied only a part, and perhaps a small part, of the continent of Asia. And after having effected this purpose, with so prodigious and so useless an effort, what would become of such quantities of water when no longer necessary? *Where would they go? How would they return from off the earth? And whither would they withdraw, until the drowned earth was again brought into the condition of “dry land”?*

[NOTE 16.—*On the testimony of the Bible as to the universality of the Flood*, it will be very opportune to stop here and duly weigh the testimony of the Bible itself on this point; because for

the true Christian the testimony of God, in his inspired word, ought to outweigh all the scientific objections and difficulties which may be brought against it; and there are very estimable Christians who think that the following testimonies, taken from chapter seventh, are sufficient to establish solidly and forever the fact of the universality of the Noachian deluge, not only in the terms of the geography of the ancients, but of modern geography as well: to wit, (1) vrs. 19, 20 of chapter 7: "And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and *all the high mountains that were under the whole heavens were covered*. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail, and the mountains were covered"; and (2) vrs. 21—23 of the same chapter, which I do not cite, on account of their length; let the reader turn back and look at the passage for himself.

There can be no doubt that for Noah and for Moses the flood was universal *in the terms of their geography*; and this is doubtless what Moses in his history desired to express. But it is necessary to remember that for Moses the world was not as large as it is for us. It is necessary also to make the Bible consistent with itself. In Deut. 2: 25 Moses said, in the name of Jehovah, to Israel: "This day I will begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee *upon the people that are under the whole heaven*, who shall hear the report of thee, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of thee." Now, if it would be arrant nonsense to insist that in this Moses includes the five continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Australia, who can reasonably insist that all this, and nothing less, is what the same Moses means in ch. 7: 19, 20? But further, 1500 years after Moses, Luke (in Acts 2: 5) informs us that on the day of Pentecost "there were dwelling at Jerusalem, *Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven*." Here we have again the very same terms in which Moses expresses himself in regard to the extent of the deluge of Noah. But if the man would be esteemed a simpleton who should cite Luke to prove that there were then in Jerusalem Jews from the five continents mentioned, and pledge the inspiration of the Bible to prove that from all these the Jews annually went up to attend the great feasts of their nation in Jerusalem; where is the reason or the good sense of pledging the inspiration of the Bible to prove that in the days of Noah, the deluge of waters passed above the most elevated mountains of all these five continents? We must needs understand Moses, and the Bible in general, in conformity with their manner of speaking, and not with our own. See also Col. 1: 6, 23. Compare Luke 2: 1 and Rom. 1: 8. It is not

so then, but just the opposite, that the Bible teaches that the waters of the deluge passed over the universal world.]

“And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the 17th day of the month, on the mountains of Armenia” (Mod. Span. Ver.; *Heb.* Ararat). Vr. 4. The name “Ararat” occurs four times in the Hebrew Bible: here, and in 2 Kings 19: 37; Isa. 37: 38; Jer. 51: 27. In the last three passages it refers to the country of Armenia; and there is no doubt that such ought to be the translation here also. There is a universal tradition in Armenia that it was there that the ark of Noah rested. Some have thought that the phrase “the mountains of Ararat” refers to the two peaks of that name, of which the higher rises 17,000 feet above the level of the sea (the smaller being 4,000 feet lower), but both of them covered with perpetual snows. On the sloping sides of the mountain there are several convents of Armenian monks, some of whom maintain, with many absurd stories, the still greater absurdity that the ark of Noah came to a stand on the top of the loftier peak, and that it still remains there; the two peaks being so inaccessible that the most valiant climber has very rarely been able to reach the top. If the ark had stopped there, then in the *first* place, it would not have been possible to discharge its freight of living beings on either of the two peaks; and in the *second* place, men and animals would have perished with cold before they could have commenced the descent. And nevertheless a tradition so extremely old, and so generalized, may well have some basis of truth, especially that part of it which determines the southern slope of Mt. Ararat as the place where the ark finally came to rest and discharged its precious cargo; for God would doubtless have provided a safe landing-place for a vessel which bore within it the hopes of the whole world. This we can readily believe; although the Bible says nothing about the two peaks of Ararat, but only that the ark “rested upon the mountains of Ararat,” or Armenia. Vr. 4.

But although the ark did finally come to its rest in the mountain country of Armenia, or on the sloping sides of Mt. Ararat, this is the real difficulty, and it is seemingly a formidable one: The text does not say that it “rested” there at the end of the deluge, but “in the *seventh month*, and on 17th day of the month”; whereas it was two months and thirteen days later, “in the *tenth month*, and on *first day of the month*, that the tops of the mountains were seen.” Vr. 5. We have here what looks like a hopeless muddle, or an egregious blunder, which the infidel sets down to the account of “the mistakes of

Moses," and the commentators, so far as I have been able to consult them, either skip the difficulty, or help to confuse you with incredible suppositions; and yet its proper and satisfactory resolution comes to prove in a surprising manner the authenticity of this history and its minute accuracy. After days and weeks of prolonged study, testing one by one every supposable clew to the enigma, I was surprised to find that the "invincible difficulty" resolves itself, when you take the record just as it reads, and at the same time correct the common misunderstanding of the word "rested." There is nothing in the record itself, nor in the use of the Hebrew word *nouah*, to suggest the idea that it *came to its final resting place*, or that it "rested" more than a few moments, a few hours, or possibly a few days; the purpose of that mention being subsequently given.

To clear up then this formidable difficulty, and bring out in safety the seemingly endangered truth, and at the same time vindicate the minute accuracy of this divinely inspired history, let us fix in our minds the following data: 1st. The dates given are all alike stated in months and days of the 600th and 601st years of the life of Noah. 2nd. The ancient year consisted of 360 days, or twelve months of thirty days each. 3rd. As the ark could not rest on *all the mountains of Armenia*, let it be (as the monks and local tradition affirm) that it "rested" on the most elevated one of them all, which raises its hoary head 8,000 or 10,000 feet above the surrounding mountains of that mountainous country. 4th. The "rest" of the ark on this elevated summit, 16,815 or as others affirm, 17,500 feet high, *was not permanent*, as the word is generally assumed to mean; *the ark merely lodged there*, and then descended with the receding waters to the convenient place which God had prepared for it to discharge its priceless burden, on the sloping sides of the mountain, or on the elevated table-lands around it. This is self-evident when we consider *the date on which the ark so "rested,"* to wit, "the 17th day of the seventh month"; precisely five months, or 150 days, after the flood began, when "in the 600th year of Noah's life, in the second month and 17th day of the month, all the fountains of the great deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened" (ch. 7: 11); —the same 150 days that "the waters prevailed on the earth" in their ascendant course (ch. 7: 23), and "after the end of which 150 days, the waters began to decrease" (vr. 3); being just then at their greatest elevation,—15 cubits above the highest mountains. Ch. 6: 20. At that precise time, therefore, the

ark was floating in waters which, on that very day attained the limit of their proud dominion, 15 cubits above the lofty summit of Mt. Ararat; and it was morally impossible that God should allow it to "rest" more than a few minutes, or a few hours, on those inaccessible heights; but when Noah and his family became fully sensible of its *grounding there*, it disengaged itself from that most perilous situation, and slowly descended with the decreasing waters of the flood.

It seems to me a wonderful thing this mention that the waters passed *precisely 15 cubits* above the tops of the most elevated mountains. Why not say 30 cubits? Why not 50, or 100? They passed 4000 feet above the summit of the lesser Ararat, which is that much lower than the other, and probably 8,000 or 10,000 feet above the tops of the surrounding mountains, which are like pigmies in the presence of these two unrivaled mountain peaks. But why just 15 cubits or *twenty-two and a half feet*, above the most elevated of them all? Who was there to answer for this number so precisely given? It was not a guess, surely. It would be unlike anything else in the Bible for God to communicate to Noah this special bit of information, for him to transmit it to posterity; the more so as the fact lay within his own ken; and this furnishes us with a solution of the whole difficulty which we are trying to unravel. Noah and his family knew perfectly well that their ark was 30 cubits in height, and if they did not know that their loaded vessel would *draw* about the half of its height, they could easily have informed themselves of the fact by the *water-line*, when they went forth out of it after the flood; and they would know, without the help of revelation, that when the ark lodged momentarily upon the summit of Ararat (the only land on which it could thus have grazed in all Western Asia) 73 days before the tops of the surrounding mountains were seen (vrs. 4, 5), *at that very time the waters stood as many cubits above the inaccessible summit as their loaded vessel drew*. What more proof could a reasonable man ask for? for without being a ship-builder or a mariner, anybody might know, or might find out, that the ark would *draw* more or less the half of its height. And thus it appears to me that "victory is plucked out of the hands of defeat," and that out of a seemingly hopeless tangle, which unbelievers would represent as *prima facie* evidence of falsehood or of foolish guesswork, is drawn an unanswerable proof of the minute accuracy of this true history, by means of two circumstances which no writer of fiction would ever, or could ever, have invented.

Keeping in view these data, let us fix attention on the following points, which we cannot remember too well: 1. The flood began on the 17th day of the second month of the 600th year of the life of Noah. 2. It rained in torrents 40 days and 40 nights; but the waters continued to advance just the same after the rain ceased, in virtue of the first of the two causes given by Moses, to wit, the "breaking up of all the fountains of the great deep"; and they reached their greatest elevation in 150 days. 3. Precisely at this juncture, exactly five months, or 150 days, after the flood commenced, on the 17th day of the seventh month, the ark grounded and rested momentarily upon the most elevated peak in all that part of the world, with which no other in all Western Asia can compare, the giant Ararat; and the circumstance that it suffered no injury thereby, striking in such a way that everybody was conscious of the shock, was due to the fact that it did not come down in full weight, or strike with full force, but merely *grazed* or *grounded*, while *floating in fifteen cubits of water*. 4. Just then, "at the end of the 150 days, the waters began to decrease." Ch. 8: 3. "And the waters decreased continually," for two months and thirteen days more, until "in the tenth month and the first day of the month"—seven months and thirteen days after the flood began—the waters, having descended 8,000 feet or more, the tops of the mountains around were visible; a very different thing from seeing, or being able to see, the two elevated peaks of Ararat. 5. Forty days later, that is to say, on the 263rd day, Noah opened the window he had made in the ark, and sent forth a raven; which being an unclean bird, and strong of wing, kept going back and forth to the roof of the ark, without entering it, finding abundant subsistence on the fishes that died by the thousand, on dry land, with the descent of the waters. 6. On the 270th day, seven days after sending forth the raven (as we infer from verse 10, "he waited *other seven days*"), he let loose a dove, in quest of the information the raven failed to bring him; to wit, to know whether the "waters were abated from off the face of the ground" (vr. 8): but low-lands, hills and elevated table-lands were all as yet sunk in the waters; and the frightened dove soon returned to seek admittance beside its mate, "without finding rest for the sole of its foot." Vr. 7. 7. Noah waited seven days longer, and sent forth the dove a second time (vr. 10); this was on the 277th day of the deluge: and at the evening it brought in its beak a fresh olive leaf plucked off; "so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth." 8. On the 284th day, seven days later, when the dove was again

sent forth, it did not any more return to him. 9. Twenty-nine days after this, on the first day of the first month of the 601st year of Noah's life, that is, 313 days after the flood began, Noah removed the covering of the ark and "looked, and behold the face of the ground was dry"—in those lofty regions. The face of the ground on those elevated plains and valleys of Armenia, is seven or eight thousand feet above the level of the sea; so that the low-lands and extended plains of the far off rivers Euphrates and Tigris would still remain buried in the waters. 10. Fifty-seven days later, in the second month and the 27th day of the month of the 601st year of Noah, the earth was well dried (at least in those mountain regions), and God commanded Noah to go forth out of the ark. Vrs. 14—17.

Here we admire that wise providence of God, which directed the ark to those elevated regions of Armenia, as a land of promise for Noah and his family, who for more than one year had been shut up in the ark:—lands high and healthy at any time, but especially healthy after such an inundation as that; for a long while the level lands would be pestilential, and it is probable that Noah and his descendants remained some years among these mountains, before venturing to descend into the more fertile but less healthy lands of the Tigris and Euphrates. So ch. 11: 2 seems to imply.

The long patience of this great servant of God is well worthy of fixing our attention, based as it was on his triumphant faith in him. Noah was not impatient to go out of the ark for the space of seven months and fourteen days after the tops of the mountains all around were visible; nor for a month and twenty-seven days after he had removed the covering of the ark and seen for himself that "the face of the earth was dried." Vr. 13. God himself had shut him in, and with imperturbable calmness he waited until God himself should open the door and give him order to go forth. Nor is less certain or less secure that providence of God (though less conspicuous) with all his people, which "orders our steps," "directs our paths," and "chooses for us the changes" of our mortal life; and it is extremely important that we learn in Noah how "good it is to hope, and silently (M. S. V.) wait for the salvation of Jehovah." Lam. 3: 25, 26. "*He that believeth shall not make haste.*" Isa. 28: 16.

God's long delay to bring forth the men and animals out of the ark, for nearly two months after it was declared that "the face of the ground was dry," places also in very clear re-



lief how improbable in itself is the opinion of those who maintain that the work of creation was consummated in six days of twenty-four hours; and that in three days (or seventy-two hours) after God had raised the dry land from beneath the waters, he placed man there in a paradise of delights.

Before we pass onward, it will be worth while to state the interesting fact that some parts of that immense territory which we suppose to have been depressed in order to cause the deluge, remain still below the level of the ocean; as if when the depressed crust of the earth rose again, some parts of it never regained their former elevation. The surface of the Dead Sea, called in the Bible the Salt Sea, is 1300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. The Sea of Galilee is at least 600 feet lower than the ocean level; and the same is true of the valley of the Jordan, lying between the two, being from 600 to 1300 feet below the sea level. The Caspian Sea, situated but a short distance to the east of Mt. Ararat, is 80 feet lower than the ocean; and what is more, Herodotus, "the Father of History" (490—409 B. C.) describes the Caspian Sea as then covering an extent of territory several times greater than its present surface.\*

8: 15—19. NOAH AND HIS FAMILY AND THE ANIMALS GO FORTH OUT OF THE ARK. (2347 B. C.)

15 And God spake unto Noah, saying,

16 Go forth from the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.

17 Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee of all flesh, both birds, and cattle, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

18 And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him:

19 every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, whatsoever moveth upon the earth, after their families, went forth out of the ark.

In the 601st year of the life of Noah, "in the second month and the 27th day of the month"—one year and ten days after the beginning of the deluge, one year and seventeen days after Jehovah had shut them in the ark—God opened the door and gave orders that he and all that were with him in the ark should go forth. To these, both men and animals, he repeated the command which he imposed on them from the beginning (ch. 1: 22—28), and which he repeats to them in ch. 9: 1, to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. It might be supposed that it would have been sufficient to leave this to

\*See footnote on p. 109.

the natural instinct of procreation; but God held it convenient to impose it as a positive obligation; and both the word of God, and the history of the world, and the moral necessities of modern society, make patent the fact that this obligation is as binding today as when God laid it upon the creatures at the creation and after the flood.

On the other hand, this command cannot be alleged in favor of the illicit union of unmarried persons; because God, who has made to the man so incomparable gift as the woman, to be his companion and helper, reserves to himself alone the right of regulating the relations which should subsist between the two; and in his name the apostle says: "Let marriage be honorable among all—laymen and clergy alike—and let the (conjugal) bed be undefiled; for fornicators (on the one hand), and adulterers (on the other), God will judge." Heb. 13: 4.

In fact, men and animals went forth out of the ark upon those high lands of Armenia, in some convenient point which God had chosen for them, rather than upon the top of some mountain; and from thence they were distributed over the depopulated earth.

[NOTE 17.—*On the Deluge in general.* The *historic certainty* of the deluge of Noah finds its confirmation in the traditions of it which exist among all nations, and in all ages; but with such variations and with such a mixture of the fabulous as was to be expected. This is very natural, as they all proceeded from the trunk of Noah. Some of these traditions preserve the very name of Noah, and almost all of them agree in the total destruction of men by water, on account of their wickedness, and in the salvation of a single family. But the proof of proofs for Christian men is the Bible itself, which is the word of God, and the frequent mention it makes of the deluge; and above all the testimony of Jesus Christ with regard to Noah, his ark, the carelessness and irreligion of men in those days, and "the flood which came and took them all away." Matt. 24: 37—39; Luke 17: 26, 27. If the testimony of Jesus Christ itself is not sufficient to establish the certainty and the historic character of all this, pray, for what is it sufficient? He, himself, says: "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?" John 3: 12.

The *physical cause* of the deluge, as has already been said (pp. 97—100), was probably, or certainly, the sinking of the thin crust of the then inhabited earth, and its submersion be-

neath the waters of the ocean,\* where it had been before (ch. 1: 9), followed by its gradual elevation to more or less its former state; the cataclysm being accompanied, as is usual with great earthquakes, by prodigious rains. It has already been noted (*Note 1*, on Chaos, p. 3), that only a thin crust of earthy matter separates the surface of the earth on which we dwell from the incandescent mass that fills it, which crust serves as a non-conductor for its inconceivable heats; some calculating that this crust is twenty miles in thickness, and others that it is fifty: so that nothing would be easier in the hand of God, than that, according as in the work of creation he made this submerged crust to rise, by means of internal upheavals, from out of the midst of the waters (ch. 1: 9), so he should make it to sink temporarily, in the days of Noah, and after some months to rise again to its former level.

With regard to *the extent* of the deluge, although in ages past (by reason of the prevailing ignorance of the phenomena of nature, on the one hand, and on the other, of the consequent neglect to take account of all the data which the Bible itself furnishes us upon these points) it was thought certain that the whole world was\* covered five miles deep with a mass of waters, which came from somewhere, and afterwards went away somewhere; the difficulties of this opinion are in our day so obvious, and are seen to be so formidable, that among persons of intelligence and culture the theory is at present almost completely abandoned; all the more since a more careful examination of the Bible itself makes it evident that it only teaches that the flood was universal with respect to man who had sinned, and who was to be destroyed, but not with respect to the world as we know it. See *Note 16*, p. 100.]

\*Since the Spanish original of this paragraph was written, the researches of the Rev. Dr. George Frederick Wright (of Oberlin College, Ohio), in Siberia and the north of Asia, have brought to us new and unexpected proofs that the Caspian and Aral Seas were, at a time not greatly removed from us, in free connection with the Arctic Ocean, seals and other denizens of that ocean being found in them, while "loess" or alluvium, deposited on mountains and plains as much as 4000 feet above the ocean level, shows conclusively that at that time the crust of the earth in that part of the continent of Asia was at least so far depressed below the level of the Arctic Ocean, and then raised again. These and other proofs which cannot here be detailed, would go to show that in the days of Noah, the waters of the flood came at least in part from that northern ocean; I say, "in the days of Noah," because that epoch will suit the discoveries made as well as any other, and is in full accord with the Bible narrative.—Tr.

## 8: 20—22. THE ALTAR. THE PROMISE. (2347 B. C.)

20 And Noah builded an altar unto Jehovah, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar.

21 And Jehovah smelled the sweet savor; and Jehovah said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done.

22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

We have here our first notice of *the altar*; although it is evident that the sacrifices offered from the days of Abel, or from the banishment of Adam and Eve from paradise, must have been reduced to ashes upon altars of some sort. This altar, since it was "builded," must have been of stone, though rude in its form. In Ex. 20: 24, 25, God prescribes "an altar of earth" as the altar of his preference; and if not this, he says that it must be of rough, unhewn stones. Upon such an altar, then, when they went forth out of the ark, Noah offered whole burnt offerings of every clean animal and of every clean bird. In the Levitical Law, a "clean animal" signifies one of whose flesh it was lawful to eat (Lev. 11: 47); and here it probably refers to the still more reduced number of these which were proper to be offered in sacrifice to God; because ch. 9: 3 expressly sanctioned the eating of any and every kind of animal food.

"Jehovah smelled the sweet savor." As the smell of burning flesh and bone is, on the contrary, most ungrateful to the sense of smell, this phrase, so often used in the Bible, and which occurs here for the first time, is very significant. The Hebrew says "a smell of rest"; as if He, who "delighteth in mercy" (Mic. 7: 18), satiated and even wearied of the terrible triumph of avenging justice over a world of proud, impious and unbridled sensualists, craved rest, and smelled with supreme pleasure and satisfaction the odor of sacrifice, which, as amends rendered to offended justice, caused his wrath to rest. How beautiful is this thought, and how full of evangelical unction is this conception of the ancient bloody sacrifices, which we find yonder in the dawn of the divine revelation! Well has Moses said with regard to that God, his own and ours, who "so loved the world that he gave his own begotten Son" for its redemption, that "Jehovah smelled the sweet savor; and Jehovah said in his heart: I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake;" who had now showed himself to be incorrigibly wicked. When again God made a sacrifice on a

grand scale to divine justice, it was that of his own Son, "upon whom Jehovah laid the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53: 6. This explains, at least in part, that mystery of Isa. 53: 10, "*It pleased Jehovah to bruise him, he hath put him to grief.*" In view of this, prefigured by that "sweet savor," God said that he would suffer the wickedness of men, and bless them, in virtue of that sacrifice; and that he would not for their sakes again disturb the ordinary course of nature. But not on this account is the arm of divine justice paralyzed, that at last, in the consummation of the ages, he should not destroy the world of the ungodly,—the living and the dead—with a deluge of fire; that in its stead "he may extend (once more) the heavens, and lay (again) the foundations of the earth" (Isa. 51: 16); "creating new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Pet. 3: 7, 10, 13; Isa. 65: 17—19; 66: 22.

[NOTE 18.—*On the miraculous character of the Creation and the Deluge.* There are Christians, and very sincere ones, who look with eyes askance upon every attempt to diminish the sphere of the miraculous in the Bible. For them, God commanded, and in the opening and shutting of an eye were brought to pass successively the stupendous changes detailed in the six days work of creation—ordinary days of twenty-four hours—as related in the first chapter of Genesis: and in the days of Noah, God commanded, and waters came from somewhere (or were *created* for this purpose), which covered the whole world five or six miles deep; and when God again commanded, they withdrew, nobody knows where (or were *uncreated*), in order to relieve the world of their presence; and nothing less than this will meet their idea of a miracle. And with regard to the work of creation, they ask: "Why is it not more simple and easy to believe that God created the world *in statu quo*, such as we find it today, or such as Adam found it in the day that he was made, 144 hours after God began the work of creation? Besides the Scriptural and unanswerable reasons already given in the first chapter, it will be sufficient to assign here this comprehensive reason: BECAUSE GOD CANNOT ACT A LIE. If he had created the crust of the earth, as it is today, with the evident signs of the action of fire, on the one hand, and of water, on the other; with rocks come forth from the bowels of the earth in molten form, and sedimentary rocks deposited in strata, in the depths of the rivers and seas, with leaves, wood, fishes and shells of innumerable kinds incrustated in them; if he had made whole mountains composed in the larger part of marine shells, and should scatter with full hands and

by the million (as I have seen them on the slopes of the Andes) round limestone nodules, having within each of them a delicate sea-shell—principally ammonites; and if he should put leaves, shells, boughs and even trunks of trees in the mines of mineral coal, created just as they stand, hundreds and even thousands of feet beneath the surface of the earth, *out of pure caprice; what would this be but* TO ACT A LIE, with the sole purpose and effect of confounding and misleading his intelligent creatures in their investigation of his works? No; *God could not create the world just as it is, without writing lies on every page of the book of nature!* He therefore did not do it. We believe in the miracle of the Deluge and in the miracle of Creation, but not in the above said form; and we believe in the coming miracle of the Second Creation—the most stupendous miracle of the ages, which is almost entirely lost sight of, or ignored, by the larger part of Christian people, in our day; though the angels, yonder in heaven, wait for it with holy and almost impatient curiosity (1 Pet. 1: 12); though the saints in glory wait for it with earnest desire (Rom. 8: 18, 23—25); although the material creation, groaning beneath the curse of man's sin, waits, with outstretched neck, the time of its coming (Rom. 8: 19—22); and Christ the Lord, “seated on his Father's throne” *waits for* the time of its advent (Heb. 10: 13) as the day of his glory and his power, “the day of the gladness of his heart” and of “the marriage supper of the Lamb.” Rev. 3: 21; Matt. 19: 28; 25: 31; Rev. 19: 7, 9. Christian people strangely overlook the fact that that day is as future to “the man Christ Jesus,” as it is to us.]

## CHAPTER IX.

VRS. 1—7. THE DOMINION OF THE NEW WORLD, IS GIVEN TO NOAH AND HIS SONS, WITH THE LIBERTY TO EAT OF EVERY LIVING THING, EXCEPTING ONLY THE BLOOD; WHICH, AS A SACRIFICE FOR SIN, WAS TO BE HELD SACRED TO GOD. (2347 B. C.)

1 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the heavens: with all wherewith the ground teemeth,\* and all the fishes of the sea, into your hand are they delivered.

3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you; as the green herb have I given you all.

4 But flesh with the life thereof, *which is* the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

5 And surely your blood, *the blood* of your lives, will I require;  
\*M. S. V. all that creeps upon the ground (= reptiles).

at the hand of every beast will I require it: and at the hand of man, even at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man.

6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

This was a new beginning of the race; not as before in a single pair without children, but in a single pair with three married sons, but without children; and these, taught by painful experience as to the terrible effects of sin, in the past history of 1600 years, and solemnly warned by the terrific judgment which God has just brought on that world of sinners. So to say, God begins here, with the Flood, a new experiment, the third (see p. 87), with regard to the irremediable wickedness of the fallen human race. It might well have been said: "With such a lesson as the last, of course this experiment will be successful!" But Jehovah had already said that the race was totally corrupt, and that no good thing could be hoped from it. Ch. 8: 21. Comp. ch. 6: 3, 5—7. God blessed this new father of the race and his three sons, and he gave them the sovereignty over all he had created, as before he had given it to Adam. Ch. 1: 28.

It is not to be believed (as we have already seen in the case of Abel and his sheep, p. 51), that prior to this there existed a prohibition against the use of animal food; although it is probable that just and temperate men used it with much moderation; as was the usage of the patriarchs, and still is of the nomadic tribes of the East. But now, and without the distinctions, which the Mosaic law subsequently imposed, of clean and unclean animals, God authorized the use of any kind of flesh that men might desire, but imposing a very powerful restriction in regard to the use of the blood. We see here that from the times of the deluge, the blood was constituted a most sacred thing, devoted exclusively to God, to make expiation on the altar of sacrifice for the sins of men. In Lev. 17: 11—14, this is set forth with more extension, in this form: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement, by reason of the life." When the blood of "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world" had been shed, this prohibition ceased naturally, together with the reason for it. The apostles, nevertheless, as a concession to the scruples of the Jewish Christians, ordained its continuance (Acts 15: 1—29); a concession which likewise of itself fell into disuse with the cessation of the occasion for it—

the disappearance of Judaic Christianity (Acts 15: 21; Rom. 14: 13); according to the express testimony of the great Augustine, in the 5th century. *Aug. contra Faust.* lib. 32, chap. 13. See Bingham's *Ecclesiastical Antiquities*, Book XVII. Ch. V. Sec. 15; and the Note of Bishop Amat on Gen. 9: 4.

Passing at once from the blood of animals to that of man, God declared that he would himself demand, both of man and beast, a strict account of human blood violently shed. See Ex. 21: 14, 28 and Deut. 21: 1—9.

The death penalty has been atrociously abused in almost all the countries of the world, especially in past times; but this does not justify its abolition in cases of premeditated homicide; and neglect or unwillingness to apply to the criminal the pain of death, ordained by God himself, the author of life, always tends to the enormous increase of crime, and gives loose rein to private and personal vengeance. The lauded "inviolability of human life," when well understood, means to say that the life of a human being is a thing so sacred, that he who takes it without just cause, must pay for it with his own, in amends to outraged justice, both human and divine. See also Num. 35: 33.

9: 8—17. THE EVERLASTING COVENANT, MADE WITH ALL MEN AND ALL ANIMALS: AND THE SIGN OF IT. (2347 B. C.)

8 And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,

9 And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;

10 and with every living creature\* that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth.

11 And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

12 And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:

13 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

14 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud,

15 and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature\* of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

16 And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.

17 And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

[\**Heb.* living soul.]



A catastrophe so great as the deluge of Noah would necessarily have the effect of shaking violently the confidence of men in the established order of nature, or rather of destroying it; and thus it would promote indolence and idleness in the infant society, filling it, likewise, with doubt, apprehension and terror. This was a sufficient reason why God should celebrate with them a special covenant—*an everlasting covenant with men and beasts*—that he would never more destroy all flesh by the waters of a flood. To confound this with the former covenant—the covenant of redemption—which God established with Noah 120 years before, and with Abraham subsequently, would manifest great ignorance of the affairs of divine redemption; the occasion, the subjects, and the matter of the two being entirely different.

God constituted *the rainbow* a sign of this covenant, probably making it to appear in a cloud on the afternoon of that notable day; on the supposition that all this followed the sacrifice which Noah offered, and the giving of the divine promise related in the preceding chapter. Chapter 9 ought to have commenced with vr. 20 of chapter 8, and have ended with the 17th verse of this, as it all treats of the same matter. The reader will understand that the division of chapters and verses forms no part of the inspired text, but was adopted in modern times to facilitate the citation of the different parts of the Bible. The rainbow, of course, was well known before this; but thenceforward God made it a beautiful and interesting sign (which never loses its charm for men) of this transaction and covenant. As to what is said of God's looking upon it, in order to remember the covenant he had made, that is a mere accommodation to the manner of speech of an infantile people, and is a strong proof of the extreme age of this account, which Moses, perhaps found preserved in writing, or by verbal tradition, and adapted it to this place in his history. In recent years there have been unearthed, among the ruins of Babylon and Assyria, more than one story of the creation, the deluge, etc., written on tablets or cylinders of baked clay, which bear a notable resemblance to this, and to other early histories of the book of Genesis; which gives the appearance of plausibility to the supposition that Moses also found in his day written documents or verbal traditions of a trustworthy character, on the deluge, on the creation, and on the temptation and fall of man; all of which is found preserved, in Babylonian form, in the collections of tablets and cylinders of baked clay, that have been made in late years.

On the use and signification of the expression "living soul," translated "living creature" in vrs. 10 and 15, consult *Note 4*, page 15.

9: 18, 19. THE THREE SONS OF NOAH, PROGENITORS OF THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE. (2347 B. C.)

18 And the sons of Noah, that went forth from the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan.

19 These three were the sons of Noah: and of these was the whole earth overspread.

This clear and emphatic declaration that all the earth was peopled by the three sons of Noah—a declaration repeated in ch. 10: 32, at the conclusion of the narrative of the distribution of the descendants of the three, after the deluge—is a peremptory affirmation that there was on earth no other human race, nor any remains of the Adamic race which had escaped the waters of the deluge, to take part in peopling the unoccupied earth, and in producing the different races which now occupy it. "(God) hath made of one blood (or race) all the nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their times appointed and the bounds of their habitation." Paul, in Acts 17: 26.

9: 20—27. THE SHAMEFUL SIN OF NOAH. HAM, THE FATHER OF THE CANAANITES. BLESSINGS UPON SHEM AND JAPHETH. A MOST NOTABLE PROPHECY. (Of uncertain date.)

20 And Noah began to be a husbandman, and planted a vineyard: 21 and he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.

22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.

23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

24 And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his youngest son had done unto him.

25 And he said

Cursed be Canaan;

A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

26 And he said,

Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem;

And let Canaan be his servant.

27 God enlarge Japheth,

And let him dwell in tents of Shem;

And let Canaan be his servant.

The shameful fall of the venerable patriarch Noah is greatly to be deplored. After he had passed the six-hundredth year of his life, had escaped the dangers of the deluge and been con-

stituted the new head of the human family, and the depository of the promises of human redemption, he, who had so long "walked with God," planted a vineyard, and drank of the wine, and became drunken, and lay uncovered within his tent. It is useless to attempt to palliate his sin with vain and empty excuses. God has not caused this history to be written in his word in order that we may seek imaginary excuses and apologies for Noah, but that we may be admonished and warned by his example. No experience of the mercies of God in the past can free us from exposure to other and sorer temptations in the future. Every period of life has its peculiar trials; and even "the hoary head," found long time "in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 16: 31), may dishonor itself with the sin and dire disgrace of drunkenness! Very insidious is the vice of strong drink. It is probable that Noah did not fall suddenly, but that little by little he went on increasing the quantity and frequency of his cups, until that happened which is related. In old age, the season in which the vigor and enthusiasm of youth and of mature life are dying out, those who are accustomed to the use of strong drink are very prone to supply with the artificial stimulus the lack of what is natural. It is a good thing to avoid falling into temptation, whether in youth, or in maturity, or in old age, by total abstinence from intoxicating liquors. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and he that is deceived thereby is not wise." Prov. 20: 1. Well has the Scripture said to us: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. 10: 12. Surely Noah had good cause to believe that he was standing firm; and yet he fell!

In this narrative Ham is not once mentioned without the addition of the words "the father of Canaan"; a clear indication that the curse which for some unexplained reason fell, not on him but on his son Canaan, had nothing whatever to do with the Africans (whom alone some persons would see in this prophecy), but with *an Asiatic race*—the Canaanites, whose land was taken from them and given to the descendants of Abraham; and the remnants of them, those who remained in the country, were reduced to a form of slavery. The reason for this we cannot explain, nor is it necessary that we should. It pleased God "who visits the iniquity of the fathers upon their children," to punish this sin of the father in the descendants of one of his sons; and as the Infinite Reason cannot act arbitrarily, we content ourselves with this. God has just cause for all that he does, or fails to do.

"Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father"; and instead of covering him, he went to tell it to his brothers who were outside the tent; and they, walking backward, with a garment spread upon the shoulders of the two, covered him, without looking upon the nakedness of their father. The behavior of Ham on this occasion was surely not a casual thing, but marks a distinctive trait in his profane and sensual character—the only one that is related of him. We know from *vr.* 24 that Ham was the youngest son of Noah, as Shem was the oldest. *Ch.* 10: 21.

"On waking from his wine," Noah knew what his younger son had done to him, and three several times he pronounced sentence of servitude upon Canaan, the son of Ham. For what cause this particular son was to bear the malediction, due to the act of his father, we are not able to conjecture; we only know that in point of fact it was fulfilled in the sentence of servitude formally pronounced by Joshua upon the Gibeonites, and others of the descendants of Canaan, who by craft and subtlety saved themselves from extermination (*Josh.* 9: 23—27); a sentence imposed likewise at a later date, by David and Solomon, upon the remnant of the Canaanites found in Israel in their day. *1 Kings* 9: 20, 21. In the following chapter, the sacred writer takes especial pains to tell us who were the sons of Canaan, and what were the boundaries of their territory; as if to give us to understand unequivocally that the sons of Canaan were all Asiatics, and not one of them an African. It is therefore an inexcusable error and an unjustifiable and hurtful misinterpretation of prophecy to infer (as some have done) from the sin of Ham and the curse pronounced upon Canaan, that from ancient times God has consigned the African (as the race of Ham) to perpetual servitude. Directly opposite to this is the truth. The race of Ham, in ancient times, was the most active, enterprising, intelligent, rich and powerful of the races of the world. It is worth while here to note that the Babylonians and the Egyptians, the most powerful of the nations of antiquity, and the Tyrians, the richest, and also the most intrepid of navigators, and the inhabitants of Carthage, in North Africa, the powerful enemy and rival of Rome, were all of the race of Ham; although it is true that the races and tribes of Central and South Africa have descended likewise from some degenerate branches of the same family. But these had nothing to do with Canaan, upon whom, or rather upon whose descendants, the said malediction fell.

It is worth noting, as we pass, that the characters of the

fathers seem to have been perpetuated in their descendants. However great in other times were the nations descended from Ham, they have in general been profane and sensual like himself; while the descendants of Shem and Japheth have been distinguished by the more serious traits which ennoble and preserve nations; races marked by the reverent modesty of their fathers.

The occasion of this malediction was likewise that of blessing upon Shem and Japheth. The form of the words is poetic, as is the song of Lamech (ch. 4: 23), and should be interpreted as such. It is also a prophecy, in which is sketched in bold outlines the general history and character of these three great families of men. The blessing of Shem is well worthy of fixing our attention. Noah, instead of blessing Shem, blesses Jehovah rather, as "the God of Shem"; adding, "and Canaan shall be *his* servant." In Hebrew the word signifies either "servant to him" or "servant to them." But as Shem only is mentioned, "of them" is hardly admissible, unless we understand it of Shem and his God; according to the words of Joshua to the Gibeonites: "Now therefore, *ye are cursed*, and there shall never fail to be of you *bondmen*, both hewers of wood and drawers of water *for the house of my God*" (Josh. 9: 23); and still later, after the Babylonish Captivity, they were called "Nethinim"—Temple-servants, given to the Levites to perform the menial work of the Temple, in their stead. Ezra 2: 43; 8: 20. Canaan therefore was conquered by Israel, and the remnants of its seven nations were put to "task work" (Judg. 1: 28, 30, 33), and were made servants of the Congregation, and perpetual servants of the Tabernacle and the Temple.

The Semitic race has been *par excellence* the religious race; and as Ham is repeatedly called "the father of Canaan," so in ch. 10: 21, Shem is called "the father of Eber," or of the Hebrews; which was his principal badge of glory and distinction; in whose tents, in the lapse of ages, God literally came to dwell ("Immanuel, God with us" Matt. 1: 23), if we understand that in vr. 27, God is the subject of both propositions; or if we change the subject, it will signify that Japheth would come to dwell in the tents of Shem; not however to rob them, but to profit by his knowledge of the true God, as many of the ancient prophecies declare (Isa. 2: 3; 60: 2, 3; Zech. 8: 23); and Jesus lays emphasis upon the declaration that "*salvation is of the Jews.*" John 4: 22. In this sense, the fulfilment has been no less notable than the prophecy; for in fact, with the Christianization of the European nations, all of them descended

from Japheth, he has come to dwell in the tents of Shem and to partake of his blessings; while Israel has separated himself from those blessings through his unbelief. Rom. 11: 20. It was blessing enough for Shem that Jehovah was his God, and that "in Abraham and in his seed all the families of the earth were to be blessed." Gen. 12: 3; 28: 14.

The blessing of Japheth was: "God shall enlarge Japheth and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." In point of fact, Japheth (the word signifies *enlargement*) has been enlarged more than any other of the three. The European nations, with all their great colonies, now nations, in both Americas, in Australia, in South Africa and in the islands of the sea, are all of his lineage; *and all of them, without a single exception, profess the religion of the God of Shem.* In the following chapter we shall see, likewise, that the Hindoos, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Tartars also, and some of the nations of Western Asia, as the Armenians and the Medes, are probably of the family of Japheth.

It is a remarkable thing that the Hebrew leaves indeterminate whether it was God who should dwell in the tents of Shem, or Japheth; and in such cases, when either of the two interpretations gives a perfectly legitimate and right sense, and is in full accord with the analogy of Scripture, it is better to *accept both together*, rather than either of the two to the exclusion of the other; seeing that the ambiguity must have been as patent to the writer as to us. Here then we have an extremely old prophecy, whose wonderful fulfilment is worthy to call the attention of all, and may well serve to convince unbelievers on the one hand, if they are thinking men, and on the other to awaken the gratitude and praises of believing men.

Canaan always comes to occupy the place of servant to the rest. As Ham was emphatically excluded from the blessings, it may be well understood that the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Tyrians, etc., although great in their day, were purely worldly peoples; and besides this, they were (like the Canaanites) of the most impure and shameful habits; and their glory and riches and science and power have perished with them; while their miserable and degraded remnants, unknown now in Babylon and Tyre, are in Egypt reduced to the level of serfs; and their continent (that which is theirs *par excellence*—Africa), has been for ages a slave market for the more advanced and powerful nations;—the foreign African slave trade, however, being happily abolished in our day.

It will be asked, perhaps, why God was *so hard* on the sin

of Ham, without even condemning the sin of Noah, or much less punishing him on account of it. I reply, 1st, because God well knows that believing men, who search his word, do not need that a particular act should be condemned and censured in order to understand that it is sinful and displeasing to him; and 2nd, as to punishment, because he does not deal with his believing people as a King, who dispenses even-handed justice to all alike (his season for kingly judgment and justice has not yet come, John 12: 47); but as a loving and pardoning Father, who does not *punish*, but only *chastens* his blood-bought children for their correction. If the reader would know and enjoy this priceless distinction, he must betake himself, with penitence and faith, to the shelter of the Cross. See *Note 26*, on the sins of God's ancient saints.

9: 28, 29. THE DEATH OF NOAH. (2006 B. C.)

28 And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.

29 And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.

But the longest and most honored life must necessarily come to an end; unless "the day of redemption" should sooner dawn. Eph. 4: 30; John 21: 23. Noah lived 350 years after the deluge, and died, according to the common chronology, two years before Abraham was born; being the contemporary of Terah, the father of Abraham, for 128 years; and the sum total of his days was 950 years.

Adam, 930; Jared, 962; Methuselah, 969; Noah, 950.

CHAPTER X.

VE. 1. THE SONS AND DESCENDANTS OF NOAH, AND THEIR DISSEMINATION THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

1 Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, *namely*, of Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and unto them were sons born after the flood.

As by the particular providence of God, our first parents had no children until after the trial which terminated so disastrously for them and for their posterity, so likewise by his providence, the sons of Noah, being all married, had no children until after they came forth out of the ark. Ch. 10: 1. Shem, the oldest of the three, had his son Arphaxad, in the line of the promise, "two years after the deluge." Ch. 11: 10.

## 10: 2—5. THE LINEAGE OF JAPHETH.

2 The sons of Japheth: Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.

3 And the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.

4 And the sons of Javan: Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

5 Of these were the isles\* of the nations divided† in their lands, every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

\*Or, coast lands.                   [†M. S. V., peopled.]

Several of these names are plurals, and are the names of nations and countries; and, according to Hebrew usage, it may be understood that only some of them are the names of individual sons of Japheth, or that none of them are; giving us to understand that, in a broad sense, the following peoples descended from him. Notwithstanding this, "the sons of Gomer" and "the sons of Javan," although in Hebrew they are the names of nations, seem to indicate that those so designated were individual sons of Japheth, who left their names to their respective peoples and races.

"Gomer" is mentioned once in Ezek. 38: 6, in connection with "the house of Togarmah" (his son, according to vr. 3), "with all their hordes," as warlike peoples, "from the distant parts of the north;" it being understood that for Ezekiel and his contemporaries, the Black or Euxine Sea was very far to the north. Of *Riphath* we know nothing with certainty. The Armenians and Georgians claim that they are of "the house of *Togarmah*." In modern Jewish speech, Germany bears the name of *Ashkenaz*; and there is not a little resemblance between this name and *Scandinavia*, which embraces the territory of Sweden, Norway and Denmark. It is probable that the descendants of Gomer were disseminated towards the N. W., as far as the Atlantic Ocean. From them it is supposed that the Celtic races of Great Britain and the West of Europe descended.

*Magog*, in Ezek. 38: 2, is represented as "the land of Gog, the prince of Rosh (= Russia), Meshech (=Moscovia?) and Tubal;" *Meshech* and *Tubal* being two others of the sons of Japheth. It is natural, therefore, that we should associate these three, as peopling the great Russia; and before that, in the days of Ezekiel, the neighboring parts of the Black and Caspian Seas.

*Madai* is the same as the Medes, or Media, situated to the north of Elam, the ancient Persia, and on the south of the Caspian Sea.

*Javan* is in Hebrew the ordinary name of Greece (although without the clear demarcations which the name now carries with it), whose descendants were *Elishah* (=probably the Greeks strictly speaking); *Tarshish*=Tartessus, in Spain; *Kit-*



*tim* (=“Coast-dwellers”), embracing Cyprus and the other Greek islands, and sometimes its use extends as far as Italy (Num. 24: 24; Dan. 11: 30); and *Dodanim*=probably Rhodanim, or the island of Rhodes; but others understand it as=Dardani, the inhabitants of Troy or Troas; of whom the Romans claimed to be descendants.

*Tiras*, the seventh “son” of Japheth,=probably the dreaded Thracians of ancient times, to the west of the Black Sea.

It is absolutely necessary to keep in mind that neither Moses nor Ezekiel had *maps*, like ourselves, to fix the exact boundaries of the nations, nor did the nations have the exact boundaries they have now; but the list given embraces the vast regions to the north of Media and Armenia and Central Asia, and the northern part of Asia Minor, and all the lands to the north of the Mediterranean Sea. From Media and Central Asia (Turk-estan) it is probable that the race of Japheth passed to the east and south of Asia, and peopled the great China and India.

“Of these (the sons of Japheth), the coasts of the nations were peopled” (*Heb.* divided). In the beginnings of colonization, men established themselves first near the sea, and gradually, with the increase of population, they moved inland, following first the course of navigable rivers. For this reason the Hebrew does not distinguish between “*coasts*” and “*islands.*” But the “*islands of the nations*” would here be manifestly improper. This is said of the sons of Japheth only, and seemingly gives us to understand that the Japhethites established themselves along the northern coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, the coasts of the Black Sea, and other maritime lands;—a sure indication of that spirit of enterprise and of sea-faring life which has always distinguished the race of Japheth. Add to these the two Americas, Australia, South Africa, etc., etc., and we exclaim: Truly “*God has enlarged Japheth!*” Without the Spirit of prophecy, how could Noah have known all this? And indeed how could any writer of the Old Testament, *all of whom died before any part of the race of Japheth rose to distinction?*

#### 10: 6—14. THE LINEAGE OF HAM.

6 And the sons of Ham: Cush, and Mizraim, and Put, and Canaan.

7 And the sons of Cush: Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah: Sheba, and Dedan.

8 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.

9 He was a mighty hunter before Jehovah: wherefore it is said, Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before Jehovah.

10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

11 Out of that land he went forth into Assyria,\* and builded Nineveh, and Rehoboth-Ir, and Calah.

12 and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (the same is the great city).

13 And Mizraim begat Ludim and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim,

14 and Pathrusim, and Casluhim (whence went forth the Philistines), and Caphtorim.

\*Or, went forth Asshur.

The four sons of Ham, the immediate branches of his stock, were *Cush*, *Mizraim*, *Put*, and *Canaan*.

The sons of *Cush* were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and Sabteca, together with the two sons of Raamah, Sheba and Dedan. Part of them went to Africa, seemingly by the Strait of Babel-mandeb, and gave name to Ethiopia, or Cush, in Africa; Seba (or his descendants), according to our best maps, established himself to the south of Egypt, in what is now Nubia or Abyssinia. With less certainty Sabtah, Havilah and Sabteca are located by Bible geographers on the African coast of the Red Sea and the Strait of Babel-mandeb, as far south as the Indian Ocean. Raamah, with his two sons, Sheba and Dedan, is located in the eastern part of Arabia, as far as the Persian Gulf and beyond that also, along its western coast. It is impossible to fix these limits with any certainty; because the Cushites were scattered over the immense area of the peninsula of Arabia, including that of Mount Sinai, where Moses found his Cushite (or Ethiopian) wife. Num. 12: 1. Some would locate Sheba, the Cushite, in Arabia Felix, not far from the Red Sea, and maintain that that was the famous, rich and powerful kingdom of Sheba, whose queen visited Solomon. But others, perhaps with more reason, concede this honor to Sheba, son of Jocktan, of the race of Shem. Vr. 28. What makes the subject the more difficult is that the Abyssinians (who surely belong to the ancient Ethiopia), since before their conversion to Christianity (such as it is), and while they yet professed Judaism, have sustained by invariable tradition until today, that the "Queen of Sheba," was of their race, and was converted to Judaism by King Solomon, who made her one of his many wives, and by whom he had a son, called Menilek, whom she carried back with her on her return, and, having converted her kingdom to Judaism, left him as her successor;—a line, which, according to them, has not changed till the present day. It is undeniable that the religion of the Abyssinians is a grotesque mixture of Judaism and Christianity. According to them, there-

fore, the famous queen was a Cushite and an African. It is almost certain that all the Cushites passed from Arabia to Africa by the Strait of Babel-mandeb; and so it is often difficult to determine whether the Cushites who are spoken of in a given passage are Arabians or Ethiopians—reserving this name for the Cushite Africans.

Cush likewise was the father of *Nimrod*, who was “the first to become a mighty one in the earth”;—which is the real meaning of the Hebrew phrase “began to be”; it surely does not mean to say that he began, but could not finish. Comp. Acts 15: 14; 1 Pet. 4: 17. He was the first of those ambitious spirits who founded empires for themselves, subduing tribes and nations, in order to make himself great. The fame of this “hunter” of men lasted a long while, and was widely extended, and he became celebrated in verse and in song; although he is not mentioned again in the Bible, outside of the circumstance that the prophet Micah, who flourished in the days of Isaiah, speaks of Assyria “as the land of Nimrod” (Mic. 5: 6); which is considered evidence sufficient to determine that it was Nimrod, and not Asshur, who founded the city of Nineveh. Eighteen miles south of the supposed ruins of Nineveh, are also found the ruins of a place which still bears the name of “Nimroud.” Davis’ *Dictionary of the Bible*, Article *Nineveh*. In any case, it is settled by the testimony of Genesis that Nineveh was founded by colonists who came from Babylon; and this the recently deciphered monuments of Assyria place beyond a doubt. But whoever may have been the founder of Nineveh, it is certain that the city passed over to the dominion of the sons of Asshur, as it was the capital of the great Assyrian empire.

“Nimrod a mighty hunter before Jehovah” passed into a proverb, or it figures here as a line of some heroic song of those ancient times; and the citation clearly demonstrates that *the name “Jehovah,”* dovetailed thus into a proverb, or into the verse of a song, was familiarly known and used long before the days of Moses. See comments on Ex. 6: 3. The phrase appears to indicate the daring and impious courage with which this valiant warrior trod down all laws and rights both human and divine. The beginning of his kingdom was Babylon, on the river Euphrates, with other cities in the land of Shinar, which Nimrod, it seems, conquered, they having been founded originally by people of the race of Japheth (Geike, *Hours with the Bible*. Vol. 1, ch. 17); and he left the impress of his character deeply stamped on this city of Babylon, whose king, “the king of Shinar,” in the days of Abraham, came on an expedition of more

than a thousand miles to rob the peoples (ch. 14: 1); and whom Habakkuk (ch. 1: 12—17), a little before the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, represents as a pitiless fisherman, proud and self-confident, who with his hook and his cast-net emptied the rivers and the seas of fish. Isaiah had elegantly used the figure of a hunter, two hundred years before, to represent the insatiable rapacity of the Assyrian Sennacherib, a worthy predecessor of the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar. Isa. 10: 13, 14.

No satisfactory reason can be given why, in this place (vr. 10), and in ch. 11: 9 the Hebrew form "Babel," should be preserved and in all the rest of the Bible the same word and name should take the Greek form "Babylon." The inevitable effect of this arbitrary change is that few of the readers of the Bible know that in Hebrew the two names are identical. The Greek translation of the LXX has *Babylon* in ch. 10: 10, and "*Confusion*" in ch. 11: 9, translating the Hebrew word "Babel." Amat and Scio, following the Latin Vulgate, put "Babylon" in ch. 10: 10 and "Babel" in ch. 11: 9. The Reina-Valera Version and the English Versions use "Babel" in both cases, and "Babylon" 287 times in the rest of the Bible. As the Hebrew is always the same, the Modern Spanish Version places "Babylon" in the text and "Babel" in the margin; in order that the reader may understand that the tower of Babylon was the beginning of the famous city of that name.

The original of vr. 11 is not clear and the sense is equivocal; some sustaining that "out of that land" of Shinar, went forth Nimrod to Assyria, and built Nineveh; while others maintain that the natural and proper translation (*Asshur* and *Assyria* being one and the same thing in Hebrew) is that Asshur "went forth and builded Nineveh"; giving us probably to understand that Asshur (of the race of Shem, vr. 22), or his descendants, who bear his name, being pressed by Nimrod, went forth out of the country of Shinar, which they had before occupied, and founded Nineveh; at a great distance to the north or N. W. of Babylon, 250 miles in a straight line, and on the river Tigris; and this capital was, for many ages, a greater, more powerful and more important city than Babylon. It is to be observed that although Nimrod (or, if you prefer it, Asshur) "builded Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir, Calah and Resen," we are not told that Nimrod builded Babylon, nor Erech, Accad or Calneh. It is probable that he "*hunted*" them, and began with these trophies of his "violent dealing" to found his empire. It seems that Rehoboth-Ir (= Streets of the city), Calah and Resen were dependent

cities of Nineveh, which some suppose were later absorbed into it, to form the "great city" of which the text speaks, celebrated by Diodorus Siculus as a city of fifty or sixty miles in circuit; and of which it is said in the book of Jonah that "Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey (in circuit). Jonah 3: 3.

[It would appear from Isa. 23: 13, that Asshur (or "the Assyrian") founded Babylonia, or "the land of the Chaldeans"; which seems to support the view of those who adopt the alternative rendering of vr. 11, given in the note, "From that land went forth Asshur and builded Nineveh"; as though, after founding Babylon, Asshur, being driven out by "the mighty hunter" Nimrod, went 250 miles farther to the north, and founded Nineveh. But the passage in Isaiah is so difficult of satisfactory interpretation, that it cannot with any great confidence be cited to prove it. —Tr.]

*Mizraim* (=Egypt), another son, or other descendants (because the name is plural, or at least dual, corresponding to the two Egypts, Upper and Lower) of Ham, founder of the great kingdom of that name, was father of the different tribes mentioned—Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, Casluhim, Caphtorim (plurals all), to which some add Philistim (=Philistines); and all of them were located in Upper and Lower Egypt, to the east and west of the mouths of the Nile, along the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, from Philistia on the east, to Lybia and Cyrene on the west. Others understand that "Caphtorim" refers to the Island of Caphtor (=Crete); although it is possible that the Caphtorim passed from Egypt to Crete. In Deut. 2: 23; Jer. 27: 4; Amos 9: 7, it is said that the Philistines proceeded from Caphtor; which would be very easy for them to do, if the Caphtorim occupied the territory of the mouths of the Nile (as is shown in Map 1 of the Parallel Bible, 1890), the Philistines touching Egypt on the N. E. It is supposed that the tribes of the Casluhim, to the N. E. of Egypt (in what was later called the land of Goshen, ch. 45: 10; 47: 27), and the Caphtorim, in the delta of the Nile, mixed; so that it might well be said that the Philistines descended from either of the two. The declaration of Jer. 47: 4, that the Philistines proceeded from the Island of Caphtor, may be, therefore, understood in this sense; or, as "isle" and "coast" are the same thing in Hebrew, the phrase is ambiguous; and it may be that those powerful enemies of Israel were of Egyptian extraction, proceeding from the mixture of the Caphtorim and Casluhim, both of them coast tribes of northern Egypt.

*Put* (or *Phut*), the third son of Ham, is probably the same as Mauritania, which is now occupied by the kingdoms or provinces of Morocco, Fez and Algeria, on the N. W. of Africa.

10: 15—20. CANAAN AND THE CANAANITES.

15 And Canaan begat Sidon his first-born, and Heth,  
 16 and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite,  
 17 and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,  
 18 and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanite spread abroad.

19 And the border of the Canaanite was from Sidon, as thou goest toward Gerar, unto Gaza: as thou goest toward Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboim, unto Lasha.

20 These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, in their nations.

*Sidon*, the first-born of Canaan, gave name to all the land of Phenicia. Josh. 13: 6; Jud. 18: 7. From him the ancient city of Sidon took its name and origin; which still exists as a city of importance; with Tyre, twenty miles to the south, which was a "daughter of Sidon" (Isa. 23: 12), and much richer and more important than she; and Carthage, an African colony of Tyre, and the powerful rival of Rome; which in the days of Hannibal came near destroying that city which in time became the proud mistress of the world.

*Heth*, his second son, was the father of the Hittites, a powerful nation or tribe, which at one time was the dominant power in Syria and Asia Minor. Then follow the familiar names of Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, and Hivites, and the less familiar names of Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites; all five situated to the north of the land of Canaan, and to the north and N. W. of Damascus—names of peoples and not of individuals. After this is given the exact demarcation of the territory of *the Canaanites*: from Sidon on the N. W. to Gaza on the S. W.; and from thence to the Salt (or Dead) Sea, the site of Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboim (cities destroyed in the days of Lot), as far as Lasha; which is probably the same as Callirrhoe, of the Roman period (famous for its warm baths), situated to the east of the Salt Sea;—that is to say, the land of Canaan in all its length and breadth; from north to south along the coast of the Mediterranean; and then from east to west, in all its breadth, from the Mediterranean to beyond the Dead or Salt Sea, on its southern border. It is to be borne in mind that the land on the eastern side of Jordan was not reputed to be part of the land of *Canaan*. Josh. 22: 9, 10, 19, 32.

## 10: 21—31. THE LINEAGE OF SHEM.

21 And unto Shem, the father of all the children of Eber,\* the elder brother of Japheth.† to him also were children born.

22 The sons of Shem: Elam, and Asshur, and Arpachshad, and Lud, and Aram.

23 And the sons of Aram: Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash.

24 And Arpachshad begat Shelah; and Shelah begat Eber.

25 And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided; and his brother's name was Joktan.

26 And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah,

27 and Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah,

28 and Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba,

29 and Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan.

30 And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest toward Sephar, the mountain of the east.

31 These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.

[\*M. S. V., Heber.]

[†A. V. and M. S. V., brother of Japheth the elder.]

In *vr.* 21, Shem is called "the father of all the children of Heber," or the Hebrews (see *ch.* 14: 13), which was his chiefest glory, because that was the line of the promise. His sons were Elam—the ancient Persians; Asshur—the Assyrians; Arpachshad—probably the Chaldeans, to the south of Babylon; Lud—Lydia, in Asia Minor; Aram—the Syrians; Uz, who perhaps gave name to the land of Uz, of which the holy and patient patriarch Job was a native, towards the north of Arabia, or to the N. E. of Edom; Hul, Jeter and Mas, of whom we only know that they were tribes of Aram or Syria. Of the two sons of Heber, the one was named Peleg (=Division), from the circumstance that "in his days the earth was divided." This may be understood either physically or morally, and both senses have their defenders. Some of the older commentators (and even Adam Clarke, in 1810), understood it of the division of the earth into continents; on the supposition that formerly all the different continents were united in one. But modern science has settled it that such a sense is absolutely untenable. Nevertheless it is possible that it refers to the valley of the river Jordan; a fracture of the crust of the earth (the most remarkable that is known in all the world, and for which modern science can assign no cause), which is called the "Arabah," and extends from the foot of Lebanon to the Red Sea. It is probable that this material cleavage of the crust of the earth (which descends to a depth of 2600 feet below the level of the ocean), took place during the physical convulsions which caused the deluge of Noah; but if not this, nothing that is known would be more worthy of commemoration

under the name of "Peleg" than this "*division*" of the land so intimately related to the history of the people of Israel descended from him.

It is, nevertheless, the commonly accepted sense, that this "*division*" of the earth, from which Peleg took name, refers rather to the confusion of tongues in Babylon (ch. 11:1—9), which was the cause of the dispersion of men through all the earth; an idea which the Psalmist expresses by this identical word (*Heb.* palag), where he says in Ps. 55: 9; "*divide* their tongue" (=confound their speech and their counsels).

The other son of Heber, Joktan, had thirteen sons, whose abode is determined by two points well known in that day—Mesha and Mount Sephar—but entirely unknown to us. It is supposed, nevertheless, that they mark out an extensive territory in Arabia which embraces all the south and a great part of the west of this great peninsula; and they are all so located on the already cited Map 1 of the Parallel Bible, which is the latest, if not the best authority, on such points. Of these thirteen sons of Joktan, three deserve special mention, to wit, Sheba, Havilah (namesakes of two of the sons of Cush), and Ophir, of whom, being the only one of that name mentioned in the Bible, it is natural to suppose that the country from whence came the most famous and abundant gold of ancient times took its name from him. There can be little doubt of the fact that all the Cushites passed first to Arabia, and from thence some passed over to Africa, while others remained in Arabia; in this way it was very easy that the two Shebas, the Cushite and the Shemite, should take part in establishing the kingdom of that name, in Arabia Felix on the Red Sea, or at a little distance from it; which some regard as Cushite and others as Shemite. It may be, therefore, that both sides are right, and that even the Abyssinians may have some shadow of truth in their contention that the Queen of Sheba was the founder of their kingdom and dynasty.

With regard to Havilah, we have already the Cushite of this name established on the coast of Africa, opposite to the Strait of Babel-mandeb; the map already cited of the Parallel Bible locates the Shemite of this name on the Arabian coast of the Red Sea, some 200 miles to the north. The book of Genesis speaks of *three other Havilahs* (in vr. 7; ch. 2: 11; 25: 18; to which we may add 1 Sam. 15: 7); but I believe that what has been said is quite sufficient on a tangled point, where much is doubtful, and nothing sure.

Ophir also, the eleventh son of Joktan, and the only one of the name, is believed to be the same who gave name to a certain



region in the south of Arabia, that was rich in gold and precious stones. Others believe that the Ophir from whence came the renowned gold of that name, was situated in India; and others still, in the south of Africa, where exist the mines so fabulously rich in gold and diamonds;—rich beyond anything hitherto discovered in the known world.

All the Shemite tribes established themselves in the western part of Asia, and to the south of the Asiatic branches of Japheth (who occupied the sea coast of the Black and Caspian Seas), extending to the south of Arabia on the one hand, and to the Persian Gulf on the other; although to some extent mixed with the descendants of Ham. But while the descendants of Shem and Ham found themselves bounded by seas and deserts, and limited in their resources by this fact, the family of Japheth, with the unlimited field that fell to their lot, scattered themselves over all Europe and over the north, the centre, and the east of Asia; and with healthy climates, abundant forests, inexhaustible resources, and a continual fight with the difficulties of their wild life, developed a physical strength, a freedom of soul and a spirit of enterprise, properly their own; and with abundance of food and ample territories, they multiplied and increased as was impossible to the descendants of Shem and Ham.

#### 10: 32. THE PROGENITORS OF THE EXISTING NATIONS OF THE WORLD.

32 These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations; and of these were the nations divided\* in the earth after the flood.

[\*M. S. V., disseminated.]

It is therefore futile and contradictory to the Scriptures to suppose that there was any other race, or races, in some corners of the earth, who took part in producing the existing population of the world.

[NOTE 19.—*On the essential unity of all the different races of mankind.* There has been age-long dispute on this point; its opponents alleging in opposition thereto the impossibility of so many races, and so different in form, features, color, hair, etc., deriving their origin from one and the same stock; but for those who accept the Scriptures as a divine revelation, the question is susceptible of ready and simple resolution. The word of God affirms it many times, and in different ways, as we have already seen; and this for us settles the dispute. Acts 17: 26 says expressly "That God made of one blood (or nature) all the nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth." The testimony of God is for us decisive. Nevertheless it will not be

amiss to indicate in order the principal arguments which sustain this opinion. They are:

1st. The clear and peremptory and repeated testimony of the word of God. 2nd. The redemption of Christ was made for the benefit of his brethren according to the flesh. Since, therefore, his redemption was for all the families of men, all of them, of necessary consequence, are related to him in that human nature which he assumed. If there were many races, or even two or three, that would put an end to the unity of the race and consequently to the solidarity of Christ's redemption. 3rd. The physical nature of all the families of men is one and the same—bones, muscles, nerves, veins and arteries; the entire anatomy is identical, without increase or diminution, in all of them. 4th. All of them *cross* perfectly; and the progeny which thence results is as productive as the families which crossed; while among different races of animals, reproduction is either impossible, or the progeny is sterile; as is true of the cross between the ass and the horse. 5th. The same intellectual and moral nature is common to all, notwithstanding the extreme degradation to which some of them have been reduced; the same state of sin, the same necessity for redemption and the same capacity for it. 6th. The allegation that it is impossible that so great differences in color, hair, language, etc., should originate among members of the same race, is refuted by the facts. It has been seen, and it is seen, that under unfavorable circumstances of climate, food, complete abandonment and despotic oppression, among tribes and nations of the same race, the most surprising changes result in a very few generations; as is seen in the case of the Eskimos, the Lapps, the Patagonians, and other peoples driven forth into pestiferous climates and into Arctic regions by the hand of the invader. And among savage tribes it has been seen, that when all dealing between them ceases, their languages change in such a manner that in a few generations they do not understand each other. And as to color, the "black Jews" will answer for that. In fact the Jews, without mixing with other races, vary in the color of their skin, hair and eyes, among all the peoples and in all the climates of the world, where they have long resided; from the fair complexion, blond hair and blue eyes of the Danish Jew, to the black or swarthy color of the Jews of India and Africa.

With regard to "the Negroes," properly so called, it is believed by the most eminent scientists that their distinctive peculiarities of hair, color, nose, lips, etc., are not original, but are due to peculiar conditions, as for example, a warm and humid climate,

bad and insufficient food, and other like causes; being the result of the *degeneration* of the copper-colored African races, which are every way superior—modifications of structure which, by a natural law, when once introduced, become permanent.

It is a singular example of the inconsistencies of the human spirit in the matter of religion, that those who reject as absurd and impossible the Bible doctrine that the different families of men are all the descendants of Adam and of Noah, should find no difficulty whatever in sustaining, as highly scientific, that they all alike derive their origin *from monkeys!* Thus God makes one error to confute another.]

## CHAPTER XI.

VRS. 1—9. THE TOWER OF BABYLON (or Babel), AND THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES. (2247 B. C.)

1 And the whole earth was of one language\* and of one speech.

2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

3 And they said one to another, Come, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime† had they for mortar.

4 And they said, Come let us build us 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.

5 And Jehovah came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

6 And Jehovah said, Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is what they begin to do: and now nothing will be withholden from them, which they purpose to do.

7 Come, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

8 So Jehovah scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off building the city.

9 Therefore was the name of it called Babel; because Jehovah did there confound the language\* of all the earth: and from thence did Jehovah scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

\**Heb.* *lip.*

†*That is,* bitumen.

At no remote period of the past it was generally believed, both by Jews and Christians, and many still believe it, that the Hebrew was the primitive language of men, spoken in Eden, and in the ark of Noah; continued in the line of the promise after the confusion of tongues; preserved in its integrity in the family of Abraham; kept uncontaminated by the Jews in Egypt, and used by them till the Babylonish Captivity; during the seventy years of which, however, scattered as they were among the heathen, they exchanged it for the Chaldean or Aramaic, spoken in Palestine in the days of Christ. Of this substitution of Chaldean or Aramaic (called "Hebrew" in the New Testament,

Acts 21: 40; 22: 2), there is not the least doubt; and the change effected so suddenly, in less than 70 years, a change so serious that the ancient Scriptures should need to be interpreted or explained to the captives, when they returned to their own land, in order to be well understood by them (Neh. 8: 8. Comp. Ezra 4: 7), makes it difficult to conceive how it was kept in its integrity from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to Moses, in spite of all the changes through which they passed in this time. It is perhaps possible; but we call to mind the fact that Jacob and his maternal uncle, Laban, spoke different languages (ch. 31: 47—49), Laban speaking Aramaic, or Syriac, the language of Haran (or Charran), where Terah the father of Abraham died, while Jacob spoke "the language of Canaan," where his fathers lived; a language which they carried with them to Egypt, and living apart from the Egyptians, they preserved it; and on returning, they found it still in use among the Canaanites. Besides this, on existing monuments, in Tyre and Sidon, have been found inscriptions in the Hebrew character. It seems probable, therefore, that when Abraham came to the land of Canaan, he dropped the language of his own people and family, and adopted "the language of Canaan." Isa. 19: 18.

But however this may be, the children and descendants of Noah spoke the same language, whether it were Hebrew or some other, more or less different; and the confusion of their language, of which this paragraph treats, came to break the bond of union between them, and "scatter them abroad over the face of the whole earth."

If "the land of Ararat," where the ark came to rest, is the same which we call Armenia, about which there is dispute, it is somewhat difficult to see how going "toward the east" (or, "from the east," for the original is susceptible of both translations), they should arrive at the land of Shinar, where Babylon was situated; that city being five hundred miles in a straight line to the south of Mount Ararat; but as Armenia is an extremely broken country, on account of its many and elevated mountain ranges, it is natural that in moving their encampments towards the south, and following the general course of the river Euphrates (which has its source there), they should reach a point where the river turns to the E. S. E., and follows this course for a thousand miles, until it empties into the Persian Gulf. The course of the river is more toward the east than the south, and this in Hebrew usage would fulfil sufficiently well the conditions of the text. So they came at last to that immense plain in the land of Shinar through which run the two great rivers

Euphrates and Tigris (both of them originating in the mountains of Armenia), which pleased them so well that by common consent they established themselves there, upon the river Euphrates; where they began at once to build their tower and their city. It is not to be supposed that all the descendants of Noah forsook Armenia, nor that all who went out from thence in search of better lands and a more genial climate, came to pitch precisely on the site of Babylon;—as the plain was immense, and embraced a great part of both the ancient empires of Assyria and Babylon. Reference is had rather, to that numerous and principal company of them to which the writer now directs our attention, which remained together for their mutual protection and profit.

There had now passed more than one hundred years, perhaps more than two hundred years, after the deluge\* (see comments on Peleg, ch. 10: 25), and as the population of the world was still sparse, all these "cities," including Babylon and Nineveh, would be places of no great size. Compare the "city" which Cain was building when his son Enoch was born. See ch. 4: 17, and comments.

The contrary opinion, that the city and the tower of Babel, or Babylon, was at this time really great, and the population very large, gave occasion, in part, for the Version of the LXX to add a hundred years to the life of all these post-diluvian patriarchs (from Arphaxad to Nahor, the father of Terah and grandfather of Abraham) at the time of the birth of the first son mentioned, and to insert bodily Cainan with his 130 years more, between Arphaxad and Shelah; giving thus 531 years between the deluge and the birth of Peleg, instead of the 101 of the Hebrew text; and 1307 between the deluge and the calling of Abraham, instead of 427. See *Note 12, on Biblical Chronology*.

\*On this point, an intelligent friend writes me that Paul's express statement that the giving of the Law was 430 years after the covenant made with Abraham (Gal. 3:17) settles that point with him for all time: but that he does not think the accepted chronology allows sufficient time between the Deluge and Abraham, for the great population he supposes there was in the world at that time; and he claims that the Hebrew text is not as explicit on this point as on the other. This is a matter I am not competent to handle. My comments on the text are based on the commonly accepted chronology. But it is in any case noteworthy that while the translators of the old Septuagint Version (and of the Samaritan Version as well), hold tenaciously to the 430 years between the calling of Abraham and the giving of the Law, they add 887 years to the preceding period, making it 1307 years from the Deluge to the calling of Abraham, instead of 427. See how they do this, in *Note 12, on Biblical Chronology*. Those who plead the necessity of *gaining time*, usually accept this as nearer the truth.—Tr.

These changes, made in the Greek Version of the LXX (done in Egypt, between 280 and 150 B. C.), in the presence of the pyramids and the other colossal monuments of Egypt, and its exaggerated chronology, which carried their kingdom backward far beyond the times of Noah, clearly manifest the object they had in view; and although, for reasons given in that *Note*, we cannot have an absolute confidence in the numbers of the Hebrew text, we do not on this account reject them, without greater cause than the changes which were so purposely introduced into the Version of the LXX. On the contrary, we accept the idea that the population of the world was still small, and that those cities, founded or subdued by Nimrod and Asshur were comparatively small towns: all small towns had kings, and were fortified and walled in those ancient times (ch. 14: 8; 19: 20—22; 26: 1, 16); the five "Cities of the Plain" occupying in part what is now the site of the Dead Sea. Gen. 14: 3. And such, I think is undoubtedly the idea of the Bible. *A numerous population is never migratory*; but vrs. 2, 3 inform us that these people continued to move their encampments until they came to this great plain in the land of Shinar; and at once they set about to build their tower and their city. The poets, the artists and the ancient romancers have undoubtedly given us some exaggerated ideas of this work. The object of the work, given in the text, was not that of scaling the heavens, nor defying the wrath of Heaven, nor yet to laugh at another deluge of waters. "They said: Go to, let us build us 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*" (vr. 4); which was precisely what God desired to effect, and what he had ordered, when Noah and his sons went forth out of the ark. Ch. 9: 1. When we bring into view Deut. 1: 28, where the cowardly spies said, to discourage the people, "that the cities (of the Canaanites) are great and *fortified up to heaven*," we shall see that it is not necessary to understand literally the words a "tower whose top shall reach to heaven." Comp. Amos 2: 9. The concentration of population and of power was evidently their purpose.

The tower of Babylon was a project well worthy of the ambition and impiety of Nimrod, and of his dreams of empire and irresistible power;—on the supposition that this was his enterprise. But God destroyed their project, and confounding the language (*Heb.* lip) of the people, he rendered impossible free communication between them; and in this way he dispersed them to the four winds of heaven.

With this blow of the avenging rod of God, came to an end the

third experiment (so to speak) which God was making with the apostate race. See pp. 87, 113, 144. They had again turned their backs on God, making haste to cast into oblivion the terrible lesson of the Flood; and so, with the confusion of their speech, God "delivered them up (without any restraint) to the lusts of their own hearts"; and placed a species of interdict upon these nations of "forgetters of God," separating them from all intercourse with those few with whom there yet remained something of the true religion; as says Paul in Rom. 1: 28: "And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, *God gave them up to a reprobate mind*, to do those things which are not fitting."

In vr. 7 we have the same form of divine consultation as in ch. 1: 26, and it has the same explanation. If we accept the theory that Moses incorporated with his history a number of documents which he found existing in his day, either orally, or in parchment, or on baked clay, we should say that this relation may be one of them, for it bears on its face indications of an extreme antiquity, and of a very primitive state of society, in which an exaggerated *anthropomorphism* was the natural manner in which men spoke of God, attributing to him human actions and passions with a degree of freedom which would be tolerated only among primitive peoples.

It is interesting to note the zeal and enthusiasm with which the people went about this enterprise. As stone, and lime for mortar, were lacking in that country, they adopted the expedient of putting thoroughly burnt brick instead of stone, and bitumen or asphalt (called "slime" in the text; abundant supplies of which were found at Hit, 140 miles higher up the river) instead of mortar; with which they went heroically forward in their work, till God put an end to it. Until quite recent times it was believed that even the site of Babylon was completely lost; according to the many notable predictions of the ancient Hebrew prophets with regard to the utter and perpetual destruction and desolation of that proud and oppressing city. But at last, diligent investigators have been able to identify the site; and among other ruins, buried in immense mounds of debris, there stands one of notable elevation, which bears today the name of *Birs Nimrod*; which many believe to have been part of the ancient tower of Babylon, or Babel; which Nebuchadnezzar found half ruined, and re-built and embellished with extraordinary magnificence. The tradition related by the Jewish historian Josephus, to the effect that God beat down the tower with lightnings and horrible tempest, may well have been founded on fact; but the Bible says nothing about it.

11: 10—26. THE DESCENDANTS OF SHEM, IN THE LINE OF THE PROMISE. (From 2346 to 2056 B. C.)

10 These are the generations of Shem. Shem was a hundred years old, and begat Arpachshad two years after the flood:

11 and Shem lived after he begat Arpachshad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

12 And Arpachshad lived five and thirty years, and begat Shelah:

13 and Arpachshad lived after he begat Shelah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

14 And Shelah lived thirty years, and begat Eber:

15 and Shelah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

16 And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg:

17 and Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters.

18 And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu:

19 and Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters.

20 And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug:

21 and Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters.

22 And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor:

23 and Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

24 And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah:

25 and Nahor lived after he begat Terah a hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters.

26 And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

It is to be observed that in this genealogical table, as in the one found in ch. 5, the son indicated is not always the firstborn, but is *the one who follows in the line of the promise*. The list begins with Shem and his son Arphaxad (or Arpachshad), who was born two years after the deluge; but if we hold as chronological the order found in ch. 10: 22, Shem had two sons, Elam and Asshur, before Arphaxad, and so he (Arphaxad) was third in the order of his birth. We might believe indeed that one of the two was born before the deluge, or at least in the ark, except that ch. 10: 1 tells us expressly that the children of the sons of Noah were all born after the flood. As therefore two years is very little time for the birth of three sons, it is probable that the two first were twins; and thus Arphaxad came to be third. The same thing happened in the case of Abram, or Abraham, who was the third son of Terah, although his name is always given as the first of the three brothers. Vr. 26. According to Acts 7: 4, Abram went forth from Haran (or "Charran") after the death of his father at the age of 205, according to ch. 11: 32; and according to ch. 12: 4, "Abram was 75 years of age, when he departed from Haran"; so that he was not born when his father was 70 years old, as might be inferred from vr. 26 of this chapter, but sixty years later. And as Nahor married the daughter of his brother Haran,



it is natural to suppose that Haran was the first-born of Terah (65 years older than Abraham) who died in Ur of the Chaldees; and that Nahor was the second; although Abraham is mentioned first on account of his pre-eminent dignity, as "he who had received the promises," Heb. 11: 17.

11: 27—32. MEMOIRS OF TERAH. THE FOURTH EXPERIMENT. THE CALLING OF ABRAM, OR ABRAHAM. (From 1996 to 1921 B. C.)

27 Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot.

28 And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.

29 And Abram and Nahor took them wives; the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.

30 And Sarai was barren; she had no child.

31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

32 And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

As this is not a genealogical table it is evident that we must avail ourselves again of the secondary use of the word "generations" in vr. 27, viz., that of *memoirs*, or *domestic history*. See comments on ch. 2: 4.

Here are repeated the names of the sons of Terah, in the order given in vr. 26; and Abram, or Abraham, is again placed before his two brothers, Nahor and Haran, although he was the youngest of the three. We learn therefore from these memoirs of Terah, studied in connection with ch. 12: 1—4, and Acts 7: 2—4, that while Abram was in Ur of the Chaldees, to the south of Babylon, and at no great distance from where the river Euphrates empties into the Persian Gulf, *God appeared to him*; and "before he dwelt in Haran" (or Charran), commanded him to go forth from his country and from his kindred and from the house of his father into a land which he would show him. It does not appear from the words of Stephen, in Acts 7: 2, 3, that on this occasion God made him any special promises; but that, appearing to him as "*the God of glory*," he commanded him to separate from all of his own people, and to follow him into another land, without even telling him where it was. If we interpret strictly the words, it would seem that this was on the part of Abram an *act of obedience* to the command which God had given him; rather than an act of faith in great promises which he then made him. It seems that this was the very thought of Stephen, to wit, that he called him first, but did not make promises to him

until the second calling, after the death of his father. Three experiments having already failed, which God was making with the lost race of Adam (pp. 87, 113), he enters here upon a fourth, and on a footing totally different from the preceding; in order to preserve at least some remnants of true religion in the earth, until "the fulness of the time when he would send forth his Son;" and in order to prepare the world beforehand for this mission of the promised "Seed of the Woman," who was to make an end of the kingdom and power of the Serpent in the earth. This fourth experiment was *to choose one man*, separate him from his own family and people, and educate and train him and his descendants to love and serve and obey Jehovah in entire separation from the other nations. But contrary to the plan and design of God, Terah, and almost all the family, determined to accompany Abram on his journey to the land of Canaan; and, in fact, they set out for that point. Haran (65 years older than Abram) was now dead, leaving two daughters, of whom the elder, Milcah, married her uncle Nahor, and became the mother of Rebekah, the wife of Isaac (ch. 24: 47); and the second, Iscah (which in the common belief of Jews and Christians was another name of Sarai) married her uncle Abram; bearing the name of Iscah first, in Ur of the Chaldees, and Sarai (= "my princess") after her marriage. If it was not so, the mention of Iscah in vr. 29, as a well known person, would be idle; for the name is not mentioned again in the Bible. Others base on ch. 20: 13 (where Abram says that Sarai was "the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother") the belief that Sarai was the daughter of Terah by a second marriage, or by some concubine or secondary wife that he had, and that thus she was Abram's half sister. Others still, conjecture that of the two supposed wives of Terah, one was the mother of Haran, the father of Iscah or Sarai, and the other, the mother of Abram; so that when he married this niece of his, daughter of his half-brother, he might say that she was *his sister* (in the same sense in which Lot, son of Haran, is called his "brother" in ch. 14: 14),—"the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother."

On the supposition, therefore, that Iscah and Sarai were one and the same person, we say that Terah, as the head of the tribe, after the death of Haran took with him nearly all the family, including Lot, the younger brother of the wives of his two uncles, Abram and Nahor, and started to go to the land of Canaan; thus defeating the purpose and plan of God; of which probably he knew nothing. There were more than 1000 miles in this jour-

ney; because, on account of the impassable desert of Arabia, which lay between Ur of the Chaldees and the land of Canaan, they had to follow the course of the Euphrates towards the N. W., 650 miles in a direct line, to the fords of the river, beyond Haran; and then 500 miles in a direct line, towards the S. W., to Hebron, or Beersheba, which became Abraham's familiar places of abode. But it seems that Terah became weary of the long journey, and when they arrived at Haran, or Charran (as we have it in Acts 7: 2, A. V.), a short distance from the fords of Carchemish (2 Chron. 35: 20; Jer. 46: 2), he stopped there; and finding the place to his liking and good for his business, they remained there, we cannot tell how many years; but we do know that there Abram and Lot became rich (ch. 12: 5; 13: 2), and there Terah died, without ever reaching the land of Canaan; a sad example of enterprises unfinished, due to a dilatory and fickle spirit; and a type of that multitude of persons who begin the march to the heavenly Canaan, but occupy themselves with other things by the way, and die without ever reaching it.

The names of Nahor and his wife Milcah are not found in the list of those whom Terah took with him (vr. 31); but later he did follow them, probably during the lifetime of Terah; for in subsequent years, when Abraham was seeking a wife for his son Isaac, we find them located there, and Haran is called the "city of Nahor." Ch. 24: 15, 10. The name of *Haran* the son of Terah, ought not to be confounded with "Haran" (or "Charran"), that of the place where Terah died. The English reader naturally infers that there is some connection between the two. But there is none; the two names are entirely distinct in Hebrew, being "Haran" the one, and "Charran" the other; which latter form is given in the A. V. of Acts 7: 2, 4. The R. V. confounds the two. The Modern Spanish Version preserves the distinction; but in this translation, I follow the established English usage, with the explanation given, that there is no connection whatever between the two names.

There has been much dispute regarding Ur of the Chaldees, the native city of Abraham; some locating it to the N. W. of Mesopotamia, a short distance to the north of Haran, where Terah died. This is undoubtedly an error, founded on the imperfect understanding of the words of Stephen, "while he (Abraham) was *in Mesopotamia*, before he dwelt in Charran." "Mesopotamia," in Greek, means "between the two rivers," Tigris and Euphrates; and it is used not only of the Mesopotamia of Bethuel and Laban, but is applied with propriety to that vast territory that lay intermediate "between the two rivers"; down

to their confluence, 200 or 300 miles S. E. of the country of Babylon. The "Mesopotamia" of Bethuel and Laban (ch. 24: 10) was Haran, or Charran, itself, where they resided. Besides which Stephen says that "Abraham, *went forth out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Charran.*" (Acts 7: 4); and it is well known that "the land of Chaldeans" lay from 400 to 600 miles to the S. E. of Haran, and extended as far as the junction of the two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates; if indeed both rivers did not at that time empty separately into the Persian Gulf. There is no doubt that those Biblical maps are in error which locate Ur of the Chaldees to the north of Haran. It was rather (where the most recent maps locate it) some 600 miles to the S. E. of Haran; 200 miles to the S. E. of the city of Babylon, on the southern side of the river Euphrates; and which in Abraham's day may have been a seaport; if maritime commerce in fact existed in the times of Abraham: see p. 90.

In the light of the discoveries of recent years, there is no reasonable doubt that this was the city of the birth and education of Abraham; called "Uru" in the cuneiform inscriptions there found, and represented today by the ruins of *Mugheir*, whose remains, recently discovered, attest the ancient greatness, riches and power of the place. It is therefore interesting to know, that like Moses, Abraham also was born and bred in a rich, cultured and powerful nation, and was educated in the midst of the luxury and the highest civilization of that day. The city of Uru (or Ur), was likewise the ancient seat of the worship of the god Sin (= the Moon); represented, however, as a *god* rather than a *goddess*.

It is undeniable that Abraham and all his family and kindred were idolaters, as I shall show in the following chapter; and the Jews, while denying this in respect of their great progenitor, Abraham, affirm with respect to his father Terah, that he was not only an idolater, but a manufacturer of idols; and they relate many stories of the zeal which from childhood Abraham displayed against idolatry, and of the way in which he broke to pieces and mocked at the idols made by his father. In the belief of the Jews, it was because of this and of his many other pre-eminent virtues, that Abraham was chosen by Jehovah, and called "the friend of God," and was made the depository of the promises and hopes of the human family; all which is not only characteristic of the self-love of the Jews and of their devotion to their own righteousness (which was the cause of their rejection of Christ, Rom. 10: 3), but it is also contrary to the spirit of the gospel and to the positive teaching of

the word of God, both in the Old and the New Testament. Rom. 4: 1—8.

## CHAPTER XII.

VES. 1—8. THE SECOND CALLING OF ABRAHAM. THE GREAT PROMISE. CANAAN. (From 1921 to 1920 B. C.)

1 Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee:

2 and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing:

3 and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

4 So Abram went, as Jehovah had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the oak of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

7 And Jehovah appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land; and there builded he an altar unto Jehovah, who appeared unto him.

8 And he removed from thence unto the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and Ai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto Jehovah, and called upon the name of Jehovah.

The third experiment had failed: the entire race had again apostatized from God. Job, the pious and patient patriarch of Uz, belonged to a distant region, and also to a past generation; if we may judge by the 140 years which he lived after having had and buried three daughters and seven sons, all of these married and with homes of their own (Job 1: 2—4), and also if we compare the years of Job with the 175 years of Abraham and the 180 of his son Isaac. With regard to Melchisedek (see ch. 14: 18—20 and comments), it is so little that we know of him, surrounded by pagan Canaanites, that it is scarcely necessary to make him an exception. The line of promise, like "the sons of God" of the times before the flood, had already renounced the living and true God; and this, only 400 years after that terrible and exemplary punishment which God had visited on the antediluvian sinners. Abram, the future "father of believers," was an idolater (as we shall see) and was bred up, as the Jews affirm, in a manufactory of idols. The Jews deny that he was himself an idolater; but the word of God teaches it in the most unequivocal manner. See ch. 31: 53, and Josh. 24: 2, 14, 15. "The seed of the Serpent" had

about made an end of the "seed of the Woman"; the tares had taken possession of the whole field, and, as in the days of Noah, the wheat could hardly be anywhere found. See the parable of the Tares of the field. Matt. 13: 24—30; 36—43. At such a rate of retrogression, long before the "fulness of the time," when God would "send forth his Son," and indeed within a very brief space of time, humanly speaking, all knowledge of God would be completely lost from the world; Satan would definitely triumph, the hopes of the human family would finally fail, and the promises of God be falsified.

Another experiment, therefore (so to speak), God was about to make, the fourth (see pp. 87, 113, 140), but on a new footing, and changing completely his plan. It has been well said that the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babylon was a sort of *Edict of Paganism* against the apostate race, separating it from the few who still retained the knowledge of God:—an edict which remained in force until the day of Pentecost, when, with the gift of tongues, there seemed to be a formal abrogation of it, in order to give prompt effect to the last command of Jesus: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16: 15. But in the days of Abram, the small remnant had also renounced the God of Noah, and there was no longer one human language on earth reserved for his glory and service.

It seems to me that formal idolatry was a manner of wickedness which probably began after the flood. The antediluvians, according to the few notices which we have of them, instead of being idolaters, were rather an impious set, pure atheists, delivered up to inordinate sensual passions, to violence, oppression, rapine and wickedness. If in this I am right, then it may be said that as the Babylonish captivity cured the Jews of formal idolatry, so the deluge cured the race of outright atheism: thenceforward no nation or people has professed atheism, except France during the frenzied excesses of its revolution, in 1792; and the results then renewed the violences of the antediluvians. Men at last knew that there was a God, and that his indignation was something to be feared. The subtilty of the Serpent, therefore, took a new departure, and without denying God, "they changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of corruptible man, and of birds, and of four footed beasts and creeping things" (Rom. 1: 23); and here we find that Abraham himself was an idolater, and his father Terah (as the Jews say) a maker of idols. The Bible proofs that Abraham was an idolater when God called and drew him to himself, are

very clear and explicit:—Joshua, when he was about to die, said to all the people: “Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: Your fathers dwelt of old time beyond the River (Euphrates), even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor: *and they served other gods*; and I took your father Abraham from beyond the River,” etc. Josh. 24: 2, 3; See also ch. 31: 53, where Laban invokes for witnesses of the oath which he had put between himself and Jacob, the ancient gods of the family: “The gods of Abraham and the gods of Nahor, let them judge between us! the gods (likewise) of their father” (Modern Spanish Version). These false gods Abraham had renounced. As therefore the title “the God of Abraham” was in this case equivocal, since Jacob and Laban understood it in opposite senses, Jacob did not wish to swear by him, but he “*swore by the Fear of his father Isaac*.” In the Hebrew text the subject and the verb are both alike in the plural form, in all three cases, showing thus that in the case of Abraham it was “*gods*” that he served, just as in the case of his brother and his father. Compare with this what Joshua repeats in ch. 24: 14, 15, in contrasting the gods whom the forefathers of the people had served on the other side of the river Euphrates, and Jehovah, the new God of Abraham, who was likewise the God of his descendants, the God of Israel. With this agree the words of Nehemiah, in ch. 9: 7, 8: “Thou art Jehovah, the God who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; and didst find his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him,” etc.

Of this new God of Abraham, Stephen says: “The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, before he dwelt in Charran; and he said: Get thee out of thy land and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I will show thee” (Acts 7: 2, 3); where the Greek, following the familiar form of the Hebrew, says “*was seen to Abraham*,” with allusion, no doubt, to some visible manifestation; just as is again said in vr. 7 of this section. In what form this was done, or whether it was done under any form, we are not told; it was probably done with some sensible manifestation of his glory; with which Abraham began to understand the distinction there was between the gods of wood and stone and the only true God; and it seems, according as I understand the words of Stephen, that this was sufficient for the first calling of Abraham, without giving him any promise to draw him; but that it was *to prove his obedience* to the God of glory who had thus sensibly appeared to him.

He commanded him, therefore, to separate himself from his family and from his native country, and go to another land which he would show him. As the family was idolatrous, the new plan which God adopted with the fallen race required in the case of Abraham entire separation from his people, and from the uses and customs of his fellow countrymen. The resolution of Terah, not only to accompany him, but himself to head the expedition, put in peril the experiment at the very outset. But his detention in Haran lent another aspect to the case. It seems indubitable that Abram sinned in not continuing the journey which he had begun; but perhaps he yielded to the pleadings of his people, and so remained with them until the death of his father. Stephen, in Acts 7: 4, says that "after the death of his father God removed him to this land"—Canaan. From all this it appears evident that Abraham had two callings; the first, in Ur of the Chaldees, the second, in Haran, after the death of his father. Nehemiah speaks only of the former, but together with this he joins all the promises and the covenant. In Heb. 11: 8, Paul speaks of only one calling, which evidently embraces the two. The calling of which Moses treats in Gen. 12: 2—4, comes formally after the death of Terah, and is evidently the repetition of the first, with promises and amplifications which it did not have, compressing, to save time (as is frequent in the Bible) the substance of two or more interviews into this one; just as we find it in the narrative of the instructions given to Noah with regard to the flood and his ark. See *Note 15*, p. 89. The same thing happens here; because Haran was not "his country, nor the place of his birth," which was Ur of the Chaldees, whence they had together gone forth, some years before;—an undeniable proof that Moses, like Stephen, recognizes the first calling, which came to him in the place of his birth. And in ch. 15: 7, Jehovah says expressly to Abraham: "I brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees to give thee this land to inherit it." The Hebrew language is not provided with *moods* like our own, and it has but two so-called *tenses*, the "past" and the "future," or more properly said, "the *perfect* and the *imperfect*"; and in translating the Hebrew into Spanish (or English) the translator himself, has to graduate these two "tenses," to suit the requirements of our own more delicate and refined use; which has at least four forms of the present, ten or twelve of the past, and as many of the future. It remains, therefore, with the translator to say: "Jehovah said to Abraham" or "had said," according as he regards it as



referring to the first calling, or to the second, or to the two, spoken of as one.

Nehemiah says (ch. 9: 7, 8) that when Jehovah had chosen Abraham and brought him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, "thou didst find his heart faithful;" not without sin, but *without any duplicity, sincere and steadfast*. How important is this point! a thousand times more important is this deep sincerity of soul, than any form of dreamed-of sinless perfection in this life! and all the subsequent life of Abraham, "the father of believers," bears impressed on its very face these two characteristic traits, *implicit faith* and *instantaneous obedience*; and the want of these two things (which are in fact one only), is what comes to vitiate the profession of a multitude of persons who regard themselves as the "children of believing Abraham." Rom. 4: 10, 11; Gal. 3: 9: 29. What Jesus said to the Jews has like application in the case of Christians: "*If ye were the children of Abraham, ye would do the works of Abraham.*" John 8: 39. Compare what Paul says about himself, in Acts 26: 19 and Gal. 1: 15, 16. How precious the words: "THOU DIDST FIND HIS HEART FAITHFUL!"

In the days of Enosh "began the usage of (the godly) calling themselves by the name of Jehovah" (ch. 4: 26), as his people; but in the family of Abraham, including all his circumcised encampment, this people began now to form a "church"\* or "congregation" of believers, separated from the rest of the world by a distinctive rite; of which Paul says in Rom. 4: 11—17 that "Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had in uncircumcision, that he might be the father of all believers," whether circumcised or uncircumcised. And to the promise that God would make of him a great nation, he adds the greater promise of making his name great, and constituting him a blessing to all nations; blessing those that blessed him, and cursing those that cursed him; and causing that all the families of the earth should be blessed in him. All this was said to him in Haran, after the death of his father. Of "the covenant" we have heard nothing

\*In the Greek Version of the LXX (in common use in the days of Christ and his apostles, and from which are generally taken the quotations from the Old Testament found in the New), the Hebrew word *edah* which in the Modern Spanish Version is translated "assembly," and *qahal*, which is translated "congregation," are indistinctively translated *either "synagogue" or "church;"*—words which are quite as common in the Version of the LXX as in the New Testament; occurring about 265 times. In agreement with this, in the New Testament also the "congregation of Israel" is called "the church" in Acts 7: 38; and a Christian church is called a "synagogue" in James 2: 2.

since the time of Noah; but the correlative of the covenant, to wit, "the promise," takes now a vast breadth, with a clearness of expression and precision of meaning which it never before had. The primordial promise of the "Seed of the Woman" develops now into "exceeding great and precious promises," whose full accomplishment we are still awaiting with anxious desire: "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." In these words we, Christians, can with much clearness see Christ, together with that immense train of temporal blessings which Christian lands now enjoy (although the greater part of their inhabitants reject the friendship and government of the God of Abraham), and those spiritual blessings which the people of God now enjoy on earth and in heaven; together with those greater and eternal blessings which his redeemed people shall enjoy in the coming Age, "the world without end," not only as individuals, but in their collective capacity, as "the nations (of the redeemed) who shall walk in the light of the heavenly Jerusalem." Rev. 21: 24.

This great promise, thus enlarged and extended, came then to *locate* itself definitely in the family of Abraham. As after repeated and varied experiments, made with the fallen race, it had repeatedly and resolutely declared itself against God, God now rejects it deliberately, and confines his attentions and his future experiments (to avail myself of this convenient expression, a favorite one with the late Dr. J. Addison Alexander, of Princeton Seminary), to the family of that renowned man, whom he honored with the title of "the friend of God." James 2: 23. The Apostle Paul well explains this procedure of God with the pagan world, in these words: "And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind to do those things which are not fitting." Rom. 1: 28.

At this date, Abram was 75 years old and Sarai, his wife, 65; being ten years younger than he. Ch. 17: 17. With his habitual promptness to do whatever his new God commanded, Abram took Sarai his wife and his nephew Lot, and all the goods and the souls, or persons, they had acquired there (where they may have passed ten years) and leaving his brother Nahor in Haran (called afterwards "the city of Nahor," ch. 24: 10), "they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, where they arrived" in due time;— a journey of 400 or 500 miles. He then passed through the land, going from north to south, until he reached Shechem, the region which was then, as it is now, the most beautiful and fertile part of Canaan. There probably, near to Shechem, was the oak-grove of Moreh. "The oak,"

says the Hebrew; but as a single oak could not serve for the encampment of 1,500 people, the word doubtless represents a *grove of oaks*; in the same way that "Abraham pitched his tent" (vr. 8, and elsewhere), means in Hebrew to say, "pitched his tents," or established the encampment of his numerous people.\* "Moreh" was probably the name of some principal man from whom the wood took name; as we read in the following chapter, vr. 18, of "the oaks, or oak grove, of Mamre, near to Hebron,"; Mamre being the name of the ally and associate of Abraham. Ch. 13: 18; 14: 13—24.

There Jehovah appeared to him again, and said to him: "To thee will I give this land. And he builded there an altar to Jehovah who had appeared to him" (*Heb.* was seen to him). It was thenceforward the use and custom of this great servant and "friend of God," to pitch his tent, erect his altar, and invoke in solemn worship (he and his people) the name of Jehovah. *The altar near the tent* is the type of patriarchal piety, worthy of the zealous imitation of all the spiritual children of Abraham. From thence, with the object of knowing the land which Jehovah his God had given him, he passed towards the mountain range on the east of Bethel, having Bethel on the west, and Ai on the east; famous afterwards in the wars of Joshua. Josh. Ch. 7. The principal mountain range of the country passes there to the east of Bethel. It is not said that he encamped *on the mountain*, as our Bibles would naturally give us to understand. The Hebrew word means mount, mountain, hill country, mountainous region, or mountain range, as the case may be. Here the text says "he went toward the mountain," or *mountain range*; which, in fact, passes at a little distance to the east of Bethel. Robinson, in his *Biblical Researches*, describes the location, Vol. 2, p. 314. There also he built an altar and called upon the name of Jehovah—a phrase which always indicates the public worship of all his encampment.

The declaration in verse 6 "that the Canaanite was then in the land," signifies two things: 1st, That formerly these races of Canaanites had not been there, and that their occupation of that land was of comparatively recent date; and 2nd, that the Canaanite—not one tribe in particular, but the descend-

\*It is much to be regretted that our translators, both English and Spanish, say in vr. 8, and elsewhere, *Abram "pitched his tent,"* as though he were a solitary traveler; knowing full well that he had with him not less than 1200 or 1500 people (see ch. 14: 14, and comments), overlooking the fact that the translator's office is to put the mind of the reader in easy and satisfactory communication with that of the writer. The Modern Spanish Version renders it: "*pitched his tents*"=his encampment.—Tr.

ants of Canaan in general (ch. 10: 15—20), was in actual possession of that land, of which Jehovah said to Abram: "To thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee."

12: 9—20. EGYPT, WHERE TO PROTECT HIS OWN LIFE, ABRAM DENIES HIS WIFE. (1920 OR 1919 B. C.)

9 And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

10 And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was sore in the land.

11 And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:

12 and it will come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they will say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.

13 Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister; that it may be well with me for thy sake, and that my soul may live because of thee.

14 And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.

15 And the princes of Pharaoh saw her, and praised her to Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

16 And he dealt well with Abram for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses, and camels.

17 And Jehovah plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

18 And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?

19 why saidst thou, She is my sister, so that I took her to be my wife? now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.

20 And Pharaoh gave men charge concerning him: and they brought him on the way, and his wife, and all that he had.

Pursuing his journey, traveling towards *the South* (not one of the cardinal points, but a region of that name, to the south of the country, called *Negeb* in Hebrew, ch. 13: 1), on account of a famine which he found prevailing there, Abram went forward as far as Egypt, to sojourn there. It was natural that Abram, a Chaldean by birth, and acquainted with Babylon, should have a curiosity to see Egypt, which rivaled it in riches, civilization and glory. Far better would it have been for him to retrace his steps, and go to the north again, rather than expose himself to the power of the Pharaohs, powerful, despotic and unscrupulous, who reigned there. "Pharaoh" in the Bible is the royal title of the sovereigns of Egypt, and not the name of any particular individual king. When he entered Egypt, Abram perceived the danger he was running on account of the extreme beauty of his wife, and availed himself of a shameful subterfuge to guard against it. Sarai must have been at this time some 65 years of age, being ten years younger than Abram; and as she had never been a mother and was wel'

cared for, and as the men and women of those days lived to double the age they now do (she died, prematurely, at the age of 127, while Abraham attained to 175), it is probable that she had all the attractions of a beautiful woman of 30 in our own day. Her fair complexion also, and the fine color that set off her beauty, would make her the object of no small admiration to the swarthy Egyptians. It seems that at that time the women of Egypt were not shut up, nor veiled, as has been the usage of the Oriental women for a long time past; or if not, Sarai must have been very indiscreet to exhibit herself as she did in public. See vrs. 14, 15, also ch. 20: 16, and comments. It is likewise to be noted that Abram did not go into Egypt as a private individual, but rather as an Arab prince, rich, and with great accompaniment; otherwise he would not have attracted as he did the attention of the princes of Pharaoh and of himself; who being pleased with the beauty of the woman, took her to his palace; and instead of killing Abram on account of his wife, he treated him well, on account of his supposed sister.

It is wholly impossible to defend, or even to excuse, the conduct of Abram on this occasion; and the Bible reveals it in all its moral deformity. Notwithstanding this, it is but just to remember that our Christian ideas of morality, and of the purity and honor of women, were totally unknown to the world of that day. Abram himself was but a novice in the ways of the true God, and he knew almost nothing of his holiness, his power, his righteousness and his fidelity. He had been educated in the midst of the idolatries and other abominations of the Chaldeans and the Babylonians, where the honor and purity of women was held in light esteem, or, rather, were deliberately sacrificed upon the altars of their impure goddesses; in Canaan he was surrounded by people who were little if any better; and there, in Egypt, the case was, if possible, even worse. His new God had hardly begun to give to him and to the people of his encampment lessons in the true religion, in order to give to the world, in him and his descendants, the lost knowledge of God, and to work out in this apostate world the ideas and forms of good morals, personal purity and true holiness, which we enjoy, and which in our day, are being diffused abroad in all the earth.

It is certain that what he said about his wife was not an absolute falsehood, as will be seen in the comments on ch. 20: 12; but it was not on this account less than a falsehood: and when he put his foot into that net of deception, he little

suspected where it was going to lead him; as usually happens when for motives of convenience we turn aside from the strict path of truth and well doing. But on the other hand, let us guard against false inferences. It is not to be supposed that Sarai had been yet received as the wife, or concubine, of the king. She was endangered, but not dishonored. The "house of Pharaoh," whither Sarai was carried, was not like a house of our own, nor even like a European palace, but it rather embraced an immensity of space, walled in and separated, with a multitude of structures for hundreds of offices, and thousands of persons. "The house of Joseph," where passed all that history of himself and his brothers, as related in chs. 42—45, was part of "the house of Pharaoh." See ch. 45: 2. In the book of Esther (ch. 2) we have a particular notice of the long preparations that were used with women, before they were admitted to the private apartments of the king, either as wives or as concubines. And Jehovah, who a little while after, "smote Pharaoh with great plagues, both him and his household, on account of Sarai, the wife of Abram," would not have deferred his interposition, until it was too late, in order to protect her honor and her person. When again, with even greater blameworthiness, Abram exposed her to the same danger, in the house of Abimelech, king of the Philistines, Jehovah did not permit Abimelech to touch her (ch. 20: 6); without any doubt, then, he guarded her well while she was in "the house of Pharaoh."

In spite of this grievous error on the part of Abram, and in spite of his little confidence in the divine protection, his God did not deprive him of it, but protected the person of Sarai, and smote Pharaoh and all his house with such plagues, that the king well understood for whose cause that had happened. Calling therefore Abram, he chided him for his conduct, he restored to him his wife, he gave orders to his men of war respecting him, and dismissed him with all that was his; giving him a suitable accompaniment of soldiers, until he had passed out of the country. Having gone to Egypt on account of the famine that was in "the South," and God having interposed a prompt resistance to the purpose the king had formed of taking for his own the wife of Abram, it is natural that he should not have passed more than a few months there.

One must be as signally lacking in good faith as in the gift of sound interpretation, to infer from the words of vr. 16—"and he dealt well with Abram for her sake; and he had sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants and maid-servants,

and she-asses and camels”—that Pharaoh enriched him at the cost of his wife’s honor. Abram entered Egypt as a prince, and as a prince he went out of Egypt. At his coming, “he had flocks, and herds, and he-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses, and camels”; and if, when he went out, “silver and gold”—more useful and current in Egypt than in Haran—are mentioned in addition to these (ch. 13: 2), it is not to be wondered at that, with the favor of the king, and regarded as his brother-in-law, he should have increased his riches in Egypt, already great and with a large accompaniment of dependents and servants of his own. But to say that he accepted these things as gifts from Pharaoh in exchange for his own dishonor, is a proof either of much ignorance or of much malignity. The man who, but a short time after that, could draw forth from his own encampment 318 trained soldiers, *his own servants, “born in his house”* (ch. 13: 14), with which to attack four kings, heavily laden with booty, had no need of gifts from Pharaoh (nor does the Bible say that Pharaoh made him any gifts); and that magnanimous man, who, when he returned victorious from the slaughter of those kings, and the king of Sodom said to him: “Give me the persons and take the goods for thyself,” with rare nobility of spirit restored to him the whole of the prey, together with the persons, saying: “I have lifted up my hand to Jehovah, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, (protesting) that I will not take a thread nor a shoe latchet, nor ought that is thine, lest thou shouldst say “*I have made Abram rich*” (ch. 14: 21—23), certainly was not the man to make merchandise of the honor of his wife. God took charge of the prosperity of his servant, whom he had so recently called to himself, and of the honor of his wife; and he went up out of Egypt, with all his people and all that was his.

## CHAPTER XIII.

VRS. 1—4. ABRAM RETURNS TO THE LAND OF CANAAN. (1919 or 1918 B. C.)

1 And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the South.

2 And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

3 And he went on his journeys from the South even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai,

4 unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of Jehovah.

Abram, dismissed from Egypt, undoubtedly with the displeas-

ure of the king, and guarded by his soldiers until he had safely passed the frontier, went up into the South country, as the southern part of Canaan was called; so that he "*went up*" thither, going from the low lands of Egypt to the hill country of Canaan, (Deut. 1: 7), and at the same time traveling northward, or rather N. E.; carrying with him his wife and all his possessions, and his nephew Lot, with all his, which were not small. And moving his encampment from point to point, traveling with their numerous herds and flocks, they arrived at last at Bethel, his old camping ground, between Bethel and Ai, where was still his altar; and there he called upon the name of Jehovah.

13: 5—13. LOT SEPARATES FROM ABRAM. HIS WORLDLY ELECTION.  
(1918 (?) B. C.)

5 And Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

7 And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land.

8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren.

9 Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if *thou wilt take* the left hand, then I will go to the right; or, if *thou take* the right hand, then I will go to the left.

10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the Plain of the Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before Jehovah destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the garden of Jehovah, like the land of Egypt, as thou goest unto Zoar.

11 So Lot chose him all the Plain of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the Plain, and moved his tent as far as Sodom.

13 Now the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against Jehovah exceedingly.

It was the declared purpose of God to separate Abram from all his kindred, in order to educate him and his in the knowledge and obedience of Jehovah, whom he had only begun to know as his God. Terah's resolution to accompany him would have frustrated this purpose; but "Terah died in Haran," and Abram, leaving his brother Nahor in Haran, went forward into Canaan, for which he had started perhaps ten years before. Lot accompanied him; and a worldly spirit like his, with his separate and large encampment, imbued, doubtless, with the spirit of its chief, and over which Abram could not exercise due authority, or perhaps none at all, did not help forward the



divine purpose. But as the dilatory and fickle spirit of Terah detained him in Haran, so that he never arrived in Canaan, thus the worldly spirit of Lot separated him from Abram's side; and this same devotion of Lot to his worldly interests came to be his ruin.

It is clear that at that time the land of Canaan was in great part unoccupied. As it was reputed to be among the best of known countries, it is undeniable that we have here a convincing proof that the deluge, at no very remote period, had left that "glory of all lands" (Ezek. 20: 6) empty and depopulated, and that it had only begun to be somewhat peopled again. Four hundred years later (Gen. 15: 13—16), the land was occupied by "seven nations greater and stronger" than the Israelites (Deut. 7: 7), who then had possession of it. But at this time, Abram and Lot, with their immense nomadic encampments, went about with all liberty, "towards the north, and towards the south, and towards the east, and towards the west" (vr. 14), without anybody's making account of it. In fact, Abram said to Lot that the whole land was before him, to choose freely and at his pleasure the part which he liked best. Vr. 9.

But while the land was plenty wide for Abram and the Canaanites, it seems that it was not enough so for Lot and his herdsmen to live in peace and good fellowship with Abram and his people; and when the latter could no longer suffer the contentions of the herdsmen of their respective encampments—contentions which "the Canaanite and the Perrizite" saw with surprise, and perhaps with satisfaction,—Abram himself at last proposed that the two should separate. And so the temporal blessings of God were converted for the worldly Lot into a positive curse. Sad day it was for him in which, to increase his worldly estate, he separated from the tent and altar of his uncle, whom God had made the depository of the promises! It seems evident from the expostulation of Abram, that the relations were becoming strained not only between the herdsmen of the two, but between the masters as well: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, *between me and thee*, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren." Ch. 13: 8. Abram, always magnanimous, manifests here the incomparable superiority of his character, as contrasted with that of Lot. He was the elder, and was the prospective owner of all, by positive donation from God; yet he left to his nephew the liberty of choosing lands at his pleasure, he being satisfied to take the part which Lot did not want. The Psalmist has said: "*I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts*"

(Ps. 119: 63);—a sentiment which Lot so lightly regarded, that, in an evil hour for himself he separated from the company of the only man in all the land (or all the earth?) who feared God and kept his precepts; and found that it was more congenial to associate with the most reprobate of those pagan peoples, than to live in harmony and peace with his pious uncle, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed.

Poor Lot! From the elevated mountain range, where the two stood, to the east of Bethel, he lifted up his eyes and surveyed the land spread out around them, and, fixing his gaze on the Plain of the Jordan, which in his eyes gleamed like a jewel, with its semi-tropical climate, away yonder, 4000 feet below them, fertile as the land of Egypt, whence they had just come, beautiful “as the garden of Jehovah”—the Eden of our first parents; instead of modestly insisting that Abram, being the older, should choose first, and without even asking his advice, he selfishly improved his opportunity, made a bad choice, and, enchanted with the view, he said in effect: “I go yonder; there is the land I choose for myself!” and leaving his uncle upon those high lands, he made haste to go down with his flocks and herds and his numerous retinue of servants, and dwelt among the Cities of the Plain; and kept on moving his encampment (vr. 5. *Heb.* his tent) till he came to Sodom; where he took a house and, as it would seem, a wife also. The text gives us to understand that he moved his encampment about from place to place in that superbly beautiful Plain, before he took the final resolution to make his home in Sodom. Impressive is the comment which the historian makes upon his ill-advised election: “But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against Jehovah exceedingly.” Very numerous is the lineage of Lot, who still follow his footsteps in crowds. Lot left his flocks and herds amid the succulent pastures of the Plain; but he himself, abandoning the pure and simple customs of pastoral life, exchanged them for the soft and effeminate life of those semi-tropical cities, delivered up to the most detestable vices. “This was the iniquity of Sodom: pride, fulness of bread, and prosperous ease; \* \* neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy.” Ezek. 6: 49.

[NOTE 20.—*On the Plain of the Jordan, the Vale of Siddim, and the Cities of the Plain.* Until a recent date it was universally believed, and from times immemorial, that the Vale of Siddim (=plains, or fields), and the Cities of the Plain were situated in the southern part of what is now the Dead Sea, and also on the plain which extends eight or ten miles still farther to

the south; and that the "Plain of Jordan" not only reached to the Sea of Sodom (a name which I use preferentially, because it was not then a *Dead Sea*), but in some way it embraced it, at least on one side, and extended to the south of it; so that "the Plain" was all one, whether of the Jordan or of the sea, there being easy communication between the north and south of it. But some scientific Englishmen, and notably Lieut. Conder, and other agents of the "Palestine Exploration Fund," have done their utmost to discredit this ancient belief, and to locate the Vale of Siddim with the five cities of the Plain all to the north or N. E. of the Sea of Sodom; where some recent maps locate them with an interrogation point, as an indication of doubt. But I believe that their efforts will prove in vain to destroy the old opinion, founded, not only on the uniform belief of Jews, Christians and Mohammedans, but on Holy Scripture itself, and on authentic secular history as well. For the convenience of the reader, I will make this *Note* to embrace at one view the consideration of the "Plain of Jordan" (ch. 13: 10, 11; 1 Kings 7: 46), the "Cities of the Plain" (ch. 13: 12; 19: 29), and the "Vale of Siddim" (ch. 14: 3, 8, 10), in order to save time and space, on account of the difficulty of considering them separately.

The Biblical arguments offered in favor of this recent opinion seem to be: 1st. That the "Cities of the Plain" ought to be located in the "Plain of the Jordan." But this is a gratuitous assumption; the Bible always distinguishes between the two expressions, and never says that the cities were of the "Plain of the Jordan" but only of "the Plain." See ch. 19: 17, 25, 28; compare ch. 13: 10, 11, 12. In Hebrew the word *kikkar* (= *circuit*, or *surroundings*) which we translate "plain," is exclusively used of this region of the Jordan and of the Sea of Sodom, except once, when it refers to *surroundings* (R. V. "plain") of Jerusalem (Neh. 12: 28), and the word is as applicable to the "surroundings" or "circuit" of the sea, as to the "surroundings" or "circuit" of the Jordan; Gesenius translates it "the *tract* of the Jordan." We know from 1 Kings 7: 46 (R. V.), that this name ("the plain of the Jordan") was given to the valley of the Jordan, 25 miles in a direct line to the north of the Salt or Dead Sea, between Succoth and Zerethan, at the brass-foundries of King Solomon; and this use of the word extended to its mouth, where it empties into the sea. But in the days of Lot, "the Plain" did not stop at the north of the sea; it continued in all its course, and even beyond that. 2nd. Another argument which is presented with great confidence is, that (according to ch. 13: 10), from the top of the mountain chain near to Bethel, Lot could

"lift up his eyes and see all the Plain of the Jordan," as far as Zoar, if we locate it at the north of the sea, but not, if at the south. The record, however, does not say that Lot could see as far as Zoar, but that "he lifted up his eyes and saw all the plain of the Jordan, that it was all well watered, etc., as thou goest unto Zoar." The words indicate *the direction in which "thou goest,"* and not the point to which the sight of Lot reached. This singular phrase, used only six times in the Bible, (ch. 10: 19, twice; 10: 30; 13: 10; 25: 18; and 1 Sam. 15: 7) seems to indicate always the going *in the direction of* the point indicated. 3rd. With the same confidence they cite Deut. 34: 4, where it is said that from the top of Pisgah, on the east of the Jordan, before Jericho, Jehovah caused Moses to see all the land of promise from east to west and *from north to south, "unto Zoar";* and it is argued that if Zoar was at the foot of Pisgah, (where they wish to locate it, to the north of the sea), Moses could see it perfectly, whereas if it were at the south of the sea, the mountains of Moab would completely intercept the view. The error here is the same as in the former case; it is not said that Moses could see Zoar, any more than Lot; but "unto Zoar" indicates *the southern limit, or south-eastern, of the prospect which the vision of the dying prophet embraced.* Compare "unto Dan" (which did not then even exist, Judges 18: 29) in vr. 1 of the same passage:—"Unto Dan" on the north, and "unto Zoar" on the south.

Some of the reasons against this new opinion are:

1st. That ch. 14: 3 says of the Vale of Siddim (where was fought the battle of the four kings against the five, and where the "Cities of the Plain" were apparently located) "THE SAME IS THE SALT SEA"; and *that* the newly proposed location is not, and never was. The Salt Sea, or Dead Sea, is 45 miles long by 10½ wide; its surface is 1,300 feet below the level of the ocean, and it is skirted on both sides by mountain ranges which rise precipitately from its edge 1,500 to 2,500 feet high; the river Jordan entering on the north, and losing its fresh waters in those of the sea, which are of bitter and intolerable saltiness. In its northern part, and in two-thirds of its length, the sea is from 1,100 to 1,300 feet deep, and the other third, towards the south, is very shallow, nowhere exceeding ordinarily twelve or fifteen feet in depth, and in years of drought it is fordable in many parts by caravans of camels, and even of loaded asses, which cross from the peninsula of Lisan to the eastern shore. It is believed, and it has always been believed, that in this part and in the plain to the south of the sea, were situated the

Vale of Siddim and the Cities of the Plain—a district some 25 miles long by 10 or 12 broad. In this view of the case, it was very proper that Moses should write, "*the Vale of Siddim, which is the Salt Sea.*" With regard to the northern part, from 1,000 to 1,300 feet deep, this could never be said. To this it is replied *that Moses did not write it thus*; that verse 3 formed no part of the original writing. See Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, Article "Siddim." But this is a sheer assumption. In the days of Moses, 400 years after Lot, this place bore the name of the "Salt Sea" (see Num. 34: 3, 12; Deut. 3: 17), which formerly it did not have; so that Moses was as competent as any subsequent writer to add to his history the explanatory note that what had formerly been the "Vale of Siddim" was then "the Salt Sea."

2nd. Ch. 14: 10 informs us that "the Vale of Siddim was full of slime pits," or pits of bitumen. These pits have entirely disappeared, due probably to the conflagration in the days of Lot; for there still are found great quantities of bitumen *in the bottom of the sea*, in its southern part, where it is believed that the Vale of Siddim and the Cities of the Plain were situated. Dr. Robinson says that at different epochs, chiefly after earthquakes, the Arabs make a lucrative commerce in the bitumen they gather at the southern end of the sea; where it occasionally detaches itself from the bottom and floats on the surface of the waters. "After the earthquake of 1837, a large mass of bitumen (one said, like an island, another, like a house) was discovered floating on the sea, and was driven aground on the west side," "where the people swam to it and cut it in pieces with axes, so as to bring it ashore;" and it was sold at a valuation of several thousand dollars. The ancient Greeks and Romans also were acquainted with this peculiarity of the sea, and named it Asphaltites, or Asphaltic Lake. Dr. Robinson adds that this occurs only in the southern part, and never on the northern part, as far as he could inform himself from the Arabs. The asphalt is not found, he says, to the north of the sea, in the plains of Jericho, nor on the other side of Jordan; which appears plainly to indicate that the Vale of Siddim, with its five cities, was not situated there. Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, Vol. 2 pp. 228—230 and 603—605.

3rd. Zoar was saved from the common destruction at the petition of Lot, and was in plain view of Sodom, being so near, that Lot and his two daughters could pass from the one to the other between day-break and the rising of the sun. Ch. 19: 15, 20, 23. Well then, Zoar continued to be a historic place, and well known under that name, for the space of 3,300 years, and was

not lost to sight, as a place of some importance until after the 14th century of the Christian Era. Isaiah and Jeremiah both speak of it as belonging to the territory of Moab (Isa. 15: 5; Jer. 48: 34); and Moab had for its northern boundary the river Arnon, which fell into the Salt Sea at about midway of its length, opposite Engedi. It is therefore morally certain that, as Zoar was a part of Moab, *it could not be situated to the north of the sea*, 25 or 30 miles from the northern boundary of Moab.

4th. Zoar is called *Segor* in the Greek translation of the LXX, and in the Latin Vulgate and the Roman Catholic translations made from the latter, and is called *Zoghar* by the Arabs till this day; it is mentioned by Josephus in the first century, by Ptolemy in the second century, by the fathers of the Church in the fourth and fifth centuries; and Jerome who describes its situation at the foot of the mountain range, says that it was then a place of importance with a Roman garrison and many inhabitants; and that it was the key to that mountain range to the east and S. E. of the Dead Sea. It is also mentioned by the Arab and Saracenic historians, and by the historians of the Crusades; and we have a detailed account of the route pursued by King Baldwin I., in the year 1100, on going from Hebron to Zoar, *passing to the south of the sea*, and finding it at the entrance of the mountains on the eastern side. With such an accumulation of data as Robinson gives at great length in his *Biblical Researches* (Vol. 2, pp. 480, etc.; 601, etc.; 648, 661), it seems to me that it is as arduous an enterprise as it is useless, to attempt to establish the new opinion.

5th. The history of the expedition of Chedolaomar and his associates, which we have in ch. 14: 1—12, establishes the same fact; because the kings came from the north in quest of the five kings of these cities, who had rebelled against him. As they came from the north, they would pass very near the cities if they were to the north of the sea. It is inconceivable, therefore, how, in that case, they should pass on 50 or 60 miles farther to the south, on the eastern side of the sea, and then doubling to the south of it, go up on the west side as far as Engedi, and descend 1,500 feet to the sea itself, by the terrible defile of Hazazon-tamar, or Engedi, in order to find themselves there *25 or 30 miles to the south* of the kings and the cities they came to subdue! The supposition is simply impossible. The public and ordinary road, then as now, crossed the Jordan on the north of the sea, in the vicinity of what was, at a later date, Jericho. *There* is where they ought to have sought them, if they were to the north of the sea. But it is very natural, in the supposition that the cities

and the Vale of Siddim were at the southern part of the sea, that they should go around on the south of the sea, reducing to subjection the tribes or peoples that might lend aid to those in insurrection, in order to fall suddenly upon them by the difficult defile of Engedi, which then had, as it now has, easy communication with the south and southeast of the sea. It is unnecessary to say that the catastrophe of Sodom and the other Cities of the Plain must have produced great and disastrous changes in the topography of that region; comparable before that with the garden of Eden, but now a frightful ruin.

Of course Lot could not see all this stretch of river and sea from the top of the mountain range to the east of Bethel (comp. *vr.* 3 with ch. 12: 8); but Dr. Edward Robinson, the most careful and laborious of investigators, and whose work is still considered a first authority, says: "It seems to be a necessary conclusion that the Dead Sea anciently covered a less extent of surface than at present. The cities which were destroyed must have been situated on the south of the lake as it then existed." "The fertile Plain, therefore, which Lot chose for himself, where Sodom was situated, and which was well watered, like the land of Egypt, lay also south of the lake, 'as thou comest unto Zoar.' Even to the present day, more living streams flow into the Ghor at the south end of the sea, from wadys of the eastern mountains, than are to be found so near together in all Palestine; and the tract, although mostly desert, is still better watered, through these streams, and by the many fountains, than any other district throughout the whole country." *Biblical Researches*. Vol. 2, pp. 602, 603.]

13: 14—18. AFTER THE SEPARATION OF LOT FROM ABRAM, GOD REPEATS WITH AMPLIFICATIONS THE PROMISE ALREADY GIVEN TO HIS SERVANT. (1917 B. C.)

14 And Jehovah said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward:

15 for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

16 And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then may thy seed also be numbered.

17 Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it: for unto thee will I give it.

18 And Abram moved his tent, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built there an altar unto Jehovah.

As if by way of recompense for his noble unselfishness, and to give him a signal manifestation of the divine approval, scarcely had Lot separated from his company and society, when Jehovah

anew repeated to Abram the promise already given, and with notable additions. From the top of the same elevated range where Lot allowed himself to be drawn away after worldly good, Jehovah told Abram to lift up his eyes towards the four cardinal points, and said to him: "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever." He promised him also that his seed should be numerous, or better said, that it *should be innumerable*, as the sand of the sea; and bade him, as the lord of all, to walk through the length of it and the breadth of it, regarding it as his own, which his God had given him with irrevocable titles.

The form and particularity and the constant repetition of this donation of that land to Abraham and to his seed "forever and ever" (*Heb.* "from eternity to eternity," and so rendered in Isaac Leeser's Jewish Version) as Jeremiah twice repeats it, in chs. 7: 7 and 25: 5, give us good reason to believe that the children of Abraham, so long dispossessed of the land which is their own by special donation of Him who is Maker and Lord of all, shall some day return into their own possession, in spite of the greatest opposition which their enemies, and their false friends may interpose. "If any of thine outcasts be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will Jehovah thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee; and Jehovah thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers." Deut. 30: 4, 5.

What possible fulfilment this promise may have yonder, in the "New Heavens and the New Earth," in relation to the Jews, as one of "*the nations*" of the redeemed and saved, when "the leaves of the tree of life shall be for the healing of the nations" (Rev. 21: 24; 22: 2), we shall see when the time arrives and "the day of redemption" dawns; which the Lord, according to his promise, "will hasten in his time," and not ours. Isa. 60: 22. But there are many very clear and express promises of the restoration of Israel;—a restoration which is to be forever (Rom. 11: 23—29; Luke 21: 24; Hos. 3: 4, 5; Lev. 26: 40—45; Jer. 7: 7; 31: 35—40); and which the Lord doubtless will fulfil in his own time and way.

The Bible ideal of that "*eternal salvation*," of which the risen Christ "has become the Author, to all them that obey him" (Heb. 5: 9),—the "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," "at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1: 5—7), is unquestionably that of RENEWED SOULS, reunited with RENEWED BODIES, and dwelling in a RENEWED WORLD. See Greek of Heb.



2: 5,—“*the inhabited earth, the one that is to be*”; of which Paul says (for I make no doubt that he was the author of this Epistle) that Christians *were always speaking*;—he himself had made no previous reference to the subject; and Peter says that he and his fellow believers were “*looking for it, according to His promise.*” 2 Pet. 3: 13. And Paul says again, for it was often on his lips, that he also “*waited for it*” with vehement desire, and the whole groaning creation (cursed for man’s sin) as well. Rom. 8: 22, 23. There is therefore at least a possibility that, in a sense we cannot now clearly comprehend, Abraham may yet dwell at home in the land in which he lived and died “*a stranger.*”\* Stephen says that God promised “*that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.*” Acts 7: 5.

We do not know how many journeys Abram would make in viewing this his God-given land; but he continued to move his encampment (*Heb.* his tent = his tents), until he came and dwelt in the oak grove of Mamre (who, together with his two brothers Eschol and Aner, were allies of Abraham, ch. 14: 13—24), near Hebron; a favorite place of residence for the patriarch; and as always, “*he builded there an altar to Jehovah.*” Oh magnanimous and faithful man!

#### CHAPTER XIV.

VRS. 1—12. THE COALITION OF THE KINGS. LOT IS TAKEN CAPTIVE.  
(1903 B. C.)

1 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim.\*

2 that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar).

3 All these joined together in the vale of Siddim (the same is the Salt Sea).

\*Or, Nations.

\*Calvin closes his comment on Matt. 5:5 with the statement that “*at the resurrection the meek will be put into everlasting inheritance of the earth.*” In his *Institutes*, he cites “*the example of Jacob, who to testify to his posterity that the hope of the promised land did not forsake his heart even in death, commands his bones to be reconveyed thither.*” Book III, Ch. 25, Sec. 8. And in this chapter, as well as in the ninth of this Book, he teaches with every possible form of reiteration, that “*God will restore the world, now fallen, into perfection.*” Luther abounds in the same representation of Christ’s coming kingdom of righteousness and life eternal. John Knox likewise, and Samuel Rutherford. See also Richrd Baxter’s *Saint’s Everlasting Rest*, Ch. 3, on the *Preparatives* for the Saints’ Promised Rest, and Chalmer’s famous sermon on *The New Heavens and the New Earth.*—Tr.

4 Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

5 And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, and the Zuzim in Ham, and the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim,

6 and the Horites in their mount Seir. unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness.

7 And they returned, and came to En-mishpat (the same is Kadesh), and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazazon-tamar.

8 And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar); and they set the battle in array against them in the vale of Siddim;

9 against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings against the five.

10 Now the vale of Siddim was full of slime pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell there, and they that remained fled to the mountain.

11 And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.

12 And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

In former times infidels laughed at such a coalition of Oriental kings, and their invasion of lands a thousand or twelve hundred miles distant from their own. But in our day the monuments of Assyria and Babylon (as also those of Egypt), with their inscriptions and paintings, come to accredit in the most surprising manner the Bible history. Those peoples of the Tigris and Euphrates, faithful to the traditions of Nimrod, the first founder of empires, extended their conquests as far as the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea. But it was not Amraphel the king of Shinar, or Babylon, who led this expedition, but rather Chedorlaomer king of Elam, the ancient Persia. And this is in surprising agreement with the ancient inscriptions of Assyria, and those found in El Mugheir (=Ur of the Chaldees, the ancient city of Abram and his father Terah), which frequently speak of a powerful line of kings of Elam, one of whom extended his empire from the south of Chaldea to the Mediterranean Sea (whose name, Kurdur-mabuk, resembles not a little this of Genesis): his empire extended 500 miles from north to south and more than 1,000 miles from east to west. *Geike's Hours with the Bible*. Vol. 1, pp. 286, 287.

The city of Nimrod apparently suffered a terrible blow at the epoch of the confusion of tongues, so that they not only desisted from their enterprise of the tower, but, as is said in Gen. 11: 8, "they ceased to build the city" as well; which for a long time remained a place of secondary importance. It is therefore a remarkable coincidence, which confirms in a wonderful way the

veracity and minute accuracy of the Biblical history, that Moses should represent the king of Elam as he who commanded in this campaign, and that the other kings (including the king of Shinar, or Babylon), should be represented as associates, or vassals, who united with him to recover the dominion which fourteen years before he had established in the land of Canaan.

On account of the impassable character of the desert of Arabia, or Syria, which lies interposed between Babylon and Canaan, they had to make a long detour of more than a thousand miles, going first N. W., to the fords of the Euphrates, and then S. W., subduing by the way Hamath and Damascus; and then, passing down to the east of the Jordan and the Salt Sea, they went around the latter to the south, subduing in their route the Rephaim, the Zuzim, the Emim—reputed to be giants (Deut. 2: 10, 11)—and the Horites, in what was afterwards the mountain country of Seir, or Edom, to the south of the Salt Sea, until they arrived at El Paran (where the Israelites, coming up out of Egypt, stopped a long while, and from whence they sent the explorers to reconnoitre the land, Num. 10: 12, 16; 13: 3); desolating what was afterwards the country of the Amalakites, and next subduing the Amorites who dwelt in the hill country to the south of Hebron; and then penetrating through the rocky defile of Hazontamar to Engedi (2 Chron. 20: 2); they gave battle “in the Vale of Siddim (which is the Salt Sea),” where the five kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim and Zoar had combined their forces for defence against the common enemy. We are informed, in passing, that the Vale of Siddim was “full of slime pits,” or pits of bitumen; a circumstance which is of great interest to us when we come to consider the catastrophe of Sodom; but we do not see that it has anything to do with this history, unless it give us to understand that these pits of bitumen had some connection with the defeat of the king of Sodom and his allies, owing perhaps, to this peculiarity of the field of battle. The five kings “fell there” (which probably means that they *died* there), and the remnants of their army took refuge in the mountains; which to the east and west inclose the sea in all its length.

The four explanatory parentheses which we have in this paragraph, and one more which occurs in vr. 17, may indicate that this chapter was an ancient document, already so old in the days of Moses that the names of several of the places mentioned called for explanations. The “Vale of Siddim” in the days of Moses had been converted into the “Salt Sea”; “Bela” was then called “Zoar”; “En-mishpat” was in the days of Moses “Kadesh,” well known by that name when the children of Israel came up

out of Egypt. Num. 13: 26; 20: 1, 14, 16, 22. It seems therefore probable that Moses did not write the antiquated form, and then add by way of explanation the name universally known in his day. But the parenthesis of vr. 17 is different from the others, and marks the interposition of a hand much later than the days of Moses: the "Vale of Shaveh (which is the King's Vale)." It was there, 900 years later, that the unhappy Absalom erected a pillar to his own memory, saying: "I have no son to preserve the memory of my name." 2 Sam. 18: 18. It is very important that the reader should bear in mind that though Moses was undoubtedly the author of the books of the Bible, which bear his name, to which fact Jesus himself gives his solemn attestation (John 5: 45, 47), nevertheless his books, like some other books of the Bible, bear unmistakable indications of explanations and additions made many ages after the death of the author; as we shall have occasion to note farther on, just as in this case.

Of the allied kings associated with Chedorlaomer, there are two, Arioch king of Ellasar, and Tidal king of Nations (or of Goyim) of whom, or rather, of whose peoples, we can give no account. Ellasar is supposed by some to be the same as Sarsa in lower Babylon, called now Senkereh. "King of nations" is a title which we meet with in the list of the thirty-one kings of Canaan subdued by Joshua; Josh. 12: 23, with a probable allusion to the mixture of races, or nations, from whom "Galilee of the Nations" took name. Isa. 9: 1; Matt. 4: 15, 16. It is possible that Tidal was one of these kings who had been subdued by Chedorlaomer fourteen years before, who had remained faithful to him when the five kings of the Cities of the Plain rebelled, and that, in passing by, the king of Elam brought him with his other vassals to the war. Others understand that "Goim," or Goyim (= nations) was some people of the Orient, whose king Chedorlaomer brought with him.

14: 13—16. ABRAM GOES OUT TO WAR; DEFEATS THE FOUR KINGS; LIBERATES LOT AND THE OTHER CAPTIVES; AND RECOVERS ALL THE PREY. (1913 B. C.)

13 And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew: now he dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner; and these were confederate with Abram.

14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued as far as Dan.

15 And he divided himself against them by night, he and his servants, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobab, which is on the left hand\* of Damascus.

\*Or, north.

16 And he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

Some one who escaped carried to the encampment of Abram intelligence of the war, and of the captivity of Lot. Abram, with that lofty spirit of decision and prompt action which characterized him, had hardly received the sad tidings of his nephew when he armed and drew forth from among his servants, skilled in the use of arms (for the defence of his encampment) 318 soldiers, all young men (vr. 24), and went out to war. He took with him three Amorite princes, allies of his, and all brothers, Vr. 24. It is interesting to notice how this "friend of God," without compromising in any degree his character and conscience, held relations of friendship with these pagans, among whom he lived; and with these three brothers, Mamre, Aner and Eshcol he had an offensive and defensive treaty. With this force he followed after the invading army, which went homewards, flushed with victory, conscious of security and loaded with the immense booty they had captured; and overtaking them in the north of Canaan, at the place that was afterwards called Dan, near to the waters of Merom, he divided his forces, and falling upon them by night, defeated them completely, and pursued them with the sword as far as Hobah, to the north of Damascus. Before the discovery of the mariner's compass, the east—the point where the sun rises—was to them what the north is to us; so that "the left of Damascus" means to say *the north*. And thus, this man of peace, who made war to liberate his nephew and not for any other purpose, brought back everything, the goods, the women, and the people.

14: 17—24. ABRAM, MELCHIZEDEK AND THE NEW KING OF SODOM.  
(1913 B. C.)

17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, at the vale of Shaveh (the same is the King's Vale).

18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was priest of God Most High.

19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth:

20 and blessed be God Most High, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him a tenth of all.

21 And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand unto Jehovah, God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth,

23 that I will not take a thread nor a shoe-latchet nor ought that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:

24 save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men that went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

Verse 10 informs us that "the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and the rest fled to the mountains," which on the east side rise from 2,500 to 3,000 feet above the waters of the sea; the mountains of the west being less elevated. It is almost a certain inference that "fell there" means that they died there; and as the invaders sacked, but did not burn the cities, by the time of Abram's return the scattered people would have begun to reorganize once more. The new king of Sodom, therefore, went forth to receive Abram, as far as the Vale of Shaveh, which was afterwards called the King's Vale (2 Sam. 18: 18, near to Jerusalem, where Melchizedek was king), and he accorded to him the honors corresponding to his great victory, and the acknowledgments which were his due. He would have been well satisfied with the restitution of the captives, among whom probably were to be reckoned some of his own family; and so he proposed to Abram that he should return the persons and keep for himself the goods. But this great man, whose detractors would attribute to him the baseness of making merchandise of the honor of his wife in Egypt, to increase his goods, manifests here a nobility of spirit to which they are strangers; and though he had the right, as conqueror, to retain all that immense booty, and the liberated persons as well, he renounces this right, and insists on returning everything to its owners, nor permits that the king of Sodom, or anybody else, should say: "*I made Abram rich!*"—excepting only the part which the young men, his soldiers, had eaten, and the portion which fell to his allies, Aner, Eshcol and Mamre.

But another more illustrious and worthy person than the king of Sodom went forth to receive Abram, when so near to his city, viz., Melchizedek, king of Salem, who was also "priest of God Most High;" and he brought forth bread and wine to refresh the weary conquerors. Contrary to our use, "bread and wine" represents a collation, or slight repast. See Ruth 2: 14; Judges 19: 19; Neh. 5: 15. He also blessed Abram—the proper office of a priest; and Abram, in acknowledgment of his official superiority (Heb. 7: 7), and as a sign of his gratitude to God Most High, of whom the other was a priest, gave him the tenth of all the spoils. Heb. 7: 1, 4.

Who then was this mysterious person, who thus suddenly presents himself as a priest-king, or a king-priest (a priest not of idols, but of God Most High), at a time when we supposed that the knowledge of the true God had perished out of the earth? The question is of itself difficult enough; for there is a moral certainty that Salem (or Jerusalem, Ps. 76: 2), neither

before nor after Abram's day, nor till the reign of David, was a city of righteousness, nor were its people the servants of the true God. But what comes to increase the difficulty is what is said about him in other parts of Scripture, and particularly in Ps. 110: 4, and Heb. 7: 1—10; in the first of which king David (as Jesus himself gives testimony in Matt. 22: 43—45; Mark 12: 35—37; Luke 20: 41—44), says prophetically, to him who was to be at once his Son and his Lord: "Jehovah hath sworn and will not repent [that is, will not change his purpose], Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110: 4); and in the other, Paul says that this pre-eminent type of Christ was acknowledged to be greater than Abraham, who received the promises, and greater than the priests and Levites of the Mosaic law, who paid tithes to Melchizedek in the person of their father Abraham. Who then was Melchizedek, and what was the order of his priesthood, according to which the Messiah was to be at once a priest and a king?

The common opinion of the Jews with regard to this mysterious person is that Melchizedek was no other than *Shem*, the son of Noah, who, according to the common chronology, was the contemporary of Abraham for 150 years. But this opinion of theirs is in open conflict with what the apostle says in Heb. 7: 3, "without father, without mother," etc.,—that is, none known to us. For this reason others suppose that it was Christ himself, who on more than one occasion appeared by way of anticipation in human form, before his incarnation. Gen. 18: 1, 2, 22; Josh. 5: 13—15. But this is equally in conflict with the argument of the apostle, and with the declaration of the Psalmist, and the oath of God; for it does not seem possible he means to say that Messiah,—the Priest-King, was constituted high priest according to the order of himself. It is therefore probable that the opinion of the Jewish historian Josephus is correct, to wit, that Melchizedek was a pious king of Salem—which later was called Jerusalem—one of the very few who (like Job, who was both a priest and a prince, Job 1: 5, 8 and 29: 25) remained in that day with the knowledge and worship of the true God; whose superiority, as king, Abram readily confessed, and whose true priesthood he cheerfully recognized. The pretension of the Roman Catholic priests to base an argument for the payment of tithes to them, upon the example of Abram in giving to this priest of God Most High the tenth part of the spoils taken in war, does not deserve an examination, *as the revenue system of Jesus Christ and the usage of the apostolic Church was that of voluntary contributions* (as Cavalario expressly teaches in his Canon Law Part II. ch.

34); this also being the rule which Paul lays down in 2 Cor. 9: 7: "Let every one give according as he hath purposed in his heart, not grudgingly nor of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." Had it not been for the tithes and other enforced contributions of the Romish church, it would never have been able to enslave the nations, and corrupt so horribly as it has done the religion of Christ.

That other pretension of theirs, that Melchizedek, as a pre-eminent type of Jesus Christ, brought forth bread and wine, not to refresh the wearied soldiers of Abram, but *to offer a sacrifice*, in prefiguration of the so-called "sacrifice of the Mass" (although they corrupt the text in order to maintain it), merits still less consideration. Let them go and learn from the mouth of Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chs. 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, that *Christ is the only Priest of his people*; that his priesthood is intransmissible; and that the Sacrifice of Calvary, accomplished once only and forever, can neither be repeated nor continued; and let them dismiss from their minds the impious pretension of *repeating or continuing that sacrifice* 100,000 times every day, upon the altars of their own invention, in all parts of papal Christendom.

## CHAPTER XV.

VRS. 1—6. GOD RENEWS AND CONFIRMS HIS PROMISE TO ABRAM.  
(1911 B. C.)

1 After these things the word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, *and thy exceeding great reward.*

2 And Abram said, O Lord Jehovah, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and he that shall be possessor of my house is Eliezer\* of Damascus?

3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed; and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

4 And, behold, the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, This man shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6 And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness.

[\*A. V. and M. S. V., this Eliezer.]

"After these things," means after this war and its results, narrated in the preceding chapter. After such a heroic feat of arms, Abram himself would be filled with wonder at his daring, and his reckless valor; and the more he reflected upon it, the more it would be likely to disturb his tranquillity of spirit, to consider



the possible consequences of it; and for this reason he had the tranquillizing vision with which he was favored by his God. "The word of the Lord came to Abram," is in Hebrew "*there was a word (or thing) from Jehovah to Abram, saying*"; which is the usual form of saying that *Abram received a divine communication, a supernatural revelation, from Jehovah*; as Gesenius explains it in his Hebrew Lexicon. [M. S. V.—Abraham had in vision a revelation from Jehovah, which said, etc.] This revelation was made in vision; the first perhaps which Abram received in this form. It is interesting and important to notice in this history not only the development and expansion of the first and fundamental promise of human redemption, but also the distinct *progression* we can observe in the *forms* of that revelation, until at length God in human flesh came into the world "to bear witness unto the truth." John 18: 37. To this march or progression in the divine revelation the apostle refers in Heb. 1: 1, 2: "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." I follow the A. V. here, the R. V. being almost unintelligible. The Mod. Span. Version reads: "God having spoken in former times unto the fathers, on many different occasions, and in many different ways, by the prophets, hath in these, the last days, spoken unto us by his Son." We shall note in these STUDIES some of these "many different occasions" and "many different ways."

It has always been the usage of God to avail himself of the critical junctures in the history of his people, to give them the most notable revelations of his will and of his love. In this case Abram had cause enough to believe that the powerful king of Elam would not abandon the enterprise which had been frustrated by a successful night attack on the part of Abram and his associates, but on the contrary would return in another campaign to make them pay dearly for their rash act, into which Abraham had been precipitated by his love for his nephew; and without doubt also by a special divine impulse. At such a juncture, therefore, this new revelation would serve to quiet his apprehensions and take away every cause of alarm: "*Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward!*" Precious promise! God not only will defend and reward his people, but he will himself be their shield and reward! And it is a remarkable fact, confirmed by the monuments already cited, that, for some cause, Chedorlaomer and his powerful vassals, or allies, did not any more return to subdue his revolted provinces.

The reply of Abram manifests that he was not so much con-

cerned about the invaders, as about his own unhappy condition; a man rich and great, who had enough and to spare, *except a son and an heir*: "Oh Lord Jehovah, what wilt thou give me" (or what canst thou give me), "seeing that I go childless, and he that shall be possessor of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?" (the only suggestion we have that Abram had ever been in Damascus);—"this Eliezer of Damascus" whom he seems to mention almost with bitterness.\*

There is no doubt that slavery existed in the family of Abram, as everywhere else in that day, and Abram had servants bought with his money, in addition to those born in his house (ch. 17: 13, 27); but we cannot fail to see that it was a form of slavery incomparably more benign than that which existed among the Greeks and Romans, and than that of the negro races which we have known in modern times, when we see Samuel seat the servant of Saul at the table beside his master (1 Sam. 9: 2), and when we hear Abram speak of his servant as his presumptive heir. Such a thing was not without example in ancient times. In 1 Chron. 2: 34, 35, we read of one "Sheshan who had no sons, but daughters. And Sheshan had a servant (or slave), an Egyptian, whose name was Jarha. And Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha to wife";—a case which well matches this, and comes in to explain the thought of Abraham.

Up to that time God had promised to give him that land,—to him and to his seed, and that his seed should be numerous as the dust of the earth; but *how* and *when* he had not said. It is certain that till then—as vr. 4 shows—he had not promised him a true and proper son of his own (Eliezer would have been his son by adoption); and no doubt the mind of Abram was greatly exercised upon this point, as the tone almost of upbraiding, with which he replies, seems to indicate. But again he had a revelation from Jehovah, which cleared up completely the case, giving him to understand that not his servant Eliezer, but a son of his own should be his heir. Still the problem of the *how* and the *when* remained without resolution, even when he brought him forth and told him to count the stars of heaven, if he was able, and said to him: "*So shall thy seed be!*" It was and is manifestly the purpose and will of God that his people should believe his promises and count upon their entire fulfilment, without entering upon inquiries as to the *how* and the *when*. Thus it was with Abram, according to verse 6: "And he be-

\*I can find no explanation of the fact that Abraham speaks of "this Damascene Eliezer;" as "one born in my house;" or, on the other hand, why "a home-born slave" should be called a "Damascene."—Tr.

lieved in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness.”

This phrase which plays so notable a part in Paul's argument on justification by faith, aside from legal works, in Rom. ch. 4: and Gal. 3: 6, and which James likewise repeats in James 2: 23, is well deserving of particular attention on our part. Paul cites the passage according to the Greek translation of the LXX: “Abraham *believed God*,” which ought not to invalidate at all the Hebrew form “believed *in Jehovah*,” nor does it indicate that Paul preferred the former. He cited the passage as he found it in the Greek Bible of the Hellenists, or Greek-speaking Jews, as that expressed the sense sufficiently well to serve his purpose. We do the same thing, even when we know that the translation is not entirely correct. Divine inspiration did not oblige the apostle to correct the defects of the Version in common use, any more than honesty requires it of us. It would have been a thing as unseemly in him to go about correcting the Greek text, whenever he cited it, as is the same insufferable habit with certain preachers in our day. Abram, then, *believed in Jehovah*, and not merely believed him in regard to the promise made. The Hebrew says literally “Abram *stayed himself on Jehovah*”; and this expresses the true difference between the mere assent of the understanding, and a true and living faith: *he received the promise, and stayed himself on Jehovah* (or leaned on him) for its fulfilment; and as this pleases God more than all our own best works (John 6: 28, 29), Jehovah looked upon it, as he always looks upon it, with supreme pleasure and satisfaction, and “he counted it to him for righteousness,”—the best righteousness we can have, and that which honors and glorifies God more than all the so-called “works of righteousness which we have done” (Tit. 3: 5), and without which the best works of men cannot please God; for “without faith it is impossible to please him,” Heb. 11: 6.

The example of Abram (especially as Paul by divine inspiration explains it in the fourth chapter of Romans), leaves little to desire in point of clearness, with regard to the use of this phrase. Abram was a sinner; he had been an idolater; in Egypt he had distrusted the divine protection to the point of denying his own wife, and exposed her to the greatest dangers; and in order to commit this unseemly action he had grievously perverted the truth, and had entangled his own wife in the same falsehood (like another Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5: 2—9), in saying that they were brother and sister, rather than husband and wife. What *righteousness*, then, could a sinful man like him have towards God? None; that is evident. But this con-

verted pagan, this sinful man, who through human weakness lied, and made his wife to take part in his falsehood; who repeated it still another time, with even less excuse, and confessed to Abimelech, king of Gerar, that for 20 or 25 years the two had between them a standing agreement to persist in the same falsehood, whenever it seemed necessary for his safety (ch. 20: 2—12); how could *he* be reputed as righteous with God? and where shall we find virtuous actions sufficient to make this man (stained with such imperfections) “the friend of God?” James explains the case perfectly where he says: “and the Scripture was fulfilled which saith: And Abram believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God.” James 2: 23. Abram believed Jehovah, and he believed in Jehovah—the rarest virtue that is found among men; *this* Abram had in a pre-eminent degree, and this was his chief title to distinction. The same thing happens with all the true children of Abraham—sinners all, who are distinguished from other men not so much by the pre-eminence of their virtues and good works (although in general they have this distinction also), but because, living in the midst of a world of them that “know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,” they believe God, and believe in God—not any kind of God, but *him who reveals himself to us in his word*; and their works accredit the sincerity of their faith. It was for this, and not for his magnificent virtues and his magnanimity and greatness of spirit,—*it was for this, that Abraham was regarded and treated as righteous*; and for this also shall be *justified* (THAT IS TO SAY, REGARDED AND TREATED AS RIGHTEOUS), although confessed sinners, “all those who walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham”; those who believe God and believe in God; not as he is according to their own caprice and notion, nor that of others, nor according as is taught in their church, or synagogue, or society, or country, but according as he has revealed himself to us by means of his prophets and apostles, and by the mouth of his own Son, in his holy word.

Before leaving this paragraph, two more things claim our attention:

1st. The words “So (like the stars) shall thy seed be” (vr. 5), and its equivalent, many times repeated, “innumerable as the sand which is upon the sea shore.” Astronomers tell us that there are only about 3,000 stars visible to the naked eye; but with the aid of the most powerful telescopes, 80,000,000; while beyond these in the depths of infinite space are to be seen *splotches* or *cloudlets* of light, which indicate perhaps systems

of thousands, or millions, of stars, which cannot be individualized on account of their inconceivable distance. Both phrases, then, represent a number which almost touches upon the infinite. "*So shall thy seed be!*" But the Jews in our day, scattered through all the nations, and kept for some great providential end, do not exceed, at the utmost, and by the largest estimates, eight or ten millions; and this, some 4,000 years after that promise was made! Shall we say then that the promise of God has failed? On the contrary, how evident it is *that this promise does not refer to the Jews*, the natural descendants of Abraham, as such!

Paul, treating of this subject in Rom. 4: 9—32, under the guidance of the Spirit of inspiration, joins in one all the promises made to Abraham, and fixes attention on the form of them given in ch. 17: 5, when God changed his name from Abram into Abraham: "A father of many nations have I made thee"; and he treats the two promises, the temporal and the spiritual, as identical: "Who against hope, believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which had been told him: So (like the stars) shall thy seed be!" which must undoubtedly mean "*all the families of the earth*" of ch. 12: 3, who were to be blessed in Abraham. These nations we can now see are not Jews, nor Englishmen, nor Spaniards, nor Germans, nor Russians, nor Chinese, nor Japanese, of this present world; but rather those too much forgotten *nations of the redeemed*, of whom the last two chapters of the Revelation, with its pictures of redemption completed, gives us particular information, in the "New Heavens and New Earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." The passage plainly treats of the Christian redemption, and seems to fix its eye on that coming and eternal Age of righteousness and life eternal, with its *nations of redeemed men*, who shall be the fruit of the travail of our Redeemer's soul (Isa. 53: 11),—"the joy which was set before him," in consideration of which "he endured the cross and despised the shame," and now awaits its entire fulfilment, "seated at the right hand of God." Heb 12: 2; 10: 12, 13.

2nd. It is a very common opinion (as I have already said, and now repeat it) among evangelical persons that Abraham, looking down the vista of coming ages, saw in distant view Christ hanging upon the cross, and by faith in this Redeemer, yet to come, was justified and saved. But this is undoubtedly an error. Paul treats at length of *the faith of Abraham which was counted to him for righteousness*, and in which Abraham was justified and saved, and he says not a word about any such thing. The

common idea that Abraham and the ancient saints believed in a suffering Saviour who was to come, as we believe in such a Saviour, who has already come, is an empty imagination of which it would be well to rid our minds. In case it were so, John the Baptist, and the apostles, with all God's pious servants in our Lord's day, *would have expected that Christ "ought to suffer and enter (thus) into his glory,"* instead of understanding nothing at all about it, in spite of all the admonitions of the divine Master, until after it was all accomplished, and he was risen from among the dead. Luke 18: 33, 34; 24: 25, 26, 45, 46. This, of itself, is enough to refute that ill-founded notion. Abraham and all the saints of the old times *believed in Jehovah as their Redeemer,* and believed all that he revealed to them; and Paul, treating expressly of this subject, teaches us, not that Abraham was justified and his faith was counted to him for righteousness, in reference to the promise of a Christ sacrificed and risen, but in reference to *the promise that he should be the father of a multitude of nations,* and that his seed should be as the stars of heaven for multitude, and as the dust of the earth: and Abraham, making no account of the innumerable natural difficulties that opposed its fulfilment, but "looking to the promise of God, wavered not through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform; *and therefore it was counted to him for righteousness.*" Rom. 4: 19—22. It is evident that THE PROMISE WAS THAT OF THE CHRISTIAN REDEMPTION; but it is no less evident that the faith of Abraham was occupied with the *results* of it rather than with the *means*. We Christians have clearly set before us, if we will see it, both the *results* and the *means*; and for this reason the apostle adds that "it shall be counted to us also, if we believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from among the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." Rom. 4: 23—25.

15: 7—21. GOD RATIFIES THE PROMISES MADE, WITH A SOLEMN COVENANT. (1911 B. C.)

7 And he said unto him, I am Jehovah that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

8 And he said, O Lord Jehovah, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

9 And he said unto him, Take me a heifer three years old, and a she-goat three years old, and a ram three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.

10 And he took him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each half over against the other: but the birds divided he not.

11 And the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.

12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him.

13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

14 and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

15 But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

16 And in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full.

17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch that passed between these pieces.

18 In that day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

19 the Kenite, and the Kenizzite, and the Kadmonite,

20 and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Rephaim,

21 and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Girgashite, and the Jebusite.

The appearance of doubt or vacillation which Abram manifests in vr. 8, did not turn upon the promise that he should have a son of his own, nor of the redemption which by his means was to come to all the families of the earth. Paul considers the act of faith related in vr. 6, *as a single act*, continuing in full exercise from that point until Abraham was a hundred years of age, a period of seventeen or eighteen years, and down to the birth of Isaac. Rom. 4: 19; Gen. 17: 1—17. *The vacillation or doubt had to do with the possession of that land;—in what form, or by what means*, he, already an old man of 85 years, who was still without a son, was to enter into possession of it, occupied then by other peoples and different races. He asked more information on a subject which interested him so deeply; so that his question does not contradict the argument of Paul in Rom. 4: 19—22, nor his declaration that Abraham did not waver through unbelief with regard to the promise of God. If *we find difficulty in telling in what sense and how far* Abraham himself was, or is, to possess that land, how much more difficult for him? The words “possess” and “inherit” are the same thing in Hebrew and in New Testament Greek; and the former in its ordinary sense, even where translated “inherit”: “to inherit eternal life” is to *possess it*: and that is the appropriate sense here. Abraham could well see that the time was remote, and asking for more information with regard to *the possession of that land*, he asked also some sign and formal security, not so much for himself, as to give assurance to his posterity, which before its fulfilment might well lose faith in the promise, on account of its long delay,—more than 400 years, as God proceeds to inform him, and many of

them years of great hardship and grievous bondage; as in fact happened in the days of Moses, when the children of Israel "hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage." Ex. 6: 9.

Jehovah deigned to grant him, in part, the information and the formal security which he asked. It seems that it was an ordinary custom among ancient nations, when they celebrated covenants of peculiar solemnity, to observe the same form; viz., that of dividing in twain animals slain for sacrifice, and the contracting parties passing between the separated pieces. It is probable that Abraham was previously acquainted with this form of covenanting; but it was Jehovah who made the preliminary arrangements, or bade Abram make them; and Abram undoubtedly passed many times between the severed pieces, while he kept guard over them, until night came on; but this signifies little, as it was not he, but God, who covenanted. But when the sun was about to set, a deep sleep fell upon Abram and a horror of great darkness; and while he was in that state, Jehovah gave him information as to the future of his race, of their going down into Egypt, of the cruel oppression they would there suffer, of their coming up from thence with great riches, and of the epoch in which this should happen—"in the fourth generation"—or after four hundred years. Gesenius in his Hebrew Lexicon, under the word *Dor*, says: "The Hebrews, as we do, seem commonly to have reckoned the duration of a generation at from thirty to forty years, comp. Job. 42: 16; but *in the times of the patriarchs it was reckoned at a hundred years*; see Gen. 15: 16, comp. vr. 13 and Ex. 12: 40. So among the Romans the word *seculum* originally signified *age*, or *generation* of men, and was later transferred to denote *a century*." "Dor" is the word used in vr. 16, and in the Mod. Span. Version it is translated "*century*," ("in the fourth century they shall come hither again"); the object of a translation being to put the mind of the reader in correct and satisfactory touch with the mind of the writer, rather than to give him a problem of difficult interpretation. In ch. 50: 23 we read that "Joseph saw Ephraim's children of *the third generation*." As therefore Joseph was married when 30 years old and died when 110, (an interval of 80 years), these four generations of his descendants cannot have exceeded 20 years each; and this confusion of "generation" and "generation," though different words in the original (the one signifying a century, and the other—in this case—20 years), has led to not a little confusion of thought in treating of the length of the sojourn of Israel in Egypt. See *Note 21*.



Abram awoke from his sleep, to observe that when the sun was set and it was now dark, behold! there was seen a smoking furnace and a flaming torch (emblem of the divine presence, repeated in the bush that burned with fire and was not consumed, Ex. 3: 2, and in the pillar of fire and of cloud, Ex. 13: 21), which passed between the pieces of the divided animals. Vr. 17. So, with this visible sign, God covenanted that day with Abram, giving to his seed or descendants that land, from the river or torrent of Egypt (not the river Nile), unto the river Euphrates; limits which the kingdom in fact reached in the times of David and Solomon. This covenant, thus formally celebrated with Abram, although it made special allusion to the possession of that land, toward which Abram's thought was then directed, embraced undoubtedly the promises formerly given, and afterwards repeated, of the human redemption. "The covenant made with Abraham" the Bible always treats as one and indivisible, embracing not only the natural descendants of Abraham, but Christ, and all the benefits and the beneficiaries of the New Covenant of grace and redemption. Paul cites expressly vrs. 5 and 6 of this chapter as setting forth that act of "faith which was counted to Abraham for righteousness," and this necessarily enters into the covenant then, for the first time, formally celebrated with him.

We ought not to pass without due attention those remarkable words of vr. 16, "for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." Four hundred additional years of grace God granted to that race of sinners (including under the name of Amorites, with whom Abram had most to do, the other tribes of Canaan), before sweeping them away with the besom of destruction. The same thing happens with sinners in general. And the long-suffering of God waits while they go on filling up the measure of their iniquity; but then, at last, the sword of divine justice falls. This thought ought to embitter the cup of their pleasures.

[NOTE 21.—*On the bondage and oppression of the people in Egypt, and on the time of their sojourn there.* There has been long dispute, and still is, as to whether the time which the Israelites passed in Egypt was 215 years, or the double of this, 430 years; a question which will be again discussed in the comment on Ex. 1: 7—12, and 12: 40, 41; but it interests us here also, in order to explain the "400 years" of the oppression and bondage (vr. 13), and the "fourth century," or "generation," in which the children of Abraham were to return to Canaan. Vr. 16.

To me it seems, after many years study of this point, that the dispute is founded not so much on any uncertainty as to what the Bible itself says on the subject (for the Bible always favors

the short term of 215 years, unless Ex. 12: 40 be an exception, the translation and sense of which is much disputed, and which we shall consider hereafter), as on the purpose of GAINING TIME, in the belief that the Biblical chronology does not concede time sufficient to put it in harmony with the newly discovered records of Egyptian history, and what is at present supposed to be the testimony of the monuments of Egypt;—the very same purpose that moved the translators of the Greek Version of the LXX (Egyptian Jews all of them) to *stretch out* the genealogies, as we have seen; in spite of which, however, they held fast to the short term of the Egyptian Sojourn. See *Note 12* on Biblical Chronology.

The text says “they shall afflict them four hundred years”—*that is to say, counting from the time that God spoke to him*; which puts vr. 13 in agreement with vr. 16, “in the fourth century (= in 400 years) they shall return hither”; because the two evidently refer to the same thing. In the Modern Spanish Version the word “until” is supplied in italics before the “400 years,” as being necessary to render the sense plain; because the oppression and bondage did not last even the half of the 400 years. We must deduct in the first place, the 71 years that Joseph governed in Egypt, after the arrival of his father and brethren. Then there must be deducted a long period of peace and prosperity which the people enjoyed after his death. Moses says that this lasted “until there arose a new king (or dynasty) in Egypt which knew not Joseph” (Ex. 1: 18); but he does not say when this was. Stephen however says, that “*when the time of the promise drew nigh* which God had sworn unto Abraham (that is, the ‘fourth century’ or the ‘400 years’ which we are now considering) the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, until there arose another king (or dynasty) over Egypt who knew not Joseph, . . . *at which season Moses was born,*” etc. Acts 7: 17—20. Moses was 80 years old when he brought the people out of Egypt, and the oppression and bondage began only a little while before he was born,\* at the time that a new dynasty came in to reign. If we grant twenty years for this, it will follow that the oppression and bondage commenced about 100 years before the exodus; so that the Modern Spanish Version is authorized in inserting the word “until,” in italics, before the “400 years,” to make it appear that these do not indicate the duration of the bondage and oppression,

\*Aaron was born three years before Moses (Ex. 7: 7), but it does not appear that he ran any risk of his life; which seems to prove that Pharaoh's inhuman edict, consigning to death all the male children thereafter born, had not yet been promulgated.

but *the date at which they were to end*, counting from a given point.\* So then the long term of 430 years proves to be incorrect all around. The 400 years cannot indicate, in general terms, the 430 years they say the people dwelt in Egypt; for they are expressly spoken with reference to the bondage of the people in Egypt, and not the time of their residence there; nor can they give the duration of that bondage, because it lasted only from 80 to 100 years; nor can they indicate the epoch of their liberation, because there is no given point from which to calculate them. Just the contrary happens with the short period of 215 years. Jehovah said to Abram that "in the fourth century (or 'generation'), they shall return hither; because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (vr. 16); from which it seems evident that he did not mean to say that the bondage would last 400 years, but *until 400 years, counting from that date*. The words of Moses and of Stephen manifest that *the new dynasty* (which according to the Egyptologists expelled the dynasty of the Shepherdkings, which favored the Israelites and other Asiatic peoples) *began the oppression*. And Stephen says *that was the time* in which Moses was born; so that the concession of 20 years of bondage and oppression before the birth of Moses seems to be amply sufficient.

The declaration of Stephen that "Moses was born *when the time of the promise was drawing nigh* which God had sworn to Abraham;" the express declaration of Paul that the promulgation of the Law on Sinai was 430 years after the covenant which God made with Abraham (Gal. 3: 17),—the same covenant which we are now studying; the fact that Moses who ought to have known the circumstances of his own birth, tells us distinctly that his father Amram was a grandson of Levi, the brother of Joseph, and that the name of his mother "was Jocabed, *a daughter of Levi who was born to Levi in Egypt*," (Num. 26: 57, 58, 59); and the fact that all the genealogies of Moses (Ex. 2: 1; 6: 16—27; Num. 26: 57—59; 1 Chron. 6: 1—3), and all the genealogies of the contemporaries of Moses, agree with the short term, but not with the long one, ought to be esteemed, I think, sufficient to settle the question.

The common allegation, which is urged on the other side, that the 70 persons who came into Egypt (ch. 46: 26, 27), could not in 215 years increase into the two or three millions of people who

\*The Revised Version of Acts 7: 6 *inserts a comma* before the "four hundred years," seemingly for the same purpose; and there is no reason why it is not inserted in Gen. 15: 13 also, except that this was done by a different company of Revisers.—Tr.

went out under Moses, has nothing to stand on; because not only Jacob and his sons and their families entered, but their servants and dependents also—the whole tribe or clan—who could not have been less than 2,000 persons and may have been 3,000 or 4,000; who might well increase to that number under the protecting hand of God; and we are informed at every step that the increase of the people in Egypt was prodigious, in spite of the oppression which they suffered. But if, on the contrary, the 430 years (eleven generations) be granted, which the advocates of the long term claim, the movement of population would be so extremely slow as to reduce to a meaningless exaggeration the repeated declarations of their enormous increase in Egypt. See also the comment on Ex. 1: 7—9. The disputed translation of Ex. 12: 40, we shall consider in its place.]

[TRANSLATOR'S NOTE 2.—On *Exodus* 12: 40. The Modern Spanish Version of this passage reads: "And the sojourning life of the children of Israel, who had dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years"—"the children of Israel" being understood, as the Version of the LXX understands it, and the English Version understands it, as meaning *the people of God*, and including Abraham and Isaac, as well as Jacob himself, who went down with his children and their families into Egypt (seventy souls, as we are told in ch. 46: 27), together with thousands of servants and dependents—not less than 2000, and probably more (see comments on ch. 46: 1—7)—circumcised Hebrews all of them, and forming an integral part of the coming Hebrew nation (ch. 17: 12, 13, 27); these as well as their offspring down to the times of Moses. To the same purpose is the A. V. of the passage: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years." The Revisers displaced this translation with the following: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, *which they sojourned in Egypt*, was 430 years." This is manifestly an incorrect rendering of the Hebrew; since "moshav" rendered *sojourning*, is never once so rendered in the 43 times it is found in the Hebrew Bible, except in this case; and the verb "yashav," translated *sojourned*, out of 1050 times it occurs in the Hebrew Bible is never so rendered except in this one case, where the A. V. renders it correctly "*dwelt*"; so that the alleged Hebrew idiom, "the sojourning which they sojourned" cannot stand—it was made for the occasion. The American Standard Revised Version (1901) seems to be so well satisfied of this, that it gives up the idea of translating it altogether, and paraphrases it thus: "Now the time that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt was 430 years;"—which the Hebrew text is careful not to say. The Modern Spanish Version, "the sojourn-

ing life of the children of Israel, who had dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years," is as good as any of them simply as a translation of the Hebrew words; and on reading my defense of it, the venerable Dr. William Henry Green, of Princeton Seminary, New Jersey, wrote me a few months before his lamented death, that *as a matter of translation, it could stand*; though he did not think it expressed the sense of the writer. However that may be, it has the merit of setting the difficult passage in harmony with Moses himself—or with Jehovah's words by his mouth—in ch. 15: 13, 16; with Paul in Gal. 3:17; with Stephen in Acts 7: 17, 20; with the genealogies of Moses and his contemporaries, repeatedly given in the Bible, which all favor the short term; and with Moses' own account of his personal history, which he gives several times over; see Ex. 2: 1, 2; 6: 16—29 and Num. 26: 59; a matter about which he might be presumed to know more than all the moderns put together. In a word, that rendering, "which may stand as a matter of translation," puts the passage in harmony with all parts of the Bible itself, and with the universal belief of Bible expositors in ancient and modern times, till a very recent date. It is only out of harmony with the supposed findings of the Egyptian monuments; in which all do not agree. In an article from the pen of Prof. A. H. Sayce, published a few years ago in *The Independent*, of New York City, he said that the readings of the Egyptian monuments were not any more decisively in favor of *the long term* than of *the short*.]

## CHAPTER XVI.

VRS. 1—6. HUMAN EXPEDIENTS TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE DIVINE PROMISES. HAGAR. (1910 B. C.)

1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bare him no children: and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, Jehovah hath restrained me from bearing; go in, I pray thee, unto my handmaid; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.\* And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

3 And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her handmaid, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to Abram her husband to be his wife.

4 And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

5 And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I gave my handmaid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: Jehovah judge between me and thee.

6 But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her that which is good in thine eyes. And Sarai dealt hardly with her, and she fled from her face.

\**Heb.* be builded by her.

After so explicit a promise that God would give him a son, Abram and Sarai naturally expected its prompt fulfilment. But as the faith of Abram was his distinctive trait and the most glorious and precious attribute of his character, and as it was for this (and not on account of his good works) that he was "justified" (= regarded and treated as righteous) before God, Jehovah was careful to refine and strengthen it by means of many trials. The promised son did not come. Ten years had already passed since God brought him to the land of Canaan to inherit, or possess, it (ch. 15: 7), and as we know, he was yet to wait fifteen more, before the promise was fulfilled that he should have a son to inherit it, in whose seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. But Sarai knew nothing of this, and Abram did not distantly suspect it. Sarai only knew that ten years had passed without any of God's many promises bringing her the happiness of being a mother; and believing it useless to wait any longer, or perhaps believing that she might help forward the cause, she adopted the most extraordinary expedient that ever found a place in the heart of a well married woman, and gave to her husband her Egyptian slave, Hagar, for a secondary wife; according to the use of the times. Ch. 22: 24. Until then, Abram had been a strict monogamist; but when Sarai formally made him such a proposal, he accepted it, not for lack of faith in God, but on account of the representations of his wife, that God perhaps waited for them to take the necessary steps for the fulfilment of what he had promised; and in fine, God had promised him a son, but not necessarily by Sarai, and the son of Hagar would certainly be Abram's own son. These human expedients to give effect to the divine promises continue still to be one of the most dangerous reefs on which Christian life is wrecked.

The reasons alleged by Sarai would appear to be well taken, in the view of a merely human prudence; but the result did not turn out according to her wishes; for the servant, when she found herself *enciente*, despised her mistress, and was guilty of the imprudence of manifesting it. Solomon says "that a handmaid, when she is heir to her mistress, is one of the three or four things for which the earth is troubled, and which it cannot bear." (Prov. 30: 21—23); and so Sarai found it, to the bitterness of her soul; although we cannot help suspecting that the mistress had as much part in this as the handmaid. Sarai, with the petulance that is natural to the woman who has always had her own way, threw the blame of her misfortune on her husband, and he, authorizing her to do as she would with her rival, the servant,

*ill-treated her*—the words mean all that—to such a degree that she fled from the encampment, and went away into the desert.

16: 7—16. HAGAR AND ISHMAEL. (1910 B. C.)

7 And the angel of Jehovah found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.

8 And he said, Hagar, Sarai's handmaid, whence camest thou? and whither goest thou? And she said, I am fleeing from the face of my mistress Sarai.

9 And the angel of Jehovah said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.

10 And the angel of Jehovah said unto her, I will greatly multiply thy seed, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

11 And the angel of Jehovah said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son; and thou shalt call his name Ishmael, because Jehovah hath heard thy affliction.

12 And he shall be *as* a wild ass among men; his hand *shall be* against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell over against all his brethren.

13 And she called the name of Jehovah that spake unto her, Thou art a God that seeth:\* for she said, Have I even here looked after him that seeth me?

14 Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi;† behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

15 And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bare, Ishmael.

16 And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.

\*Or, Thou God seest me.

†That is, The well of the living one who seeth me.

Hagar naturally took the road to her own country, and, being a resolute and high spirited woman, and proud of the distinction of giving a son to her master, she took her solitary way for Shur;—the name of the district to the N. E. of Egypt, including the eastern part of what we call the Isthmus of Suez. While she was on her way, the Angel of Jehovah found her at a fountain of water near to the S. W. limits of the land of Canaan. He detained her in her purpose of going to her own country, and bade her return to her mistress and submit herself to her authority. The Angel likewise said to her: "I will greatly multiply thy seed." Very surprising must these words have sounded in the ears of Hagar; and in ours they ought to make little less impression. Who, then, was the "Angel" that thus spoke, but the "Angel of the Covenant," who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and *with the name and the authority of Jehovah*, commissioned him to bring forth His people out of Egypt, and gave directions as to the steps he should take for this purpose? Ex. 3: 2, 4—6. The word "*angel*" signifies "messenger," or "sent one"; and if this Angel was a divine person, who but God the Father could be he that sent him? Here then we have another

proof of the doctrine of a plurality of persons in the Godhead found in the Old Testament, and near to the beginning of it. The God Jehovah sent his Angel, who was also God Jehovah, as is said in vrs. 10 and 13, and as, with greater emphasis, is repeated in Ex. 3: 2—6; and he also, when he was made flesh, said to his afflicted disciples: "I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter ('who is the Holy Ghost') will not come unto you; but if I go, *I will send him unto you.*" John 16: 7. So then the Son is the "Angel," or "Sent One" of the Father; and the Holy Spirit is the "Angel," or "Sent One," of the Son. Comp. Acts 2: 32 and John 14: 26. *More than sixty times* in the New Testament, in various forms, Jesus is called, or calls himself, *the sent one*. See John 5: 38; 6: 29; 12: 49.

The Angel said likewise to her that she was to become the mother of a son, whom she should call Ishmael (= God will hear), in commemoration of the fact that God had "heard her (cries in her) affliction";—a seemingly clear proof that in her lonely wandering in the desert, she had called for help to the God of her master Abram. A wild and untamable man, like the wild ass of the desert, was her son Ishmael to be; free and indomitable as the "onager" described in Job 39: 5—8, "who heareth not the cry of the driver"; "his hand against every man and every man's hand against him"—a vivid picture of the Bedouin Arabs, his descendants, until this day: "and in the presence of all his brethren shall he dwell." He would not, therefore, be the only son of Abram, but should have brethren; yet in the presence of all of them he should maintain himself free and independent, unconquered and unconquerable as the wild ass.

A very great prophecy is this. While the Jews of the world, dispersed throughout the globe, do not exceed eight or ten millions, at most, the descendants of Ishmael, and those allied with and joined to him in the faith of the false prophet of Arabia, Mohammed—an Ishmaelite of the Ishmaelites—form a vast host, of 150,000,000 to 200,000,000 people. "I will greatly multiply thy seed, so that it cannot be counted for multitude."

If Hagar, who knew the secrets of the family, entertained the hope that she was to be the mother of the promised "Seed," the revelation which the Angel made was enough to undeceive her; but being a woman of worldly and ambitious disposition, and of a proud spirit, the promise of the Angel would at any rate leave her completely satisfied; and she commemorated a divine interposition, so merciful and so opportune, by calling the Angel-Jehovah, who spake with her: "*Thou-God-seest-me.*" (A. V.), and probably she called the well also "the Well of the Living-One-who-



seeth-me (*Heb.* Beer-lahai-roi); a name which was long preserved in the family of Abraham. Ch. 24: 62; 25: 11. Vr. 14 locates this well "between Kadesh and Bered." But Bered does not appear again in the Bible as the name of a place, and Kadesh also is of uncertain location. So that the surest note of the locality of this well will be found in the fact that Hagar set out from Hebron and took the route to Shur, which was precisely at *the entrance of Egypt*; whither doubtless the Egyptian directed her steps. In this line therefore, should the well be sought, and not in the road to Mount Sinai, where some would locate it. It will be well for us, if in imitation of this unhappy woman, we also erect our "Ebenezer" (1 Sam. 7: 12) in the places of our mortal pilgrimage where our God has lent us his special aid.

Others give a different sense to vr. 15, and translate: "Also do I here see (= live), after the vision (of God);" and they support this sense with ch. 32: 30; Jud. 6: 22; 13: 22:—an exclamation of surprise and pleasure that she had seen God and yet remained alive; according to an ancient belief that a vision of God deprived of life any who should have it. The passage is extremely difficult, and many and various are the meanings which are given to it in the ancient Versions. That which I have given, seems to be the most satisfactory, and is likewise the most common.

[NOTE 22.—*On the "Angel of Jehovah."* It is an interesting and very important fact that he who in Gen. 16: 7—10; 21: 17, 18; 31: 11—13; Ex. 23: 20, 21; Judg. 2: 1, 2; 13: 3, 18, 22, and in other cases besides, presents himself to us as "the Angel of Jehovah," is represented in the context as Jehovah himself, speaking in his name and with his authority, and clothed with his prerogatives. In chapter 18, and in Josh. 5: 13—15; 6: 5, we shall have to consider the case of one in human form, who without being called "Angel," the history clothes with the distinctive traits of Jehovah and gives him the name of Jehovah. Such a one is indeed "the Angel of Jehovah" (or, if you please "the Angel Jehovah"), who, 1900 years after this interview, "became flesh" in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and was born to be Jehovah-Jesus.

It is much to be regretted that the Hebrew does not distinguish, and so far as I can learn, cannot distinguish, between "the Angel of Jehovah"—he who is such *par excellence*, and an *angel* of Jehovah—any one of the many whom he sends as his messengers, and to execute his mandates; and it remains with the translator to make the due distinction between the two, according as the sense demands; as is done in the English

Version. The Revised English Version, affecting as it does an extreme precision, always translates "*the angel of Jehovah,*" (or "of the Lord") whoever the said angel may be; which is the same as to use the phrase always in an indefinite sense; and in fact the Revised English Version, so far as I can see, never uses the phrase "*an angel of Jehovah*" in the Old Testament.

It is also an interesting circumstance that after the incarnation of the "Angel of Jehovah," in the form of Jesus-Jehovah, the original Greek of the New Testament never presents to us any messenger from heaven as "*the angel of the Lord,*" but always indefinitely as "*an angel of the Lord,*" (as is seen in the Revised English Version,) unless it be in allusion to an angel already mentioned. And this circumstance, unobserved by the translators of the Bible in general, furnishes us an incidental proof, *first*, of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and *second*, that the Son of Mary is the Angel Jehovah of the Old Testament; according as the prophet Isaiah, proclaimed the fact, 700 years before his wonderful birth:

"For unto us a Child is born,  
unto us a Son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder:  
and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father,\* Prince of Peace.  
Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be  
no end,  
upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom,  
to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with  
righteousness  
from henceforth and forever.

The zeal of Jehovah of Hosts will perform this." Isa. 9: 6, 7.]

[In the above quotation from Isaiah, the translation "Everlasting Father," as one of the names of Christ, is unfortunate and misleading, and leaves the ordinary reader in sad perplexity as to how the Son of Mary should bear a distinctive title of "God the Father Almighty." The Hebrew form, as given in the margin of our Bibles, does not help the matter much. "Father of eternal duration," would be more comprehensible. The Latin Vulgate renders it "*Father of the Future Age,*"= *the World to Come*—the "world without end." The Vulgate translations of Scio and Amat render it "*Father of the Age to Come.*" The Modern Spanish Version, following the Hebrew more closely, renders it "*Father of the Eternal Age*" ("age" in italics). This is

\**Heb.* Father of Eternity.

doubtless the meaning of the name. Adam was and is the Father of this present Age of sin and death; Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, is "the Father of the Coming Age" of righteousness and life eternal. "He shall see of *the travail of his soul*, and shall be satisfied." Isa. 53: 11. He is yet to say, when the number is complete: "Behold me *and the children which God hath given me!*" Heb. 2: 13. Two great men tower immeasurably above all others in the history of men: *the man who damned the world*, and *the man who saves the world*—sent by God for this very purpose (1 John 4: 14) and not merely to save individuals, whether regarded as many or few. Paul draws the parallel between them in Rom. 5: 12-21. *Each is father of his own*, as there indicated. In this sense the "child" born in Bethlehem is the "Eternal Father" of the English Versions; or better said, the "Father of the age (or world) to come"—the eternal age, "the world without end." Of all "them that are accounted worthy to obtain *that world* and the resurrection from among the dead" (Luke 20: 35), and also of all the infant dead, "of whom is the kingdom of heaven," HE IS THE FATHER; "*Father of the world (or age) to come.*" Compare Greek text of Heb. 2: 5.—Tr.]

## CHAPTER XVII.

VRS. 1—8. ONCE MORE THE COVENANT IS ESTABLISHED WITH ABRAM, UNFOLDING MORE AND MORE THE PROMISE. HIS NAME IS CHANGED TO ABRAHAM. (1897 B. C.)

1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for the father of a multitude of nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.

8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land of thy sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Thirteen years had passed since the birth of Ishmael, who was born eleven years after Abram's entrance into the land of Canaan,—a total of twenty-four years. Abram naturally regarded Ishmael as the promised heir; and as the boy had talent

and resolution, which came to him from both his parents, Abram was more and more delighted with his son. Sarai could interpose no difficulty whatever, in spite of her jealousy of her handmaid; because the proposal had been her own, that Abraham, by this expedient, should obtain the fulfilment of the divine promise; and Sarai had already obtained the accomplishment of her wishes—a son and heir by Hagar her slave. Hagar, in spite of the undeceiving which the Angel of Jehovah had given her (ch. 16: 12), could not fail to participate in the illusion which was common to both her master and mistress. So thirteen years of roseate illusions had passed for her and her son Ishmael:—not Eliezer of Damascus, then, but Ishmael was to be the heir of Abraham! Fourteen or fifteen years had passed since the preceding revelation (ch. 15: 1), when in the fourteenth year of Ishmael, Jehovah deigned to favor his servant and friend with still another revelation; which came to overturn all his calculations and change all his plans. Let the children of Abraham learn, in their father, that the God of the covenanted promises *fulfils his designs and not ours*, and overturns our projects in the most strange and unlooked-for manner, after leaving us to enjoy them in anticipation, for a long season, as already certain; and all this to try our faith, as silver is tried, and to produce in us an unlimited confidence in the omnipotent power, the watchful providence, the infinite wisdom and the inexhaustible love of God.

Another revelation, therefore, God now granted to his servant Abraham; but in a different form from the vision he last had. On this occasion we are told that “Jehovah appeared to Abraham”; *Heb.* “Jehovah was seen to Abraham.” The inference is irresistible that this was with a visible manifestation of his glory (perhaps like the first he ever had, p. 145), and not in the form of a man as in ch. 18: 1, 2; because Abraham, when he heard the first words which he spoke to him, *fell upon his face*, and thus he remained while God conversed with him; the case reminding us of Moses in the presence of the Angel of the Burning Bush, where Jehovah commanded him to “take off his shoes from off his feet, because the place where he stood was holy ground; and Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.” Ex. 3: 2—6. We ought not to pass unnoticed indications of this sort, in studying the different manners in which the true God began to reveal himself in a world which had completely forgotten him. “*I am God Almighty; walk before me and be thou perfect!*” was the announcement with which Jehovah made himself known; and

almost in the same form that he made himself known to Moses. On hearing the voice, Abram fell upon his face. "Walk before me and be thou perfect," reminds us of Enoch who "walked with God" (ch. 5: 24), and of Job, who "was perfect and upright, a man that feared God and turned away from evil." Job 1: 1. That *covenant* which was solemnly ratified in ch. 15: 18 is the thing which in this interview occupies the prominent place. We have traced the promise of redemption, in its constant unfolding, down to the times of Noah, and now of Abraham. This promise 450 years after the flood was expressly deposited in the hands of Abraham and his seed, and after several repetitions was confirmed by a formal and solemn covenant; with emphatic mention of the land of promise; including nevertheless, the promise of the redemption "of the world," of which Abraham and his seed were to become "the heirs" (Rom. 4: 13); and with regard to which promise we are for the first time told that "Abraham believed in Jehovah, and he counted it to him for righteousness." Ch. 15: 6.

Here Jehovah establishes anew the covenant, and at the same time amplifies and unfolds the promise, which the covenant carried in its bosom, not as a covenant of works and a temporal covenant, but on the contrary, as God says expressly: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee, throughout their generations, *for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.*" Vr. 7. He changed his name from "Abram" (= exalted father), into "Abraham" (= exalted father of a multitude); promising him, not merely that his seed should be as the stars of heaven, and as the dust of the earth, but that he should be *the father of a multitude of nations*; and this was signified and commemorated in *the new name* which he gave him together with the promise. The change of name, or the receiving of a new name, signifies in Holy Scripture, some marked change in the character, condition, office, or destiny of the person concerned; as will be seen in the case of Abraham and Sarah, vrs. 5, 15; of Jacob, ch. 32: 28; of Gideon, Jud. 6: 32; of Simon Peter, John 1: 42; Matt. 16: 18; and of Paul, Acts 13: 9. Comp. Isa. 62: 2, 4, 12; Jer. 33: 16; Rev. 2: 17; 3: 12.

Thus God gave to Abraham, to him and to his seed after him, "the land of his sojournings, to wit, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession"; but a possession *for one nation only*. Yet Abraham, in addition to this, was to be the "*father of a multitude of nations*"; who undoubtedly are "all the families and nations of the earth, that were to be blessed in him." Ch.

12: 3; 18: 18. Ishmael was already born, and was then thirteen years of age; so we see, in a moment, that the covenant was not made with reference to him. And Ishmael being excluded, for the same cause and with equal reason must be excluded the other sons whom Abraham had by that other concubine, Keturah, before Isaac was born. See comments on ch. 25: 1, 2. And if these, then with equal reason must be excluded his grandson, the worldly Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. But this reduces our account again to the single Jewish nation, with its narrow and limited land of Canaan, or Palestine; which in its greatest dimensions was some 150 miles long and seventy-five or eighty miles broad, on both sides of the river Jordan; which in fact that nation had in possession for 1400 years; although for eighteen centuries the Jews have been dispossessed of it.

But the same reason that there was for eliminating Ishmael and the sons of Keturah, together with the worldly Esau, operates with equal force to exclude the worldly, wicked and unbelieving of Israel also; as John the Baptist preached: "And think not to say within ourselves: We have Abraham for our father; for I say unto you that of these stones God is able to raise up children unto Abraham." Matt. 3: 9. Jesus also said to them: "If ye were *Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham*"; and again: "If God were your father, ye would love me; because I proceeded and came forth from God; for I came not of myself, but he sent me. \* \* \* *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is of your will to do.*" John 8: 39, 42, 44. And this brings us to the same conclusion as Paul, where he says (Rom. 9: 6—8): "All are not Israel, that are of Israel; neither, because they are Abraham's seed are they all children; but: In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, it is *not the children of the flesh that are the children of God*; but the children of the promise are reckoned for seed." It is clear from this that we have to look beyond the surface of things and their mere exteriority, in order to penetrate the true meaning and wonderful reach of this great promise. For if the wicked, worldly and unbelieving Jews, and such as were mere formalists (like the Scribes and Pharisees), not being children of God in spirit and truth, were not the "children of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise," still less can be accounted such those so-called "Christians" who are in identically the same case, and who are not the children of Abraham either according to the flesh, or according to the spirit. It is clear, therefore, that "*the multitude*

of nations" of whom Abraham was to be "the father" ARE NOT THE NATIONS OF "THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD, from which Christ gave himself to deliver us, according to the will of our God and Father" (Gal. 1: 5); but rather the "*nations of those who keep the truth*" (Isa. 26: 2)—who "seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness"—the nations of the sanctified, resurrected and saved. Rev. 21: 24—26; 22: 2. There is a *growing tendency in our day to confound Christianity with Christian Civilization*, (as in the days of Constantine\*), and "the hope of our calling" with the "regeneration of society." No mistake could be greater.

But it is certainly a most interesting fact that no nation, nor people, nor tribe of the natural descendants of Abraham is idolatrous; all, without any exception, are monotheists, and profess after their manner the exclusive worship of the God of Abraham;—more truly monotheists, from every point of view, than the Roman Catholic nations, which, while professing monotheism, have resuscitated and baptized with the name of "Christianity" the ancient idolatry of the Greeks and Romans, in the worship of their *canonized saints*, who are in effect, though not in name, "*gods*" and "*goddesses*," and the favorite objects of the worship of all classes of the people. But which, and how many, are THE NATIONS that derive their lineal descent from the loins of Abraham, or their religious faith from the son of Hagar? Jews, Arabians, nomadic Bedouins, Turks, Turcomans, Egyptians, Afghans, Moroccans, Algerians, and who else? "The father of a *multitude of nations* I have made thee," says the promise. It is evident that this does not mean the English nation, nor the German, nor the Dutch, nor the Swedish, nor the American, of those called Protestant; and still less those who are called Roman Catholic, where reign the "*canonized saints*," and Moses and the Prophets and the Apostles, except in name, are almost unknown.

Well then, if the *nations* already Christianized cannot figure in the list of "children of Abraham and heirs according to the promise," that "*multitude of nations*" cannot have reference to the future *Christianization* of all the other nations: this is undeniable. But Paul, by divine inspiration, explains and comments at length on this and the associated promises, in Rom. 4: 9—25, where he speaks as follows: "For not through the Law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed, THAT HE SHOULD BE HEIR OF THE WORLD (*Gr. kosmos*), but through the righteousness of faith. . . . For this cause it is of faith, that it may

\*See Eusebius Pamphilius "*Panegyric on the Splendor of Our Affairs*." Eccl. Hist. Book X. Ch. 4.—Tr.

be according to grace, to the end that the promise [*the promise that he should be the heir of the world*—no other is mentioned] may be *sure unto all the seed*; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the *faith of Abraham* (= the Gospel), who is the father of us all (as it is written: A father of *many nations* have I made thee), before him whom he believed, even God, who *giveth life to the dead*, and calleth the things that are not as though they were. Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he *might become the father of many nations*, according to that which had been spoken: So (like the stars), shall thy seed be." Rom. 4: 13—18. When "the kingdom of God is indeed come, and his will is done on earth as it is in heaven"\* (Matt. 6: 10); when are inaugurated the "new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3: 13); when "the Lamb of God has in fact *taken away the sin of the world*," and there is none left (John 1: 29); when the Christ of God, his promised Messiah and World-Deliverer, has indeed "*put away sin* by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9: 23); when he shall have "*finished the transgression, and made an end of sins, and brought in everlasting righteousness*" (Dan. 9: 24); when he has "*swallowed up death forever, and wiped away tears from all faces, and taken away*

\*The Westminster *Shorter Catechism* (Q. 102) says that under the second petition of the Lord's Prayer, we pray (last of all) "*that the kingdom of glory may be hastened*"—a matter about which few Christians in our day concern themselves, "the conversion of the world" having come to take its place, as the great Hope of the future. The *Larger Catechism* (Q. 191) is more explicit, and says "*we pray that Christ would hasten the time of his second coming and our reigning with Him forever*"—about which we are not thinking much, although Paul wrote to the worldly and boasting Corinthians: "I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you!" 1 Cor. 4: 8.

The reader may not be aware of the fact that our common doctrine of "The Millennium," called *Post-millenarianism*, in our day, to distinguish it from *Pre-millenarianism*, was a thing unheard of in the times of the Westminster Assembly (1643-1648). The great John Howe, reputed father of the doctrine, was but a beardless youth when that Assembly met; and it was 50 or 60 years later when Daniel Whitby modestly presented it as "A NEW HYPOTHESIS." See Appendix to Commentary of Patrick, Lowth and Whitby. Jonathan Edwards worked it out fully in his *History of Redemption*, and the Commentator, Thomas Scott (Rev. ch. 20), diffused it throughout the English-speaking world; so that people now speak of it as "the old orthodox doctrine," in distinction from the *novelties* of *Pre-millenarianism*! Joseph Milner, a contemporary of Thomas Scott, speaks of it as a modification of the old Chiliasm of the second and third centuries—putting the Millennium *before* rather than *after* the Second Advent—"revived and confirmed with much clearer light in our days." Church History, Vol. 1, page 357.—Tr.



*the reproach of his people from off all the earth*" (Isa. 25: 8); when the wicked shall have GONE AWAY into everlasting punishment, and the righteous been placed in possession of "the kingdom, prepared for them (the just) from *the foundation of the world*" (Matt. 25: 34—46); "when *the ransomed of the Lord shall return* and shall come unto Zion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, when they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away"—forever (Isa. 35: 10); when "THE NATIONS (of the redeemed) shall walk in the light of the New Jerusalem," come down from heaven to earth, and there is no more curse, nor groaning, nor sorrow, nor tears, because *the former things have passed away*; when all the redeemed and saved shall again have "a right to the tree of life," and to eat of its fruit (see ch. 3: 22, 24), and *the leaves of the tree shall be for the healing of THE NATIONS*" (Rev. chs. 21 and 22);—then shall be seen and experienced the plentitude of meaning comprised in *this great promise given to Abraham*; and in fact, "all the nations and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in him"; and the Seed of the Woman, the great Descendant of Abraham, and the greater Son of David, shall be proclaimed "THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD." Right well has John said, as the summing up of the Gospel: "*We have seen and do testify that THE FATHER SENT THE SON TO BE THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.*"\* 1 John 4: 14. "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

There is no UNIVERSALISM in this. Though it is commonly assumed, in theological discussions, that "the world," "the whole world," means *all mankind, the whole race of Adam*, it is but a gratuitous assumption. "The world," "the whole world," never means that either in Scripture or in common parlance; but rather *the earth and its inhabitants*. When we speak of "the whole world," we do not include Cain, or Abel, or Nimrod, or Abraham, or David, or Nebuchadnezzar, or Julius Caesar; THE DEAD ARE COUNTED OUT. And so, when "the world," "the whole world," is saved, THE LOST WILL BE COUNTED OUT; as Peter preached (and as a hundred Scriptures declare): "And it shall come to pass that every soul that will not hearken unto that Prophet, *shall be destroyed from among the people.*" Acts 3: 23. "The people" will be saved, "but the wicked shall be *cut off from the earth*, and the transgressors shall be *rooted out of it.*" Prov. 2: 22. Intelligent and decisive choice between these two only alternatives is what saints and sinners should be alike urged persistently to make, in the words of Moses, the man of God, to the people of his day, in Deut. 30: 19. And it is just here that the modern pulpit seems to be most grievously blameworthy.—Tr.

17: 9—14. ABRAHAM RECEIVES CIRCUMCISION AS A SIGN AND SEAL OF THE COVENANT MADE BY GOD WITH HIM. (1897 B. C.)

9 And God said unto Abraham, And as for thee, thou shalt keep my covenant, thou, and thy seed after thee throughout their generations.

10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee: every male among you shall be circumcised.

11 And ye shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of a covenant betwixt me and you.

12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any foreigner that is not of thy seed.

13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

14 And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

The rite of circumcision was the sign and seal of the covenant made with Abraham, for him and for his posterity (ch. 15: 18; 17: 2); and it remained in constant use among the professed people of God, "for a sign (said God) of the covenant between me and you" (vr. 11), until the time when they condemned and put to death Jesus, the Christ of God. He then "broke his covenant which he had made with all the peoples" ("with all the tribes," the M. S. V. has it, and Leeser's Jewish Version, Zech. 11: 10); and Christ, having risen from the dead, instituted *another sign and seal* for the same purpose, which he commanded to be applied to all his people, men and women alike: and although, when the unbelieving Jews put their circumcision in antagonism with the gospel, and entrenched themselves behind it, in order to discard their own Messiah and the salvation promised to Abraham, Paul treated it as a carnal rite, useless and even pernicious (Gal. 5: 1—4), he himself teaches us that in its beginning God gave to Abraham "the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised." Rom. 4: 11. Moses also and the prophets of the Old Testament as well as the apostles of the New, use the word "circumcision" symbolically in a spiritual and evangelical sense; and even contemned the external rite, when used apart from this, its legitimate and proper meaning. Deut. 10: 16; 30: 6; Jer. 4: 4; 10: 26; Acts 7: 51; Rom. 2: 25, 28, 29; Col. 2: 11.

Putting the sign for the thing signified, circumcision in vr. 10, represents the covenant of which it was the seal; and in vr. 13 Jehovah said that by this means they should carry the covenant of their God in their very flesh, and threatened the

uncircumcised male with the penalty of being cut off from the pale of his people. This in a strict sense is understood of capital punishment, in the case of a proud contempt of this institution of God; as is seen in such contempt on the part of Zipporah, the wife of Moses, which came near costing him his life, at the very time he was about to enter on his mission as the prophet and liberator of his people. (Ex. 4: 24—26); or in less aggravated cases, it was to be taken in a more spiritual sense, as Peter uses it in Acts 3: 23, for excision from the Church and people of God. All the people, or most of them, in passing their forty years in the wilderness, went without circumcision (Josh. 5: 5—7); and although the reason given for this does not present itself to us as conclusive nor satisfactory, with regard to infants of eight days old, it is clear that it was not done through contempt, and was allowed to pass under the eyes of Moses himself.

The law which thus threatened capital punishment against the uncircumcised male, prescribed that *the rite was not to be administered before the child was eight days old*. It is clear, therefore, that it had nothing to do with the salvation of infants, of whom multitudes died before they were eight days old, and of necessary consequence, uncircumcised. The rite, then, had *no efficacy whatever* to impart grace and salvation to those who received it, nor did the lack of it operate to the spiritual hurt of those who died without it; as happened in the case of the vast uncircumcised multitudes (Josh. 5: 5) who died in the desert, as well as the many millions of Israelitish children who died before they were eight days old; and this circumstance comes to shed a flood of light on *the anti-christian dogma of baptismal regeneration*, and the fate of the infants who die without baptism. The Old Testament, therefore, teaches plainly that rites and ceremonies cannot communicate grace and salvation. But Roman Catholics and all Ritualists maintain that Christ communicated this special virtue to the sacraments in general, and to baptism in particular, making them the exclusive channels of his grace; and making that grace dependent on the secret will and intention of the officiating priest!\*

\*A singular but unavoidable consequence of all this is that no member of that Church, from Pope Leo X down to the humblest peasant, is, or can be, infallibly *sure that he was ever baptized!* I baptized a lady in the City of Bogotá, S. A., who was baptized as an infant in Cúcuta, when the priest was so drunk that her mother could never be sure that he *had any intention at all!* So distressed was she about this, that when the family removed to Bogotá, at her urgent instance the child was re-baptized by Archbishop Herran. When converted to the belief and obedience of the Gospel, I re-baptized her still again, overcoming finally her objections with the statement that *the Archbishop himself did not have the right intention.*—Tr.

On a certain occasion I was treating of this subject with an intelligent priest and theological professor in Colombia, S. A. and I put the case to him in this shape: "So you say, Doctor, that the children who die without baptism are lost?" He reminded me that Roman Catholics hold also to a baptism of *blood* and a baptism of *fire*, which serve the same purpose as that of water. I answered that the baptism of *blood* would not suit their case, as they did not die by *martyrdom*; nor that of *ardent desire* either, as it is a matter of *entire indifference* with them whether you baptize them or not; so that water baptism is the only one available in their case; and therefore I repeated my question whether they perish for lack of baptism?—"Yes, Sir!" he replied.—"How then," I asked, "did it fare with the little ones who died before Christ? All the women, and the male children of less than eight days, died uncircumcised; and besides these, numberless millions of pagan children died without circumcision, and without baptism, of course."—"They were saved," he answered me; "passing, however, through *limbo*, whence Jesus liberated them, when he 'descended into hell,' between his death and his resurrection."—"But in any case they were saved, sooner or later; and they were saved, male and female, circumcised and uncircumcised, Jews and pagans alike?"—"Yes, Sir, they were all saved."—"Well then, Doctor, permit me to ask whether Christ *came to bless or to curse the little ones*? Jesus said (before he had instituted Christian baptism, and consequently he said it of unbaptized children): 'Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God' (Mark 10: 14); and yet you affirm that all infants were saved who, before Christ, died without baptism and without circumcision; but that from that time to this nine-tenths or ninety-nine hundredths of them have perished, *for the lack of somebody to 'put water on them'* [the common expression] *in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost!* In this view of the case, Sir, it appears to me that, in so far as concerns the little ones, *it were better if he had not come till now!* Tell me, therefore, if he came to bless or to curse the little ones?" The good man found himself cornered, and whether from conviction, or whether (as is most likely) to put a stop to a conversation which was becoming inconvenient, he agreed with me that all unbaptized infants who have died in infancy were saved through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, whether before Christ or after Christ, and whether of Jewish parentage, or Mohammedan, or Christian, or pagan.

[Visiting a priest on one of my journeys, he deplored very

frankly the vices and wide-spread immoralities of the people, notoriously great in that particular city; which naturally led me to speak of the indispensable necessity of having the "new heart and right spirit" which the Holy Ghost alone can put within us,—experiencing that "new birth," or being "born from above," without which, as Jesus teaches in John 3: 3—5, we "cannot see the kingdom of God." To this he readily assented; but he spoiled it all by saying that this great change is wrought in baptism, which washes away all sin and implants all grace. I put this doctrine of his Church to a practical test by reminding him that we lived in a country of three or four millions of people, every one of whom was a baptized Roman Catholic,—a "regenerate person," according to their religion; and inquired what they had done with so much "grace" which they had all received; to which he replied: "*They have lost it, Sir!*" On this I remarked that it seemed to me that a "grace" so easily gained and so universally lost was not worth going very far to find! He said that might be so, but such was the teaching of his Church.

On another occasion I was talking with a very handsome and intelligent young man, with none too much religion of any kind, who, pointing across the lake to some cattle three or four miles away, said to me: "That cattle yonder is badly infested with the *wolf* (a grub or larva hatched under the skin from an egg deposited by a species of gadfly); but I know a little prayer about SO LONG (indicating an inch or two on his finger) by the use of which I can stand here and extirpate completely that plague in the cattle!" I curiously scanned my man to see whether he was the fool to believe this, or whether he thought it was I. He said in reply that it was a fact, and that there were other persons around—especially among the priests—who had that happy faculty, which, said he, "I also possess!" It was but natural to ask him, why then he did not make his fortune at it!—for on the vast plains of the Casanare, a tributary of the Orinoco, and in other cattle-raising sections of Colombia, the "wolf" is the one great enemy of the stock-raiser, except for which, as they told me, there would be no end to the cattle that might be raised.

On the same journey, a well-to-do countryman was talking to me of the same matter, and told me of a certain "padre" who had great fame in those parts as an exterminator of the "wolf," whom, after many failures, he at last induced to come and cure his cattle. So he prepared a sumptuous breakfast for him, and after breakfast the "padre" took his station on the lawn, where he had a fair view of the stock to be healed; placing then his

book, candles, etc., on a table, he put on his robes and was about to begin the performance, when about 11 o'clock A. M. the earth began to heave responsively to the earthquake shock which that very day (May 18, 1875), and just at that hour, wiped out completely the City of San José de Cúcuta, 200 miles away, a city of 12,000 inhabitants, in one moment of time, burying several thousand people beneath the heaps of ruins. On this, the "padre" naturally desisted, remarking that he would defer the exorcism of the cattle for a more propitious occasion.

Now it has always occurred to me to ask which of the two was easier, to *cure cattle* of the "wolf" by means of a little prayer "about SO LONG," or to *cure men* of original and actual sin by sprinkling babies (or adults either) with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost? And if he would be a "fool" who believes the one, how can he be a wise man who accepts and believes the other? Surely Romanism is guilty of a heinous "sin against the Holy Ghost," in teaching the nations subject to its sway that there is no other "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. 3: 5), except what they all have already received in baptism! and that, therefore, what the Protestants have to say about the necessity of the "new birth," the "being born from on high" is all "bosh," or a nonsensical fanaticism! It is to be observed, and the reader ought never to lose sight of it, that the diabolical atrocities committed against the poor Jews of Russia in these days of horrible butchery, robbery and violence (October—December, 1905), are all perpetrated by "regenerate persons,"—people who have experienced the only "regeneration" held and taught by the Greek and Roman Churches! The bitter fruits of this "sin against the Holy Ghost"\* in the work that is peculiarly his own, fill Russia and every Roman Catholic country from end to end.—Tr.]

\*In a conversation on this subject which I had with the Rev. Dr. J. Addison Alexander, of Princeton Seminary, that portent of learning, a few weeks before his lamented and untimely death, he said that in the opinion of some very great men the distinctive sin of Romanism (as such) is that of "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost"; an opinion based on the manner in which the Roman Catholic Church pretends and claims to appropriate to its own uses, to limit, control and apply at its pleasure the free and sovereign Spirit of God—free as the winds of heaven, John 3: 8—shutting up his sanctifying and saving influences in its "seven sacraments," to be administered or withheld according to the will and intention of the officiating priest, bishop or pope; and *freely attributing to the devil* the most precious and glorious manifestations of his presence and power among Protestant Christians. See Mark 3: 28, 29.

17: 15—22. GOD PROMISES TO ABRAHAM A SON BY SARAH, HIS PROPER AND LEGITIMATE WIFE, WHO SHOULD BE THE HEIR OF THE COVENANTED PROMISE. (1897 B. C.)

15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai\*, but Sarah† shall be her name.

16 And I will give thee a son of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a *mother of nations*; kings of peoples shall be of her.

17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

18 And Abraham said unto God, Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!

19 And God said, Nay, but Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son; and thou shalt call his name Isaac‡: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him.

20 And 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.

21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

22 And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

[\* = My Princess.]

[† = Princess.]

[‡ = Laughter.]

Up to this point God had said nothing of the happy change which he proposed to make in Sarai's condition, but now he directs Abraham to change her name from Sarai into Sarah,—the first intimation which Abraham had of the part she was to take in the fulfilment of the divine promise. As has been already said (p. 140), it is probable that among her own people, in Ur of the Chaldees, *Iscah* had been her name, and that on marrying Abraham, or on setting out for Canaan, her name was changed to *Sarai* (= "My princess"); for it is easy to believe that this was a pet name which Abraham had given to this woman of extraordinary beauty. But now God says to him that thenceforward he should call her *Sarah* (= Princess); as if to indicate that with this change in her hopes and in her state, that distinction which she had borne for a single individual should cease, and she should become a "Princess" in a larger sense, and for a numerous posterity. Sarah had already abandoned all hope of becoming a mother, resigning herself, with ill-grace, to the hard necessity of seeing the son of her slave put in possession of what for many years she had dreamed would be the inheritance of children of her own. But Ishmael was now thirteen years old, and Abraham and all the patriarchal encampment recognized him as the heir of his father. She was close on ninety years, and Abraham was ninety and nine. If God was ever going to confer on her so great a happiness, why had he not done so in the thirty or thirty-five years which had elapsed since he first called her husband, in Ur of the Chal-

dees? What remedy, then, was there, except to resign herself to her hard lot, and submit to the inevitable? This would not be for lack of faith, because *God had never promised that Sarah should be a mother*, and her own expedient for giving fulfilment to the divine promise, by bearing children to Abraham in the person of her slave, Hagar, seemed to shut every door of hope for its fulfilment in her own person. But now, for the first time, God says to Abraham of Sarai: "I will bless her, and moreover I will give thee a son of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother of nations*; kings of peoples shall be of her." The laugh of Abraham, and his exclamation of surprise, in vr. 17, do not express unbelief on his part. His emotions would rather be a mixture of wonder and rejoicing, which expressed themselves in this unusual manner, in the presence of his God; but it was eminently natural. With perfect naturalness, Luke, on relating the first appearance of Jesus in the midst of his disciples, after his resurrection, says that after he had shown them his hands and his feet, "*while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered,*" Jesus took a piece of a broiled fish and did eat before them. Luke 24: 41—43. Such would appear to have been the state of Abraham's mind at this juncture. For the space of thirteen years he had believed that he had the promise of a son already fulfilled in Ishmael, whom he loved, and in whom he centered many hopes; and he replied to that divine announcement with the exclamation: "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!"

It seems that he was perfectly satisfied with the boy, and did not look for any other son in fulfilment of the promise. But it was not a skilful huntsman, or a valiant warrior, "*whose hand should be against every man and every man's hand against him*" (ch. 16: 12), nor still less was it the son of a slave (Gal. 4: 31), whom God had chosen for the fulfilment of his purposes; so that he answered him that, on the contrary, and in spite of whatever natural difficulties might oppose, Sarah should bear him a son who in his very name would commemorate the joyful laughter of both his parents on hearing the unlooked-for announcement. Isaac (= "Laughter" or "He shall laugh") should be his name and the covenant so often mentioned and of such transcendent importance, should pass into his hands, and be established with him, for his descendants, as an everlasting covenant. He told him that Ishmael also should be blessed and extraordinarily increased, and come to be a great nation, because he was his son (ch. 21: 13); but the covenant, which meant so much to Abraham and to the whole world, should



be for Isaac, whom Sarah would bear to him the coming year. In this promise Abraham believed with implicit and unfaltering faith; which Paul celebrates in Rom. 4: 13—22, concentrating in this promise that faith, one and indivisible, which fifteen years before had been reckoned to him for righteousness. Gen. 15: 6. Paul says that Abraham, keeping in view this divine promise, "against hope—that is to say against all reasonable human hope—believed in hope, that he might become a father of many nations (*Heb.* a multitude of nations) according to that which had been spoken: So—like the stars—shall thy seed be, and being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now as good as dead (when he was about an hundred years old), neither the deadness of Sarah's womb; but, looking to the promise of God, he staggered not through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. *And for this cause it was counted to him for righteousness.*" Rom. 4: 18—22. How important is it for us to remember that by an intelligent and illimitable faith in God and his promises, we give more glory to him, than by all the good works which he has commanded in his word, when performed with a vacillating faith, or without any! John 6: 29; Luke 17: 10.

The promise with regard to Ishmael, "I will make of him a great nation," has had its fulfilment; but, just as in the case of the same promise made to Abraham (ch. 12: 2), it has been fulfilled in a moral rather than in a literal sense. Ishmael, as an Arab, a nomad of the desert, with his descendants, divided among many nomadic tribes, does not make much of a figure among the nations of the earth. But when his more distinguished son, Mohammed, in the seventh century of the Christian Era, raised the banner of the Crescent, and by his sword, and that of his successors, destroyed all images, both pagan and "Christian"—so called, extirpating material idolatry, and subdued a great part of the world, in Europe, Asia and Africa, to his spiritual and political dominion [he still holds 150,000,000 of the inhabitants of the world subject to his spiritual sway], it will be seen that the son of Sarah's slave lifts his head aloft, among the great founders of empires, as greater than them all.

"When he left off talking with him, *God went up from Abraham.*" Vr. 22. This comes to clinch the argument presented on page 190 that it was a visible conference (and not simply audible) that Jehovah had with Abraham. Jehovah occupied a certain spot near to Abraham, and as soon as he ceased talk-

ing with him, *he went up from just there*. This literally is repeated in ch. 35: 13, with regard to Jacob, when Jehovah appeared to him, after his return from Padan-aram, changed his name to Israel, blessed him, and confirmed to him the promises made to Abraham. In the following chapter (18: 33) we have the account of another interview, even more palpably sensible and real, which Jehovah, in human form had with Abraham; which concludes in this manner: "*Jehovah went his way (for he had stopped in the way to listen to Abraham's intercession) as soon as he left off communing with Abraham.*" It is extremely interesting and no less important to pay attention to these sensible and visible appearances of Him who 1900 years later "was made flesh and dwelt among us." John 1: 14.

17: 23—27. ABRAHAM MAKES HASTE TO PERFORM WHAT GOD HAD COMMANDED HIM. (1897 B. C.)

23 And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him.

24 And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

25 And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

26 In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.

27 And all the men of his house, those born in the house, and those bought with money of a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

Nothing distinguishes this great servant and friend of God more than the resolution and promptitude with which (in virtue of a living and vigorous faith) he fulfilled every indication of his will. As the rite of circumcision was painful, bloody, repugnant (Ex. 4: 25), and even dangerous, anybody else but an Abraham would naturally have waited, consulting in his mind *when* and *how* he should give effect to the divine command; but "in that same day," hardly had God gone up from beside him, when Abraham gathered the men of his encampment, who could not be less than five hundred or a thousand persons (ch. 14: 14), and the master, the son, and the servants, great and small, were circumcised without delay. Most worthy it is that the spiritual children of Abraham should fix attention on this distinctive trait of their father. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3: 29.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

VRS. 1—8. ABRAHAM ENTERTAINS ANGELS AND THE LORD OF THE ANGELS. (1897 B. C.)

1 And Jehovah appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

2 and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood over against him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the earth,

3 and said, My lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:

4 let now a little water be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:

5 and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and strengthen ye your heart; after that ye shall pass on: forasmuch as ye are come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes.

7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto the servant; and he hasted to dress it.

8 And he took butter,\* and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

[\**M. S. V.*, cheese, or curds.]

Abraham found the vicinity of Hebron (some 20 miles to the south of Salem, which later was Jerusalem, and at that time was, or had been, the residence of Melchisedec, ch. 14: 18) so much to his liking, that when Lot separated from him, he established himself there, in the oak-grove of Mamre, his companion and ally (ch. 13: 18; 14: 13); and it would appear that he had remained principally there, in all the intermediate space of twenty or twenty-five years; for Lot, who was then, it seems, unmarried, had now a family in Sodom of grown daughters, some of them married. Ch. 19: 14, 15.

In the same year as before, and about three months later, God appeared again to Abraham. On this occasion we see Jehovah as one of three individuals who presented themselves at the tent door of the patriarch. The story of this visit gives us a simple and beautiful picture of the courtesy and hospitality of those times. It is possible, but not certain, that Abraham knew nothing of letters; but he was a gentleman, and a very great gentleman; for sincere and unaffected gentility is in its essence one and the same thing in all ages. Seated in the door of his tent, beneath the shade of the tree, during the heat of the day, Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw that three respectable persons had arrived, and were standing near his tent. On seeing them, he ran to receive them, and bowing himself toward the earth (as on a later occasion he did with the sons

of Heth, ch. 23: 7, 12), he begged him whom he at once saw to be the most distinguished of the three, that they would enter beneath the shade of the tree and recline there, while he had water brought to wash their feet, and prepared for them to eat, before they passed on; and the argument which he uses with them was that passing so near their servant, they could not deny him the satisfaction of using the rites of hospitality with them. Here also our attention is called for the first time to the usage of washing the feet, when a guest entered the house; a usage which appears so frequently in the Bible. Abraham had observed something extraordinary in his visitors, and instead of calling a servant to take his orders, he himself "ran" with diligent care to wait upon his guests. Everything is great in this great man, who gained for himself the distinction of being called "the friend of God." Isa. 41: 8; 2 Chron. 20: 7; James 2: 23. And when he had himself brought and placed before them the dinner which he had had prepared with the greatest promptness, so as not to detain them on their journey, *Abraham stood*, in the attitude of a servant (1 Kings 17: 1; 2 Kings 5: 25), near to them, while they ate.

18: 9—15. THE PROMISE OF A SON BY SARAH HIS WIFE IS REPEATED, WITH AMPLIFICATIONS, TO ABRAHAM. (1897 B. C.)

9 And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.

10 And he said, I will certainly return unto thee when the season cometh round; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard\* in the tent door, which was behind him.

11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, and well stricken in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

12 And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

13 And Jehovah said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, who am old?

14 Is anything too hard for Jehovah? At the set time I will return unto thee, when the season cometh round, and Sarah shall have a son.

15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

[\*M. S. V., was listening.]

When dinner was done, the men, contrary to all Oriental usage, inquired about Abraham's wife; which would surprise him not a little, and all the more on seeing that they called her by name; a surprise that would prepare his mind for the announcement, which was at once made by him who was evidently the chief of the three, and who was seated with his back to the door of the tent. Sarah, meanwhile, who already had intelligence of the promise which Jehovah had given on the previous

occasion, that she should be the mother of the son and promised heir, incited by her curiosity to know more, and with womanly quickness divining, perhaps before her husband did, the quality and character of the guests who made the visit, left her own tent (vr. 6 and ch. 24: 67), and passing to that of her husband, she drew close to the door, behind the curtain or screen (in order to see and hear, without being observed), at the back of the principal visitor. In the preceding interview, Jehovah had promised Abraham that Sarah should have a son, at the end of a year (ch. 17: 21), but without anything further. Now, however, he tells him that in the spring of the year (as some understand the difficult phrase "when the season cometh round"; or, more probably, in the time necessary for the production of a living child), he would certainly return to him again, and Sarah should have a son. As he never repeated the visit, his *returning again* must be understood, of course, of that beneficent providence that would bring him a son, in whom the promises should have their fulfilment, and of whose birth we are told, in ch. 21: 1, that "*Jehovah visited Sarah according as he had said, and Jehovah did unto Sarah according as he had promised.*" It is interesting and profitable to fix attention on the fact that so near the beginnings of the divine revelation, the notable manifestations of the providence of God, in mercy or in wrath, are said to be his "*visits,*" and "*comings.*" Sarah undoubtedly had knowledge of that first promise; but when she heard it for herself, and heard the time fixed, she laughed with satisfaction (as Abraham had done before), but with a certain degree of incredulity. She laughed *within herself* and standing behind Jehovah. But he had observed it, and said to Abraham: "Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying: Shall I of a surety bear a child, who am old?" In times of danger and urgent necessity, it is well for us to bring to mind the question with which the Angel answered that unspoken doubt: "*Is anything too hard for Jehovah?*" Sarah then denied, saying: "I did not laugh;" because she was afraid. But he reproved the falsehood, affirming that she did laugh. This colloquy between the two manifests that Sarah had not committed any impropriety in drawing near to listen, although according to Oriental usage, she remained unseen, behind the door or curtain. The word translated "*Sarah denied*" is translated ordinarily *to lie*; here it is to deny the truth. The falsehood of Sarah cannot be excused, of course; and yet it is in strict conformity with the usage, and even the modern usage, of all peoples who have not the knowledge and use of the Bible; for them the negation of the truth

is the most convenient form of evading a difficulty, or of escaping from a painful situation. *The Bible alone effectually teaches the nations to speak the truth.* Ps. 58: 3; Jer. 9: 4, 5.

18: 16—33. ABRAHAM INTERCEDES ON BEHALF OF SODOM. (1897 B. C.)

16 And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.

17 And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do;

18 seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

19 For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

20 And Jehovah said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;

21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

22 And the men turned from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah.

23 And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou consume the righteous with the wicked?

24 Peradventure there are fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou consume and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?

25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked, that so the righteous should be as the wicked; that be far from thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

26 And Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sake.

27 And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes:

28 peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, I will not destroy it, if I find there forty and five.

29 And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for the forty's sake.

30 And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there.

31 And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the twenty's sake.

32 And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the ten's sake.

33 And Jehovah went his way, as soon as he had left off communing with Abraham; and Abraham returned unto his place.

At the close of the interview, the three men arose to go on their way, and turned their faces in the direction of Sodom; which, from Hebron, lay to the S. E., on the supposition that it was located at the south of the Sea of Sodom. Hebron was about 16 miles distant in a straight line to the west of the sea; almost opposite to En-gedi, where the terrible defile of Hazazon-

tamar communicated between the sea and the mountains, which rose to an elevation of 1500 feet above it. Through this defile, some twenty or twenty-five years before, Chedorlaomer and his allied kings descended to En-gedi and the vale of Siddim where they overcame the five confederate kings, and sacked their cities. It is natural, therefore, that the angels, being in front of En-gedi, and going towards the same objective point, Sodom, should take the same route they did. In compliance with the duties of hospitality, Abraham accompanied his visitors a considerable distance in taking leave of them. He had observed with interest and concern that they set out in the direction of Sodom, and it awakened his fears for the security of his nephew. The interview in his tent had likewise given him a more or less correct idea of the exalted station of his guests; "angels whom he had entertained unawares." Heb. 13: 2. Extremely interesting is the soliloquy of Jehovah as he walked at Abraham's side; and it manifests with how much reality Jehovah speaks of Abraham as his "friend." So also Jesus said to his disciples "I no longer call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard from my Father have I made known to you." John 15: 15. Jehovah, therefore, did not wish to conceal from his friend Abraham what he was about to do; and apparently the heart of Abraham had already a strong presentiment of some terrible calamity that was impending; concerned as he was for the security of his kinsman, whose worldly tendencies and his intimate associations with that most wicked people filled him always with concern.

The reason given in vr. 19 for this act of intimate confidence, gives likewise a compendious declaration of the reason and purpose of the calling of Abraham, and why God had separated him from the other peoples of the earth, and brought him into such close and confidential relations with himself. The Versions in general do not clear up this point, giving us rather to understand that it was because Abraham was very faithful and holy in the government of his house. But the translators have allowed themselves apparently to be misled by the ordinary sense of the words *to know*; and so Scio translates the passage: "For I know that he will command his children," etc. (Amat gives the same sense); so also the common English Version and that of Valera, "For I know him, that he will command his children," etc. But the Hebrew text does not sanction this rendering, and makes it clear that to "*know*" is

used here in a special sense, but one well known in the word of God; and so the Revised English Version, together with the Modern Spanish Version, translate it as it is given in the text: "*For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.*" The word "know" has here the sense which the prophet Amos gives it (ch. 3: 2), where God says: "*You only have I known* of all the families of the earth;" which is explained in Ex. 2: 25, when God interposed for the salvation of his people: "And God saw the children of Israel; and God *took knowledge* (of them)." [M. S. V., "And God looked on the children of Israel; and God recognized them (or knew them) *as his people,*"—in italics.] In the same sense Paul says to the fickle Galatians: "But now that ye have come to know God, or rather *to be known of God*, how turn ye back again," etc.? Gal. 4: 9. It is the same sense in which Paul says once more: "For whom he did *foreknow*, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8: 29); in all which cases the idea is not that of having more or less personal acquaintance with an individual, nor having relations of intimacy with him, but *to know and recognize him as one's own*; something which had a very close relation with his divine calling. Jehovah had known Abraham, and had brought him into the knowledge and friendship of his God, "*in order that he might command his children and his household after him, to keep the way of Jehovah;*" *that so Jehovah might give fulfilment to all he had promised concerning him.*

The same thing is true, in a degree, of all the spiritual children of Abraham, God calls them to himself, not merely that they may be saved, but that they may direct, and not merely direct, but "COMMAND" their children and their families to walk in the paths of piety and truth, *to the end that he may fulfil the promises of blessing* given to his faithful people and to their children after them. "To you is the promise and to your children." Acts 2: 39. If Christian parents thus understood and practiced their heavenly calling, how differently would the cause of God progress in this world? Extremely significant is the use of the word *command* here. There are parents, and not a few, who believe that if they give good advice to their children, and if to that they add a good example, they have performed all their duty, and may well leave their children in



full liberty to do as they like. It is truly lamentable to observe in how many families of evangelical parents the children are permitted to take a different road, while parental authority avails nothing to prevent it. There are other families in which the supposed son of Abraham, instead of commanding his children and his household, abdicates his authority in favor of the worldly or fanatical wife, and consents that *she shall command* the children and household in a totally different way. Wholly conformable with the will of God was the decree of Ahasuerus, king of Persia, which he caused to be proclaimed throughout the one hundred and twenty provinces of his dominion: "THAT EVERY MAN SHOULD BEAR RULE IN HIS OWN HOUSE" (Esth. 1: 22); a most salutary order of things which Romanism has completely subverted, as far as it is able, causing that, in matters of religion, the wife, under the tutelage of the priest, shall govern the house, and her husband submit, or go out of it; or if not, that she "*turn the house into a hell*"; to avail myself of the expression so much used by fathers to excuse themselves from mentioning "religion" or "Bible" within their own doors. This is one of the means by which the religion of the priest shakes the social and political fabric, and causes to totter the columns of public order; as seen today in almost every Roman Catholic country.

In view of such enduring and intimate relations, Jehovah determined that he would not conceal from Abraham, his servant and friend, the resolution he had taken to examine with his own eyes whether the conduct of Sodom and the other Cities of the Plain was altogether in accord with the "cry" which was going up to him, and govern his conduct according to the result. That word "cry" is very expressive, and for evil-doers it ought to be very terrible. Their sins and other wickednesses go up to God as an incessant "cry" (like the shed blood of Abel, ch. 4: 10), which calls for the retributions of divine justice; and sooner or later those cries will receive due attention.

Vrs. 20 and 21 may be regarded as a part of the foregoing soliloquy; in which case "I will go down and see whether they have done," etc., may be interpreted in the same way as in the case of the tower of Babylon we interpreted the words of Jehovah "Let us go down," etc. (ch. 11: 7), as an accommodation to our human mode of speech. But it seems very unlikely that Jehovah, walking with Abraham in the road from Hebron to Sodom, should speak as if he were still in heaven, and had not yet descended to earth. It is much more natural and

proper to understand the words as *spoken in Abraham's hearing* by Jehovah, who, in human form, strode at his side, going towards Sodom; and in these words he reveals the personal examination he was about to make of the abominations which were committed there in the light of the sun, and still more under the cover of the night—crimes that seemed to renew the violences and abominations of the antediluvians. All this is a very human but very expressive mode of speech. As Sodom was situated in the depression of the Arabah, something like 4,300 feet below the mountain range on whose summit the four men were at that moment standing, and whence the immense concavity of the Sea of Sodom could in the distance be discerned, with entire naturalness and propriety he might say to Abraham "*I will go down and see*"; just as Jesus presents to us, in the parable of the good Samaritan, "a certain man *who went down* (3,700 feet) from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves." Luke 10: 30.

Abraham, by this time fully aware of what he had before suspected, seems to have given indication of his wish to detain his interlocutor, whose exalted character he now understood; and in fact, the two companions passed on in the way to Sodom; "*but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah.*" There is no doubt that this was the state of things in that moment: Four men left the tent of Abraham that afternoon; four men were together in the way, at the time when Jehovah revealed his purpose of investigating for himself the occasion for the cry which was going up to him from Sodom, and Abraham well knew that such an investigation could have only one result; Abraham detained Jehovah in the way, to intercede on behalf of Sodom; so that two of the four stopped in the way, and two of them, called "angels," arrived at the gate of Sodom that very afternoon; and not only so, but we are told that "*the two angels came to Sodom at even*" (ch. 19: 1), the two whom we already know, and who passed on when Abraham "*stood yet before Jehovah.*"

The testimony of the word of God could not be more express that he who 1900 years afterwards "was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1: 14), here took, by way of anticipation, the form of a man, accepted the hospitality of Abraham, reclined beneath the shade of a tree in front of his tent, ate of his food, walked by his side along the road, stopped to listen to his intercession for the sinners of Sodom, answered him mouth to mouth with indulgent kindness, while Abraham pressed him more and more to reduce the number of just men who

would be sufficient to preserve the city from destruction; and when Abraham ceased to ask, before the Lord ceased to grant his petitions, "Jehovah *went on his way*, as soon as he ceased talking with Abraham, while Abraham returned to his place." Vr. 33. Voluntarily blind must he be, and misled by prejudice, who will not see in all this, that our father Abraham recognized (what his descendants according to the flesh denied and yet resolutely deny) the fact and certainty that God manifested himself to Abraham in human form, and that this God was not some inferior divinity, or a superior or supreme angel (according to the teaching of Ariens), but Jehovah himself; and not less unequivocal is the testimony that Moses, who wrote this history, recognized it likewise; for had it not been so, it would have been very easy for him to guard his readers against such an inference. Moses, therefore, and Abraham may be regarded as pertaining to the Christian family; and we see with how great reason Jesus said to the Jews: "If ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me." John 5:46.

Another circumstance well worthy of fixing our attention, and especially of fixing the attention of Roman Catholic peoples, is that with full knowledge of the fact that it was Jehovah with whom he was speaking, and recognizing himself as "dust and ashes" in the presence of "the Judge of all the earth" (vrs. 25, 27), "*Abraham yet stood before Jehovah.*" Surely if Abraham (and Joshua also teaches us the same lesson, Josh. 5:13; 6:1), *remained standing* in the presence of him whom he recognized as God in human form, understanding probably that *the human form* was reason sufficient why he should not cast himself on his knees before him, we ought to see that it is a shameful idolatry to kneel before a priest in the confessional, or before images of saints, representations of dead men and women, and even before *a consecrated wafer*, which they impiously call "The Divine Majesty"! With good reason did Peter say to Cornelius, a half illuminated pagan, when he fell down before him, to render him religious worship: "*Stand up; I myself also am a man!*" (Acts 10:26); and the angel said to John twice, when he twice placed himself before him in the same attitude of worship: "*See thou do it not! I am a fellow servant of thine, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book; WORSHIP GOD!*" Rev. 19:10; 22:8, 9. Truly the religion of Abraham and of Moses, the religion which Jesus Christ came to establish on earth, and which his apostles taught and practiced, is that which ennobles

a man, teaching him that *not to his "fellow servants,"* whether angels or men, should he pay adoration and worship, but to God alone. As Jesus himself puts it: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and HIM ONLY SHALT THOU SERVE." Matt. 4: 10.

The intercession of Abraham on behalf of Sodom is one of the most notable and moving narratives contained in Holy Scripture. Comprehending perfectly the urgency of the case, and knowing how short the time was, allowing the two angels to pass on their way to Sodom, Abraham, with holy boldness *drew locally near to Jehovah,* and began by saying: "*Is it so that thou wilt destroy the righteous with the wicked?*" If Abraham with full knowledge of the weaknesses of his worldly nephew, counts him among the number of "the righteous," it ought not to seem strange to us that Peter should tell us that in the horrible overthrow of Sodom God "delivered righteous Lot, distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked." 2 Peter 2: 7. And if Jehovah "the Judge of all the earth," admitted the plea, it should not cause us the repugnance we feel in repeating, without criticism, these words of Peter, and to recognize that through the unmerited grace of the God of Abraham, who justifies the believing sinner, and "*imputes to him a righteousness apart from works*" (Rom. 4: 5, 6), even the worldly Lot in Sodom could pass muster among the just!

Abraham begins with the supposition that, having made his examination, it should turn out that there were fifty righteous persons in the city; and he asks whether, on account of the fifty, he would not pardon the guilty city. Abraham did not know Sodom, and in the belief that there might be fifty righteous men there, he proceeds to argue the case, affirming that Jehovah would not slay the righteous with the wicked, destroying them all alike; and he appeals confidently to the rectitude of the "Judge of all the earth." In this Abraham teaches us that we likewise ought to use arguments, and *especially to appeal to the divine promises,* in our prayers and intercessions. Jehovah admits his plea, and tells him that he will not only not slay the righteous with the wicked, but that he will even spare all those impious sinners, if he should find fifty righteous persons within the city. The words "within the city," twice repeated, may indicate that among the shepherds and other servants of Lot (the older of them educated near to the altar of Abraham), there might be just men tending his flocks in the mountains, or cultivating his fields in the plain, who might enter into the account of the fifty righteous persons; but it does not appear that there were any such; they all

seem to have perished alike. The groundless supposition that there were fifty righteous persons (even in a low and worldly sense) in Sodom, *within the city*, gives us to understand that not even Abraham had a correct idea of the desperate wickedness and total corruption of that focus of abominations, where material interests, the bonds of family, the claims of society, and other human considerations detained "just Lot," as if a prisoner, against his will; "who dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds." 2 Peter 2: 8. Most instructive is this example of Lot, and it sets clearly before us how extremely dangerous is intimate association with the workers of iniquity, and what kind of spiritual suicide those Christians commit, who marry into the families of such as are the enemies of God's ways, and bind themselves with ties hard to loose, and even with indissoluble bonds, to persons who with rapid steps are hastening to the abyss. The lesson is extremely important to our evangelical people, of whom a multitude of men, and even a larger number of women, professing piety, have sacrificed all their spiritual interests and their Christian character and influence, by this intimate association with "them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thes. 2: 8. Jesus has left us the solemn admonition: "*Remember Lot's wife!*" that we may not hesitate, nor falter, in "fleeing from the wrath to come" (Luke 17: 32): but to young and old, to men and women, who profess the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, it may be said with much frequency and no less urgency: "*Remember Lot!*"

Having obtained his first petition, Abraham makes a rebate of five from the fifty, and with profound humility, as became "dust and ashes" in speaking with the Lord, he asks him if he will destroy the whole city *for the lack of five?* Jehovah grants this petition also, promising that he will not destroy the city if he should find there forty-five just persons. Grateful for the petitions already obtained, and apprehensive as to the small number of just persons who might be found in Sodom, Abraham again deprecates the wrath of the Lord, which might be awakened by his daring and his persistence; and he passes successively from forty-five righteous persons to forty, to thirty, to twenty, and to ten, without Jehovah's manifesting the slightest hesitancy in granting all he asked. It seems that Abraham was afraid, or at least ashamed, to pass beyond this point; and the result shows that such was the general wickedness of these cities, which God "*has set forth as an example, suffering the punish-*

*ment of eternal fire*" (Jude 7), that even if the patriarch had gone further, and reduced the number from ten to five, Jehovah might have conceded this also, without any advantage whatever to those guilty cities.

It is worthy of note that in all this wonderful intercession in favor of the sinners of Sodom, Abraham never addresses his interlocutor as "my Lord" (as he did in vr. 3 and as Lot does in ch. 19: 18), but always and only as "THE LORD," showing that he did not use the word "Lord" as a title of respect and veneration, but as a designation of the Supreme Being.

When the interview was ended, "*Jehovah went on his way,*" in which Abraham had detained him, while the latter returned to the oak-grove of Mamre, near to Hebron, to wait there the outcome of events; which was not delayed for even a single day.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### VRS. 1—11. LOT, SODOM AND THE ANGELS. (1897 B. C.)

1 And the two angels came to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot saw them, and rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face to the earth;

2 and he said, Behold now, my lords, turn aside, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your way. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

3 And he urged them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, *even* the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both young and old, all the people from every quarter;

5 and they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men that came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

6 And Lot went out unto them to the door, and shut the door after him.

7 And he said, I pray you, my brethren, do not so wickedly.

8 Behold now, I have two daughters that have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing, forasmuch as they are come under the shadow of my roof.

9 And they said, Stand back. And they said, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and drew near to break the door.

10 But the men put forth their hand, and brought Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.

11 And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

The three men presented themselves at the door of Abraham's tent at midday—"during the heat of the day;" and after

that hour happened all that is related in the preceding chapter. The afternoon, therefore, must have been far advanced when the two men who passed onward, when Abraham detained Jehovah to intercede with him in favor of Sodom, arrived there; but they arrived before night. Following the same road as Chedorlaomer and his allies, by Hazazon-tamar, or En-gedi (ch. 14: 7; 2 Chron. 20: 2), there would be 16 miles in a straight line to En-gedi (but double that distance by the rough and winding paths which they would have to travel), and 20 to 25 miles from there to Sodom;—a plain indication that they did not make the journey on foot. [This, however, does not mean to say that they made it by miracle either, but probably in accordance with the laws of a higher sphere, in which they moved; as we know it was with Jesus, after his resurrection, who, having still a body of "flesh and bones" (Luke 24: 39; Eph. 5: 30), which could be handled and felt and proved *not to be* "spirit," ate and drank with his disciples (Acts 10: 41), like these angels at the door of Abraham; vanished from the sight of the two disciples in Emmaus (*Gr.* "became invisible to them"), to appear unannounced in the midst of the disciples in Jerusalem, as with locked doors they stood discussing the flying reports of his resurrection (Luke 24: 31, 36, 39); and at last ascended up into heaven, by his own volition, as being no longer subject to our limitations of time and space;—whence *in like manner* he shall come in the day of his glory and his power.—Tr.]

That same afternoon, then, the messengers from heaven, the ministers of divine vengeance (called "men" in chapter 18, but "angels" here) arrived at the principal gate of Sodom, at the time that Lot was seated in the gate, to enjoy the cool of the evening, and to converse with the other people of quality, who gathered there for the same purpose. The gates or entrances of ancient cities were not merely openings in the wall, secured with "gates and bars," but large and very strong structures; for, in assaults upon the city it was there that the combat was fiercest. The walls in this part were very thick and often double, giving space for chambers, or even dwellings, within the wall itself, (Josh. 2: 15; Acts 9: 25; 2 Cor. 11: 32, 33), so that the structure which was called a *city gate*, was more like a fortress, or a tower, than an entrance-way (2 Sam. 18: 24, 33; Ezek. 40: 15); and there, within the gate, or immediately adjacent to it, justice was administered and public affairs considered (Job 29: 7; 31: 21; 2 Sam. 19: 8; 1 Kings 22: 10), and in its refreshing shade the people of most distinction sat down to enjoy the pleasures of social life. Lot, then, as he was one of the notables of the city, was seated there when

the two angels arrived, and on seeing in their very appearance that they were persons of note, he rose up to receive them with the attention due to their station. He courteously begged them to *turn aside* from the course they were going (right into the city), and enter into his house, which was probably close by (see 2 Kings 7: 9—11), and spend the night there, and wash their feet, and the next day go on their way. They, who brought a commission very different from what Lot supposed, at first declined his invitation, preferring rather to spend the night in the street. This the courteous and hospitable Lot would not consent to, and using urgency with them, they turned aside with him and entered into his house. The courtesy and hospitality of Lot, and his insistence in their exercise, saved the life of himself and his family; which fact the apostle had in view in the passage already cited, in the case of Abraham: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Heb. 13: 2. The entertaining of angels on that night was his temporal salvation. The angels brought as their commission to probe to the bottom the character of the inhabitants of Sodom (whose ill-fame was notorious not only in all the country, but its "cry" had reached unto heaven), and to act in accordance with the result; so that without his knowing it, the moment was extremely critical for him, as a citizen of that city of horrible wickedness. Thus it is that the critical moments of life usually pass us unperceived, and there is for us no other safe rule but these: "Trust in him *at all times*" (Ps. 62:8); "Do righteousness *at all times*" (Ps. 106:3); and, "*Pray without ceasing.*" 1 Thes. 5: 17.

It is not necessary to enter minutely into the events of that night. The entrance of such distinguished strangers through the principal gate of the city, had called greatly the public attention; and the beauty of their persons (as befitted their exalted character and mission), awakened the depraved passions of those base wretches, whose city has given name to the most detestable of vices. The rights and duties of hospitality, eulogized by the wise of all ages, have been held most sacred among all the nations who possess even the rudiments of civilization. The modern use of hotels, and houses of public entertainment, has greatly changed the forms of hospitality; but where these are not to be found, private individuals have necessarily to exercise it, or men relapse into a state of savagery; and the duty of protecting the person of a guest has always been counted among the most sacred of obligations. The Bedouin of the desert, who would kill a stranger without scruple on meeting him outside his nomadic en-



campment, if for any cause he has received him into his tent, will defend him at the cost of his own blood; and once a stranger has eaten of his food, the Arab holds himself as obliged thenceforward to treat him as a friend. Lot having invited the two strangers to come under the shelter of his roof, on seeing the violence that the people of his town wished to do them, used this as his principal argument why they should leave them in peace: "*Forasmuch as they are come under the shadow of my roof.*" He exposed his own person nobly in their defence, going out to the insensate and brutal crowd, to bring those shameless profligates to their senses; but we can find no words adequate to reprobate the proposal which he made, of sacrificing his two daughters in defence of his guests—a thing which his celestial visitors would never have permitted; and they, seeing how the fierce crowd threw themselves upon Lot and that they were doing their utmost to break the door, put forth their hands and pulled him in to them, smiting the assailants also with blindness; and they, though blind, wearied themselves in their fruitless endeavors to find the door.

The proposal which Lot made to those brutish ruffians, to sacrifice his two daughters in defence of his guests, brings to mind the observation already made in the case of Abraham when he denied his wife in Egypt; to the effect that the honor and purity of women, and above all, of unmarried women, were in those times matters of very little importance, compared with what the Christian religion has made them. Without this, woman is and everywhere has been regarded as the slave and plaything of man. Five hundred years after the days of Lot, the respectable old man who in Gibeah entertained the traveling Levite, made the identical proposal of sacrificing his daughter in the defence of his guest; while the Levite, in fact, delivered up his concubine-wife to the crowd, in order to save his own person. Judg. 19: 24, 25.

This manifestation of bestial passion seems almost incredible to us; and nevertheless, the whole of it was repeated, literally repeated, by the inhabitants of Gibeah of Benjamin, in the case just indicated; for whom Moses had to no purpose written the story of Sodom; and they brought upon themselves and upon their tribe a vengeance little less horrible than the divine judgment which overthrew Sodom with terrible destruction. See Judges, chs. 19, 20 and 21. Lot was a man of the highest respectability; but this availed him very little that night. They looked upon him still as a foreigner, a man foreign to their ways and their religion (if they had any), and they regarded it as a great impertinence on his part that he should undertake to give them lessons in good morals, or interpose to prevent the attainment of their

wishes. The little he had left of the religion of his uncle made him a mark for the derision and hatred of the citizens of Sodom: "This one fellow (they exclaimed) came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge! Now will we deal worse with thee than with them!" Vr. 9. The poor and vacillating Lot! He was neither one thing nor the other. How far was he from possessing the firm, resolute and decided character of the "believing Abraham!"

19: 12—14. ANGELS. THE FAMILY OF LOT. THE WARNING DISREGARDED. (1897 B. C.)

12 And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whomsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of the place:

13 for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxed great before Jehovah; and Jehovah hath sent us to destroy it.

14 And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons-in-law, who married\* his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for Jehovah will destroy the city. But he seemed unto his sons-in-law as one that mocked.

\*Or, were to marry.

The "angels" of vr. 1 are here called "men," as in ch. 18: 2, and again are called "angels" in vr. 15. For the first time we have mention of "angels" in this chapter, except "the Angel of Jehovah," who appeared to Hagar (ch. 16:7), which is quite a different matter; and it will not be amiss for us to stop at this point and consider the subject a little. We ought at once to free ourselves of the erroneous belief, created chiefly perhaps by the poets and artists, that angels have *wings* and fly with them. The "cherubim" and "seraphim" are represented in the Bible as having wings—two, four, and even six, each; but although the hierarchy of heaven is something almost unknown to us, on reading of the "Archangel" (not several, but one only), of "angels," of "authorities," of "thrones," of "dominions," of "principalities," of "powers," we may say that the "cherubim" (of whom we treated somewhat in commenting on ch. 3: 24), and the "seraphim" (mentioned only by Isaiah, in Isa. 6: 2, 6), are not "angels" (= messengers, or "sent ones"), and in fact we are never told that they are "messengers" of God, nor "sent" by him with any commission; and so of the others to whom allusion has been made. In Holy Scripture not even once are "angels" spoken of as winged beings. Three times (Dan. 9: 21; Rev. 8: 13; 14: 6) an angel is spoken of as "flying," and if we please we may imagine him as *flying with extended wings*; but if the frequent mention of "*the shadow of Jehovah's wings*" does not give us to understand that "when Jehovah appeared to Abraham," he came in the form of a winged

man, it is not a likely supposition that the angels who appeared to Abraham, to Hagar, to Lot, to Baalam, to Jacob, to Joshua, to Gideon, to Daniel, to Mary, to Joseph, to Zacharias, to Peter, to Paul, to John and to others, presented themselves to them as winged beings. Neither will it be proper to imagine that, because the angels sent with commissions from heaven to earth presented themselves in the form of men, therefore they must necessarily have the same form when they present themselves in heaven before God. It will be a good thing for us to accustom ourselves to reflect that all our personal knowledge is limited to the objects and types of this terraqueous globe of ours, and that our ideas are cast in the mould of corporeal things that do not rise two full leagues above the soil we tread, and habituate ourselves to wait with patience, with modesty and moderation until the great God shall show us things of his own, belonging to a higher sphere. "If I have told you earthly things—things on earth—and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things" or things in heaven? John 3: 12.

But the hour of doom for Sodom was rapidly hastening on. Without any investigation whatever, of itself "Sodom declared its sin and hid it not" (Isa. 3: 9), and the verdict of heaven took immediate effect. The sun of another day, or the moon of another night, was not to witness the enormities which all practiced there (see vr. 4)—and shamelessly; and there were not "found there ten righteous persons" to put in fear or to shame those workers of iniquity. Time was urgent. The men hurriedly asked Lot about his family: "Hast thou here any besides? son-in-law, and thy sons and thy daughters, and whomsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of the place; for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before Jehovah; and Jehovah hath sent us to destroy it." Whatever may have been the physical cause of this destruction, these two angels gave the order which put it into operation; and until they gave the order, the cause or causes remained inoperative. Vr. 22. Fortunately Lot had no sons; Sodom would have been a bad place for the education of boys. Sons-in-law indeed he had, and married daughters; who would naturally pay more attention to their husbands than to their father. With regard to these "sons-in-law" there is dispute, as to whether they were sons-in-law in fact, or only in prospect. But I do not believe that it is the use of any people to call those "sons-in-law" who are only engaged to one's daughters. In any case, when the angels asked after the members of his family, "sons-in-law, and thy sons and thy daughters," it is clear that they inquired after the husbands of his married daugh-

ters; and when vr. 14 says that "Lot went out and spoke with his sons-in-law," the word is naturally to be understood in that sense. It is certain that the words can without violence be translated "sons-in-law, who were to take his daughters"—the unmarried daughters he had there at home—if there were any reason to believe that they were only engaged to be married. But of this there is not a vestige of proof or even a suggestion; and when the day was dawning, and the angels pressed Lot saying: "Arise, take thy wife and *thy two daughters that are here*, lest thou be consumed in the punishment of the city" (vr. 15), it is evident that they now understood that he had daughters somewhere else. Four daughters, then, at least, had Lot; two married, and two single ones at home.

But the urgency that Lot used with his sons-in-law bore little fruit; it all seemed to them like an untimely jest, an unseasonable practical joke he was playing off on them; and the more urgent he became to convince them of the danger which threatened them, the more convinced they became that the man had lost his senses: "An old imbecile!" "A terrified old dotard, who had perhaps been sleeping badly!" It is evident that the little religion that remained to Lot in Sodom, did not give him any more credit with his own family than with his fellow-citizens. The same thing happens with worldly Christians today, when they talk of religion to those who know them. Lot did not gain any more with his married daughters, than with their husbands. If he had said to them that *the house was afire*, at once they would have got up to save themselves; but to tell them, and passionately, that Jehovah was going to destroy the city with fire, rained down from heaven, was an evident sign that the man was crazy.

And so it is that multitudes of persons, and even many who profess faith in Christ, look upon all serious treatment of the Second Advent of the Lord, and the Day of Judgment, as matters of no personal concern to them; and they believe, and sometimes say so, that our Lord and his apostles, went a little astray, in their preaching, and in their writings, in the importance and prominence which they gave to this subject, "*so many ages ahead of time*": forgetful or ignorant of the fact that the day of Jesus Christ, "the Great Day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16: 14), is a day *as great for the dead as for the living*, and that it is all practically *one with us whether Christ at his coming wake us from our graves or from our beds*; and for that reason a thousand years more or less, in the question of time, is a matter of no importance to us, provided we keep it always in view, and live in such a way that we "shall have confidence in the day of judgment," "and be not

ashamed before him at his coming." 1 John 2: 28 and 4: 17. See Rev. 16: 14; 2 Tim. 4: 1; Acts 10: 42; 17: 30, 31; Matt. 16: 27; Luke 21: 34, 36; Matt. 10: 15; 11: 23, 24; Luke 17: 28—30; Rom. 2: 3—16; 1 Thess. 5: 4; 2 Pet. 2: 6, 7; Jude 5, 7.

19: 15—22. LOT IS STILL UNDECIDED, AND CLINGS TO HIS WORLDLY INTERESTS. (1897 B. C.)

15 And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters that are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

16 But he lingered; and the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters, Jehovah being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

17 And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the Plain; escape to the mountains, lest thou be consumed.

18 And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my lord:

19 behold now, thy servant hath found favor in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy lovingkindness, which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest evil\* overtake me, and I die:

20 behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one. Oh, let me escape thither (is it not a little one?), and my soul shall live.

21 And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow the city of which thou hast spoken.

22 Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. [*\*Heb. the evil.*]

Lot returned chagrined and sad from the homes of his sons-in-law, abandoning his married daughters to their fate,—in the reasonable belief that, "sons-in-law" means married men and not men about to marry. Confused and disconcerted with a thousand conflicting thoughts and purposes, he made little progress in arranging the effects most necessary to carry with them in their precipitate flight. When the day was breaking, the angels urged the prompt departure of those he had at home, lest they also perish in the destruction of the city. But Lot still delayed. Whether it was that he hoped that at the last moment his sons-in-law and married daughters would resolve to accompany them, or whether it was that among his many possessions he could not decide which were the effects most important to take with them, the certainty is that like a shipwrecked voyager, who allows himself to drown rather than let go of his bags of gold, Lot was running the greatest risk, with the precious time that he was losing; until, in the mercy of Jehovah towards him, the men laid hold of his hand, and of the hand of his wife, and of the hand

of his two daughters, and with a holy violence brought them out, and left them without the city. Of the two angels one was evidently the superior, as we observed of the three men in front of Abraham's tent; and he commanded Lot that with the utmost speed he should escape for his life, without looking back; and that he should not stop in all the Plain, but escape to the mountain, lest he perish.

To this mountain range, then, which rose 2000 or 2500 feet on the eastern side of the Plain, the angel commanded Lot that he should escape with the greatest haste. But Lot still interposed other difficulties. Looking toward the lofty precipices, inaccessible except by the narrow valleys and steep defiles through which entered the waters of the elevated lands of what later was the country of Moab, he was frightened at the apparent impossibility of finding a place of safety there (forgetful that God would not command him to do an impossible thing to save his life), and fearful of perishing in the conflagration before he could scale those heights, he besought permission to flee to the little city of Bela, which was there close by, alleging its insignificance as a reason why the angel should grant it to him as a place of secure refuge. Accepting his urgent plea, and sparing that city, which was one of the five, the angel again commanded him to use the utmost speed in reaching it, because the case was urgent; and, "I (he said) *can do nothing until thou be come thither.*" How consolatory are these words, spoken to the most worldly and least consistent and well-deserving of the household of faith!

"He shall give his angels charge concerning thee,  
to keep thee in all thy ways." Ps. 91: 11.

So strict a charge had the angel received to guard the life of this nephew of Abraham, who walked with limping steps the path of life, that they could not execute their commission of vengeance against those sinners among whom he lived, until they saw him in a place of safety! For this reason that city Bela was afterwards called Zoar (= Little).

19: 23—26. THE CATASTROPHE OF SODOM, GOMORRAH, ADMAH AND ZEOIM, CITIES OF THE PLAIN. LOT'S WIFE. (1897 B. C.)

23 The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot came unto Zoar.

24 Then Jehovah rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven;

25 and he overthrew those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

For the last time the sun had risen for Sodom; its rays were

shooting over the earth when Lot reached Zoar. Little enough time had he to arrive, between day-dawn and the fatal hour; for in that moment "Jehovah rained upon Sodom, and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah, out of heaven." If the punishment of the Cities of the Plain had occurred by night, it would have been more terrifying; but the deliberate, dispassionate and irresistible wrath of heaven would have been less forcibly presented. The dangers and fears of the night had given place to the peaceful light of the morning; the sun was shooting its beautiful and benignant rays, which passing above the mountains on the east, were striking fairly against the mountains on the west of the sea, when Lot and his fugitive daughters, with flying steps, reached Zoar. And now the angel could do what he was forbidden to do until that moment; he gave the order, and a rain of brimstone and fire fell from heaven, and, "turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example to those who should thereafter live ungodly." 2 Pet. 2:3. "And Jehovah overthrew (or 'overturned') those cities, and all the plain"—cities, soil, inhabitants and all! In the battle of the four kings against the five, those who did not fall by the sword, and those who were not taken captive, "fled to the mountain" (ch. 14:10); but on this occasion there was none to escape except Lot and his family and the city he had begged as a refuge for himself, and which, by the especial protection of heaven, was delivered for his sake: for from above a rain of fire was falling, and underfoot the solid earth was overturned by horrible upheavals and submersions of the ground.

This circumstance, although clearly marked, and many times repeated in the original text of Scripture, both in the Old and the New Testament, seems in general to have passed almost unperceived. It is a fact worthy of fixing our attention, that the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New never mention this event without words which mark it as a *cataclysm*, a violent and sudden *upturning* or *moving of the earth*; an *overturning of terra firma*. Thirteen times in the Old Testament the subject is referred to, and once in the New, without ever using any other word to characterize the phenomenon. In the English Version, forty-seven different words are translated "*destroy*" in the Old Testament, and ten words in the New; what signifies then, the tenacity with which so many different writers lay firm hold on this word "OVERTHROW," or "OVERTURN," to describe the destruction of Sodom? In Hebrew *haphak* signifies to *turn upside down*, and although it is used figuratively also (like the word "overthrow" in English), the root idea is to *turn*, to *overturn*, to

*turn upside down*; and the same thing is true of the word *katastrophe* in the Greek. 2 Peter 2: 6. It is therefore impossible that the Bible could teach with greater clearness and persistency that Sodom and Gomorrah suffered a material *overturning* or *overthrow*; and it seems eminently proper that under these circumstances this idea should be preserved in the translation, and not be lost sight of, by substituting therefor, as is done in most Spanish Versions, the words "destroy" and "destruction."

No phenomena of physical nature have been as much studied in ancient and modern times as the Dead Sea and the causes which have produced its actual condition; but in spite of the speculations and fables of the ancients, and the scientific investigations of modern times, it is possible that we shall have to content ourselves with the few data furnished us by Holy Scripture, till "the men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation" (Matt. 12: 41), and with them, the men of Sodom; or until we shall find ourselves with Lot himself and with Abraham, and learn from them the details of the case.

The catastrophe of Sodom is in the Bible attributed to two distinct causes; to wit, "brimstone and fire" rained down from heaven, and the "overturning" not only of the cities, but of "all the Plain" as well, by volcanic action. These two causes are as clearly indicated in the Hebrew Bible as the two causes which produced the deluge of Noah (to wit, 40 days and 40 nights of continued and torrential rain, and "the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep"); and in both cases the least efficient of the two is that which has called most our attention. Forty days of such continued rains would have caused a deluge on dry land, but without elevating at all the level of the ocean (see comments on ch. 8:1—14, pp. 97—100); and a rain of brimstone and fire—or of lightnings—from heaven, while burning up the cities, and killing the inhabitants, and setting on fire the many natural deposits of bitumen, or asphalt, which abounded in the Vale of Siddim (ch. 14: 10), would not have been sufficient to transform that paradise of delights, comparable with "the garden of Jehovah," into the frightful solitude and horrible desert which it has since remained. It is probable, or better said, it is certain that in the days when the Vale of Siddim was a paradise, there did not exist above ground that enormous mountain of salt which is now found at the south of the sea, but that its appearance above ground was due to the upheavals of the earth, which accompanied "the *overturning* of those cities and all the Plain" (vr. 25); and it is certain that from this resulted the intolerable saltiness of those waters and the complete desolation of that large



and fertile Plain. It is well known that salt mines beneath the surface of the earth are to it an inexhaustible fountain of exuberant fertility and luxuriant beauty; but above the ground, it is death to every living vegetable substance;—as Moses says in Deut. 29: 23: “The whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning; that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein; like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which Jehovah overthrew in his anger and in his wrath.”

As we know little of the physical geography of the depression of the Arabah in the days of Lot, we have not the data, and probably shall never have them in this life, to form a clear and satisfactory idea of the causes and effects of that overthrow. The opinion, favored at one time, and which some still wish to hold, that the fresh water of the river Jordan, in the days of Lot *passed through the Sea of Sodom*, purifying thus its waters, now intolerably salt, and finally emptied into the Red Sea, will have to be abandoned, in virtue of the discovery in recent years, that the surface of that sea is 1300 fées below the level of the other. But the circumstance that the Sea of Sodom has not, and in the days of Abraham and Lot did not have an outlet for their waters, would not hinder their being at that time healthy and good. The catastrophe of Sodom occurred, according to the common chronology about 450 years after the Flood; and although that may have left in the vast concavity of the sea a large deposit of salt water, nevertheless the river Jordan, according to proximate calculations, discharges into it 6,000,000 tons of sweet water every 24 hours; a quantity which in the days of the glory of Palestine was doubtless much greater; and this, together with the rivers which from all sides fell into it, from the lands which afterwards were those of Moab, of Edom, and of “the South” of the tribe of Judah, would be enough to preserve its waters as healthy, and a fountain of as many blessings, as the rivers and lakes of Damascus, which likewise have no outlet; and yet they make that city to be for the Arabian poets the *beau ideal* of Paradise—“the Eye of the Desert” and “the Pearl of the Orient.”

The distinguished German geologist Leopold von Buch, whose letter in reply to certain inquiries of his, Dr. Robinson publishes in his *Researches* says: “Could some mass of basalt be discovered in the southern part, or towards the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, one might believe that a basaltic dyke had been heaved up at the time of the celebrated catastrophe; just as took place in 1820, near the isle of Banda, and at another time, at the foot of the volcano Tornate. The movements which accompany the

breaking out of such a dyke, are of a character to produce all the phenomena which have changed this interesting region, without exercising any very marked influence upon the form and configuration of the mountains round about. The fertility of the soil depends sometimes upon light accidents. It is not probable that bitumen would be adapted to augment it. But it is very possible, that earthquakes may have brought out a larger mass of fossil salt; which, being carried by the waters to the bottom of the valley, would suffice to take away its productive power." And then he adds, with a certain disagreeable flavor of German infidelity: "Lot would hardly have been so struck with the fossil salt, as to suppose that his wife was changed into salt, had there been any knowledge of its existence between the layers of the mountain, before the remarkable catastrophe." *Biblical Researches*, Vol. II. pp. 607, 608. According to this, that enormous mountain of fossil salt, seven miles long, two or three wide, and 100 to 150 feet high (which touches the sea on the southern part), either did not exist above the ground before that time, or was so buried beneath a covering of good earth, that it communicated freshness and exuberant fertility to the soil; as happens in the country surrounding salt mines today; but raised from beneath the valley, or denuded of its covering of earth, it would transform that image of the paradise of Jehovah into a complete desolation; as it has been from that day to this. Some volcano which suddenly vomited brimstone and fire upon the condemned cities, setting in conflagration at the same time the great quantities of bitumen or asphalt, to the south of the sea, accompanied likewise by upheavals and depressions of the earth, elevating that mountain of fossil salt and sowing with salt all those regions, and, in fine, leaving in the bottom of the sea that enormous abyss of 1300 feet in depth, to be filled up with those waters accursed of God, would completely meet the conditions of the case, "without exercising any very marked influence upon the form and configuration of the mountains round about." But in the revelations of the Day of Judgment, when Lot and his fellow citizens shall give an account of themselves, and when the Lord "shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the heart" (1 Cor. 3: 5), we shall know all about it.

In view of the profound interest which this subject inspires, I have extended my comments perhaps more than was necessary upon this catastrophe of Sodom:—that imperishable monument of the wrath of God against the unbridled excesses of wicked men. If any reader should not be pleased to have me account for this tremendous chastisement of the sinners of Sodom in great part

by natural causes, it will be sufficient to remind him that in the Bible little account is made of secondary causes, and the great God is he who does it all, whether mediately or immediately: "Your heavenly Father maketh his sun to arise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matt. 5: 45.

To this point is reserved the account of the sad fate of Lot's wife. After relating the complete destruction of Sodom, Moses says that Lot's wife, who followed along after him, had looked back, against the express order of the angel (vr. 17), and had been converted into a pillar, or monument, of salt. It is needless to say that nothing remains of such a monument in our day; and in a "Valley of Salt" (as it is called in 2 Sam. 8: 13), where a whole mountain of salt stands bare and naked, on whose abrupt declivities Robinson relates that he repeatedly saw "precipices forty or fifty feet high, and hundreds of feet long, of pure crystallized fossil salt," cut into rude columns by the rains, it is not unlikely that Josephus (and several of the fathers of the Ancient Church) should have found some upright blocks of salt which reminded him of the pillar of salt, which in the days of Abraham commemorated the little wisdom and the tragic end of Lot's wife.

What might be her motive for looking back, it is not hard for us to conceive:—the place of her birth and education; the home of her brothers and sisters, her parents and friends; the place where her married daughters had remained; the city which contained all her worldly possessions (which were not small), forming in their aggregate all that on which her affections were placed!—"where her treasure was there was her heart also;" and her eyes obeying the promptings of her heart, she turned and looked thitherward, to see if in fact any harm had happened to it, and perhaps with some doubt whether their precipitate flight had not been a useless sacrifice of their worldly interests, or an act of egregious folly. Lot and his two daughters entered Zoar; but on looking for the wife and mother, she was not to be found! Later they found her on the road, turned into a pillar or monument of salt.

On this tragic event Jesus based a solemn admonition to his disciples (and to us no less) with regard to the haste with which we should prepare, and be always prepared, for the day of his coming in power and glory: "*Remember Lot's wife!*" Luke 17: 13. An admonition is this which is suitable to all real Christians—and was intended to be—for all time, and down to the Consummation of the Ages; since the time of our Lord's return is pur-

posely hidden from us, and from all heaven as well. Matt. 24: 36. And indeed that day is so incomparably great—"the great day of God Almighty"—that the question of *the time* is a matter of practically no importance, and a thousand years sooner or a thousand years later, do not weigh a feather in the great account;—as great to the dead as to the living, to holy Abel who has been 6000 years in heaven, as to the last sinner who shall repent and believe unto life everlasting. The admonition was therefore as timely in Christ's day as in our own, or as it ever will be; the day is none the greater for being in fact very near, and none the less important to us, for being at least another thousand years in the future. And in many respects this resembles the admonition which two apostles based on the never-to-be-forgotten fact that, with two exceptions, the people who came so happily out of Egypt, never arrived at Canaan, since through their own unbelief and disobedience they "were overthrown in the wilderness." 1 Cor. 10: 1—11; Heb. 3: 16—4: 1; Jude 5. The wife of Lot came forth unharmed from Sodom; but by her unbelief, disobedience, and dilatoriness to "flee from the wrath to come," and her attachment to worldly goods and interests, she remained half way of the short journey, turned into a pillar of salt. It is also never to be forgotten or lost sight of that in presenting us this example of Lot, of Sodom and of the wife of Lot, *Jesus himself guarantees to us the authenticity and minute accuracy of this history.* Luke 17: 28—32.

19: 27—29. ABRAHAM SEES THE SMOKE OF THE CONFLAGRATION FROM  
A DISTANCE. (1897 B. C.)

27 And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he had stood before Jehovah:

28 and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the Plain, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace.

29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the Plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt.

The Vale of Siddim was 4300 feet below the elevated point of observation which Abraham occupied, near Hebron, when he interceded for Sodom with Jehovah, on the afternoon of the preceding day; he could not save Sodom, but he did save Lot and his family from that ruin. Hebron stands in a direct line some 16 miles from En-gedi, whither the angels had directed their steps on the way to Sodom (ch. 18: 22); and Abraham, looking across the mountain country, could see, not the waters of the sea (visible from the Mount of Olives, near to Jerusalem), but he could see

perfectly the vast depression between the mountain ranges, which was the site of the sea; "and looking towards Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the Plain, he beheld, and lo! the smoke of the land went up, as the smoke of a furnace." On the western side of the sea, in all its length, the mountains rise precipitously 1500 feet above the waters; and 2000 to 2500 feet on the eastern side. It was therefore materially impossible that 15 miles away Abraham should see the Vale of Siddim and the Plain of the Jordan; but stretching his vision over and in the direction of Sodom and the Vale of Siddim, he saw the dense columns of smoke that went up.

If "all the Plain," in vr. 28, includes all the space embraced by the corresponding phrase, in ch. 13: 19, "all the Plain of the Jordan" that Lot beheld (see *Note 20*, on the Plain of the Jordan), then the catastrophe of Sodom must have been much more extensive than is commonly supposed; embracing fully half of the valley of the Jordan (which is expressly so called at the brass foundries of King Solomon; see 1 Kings 7: 46, R. V.), opening anew the cleft or fracture of the rocky substratum of the country, which originally created the long, wide and deep depression of "the Arabah" (see comments on Peleg, ch. 10: 25, p. 129), and causing, with the inrushing waters of the Jordan, clouds of steam, which might well compete with "the smoke of a furnace," which arose from the Cities of the Plain and the concavity of the Sea of Sodom. But if the Mosaic account is strictly interpreted, "the Plain of the Jordan" extended no farther south than the northern extremity of the sea, where "the Plain," of which "the Cities of the Plain" formed a part, began; for, as I have already indicated, the Bible never says that these cities were situated in "the Plain of the Jordan." The Hebrew word (*kikkar*), which is never but once used of any other "plain," means literally "circuit" or "surroundings," and it is probable that the two, "the circuit" or "surroundings" of the Jordan and "the circuit" or "surroundings" of the sea, were regarded as practically one, overlapping each other at the north of the Sea of Sodom, where they joined; and that the "kikkar" of the Jordan and the "kikkar" of the five cities were terms of vague use, extending all the way from the midlands of Jordan, where Solomon had his brass foundries, to beyond the southern limits of the Sea of Sodom. It is not necessary, therefore, to understand that "all the land of the Plain," in vr. 28, extended farther towards the north than the present limits of the Dead Sea, or included any part of the "Plain of the Jordan," properly so called.

As Abraham rose up very early in the morning to go to his

point of observation, he would necessarily have witnessed the discharge of brimstone and fire passing through the aerial heavens upon Sodom, if such there had been: since it did not begin till Lot entered Sodom, after the sun had arisen upon the earth. Vr. 23. This seems to me a fact of great importance; for we are not told anything of the kind. Nor did he see the flames either, *but only dense clouds of smoke*. We seem to have in this a notable confirmation of the authenticity and accuracy of the story in Genesis. A writer of fiction would have presented the whole scene to the vision of Abraham. One of the most respectable and estimable of commentators says "that he went to the spot where he had the day before held his favored communion with Jehovah, *which was doubtless a position commanding a full view of the Cities of the Plain*, and the adjacent valley of the Jordan. And here, what a scene of woe bursts upon his sight!" "Not the buildings only and the inhabitants are sinking in the conflagration, but the very ground itself on which they stood shares in the awful catastrophe! Sulphureous smoke, mingled with lurid gleams of fire, is constantly rising up in dense, pitchy masses, and constitutes all that Abraham is now able to see." *Bush's Notes*, Vol. I, p. 328. I repeat, it is remarkable that the text says nothing about all this. With the *Researches* of Robinson and others in our hands, we now know that Abraham would have had to travel five or six leagues by the roughest of winding mountain paths in order to reach a point of observation overlooking that scene and offering to his sight that horrible spectacle; but at the distance of five leagues, in that clear, diaphanous atmosphere, he could have seen and noticed that rain of fire and burning brimstone, if it descended through the atmospheric heavens, which have an elevation of at least fifty miles above the earth; all which suggests the idea that possibly that rain of brimstone and fire may have been the effect of a sudden outburst of a volcano situated in the bottom of the valley; perhaps in the very part where the sea now measures 1300 feet in depth, and which so much resembles the crater of an extinct volcano. If such a discharge of fire and brimstone did not rise 3000 feet, it would have been hidden from the eyes of Abraham by the lofty mountains which overhang the western side of the sea, and fill up the intervening distance of 15 or 16 miles.\*

\*The recent terrific destruction of cities and towns and estates by the explosion of the volcano Pelée, in the Island of Martinique, West Indies, in the year 1902, may well illustrate what I suppose is meant by "brimstone and fire from heaven," in the case of the guilty Cities of the Plain; though probably on a much smaller scale. The rain of "brimstone and fire" and incandescent ashes, though thrown to a vast height, would

## 19: 30—38. LOT AND HIS TWO DAUGHTERS. (1897 B. C.)

30 And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.

31 And the first-born said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth:

32 come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

33 And they made their father drink wine that night: and the first-born went in, and lay with her father; and he knew not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

34 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the first-born said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

35 And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he knew not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

36 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.

37 And the first-born bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day.

38 And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-Ammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

Lot continued but a short while in Zoar, because for some reason he was afraid to remain there. Nothing shakes one's nerves like an earthquake; much more, such a one as this. It is probable or certain that the upheavals of the earth, such as caused the "overturning of those cities and all the plain," would leave that region in a state of volcanic perturbation for a considerable time, and the low rumbling of the earth, with eruptions of fire from time to time, threatening a second visitation of the wrath of heaven, would keep Lot and his daughters in constant alarm. Zoar was situated at the foot of, or somewhat within, the mountain range to the east of the sea, "at the mouth of Waddy Kerak," says Robinson, (our Spanish Bible Dictionary locates it still farther to the south) that is to say, at the mouth of the river or torrent of the ancient Kir-Moab; "through which, says Dr. Robinson, used to pass and still passes the principal road between Judea

not have been visible to Abraham, had it been vomited forth by a volcano, now sunken in the Dead Sea. \* \* Since the above was written, I have read an article from the pen of the distinguished scientist, Prof. G. Frederick Wright, of Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, who has lately been over the ground, examining the topographical conditions for himself; being already familiar with the oil-gas regions of the United States, and having recently visited "the still more remarkable oil-fields at Baku, on the Caspian Sea;" and his impressions incline him to believe that the secondary causes which produced the catastrophe of Sodom were the ignition of vast subterranean deposits of petroleum and gas, by volcanic agency. See *Bible Student and Teacher*, for June, 1905, pp. 428, 429.—Tr.

(round the southern side of the sea) and the country of Moab." See also the testimony of Jerome and others, given in *Note* 20, p. 156. Since, then, Zoar was the key to Moab on its western side, a fortified town with a Roman garrison (in the fourth century), at the entrance of the mountains, unless the mountains should sink, Lot had no cause to fear in that account; but he was afraid, and went still farther into the mountains. Perhaps also he found himself ill at ease in Zoar,—a stranger, a fugitive, poor, and with no more resources than he was able to bring with him in his precipitate flight; and perhaps he was ill-regarded for what he, or his God, had had to do with the calamity which had come upon that region; although it was at his entreaty that Zoar escaped the general destruction. However that may be, he did not feel quiet or secure there, and he went farther into the mountains; where, finding a cave, he and his daughters made themselves as comfortable as they could. This the angel had not counseled him to do, nor would one less wise than an angel have advised it. Under such circumstances, a solitary and indolent life was the worst he could have chosen. Tired of life and filled with melancholy, it was natural that he should flee from society; as in like circumstances men and women not a few have taken refuge in convents and monasteries, to discover, when too late, that these are neither a safe refuge, nor a gate of heaven. The angel told him that he should escape to the mountain, in the pressing urgency of the moment; but he would have advised him to return as soon as possible to the encampment and altar of his uncle Abraham, assured that he would find there a joyful welcome. But no; rather, thought Lot, live a solitary life in the mountains, with the little he had been able to save from the wreck of his worldly possessions, than to confess to his uncle the errors of his past life!

What happened there, horrible as it was, is not surprising. The lame excuse which some have desired to make for the daughters of Lot, namely, their belief that the whole world had perished, or all the men who could marry with them, is an absurdity, for women who had but a little before gone forth from Zoar; which, although a small place, was sufficiently large to have a king (ch. 14: 2); and if the excuse be pleaded, that there was no man in the earth who was willing to marry young women who had lost all their former possessions, and would go into the mountains to seek them in marriage, the truth which this contains would not excuse their detestable conduct, any more than it would excuse it in other women in like circumstances. Their father had the blame of exposing himself and them to a life of celibacy in those



mountains; as innumerable men and women have found it in the solitude of the cloister; and Lot ought to have known that two damsels brought up in Sodom, and whom he himself but a little before had offered to the brutality of the furious crowd that surrounded his house, could not be regarded as patterns of modesty and propriety. The whole thing is shameful in the extreme, and sets in a clear light how calamity, and the temptations to evil-doing which it brings, tenaciously pursue those who walk with hesitating steps the path of duty and honor. For such persons one calamity and one fall are likely to serve as stepping-stones for another. Satan does not know how to pity the victims who fall into his nets. Of the Prince of Darkness it may be said, as the prophet says of the pitiless king of Babylon, that "he openeth not the house of his prisoners" (Isa. 14: 17), but rather he makes their past errors and sins, and the calamities that result therefrom, to serve them as a temptation and excuse for other new errors and sins. The example of Lot lends emphasis to the petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (or from the Evil One); and it teaches us not merely to repeat the prayer, but to practice it also. *Lot placed himself in such temptation.* The Bible relates the case (as it always does) in all its revolting hideousness, not for the entertainment of fools, nor for the offense of the prudish, but for the solemn admonition of all: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. 10: 12.

It is to be noticed that the Moabites and the Ammonites both peopled that mountain country, where their two fathers were born; the Moabites as far to the north as the River Arnon, which empties into the Dead Sea, about midway of its length, from north to south, opposite to En-ge-di; and the Ammonites farther to the north, between the Arnon and the river Jabbok; and, driven from thence still later by the Amorites, they withdrew from the river Jabbok and went farther into the desert of Arabia; but they bordered still upon the Moabites; and the two were always the implacable enemies of the children of Israel.

## CHAPTER XX.

VRS. 1—7. ABRAHAM IN GERAR, WHERE HE AGAIN DENIES HIS WIFE.  
(1896 B. C.)

1 And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the land of the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in Gerar.

2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said

to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, because of the woman whom thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.

4 And Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay even a righteous nation?

5 Said he not himself unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and the innocency of my hands have I done this.

6 And God said unto him in the dream, Yea, I know that in the integrity of thy heart thou hast done this, and I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

7 Now therefore restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.

It was natural that after such an event as that related in the preceding chapter, Abraham should break up his encampment, and remove from a place so charged with painful memories for him. And in fact, leaving Mamre, or Hebron, he removed towards the S. W., to the land of "the South," on the road to Egypt (ch. 13: 1), and dwelt between Kadesh (= Kadesh Barnea, Num. 13: 26; 32: 8) and Shur (ch. 25: 18); and he sojourned awhile in Gerar, in the land of the Philistines (12 miles to the south of Gaza); where, or in which vicinity, it is probable that Isaac was born. It would seem that this was the first visit that Abraham made to that small city, whose neighborhood was the favorite residence of Isaac. Those lands of the South were more to the liking of these two patriarchs than those of the north; because it was natural that the latter being more fertile, should be more rapidly peopled with Canaanites, who apparently had but recently come to the country (ch. 12: 6 and 13: 7); and because there the cities were more numerous and larger; and also because the great extent of unoccupied lands in the South gave free and abundant pasturage to their vast flocks and herds. The lot of the tribe of Simeon fell precisely in this land of "the South;" from which we may know that it was not then the desert it now is, where none but Arabs of the desert would care to live. There, in Gerar, for the first time since he left Egypt, Abraham seems to have taken a house in a city; a small town, we should call it if it did not have a king; because 90 years afterwards, Abimelech (probably a son of this one) said to Isaac: "Go from us; for *thou art much mightier than we.*" Ch. 26: 16. There, in the town, Abraham thought he found himself in the same danger as in Egypt, where city life exposed his wife to the observation of curious eyes. It is something almost incredible that at 89 years of age, this woman should have retained her extraordinary beauty to such a degree that Abraham should resort to the same expedient of falsehood, of which he had availed himself 33 years

before in Egypt, and with the same object. Sarah, nevertheless, lived 38 years longer; whence we infer that she might still possess the personal attractions of a well preserved woman of 50 in our day. Abraham lived 76 years after this, dying at the age of 175; and it is supposable that then, as now, the life of women was ordinarily as long as that of men.

If the reader should suppose that the word "falsehood" is too severe, which I again use with regard to this sin of Abraham (a graver offence now than before, ch. 12: 13), let him pass his eye on to vrs. 12, 13, where Abraham himself confesses to Abimelech that, in virtue of the blood relationship existing between the two, as half brother and sister (or at least as uncle and niece), by mutual agreement this had been their usage since (as he said) "God made me to wander from the house of my father"; that is to say, from the time that he left Haran for the land of Canaan—a period of 24 years. The falsehood of Ananias and Sapphira his wife, was of the same class—a half truth, spoken to deceive. Acts 5: 1—3, 8—10. When the Bible lays bare the sins of the great servants of God in all their deformity, removing every veil and disguise, it ill becomes us to palliate or excuse them.

We find no way to excuse such duplicity; for the excuse which mitigated the first offence, in Egypt, when Abraham was still a novice in the ways of Jehovah, fails him in this case. But it is natural for men to lie (Ps. 58: 3), and only among the nations and peoples educated under the influence of the Bible is it easy and ordinary among serious and decent persons to speak always the truth. The French and Spanish have an adage which says it all: "*Children and fools speak the truth.*" This is almost the last vice to be extirpated among the converts from paganism; and a multitude of our converts from Romanism are in almost the same case. Pascal in his "Provincial Letters" sets forth with abundance of proofs, taken out of the writings of their own, and these their most famous masters, how Jesuitism teaches its adepts to suppress the truth, and even *to lie with a good conscience*. We have no reason whatever to believe that this pernicious system is any better now than in the days of Pascal; and Jesuitism is nothing more than the quintessence of Romanism.

In addition to the personal attractions which Sarah may have had, it is probable that the desire of relating himself by marriage with a prince as rich and powerful as Abraham, had its part in the alliance which Abimelech proposed to form. It seems that Abimelech, after the manner of the kings of that time, adopted the same arbitrary procedure as the powerful king of Egypt in similar circumstances had used; he sent and took Sarah, and

carried her to his house. But God again interposed for the protection of the woman in whom were deposited the hopes not only of Abraham, but of the whole human race; in spite of the sin which her husband had committed. And if it be asked why he did not punish Abraham for such sin, and why the Bible does not even censure him for it, I reply, just as in the case of Noah (p. 121): 1st. Because God does not deal with those who are really and truly his servants on the footing of a King who rigidly administers justice, but of a loving and pardoning Father. The doctrine of Paul, that "there is now therefore no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8: 1), was as certain then as it is now, though not as clearly defined; and with regard to those paternal chastisements with which God corrects his children for their amendment (Heb. 12: 7, 8), Abraham doubtless had his share of them, as we shall see, like all the rest. 2nd. Those who are familiar with the Holy Scriptures do not need that the Bible should condemn every act of improper conduct, in order that they may know that it is displeasing to God. And it is well to bear always in mind that God's divine revelation *ought to please us in the very form in which he has been pleased to give it*, without demanding any reason for his procedure. "Blessed is he whosoever shall *find no occasion of stumbling in me.*" Luke 7: 24.

God interposed, therefore, for the protection of that woman from whom Moses and the prophets, and Christ himself, "according to the flesh," were to descend, without reference to the sin of Abraham which had given occasion for the error of Abimelech; and in dreams of the night he put him in mortal terror, on account of his having taken, though innocently, the wife of Abraham, and threatened with certain death both himself and all of his, if he did not restore the man his wife. Abimelech protested his innocence and the honorableness of his procedure; a protest which God readily admitted, saying that for this very reason he had *withheld him* from sinning against him, and did not permit him to touch the woman; but he made even more peremptory his demand that he return her at once.

Three things here call our attention: 1st. That God could communicate with the Philistine, without doubt a pagan, with as much facility, explicitness and certainty as with Abraham or Moses; and Abimelech did not doubt it any more than he would doubt the communications received from Picol, the captain of his army. Ch. 21: 22. See also the like case of Baalam, in Num. 22: 9—20. Now more than ever, while many who profess to believe in God, deny the fact, and even the possibility, of a supernatural revelation, it is necessary to recognize and

constantly to affirm that a God who cannot communicate with his creatures, and that, with the greatest precision and certainty, is in nowise better than the gods of wood and stone. 2nd. That the criminal acts of a pagan (whatever be the religion he professes and whoever the gods he worships) are sins committed against Jehovah, the only true God: "I also withheld thee from *sinning against me.*" 3rd. That the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was known and recognized as the act of Jehovah, even by the pagans round about, who were disposed to blame him for using too great severity. Only thus can be explained those words of Abimelech, in vr. 4: "Lord, wilt thou *slay even a righteous nation?*"

20: 8—18. ABRAHAM, ABIMELECH AND SARAH. (1896 B. C.)

8 And Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid.

9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and wherein have I sinned against thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.

10 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?

11 And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.

12 And moreover she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife:

13 and it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt show unto me: at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother.

14 And Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and men-servants and women-servants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.

15 And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee.

16 And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, it is for thee a covering of the eyes to all that are with thee: and in respect of all thou are righted.

17 And Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants; and they bare children.

18 For Jehovah had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Abimelech rose early in the morning (for it is plain that he slept little, if at all, after God had made to him such an announcement), and "called all his servants" (which in Hebrew style means the princes and chiefs of his people), and had no difficulty in making them understand and believe the import of the revelation of the preceding night; for the men feared greatly. Next he called Abraham, and reprov'd him respect-

fully, but justly and severely, for the unseemly action which he had committed. It is undeniable that pagans are fully aware of the criminality of many of the sinful acts which they commit, so that Paul does not hesitate to say that they are "*without excuse*" before God. (Rom. 1:18); and it is so even with regard to those sins which they commit without hesitation or scruple; and on this fact is based the possibility of convincing them of sin, and effecting their genuine conversion to God. Among these sins, adultery and the robbery of another's wife, are those most universally recognized as such by all the nations and peoples of the world; but there can be no doubt that the interview which Abimelech had just had with God in dreams, awakened and quickened his natural conscience to such a degree that he ingenuously confessed that Abraham had been the cause of bringing *upon him and upon his kingdom a great sin*. The hand of God had already come down on Abimelech, and upon his wife, and upon his maid-servants, in some manner inexplicable by us, but which they well understood; so that Jehovah said to him (vr. 7), that Abraham was a prophet and would pray for him that he should not die; and in vr. 17 we are told that Abraham, in fact, prayed to God, and "God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants, so that they bare children."

This is the first time that the word *prophet* occurs in the Bible, and it is well to fix in our minds that it does not signify, either first or principally, an announcer of future events, but rather one who has intimate relations with God, and from him receives communications to make them known to men. In this sense Abraham was a great prophet, although he has not foretold anything to us. It signifies also one who spoke or wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21); in which sense Barnabas (Acts 13:1) and Mark and Luke were prophets. And not only so, but in the Old Testament those were reputed prophets who spoke under the impulse of *any spiritual influence*, even though it were that of the spirits of darkness. 1 Sam. 10:10—13; 18:10, 11; 1 Kings 22:10, 22, 24; Jer. 23:13. It is altogether probable that the false prophets, who played so conspicuous a part in the histories of the Old Testament, were not mere liars and vulgar imposters, but men of weight and capacity (like the great false prophet Baalam), who were, on many occasions, the mouth-piece of Satan and his satellites; much in the same way as the true prophets were of Jehovah. See 1 Kings 22:23. The same thing happened, *mutatis mutandis*, with regard to the ancient pagan oracles (comp. Acts 16:16—19),

and it happens still in the modern form of the same, to wit, the "mediums" among the *Spiritists*\* of today; who, aside from the deceptions they commit, and the frauds they practice, are sometimes as certain that they have received communications from the invisible world, as was Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah (1 Kings 22: 21—24), of whom we have the most unimpeachable testimony that this really happened in his case.

Abraham, without explaining (in reply to Abimelech's interrogatory) what he had seen in the city to awaken his distrust, confesses frankly that he had come to believe, with or without cause, that "there was no fear of God in that place, and that they would kill him for his wife's sake." It is impossible for us to duly appreciate the insecurity which in ancient times everywhere prevailed in this regard, and which yet prevails among the peoples and societies where there is no fear of God nor knowledge of his word. Protestant countries are of all others the most privileged in this respect, as in almost every other. But making all allowances, it is hard for us to account for such apparent timidity, in so small a city, on the part of a man who had pursued and routed four kings (ch. 14: 25); having, as he must have had at a short distance from the spot, his encampment and his valiant soldiers. But as Abraham cannot be accused of cowardice or pusillanimity, there must have been some cause for his fears, which in so compendious a history has not been related to us. This does not at all excuse his sin, which we have already characterized as great and inexcusable; but it brings to mind the lesson that it is easy, alas how easy! to repeat a sin which has once been committed; and the imitation of his conduct by his son Isaac, in this same city of Gerar, 90 years later (ch. 26: 7), teaches us how much easier it is to imitate the sins and weaknesses of good men, than their virtues; and how it is that the sins of parents live again and are perpetuated in their children.

It is not necessary to repeat here what we have said in another place (ch. 12: 9—20), with regard to the difficulty of explaining the pretext which Abraham alleges for calling the woman his sister who was really his wife. But whether she was (1) the niece of Abraham, being the "Iscah" of ch. 11: 29, daughter of his brother Haran; or whether it be (2) that Haran was only the half brother of Abraham, being the son of Terah by a former wife, and Abraham (65 years younger),

\*The Spanish form of this word is far more appropriate and expressive than the familiar English one "spiritualist," to which they have no honest claim, there being nothing *spiritual* about them.—Tr.

the son of Terah by a second wife, so that in this sense Sarah was the daughter of the same father, but not of the same mother; or whether it be (3) that Sarah was his own half sister, being the daughter of Terah by a second wife, after the death of the former, or by a secondary wife or concubine, while the former was still alive; and so Abraham might say, in a literal sense, that she "was the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife";—in whichever way it may have happened, it is all one in this regard: a half truth does not fail of being a complete falsehood, when spoken for the purpose of deceiving. The essence of the lie consists in the intention to deceive; and it does not greatly matter just what may be the means adopted to effect it, whether fallacious words or fallacious actions, suppressions of the truth, or incomplete statements; it is all the same in fact, though not in form, and God regards them as falsehoods. I have extended my comments on this point because of its great practical importance, and above all in Roman Catholic countries, where, under the influence of a deeply corrupted form of Christianity, and the prohibition and disuse of the Bible from age to age, the vice of untruthfulness is almost universal. We ought to make the greatest efforts that our Protestants may be always distinguished (1) by their love of the Bible, (2) by the religious observance of the Lord's day, and (3) by always speaking the truth.

In requital of the offence which he had committed in taking away Abraham's wife, Abimelech "took sheep and oxen and men-servants and maid-servants and gave them to him, and he restored him Sarah his wife." Abimelech also said to him that his land was before him, and he might dwell in whatever part of it he liked best. And it seems that, in fact, Abraham remained in the land of Abimelech not only until Isaac was born, but for a long time after that; as we understand from vr. 34.

The words which Abimelech addressed to Sarah, in vr. 16, are not easy for us to translate, or to explain, satisfactorily. It is possible that he put them in this enigmatical form, purposely availing himself of a double sense, with the object of suggesting more than he wished to say, and as a mixture of courtesy, of wit, of delicate reproof, and of disguised excuse for the offence committed. As is natural, therefore, the different Versions give them many and various renderings. The sense given in the Modern Spanish Version is that which Gesenius prefers, and also it is that given me by one of the



most distinguished Rabbis of America, the late Rev. Dr. A. P. Mendes, who had the goodness to revise my first translation of Genesis. In addition to the sheep and oxen and servants already given to Abraham, Abimelech gave him likewise, in the name of Sarah, and in requital of what had happened to her, a large sum of money, and said to her: "Behold I have given to thy brother a thousand shekels of silver" (= \$600 gold of our money; which was then and there worth many times this sum); see, this shall serve thee as reparation (*Heb.* a covering of the eyes), for all that has happened to thee, and with all men: and so she was vindicated." Gesenius explains the "covering of the eyes" as the expiation of a fault, making one dissemble the offence, as if he did not see it; but in any case the "covering of the eyes" suggests the idea of a veil for the eyes; and this is the sense which is preferred by the Revised English Version. Thus it was that on seeing Isaac walking in the field and coming to meet them, Rebekah, who had been unveiled in the presence of the servants of Abraham who accompanied her, "took her veil and covered herself." Ch. 24: 65. It is quite possible that Sarah on leaving the life of the country to live in the city, had used there the same liberty to which she was accustomed in the camp of Abraham, among her own people; and it is very certain that in Egypt, when she was much younger, she committed this act of grave imprudence, exposing her extraordinary beauty to the sight of everybody (ch. 12: 14, 15); and it seems, that in this way, Abimelech reminds her that women, and above all, handsome women, ought to cover themselves with a veil in the presence of men; and the thousand shekels of silver would supply her with abundance of veils for this purpose. He does not tell her so plainly, of course; but as his words admit of a double sense, they could not less than carry this covert insinuation. The following words also admit of a double or triple sense; the Revised English Version regarding them as the words of Abimelech to Sarah; and still other senses can be found in the commentaries. But whether it be that the beautiful but imprudent and much indulged woman was "vindicated," or "reproved," or "confuted," or "convicted" and silenced, the disagreeable incident was thus closed. We evangelicals also have some indiscreet Sarahs, who because they misunderstand the "liberty wherewith Christ has made us free," or who affect foreign usages, expose themselves to even graver censure. It will be well for them to take warning from the wife of Abraham, and not bring reproach on the name of Christ and his cause.

To this occurrence and to the other like it, which happened, as we have just said, in Egypt, the Psalmist alludes when he says:

“He hath remembered his covenant for ever,  
 the word which he commanded to a thousand generations;  
 the covenant which he made with Abraham,  
 and his oath unto Isaac,  
 and confirmed the same to Jacob for a statute,  
 to Israel for an everlasting covenant,  
 saying: Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan,  
 the lot of your inheritance;  
 when they were but a few men in number,  
 yea, very few and sojourners in it.  
 And when they went about from nation to nation,  
 from one kingdom to another people,  
 he suffered no man to do them wrong;  
 yea he reproveth kings for their sakes,  
 saying: Touch not mine anointed ones,  
 and do my prophets no harm!” Ps. 105: 8—15.

#### CHAPTER XXI.

VRS. 1—7. SARAH IS AT LAST A MOTHER. (1896 B. C.)

1 And Jehovah visited Sarah as he had said, and Jehovah did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

2 And Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

3 And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.

5 And Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

6 And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh; every one that heareth will laugh with me.

7 And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham that Sarah should give children suck? for I have borne him a son in his old age.

The Angel-Jehovah had said to Abraham (ch. 18: 10): “I will return unto thee when the season cometh round, and Sarah shall have a son.” In this form, therefore, he returned to him at the appointed time; for in all the Scriptures the word “visit” or “come” is used to express any remarkable manifestation of the kindness, or of the justice and wrath of God. Isaac (= Laughter, or, He shall laugh) was the name which God himself had given the child, when he made promise of his birth (ch. 17: 19); so Abraham called him Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day, fulfilling thus the law of Jehovah. Ch. 17: 12. Abraham at the time was a hundred years old.

Beautiful and very natural is the exclamation of the aged mother: "God hath made me to laugh, and every one that heareth will laugh with me! Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah should give suck? For I have borne him a son in his old age." Isaac was born in Gerar, or in the valley of Gerar, where Abraham dwelt a long time before going to Beersheba; the proof of which is found in the many wells which he digged there; for as Abraham seems never again to have lived in the valley of Gerar, this must have been the time when he dug them. See ch. 26: 15, 18. The repetition in vr. 1 that "Jehovah visited Sarah as he had said and Jehovah did unto Sarah as he had said," gives emphasis to the faithfulness of the God of Abraham in fulfilling his promises to his people who trust in him. The words of Paul on this particular case are worthy to be given here, and also on the certainty and security of all the promises of God to his children: "Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken: So (as the stars) shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now as good as dead (when he was about a hundred years old), neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; but looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what he had promised he was able also to perform. Wherefore also it was reckoned to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sakes also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised again for our justification." Rom. 4: 18—25.

We are often impatient because God does not at once fulfil some promise of his on which we have set our heart; but in this we do not "walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham." And it is not less certain in our case than it was in his, that God will fulfil every promise of his, in the way and at the time that shall be most for his glory and for our own advantage; and meantime, he is more glorified by our unwavering and imperturbable faith, than by all our so-called good works. John 6: 28, 29; 1 John 3: 23.

"For the vision is yet for the appointed time,  
and it hasteth towards the end and shall not lie (=disappoint our hope);  
although it tarry, wait for it;  
because it will surely come, it will not delay." Hab. 2: 3.

21: 8—13. ISHMAEL MOCKS AT ISAAC. (1892 B. C.)

8 And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne unto Abraham, mocking.

10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this handmaid\* and her son: for the son of this handmaid shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.

11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight on account of his son.

12 And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy handmaid\*; in all that Sarah saith unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

13 And also of the son of the handmaid will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

[\*A. V., bondwoman; M. S. V., slave.]

In Oriental countries, it is customary for mothers to nurse their children for a longer time than they do with us, and wean them at a more advanced age. When Samuel was weaned, he was old enough to be carried to the house of Jehovah, in Shiloh, and be left there with Eli; where he remained "ministering to Jehovah before the high priest Eli." 1 Sam. 1: 22—25; 2: 11. In 2 Chron. 31: 16, provision was made for the maintenance of the priests and Levites "from *three years old* and upward," and in the second (Apocryphal) book of the Maccabees (ch. 7: 27), the mother of the seven martyred sons, after witnessing the death of the six elder ones, plead with the youngest by all her maternal care, including "three years" that she had given him the breast, that he would not disappoint her hope, but would die like his brothers, and despise the flattering offers of Antiochus. From all which it is proper to infer that Isaac was three years old when Abraham made that great banquet in honor of the weaning of his son. The case of Leah was altogether exceptional, not only for those times, but for any other; for she, with her vehement desire to bear children and more children, had the satisfaction of giving to Jacob a son year after year for six consecutive years, and a daughter besides in the seventh; and all these before the birth of Joseph, who came at the time that Jacob had completed the first seven years of his married life. Ch. 30: 25.

Up to this point Hagar and her Ishmael, the rivals of Sarah and her Isaac, had looked on and kept silence; but nettled with the great public rejoicings that were made over the heir of the promise, Ishmael in an evil hour for himself set about to mock at him. We do not know in what form or with what aggravating circumstances this was done; but the language of Paul in Gal. 4: 29, that "he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit," gives us to understand that it was a

depreciatory and malignant treatment, a bitter and satirical scorn, sufficient to constitute an exceedingly grave offence. There are unreflecting persons who would wish to treat the whole matter as if it belonged to the class of "childish things," and look upon the painful consequences which it brought upon Ishmael and his mother, as the vengeance of a jealous and passionate woman. But God approved the sentence, and this ought to banish such vulgar notions from the minds of those who fear him. This did not belong to the class of "childish things." Ishmael was fourteen years of age when Isaac was born, and at this time he was seventeen. He was more of a man than a child, and his conduct gave evidence of the growing rivalry and the profound hatred toward Isaac which was going to characterize the man.

Notwithstanding this, it must be confessed that Sarah was not as amiable as she was beautiful. Called affectionately by Abraham "My Princess" (= Sarai), in her youth, and "Princess" (= Sarah) by Jehovah, who gave her this name; indulged and petted from youth to old age, and naturally proud and high tempered (see ch. 16: 5) it was not possible for her any longer (for this was not an isolated case) to tolerate the impertinences of her slave, high spirited and independent by nature, and also her rival, as being the mother of the youth who for thirteen years had been considered as the only son and heir of Abraham—a rivalry which she was at no pains to dissemble. Comp. ch. 16: 4, 5. The conduct of young Ishmael, therefore, was intolerable to Sarah; and it was probably instigated or countenanced by his mother. "Cast out (she said to Abraham) this slave (= bond-woman) and her son; for the son of this slave shall not be heir with my son, with Isaac!" Abraham had a tender love for Ishmael, whose natural endowments and his free, independent and indomitable spirit, like that of a wild ass (ch. 16: 12), contrasted advantageously with the quiet, meek and somewhat indolent temper of Isaac—perhaps already visible in the child of three years; and so the demand which Sarah made "was very grievous in his sight." Abraham therefore hesitated to carry out the wish of his wife; but God said to him: "Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad and because of thy bond-woman; in all that Sarah saith unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called"—that is, the seed in the line of the covenanted promise. The fact that Abraham was willing to overlook such gross misbehaviour upon the part of Ishmael, which presaged so many troubles and vexations, if not dangers, in the bosom of his own family; and that, blinded by his love for the boy, he did not see the grave inconvenience of

having in his encampment a lusty youth, who so openly published his profound hatred towards the child that deprived him of the inheritance which for fourteen years he and his mother had learned to regard as his indisputable right, was additional reason why God should tell him to do in this matter according to the will of Sarah.

The allegory of Sarah and Hagar, of Isaac and Ishmael, which Paul bases on this incident, it would be worth the reader's while to stop and read here (in Gal. 4: 22—31), as it is too long to quote. The passage would also be worth the serious consideration of those "liberal Christians" who affect to regard all decent forms of religion as more or less the same in their essence, and think it is better worth our while to find out and accentuate the excellencies of each, than to "preach the Gospel to every creature," as Christ has given us commandment; and who naturally enough hold that Christians may conform to the usages and the pleasures of the world, without losing the distinctive marks of being the Church of God. The hatred of those who are "born after the flesh" towards those who "are born after the Spirit," is as ingenuous and as deep now as was that of Hagar and her son towards Sarah and her son. This allegory of Paul's reminds us of the words "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." Gen. 3: 15. It also explains the implacable hatred of the Romish Church toward the Gospel and all who profess the evangelical religion;—that Church which has constituted itself the legitimate successor of "the Jerusalem that is now," (in contradistinction from "the Jerusalem that is above"), which Paul represents under the figure of Hagar and her son, and says: "she is in bondage with her children." "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." Gal. 4: 25, 29.

When God ordained the expulsion of Hagar and her son, he renewed with Abraham the promise of blessing the lad Ishmael, of caring for him, and making him a great nation, because he was Abraham's son; a promise which we have already considered at length, in the comment on ch. 17: 20. Thus it is that God blesses the children for their parents' sake.

21: 14—21. HAGAR AND HER SON ARE CAST OUT. (1892 B. C.)

14 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle\* of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and *gave her* the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

15 And the water in the bottle was spent, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.

\*Or, skin.

16 And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not look upon the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept.

17 And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.

18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand; for I will make him a great nation.

19 And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.

20 And God was with the lad, and he grew; and he dwelt in the wilderness, and became, as he grew up, an archer.

21 And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

Habitually prompt to fulfil whatever his God ordained, on the following morning Abraham rose up early, and lading Hagar with "bread" (a word which in Hebrew signifies food in general), and with a water-skin—holding probably five or six gallons—he gave her her son, who being almost a man, would be able to carry a part of the burden of his mother, and sent them away. The farewell seems to us to have been almost hard and unfeeling. But in a history as compendious as this, the love of Abraham for his boy will answer for it that it was not as much so as it looks. The Bible wastes no words in those delicate pencilings which form so essential a part of human compositions. Without doubt, he supplied them with everything that was necessary; as it appears by vr. 15 that the first and only thing that they lacked in the desert was water. There can be no doubt that Abraham followed the steps of the youth in whom he had centered so many hopes, with the keenest interest. To suppose that he disinherited him is proof of much ignorance of the Bible and its usages, or of much and bitter prejudice. What more could Abraham do for them under the circumstances; or what would Ishmael and his mother do with worldly goods in the desert? We know for a certainty that in due time Abraham gave him the part of his fortune which was due him as one of his sons; for he had no other concubines but Hagar and Keturah; and ch. 25: 5 tells us that "to the sons of *the concubines*, that Abraham had, he gave gifts; and he sent them away from Isaac his son while he yet lived, eastward, into the east country;" and we are told in ch. 25: 6, 9, that Ishmael took part with Isaac in the obsequies of his father Abraham; which could not have been, if his father had not treated him with the attentions which were his due, and had not honored him with worldly goods such as corresponded with his quality as his son, and first-born son.

Beersheba and the city which afterwards grew up there, near to

its celebrated wells, lay to the S. E. of Gerar, at a distance of 20 or 25 miles farther up the valley of the river, or winter torrent, which passed by Gerar; and as this at a later period was almost the southern limit of Canaan—as is indicated in the current phrase “from Dan to Beersheba” (Judg. 20: 1), which indicated the extreme length of the country from north to south—it is probable that “*the desert of Beersheba*” began at this point, and extended all the way to “the desert of Shur,” on the S. W., and to “the desert of Paran” on the south. On the former occasion (ch. 16: 7) she took the road to Shur, going from Hebron (28 miles N. E. from Beersheba) towards Egypt, her native country; but this time she turned south, or S. E., since the young Ishmael was fond of desert life, and came in fact to fix his wide abode, as a nomad, in the desert of Paran,—far to the south. The Well of “the Living-One-who-seeth-me” (= Beerlahai-roi) was not far distant from the place then called Beersheba (ch. 24: 62); and it is in itself probable that when the banished ones directed their steps from Gerar to the S. E., towards “the desert of Beersheba,” Hagar went wandering about those solitudes in search of that well, the place where she had had that first interview with the Angel-Jehovah, which would bring so grateful recollections to her mind in this time of even greater need. As the two went wandering and lost about the desert of Beersheba, the water was spent in their skin-bottle; and when young Ishmael could no longer endure the thirst, “she cast him under one of the shrubs, and sat over against, or in front of him, at the distance of a bowshot, saying: “Let me not look upon the death of the child!” “And she lifted up her voice and wept.” Very moving is this picture, which the Bible, and the Bible alone, can paint to us so vividly and so completely in so few words.

On the former occasion, it is supposable and probable, that the poor Egyptian, fleeing from the hard hand of her mistress, called for help to the God of her master Abraham, the father of her unborn child; for the angel told her to call the child “Ishmael (= God hears); because Jehovah hath heard (the voice of) thy affliction.” Ch. 16: 11. On this occasion, the affliction of the mother was much greater; but nothing of the kind is told us. Naturally high spirited, bitter of soul, and full of resentment for what had happened, it is supposable that the gods of Egypt, her native country, would have for her more attraction than the God of Abraham. It is at least noticeable that although she wept and sobbed out her keen distress, and presents herself to our view as the most moving figure in the picture, the text says to us “that God heard the voice of the lad”; and the Angel-



Jehovah, calling to her out of heaven, said to the weeping mother: "What aileth thee Hagar? Fear not, for *God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.*" Ishmael was, at the time, seventeen years old. He was old enough to know his need; and in his great strait it is probable that he, who knew no other God, nor gods, but Jehovah the God of his father Abraham, laid aside his resentment, and cried to God almost with his last breath. It is also worthy of attention that when the Angel opened the eyes of Hagar to see the well of water, she did not give either to the well, or to the Angel, as on the former occasion, a name of grateful remembrance; although her necessity was greater, and more opportune the relief.

However this may be, the Angel tranquillized and consoled her with the assurance that God had heard the voice of the lad; and he commanded her: "Arise, lift up the lad and hold him in thy hand! For I will make of him a great nation." He then opened her eyes to see the well of water, the same perhaps which she had been seeking in vain, on account of the anguish of her spirit, and blinded with her tears. It would seem that even when she lifted him up, the lad was unable to walk; because the mother "went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad drink."

We know little of the subsequent life of Ishmael, except what we read in ch. 25: 9, 12—18. I cannot anywhere discover whether this divine interposition softened the heart of the mother, or worked for the spiritual profit of her son. It is probable that they abandoned the religion of Abraham together with his encampment; because the words "God was with the lad, and he grew," etc., do not indicate more than the faithful performance of the promise given to Abraham, to bless him because he was his son, and to make him a great nation. He grew up in the deserts and became an expert archer, dexterous in the use of the bow, a great hunter, and a valiant warrior, "his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him." The desert of Paran, where he came to dwell, embraced all the central part of the peninsula of Mount Sinai. His mother took him a wife out of Egypt, her own country; and with this he was more than ever separated from the altar, and from the family and usages of his father. Seventy-two years afterwards, when an old man of 89 (he died at 137), he took part with Isaac in the burial of his father, accompanied doubtless by his fierce Arabs of the desert, to return immediately to the predatory life, which his descendants, the Bedouins of the desert, have followed till today. The Ishmaelites, scattered through the deserts, from Havilah (near the

mouth of the river Euphrates) "unto Shur, before Egypt" (ch. 25: 18), did not preserve a trace of the religion of Abraham, except the rite of circumcision; and they continued completely pagan, until 600 years after Christ, when the great descendant of Ishmael, Mohammed, converted them to Islam, by the argument of the sword; and since then their motto has been, "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his Prophet!" "Mohammed first, and after him the Son of Mary!" Thus ended Sarah's human expedient to give fulfilment to the promises of God! Ch. 16: 1—3.

This history of Hagar and her son makes clearly evident that Abraham, the believing man, the friend of God, had, like the rest of us, his errors, his bitter undeceivings, his domestic troubles and his poignant griefs which cost him dark days and sleepless nights; and it teaches us that we shall in vain hope to travel the way of our mortal pilgrimage without much suffering, due to our own errors and sins, and those of others. The important thing is, therefore, that, trusting in God and in his promises, we perform as far as possible our allotted duties and make full use of our privileges, "exercising ourselves herein to have always a conscience without offence toward God and toward men." Acts 24: 16. As it is impossible to avoid difficulties and sorrows, which are an essential part of our spiritual education, let us enjoy at least the delights of a good conscience. "In the world (said Jesus) ye shall have tribulation; *but be of good cheer*; I have overcome the world." John 16: 33.

21: 22—34. ABIMELECH MAKES A COVENANT OF PEACE WITH  
ABRAHAM. BEERSHEBA. (1891 B. C.)

22 And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phicol the captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest:

23 now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.

24 And Abraham said, I will swear.

25 And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of the well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.

26 And Abimelech said, I know not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to-day.

27 And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and they two made a covenant.

28 And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.

29 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves?

30 And he said, These seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that it may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well.

31 Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba; because there they sware both of them.

32 So they made a covenant at Beer-sheba: and Abimelech rose

up, and Phicol the captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.

33 And *Abraham* planted a tamarisk tree\* in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of Jehovah, the Everlasting God.

34 And Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines many days.

[\*A. V. and M. S. V., a grove.]

“At that time,” in vr. 22, refers either to the marriage of Ishmael, mentioned in the preceding verse, or more naturally to what is related in the preceding paragraph, as having occurred in the valley of Gerar; where, in coming years, Isaac passed much time, opening again the wells dug by his father (which the Philistines, after Abraham’s death, had filled with earth, on account of the ill-will they had to Isaac), and digging himself three new wells, before he put himself in safety from that envious crew, by going to Beersheba. Ch. 26: 12—23. These brief notices make it evident that Isaac was born near to Gerar, and that Abraham passed much time in “the valley of Gerar,” before he went to dwell in “the valley of Beersheba,” which is no more than the extension of the former, upon the same river or winter torrent. What is related in this paragraph took place in Beersheba, as we are expressly told in vr. 31; which was not the “land of the Philistines,” as is implied, if not stated, in vr. 32; and this makes it extremely difficult to explain satisfactorily vr. 34; which, in continuation of the foregoing, says that Abraham passed much time in the land of the Philistines. It would be very easy to translate it “had passed many days in the land of the Philistines,” and so avoid the difficulty, were it not that it appears to allude to the grove which Abraham planted in Beersheba, and where he passed at least forty years, except the little time that he was in Hebron, where Sarah died and was buried. Ch. 23. In Beersheba Isaac was married, and there probably Abraham passed his old age; although he also was buried in the cave of Macphelah, near to Hebron.

A satisfactory solution of the difficulty may perhaps be found in the supposition that in a wide sense the pastures of Beersheba were regarded as lands annexed to the kingdom of Abimelech, being only 20 or 25 miles distant from Gerar; the herdsmen of Gerar going as far as that, or farther, for the pasturage of their cattle, and where by brute force they took away from Abraham this same well of Beersheba, under the pretext doubtless that the waters were theirs; just as they did with the herdsmen of Isaac after the death of his father. Ch. 26: 20, 21. On the other hand, when it is said in vr. 32 that after making a covenant with Abraham in Beersheba, Abimelech and Phicol, the captain of

his army, "returned to the land of the Philistines," it is easy to understand that what is meant is that they returned from those unoccupied pasture-lands to Gerar, and to the inhabited part of his kingdom.

At that time, therefore, and after the departure of Hagar and her son Ishmael, and when Abraham had moved his encampment up the valley, until he arrived at the place afterwards called Beersheba, and had digged there the famous well which gave name to the city that in coming years grew up near to it, Abimelech and Picol made him a visit, in order to secure by covenant an enduring basis of peace with him. The motive,—it is not easy to penetrate the motives of the Orientals; but the occasion might well have been the disagreement about that well, which the servants of Abimelech had violently taken away from Abraham, although Abimelech protested his entire ignorance of it; for it is the universal testimony of travelers that the Orientals lie without scruple, unless an oath is required of them;—something which they horribly fear. Near to the north bank of the wide and dry torrent-bed or "waddy," Dr. Robinson says that he found two very aged wells with an abundance of water and of the best quality, about 300 yards apart; of these "the larger one (which he says may well have been the one which Abraham dug) measures  $12\frac{1}{2}$  feet in width, and  $44\frac{1}{2}$  feet in depth, down to the surface of the water; of which 16 feet was cut in the solid rock." *Researches*, Vol. I, pp. 300, 301. If this be the well which they took away from him, it is not strange that Abraham should complain of the injustice done him. So then Abimelech came a distance of 20 or 25 miles, with some troops doubtless (as he brought with him the captain of his army), to celebrate a lasting covenant of peace with this great prince Abraham, whose friendship might be worth much to him, and whose enmity might cause him serious harm. Abimelech asked a solemn oath of Abraham. Abraham readily granted the oath that was asked, and he took occasion from so favorable a juncture to reprove Abimelech about the well which the servants or herdsmen of Abimelech had taken from him; this friend of God having suffered the trampling upon his rights rather than resist by force, which he might well have done. On similar occasions, Isaac dug other wells, when the herdsmen of Gerar "filled with earth all the wells his father had dug," and took from him successively two other wells which he himself had dug. Ch. 26: 15. And it is at least possible that when they took away from Abraham the first, he dug the second well which still is found in that place, 300 yards distant from the other.

It is not easy to understand why Abraham, the aggrieved party, should take sheep and cattle and give them to Abimelech, the offending party, unless it be explained by the words which follow: "and they two made (*Heb.* CUT) A COVENANT." The phrase appropriated to making covenants in Hebrew is "to cut a covenant"; which probably took its origin from the ceremony minutely described in ch. 15: 9—17; and, in this case, to give greater force and validity to the covenant, it would seem that Abraham gave the animals to Abimelech, that he might make the customary sacrifices and cut in twain the victims, between the divided parts of which the contracting parties were to pass. See the ceremony described in ch. 15: 6—18. From this circumstance the place took its name, "Beer-sheba" (= "Well of the oath"); a name, which in its Arabic form continues till today; and near to such abundant and good waters was slowly built the well-known city of that name, in those days when such a well of water was enough for a whole city. Ch. 24: 11; 28: 2, 3; John 4: 6—12. Then, in order to confirm the solemn transaction with greater abundance of proof, Abraham took seven ewe lambs of the flock and set them by themselves; an action which Abimelech did not understand; and on asking what it meant, Abraham replied that Abimelech must take them from his hand and keep them, as a testimonial that he, Abraham, was the owner of that well in Beersheba, and that he had dug it. When these ceremonies were concluded, which were of great importance in those times, Abimelech and Picol and their attendants "returned to the land of the Philistines."

There in Beersheba Abraham planted a grove, and in that locality he remained for many years. There he was living when he made the sacrifice of Isaac (ch. 22: 19); there he was living when Isaac married (ch. 24: 62); and it is probable that (with occasional visits to Hebron, the place of his sepulchre and that of his wife) there he passed the evening of his long life; enjoying the grateful shade of his grove, and the tranquillity which comported with the nobility and grandeur of his character. With regard to this "grove" there is some difference of opinion. The Revised English Version says that he planted a "*tamarisk tree.*" But as the tamarisk is scarcely more than a shrub, according to the Standard Dictionary and the *Diccionario Castellano* of the Academy (or if it is the same thing as the Spanish "taray," it is, according to the same authority, but "a small tree which grows up in low coppices"), we cannot comprehend how this was a circumstance worthy of record, or of what utility even a grove of tamarisks could be to Abraham and his encampment. There

exists a great deal of uncertainty with regard to the *flora* and *fauna* (= plants and animals) of the Bible, and whatever may have been the kind of tree, "a grove," as used in the A. V. comes to supply us with a comprehensive term which is suitable to them all. There, then, in this grove, and under its grateful shade, Abraham placed his altar, and there "he invoked the name of Jehovah, the Eternal (or Everlasting) God."

We have here another new name of the true God, who was revealing himself in a world which had willingly forgotten him—"Jehovah, the Eternal God." In ch. 14, Melchisedec blessed Abraham in the name of "God Most High, possessor of the heavens and the earth"; but that there might remain no room for doubt as to *who he was*, Abraham said to the king of Sodom: "I have lifted up my hand *unto Jehovah, the Most High God*, possessor of the heavens and the earth." In this place he invoked him under the name of "Jehovah, the Eternal God." Clear proofs are these that *the name "Jehovah"* was in use in the days of Abraham; whatever "the critics" may have to say about it. See comments on ch. 10: 9; Ex. 3: 13, 14; and 6: 2, 3.

## CHAPTER XXII.

VRS. 1—14. ABRAHAM, IN THE LAST AND GREAT TRIAL OF HIS FAITH, OFFERS UP IN SACRIFICE HIS SON; THAT IS TO SAY, HE WAS ABOUT TO DO IT. See Heb. 11: 17. (1872 B. C.)

1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Here am I.

2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3 And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

4 On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come again to you.

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together.

7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

8 And Abraham said, God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son: so they went both of them together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood,

10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11 And the angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham; and he said, Here am I.

12 And he said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou has not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.

13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son.

14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: \* as it is said to this day, In the mount of Jehovah it shall be provided.

\*That is, Jehovah will see, or provide.

Another trial awaited "the father of all them that believe." Rom. 4: 11. Abraham had, like all men, his weaknesses and his sins, as we have already seen; he had therefore no righteousness of his own in which to trust; nor in respect of good works and perfection of life, did he excel many other servants of God. In what he did excel was in that which had to do with his faith in that God who had called him to himself from the idolatries of his native land and of his family, that in him and in his seed all the families of the earth might be blessed. This was his distinguishing trait, his super-excellent glory; and for that very reason, God proved and refined his faith. *Human virtues are cheap enough*, when contrasted with the faith of those who are truly the people of God. It is absolutely necessary that we insist forever on this, with those who (despising the gospel light, which has made *them* what they are), go seeking human virtues and good works, and moral sentences among the philosophers of the gentile world, and among those decent people at home who reject the Bible and make light of the claims of Jesus Christ; in order to set them in invidious comparison with the gospel of the grace of God. With God, of what worth are all the boasted good works and beautiful natural endowments of those who reject with disdain his Son, and who refuse to believe in his revealed will, or who even deny his existence? Faith, therefore (not insistence in the opinions and teachings of men, nor in the beliefs and practices of one's forefathers, nor in the doctrines of one's church, sect or party; nor still less, a stubborn adherence to one's own way of thinking; but *the intelligent and cordial acceptance of the testimony which God, by supernatural revelation, has given us of himself, and of his will and ways*)—faith, thus understood, is of all things in this apostate world the most precious, and is the root of all human virtues which have any real value with God. Because "without faith it is *impossible to please him*;

for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. 11: 6.

Peter says that "*the trial of our faith* is much more precious (= estimable, important), than that of gold, which though perishable is tried (*Gr.* gold which perisheth, but is tried) by means of fire." 1 Pet. 1: 7. If the trial of *our* faith is so precious, how much more in the case of Abraham, the father and pattern of those who from then till now, have believed in God unto the saving of the soul! Heb. 10: 39.

It is not necessary nor convenient for us to enter into the details of this most beautiful story, which is clear enough of itself; so that explanations and amplifications cannot do less than detract from its perfection. But I will cite what the apostle says about it, in Hebrews 11: 17—19: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, *offered up Isaac*, and he that had received the promises offered up (R. V. *was offering up*) his only begotten son, of whom it was said; In Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

It will be opportune to call the attention of my readers to certain points in this precious story which ought not to be passed by unobserved.

1st. The promptness of the faith and obedience of Abraham to fulfil whatever his God ordained: "*He rose up early*" to do it; and it would seem that without communicating his secret to anybody, he started out on its performance.

2nd. He left nothing to chance: with thoughtful care he made all his preparations beforehand; and for fear that dry wood might be lacking in the locality, he cut and split it at once, lading it upon the ass, which he carried for this special purpose. In the midst of the careful preparations which he was making, Isaac may have noted with surprise that his father did not take with him a lamb of the many which he had in his folds; but he kept silent until, as they were going up together the mount of sacrifice, he addressed to his father that question (vr. 7), which must have broken his heart to pieces.

3rd. The locality is of great significance. In 2 Chron. 3: 1 we are informed that Solomon built a Temple to Jehovah "*on Mount Moriah.*" Beersheba, where at the time they were living (vr. 19), was 25 miles from Hebron, and Hebron was 20 miles from Jerusalem; making 45 miles between Beersheba and Mount Moriah, where the Temple was built, as the exclusive place for offering sacrifices and burning incense before Jehovah, the God of all the earth. These 45 miles are in strict agreement with the



note of distance that we have in vr. 4, that "*on the third day*" Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off," but near enough for him to leave the beast of burden and the two young men there, and set out for the place of sacrifice they two alone, Isaac carrying the wood; as 1900 years after, Jesus also carried his cross, going to the same locality. Some of the Jews, who naturally would desire to avoid this coincidence, place the site of this transaction in Bethel—12 miles to the north of Jerusalem; but, although "*the land of Moriah*" may possibly have extended 12 miles farther to the north, 57 miles is quite too far to have gone there and fulfilled that work of faith "*on the third day.*" For those who believe in a divine revelation, and in the particular providence of God, the circumstance that no other mention of "Moriah" except these two is found in all the Bible, and that the site of the Temple of Solomon corresponds well with the note of distance which Genesis gives us, will be enough to prove satisfactorily that the all-wise God who ordained that "upon one of the mountains of the land of Moriah" Abraham should make the great sacrifice, would ordain likewise that this should be the very spot where the Eternal Father 1900 years afterwards was to offer his great sacrifice—that of his only begotten Son—for the sins of his believing people, the spiritual children of this same Abraham.

4th. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews fixes our attention upon the fact that he who offered this sacrifice "was he that had received the promises," and the victim of the sacrifice was "his only begotten son," for whose advent he had waited 25 years, and in whom the promises given were to have their fulfilment. There we see the resplendent glory of this faith of Abraham, that he did not hesitate on this account, nor ask his God if he had forgotten his promises; nor require of him any explanation of *how* he was going to fulfil them, if Isaac was to perish under the sacrificial knife, and his body be reduced to ashes on the altar; but without entering on inquiries, nor asking explanations of any sort, he was about to crown his faith with the corresponding work, "considering that even from among the dead God was able to raise him up; from whence also he received him in a figure." Thus ought faith to work in us, that God may be glorified in us.

5th. We indignantly reject the suggestion of some of the "critics," that, as it was then common in that country to offer human sacrifices, God wished to prove whether his servant

\*Fifteen miles a day is still the usual rate of travel in mountain countries like the Andes.—Tr.

Abraham had the valor and firmness to make for him as costly a sacrifice, as the zealous pagans offered to their gods of wood and stone and brass. See Geike's *Hours with the Bible*. So a Canaanite contemporary of Abraham might regard it, but not a Christian who uses his Bible as he ought. In reference to the difficulty of an opposite character, which infidels raise, that it is "a barbarity" even to think that God should command Abraham to offer such a sacrifice, it will be sufficient to say, that as they deny that "God so loved the world that *he gave his only begotten Son*" as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, they are simply consistent in denying that he should command Abraham to offer such a sacrifice (which he was going to prevent before it was carried into execution); thus shadowing forth that other sacrifice which 1900 years afterwards was to be carried into effect in the same locality. If they would accept the testimony of the word of God in the one part, they would find no difficulties in the other. If it was no crime for God, by the hands of wicked men, to bring about the sacrifice of his own Son for us, neither was it a crime, nor "a barbarity," that he should command Abraham to prefigure all that in his own family.

6th. Four words, or phrases, here call our attention: 1. "Take in thy hand the fire," seems to indicate that the use of the flint and steel was not at that time known. 2. "The lad" (M. S. V., young man). The general use of the word "lad" in the different Versions has given rise to the idea that Isaac was at that time about fifteen years old. On the contrary, he was about twenty five, according to the common chronology; and the word "young man" better expresses the idea of the Hebrew, which three times in this chapter uses the very same word in speaking of the "young men" whom Abraham brought with him as servants, Vrs. 3, 5, 19. It is likewise the same word which Abraham uses in reference to his soldiers, in ch. 14: 24. Isaac was man enough to carry up the hill, or mountain side, the wood of sacrifice, which up to that point had been carried by the ass, and therefore he was fully able to resist his father, if he himself had not consented to the sacrifice which God demanded. This was as illustrious an act of obedience on his part as on the part of his father, and reminds us of the case of Him who said of his life: "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This *commandment* have I received of my father:" John 10: 18. And in the matter of Isaac's carrying the wood of his own sacrifice, we see at once the likeness to Jesus, who went forth to the place of his great sacrifice "bearing his cross." 3. So also the

words "Now I know that thou fearest God." As a matter of simple, intuitive knowledge, God knew it before; but, humanly speaking, he had then positive proof and experience of it. To the same effect Jesus said in the passage already quoted: "Therefore doth my Father love me [= this constituted a new, peculiar and pre-eminent ground of the Divine complacency], because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me," etc. John 10: 17, 18. Here, as in all the Bible, "the fear of God" is put for practical religion and true piety. 4. In this history, Jehovah calls Isaac "thy son, thine only son;" and the apostle in Hebrews 11: 17 speaks of him as his "only begotten son." Isaac was his "only son" by his own proper wife; and it was usual to make that distinction in such cases. Jacob, led into polygamy against his will, never recognized any one except Rachel as his proper wife, and her sons he always regarded as different from the rest. See ch. 44: 27—29; 48: 6, 7, 22. "Only begotten son" he was also in a certain sense, inasmuch as he was the only one of the promise, and in case of his death there was none of the other sons who could fill his place; resurrection from the dead, as the apostle intimates, alone would have sufficed in such a case.

22: 15—19. GOD RENEWS TO ABRAHAM THE GREAT PROMISE.

(1872 B. C.)

15 And the angel of Jehovah called unto Abraham a second time out of heaven,

16 and said, By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son,

17 that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

18 and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

19 So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.

The divine person who intervened in this matter is twice called "the Angel of Jehovah" (vrs. 11, 15) and both times it is said that he spoke "out of heaven"—in Hebrew "heaven" and "the heavens" are the same thing. Revelations in different forms Abraham had had, but this is the first time that he was spoken to out of the heavens;—according to the information given us in this book. Thus spoke the same divine person, with the same name, to Hagar, the second time that he spoke with her; that is to say, "out of the heavens." Ch. 21: 17. The proof that it was really Jehovah who thus spoke, is seen in vrs. 12 and 16; and

is more amply set forth in *Note 22* (page 187) "on the Angel of Jehovah." For this reason in the Modern Spanish Version the word "Angel" in these passages is printed with a capital letter. It will be sufficient to observe here that in *vr. 12*, this Angel says to Abraham: "Put not forth thy hand against the young man, nor do anything to him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, *from me.*" For the second time the Angel cried to Abraham out of heaven, and this time he speaks plainly under the name of Jehovah, saying: "By myself I have sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this, and hast not withheld thy son," etc.; and then he expressly repeats the covenanted blessings promised to his posterity and to all the nations of the earth. To the blessings already promised, he adds now: "And thy seed shall possess the gate of their enemies"; which is a promise of having and maintaining the dominion over them. As the gate of ancient cities was the strongest part of the wall and the most stoutly defended, and as it was the principal place of concourse for the people, where public affairs were transacted, and justice was administered, "to possess the gate" of a city was really to possess the city itself with all its interests and concerns.

The motive and reason for this renewal or repetition of the great promise at this juncture was, as God said, "because thou hast done this, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." To this illustrious act of faith God doubtless referred, when, on confirming the sworn covenant in the hands of Isaac, he said that he would do that which he had sworn to Abraham, "because Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes and my laws." *Ch. 26: 5.* There can be no doubt that this particular act of faith and obedience was of inestimable value with God. It reminds us of those words already cited, and worthy of repetition, so like to these in form and spirit: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. *This commandment* have I received of my father." *John 10: 17, 18.* Jesus did not do this of his own motion (any more than did Abraham), but in obedience to a commandment. And Paul says that it was because of his "*obedience unto death and the death of the cross,*" that "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name." *Phil. 2: 8, 9.* And although these works and voluntary sufferings of Christ, done on our behalf, in obedience to the will of God, had an infinite value, while those of Abraham had none

whatever as a basis of confidence in himself, or a means of obtaining a justifying righteousness with God, it should never be doubted nor forgotten that, as regards their value and estimation with God, this act of faith and obedience of Abraham possessed it in the highest degree. We should never allow our protest against the false and pernicious Romish doctrine of the merits of good works to obtain remission of sins and eternal life, to obscure in the slightest degree the Bible doctrine of the inestimable value which his people's heroic acts of faith, and their humble, sincere and spontaneous obedience to his revealed will, have with God. Let us be intelligent and self-consistent in this: "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64: 6), when regarded as a ground of merit before God, and as the basis of justification and peace with him; but as the fruit of our faith and obedience, he esteems them of great price, and will most munificently reward them all; so that even a cup of cold water, given in the name of a disciple "shall in no wise lose its reward," as Jesus himself says. Matt. 19: 29. Comp. 1 Peter 3: 4.

To the same effect says the Holy Spirit in Heb. 13: 16: "But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with *such sacrifices* God is well pleased." Moses celebrates the work of Abraham, and Paul his faith, of which his work was the legitimate and indispensable fruit. His faith without the corresponding work would have been a lie; his work without his faith—that is to say without being founded on the word and commandment of God—would have been a crime. The virtue of it all consisted in the fact that he acted *in obedience to what God had commanded him to do*. Without this, it would have been in no respect better than the corresponding act of the pagan Canaanites, and of Israelitish idolaters, in whom it was regarded and held as the most aggravated form of their numerous abominations, that they offered their own sons and daughters in sacrifice to their idols. Deut. 12: 31; 18: 10; Ps. 106: 37, 38; Jer. 19: 5.

No such sacrifice is demanded of us as this of Abraham; but if Christian parents withhold their children from God, when he calls them to the missionary work, or to any other difficult or painful enterprise of his, or if they rebel against his manifest will, when he takes them away by the hand of death, it is a sad proof that they know little or nothing of the obedience of Abraham, or of the blessing that accompanied it: "*Because thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.*"

When this sacrifice was finished, which God regarded as an accomplished work (Heb. 11: 17), in view of the undivided purpose with which his servant undertook to execute what was com-

manded, Abraham and Isaac returned to their young men, who waited with the ass at the foot of the mount, and setting out on their journey, they returned to Beersheba; and there they abode for many years.

22: 20—24. ABRAHAM RECEIVES TIDINGS FROM THE FAMILY OF HIS BROTHER NAHOR. (1872(?) B. C.)

20 And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she also hath borne children unto thy brother Nahor:

21 Uz his first-born, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram,

22 and Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.

23 And Bethuel begat Rebekah; these eight did Milcah bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother.

24 And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she also bare Tehah, and Gaham, and Tahash, and Maacah.

Some time after what is related in the preceding paragraph, Abraham received this intelligence from his brother's family. The common chronology, given in our Bibles, reckons that this occurred the same year. The commentator Adam Clarke supposes that it happened ten years later: it would be as easy to suppose that it was twelve or fourteen. If we conjecture that Isaac was twenty five years old at the time of the sacrifice which was not carried into effect, there would remain fifteen years until the time of his marriage with Rebekah; because he was forty years old at that time (ch. 25: 20); but as it is certain that these tidings had to do with that marriage, and are mentioned here for that reason, fifteen years seems to us an unreasonable interval.

It would seem that in those times little intelligence passed between the separated members of the same family. The distance was about 500 miles in a direct line between Beersheba and Haran, the city of Nahor; and when Jacob passed twenty years there, it does not appear that in all that time he had tidings from the family of his father Isaac. It is probable that Abraham had not had tidings from his brother in many years, when there came to him this opportune intelligence with reference to the number and even the names of the children of his brother Nahor; twelve in all, together with one grandson, and one granddaughter, Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, who later became the wife of Isaac. Such information would be interesting in itself, but as Rebekah is expressly mentioned, and by name, it is to be supposed that it is given here, after the escape of Isaac from a sacrificial death, as a prelude to the embassy in search of a wife for Isaac, which occupies the whole of chapter 24.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## VRS. 1—9. THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF SARAH. (1860 B. C.)

1 And the life of Sarah was a hundred and seven and twenty years: these were the years of the life of Sarah.

2 And Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (the same is Hebron), in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

3 And Abraham rose up from before his dead, and spake unto the children of Heth, saying,

4 I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

5 And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him,

6 Hear us, my lord: thou art a prince of God\* among us; in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead.

7 And Abraham rose up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth.

8 And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar,

9 that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for the full price let him give it to me in the midst of you for a possession of a burying-place.

[\*A. V. and M. S. V., a mighty prince.]

The longest life comes to an end at last. At 127 years of age Sarah, "the princess," died. It is probable that she died of sickness rather than of old age, in view of the fact that Abraham attained to 175 years, and Isaac to 180; and in our day it is ordinary for women to live to be as old as men. It is likewise possible that she died unexpectedly, if we are to understand literally the words "Sarah died in Hebron, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her." Whence then did he come? We have seen that Abraham lived many long years in Beersheba, and we shall see that, after this, he continued to live long near to his famous well of this name, and under the shade of the grove which he had planted there. But Hebron also had been the place of his residence, in the oak-grove of Mamre, situated 25 miles to the N. E. of Beersheba (and 20 to the south of Jerusalem), where Abraham resided for twenty years, when the events happened that are related from ch. 13: 8 till ch. 20: 1, that is to say, till after the destruction of Sodom; and as the usages of the Orientals do not admit of the supposition that Sarah was there on a visit to friends, it is probable that Abraham had his immense encampment and estate divided between different localities, for the convenience of pasturage, and that Sarah was with one part in the oak-grove of Mamre, near to Hebron, while Abraham, not expecting so sad an event, was at Beersheba, looking after his interests there.

Hebron still exists, and with Damascus the two are among the most ancient cities of the world. It was built seven years before the famous city of Zoan in Egypt (Num. 13: 22), by the Anakim probably, and, was originally called Kirjath-arba (= City of Arba); "the which Arba was a great man among the Anakim." Josh. 14: 15. There, in the days of Abraham, the Hittites resided (vrs. 5, 7, 20), and among them his friend and ally Mamre, from whom took name the oak-grove of Mamre, and after whom also the city is called "the city of Mamre," in ch. 25: 27.

There, or in the encampment close by, Sarah died; and Abraham came to mourn for her and to weep for her. This is the first notice we have of the funeral rites of the old time, and of the mourning, about which we read so often in the Bible; a custom which still forms their distinctive trait in Oriental lands. The words "to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her" give us to understand that this was more than the expression of his sincere and deep mourning for his aged companion, with whom he had walked in his life of sojourning for the space of 65 or 70 years; but in the funeral rites so designated we feel sure that those extravagancies would be avoided which are usual among the eastern peoples; which ill accord with the character of severe simplicity which marks all the actions of this great prince, the friend of God. Isaac was about 36 years of age, his mother being about 91 at the time of his birth; and he, being yet unmarried, would take a very pathetic part in the mourning for his mother. The mourning for Jacob in Egypt, a thing of etiquette and ceremony, lasted 70 days, and that of his burial 7 days more. Ch. 50: 3—10. We are not told how many days, or how many hours, were spent in the mourning for Sarah; but it would seem that Abraham performed it seated, or prostrate on the ground; because when that ceremony was ended, "*Abraham rose up* from the presence of his dead," and spoke with the children of Heth for the purpose of obtaining the possession of a burial place where he might deposit the mortal remains of his aged companion.

But why should Abraham have deferred so important a matter till so inopportune an hour? Undoubtedly he had buried many individuals of his encampment in the 72 years he had sojourned in Canaan, 20 of them right there in the oak-grove of Mamre; so that he did not need a place of burial in general, but the possession of a burial-place for his own family. There did not exist among the Canaanites anything of that insane prejudice which exists today only in Roman Catholic countries and among the Turks, against allowing the rites of burial to those who are of a different religion from themselves,—as if the mother earth had



not space in her broad bosom for the mortal remains of all her children, irrespective of their religious beliefs and practices, or of their moral character: Abraham therefore did not have to contend against prejudices of this nature; why then did he not have the place already prepared? It is probable that from a period antedating the destruction of Sodom (at which time Abraham departed for the South country) he knew perfectly well this cave of Machpelah, and had it already chosen as a place that would suit him for his own especial use; but in his nomadic life it would not have been prudent to acquire it as his own property many years before he had need for it, and then abandon it to the use of others. The unexpected death of Sarah, in the neighborhood of Hebron settled the question as to the place of burial, and found her husband not yet possessor of the locality which, as we suppose, he had already selected.

The story is extremely interesting: it is beautiful in its simplicity, and presents to us a vivid picture of Oriental usages and customs, which we shall in vain seek elsewhere, unless it be in the arrangement for the marriage of Ruth, which in its external circumstances, greatly resembles this. Ruth 4: 1—12. This conference, like that, took place in the gate of the city (vrs. 10, 18), where all public and much private business was transacted, where the judges administered justice, and persons of quality sat to discuss matters of general interest. See ch. 19: 1 and comments. Going therefore to the gate of the city, Abraham made known the purpose of his coming,—that of acquiring the possession of a burial-place among them, in order to bury his dead, hiding it “out of his sight”; and it was a case that did not admit of delay. The words “bury it out of my sight” are extremely pathetic, manifesting how soon that which we most esteem in life, when once the vital breath departs, is turned into an object of repugnance, which we need to *hide out of our sight!* Humbling confession, but in a high degree salutary for us mortal sinners!

The reply of the children of Heth manifests the ascendancy which this great man everywhere possessed, in Egypt, in Gerar, or in Hebron, and the great respect with which he was everywhere regarded—so different from the treatment which was accorded to his son Isaac, and also to Jacob. “A great prince (*Heb.* prince of God), art thou in the midst of us.” They told him therefore to choose at his pleasure, and bury his dead in the best of their sepulchres. But this was not all in conformity with the wishes of Abraham; what he desired was the possession of a burial-place of his own, for himself and his immediate family. As therefore he had sat down after speaking, he stood up again,

and bowed himself before the people of the land. This bowing before the children of Heth was in token of profound respect, and of the esteem in which he held the generous offer that had been made him. In the same way Abraham and Lot had bowed their faces to the earth before the heavenly visitors, in the belief that they were no more than distinguished strangers. Ch. 18: 2 and 19: 1. In all these cases the Latin Vulgate says *adoravit*, which according to Salvá in his Latin-Spanish Dictionary, signifies not only to "adore" but "to salute with humility," and to "prostrate one's self"; a sense which the word "adore" does not have in Spanish or in English; and yet grave Roman Catholic authors argue that if Abraham "adored" the sons of Heth, how much more is it lawful and proper to "adore" the canonized saints, together with their images and relics? But the real argument is precisely the reverse of this, and goes to prove that what it was lawful to do with men, in compliment and courtesy, according to the usages of the Orientals, God has strictly prohibited, from the moment it is done as an act of religious worship: "*Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them; for I, Jehovah thy God, am a jealous God*" (Ex. 20: 4, 5); or as he says with equal emphasis by the mouth of Isaiah: "I am Jehovah, that is my name; my glory will I not give to another, nor my praise to graven images." Isa. 42: 8. Most remarkable is this fact, and worthy of ceaseless remembrance, that the act which is lawful and proper as a social courtesy, God holds to be a grievous sin the instant it is done in worship paid to any beside himself. I take off my hat to a lady, or when I enter a church, and nobody misunderstands me; but to uncover in the street, or to incline the body before an image, or a consecrated wafer, everybody understands to be *an act of religious worship*. Anybody, however simple he be, can distinguish between the two acts. It is to be noted in passing that the Jews ordinarily prayed to God *standing* (Matt. 6: 5; Mark. 11: 25; Luke 18: 11, 13), with the arms crossed on the breast, and with the head inclined, or the upper part of the body bowed toward the earth.

23: 10—20. ABRAHAM BUYS FOR HIMSELF THE POSSESSION OF A BURIAL-PLACE IN THE LAND OF PROMISE. (1860 B. C.)

10 Now Ephron was sitting in the midst of the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying,

11 Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give thee: in the presence of the children of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead.

12 And Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land.

13 And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt, I pray thee, hear me: I will give the price of the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there.

14 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him,

15 My lord, hearken unto me: a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead.

16 And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the children of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.

17 So the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the border thereof round about, were made sure

18 unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.

19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre (the same is Hebron), in the land of Canaan.

20 And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying-place by the children of Heth.

It would seem that Abraham, absent for many years from Hebron, did not by sight know Ephron, the owner of the land and of the cave which he desired to purchase; or if he knew him, he had some misgivings as to his willingness to agree to the transaction, so that he asked those present to intervene in the business, in order to induce the owner to sell him the property at its full value. Ephron was then sitting in the midst of them, and he answered for himself, taking for witnesses all those who came in and went out of the gate, that with entire good will he frankly gave him the field and the cave; and that Abraham should proceed to bury his dead without further delay. This bears the appearance of great magnanimity, and because of its ostentation of greatness of soul, this style of thing is very much *the mode* among the Orientals (and among some Occidentals as well); but alas for the unfortunate who accepts in good faith this class of offers! Abraham well understood with whom he was dealing; and bowing himself again, in acknowledgment of the magnanimous words of Ephron, he insists on making the purchase in hard cash; and, knowing as he did the usages of the times and the people, he asks as a favor that Ephron will accept payment for the property at its full value; and then he would bury there his dead. With the same affectation of magnanimity, Ephron names the price (which it may be understood was many times the real value of the land), saying "My lord, the land is worth 400 shekels; but *what is that between me and thee?* Bury thy dead." At the usual valuation of 60 cents a shekel, the 400 shekels would amount to

\$240 gold of our money, the value of which at that time would be five or ten times its worth today. Considering that a slave was worth thirty shekels (\$18) in the time of Moses (Ex. 21: 32), and that in the days of the Judges the salary of "a father and a priest," who offered his services and was accepted, amounted to "ten shekels of silver" (\$6) by the year, and a suit of apparel and his victuals (Judg. 17: 10), one can form an idea of the magnanimity of Ephron who affected to regard as an insignificant sum 400 shekels of silver, for a field that had no value for Abraham aside from the cave where he wished to lay his dead. Well, very well will it be for our evangelicals to learn in their business and in all their social relations to make use of that simplicity, sincerity and veracity which the gospel commends and teaches us, and which comes to distinguish all the nations that have felt its formative influence.

Abraham cheerfully paid the money, "current money with the merchant," weighing it out in a faithful balance, in the presence of the sons of Heth. The art of coining money it seems was invented something like 700 years before Christ, though it was not practiced among the Jews until the time of the Maccabees. Before that, purchases were made by weighing in the balance the gold and silver, in the form of bars, ingots, or jewels; which was extraordinarily favorable to the practice of dishonesty in pecuniary transactions, and gave occasion for the frequent denunciations of Holy Writ against false weights and balances.

In the time of Jeremiah they made use of deeds of purchase, signed and sealed in the presence of witnesses (Jer. 32: 9—15); but in the days of Abraham eye-witnesses accredited the deed, as also in the days of Boaz and Ruth (Ruth 4: 7—11); and the gate of the city was the place where all such transactions took place. According to the usages of the Orientals, once the cave of Machpelah was used for the burial of Sarah, it would remain inviolate for the family of Abraham, whether he and his dwelt in Hebron, in Beersheba or in Egypt. Ch. 49: 29—32.

In mountainous and hilly countries, caves, in addition to serving as habitations for the living (ch. 19: 30), served likewise as places of sepulture for the dead; and the mouth of the cave being closed with great stones, for defence against wild animals, there was a moral certainty that no hand of man would violate the repose of their mortal remains. Ordinarily, and according to the several ability of the proprietors, they were cut into different chambers, with galleries and niches, where (without a

coffin) were deposited the bodies of the dead, without being covered with earth. As this cave of Machpelah served for at least three generations, it is evident that some such work was done there after the burial of Sarah; Jacob, who was buried in the same cave (ch. 49: 29—32), said to Joseph in Egypt, making him swear to its faithful performance: "*In the grave which I have digged (Heb. cut) for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me.*" Ch. 50: 5. But it is clear that Abraham did nothing of the kind before he buried Sarah there.

This is the first notice we have in the Bible of the holding of real estate, and its manner of transfer from one owner to another; and it is interesting from many points of view. Abraham claimed the right of property in the well which he had dug in Beersheba in the open pasture lands; and he took measures to prove that fact. Ch. 21: 30. Here, he to whom God had given the whole land, without giving him a foot-breadth of it in actual possession, bought for himself the possession of a burial-place in the land of promise; and he took pains to secure it by all the formalities known in that day, so that his title should remain indisputable; and having finished all these formalities, he buried there his dead wife.

Peter celebrates the virtues of Sarah, and sets her as a model for the imitation of Christian women (1 Pet. 3: 5, 6); and Paul celebrates her faith, (Heb. 11: 12); but though a faithful and exemplary wife, and doubtless an affectionate mother, she seems, according to the little that is related of her, to have been impatient of God's delay to fulfil his promises, rash and inconsiderate in the remedies which she applied to meet the need, and little submissive as regards the consequences of her error. It was natural that the "princess" (= Sarah) should have been proud; it is certain that she was jealous of her rival Hagar, and she was surely imprudent. On the former occasion, she "maltreated" Hagar, so that she fled to the desert (ch. 16: 6); and the word *maltreated* (Span. Vers.), implies not only harsh treatment, but cruelty as well (*Heb. afflicted*);—it is the word always used of the oppression of Israel in Egypt; and when the last offence was committed, which was not the less Hagar's for being the act of her son (ch. 21: 9, 10), Sarah's demand: "Cast out this slave (= bondwoman) and her son; for the son of this slave shall not be heir with my son, with Isaac!"—her demand seems to have been somewhat imperious, as well as harsh. Without danger of mistake, we may be sure that the honored wife of Abraham was not as amiable as she was beau-

tiful. But we should be thankful that there is place in the kingdom of God for persons of every different form of natural disposition and temper.

The Hittites are mentioned in this chapter as the people who occupied Hebron. The Egyptian and Assyrian monuments speak of the Hittites as a powerful and cultured nation which for long time ruled over a great part of Canaan, and over Syria to the north of it, from the river Orontes as far as Carchemish on the river Euphrates. From Josh. 1:4, it would appear that the land in general from Lebanon to the river Euphrates on the north, and to the Mediterranean Sea on the west, was called "all the land of the Hittites"; which corresponds with what those monuments say of the power and dominion of the descendants of Heth, the second son of Canaan.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

VRS. 1—9. A WIFE IS SOUGHT FOR ISAAC. (1857 B. C.)

1 And Abraham was old, *and* well stricken in age: and Jehovah had blessed Abraham in all things.

2 And Abraham said unto his servant, the elder of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

3 and I will make thee swear by Jehovah, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that thou wilt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:

4 but thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac.

5 And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?

6 And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.

7 Jehovah, the God of Heaven, who took me from my father's house, and from the land of my nativity, and who spake unto me, and who sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he will send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife for my son from thence.

8 And if the woman be not willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath; only thou shalt not bring my son thither again.

9 And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning this matter.

The solicitous and scrupulous care with which Abraham sought a wife for his son Isaac, a wife whose character and condition should not frustrate the great purpose of his calling and that of his posterity, places in very clear light the mad precipitancy, or foolish carelessness, with which many persons who make a profession of piety, enter into the marriage state, and the little care they exercise as to whether the woman be apt or inapt to fulfil the duties of wife and mother. Many excellent

men, and even some who excel in their Christian character and personal endowments, and even many ministers of the gospel, have done themselves enormous injury, and sometimes have reduced their character and influence to a nullity, by means of an improper or ill-advised marriage. There are some who do not use as much intelligent care in selecting one who shall be the mother of their children, and have a formative and decisive influence in their character and destiny, both temporal and eternal, as in seeking a clerk for their business or a herdsman for their cattle.

Not so Abraham. Isaac was 40 years old. His mother was dead, and Abraham had reliable information about the family of his brother Nahor, which gave promise that he would find in his family the companion he sought for his son. For some years past the name of Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor, was familiar in his house. Ch. 22: 23. Abraham was well advanced in days, and the recent death of Sarah (three years before, chs. 17: 17; 23: 1; 25: 20) reminded him of the uncertainty of his own life. He desired therefore, that Isaac without further delay should marry. He sought for his son a wife of his own tribe, who should have no relations of friendship or kindred with the idolatrous Canaanites; relations such as might endanger the divine purpose which had separated him from the idolatries of his own family, 75 years before; a woman who would readily comprehend the mission of his family, and cheerfully lend herself to its fulfilment.

Beautiful women, and "of good family," there were among the Canaanites, who from any worldly point of view were suitable to be received into his family, and whose fathers would esteem it a great honor to ally themselves with a great prince like Abraham; and from the difficulty there was in communicating with his own people, it would be easy that, through a fraudulent understanding with any of the princes of Canaan, some well-born Hittite or Canaanite woman might be substituted for a woman of his own race. But what a calamity this would be for Isaac, who was naturally of a soft and yielding disposition! and how calamitous for the hopes of the entire world, which he held in his hands! See ch. 18: 18, 19. Abraham did not wish, therefore, in a matter of such transcendent importance to trust merely to the proved integrity of his steward, the elder of his house, but took of him a formal and solemn oath that he would not deceive him in this commission and embassy. The servant saw at once the difficulties of his commission, and he evidently knew beforehand that it was not the will

of Abraham that his son should return to the land from whence God had brought him out. Fearing therefore the oath which was demanded of him, and knowing that the death of his master was possible during the time of his absence, before giving the oath which was asked he inquired whether, in case the woman should refuse to follow him to that land, unknown to her, he should carry his son there. Abraham did not wish that his son should return to Haran; for the very reason that he had not himself gone back to visit his people, because contrary to the express terms of his divine calling. He therefore said to him that under no circumstances whatsoever, should he do so; that the God who had called him, and had intrusted to his hands so great and precious promises, would send his angel before him and would arrange it all. Great faith had Abraham in his God; and the ministry of angels, and in particular that of the Angel-Jehovah (see ch. 48: 15, 16), entered into all his conceptions of God's divine providence; and the event justified this supreme confidence of his. He said to him, therefore, that he would be free from that oath, if he went to his kindred and they should refuse to give him the woman asked for (vr. 41); but always under the condition that he should in no case carry his son there.

The form of the oath which Abraham demanded of him we do not find to be used on any other occasion, except that on which Jacob took oath of his son Joseph that he would not bury him in the land of Egypt, or anywhere else than the land given by God to his fathers. Ch. 47: 29—41. The form, doubtless, had to do with the covenant of circumcision and its seal, in both cases; as though he had in view the promise of that land which the patriarchs were unwilling to abandon either in life or in death. This scruple being removed, the steward took the oath in the form required.

[NOTE 23.—On "*the Elder*." Here, for the first time in the Old Testament, we meet with the "Elder" as an official title. The translation given in the old Versions (including the A. V. English), "his eldest servant of his house," is undoubtedly incorrect. Abraham's steward was a vigorous, active, enterprising and most capable man, who was neither "old" nor still less "the oldest of his house"; and with the best of cause the Revision translates it "*the elder of his house*, that ruled over all that he had." It is a fact, which should never be lost sight of, that in the Old Testament, the government of the people, both civil and religious, was in the hands, not of the priests, but of the "elders" appointed for that purpose; and it would seem that this form



of popular government was general in the surrounding nations; for we read of "the elders of the house of Pharaoh," "the elders of Egypt," "the elders of Moab," "the elders of Midian," etc. Ch. 50: 7; Num. 22: 4—7. It is important to remember always that neither in the Old Testament nor in the times of the New Testament were Jewish priests the governors of the people; but on the contrary, "the elders of the people," "the elders of Israel," "the elders of the city," "the elders of Gilead," "the elders of Jabesh," etc.,—not one, but a plurality of elders,—were always the immediate rulers of the people, including the government of the synagogue. "The elders of the people" represented and governed them even in the midst of the slavery of Egypt. Ex. 3: 16—18. This is a clear indication that popular government derives its origin from very ancient times, and even under despotic kings, "the elders of the people," or "the elders of the city," served as some manner of check upon the arbitrary proceedings of the throne. 1 Kings 21: 8, 11. And when in the New Testament we pass from the civil State to the Synagogue, and from the Synagogue to the Church, we observe the same fact, to wit, POPULAR GOVERNMENT, by means of elders or presbyters. Acts 14: 23; Tit. 1: 15. Only in the Roman church, ever since they cast down every divine institution which they have not been able to turn to the account of their own narrow and selfish purposes, has the priest been elevated above the civil power, as the supreme government; and "the elder," or presbyter, they have turned into a "priest"; in order that free and popular government may be forever destroyed.]

24: 10—27. ABRAHAM'S STEWARD SETS OUT FOR MESOPOTAMIA, TO HARAN, THE CITY OF NAHOR. THE MEETING WITH REBEKAH. (1857 B. C.)

10 And the servant took ten camels, of the camels of his master, and departed, having all goodly things of his master's in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.

11 And he made the camels to kneel down without the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time that women go out to draw water.

12 And he said, O Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, send me, I pray thee, good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham.

13 Behold, I am standing by the fountain of water; and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water:

14 and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master.

15 And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah,

the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

16 And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the fountain, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

17 And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Give me to drink, I pray thee, a little water from thy pitcher.

18 And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

19 And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.

20 And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw, and drew for all his camels.

21 And the man looked steadfastly on her, holding his peace, to know whether Jehovah had made his journey prosperous or not.

22 And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden ring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold,

23 and said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee. Is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?

24 And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bare unto Nahor.

25 She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.

26 And the man bowed his head, and worshipped Jehovah.

27 And he said, Blessed be Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, who hath not forsaken his lovingkindness and his truth toward my master: as for me, Jehovah hath led me in the way to the house of my master's brethren.

Abraham bound his steward with a solemn oath that he would not betray his confidence in so important a matter; but who was to answer for it that he did not betray the confidence of the woman and her family? In order that on this side there should be no lack of complete security, Abraham ordered his steward to take ten camels of the camels of his master, laden with the choicest of his goods and possessions; and this would serve both as a dowry, and also as a guaranty that he was really the servant of Abraham.

The journey of 500 miles is described in a single line: "And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor." Arriving there at the close of day, he made his camels to kneel down, and waited beside the well, from whence all the city, and probably all the cattle of the surrounding district were supplied with water (ch. 29: 2, 3); and he raised his heart to God in prayer, that, at that hour, when the daughters of the men of the city were coming forth to draw water, the God of his master Abraham, would designate to him, then and there, which among them he had appointed for his servant Isaac. This spring of waters is twice called a "well" in this chapter, and seven times it is called a "fountain"; and in vr. 16 we are told that Rebekah "went down to the fountain and filled her pitcher, and came up"; all which seems to indicate that it

was in fact a spring of waters, which they had deepened, leaving steps to go down and come up on them; differing in this from the well, so called, from which the water is drawn with a rope. The servant, doubtless carried with him, on so long a journey, the means of drawing water in case of need, and his men were as capable of going down and up the steps as was Rebekah; it appears, therefore, either that he had only just arrived, or that it was his fine device, and not his necessity, which led him to ask water of the first young woman who came. And Rebekah must have been the first; for before he had done offering his petition (not audibly, but "in his heart," *vr.* 45), Rebekah presented herself and fulfilled to the letter what he had thought out as an excellent means of resolving his doubts. The sign thus devised, asked, and performed, was most excellent from another point of view, since it indicated that the young woman who was to be his new mistress, was courteous, amiable and obliging; so that the servant asked a good mistress for himself, a good wife for Isaac, and a divine election and designation, all in one breath. A good lesson is this in favor of courtesy and politeness in our department, whether with persons known or unknown. How much did Rebekah gain for herself that day, from being attentive and obliging to strangers!

The family of Bethuel was in moderate circumstances. The twelve sons of his father Nahor (*ch.* 22:20—24), must have reduced to very little the part of the family estate which fell to each one in particular. The circumstance that Rebekah, a beautiful young woman, should go forth to draw water, suggests it, but does not prove it; for they had servants for other work (*vr.* 61), and it seems that it was the custom of the town "for the daughters of the men of the city to go forth to draw water" at that hour,—women of the highest respectability, among whom the servant of Abraham thought he would find a wife worthy of the son of Abraham. But so far as we can ascertain from indications given, Bethuel had no other children than Rebekah and her brother Laban, who after the departure of Rebekah, inherited the whole estate of his father; notwithstanding which, he was a poor man when Jacob, the son of Rebekah, took charge of his flocks, 90 or 95 years afterwards, and God commenced to bless him by the management of his nephew. *Ch.* 30:30. From all which we infer with certainty that the arrival of such an embassy in search of a wife for the son and heir of the rich and powerful prince Abraham, could not fail to produce a very deep impression upon the

family, and among all the people of the town. This device of proposing some particular sign by which to ascertain the will of God, is of very old use and abuse in the world; of which this is the first instance we find in the Bible. The same usage would seem to be as common today as in Bible times. Gideon betook himself twice to this expedient for dispelling his doubts (Judg. 6: 17, 37); but it is very ill-advised, in our day, to leave the practical and important decisions of life to the arbitrament of signs of this kind; and very grievous errors arise from accrediting God with the outcome of such tests. With the book of God for our teaching, with his providence and Spirit for our guide, and with the throne of the heavenly grace always accessible through Jesus Christ, *it is as useful as it is necessary for us to bear the responsibility of our own decisions*, in the doubtful and difficult cases of life; and God wishes thus to form in his sons and daughters that robustness and firmness of character which is always lacking in those who govern their actions by the supposed signs of good or evil fortune, or who leave the resolution of their doubts and scruples in the hands of some confessor or spiritual guide, who pretends to act for them in God's stead; contrary to the express command of Christ. Matt. 23: 9, 10.

The steward, surprised and even amazed at the so prompt and exact fulfilment of the sign which he had asked of the God of his master Abraham, fastened his eyes upon Rebekah, with admiration and rejoicing; yet, like a prudent man, he waited to assure himself more completely of the fact. But when he learned from her own mouth that she was that Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor, of whom they had personal knowledge in the house of his master, even before the death of Sarah, and whose name was a familiar word there, he broke forth in blessings upon Jehovah, the God of his master Abraham, who had led him by a straight way to the house of the brethren of his master. He therefore placed a golden ring in her nostril and bracelets upon her hand (vr. 47); and she, without waiting for anything further, ran to carry the unexpected tidings to the "house of her *mother*" (vr. 28): the servant had naturally asked after the "house of her *father*." Vr. 23. It is to be noticed that he did not put two rings in her ears, but one ring, or nose-jewel, in her nostril. This offends our taste; but such was and still is the usage of the women of the Orient.

## 24: 28—33. LABAN AND ABRAHAM'S STEWARD. (1857 B. C.)

28 And the damsel ran, and told her mother's house according to these words.

29 And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the fountain.

30 And it came to pass, when he saw the ring, and the bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he was standing by the camels at the fountain.

31 And he said, Come in, thou blessed of Jehovah; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.

32 And the man came into the house, and he ungirded the camels; and he gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men that were with him.

33 And there was set food before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on.

It would seem that Bethuel had no other children but Laban and Rebekah; and when she heard the pious ejaculations of *praise to Jehovah, the God of his master Abraham*, which his steward uttered, on seeing his desires and prayers so wonderfully fulfilled and so instantaneously, she ran and told the news in the "house of her *mother*." Laban on hearing it, set out to run, and the sight of the jewels of gold which he saw on the person of his sister, lent wings to his feet. In this short paragraph we have a living and breathing portraiture of Laban, such as he appears without disguise in the history of Jacob:—selfish, covetous of gold, sagacious, astute, a noisy boaster, and unscrupulous as to the means of gaining his ends. It is evident that Bethuel, whether from natural deficiency, or from dotage, amounted to little or nothing, and nobody made any account of him. In vr. 28, it is said that although the servant asked as to *the house of her father* (vr. 23), Rebekah related the incident of the well in *the house of her mother*; and in the whole chapter Bethuel passes for nothing but the father of Rebekah; and even when in vr. 50, we are told that he did say something, he is mentioned after Laban, and only as concurring in what he had said. In the rest of the story he is not even mentioned, but Laban and his mother do everything. Laban is the great man who takes charge of the whole business. On hearing, therefore, the message of his sister, and seeing on her person the jewels of gold, he runs to the well where the man was still standing, and says to him: "*I have prepared the house and room for the camels*," without having done anything at all; and although he repudiated Jehovah, the new God of Abraham (see ch. 31: 29, 30, 42, 53), with open mouth he salutes in his name the servant of Abraham, standing there beside the

fountain: "Come in thou blessed of Jehovah! wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house and room for the camels." He made himself busy in bringing straw and forage for the camels, and water to wash the feet of the whole party; for it seems that the sight of the gold, and the hope of material profit, moved the innermost fibres of his sordid heart, and set in action the most powerful springs of his being; as we shall see farther on, in chapters 29, 30 and 31.

When they had come to the house, and the camels were unloaded and cared for, and the feet of the travellers were washed, they set food before them; but the steward, diligent in everything, the model of a faithful servant, refused to eat until he had made known the business upon which he had come.

24: 34—49. ABRAHAM'S STEWARD MAKES KNOWN HIS BUSINESS.  
(1857 B. C.)

34 And he said, I am Abraham's servant.

35 And Jehovah hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and men-servants and maid-servants, and camels and asses.

36 And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath.

37 And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell:

38 but thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son.

39 And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.

40 And he said unto me, Jehovah, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house:

41 then shalt thou be clear from my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give her not to thee, thou shalt be clear from my oath.

42 And I came this day unto the fountain, and said, O Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go:

43 behold, I am standing by the fountain of water; and let it come to pass, that the maiden that cometh forth to draw, to whom I shall say, Give me, I pray thee, a little water from thy pitcher to drink;

44 and she shall say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom Jehovah hath appointed for my master's son.

45 And before I had done speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the fountain, and drew: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee.

46 And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also.

47 And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the ring upon her nose, and the bracelets upon her hands.

48 And I bowed my head, and worshipped Jehovah, and blessed Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter for his son.

49 And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.

The paragraph does not call for explanations or comments; it is a relation *in extenso* of what has already been said, which Abraham's steward makes in order that Rebekah and her family might see the surprising way in which God had brought him, in his performance of the commission which his master had given him; and then he leaves them to determine for themselves whether or not it would suit them to comply with the request that Rebekah should become the wife of his master Isaac. In ch. 25: 5, that is related as history which the servant of Abraham here declares in the way of information, regarding the immense estate of his master; viz, that Abraham had given everything to Isaac, for whom he asked the hand of Rebekah. It is probable that to the seven sons of his two concubines he had already given rich portions, such as was suitable to them as his sons, and had sent them far away from Isaac, previous to his marriage; so that the servant might well say that Abraham had given his whole estate to Isaac. See comments on ch. 25: 1—4, 5, 6, where will be given conclusive reasons for believing that Abraham took to wife Keturah, not only before the death of Sarah, but before the birth of Isaac; so that long before the marriage of Isaac, at forty years of age, all his half-brothers had received their portions and had removed from the encampment. It is the usage of the Bible to make what is said in one part supplement, or limit, what is said about the same matter in another,—an important rule for us to observe in our interpretations of Scripture. The steward in effect tells Rebekah and her family that the brother of Nahor had been greatly prospered by the blessing of Jehovah, his new God; so that he was exceedingly rich in flocks and herds, in silver and gold, in men-servants and maid-servants, in camels and asses; and that Isaac, the son of his old age, by Sarah, his own proper wife, was his only heir. This would be very true, even if Abraham gave portions to the seven sons of his concubines after this; but more strikingly true if it were so that they, being older than Isaac, had already received the share of their father's goods and chattels which was coming to them, and had been sent away towards the east country before the marriage of Isaac. Having set forth thus fully the subject, he left the question to their decision, asking only that they would make it directly

and without delay, simply and decisively; in order that in case they did not accede to his request, he might at once "turn to the right or the left"; that is to say, apply to the other sons of Nahor for the same purpose.

24: 50—53. LABAN AND HIS FATHER BETHUEL GRANT THE REQUEST OF THE STEWARD. (1857 B. C.)

50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from Jehovah: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good.

51 Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as Jehovah hath spoken.

52 And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself down to the earth unto Jehovah.

53 And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.

In all this matter Laban acts the part of the great man, and Bethuel, the father of the young woman, is almost a nullity. This is the reason why Josephus, the Jewish historian, supposes that Bethuel, the father of Rebekah and Laban, had died several years before, and that the Bethuel of verse 50, was a younger brother of Rebekah and of Laban;—a supposition adopted by some commentators. But there is not the remotest suggestion of such a thing in the text, or in any other part of the Bible. On the contrary, vrs. 50, 53 treat of Laban as the only brother of Rebekah, to whom, together with herself and her mother, the servant of Abraham made gifts of precious things, but without making account of any other brother, or of the father; and it is to be observed also, that when the servant of Abraham asked Rebekah if there was place for them "in the house of *her father*," she replied that there was; without giving any intimation that she no longer had a father.

The formal presentation of his cause which the servant of Abraham had made, had the desired effect; and at once Laban declared (in which his father Bethuel concurred), that the whole business was from Jehovah, whose will it did not become them to oppose: and they at once disposed of the person of Rebekah, without even consulting her. This was and still is the manner of the Orientals in disposing of their women, who in this matter conform to the will of their fathers, who have, as they are told, the right to dispose of them. In fact, just as happens among pagan nations today, the suitor paid the dowry of the woman to her father and her family. Abraham understood this very well when he sent ten camels loaded with the most precious things he had, in part as gifts to the young woman, but a great part of it would go as her dowry, and he



paid to the family; a point about which there would be no dispute in a case like this, where gifts were so many and so rich. Jacob paid the dowry of his beloved Rachel with seven years of personal labor, and the villain Laban, by means of a cruel deception, appropriated this as the dowry of Leah, whom Jacob neither asked for nor loved, and obliged him to bind himself for seven other years of service, before he could gain possession of Rachel; of all which dowry they two received no part whatever: see ch. 31: 15, 41. And young Shechem, enamored of Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, said to him and to his sons: "Ask me never so much dowry and gifts, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me; but give me the damsel to wife!" Ch. 34: 12. And yet, as they left it entirely to the will of Rebekah, whether or not she would go at once with the servant of Abraham, as he asked, it is probable that on acceding without delay to the servant's petition, they saw very clearly that the engagement would be altogether in accord with her own wishes. On hearing so grateful intelligence from the mouth of Laban and Bethuel, and on seeing the business which had brought him so promptly concluded, and so much to his satisfaction, the servant of Abraham prostrated himself to the earth before Jehovah, in the attitude of adoring thankfulness and worship. The circumstance that there was there neither altar, nor sacrifice, nor vision, nor any other manifestation of the presence of God, gives to us the unchallengeable and most precious evidence that even in those remote times, the pious servants of God recognized his presence in every place, and "worshipped him in spirit and in truth";—a point on which Jesus insists that it is, it will be, and always has been indispensable, in order that our worship may be pleasing to God. John 4: 24.

The subject being thus happily concluded, "the servant brought forth jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah; he gave also precious things to her brother and to her mother,"—and all this before he would sit down to eat! Happy Abraham in having so faithful and zealous a steward! Bethuel was undoubtedly in his dotage, or in some way lacking in judgment and weight of character, for them to make so little account of him; because it was to the father, first of all, that the dowry of his daughters belonged. Ex. 22: 17.

24: 54—61. THE FAITHFUL AND ASSIDUOUS STEWARD. REBEKAH CONSENTS TO GO AT ONCE; AND IN FACT SHE GOES, TOGETHER WITH HER MAIDENS. (1857 B. C.)

54 And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with

him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master.

55 And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us *a few days*, at the least ten; after that she shall go.

56 And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing Jehovah hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.

57 And they said, we will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth.

58 And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

59 And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men.

60 And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Our sister, be thou *the mother* of thousands of ten thousands, and let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them.

61 And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

Having finished so satisfactorily his business, the steward and his men (who would be in sufficient number for the defence of the caravan in its long journey through uninhabited deserts), ate, drank and slept, and on rising the next morning, instead of taking some days to rest, and to see the city and its objects of interest, the steward said: "Send me away to my master!" If he had spent ten days arranging the question of a wife for Isaac, he would have regarded it as time well employed; but he finished it before eating, and not one day longer did he wish to remain! The brother of the young woman and her mother wished a delay of at least ten days. By a singular Hebrew idiom, the word "*days*" sometimes stands for *a year* (as in 1 Sam. 1: 21; 2: 19; 27: 7; Judg. 17: 10), and there are persons who, instead of "some days, at least ten," would translate it a "year or ten months." But this is quite improbable; and if the servant of Abraham had so understood it, it is no wonder that, with yet greater earnestness, he should insist on taking his departure at once. The fact that Jehovah had prospered his way, which another would have converted into an argument to spend some days in recreation or in resting after so long a journey, operated with him in precisely the opposite direction: "Hinder me not, seeing that Jehovah hath prospered my way! Send me away that I may go to my master;" They agreed then to let the young woman herself decide the question.

So they called her, and when asked if she would go with that man, that is, if she would go at once, she replied: "Yes, I will go." For this so prompt and decided a reply, some have accused Rebekah of being hasty and inconstant; but such an opinion is founded on known defects of her subsequent character, and it is probably an unjust judgment. On the contrary,

her reply indicates resolution and decision of character; all the more, if she understood that they wished to detain her for a whole year, and leave the servant of Abraham to return without her.

The history might leave on us the impression that the travelers took leave of them that same day; but it is not necessary to suppose that it happened so in fact, but only that they at once set about making the necessary preparations, and with all possible dispatch they sent her away, with the nurse who had cared for her from a child, and her maidens, and the servant of Abraham and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, saying: "Our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of ten thousands; and let thy seed possess the gate of their enemies!" Compare comments on ch. 22: 17. The maidens, or maid-servants, which Rebekah carried with her, besides her nurse, do not indicate great prosperity on the part of the family; for this was the sum total of what she obtained of the property of her father; and when the life of a slave was valued at 30 shekels of silver (= \$18, Ex. 22: 21, 32: see Zech. 11: 12, 13; Matt. 26: 15; Comp. Lev. 27: 2, 3, 4), and the hire of "a father and a priest," at ten shekels of silver (= \$6 gold) by the year, with a suit of apparel and his victuals" (Judg. 17: 10), it was little enough that the only daughter of a respectable family of somewhat reduced circumstances, should have more than one or two maid-servants to carry with her, when going to be presented to her husband, and he very rich.

24: 62—67. ISAAC'S DEVOTIONS. HE MARRIES REBEKAH. (1857 B. C.)

62 And Isaac came from the way of Beer-lahairoi\*; for he dwelt in the land of the South.

63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, there were camels coming.

64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she alighted from the camel.

65 And she said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant said, It is my master: and she took her veil, and covered herself.

66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.

67 And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

[\*M. S. V., the Well of the Living-One-who-seeth-me.]

At this time Abraham resided in Beersheba, in the midst of his delightful grove;—his residence probably for nearly seventy years before his death. He seems to have had his home there in all these years, after the expulsion of Hagar and her son, with occasional visits to Hebron and other places. The camel carries

a burden of 800 to 1000 pounds, at the rate of 30 miles a day. The ten camels of Abraham, which came loaded, returned almost empty, and the steward would naturally hasten their pace, to arrive at the encampment as soon as possible. In twelve or fifteen days they would easily travel the 500 miles of distance between Haran and Beersheba. Comparing *vr.* 62 with *ch.* 25: 11, it seems certain that Isaac was living apart from his father, near to the Well of the-Living-One-who-seeth-me. If the word "dwelt" indicates permanent abode in the latter case, then it ought to indicate it in the former also, since it is not the word for sojourning, or temporary abode. And although Beersheba was "in the land of the South" (as was also the site of that well), nevertheless the form of *vr.* 62 indicates that the well was at some distance from Beersheba, where Abraham resided; and still farther to the south or S. W. We have seen in the former chapter that Sarah died at Hebron, while Abraham was probably at Beersheba (see comment on *ch.* 23: 2), looking after his interests there. If in this we are right, it is still easier to see how Isaac should "dwell" (with a part of the immense cattle interests of Abraham) at the site of the Well of the-Living-One-who-seeth-me, a day or two's journey perhaps to the south or S. W. of Beersheba, while his father continued his tranquil abode at that place. As he lived 35 years after the marriage of Isaac, and his was a vigorous and "good old age," there was nothing to hinder Isaac's withdrawing from the neighborhood of his mother's empty tent, the sight of which at every moment would renew the grief of his tender heart (*vr.* 67), taking care of the varied interests of his vast estate, near to the well of Hagar.

Isaac, then, was "dwelling" there. But as the distance was not great between the two places, and as he was in expectation of the arrival of his future wife, he would naturally go and return with frequency. In *verse* 62, as I understand it, it is said that Isaac had returned from the well whither he had gone a little before (that being the place of his abode), and he had gone out into the field in the evening to meditate, or pray, when lifting up his eyes, he saw that lo! the camels were coming with their precious burden. The English Version and the Revision say: "And Isaac came from the way of the well." Valera says that "Isaac was coming from the well." Scio and Amat, following the Vulgate, say that "at the time Isaac was taking a walk in the road leading to the well." The Jewish Version of Isaac Leeser says that "Isaac came from a walk to the well," etc., implying that it was very near. The Modern

Spanish Version says that "Isaac *had returned from the well*, etc.; for he dwelt (= was dwelling) in the land of the South." The Hebrew text says simply: "And Isaac came from going to the well"—it was perhaps a two days' journey; which suggests the idea that, although he resided to the south of Beersheba, near to the well of Hagar, he was then on a visit to his father, and had just been to the well and returned; when, having gone out into the field to meditate and pray, on an occasion so important for him, he lifted up his eyes and saw that the camels were coming.

This instance of Isaac's devotions (a thing which we observe here for the first time in Holy Scripture) is worthy of all praise and imitation. The hour—the close of the day, is one which especially invites to meditation on divine things and secret prayer; and the place, "the field" (or country), was favorable to that expansion of soul which is an aid to the same purpose. Jesus recommends to us "the closet" with *shut* doors (*Gr.* locked, Matt. 6: 6), as the place which is ordinarily most convenient for secret prayer; although he himself frequently sought the country, or the mountain, when it was practicable for him to do so. Mark 1: 35; Luke 6: 12. Those who have tried the plan of Isaac (for we suppose that it was his custom), will have found that every step taken toward the place of retirement, is a step nearer to God, and prepares the spirit for the act of drawing near to him in prayer.

But Isaac was not the only one who lifted up his eyes; for he had hardly begun to walk toward the coming caravan, when Rebekah also lifted up her eyes, and seeing a man on foot, who was crossing the field, or open country, coming toward them, and learning from the servant of Abraham who he was, she dismounted from her camel and covered herself, not only her face, but her entire person, with the Oriental veil. It is evident that till then she had been traveling among those of her company with uncovered face; and she dismounted from the camel, because, as in the East the woman occupies a position of inferiority, it would have been quite improper for her to go riding on her camel to meet her future husband. Undoubtedly all the company did the same thing, and walked to meet their young master. The servant then told Isaac of all that had happened. It is in conformity with Biblical usage that the name of Abraham is not mentioned in this part of the history. The servant undoubtedly gave to him an account of how he had fulfilled the sworn commission he had confided to him, although nothing is said about it; and Abraham doubtless gave a hearty welcome to

his new daughter; but it would have been contrary to the Oriental style of things to say anything about that. Compare the meeting of Moses with his father-in-law, and his wife, and two sons, in Ex. 18: 2—12. But "Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah's tent, which had been unoccupied for three years (ch. 17: 17; 23: 1; 25: 20); and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after the death of his mother." Such is the simple story of the marriage of Isaac; and the declaration that "he loved her" is by no means superfluous; for, according to our usages, the man ought to love before he marries; but according to the customs of the Orient, Isaac did not even see the face of Rebekah until he had carried her into the tent of his mother; and he might well have been disappointed (as it happened with Jacob, ch. 29: 25—31); something which is necessarily frequent among those peoples, where the man does not usually become acquainted with his wife until after they are married. Happy, therefore, was this marriage, of which we are told that "he took her, and she became his wife, and he loved her." So well did he love her, that never in his long life, did he take another wife; and such doubtless would have been the case with Jacob and his much-loved Rachel, if it had not been for the cruel deception practiced upon him by the rascally Laban.

[NOTE 24.—*On Marriage.* After the marriage celebrated in Eden, when Jehovah himself presented to Adam his wife, this is the first account of a marriage that we have in the Bible; and in the one case it was as entirely without ceremony as in the other: "And Isaac brought her into his mother's tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her." I pay no regard to the case of Hagar and Keturah, for they were concubines, or secondary wives, and could not in any sense compete in character and condition with a legitimate and proper wife. When Jacob married the daughter of Laban, "Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast" (ch. 29: 22); but so utterly without ceremony and exchange of engagements was this marriage, that in the evening, or night, Laban put Leah in the place of Rachel, for whom Jacob had served him like a slave during seven long years. But in the case of Isaac, it does not appear that there was even a feast, or gathering of Abraham's encampment, nor a formal contract in his presence; but Isaac, without further delay, installed Rebekah in his mother's tent, and with this, and nothing more, she was known and recognized as his wife.

This is a point of the greatest importance. According to the

law of God and the teaching of the Bible, both in the New and Old Testaments, marriage consists neither in sacrament, nor in rite, nor in any ceremony; nor does it derive its legitimacy from any of these things; it is rather the frank and open union of one man and one woman in indissoluble and inviolable bonds; the form and ceremony are the thing of least importance. In Christian lands there are laws to regulate marriage, and the Christian Church has rites and ceremonies suitable to the occasion; and no Christian minister ought ever to marry any one contrary to the civil laws established to regulate the relation. But before God, marriage is something which antedates all civil statutes, and all ecclesiastical ceremonies and usages; and sexual unions contrary to the rule which the Creator established, are declared by Christ, our final Judge, to be a sin and a crime. In the Bible we do not find a word about legitimate and illegitimate marriages, outside of the degrees of consanguinity and affinity within which all sexual relations came to be crimes punishable by the magistrate. Lev. 18: 6—18. In subsequent times we do read of the marriage *covenant* (see Prov. 2: 17; Ezek. 16: 8; Mal. 2: 10), as was natural and necessary with the lapse of time and the advances made in the civil and social state of the people. But *the Bible treats all kinds of marriage as valid and good*; and lays upon all married people alike the obligation to perform sacredly its duties and fulfil its vows. *Christ and his apostles, and the Christian Church for three or four centuries, recognized every form of marriage*, whether of Jews or Samaritans (John 2: 1; 4: 17), whether of Greeks or Romans, whether of pagans or Christians (1 Cor. 7: 12, 13, 28—40); and it never required that the parties should be re-married when they entered the Christian fold, in order to give it validity; but only that the obligations of their previous marriage be sacredly observed and fulfilled, as became Christian people.

For this reason both fornication and adultery are so great sins in the sight of God; because, above and beyond their own moral turpitude, they are a complete prostitution of the marriage relation, instituted (1) for the honest and chaste procreation of children; (2) for their education and training for good and not for evil; and (3) in order that the clean and honorable family may serve as the secure basis and the fruitful seed-plot for the State and for the Church of God. "Let marriage be honorable in all, and the (conjugal) bed be undefiled; for fornicators (on the one hand) and adulterers (on the other) God will judge." (M. S. V.) Heb. 13: 4.]

[In the days of Christ, polygamy would seem, as already said,

to have been completely, or practically, superseded by the more convenient system of free and easy divorce and remarriage;—a condition of things on which some of our Western States seem to be rapidly verging. We do not ever find the apostles confronted or embarrassed with the question of plural marriages, in the admission of members to the Christian Church;—a question that is so difficult of management for our missionaries in all pagan and Mohammedan lands. Bingham's *Ecclesiastical Antiquities* (Book XVI, Ch. 11, Sec. 5) states that "there was never any law to authorize polygamy in the Roman Empire," and both custom and public sentiment were against it. The *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia* (article "Marriage") speaks to the same effect: "all the peoples of the West, of a higher civilization discarded it." There was therefore no need for a positive prohibition of polygamy in the Christian Church, since it "*faded out of manners without legislation*"; as the same article says.

But among the Jews, and still more among Gentiles, prevailed the custom, which our Lord denounces, of *putting away one wife and taking another*;—the Jews by simply writing a "bill of divorcement" and giving it to the woman; the Gentiles without even that formality. A missionary from that country has recently told the writer that even in progressive Japan, which has imitated so many of our laws and usages, when a man gets tired of his wife, *he simply says to her "GO!"* and she goes! Among the multitude of "*amancebados*" found in Roman Catholic lands, it is the man generally who *goes*, and leaves the woman with the care of the children. What has the Gospel done for us!

This explains the true meaning of the phrases "the husband of one wife," and "the wife of one husband," which occur repeatedly in Paul's writings (*Gr.*, "*the man of one woman,*" "*the woman of one man*"). Persons thus ill-mated (of whom both Jewish and Gentile lands were full), might become private members of the church, and be received to Christian fellowship, when converted to Christianity; *but they could not hold any office in the church.* Out of the 3,000 converted and baptized on the day of Pentecost, there might easily have been 100 such, if not more. This was no toleration of polygamy (which did not in fact exist), as some commentators strangely imagine, from ignorance of a usage so different from our own; but all missionaries to Roman Catholic countries understand it to their sorrow. See foot-note on *Amancebamiento*. Pp. 35, 36.

This state of things is due primarily and chiefly to the influence, direct and indirect, of the so-called "Sacrament of Marriage," and the allied influences which have formed the



character and mode of life of those peoples; and now that custom has made it practically a social law, it is next to impossible to shake it off, even in some Mexican States where the Government offers to all civil marriage *free of charge*. See *El Faro*, for May 15, 1905. And no wonder, when *their Church teaches that Civil Marriage is only another form of "Amancebamiento!"* And that is not the worst of it. The Roman Catholic doctrine that no marriage but her own is legitimate,—none but the "sacrament" celebrated by a Roman Catholic priest, degrades Protestant Marriage, as well as Civil Marriage, to the same level! so that according to the teachings of that Church, which would *pose* as the sole guardian of *the sanctity of marriage*, five-sixths of the people of Great Britain, with King Edward VII at their head, and nine-tenths of the people of the United States, with President Roosevelt at their head, are living in a state of legalized Concubinage, and their children are born out of wedlock! Her "amancebados" certainly find themselves in the best of company! By such wickedly absurd teaching, that Church makes the extremes meet, and degrades the standard of public and private morality, while pretending to exalt it!—Tr.]

## CHAPTER XXV.

VRS. 1—4. ANOTHER WIFE WHOM ABRAHAM HAD TAKEN. (Of uncertain date.)

1 And Abraham took another wife,\* and her name was Keturah.

2 And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah.

3 And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim.

4 And the sons of Midian: Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoah, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.

[\**Mod. Span. Ver.*, But Abraham had taken another wife.]

More than three hundred and fifty years ago, Calvin called attention, in his commentary, to the fact that this passage ought to be translated (as it is in the Modern Spanish Version): "Abraham *had taken* another wife"; but this has been of little benefit to most translators and commentators from that day to this, who continue to translate the words so as to give to understand that after the death of Sarah, and after the marriage of Isaac, Abraham, an old man of 140 years, married again, and had by this marriage six sons more. I find it hard to account for a translation so inopportune, erroneous and misleading as this. Where, then, was the singular grace and favor of God, in a man of a hundred years old having a son, if forty

years later (and even fifty years), he had consecutively six sons more, by another new wife? Without doubt Moses has cause (and Paul likewise), to complain of his translators.

It is altogether idle to say that such is the simple and correct translation of the Hebrew words; for in Hebrew the verbs have no *moods* or *tenses*, in our use of the terms; and its two so-called tenses, the *past* and *future*, or more properly, the *perfect* and *imperfect*, have to do duty for the eighteen or twenty forms of the regular Spanish verb, in the Indicative and Subjunctive moods, which include the Potential as found in English. Including auxiliary forms, we have not less than twenty or twenty-five different *temporal* forms of every verb, where the Hebrew has but two; and it becomes the duty of the translator to vary the shadings of the thought, according as every several case may require. This the translator knows, but the ordinary reader does not know; and therefore it is not fair to him to give him the Hebrew form and leave him to do the shading for himself. The Hebrew, or Jew, of ancient and modern times makes the adjustments unconsciously, varying the thought according to the conditions of the case; because he has *the habit of thinking in these forms*, so different from our own. "He took," "He has taken," "He had taken," is all one in Hebrew; but in our more exact forms of speech it is very different. To say therefore, after relating the death of Sarah and the marriage of Isaac: "And Abraham took another wife, who bore him six children more," is *not a correct translation*, if the Bible itself really makes manifest (as it does in vr. 6 of this same chapter) that all this had taken place long before. Amat, with much propriety says: "Abraham had also taken another wife, named Keturah, who bore him Zamram," etc. Keturah was probably a woman of his own encampment, one of his own people; a woman who could not aspire to a condition superior to that of Hagar, Sarai's servant, and mother of Ishmael. It is morally impossible that Abraham, after sending to Haran to get a wife for Isaac (ch. 24: 1—4), should himself marry a Canaanitish woman, even though she were the daughter of a prince;—such an one as might aspire to the standing of a principal wife.

The proof that he had taken her before the death of Sarah, is found in the fact that the only two times, besides this, in which the Bible speaks of her, she is expressly called the "*concubine of Abraham.*" Vr. 6; 1 Chron. 1: 32. If he had taken her after the death of Sarah, having separated himself from Hagar 35 years before, *Keturah would not have been his con-*

*concubine, but his legitimate and only wife.* This argument does not admit of reply. The Mosaic use of the word "concubine" is clearly determined in ch. 35: 22, where Bilhah, maid-servant of Rachel, is called the "concubine" of Jacob.

Another proof that he had taken her before the birth of Isaac, is found in the fact that not only had Abraham regarded it as out of all ordinary possibility "that a son should be born to a man a hundred years old" (ch. 17: 17), but the New Testament tells us by that "*his body was now as good as dead*" (Rom. 4: 19; Heb. 11: 12) and that only by the interposition of a divine power could the promise of the human redemption be realized (ch. 18: 14); on which circumstance is based the extraordinary character of the faith of Abraham, "who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations." Rom. 4: 18. Now this would be worse than an extravagance, if, after the death of Sarah, he should marry again, and have by this marriage six sons, without any divine promise, and in a purely natural way. It is futile to allege that that stupendous act of faith, at 99 years of age so rejuvenated "his body then as good as dead," that he could begin to have another new family 40 or 50 years later. The Bible does not deal in foolish and ridiculous statements. God would take good care that, when by a singular favor of his, and by the extraordinary faith of Abraham, a child was granted to a man a hundred years old, this same man should not have half a dozen children in a purely natural way at the age of 140 or 150 years! The error, which is not a small one, belongs to the translation, and not to the text.

Another proof is found in the circumstance related in verse 6, that the six sons of Keturah were not boys, nor inexperienced youths, when "Abraham gave them gifts, and sent them away from Isaac, eastward, into the east country," but on the contrary were men of age and experience, well capable of managing their affairs in the world. It is therefore probable and almost certain that they were older than Isaac; and it is probable, as has already been said, that Abraham had divided to them their respective portions of his estate, and had sent them far away, before Isaac was married.

The reason for this late mention of Keturah and her sons appears to be this: When Moses was bringing the history of Abraham to a close, and telling what disposal he made of his immense estate, he had naturally to mention his other sons, to whom he divided a worthy portion of his goods, and before his death sent them away from Isaac, his son and heir; and

it is to be believed that he sent them away long before his death; so long before, that Isaac would have no question or dispute with any of them after the death of his father. It seems plain that only on this account does he mention at all, so much out of place, Keturah and her six sons.

Of none of these six sons of Keturah have we any historical notice whatever, with the exception of Midian; of whom, or rather of his descendants, we have frequent mention in the history of Israel, until the end of the book of Judges. Moses married a Midianitess, the daughter of Jethro, priest and prince of Midian. Aside from this, the Midianites always present themselves in Bible history as the treacherous and implacable enemies of Israel.

25: 5, 6. ABRAHAM DISPOSES OF HIS ESTATE BEFORE HIS DEATH.  
(Of uncertain date.)

5 And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.

6 But unto the sons of the concubines, that Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts; and he sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country.

There is nothing in the history, or in the uses of the Orientals to lead us to suppose that all this was done in the same day, or the same year. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the younger said one day, to his own sorrow: "Father give me the portion of goods which falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living" (Luke 15: 12); not equally, of course; for in every such case a *double portion* fell to the first-born (Deut. 21: 17); but he divided his estate between them. The younger son took what was his, and, after converting it into money, went away with it; and the rest belonged to the elder son; with regard to which the father did not hesitate to say: "*All that I have is thine.*" Luke 15: 12, 31. It is in this way that we ought to understand these two verses. Beginning with Ishmael, whom he sent far away from Isaac first, it is probable that he sent them all away from him *successively* (dividing to each such a portion of his goods as appertained to them) in the course of many years, and at the time that their age and other circumstances made most opportune; and what was left he gave it all to Isaac. We shall need to forget the parable of the Prodigal Son in order to suppose that Abraham would need treat the sons of his concubines with great niggardliness in order to "*give all he had to Isaac.*"

In this matter of disposing of his estate long before his death, and seeing to it himself that there were no disputes and

wranglings between his sons about the division of the property, Abraham has given us a laudable example and worthy of universal imitation. The last will and testament of dead men with lamentable frequency causes great heart-burnings and even open dissensions among their children; and it often happens that the disposal they make of their property is altogether frustrated, because they lacked the willingness or the valor to dispose of their estate during their life-time, and be the executors of their own testamentary will. If it be little that one possesses, the case is less urgent; but when the estate is large, an honorable and just disposal of it during the lifetime of the owner, when he is able himself to place such arrangement upon a good and secure footing, would give less occupation to the lawyers, but in exchange, would secure the tranquillity of the family, and the security of the legacies made. It is a proof of much indolence or much cowardice on the part of those fathers who leave it till after their death for their children and heirs to come to a knowledge of the partialities and prejudices which lodged in their hearts; and sometimes their children have occasion to curse their memory, instead of blessing it. Nothing of the sort did Abraham do. Doubtless it cost him much trouble and difficulty to duly weigh the natural claims of Ishmael and the six sons of Keturah; but if he had not done so, it would have been a sad day for the pacific and timid Isaac, when once his father slept in death, and the seven half-brothers entered into disputes with him over the share of the patrimony which fell severally to them. The fact that there were no such disputes is the best guaranty that Abraham dealt justly and honorably with them all.

It is not a little singular that all the sons of Abraham, except Isaac, were fond of the life of the desert; and so their father sent them toward the east of Beersheba into the east country—into the great desert of Arabia, which lay between the land of Israel and the river Euphrates. In the days of Moses we find the Midianites in the peninsula of Mount Sinai and to the east of the Elanitic Gulf of the Red Sea; we find them likewise mingled with the Moabites in their wars against Israel. Num. 23: 7; 25: 1, 2, 17, 18; 31: 2, 3. Vr. 18 informs us that the descendants of Ishmael were scattered from Havilah, near the Persian Gulf, unto Shur, at the entrance of Egypt, a distance of 1000 miles.

25: 7—11. THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM. (1822 B. C.)

7 And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, a hundred threescore and fifteen years.

8 And Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people.

9 And Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre;

10 the field which Abraham purchased of the children of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.

11 And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed Isaac his son: and Isaac dwelt by Beer-lahai-roi.\*

[\* = The Well of the Living-One-who-seeth-me.]

Abraham lived 35 years after the marriage of Isaac, and probably in his beloved Beersheba, where he had his well, or his wells, and his grove, which he had planted 70 years before his death. Although it is not to be supposed that the South land was then as denuded of trees as it is now, a grove such as Abraham planted in Beersheba (ch. 21:33), would have as powerful an attraction for him as the oak-grove of Mamre had in former years. Perhaps something had happened at Mamre which caused him so completely to substitute the grove of Beersheba for the oaks of Mamre.

"Abraham gave up the ghost (*Heb.* expired=breathed his last) and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people" (*Heb.* peoples);—a beautiful summing up of a life and a death in which everything happened at its proper season. We infer from this, that in contrast with the old age of Isaac and of Jacob, Abraham passed his in good health, honored and esteemed by all his neighbors, beloved and venerated by all his own people. "Full of years" means to say that he had them both good and in abundant measure, and did not desire any more; according to the beautiful expression of Eliphaz the Temanite:

"Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age,

like as a shock of grain cometh in its season." Job 5: 25.

Only in the case of Gideon (Judg. 8: 32), and of David (1 Chron. 29: 28) do we find repeated this description of the prosperous old age of Abraham,—though not in the identical words.

The phrase "*he was gathered to his peoples*" is extremely interesting; for, explain it as you will, it reveals to us with clearness and certainty the hope of immortality which was cherished in the ancient times. Observe the movement and progression indicated: "He breathed out (his last breath); and he died; and was gathered to his peoples; and they buried him";—four things closely related but distinct: like those words of Jesus: "And the beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried, and in hell (*Gr.* Hades=among the dead) he lifted up his eyes being in tor-

ments." Luke 16: 22, 23. In both cases this expresses not what would happen after the resurrection, but in the time intermediate between death and the resurrection. Let us be careful, however, not to infer that "was gathered to his peoples" means to say he was received into the congregation of the blessed. Let us be just and accurate in our interpretations of Scripture. The same phrase is used of Ishmael also (vr. 17), and it would be hazardous to draw the inference that Ishmael is also in the congregation of the blessed, waiting for the day of the resurrection and the promised immortality. Of Isaac and Jacob, of Moses and Aaron also, and of these alone, is used the same phrase; which occurs only in the five Books of Moses. In Judg. 2: 10, the corresponding phrase "*were gathered to their fathers*" is used with reference to the entire generation that entered Canaan, without even a thought of putting them all in glory. This phrase does not occur any more in the Bible; but the equivalent phrase (used also of Moses, in Deut. 31: 16), "*slept with his fathers*" (or more correctly, "*lay down with his fathers*,"—for the death of the wicked is not called a *sleep*), is used with regard not only to David and Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah, and Josiah, but of Solomon also (whose case is doubtful to say the least—sensualist that he was, 1 Kings 11: 3), and of Rehoboam, and Abijah, and Jehu, and such monsters of iniquity as Ahaz and Ahab. It is clear, therefore, that the phrase in neither of its three forms has reference to the rest of the blessed; but certainly it speaks of the future existence of souls separate from the body; as the dead Samuel said to Saul—words which froze his soul: "And tomorrow *thou and thy sons shalt be with me!*" (1 Sam. 28: 19); without meaning to say they would be in heaven, or at rest, or "in hell," or anything of the kind; or to affirm, on the other hand, that the souls of the righteous and the wicked were mingled together in one vast receptacle, or common place of abode. Nothing is said of *receptacle*, or *place of abode*, one way or the other; but rather of *CONDITION*, or *STATE*;—"Ye shall be with me," among the dead;—a state or condition of conscious and sentient being, which not only for the ancients, but for ourselves, is an unfathomable and inexplicable mystery, which none of us will be able to understand, till we enter into it and ascertain, each for himself, what that state of disembodied being really is. Neither reason nor Scripture gives us to understand (much as we may think it), that a disembodied soul resembles an angelic being. See Luke 20: 35, 36. Of that abnormal condition, totally foreign to man's nature as God designed and made him, Calvin says:

"The wonderful counsel of God devised a middle state; that, without life, we might live in death." No man ever spoke more wisely of what we understand so little. *Institutes*, Book III, Ch. 25, Sec. 9. See *Note 27*, on "Sheol," or "Hades," with comments on chs. 25: 8 and 42: 38.

It is also of interest to know that his two sons, Isaac and Ishmael (the precedence being given to Isaac) buried him. Isaac was at that time 75 years old, and Ishmael 89. Isaac was three years old when Ishmael and his mother were sent away from the encampment of Abraham, and we have no notice of the two having met again in the intervening space of 72 years; yet as we are positively sure that Ishmael was not disinherited, but obtained his honorable share among the sons of his father's two concubines (vr. 6), it is positively certain that during these 72 years he returned, perhaps repeatedly, to the paternal home to receive the portion of the inheritance that came to him. It is to be believed that during that time he had become the head of a powerful tribe of nomads of the desert, not only descendants of his own, but his servants and dependents (comp. ch. 14: 14), and of others likewise, associated with him as a valiant and expert captain. Twice we are told that he had for his sons "twelve princes," heads of tribes; and twelve *princes* (ch. 17: 20; 25: 16) could not be born of any but a famous and powerful father, and would necessarily gather their tribes largely from the surrounding peoples. It is therefore to be supposed that at 89 years of age, at the burial of his father, he would present himself in Hebron with such accompaniment and simple magnificence (which the Arabs dearly love) as corresponded with his quality and condition. This pacific meeting of the two half-brothers, on an occasion so tender and interesting, is also a guaranty that Ishmael was satisfied with the treatment he had received from his father, and with the part of the estate which had been given him; otherwise it would have been easy for him to endanger the interests of Isaac.

On leaving at this point the history of Abraham, let us remember:

1st. That he was a convert from idolatry; he abandoned the religion of his country and of his father (see comments on chs. 12: 1; 31: 53), like the Thessalonians of whom Paul said "Ye turned unto God from idols, to serve the living and true God." 1 Thes. 1: 9. And this is an example worthy of the imitation of those who ought to abandon the idolatries and superstitions of Romanism, to embrace and propagate the true religion of the



true God. And this being so, the sooner they abandon the errors of their fathers the better. The most brutish pagans make the same argument as do the Romanists, to persist in the false worship of their fathers, without perceiving the harm and loss that in a thousand ways it brings to them, and to their children, and to their country.

2nd. Of all converts Abraham was the most zealous and faithful; and in his own person he answers the cavilings of ignorant and prejudiced irreligious men, who claim that those who change their religion are not sincere. The world today is full of the precious fruits of that change of religion which Abraham made; and all modern nations are no less full of the precious fruit of the change of religion which the Reformers and the nations of Northern Europe made in the 16th century.\*

3rd. His faith in the new God he had found, or rather, who had found him (ch. 18: 19; Gal. 4: 9), was proof against every solicitation and assault; and God took care to prove and refine it in every possible way. Thus we also ought to "walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham," and not be cast down on account of the trials through which our God leads us, for the same purpose.

Vr. 11 informs us that "the blessing of Abraham" passed

\*Where would England be today, and Scotland, and Germany, and Holland, and Denmark, and Norway and Sweden, and British America, and the United States, and Australia, and other Protestant countries, if in the 16th century our fathers had burned Bibles and those who read them, to bow the neck under the galling yoke of the Romish priesthood; as Spain did? And *per contra*, where would the great Spain, on whose empire the sun once never set, be today, and Portugal, and Italy, and Austria, and Mexico, and South America, had their fathers broken the yoke of priests, in the 16th century, to accept instead the light and easy yoke of Christ, and say with Jesus: "*Call no man your (spiritual) father on the earth; for one (only) is your Father, who is in heaven*" (Matt. 23: 9); and with Paul: "*Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men!*" 1 Cor. 7: 3. The enterprise, and intelligence, and liberties of France, above all the other Roman Catholic lands, she owes chiefly to Protestantism; one-third of her people having been Protestant in the 17th century; who held their own for more than a century against all the persecuting might of Rome, backed by the despotic power of treacherous kings. The fickleness, and licentiousness, and infidelity, and atheism, in which she excels other Roman Catholic peoples, she owes largely to the fact that that "*one-third*," which might soon have become *two-thirds*, was drowned in rivers of its own blood, treacherously and basely shed, for their religion's sake. What would "Beautiful France" be today, had she taken as her beau-ideal of a man among men her own chivalrous and God-fearing Coligny; and, accepting God's word as her only rule of faith and duty, adopted as her own the heaven-approved maxim "That every man should bear rule in his own house" (Esth. 1: 22), and neither priest nor preacher cross his threshold without his consent?—Tr.

straight on to Isaac, and that the death of Abraham caused no interruption in the descent of the blessings of the covenant. "He remembereth his covenant forever." Ps. 111: 5.

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25: 12—18. MEMOIRS OF ISHMAEL. (1911—1773 B. C.)

12 Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham:

13 and these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the first-born of Ishmael, Nebaioth; and Kedar, and Abdeel, and Mibsam,

14 and Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa,

15 Hadad, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah:

16 these are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their villages, and by their encampments; twelve princes according to their nations.

17 And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, a hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people.

18 And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: he abode over against all his brethren.

We have already observed (ch. 2: 4) that in the technical phrase "these are the generations of ——," which occurs eleven times in the book of Genesis, the word "generations" does not signify ordinarily a genealogical table, but more commonly is equivalent to "memoirs," or brief family history; and this case is not an exception; for the names which follow do not form a genealogical table, but are simply the names of the twelve sons of Ishmael, who were the heads of tribes, or princes of nomadic peoples, according to the promise of Jehovah to Abraham with respect to Ishmael: "Twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make of him a great nation." Ch. 17: 20. It seems that the historian, having spoken in vr. 11 of the blessing of Jehovah which came upon Isaac after the death of his father, inserts here these memoirs of Ishmael, before continuing the history of Isaac, in order to record the fact that Jehovah did not forget his promise regarding Ishmael. "These are the names of the sons of Ishmael by their names *and according to their generations*," does not signify *successive generations*; for they were all brothers and contemporaries; but probably it means, as Gesenius says, "in the order of their birth." Verse 16 varies the phrase in this manner: "These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their villages, and by their encampments; twelve princes according to their nations." It is not possible for us to locate these tribes of Ishmael; and as instead of cities and towns they had "villages and encampments," it would not be possible to determine their boundaries or limits, being wandering tribes that had none. We have already seen (ch. 10: 7, 14, 26—29), that the descendants of Ham, of the family of Cush, and the descendants of

Shem, of the family of Joctan, established themselves in the richest and most delightful part of Arabia (called Arabia Felix), along the shore of the Red Sea, and of the Indian Ocean, as far as the Persian Gulf, and in the high lands of the interior; but *vr.* 18 informs us that the Ishmaelitic tribes extended themselves "from Havilah [on the western coast of the Persian Gulf, as is supposed, near the mouths of the river Euphrates] into Shur"; on the Isthmus of Suez, at the entrance of Egypt; a distance of 1000 miles, embracing all the north of Arabia and of the Peninsula of Mount Sinai. But *1 Sam.* 15: 7 tells us that Saul smote the Amalekites "from Havilah as thou goest unto Shur, which is before Egypt." This is essentially the same phrase that we have here, and yet Saul could not have gone anywhere near the desert of Arabia. Havilah is to be understood, in this case, of some point in the mountain country of Seir, and some maps have it indicated as on the west coast of the Gulf of Akabah, the Elanitic branch of the Red Sea, in the territory of the Amalekites. There are in the Bible four or five different regions that bear the name of Havilah.

Of these twelve sons of Ishmael we know nothing more than their names; although to them, or to their descendants, called by the name of their respective fathers, we have several allusions in the Bible; as Nabaioth, Kedar, Duma, Tema, Jetur and Naphish.

The years of the life of Ishmael were 137—ten years more than the life of Sarah, 38 less than that of Abraham, 43 less than that of Isaac, and 10 less than that of Jacob; perhaps the dangers and exposures of his desert life shortened his days. As regards the phrase "he was gathered to his peoples," see comment on *vr.* 8 of this chapter. When we consider that in the days of Abraham and Moses, the Egyptians and the Babylonians had their "doctrine of the dead" in a state of full development, as is shown by their books still existing, discovered in recent years, we see clearly that nothing less than a supernatural revelation and a constant superintendence of the divine Spirit could have deterred Abraham and Moses (who were perfectly acquainted with these *doctrines of the dead*, having been educated, the one under the Babylonish system, and the other under the Egyptian), from communicating even a trace of it to their people, as part of the revelation of Jehovah. And what would we do, if we found such fables in the religion of Abraham and the writings of Moses, and had to reconcile them with the teachings of Jesus Christ? No! the silence of the writings of Moses on such matters, relating to the dead, proves that the Spirit of God directed his mind and his pen; it could not otherwise have happened.

[If it should here occur to a hundred readers to ask: "Why then did not God at once reveal the *correct doctrine* of the dead"? I reply, by asking, how many, and which, of the half-dozen or more "*doctrines of the dead*," prevailing in Christian countries, 1900 years after Christ, are God-revealed, and how many, or how much of them, are man-devised? As I have remarked already (Translator's Note 1), (1) Luke 16: 9, 22—31; (2) Luke 23: 42, 43; (illustrated by 2 Cor. 12: 2—4 and Rev. 2: 7); (3) Acts 7: 55—59; (4) 2 Cor. 5: 1, 6, 8; (5) Phil. 1: 21, 23; (6) 2 Tim. 4: 6—8; (7) Heb. 11: 13, 39, 49; (8) Jude vr. 7; (9) Rev. 14: 13;—these nine passages (and perhaps Heb. 6: 12), cover all that Christ and his apostles teach us as to the place, the character and the present condition of disembodied souls, both holy and unholy. Rev. 7: 4—17 is not a vision of the blessedness and employment of disembodied souls, but is evidently a symbolic representation of *redemption completed*, perfected both in number and degree. Redeemed souls, though in heaven, do not "*reign in life*," while yet *death reigns over their mortal bodies*; any more than Christ did, the three days he lay in Joseph's tomb. They wait "with Christ," while "he waits till his foes be made his footstool" (Heb. 10: 13)—"waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Rom. 8: 23. See Note 27, on Sheol, or Hades. Chapter 37: 35. It is probable, I think, that no truthful and comprehensible revelation could be made to mortal man of that mysterious state of disembodied existence that follows immediately upon death, and that, therefore, the Bible has not attempted it;—in strongest contrast with all man-made religions.—Tr.]

"The sons of Ishmael" represent here not only those who were his sons personally, but the tribes or nations who, according to the style of the Old Testament, bore the names of the fathers from whom they descended; speaking frequently of a tribe or a people as of a single individual. See Num. 20: 8; Judg. 11: 13, 17, 19. Verse 18 designates the vast bounds of the nomadic abode of the descendants of Ishmael. But in the matter of the limits of peoples, we ought always to bear in mind that the geography of the Bible and of the ancient nations (and even those of modern Europe, prior to the 16th century, or even after that date), was a thing much more vague and uncertain than in our day, in which we begin to know tolerably well the world in which we live.

The words "as thou goest towards Assyria," in vr. 18, are difficult, but they seem to be a technical phrase which signifies that leaving Egypt, and *going in the direction of Assyria*, one would pass through Shur. The words "He abode over against all his brethren," as found in the "American Standard Edition" of the

Revision, are rendered in the A. V. and the older Versions generally: "He *died* (*Heb.* fell) in the presence of all his brethren." But in Biblical usage to *fall* does not mean to *die*, except when one falls in battle. Nor can it be understood in what sense it could be said that Ishmael died in the presence of all his brethren; and still less when it is remembered that it is not said of him individually, but as the father of twelve nations or tribes. The Revised Version renders it correctly, as also the Jewish Version of Isaac Leeser, and the Modern Spanish Version, "He *abode* (or dwelt) in the presence of all his brethren," understanding the *Heb.* "fell" to mean, *the lot fell to him*; according to the promise given to his mother before his birth (ch. 16: 12): "And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren"; giving us to understand that he maintained himself on a firm footing, in dignity and independence, in the presence of the descendants of Isaac, and of the sons of Keturah.

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25: 19—23. MEMOIRS OF ISAAC. (1897—1838 B. C.)

19 And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac:

20 and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel and Syrian of Paddanaram, the sister of Laban the Syrian, to be his wife.

21 And Isaac entreated Jehovah for his wife, because she was barren: and Jehovah was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

22 And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, wherefore do I live? And she went to inquire of Jehovah.

23 And Jehovah said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, And two peoples shall be separated from thy bowels: And the one people shall be stronger than the other people; And the elder shall serve the younger.

Isaac was 40 years old at the time of his marriage, and his two sons were born to him when he was 60,—20 years after his marriage. Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born, and 140 at the time he married; he lived 35 years longer, dying at the age of 175; so that he lived until Esau and Jacob were 15 years of age. Rebekah was barren. It is remarkable how many mothers of notable Bible characters were barren; by divine arrangement, perhaps, in order to prove the faith of their parents—Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, the mother of Sampson, Hannah the mother of Samuel, and Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptist. On this account Isaac and his wife were greatly disturbed and perplexed; and children were given to them in answer to special prayer. Doubtless in his prayers Isaac alleged the great promises given to Abraham and confirmed to himself. How could the promises be fulfilled to him and to all the nations of the earth, who were to

be blessed in Abraham and his seed, if Isaac, the heir of the promise, was to remain "a dry tree"? Fortunately for him and Rebekah they did not repeat the error of Sarah and Abraham. Ch. 16: 2, 3. Instead of such a human expedient to give fulfilment to the divine promise, Isaac set himself to beseech God, who granted conception to Rebekah; in which we note the effects of pious education, training and culture. Well is it said in Ps. 127: 3:

"Lo children are a heritage from Jehovah,  
and the fruit of the womb is his reward."

So Isaac felt it to be when, after 20 years of patient waiting, his wife presented him with two sons. But is it less so when children are born in the natural order of things? I think not, and Christian people never should regard it as otherwise than a precious gift of God; a gift none the less estimable for being so ordinary; and I suppose that every mother feels it so when she embraces her first child. When the first child was born into this world, Eve exclaimed: "I have gotten a man by the favor of Jehovah." (M. S. V.) Gen. 4: 1. And shall it be esteemed less a favor in the case of other mothers, and other children, because less appreciated? When the desperate Rachel cried out passionately to Jacob: "Give me children, or else I die!" he replied: "Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?" Ch. 30: 1, 2. When Esau asked Jacob as to the numerous family which he had met on the way, he replied: "They are the children whom God hath graciously given to thy servant." Ch. 33: 5.

The two nations that were to descend from her were throughout all their history the most uncompromising and bitterest of foes (Ezek. 35: 5), and would seem to have begun their contentions before their birth. So distressing was the case, that Rebekah well-nigh repented of having besought the Lord for children, and exclaimed: "If it was to be thus, why did I desire this?" (M. S. V.) The case seemed to her so extraordinary that she went to inquire of Jehovah. How she did this it is not given us to ascertain. It may be that it was in prayer; but the phrase "to consult" or "to inquire of Jehovah" has in the Bible the technical sense of consulting the oracle of God; and the manner in which this is described in 1 Sam. 9: 9, gives us to understand (although this is the first case of it that we find in the Bible) that it was a constant usage in the old times: "Beforettime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said: Come and let us go to the seer! for he that is now called a prophet was beforesetimes called a seer." And as Abraham was still living in Beersheba, not

very far from the well of the Living-One-that-seeth-me, where Isaac resided, the words, "she went to inquire of Jehovah" in her perplexity, would naturally mean that she went to Beersheba to see Abraham himself; with regard to whom Jehovah had said to Abimelech: "*He is a prophet*, and shall pray for thee, that thou die not." Ch. 20: 7. Extremely interesting is this item of information given us here, that there were in those times ways and means by which individuals could communicate with God, as certain and reliable as those by which God communicated with men. It is also to be noted that the first example we have of this, is that of a woman; and the fact should not be lost sight of by women who, 2800 years after Rebekah, have occasion to consult God in the living oracles of his holy word—this being the only method we today have of consulting God, in humble prayer and entire dependence upon his Holy Spirit.

The answer of the oracle is given in poetical form, as is usual in the Old Testament; and it gave her to understand that she had within her two nations, and that even from the bowels of their mother these two peoples would be in dissension; so that the struggles she felt within her presaged the incessant struggles there would be between the two brothers and the respective posterity of each. And in fact Edom was always the most implacable enemy of the many that Israel had in the whole course of their history.

The oracular reply that "the elder shall serve the younger," indicated, antecedently to any act of theirs (as the apostle says in Rom. 9: 11, 12), upon which of them fell the divine election to be the heir of the promises given Abraham, and confirmed to his son Isaac; and doubtless this oracle (of which they could not remain ignorant) helped to create and foment that spirit of rivalry which marked their lives, and gave occasion (in addition to their so different characters and dispositions) for the continuance of those struggles which commenced before their birth.

25: 24—28. ESAU AND JACOB ARE BORN. THEIR DIFFERENT DISPOSITIONS AND CHARACTERS. (1837 B. C.)

24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

25 And the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

26 And after that came forth his brother, and his hand had hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was three-score years old when she bare them.

27 And the boys grew: and Esau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a quiet\* man, dwelling in tents.

\*Or, harmless, *Heb.*, perfect. [A. V., plain.]

28 Now Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: and Rebekah loved Jacob.

According to our usage, children take the name of their parents, or of the kindred of their parents, or their friends; or else a name chosen according to their fancy or caprice; in the early ages it would seem that proper names were scarce, judging by the frequent repetition of them which we have in the ancient geneological tables; and any trivial circumstance of their birth, or any accident in their personal history was sufficient to determine the name they would bear. Comp. vr. 30. Indeed, it is to be believed that the original name was sometimes exchanged, at a later date, for another which more adequately expressed any notable circumstance of their life. It is probable that it so happened with Abel (= "Vanity"). The radical differences which existed between these boys, Esau and Jacob, began to reveal themselves before they were born, and were supposed to be revealed in their very appearance, and in the circumstances of their birth. It ordinarily happens that twins are much alike; but here it was just the opposite. Esau, the first-born, was red ("ruddy" the same word is translated in the case of David, in 1 Sam. 16: 12; 17: 42), both as to his complexion and the color of his hair, and "all over like a hairy garment"; from which circumstance he took the name Esau (= hairy); an indication of his rude, violent, frank and passionate character. Jacob, on the contrary, was of a smooth skin (ch. 27: 11) and of a character no less *smooth* and deceitful; and in the opinion of his friends he manifested in the very moment of his birth his treacherous tendencies, seizing his elder brother by the heel; for which reason they gave him a name of reproach, which at the time of his conversion God changed to a most honorable one, saying: "Thou shalt be no more called Jacob (= Supplanter), but Israel (= He who strives, or prevails with God); for thou hast contended with God and with men and hast prevailed." Ch. 32: 28.

As they grew up, the young men developed the same tendencies and characteristics. Esau was a man of the field (or *country*, including the woods), not given to agriculture, which indeed was no part of his business; but a skillful hunter, and ready to fight hand to hand with as many fierce beasts, or fiercer men as set themselves before him. The story of David and his encounters with the bear and the lion (1 Sam. 17: 34—36), as something often repeated, will give us an idea of the perils in the midst of which Esau passed his life as a hunter, in unpeopled wilds, 800 years before David was born. Jacob, on the contrary, was a "quiet (or 'plain') man," without skill or dexterity, or other



manly accomplishments, and passed his life seated indolently among the tents, or in womanish occupations in the encampment. The old opinion that Jacob was pious, and devoted to divine things from his youth, is without doubt founded on the word which is translated "*plain*," which others render "sincere"; and as this is the same word which in the case of Job (ch. 1: 1), is translated "perfect," some have believed that it ought to be understood here in a good sense. But the epithet "perfect" has no application whatever in the case of Jacob, and it is necessary to seek some other meaning which better agrees with the known facts of his life. "Plain" or "simple" is that word, not in the sense of *sincere* or *innocent*, but in the sense of *without art, or skill, or manly accomplishments*. Jacob was "a quiet (or plain) man who dwelt in tents" misleads one, in contrasting his life and character with that of Esau; for Esau was undoubtedly more frank and sincere than Jacob; and he also "dwelt in tents," of course, as he had *no house* to dwell in; with this difference, that *Jacob dwelt in tents by day, and Esau by night*. "To dwell" and "to sit down" are the same word in Hebrew; and the purpose of the author is doubtless to paint Esau as bold, valiant, skillful, dexterous, habituated to dangers, and a stranger to fear; while Jacob was without skill or dexterity, or any special accomplishment, without ambition, of a timid disposition (as he revealed it in the house of Laban), and passed his life sitting indolently about the encampment. A knowledge of the unamiable, unattractive, unpromising character of Jacob is essential to a proper recognition of the hand of God in the work of his conversion. It is greatly to the discredit of religion to represent the false and intriguing Jacob, as having been pious from his youth.

Isaac admired and loved his valiant hunter, and the reason given manifests at the same time his weak side: "Isaac loved Esau, *because he did eat of his venison*" (a very expressive phrase in Hebrew: "because his venison was in his mouth"); "but Rebekah loved Jacob," whom she had always with her at home; and the form of the declaration implies that the partiality of each for the favorite son was open, and without any pretense or disguise. Polygamy produced lamentable results in the family of Abraham and Jacob; Isaac was a strict monogamist and much devoted to his wife, ch. 24: 67 (perhaps weakly subject to her will); but results no less lamentable grew out of such a happy beginning, for particular reasons; and especially on account of the undisguised partiality of the parents each for the favorite son. It is impossible for parents not to have preferences in the family and love their children with varying degrees of affection; unless

all of them are cast in the same mould, and have all the same character and disposition: the evil lies in their *manifesting it*, or in varying their treatment according to their partiality.

25: 29—34. JACOB WITH SHAMELESS SELFISHNESS DEMANDS IT, AND ESAU WITH PROFANE SPIRIT SELLS HIM HIS BIRTH-RIGHT. (Of uncertain date.)

29 And Jacob boiled pottage: and Esau came in from the field, and he was faint:

30 and Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with\* that same red *pottage*; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.

31 And Jacob said, Sell me first thy birthright.

32 And Esau said, Behold, I am about to die: and what profit shall the birthright do to me?

33 And Jacob said, Swear to me first; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: so Esau despised his birthright.

\*[M. S. V., Let me gulp down part of, etc.]

The divine oracle had declared, before the children of Rebekah were born, that "the elder should serve the younger." This the two parents well knew, and it was not possible that the two sons should fail to know it also; and that would contribute its part to promote a spirit of rivalry and discord between the two. The marked partiality of each of the parents for the favorite son, operating upon the different disposition of each, and upon the rivalry already existing between them, made matters worse and worse. One day Esau came in from his favorite occupation, completely exhausted, and he found Jacob in the tent as usual, busy with the womanish occupation of cooking a mess of pottage. He urgently, but civilly, begged he would permit him to "*devour*" a part of that same red pottage, which Jacob had before him, the sight of which and its odor appealed irresistibly to his present need, worn out as he was with fatigue: (M. S. V., "I beg that thou wilt let me *gulp down* part of that same red pottage"). The very word which he uses (*lagnat*), "devour," "gulp, or swallow down," attests his urgent necessity and the passionateness of his request: with a single gulp he was ready to pass it from the pot to his stomach. From this red pottage Esau took the second name that he bore, to wit, "Edom" = Red. It would seem that Jacob had for a long time been on the watch for a favorable opportunity to capture that birth-right, of which an accident of his birth, and the difference of a single moment, had deprived him, and to the possession of which, in his opinion, the oracle of God gave him the best of titles. Like the mother of Herodias, who for a long time

was seeking the favorable opportunity for the accomplishment of her designs (Mark 6: 21—24), so Jacob, always on the alert, seeing here his opportunity, took advantage of the impatient importunity of Esau and his urgent necessity, saying: "Sell me this day (or first of all) thy birthright!" Esau, who with all his fine natural endowments and his admirable qualities, was out and out a worldling, for whom "the blessing of Abraham" was a matter of little importance, required no urging, nor did he hesitate a moment. Resolute, frank and open-hearted in everything, he said to Jacob: "Behold I am at the point to die, and what profit shall the birthright do to me?" But Jacob, distrustful, astute and without natural affection, said: "Swear to me first!" and the worldly and valiant hunter, bold in everything, did not hesitate, but without vacillation swore to him; selling to Jacob his birthright for a mess of pottage. It is wonderful with what skill the Bible paints this act of contemning holy things: "Then Jacob gave to Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat, and drank, and rose up, and went his way: so Esau despised his birthright." It is necessary to keep in view the fact that together with the birthright, "the blessing of Abraham" carried with it the promises of human redemption: things about which Esau did not concern himself enough to understand the magnitude of his sin.

Well has the apostle said: "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright. For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place for a change of mind (in his father), though he sought it diligently with tears." Heb. 12: 15—17. The apostle does not admit that the pressing urgency of Esau's necessity (though it sets in an odious light the meanness of Jacob) can in any wise mitigate the foolish wickedness of his act. Others, rather than lose an incorruptible crown, have willingly lost every worldly good, and even life itself; but Esau, rather than put a check upon his appetite until somebody could prepare him food, sold for one savory morsel the great privileges of his birthright, together with the promises of the human redemption. Let all sensualists give attention to this—especially those sensualists whom the apostle particularly addresses, who by profession are found in the household and family of faith.

The timid Jacob was by nature incapable of sinning in the same way as Esau, although he incited him to do it, and was capable of sinning no less gravely in other ways. And those parents

who have children with Esau's disposition, who do nothing by halves, ought to endeavor constantly and with ardent prayer to God, to preoccupy their hearts with the lessons and examples of a true and noble piety; in order that they may be valiant for the truth, bold in the defence of the right, resolute and intrepid in fulfilling their obligations: unless this is done, their natural temper will tend to drag them blindly into the wild excesses and disorders of an unholy and criminal life.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

VRS. 1—5. ON ACCOUNT OF A FAMINE IN THE LAND, ISAAC SETS OUT FOR EGYPT; BUT GOD STOPS HIM IN THE LAND OF THE PHILISTINES; HE RENEWS TO HIM THE COVENANT MADE WITH ABRAHAM, AND CONSTITUTES HIM THE HEIR OF THE PROMISES. (Of uncertain date.)

1 And there was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines, unto Gerar.

2 And Jehovah appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:

3 sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father;

4 and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these lands; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

5 because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

In our happy America we do not know what famine means, as it is known in the Eastern Hemisphere. In parts of Europe, and particularly in the great plains of Russia, they know it also. In India and China people die of famine, with only too great frequency, by hundreds of thousands, and even by millions. In Palestine, one of the natural conditions most necessary to the discipline and tutelage of the people of Israel under the hand of God, consisted in the fact that a country so rich and abundant in years of seasonable rains, was at all times liable to seasons of drought, general or partial, which brought about a famine of greater or less extent; and this, in order that the people should always feel their constant dependence on the provident hand of God for the means of subsistence.

More than a hundred years before, Abraham, recently arrived from Haran, in Mesopotamia, and resident in this same part of Canaan, went down into Egypt on account of a famine there was in the land. It seems that Isaac proposed to take the same step;

and so from Beersheba, or the Well of the Living-One-who-seeth-me (ch. 25: 11), he went to Gerar, with the intention of going from there into Egypt. Abimelech was then king of the Philistines in Gerar. As it is impossible that he should be the same man who reigned there before the birth of Isaac (ch. 21: 2), it seems probable that in Gerar the name "Abimelech" (= My father the king), like "Pharaoh" in Egypt, was the *title* of the king, rather than his proper name. The common chronology assigns to this event the approximate date of 1805 B. C., when Isaac was 93 years of age; and if Rebekah was 20 when she married him, she would be about 73;—suppositions, both of them, which are little in accord with the incident mentioned in vrs. 6—9. There are but few dates in these histories given in the margin of our Bibles, in which we can have entire confidence, even accepting for certain the chronology of the Hebrew text. (See *Note 12*, on Biblical Chronology.) This is one of the cases where we have a full certainty of error; and the circumstance of its being narrated after the sale which Esau had made of his birthright, does not prove that the occurrence really took place after that deed, or that Isaac and Jacob were at that time 30 or 35 years of age. The Bible does not follow strictly the chronological order of the events which it relates. Even the Four Gospels do not always follow it, and notably the Gospel of Luke. We have already several times seen, and particularly in the case of Keturah (ch. 25: 1), that Moses himself did not always follow the order of events in his narrative; and in ch. 25, the death and burial of Abraham is related in vr. 8, while in vr. 22 of the same we have the inquiry which Rebekah made of Jehovah (probably by means of Abraham himself) with regard to her unborn children, 15 years before the death of Abraham. There is nothing, therefore, in the history to indicate that, on this occasion, Jacob and Esau, were more than youths, or that Rebekah was more than 50 or 60 years of age. Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah, and was 60 when the boys were born. Ch. 25: 20, 26.

Although Isaac left his place of residence to go down into Egypt, Jehovah stopped him in Gerar, and told him not to go there, but to dwell in the land which he would tell him of; which was in fact the same place where he then was. He promised to be with him and bless him; and he confirmed to him one by one the identical promises made to Abraham and his seed; showing him these great and distinguishing favors on account of the obedience and fidelity of his father Abraham.

26: 6—11. ISAAC IN GERAR; WHERE, IN IMITATION OF HIS FATHER, IN THIS SAME CITY, HE DENIES REBEKAH HIS WIFE. (Of uncertain date.)

6 And Isaac dwelt in Gerar:

7 and the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, My wife; lest, *said he*, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon.

8 And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife.

9 And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die because of her.

10 And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might easily have lain with thy wife, and thou wouldst have brought guiltiness upon us.

11 And Abimelech charged all the people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.

It is evident from vr. 8 that Isaac remained a long while in Gerar, before he departed thence to encamp in "the valley of Gerar" (vr. 17); where he remained a much longer time, in spite of the persistent hostility of the Philistines (removing from one point to another), before finally "he went up from thence to Beer-sheba," vr. 23. It seems, then, that it was during his life in the city, and before he withdrew to the valley of Gerar, that Isaac observed that the beauty of his wife might compromise his interests and even endanger his life. "The men of the place asked him of his wife"; a thing which caused him annoyance and concern. The Hebrew text does not say that they asked *him*, and therefore "him" (in the A. V. and M. S. V.) is printed in italics. It is probable that the extraordinary beauty of the woman came to the knowledge of the public and was a matter of common town talk, until at last they asked him as to the relations which subsisted between the two. Whether it was that Rebekah neglected the counsel which the former king Abimelech had given to her mother-in-law, Sarah (ch. 20: 16), or whether it was that the fame of her beauty supplied the lack of sight, the certainty is that the rare comeliness of the woman put in motion the tongues of the men of Gerar. Abraham anticipated the questions they might ask as to Sarah, saying beforehand that she was his sister; Isaac felt that he was in a still nearer peril, because the inquiries they were already making about his wife (see comment on ch. 18: 9) revealed clearly the dangers that were surrounding him. Taking counsel of his fears, then, instead of his God, Isaac betook himself to the same expedient his father had made use of in this very city of Gerar, of which no doubt he had intelligence, and

said: "She is my sister." It is evident that the woman was attracting more attention than was convenient or safe, and that the reply (or replies) of Isaac was well known, since Abimelech the king was fully aware of it. It happened therefore, one day, during the long abode of Isaac in Gerar, that looking out of a window, which gave him a view of the tent or the house of Isaac, Abimelech saw that, "behold! Isaac was sporting with Rebekah." The words do not imply that he passed the limits of modesty, but they do imply that he was taking liberties with her that would be improper between brother and sister, or between unmarried persons. Calling Isaac, therefore, he said that she was manifestly his wife and not his sister; and he reproved him for the deceit he had practiced on them. Isaac excused himself, on the ground of his fear that they would kill him on account of the beauty of his wife. It would seem that Abimelech acknowledged in part that his fears were not entirely groundless; and he was sure that the God of Abraham, who put in mortal terror the former Abimelech, would not regard with indifference an offence committed against Isaac and his wife; for he gave rigorous orders that whosoever should touch the man or his wife should surely be put to death.

Abimelech showed himself in this matter the worthy son of a worthy father (ch. 20: 9, 10); and the horror with which he and his father looked upon the crime of adultery, seems to indicate that the morals of the people were as yet in a condition greatly superior to that which existed in the days of Moses; when on account of their unspeakable abominations, he declared that the earth itself was ready to vomit out its inhabitants. Lev. 18: 3, 26—28.

The readiness with which Isaac fell into the sin of his father, reveals to us how much easier it is for children to imitate the vices and weaknesses of their parents than their virtues, and how the sins of parents are frequently perpetuated in their children.

If Abraham and Isaac, who were powerful princes, had reason to fear that they might die on account of their beautiful wives, what must have been the condition of the common people? and what security could any ordinary person have for the possession of a so much coveted good? All the history of antiquity, and the social condition of the Middle Ages, and the actual condition of unevangelized nations and peoples, and of the criminal classes of our own great cities, show clearly that the fears entertained by Abraham and Isaac were not ill-founded; and it ought to fill us with continual gratitude to God, that the direct and indirect

influence of the Gospel has made itself felt with such powerful effect in the world, that the man who has a beautiful wife has now no fear of dying on her account, nor (among peoples formed under the influence of the Gospel) does he live in continual apprehension of a criminal invasion of his honor and the purity of his home.

This danger in those times was real and very great; but that in no wise excused the great sin into which Abraham and Isaac fell on account of their fears, nor their little faith in God, in those times of visible peril. It has been wisely said:

“The fear of man bringeth a snare,  
but whoso putteth his trust in Jehovah shall be safe.”

Prov. 29: 25.

But while we censure their lack of full confidence in God, let us remember that in our circumstances, so different from theirs, and completely protected as we are against like dangers, we are not in the most favorable position to judge of their case with fairness and strict impartiality.

26: 12—22. UNCERTAINTY OF DATES. ISAAC ADDS AGRICULTURE TO THE CARE OF HIS FLOCKS AND HERDS. HIS GREAT PROSPERITY, AND THE ENVY OF THE PHILISTINES. (Of uncertain date.)

12 And Isaac sowed in that land, and found in the same year a hundredfold: and Jehovah blessed him.

13 And the man waxed great, and grew more and more until he became very great:

14 and he had possessions of flocks, and possessions of herds, and a great household: and the Philistines envied him.

15 Now all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped, and filled with earth.

16 And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we.

17 And Isaac departed thence, and encamped in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.

18 And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.

19 And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing\* water.

20 And the herdsmen of Gerar strove with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek, † because they contended with him.

21 And they digged another well, and they strove for that also; and he called the name of it Sitnah. ‡

22 And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth: || and he said, For now Jehovah hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

\*Hcb. living.

†That is, enmity.

‡That is, contention.

||That is, Room.



The little security that we have as to the chronological dates given in our Bibles (excepting certain determined epochs) is seen here in the fact that all this chapter goes in our Bibles under the date of "1804 B. C.", whereas it is certain that its contents embrace a period of several years, if not of many years. We have here, (1) the long residence of Isaac in Gerar, vr. 8; (2) his residence in the country near to the city, where he sowed the lands and reaped a prodigious harvest; (3) "he went from there, rudely sent away by Abimelech, and encamped in the valley of Gerar, *and dwelt* there" (vr. 17)—a word which signifies long residence in a given place; (4) the envy of the Philistines, who contended with him for the wells he had dug, and obliged him to break up camp and dig new wells,—a thing that was several times repeated, he digging new wells, and reopening "*all the wells* which the servants of his father had dug," (vr. 15) in this same valley of Gerar, "which the Philistines, after the death of his father Abraham, had stopped, filling them with earth"; "and he gave them the same names which his father had given them." Vrs. 15—18. "All the wells" would be at least four, while Isaac himself dug three besides, to which he gave names of his own. And all this, before he at last left those contentious folk, "and went up thence to Beersheba" (vr. 23), going higher up the valley. There Abimelech made him a visit, at the time that he was digging still another well—the eighth; the largest number of wells we hear of as dug by any one man; at a time when the digging of wells was the work of princes (see comments on ch. 21: 25, 30), and when the finding of abundant waters was the occasion of general rejoicings:

"Then sang Israel this song:

Spring up, oh well; sing ye unto it!

the well which the princes digged,

which the nobles of the people delved,

with their staves, by order of the lawgiver" (M. S. V.).

Num. 21: 17, 18.

Isaac was the most famous digger of wells of whom we have notice in the Bible; and they are all mentioned in this chapter. If he had occupied 10 or 15 years in this, it would not be surprising: that he should have dug them all in the year 1804 B. C., is altogether incredible.

When Isaac departed from Gerar, or perhaps while still residing there, he added agriculture to the care of his numerous flocks and herds of cattle. Undoubtedly Abraham and Jacob also gave some attention to agriculture, although we have no mention of it; but the fact we have here mentioned seems to in-

dicating that Isaac began the work on a large scale; and through the blessing of Jehovah the product of his labors was great. The circumstance that the man enriched himself extraordinarily as the result of his new enterprise, manifests that he continued at it for many years, besides that first year in which Jehovah gave him the return of a hundred for one. This astonishing increase of his wealth in the land of the Philistines provoked their envy to such a degree that he had to remove from place to place, digging new wells, or opening afresh the wells dug by his father, which the Philistines had filled with earth after his death; a thing they would not have dared to do during the life of Abraham; which places in clear relief the fact that Isaac had completely lost the ascendancy which his father had among those Canaanites. His prosperity was too great for a man who was cordially disliked, and who was of a weak and irresolute character. After Isaac had given up one well after another to the contentious Philistines, Abimelech, who regarded him as a troublesome guest in his land, said to him plainly: "Go from us, for thou art much mightier than we!" Vr. 16. This was probably an exaggeration, and served only as a pretext for sending him rudely away (vr. 27); but in any case it shows us how vast was the encampment of Isaac, and how large was the number of his people. Compare another exaggeration in Ex. 1: 9, spoken by Pharaoh with like intent: "The people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we."

"A well of living waters," in vr. 19, is an expression difficult to explain, regarded as a distinctive mark of this particular well. Because all the eight wells Isaac had dug, or opened anew, since they were not *cisterns* of water, were wells of "*springing water*." The Jews, nevertheless, used the word "living water" for "*running water*" (Comp. John 4: 11); and it is possible that this particular well was distinguished from the rest by the force and abundance with which the water, when they struck it, leaped upward; or perhaps the well was of little depth, and the water, after filling it, overflowed in great abundance.

On digging his last well in the pasture lands of Abimelech, the Philistines did not contend for it; and for this reason he gave it the name of Rehoboth (= Room; 16 miles to the south of Beersheba), saying "Because Jehovah hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." Vr. 22. We infer from this that Isaac intended to remain much time there. This well still remains in Rehoboth, strengthened with works of masonry of immense proportions and of very great antiquity. It is believed that it is the same well which Isaac dug. But the country is

now a complete desert—a Sahara; showing how much it has changed since the time when Isaac expected to “be fruitful in that land.”

26: 23—25. IN BEERSHEBA JEHOVAH APPEARS TO HIM AGAIN, AND TRANQUILIZES HIS FEARS. (Of uncertain date.)

23 And he went up from thence to Beer-sheba.

24 And Jehovah appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.

25 And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of Jehovah, and pitched his tent\* there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

\**M. S. V.*, his tents.

Although Isaac had named his last well “Rehoboth,” because the Philistines had no dispute with him about it, and although he had promised himself “to be fruitful in that land,” yet when least we expect it “he went up from thence to Beersheba.” This circumstance, taken in connection with the fact that “Jehovah appeared to him that same night, and said to him: I am the God of Abraham thy father; fear not for I am with thee,” is enough to satisfy us that at last something unlooked for happened which not only made him break up his encampment, but filled his heart with apprehension, if not with alarm. Abraham, Isaac and Paul (Comp. ch. 15: 1 and Acts 27: 24) give us examples of how God was wont to improve times of danger and anxiety to make to his servants tranquilizing revelations of his presence and his blessing.

It would be difficult to acquit Isaac of the charge of timidity; and however exaggerated may have been the allegation of Abimelech: “Thou art much mightier than we” (vr. 16), we cannot understand how he should give up one well after another, six or seven consecutively, except by the admission that there was in him a timidity which verged on cowardice. From Abraham these same warlike Philistines had once taken by force his well at Beersheba, 25 miles from Gerar; and Abraham in the interest of peace had submitted for some time to the injustice done; but always with a purpose of complaining to the king of the country, and recovering what was his. See ch. 21: 25, etc. “A great prince (*Heb.* a prince of God) art thou in the midst of us” (ch. 23: 6), expresses well the respect and deference with which this great man inspired all who had anything to do with him. But Isaac was of a different temper and disposition; and it would seem that the Philistines regarded with some contempt the numerical force which he had at his command, in view of the

weakness and vacillation of the hand which grasped the sword. Isaac was not only pacific, extremely pacific, but he was of a weak and irresolute character; and doubtless he must have gone away from Rehoboth intimidated and troubled, for Jehovah to appear at once to him, "that same night," for the sole purpose of speaking to him the tranquilizing words that we have quoted, and to assure him anew of his part in the blessings promised to his father Abraham. It is no small consolation for us to know that in the love and esteem of God, there was place not only for the magnanimous Abraham, but for the weak and timid Isaac.

In this paragraph we read for the first and last time of Isaac's building an altar to Jehovah. It would be unjust to infer from this that it was the first and only time that Isaac offered sacrifice, and made public confession and adoration of Jehovah. The four several times that Abraham is said to have built an altar to Jehovah are enough to give us to understand that wherever he pitched his tent, there also he had his altar. It is therefore much more probable that it was the manner, character and object of this revelation with which Jehovah favored his servant, and the juncture at which he granted it, which called for this special commemoration of building an altar to Jehovah, and its mention in this place.

Two things strike us here as strange: 1st. That Isaac should dig a well in Beersheba, a place which had taken its name (= Well of the oath) from the oath which Abraham and Abimelech had there mutually pledged to each other many years before, and where Abimelech accepted seven ewe lambs in witness that Abraham had dug that well (ch. 21: 30, 31); and 2nd. That he should build an altar where Abraham, in his very long residence near this well, was accustomed to call upon the name of Jehovah, under the shade of his grove (ch. 21: 33), and where necessarily he had built his altar. It is still more notable that in virtue of the oath which he and Abimelech made there, Isaac should give to his well the same name of *Beersheba*, which Abraham had given it nearly 100 years before. The readiest explanation of it, and probably the most correct and satisfactory, is that the herdsmen of Gerar claimed all this country as their pasture lands (ch. 21: 25), and even Rehoboth, 16 miles farther south (vr. 22); and as they were envious of Isaac and hated him, they not only stopped all the wells that Abraham had dug in the valley of Gerar, but this of Beersheba also (in the same valley), in spite of the oath of peace which had been made there; and that as hatred and envy was the cause of all this, they not only filled the well with earth, but perhaps also cut down his grove

(which is not mentioned any more), and threw down his altar. In vr. 18 we are told, in regard to the wells of his father which Isaac opened again, that he gave them the same names that his father had given them. This will perfectly explain the case we have here.

26: 26—33. ABIMELECH MAKES A COVENANT OF PEACE WITH ISAAC  
IN BEERSHEBA. (Of uncertain date.)

26 Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath his friend, and Phicol the captain of his host.

27 And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore are ye come unto me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?

28 And they said, We saw plainly that Jehovah was with thee: and we said, Let there now be an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee,

29 that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of Jehovah.

30 And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink.

31 And they rose up betimes in the morning, and swore one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

32 And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water.

33 And he called it Shibah: therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba unto this day.

Eighty or ninety years before, according to the common chronology, when Isaac was still a little boy, this same scene was witnessed in this very place. Of the participants in that transaction, Phicol, captain of Abimelech's army, alone remains. Abimelech (who for convenience we shall call Abimelech I, calling Abimelech II this contemporary of Isaac), had of course died; because he was so old a man that he had desired to marry Sarah, who was at that time nearly 90 years of age; so that it is not to be supposed that he was still alive and vigorous. This Abimelech, probably the son of the former, presents himself with a friend of his who under every point of view is a new character—"Ahuzzath his friend," who comes in here to give us information as to Abimelech himself. Valera says: "his friend," and the English Version says: "one of his friends," mistaking the form of the word. The R. V. says "Ahuzzath his friend," giving us to understand that the word is used in a special or technical sense, to indicate probably "the friend of the bridegroom" in a marriage festivity (John 3: 29); we therefore infer that Abimelech was young and recently married, and that the chief of his companions on this occasion was this Ahuzzath. The history of Samson makes it all plain to us; and both events happened among these same Philistines. In Samson's marriage feast, "they

brought him thirty companions to be with him"; but among these thirty there was one only who was called by pre-eminence his "companion" and "his friend" (Judges 14: 11, 20; 15: 2); and when in an access of rage, Samson rudely broke up the feast, and "burning in anger went up to his father's house," "the wife of Samson was given to his companion, who had been *his friend*." Judges 14: 19, 20. To the same custom John the Baptist alludes, when he compares himself "to the friend of the bridegroom who standeth and heareth him." John 3: 29. In the Greek translation of the LXX, Ahuzzath is called the "*numphagogos*" of Abimelech; that is to say *the friend of the bridegroom, who presented to him the bride*. I believe that little or nothing is now lacking to prove that Abimelech was young and recently married, and that Ahuzzath was his chief wedding companion, his "best man," according to an Americanism of recent coinage, or his "padrino de boda," according to Spanish usage. Phicol, if he were young on the former occasion, might be the same person mentioned here; or more probably he was another person of the same name.

With this accompaniment, and doubtless with soldiers also at the orders of their "captain," Abimelech came to visit Isaac; who received him with coldness: "Wherefore are ye come unto me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?" All which manifests that their separation had been marked by violence and ill-will. It is difficult to penetrate the true feelings and purposes of the Orientals, who always speak with reserve, disguising the true object they have in view, and doing everything by indirection. In the case of Abraham, it is easy to discern it; because there was to be arranged that question of the well which the Philistines had taken from him by force (ch. 21: 21, 25); but in the case of Isaac we can see nothing which should influence Abimelech, except a prudent desire to ward off the possible effect of the repeated injustices they had used with the head of a rich and powerful tribe or clan, and who had Jehovah for his protector; for although Abimelech neither feared nor served Jehovah, it was regarded in those days as a dictate of ordinary prudence, that while "there were gods many and lords many," some of greater and others of less standing and power, yet in any case *a god could do more than a man*; and for this reason it was wise to avoid giving offence to any of them. And thus, in spite of the ill-treatment they had given Isaac, with cool Oriental effrontery they answer him: "We plainly saw that Jehovah was with thee; and we said: Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant

with thee; that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and *as we have done unto thee nothing but good*, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of Jehovah!" (vrs. 28, 29),—words of flattery, designed to cover up hatred. Isaac made them a feast, which according to the usage of the Old Testament was always accompanied with a sacrifice; and with this sacrifice it is probable that they celebrated (*Heb. cut*) the covenant asked by Abimelech, according to the rites already described in ch. 15: 9—18; 21: 32.

So they ate, and drank, and slept; and "they rose up betimes in the morning and sware one to another." Thus Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. The same day was also notable on account of the good news his servants brought to Isaac with regard to a well they had digged, saying: "We have found water!" To this well Isaac gave the same expressive name "Beersheba" (= Well of the oath), which Abraham gave to his own on a similar occasion, 80 years or more before: it may be that it was the same well of Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped. At the present time there are two extremely old wells in Beersheba (see comment of ch. 21: 22—32) 300 yards apart, the larger of which is 12½ feet in diameter, and the lesser 5, in great part cut in the solid rock, and abundant in the best of water. Dr. Edward Robinson believes that the larger of the two may reasonably be supposed to be the famous well of Abraham, dug almost 4000 years ago. When the second was dug, we have no way of finding out; nor can we conceive why the smaller well should have been dug at a distance of 300 yards from the former, when either of the two is so abundant in water. It is possible that the second is that which Isaac dug, while the former was still stopped; or if the two are wells of Abraham, it may be supposed that when the Philistines violently took away the former, and while the question was in waiting to be arranged by the king of the country, Abraham dug the second in the interests of peace, rather than measure his strength with those quarrelsome and warlike Philistines. The locality still bears the same name in Arabic form, "Bir es-Sebá," and there are yet found there the scattered remains of the city which at one time stood upon the high ground to the north of the wells. Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, Vol. 1 pp. 300, 301. Dr. Robinson sought in vain for Rehoboth, the well which Isaac dug; but since then it has been found, preserving still its old name in Arabic form, 16 miles to the south of Beersheba; 12 feet in diameter, but so covered and filled with earth and rubbish that it was with difficulty found. The work of masonry is the most massive that

exists in that part of the country, and bears evidence of being as old as the days of Isaac: it is called today "er-Ru-heibeh." Schaff's *Bible Dictionary*.

26: 34, 35. THE DOUBLE MARRIAGE OF ESAU. (1796 B. C.)

34 And when Esau was forty years old he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite:

35 and they were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.

The commentator Bush believes that after arranging terms of peace with Abimelech (vr. 31), Isaac enjoyed a period of delicious calm for 18 years, of which we have no notice whatever, until his domestic peace was again disturbed by the wilfulness of his favorite son. It would seem that Esau took two wives at once, and presented them together, or with little difference of time, in the encampment of his father; because he was forty years old when he married both of them. They were probably daughters of Canaanite princes; an alliance by which Esau sought to increase and extend his worldly importance;—something diametrically opposed to the purpose of God in calling for himself the seed of Abraham, and separating them from the other nations. They were Hittites, and perhaps from Hebron, which was a Hittite city, and whose princes are called the sons of Heth, in ch. 23: 3, 10, 18; the city where Abraham resided so many years, and where he and Sarah his wife were buried.

The worldly-minded Esau, who had already sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, little cared with whom he married, provided it was to his satisfaction. Abraham, imbued with the religious spirit, and animated with the Messianic hope (things about which Esau did not concern himself), with great solicitude took care that Isaac should not marry a Canaanitish woman; and Isaac and Rebekah manifested the same solicitude with regard to the marriage of Jacob. Ch. 27: 46; 28: 1, 2. This was not only, nor principally (as some would represent it), a zeal to keep their blood pure and without mixture; but, on the contrary, it was that if their sons married the daughters of the heathen Canaanites, in the midst of whom they lived, they would soon lose the traditions of their family, with every trace of that heavenly vocation with which Jehovah had called to himself Abraham and his seed, in order that they should be to him a people of his exclusive possession. From what happened with Ishmael and the sons of Keturah, and from what happened with Esau, the first-born of Isaac and Rebekah, it is easy for us to imagine what would have been the result if Isaac and Jacob had married women



of the same class. Humanly speaking there was no reason why all the sons of Abraham, including the sons of his two concubines, should not have "entered into the bond of the covenant" (of which, with their circumcision, they received the seal), the same as all the twelve sons of Jacob (four of whom were the children of his concubines, Bilah and Zilpah), except the influence of the Egyptian mother and wife of Ishmael and the uncongenial spirit of the sons of Keturah, married probably with Canaanitish women before their father separated them from Isaac, and sent them away toward the East: and so they all became "strangers from the covenants of the promise." Eph. 2: 12. There was in itself no reason why the two sons of Isaac, both of them, should not have at once begun to form the lineage of Abraham to whom pertained the promises, if it had not been for the wilful and worldly temper of Esau, completely foreign to the Messianic spirit; for whom nothing was worth anything which did not bring him immediate satisfaction, and in whose esteem the great promises made to Abraham were not worth a thought. He commenced by selling his birthright to satisfy his hunger, and afterwards to please himself he married two daughters of Canaan whom he had close at hand, and who suited his fancy. It is worthy of our attention that the pleasure and satisfaction of those two marriages was purely for himself. He did not even consult his parents, nor ask their intervention in the matter, according to the use of the time and country. They were not even good and amiable as Canaanites; for the text informs us that they were "a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah."

Would to God that our evangelicals would fix attention on the example of Esau, whose gentile wives, totally foreign to the spirit and purpose of the calling of Abraham and his seed, speedily made an end in his case of all the holy traditions and aspirations of the family of Abraham! A race of utter heathens is what they produced; and the Idumeans, children of Esau, pagans out and out, were always the implacable enemies of the children of Israel, and figure in the mouth of the prophets as the type *par excellence* of the enemies of the true God and of his cause and people; until at last what remained of them allied themselves with the famous son of Ishmael, the false prophet, whose device was and is: "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet!"—"Mohammed first, and after him the son of Mary!" From Esau let those evangelicals take warning, who, looking chiefly to their pleasure and temporal profit, marry women of a worldly spirit, or fanatical enemies of the gospel, and so reduce their religion (if they have any)

to a nullity, while they bring up fanatical or wicked children, for whom the promises of God are not worth a groat. The zeal of the Roman Catholic priests against mixed marriages is of a very different quality. True holiness of life and the conservation of the promises of the gospel, is what they are least concerned about; or better said, what they most fear. It does not greatly matter to them how much the families therefrom resulting sin against the laws of God, provided they *do not break the yoke of the Priest*. Among us, Evangelicals, the question of ecclesiastical relations is of comparatively little importance; that which is supremely important is the knowledge and love of the word of God, repentance and a living faith; resulting in "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Heb. 12: 14.

How numerous are the *Esaus* of the evangelical fold, who, born in the bosom of Christian families, and partially educated in the knowledge of the great privileges and hopes of the present and the coming kingdom of our God, give loose rein to their passions and their worldly inclinations, and for the shortlived pleasures of sin, disinherit themselves of those incomparable blessings to the inheritance of which they were born, without even a sigh—"even as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his own birthright!" Heb. 12: 16.

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

VRS. 1—29. JACOB, BY FRAUD, TAKES AWAY FROM ESAU HIS BLESSING. (1776 B. C.)

1 And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his elder son, and said unto him, My son; and he said unto him, Here am I.

2 And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death.

3 Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field and take me venison;

4 and make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.

5 And Rebekah heard\* when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.

6 And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,

7 Bring me venison, and make me savory food, that I may eat, and bless thee before Jehovah before my death.

8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.

9 Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savory food for thy father, such as he loveth:

10 and thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, so that he may bless thee before his death.

\*M. S. V., was listening.

11 And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man.

12 My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.

13 And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son; only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.

14 And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savory food, such as his father loved.

15 And Rebekah took the goodly garments of Esau her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son;

16 and she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck:

17 and she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

18 And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son?

19 And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy first-born: I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

20 And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because Jehovah thy God sent me good speed.

21 And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not.

22 And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.

23 And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.

24 And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am.

25 And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank.

26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.

27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said,

See, the smell of my son

Is as the smell of a field which Jehovah hath blessed:

28 And God give thee of the dew of heaven.

And of the fatness of the earth,

And plenty of grain and new wine:

29 Let peoples serve thee,

And nations bow down to thee:

Be lord over thy brethren,

And let thy mother's sons bow down to thee:

Cursed be every one that curseth thee,

And blessed be every one that blesseth thee.

Some writers maintain that Esau was 39 years old when he sold his birthright to Jacob, one year before he married his Hittite wives. There are those also who maintain that Jacob married at the same age as Esau, or a little later; which would place the events of this chapter, which gave occasion for the flight of Jacob, a short time after the marriage of Esau,—opinions, both of them, which make little account of the facts and the dates furnished us by the Bible itself; for if Jacob fled to Padan-aram when 40 years old, and 20 years later re-

turned to Canaan (that is to say when 60), and went down to Egypt at 130 (ch. 47: 9), there will be nothing with which to occupy the 70 intermediate years; and it will be impossible to adjust the account with what we know of Joseph and his brethren. The commentator Adam Clarke places the marriage of Esau about 1804 B. C.; and the trick by which Jacob robbed him of the blessing, he puts at 1779 B. C. (that is to say 24 years after the marriage of Esau; a time at which the two brothers would be about 65 years of age). According to the common chronology, given in the margin of our Bibles, the sale of the birthright took place about 1805 B. C., when Esau and Jacob were about 32 years of age, and the marriage of Esau with his two Hittites, eight years afterwards, 1796 B. C.; and the theft of his blessing, 36 years after this, in 1760 B. C.; that is 44 years after the sale of the birthright. In all this the reader will see the uncertainty of a large part of the particular dates given in our Biblical chronology—except in the cases where the text itself furnishes us the data. It becomes us to bear always in mind that in the Bible, in common with all ancient profane history, chronology (a point of so great importance to us) was esteemed of very little interest, and they did not always carefully guard even the chronological order of events. It is surely an error to hope to arrange minutely the chronology of the Bible when frequently there was no such order and arrangement in the mind of the writer. The only reason I can see for supposing that Jacob married at 40 or 50 years of age, is found in the idea that an old man of 70 years could not be the passionate lover that Jacob was of his beloved Rachel. Ch. 29: 20. But such argumentation is very insecure, and the age which they would assign to him is in complete disagreement with the subsequent history of Jacob and his sons.

We have already spoken at considerable length of the great difficulties of the Hebrew chronology (*Note 12*, p. 72); but assuming its correctness in this case we have the following data with regard to Isaac and his family. The theft of Esau's blessing was the immediate occasion of the flight of Jacob to the house of Laban, the brother of his mother; Joseph was born 14 years after this date, when Jacob had, with 14 years of personal labor, paid the dowry of his two wives, and when about to begin the six years of service with which he gained his property (ch. 30: 25, 26; 31: 41); Joseph was 39 years old when Jacob and all his family went down to Egypt (ch. 41: 47; 45: 11); and at this very juncture (53 years after

Jacob's act of treachery towards Esau and his flight to Padan-aram), Jacob was 130 years old (ch. 47: 9); and deducting the 53 years aforesaid, it appears that Jacob, when he fled to the house of Laban, was 76 years old (or 75 counting after the Jewish manner), 35 or 36 years after the marriage of Esau. As Isaac was 40 years old when his two sons were born (ch. 25: 26), he was at the time of Jacob's flight 135 years old; a time at which, according to vr. 1, he was blind; and as he died at the age of 180, it appears that he passed about 45 years in blindness, before his death.

According to the common chronology, then, 44 years had elapsed since Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. It is possible that there had passed 50 years, or even more, for all that bad business wears the appearance of the follies of youth, rather than of the deportment of two men of 35 or 40 years of age; and perhaps Esau considered that because the date was long since past, that act of youthful folly had by that time become a matter of little importance. Thus sinners always imagine it is with their former sins, of which they have not yet repented;—only because the distance of time has well nigh blotted out the remembrance of them. How forgetful are they that in the book of the divine remembrance, these, with all their aggravating circumstances, are as fresh and as clearly depicted as on the day of their commission! "They consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now have their own doings beset them about; they are before my face." Hos. 7: 2.

Esau (vr. 36), draws a distinction between the birthright and the blessing, and evidently he dreamed that although he had sold the former more than 40 years before, the other was his, and that he would certainly obtain it in its season; a vivid example of the extravagant belief of men, that the blessing will be theirs in the end, however long they persist in their "ways of destruction." The habitual thought of their mind is: "*I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.*" Deut. 29: 19. For us, the distinction which Esau makes did not exist, except in his own imagination: the birthright and the blessing were all one, the latter being nothing more than the public or official acknowledgment of the former by his father; so that selling the birthright, he sold the blessing likewise. Isaac and Rebekah undoubtedly had knowledge of the traffic which their elder son had made of his birthright, and it would seem that they shared in Esau's idea that the birthright and the blessing were separable things, so that the

younger might have the birthright and the elder the blessing; or if not (and this is the more probable), that the sale of the former would have no effect, until their father had given it validity and confirmation by the blessing which was to follow.

It is clear that the two sons had little in common. Although children of the same birth, they were totally different in disposition; by occupation they were still more different. The manifest partiality of the two parents, each for the favorite son, made matters worse day by day; the cunning of Jacob had taken advantage of the frank and rude independence of Esau, in order to rob him of the birthright; worse than robbery, for he had made his brother to take part in his crime; and from that time, a period, we suppose, of 40 or 50 years, the two would have less than ever to do with each other; and in all this while they would be on the alert, and always waiting to see to which of the two the confirmatory blessing would fall. Rebekah was also on the watch day and night, to prevent its happening that some day her beloved Jacob would be deprived of the blessing, having already gotten his brother's birthright. Isaac, weak and timid by nature, and old, blind, incautious, he also had the blessing in reserve for his favorite son, his valiant and expert hunter. He knew well the divine oracle, given to the mother before the birth of the two sons:

"Two nations are in thy womb,  
and two peoples shall be separated (= divided) even from  
thy bowels;  
and the one people shall be stronger than the other  
people;  
and the elder shall serve the younger" (ch. 25: 23);—

he knew it, but he did not give due heed to it; or perhaps he did not wish to understand it in a sense unfavorable to his favorite son.

Isaac was old, blind and sick. He must necessarily have been in greatly impaired health; for otherwise we cannot conceive how a man who had 45 years more of life before him, should have come to believe (an opinion in which all his family shared), that he had but a short time to live. Vrs. 1, 41.

Impressed therefore with the idea that his life was soon to end, Isaac called his elder son one day, and begged him to take his weapons, his quiver and his bow, and go out to the field to hunt some venison for him, and make him savory food such as his father loved; in order that he might eat, and bless

him before his death. This again reveals to us the weak side of the poor old man. In ch. 25: 28, the only reason given for the partiality he had for his son Esau is that "he did eat of his venison." I see no reason why, when the Holy Scriptures speak without disguise of the weaknesses and sins of the saints of the ancient times, we should endeavor to cover them up, excuse them, or extenuate them. On the contrary, there are many reasons why we should call things by their right names, and endeavor to derive from them the spiritual profit and the important lessons, with a view to which they were written by inspiration of God, for instruction in all the ages of the Church.

Seeing therefore that the hour so long waited for had arrived, Esau took his weapons and went out hurriedly. But his mother was listening while Isaac talked with him. The Hebrew text carefully indicates that this was not an accident; Rebekah "was listening," with full intent to hear what was said, and she saw that the critical moment had arrived when, as she viewed it, everything was to be gained or lost. Rebekah also knew the divine oracle, but like Sarah, in an evil hour for herself, she believed that (according to the common proverb of those who know little or nothing of the fidelity of Jehovah) "God helps those who help themselves," and that human expedients are very necessary in order to give effect to the divine promises. See ch. 16: 1, 2. If Rebekah had had confidence in the divine oracle, that the "older shall serve the younger," she might well have followed tranquilly the path of duty, assured that God himself would give effect to his word. He, in fact, fulfilled it, in spite of the great sin which Rebekah and her favorite son committed; but with many and lasting calamities for both of them.

Her expedient was to call Jacob, inform him of all that was going on, and say to him that without the loss of a moment he should run to the fold and bring her two good kids, of which she would make the savory food which his father loved; and then, carrying it in to his father, before Esau's return, he would receive the coveted blessing. Jacob, who many years before, had taken advantage of his brother's urgent need, in order to make him sell his birthright, and forced him to confirm the sale with an oath (ch. 25: 31—33), had, it would seem, on the score of conscience, no scruples, and made no difficulty about acceding to his mother's proposal. He did not startle at its baseness. He suggested to his mother as his only difficulty, that although the poor old man could no longer use his eyes

to know him, he would perhaps take him by the hands to *feel him*, and would thus find out the deception that was practiced on him; and so he, Jacob, as one who was mocking his father, would bring upon himself, not a blessing, but a curse! His mother, sagacious and crafty, told him to leave all that (including his curse) to her care, and only listen to her voice, and do as soon as possible what she commanded him. All the steps in this miserable imposture fill us with horror, and give us a pitiable idea of the weakness of poor Isaac, whose own wife and son expected to deceive him with so clumsy an artifice. Unhappy old man!

[NOTE 25.—*On the sins of Old Testament Saints.* I believe it my duty to present without disguise, what the Bible depicts without any disguise, lest some incautious reader fall into the error, into which many careless and superstitious persons fall, of believing that as these were the acts of the people of God, they were not really wicked; and that as the text does not condemn them in energetic terms, it is lawful to palliate them, if not to justify or imitate them. The ancient fathers and Roman Catholic expositors, with their mania for seeking mystical senses in everything, with much frequency fell, and yet fall, into this error. See the notes of Bishop Amat on vrs. 13 and 19 of this chapter. Romanism not only by its anti-christian doctrines and practices, but even by its expositions of the Bible, sinks deeper and deeper in the mire of infidelity multitudes of its own baptized children, who seek something of truth and sound reason in religion. If any reader is scandalized at seeing such hateful sins in the families of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, let him banish for ever from his mind the idea of human merits, and see that God did not have for his object to recompense his ancient servants according to the good or evil of their conduct, but served himself of such instruments (the best no doubt he could find in the world), to carry out his own designs of mercy toward the ruined race of men, and begin to plant in a world of universal corruption those principles of righteousness and holiness whose fruits, immature as yet, we are now enjoying, and which will reach their complete fruition in the day of promise (2 Pet. 3: 13), whose advent Christ teaches us to pray for with daily supplication: "THY KINGDOM COME. THY WILL BE DONE, AS IN HEAVEN SO ON EARTH." We who enjoy the light which shines in the world 1900 years after Christ, instead of being scandalized by the imperfections and sins of those who 1900 years before Christ had scarcely begun to come out of the universal and dense



darkness, which then covered all the earth and all the nations, ought rather to consider out of what a horrible abyss of wickednesses God has now brought the nations which in some degree enjoy the innumerable benefits of his word. Well, right well, has the apostle John said: "The darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth!" 1 John 2: 8. How then will it be when the darkness shall have completely and forever passed away, by the virtue and power of him who came to put away sin (*Gr.* for the abolition, or destruction, of sin) by means of the sacrifice of himself? Heb. 9: 26. See also the comments on the sin of Noah, in ch. 9: 24—27, and of Abraham in ch. 20: 1—7.]

Jacob did as he was bidden, and Rebekah, who had it all arranged beforehand in her mind, covered his hands and the smooth of his neck with the skins of the kids, and clothing him with the most precious garments of Esau, which it seems she had by her in the house, redolent with the smell of the fields and woods in which he passed his life (due perhaps to the aromatic herbs with which he kept them), she placed in his hands the savory food now ready, together with the bread; and he presented them thus before his father, in order to receive his blessing. Isaac, who did not recognize in his tones the voice of Esau, asks him who he is; and he, who had learned well his part, answers: "I am Esau, thy first-born. I have done as thou badest me; arise, I pray thee, sit up and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me!" The words "arise, sit up" confirm us in the belief that the poor old man was sick, or at least seriously ailing. But the distrust of Isaac had now been awakened; he asks him, therefore, how it is that he had so soon found the venison; and the crafty Jacob hypocritically answers (dishonoring thus the name and providence of God): "Because Jehovah thy God sent me good speed." Distrustful still, he made him come near to him, that he might feel him; and he said: "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands; and so he blessed him." But the poor Isaac, bewildered not only as to his sight, but now in mind as well, asked him helplessly for the last time: "Art thou my very son Esau?" And he, resolved now to carry through his purpose, answered without hesitation: "I am!" The poor old blind man, worse bewildered than before, unable to detect the deceit that was being practiced on him, and without anybody he could make use of to know just what was passing, said to Jacob: "Bring it near to me,

and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee." And having eaten, Jacob brought him wine and he drank. He said to him at last: "Come near now, and kiss me, my son!" Jacob did so; and when Isaac smelled the odor of his raiment, he exclaimed:

"See, the smell of my son,  
is as the smell of a field which Jehovah hath blessed!  
And God give thee of the dew of heaven," etc.

The blessing of Jacob contained three things: 1st. Material prosperity—fruitful seasons and abundant harvests. As it does not rain in Palestine during the months of summer, abundant dews come to supply, in favored parts, the lack of rain. The copiousness of these dews may be inferred from that which fell upon the fleece of Gideon, from which he wrung out a bowlful of water (Judg. 6: 38), and from the comparison which Hushai makes of an army which comes down upon the opposing hosts "as the dew falleth upon the ground." 2 Sam. 17: 12. 2nd. Power and dominion over peoples and nations, and the lordship of his brethren,—the children of his mother. As he had no other brother but Esau, the words can be understood of the descendants of each respectively—the form in which such promises and prophecies must be understood, as Esau was never personally subject to Jacob. 3rd. The two last lines of the blessing are merely a repetition, with a change of form, of the blessing which God gave originally to Abraham, in ch. 12: 3: "I will bless them that bless thee and him that curseth thee I will curse;" and Baalam repeats it in almost the identical form, in spite of Balak's wishes and the desires of his own covetous heart, with respect of the people whom Balak had brought him to curse:

"Blessed be every one that blesseth thee,  
and cursed be every one that curseth thee." Num. 24: 9.

It is to be observed that this notable form of blessing is used exclusively of the people of God. And it is a fact, real and true until today, and will continue to be so eternally; not with regard to Churches or ecclesiastical establishments, but with reference to the true people of God. In Matt. 25: 31—46 (that greatly misunderstood and misused passage), Jesus teaches us that in the last great day the destiny and final abode of men *will turn on the attitude they have habitually maintained toward his true people*; those whom he will, in that day, set at his right hand:—an infallible touchstone, which will determine *the real attitude of each individual soul towards himself*.

## 27: 30—40. ESAU'S BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT. (1760 B. C.)

30 And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

31 And he also made savory food, and brought it unto his father; and he said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

32 And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau.

33 And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who then is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed.

34 When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceeding great and bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.

35 And he said, Thy brother came with guile, and hath taken away thy blessing.

36 And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

37 And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with grain and new wine have I sustained him: and what then shall I do for thee, my son?

38 And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.

39 And Isaac his father answered and said unto him,  
Behold, of\* the fatness of the earth shall be thy dwelling,  
And of the dew of heaven from above;

40 And by thy sword shalt thou live, and thou shalt serve thy brother;

And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt break loose,  
That thou shalt shake his yoke from off thy neck.

\*Or, away from.

The two brothers almost met at the door, while the one went out and the other came in. Esau also had hastened as much as possible, and had prepared savory food, and brought it to his father; and with the genial frankness which characterized him, and a candor which suspected no evil, with sonorous voice he saluted his father, as he entered, with the ingenuous and cheerful invitation: "Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me!" Isaac, surprised and stunned, received his salutation with the unlooked-for and dry inquiry: "Who art thou?" To which Esau replied, no doubt with altered voice: "I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau!" Now at last begins to dawn on the poor blind man the deceit which his younger son, aided by his mother, had practiced on him, and he trembles with a very great trembling. Still confused, he inquires: "Who then is he that hath taken venison and brought it to me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest and, have blessed him?" And remembering then the oracle of God,

and how, contrary to his own will and purpose, he himself had fulfilled it, he adds: "Yea, and he shall be blessed!" Jacob had feared with good reason that his father would discover the miserable trick of his mother, and would lay on him a curse instead of a blessing. Isaac in fact discovers, but too late, the imposture; but instead of endeavoring to revoke the blessing given so contrary to his own will, and persuaded at last of the designs of God, he adds slowly and thoughtfully: "*Yea, and he shall be blessed!*"

The surprise and desperation of Esau are depicted in the text with such naturalness and skill that all human embellishments can but mar the beauty of the passage. Forty or fifty years before, to satisfy the clamors of his appetite, Esau had sold his birthright, with everything pertaining thereto (of which the blessing was a part), without its costing him one sigh, or even a thought: "And he ate, and he drank, and he rose up, and he went away. So Esau despised his birthright!" Ch. 25: 34. But now with vehement desire, with convulsive sobs, and with a great and exceeding bitter cry, he endeavors to obtain what he then lost; but all in vain. It adds no little interest to this moving scene to remember that it was a man of seventy-five years who so uselessly weeps for what had once been his, but which he had sold with contempt; like so many other children of pious parents, bred up for the kingdom of God, who despise the heavenly gift, and exchange it gladly for any tempting morsel of sinful delight which Satan may set before them. Extremely moving are the words: "Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?"—"Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, oh my father!" To this the apostle refers in Heb. 12: 15—17: "Looking diligently lest any man come short of the grace of God; . . . lest there be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his own birthright. For ye know that even when he afterwards desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found (in his father) no place for a change of mind (*Gr.* repentance), though he sought it earnestly with tears." His father was on his side; his father earnestly desired to give him the blessing, for whom he had long held it in reserve; but in spite of all this, his father could not change, much less withdraw, what he had already said, knowing at last that such was the will of God. From this firm purpose of his, the cries, and sobs, and passionate entreaties of Esau could not move him; and it is very remarkable that Isaac, instead of soothing with soft words and expressions of equivocal

import the wounds he had made, seeing at last that he was speaking for God and not for himself, with great clearness said to him: "Behold I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given him for servants; with corn and with wine have I sustained him, and what then shall I do for thee, my son?" As Esau persisted in his entreaty, begging that he would give him a second blessing, even though he had lost the first, his father at last relented, and gave him all he could, as the prophet of God,—a *quasi-blessing*, which in its temporal aspect lacked little of the blessing which he had given to Jacob.

The words "of the fatness of the earth" are by some translated "away from the fatness of the earth," etc., with allusion to the dry lands of the mountain country of Seir, the land of Edom. But such a sense does not appear to me adequate to the occasion, nor in agreement with the facts of the case; because Esau voluntarily withdrew from Canaan to the mountain country of Seir, before Jacob returned from Padan-aram. Ch. 32: 3; 36: 6, 7. And since the separation was made (as in the case of Abraham and Lot) in view of the immense numbers of their flocks and herds, it is clear that the land of Edom was well suited to the wishes of Esau and to his need, as a land abundant in pasturage, and not lacking in either the dew of heaven or the fatness of the earth. Even in our day, when the southern part of the land of Canaan is sadly lacking in both these things, the high lands of Edom, to the east of the Arabah, and to the south of the Dead Sea, "is rich in pasturage, abundant in trees and flowers, and brings to mind the memory of the blessing which Isaac gave to Esau: 'Behold thy dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth and of the dews of heaven from above.'" Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, Vol 2, pp. 551, 552. Schaff's *Bible Dictionary*, Article *Edom*. If this part of the land of Edom is today so greatly superior to the south of Judah, we can readily conceive what it must have been when Esau chose it for himself, and when, at a later date, it had many and great cities, and a dense, powerful and warlike population. In respect to temporal advantages, the blessing of Esau is almost a repetition of that which Isaac gave to Jacob, except that the land of Edom was much smaller than the land of Israel, which was "the good land" which Jehovah promised to Abraham. There was also this difference, that Esau entered into the possession of his good things at once; whereas Jacob went down into Egypt, and his descendants did not come into possession of his for some 300 years or more. When Moses asked permission of the king of Edom

(=Esau) to pass through his territory, on his way from Egypt to Canaan, the land was abounding in planted fields and vineyards. Num. 20: 17. In respect of riches and personal possessions, then, it would seem that Esau did not come behind Jacob (ch. 36: 6, 7); and when Jacob wished that Esau, who had become reconciled to him, should accept some 600 head of cattle, which he sent him, Esau replied: "*I have enough, my brother; let that thou hast be thine.*" Ch. 34: 9. And as regards military strength, Esau was much the more powerful. It is therefore a great error to suppose that Isaac's words made Esau the possessor of a dry land, sterile and of few resources, or that it deprived him of any class of temporal good.

The words "by thy sword thou shalt live," indicate the warlike spirit of Esau and his descendants. But Isaac repeats yet again the words: "Thou shalt serve thy brother;" although he adds that, at last, "thou shalt shake his yoke from off thy neck." As Esau personally was never subject to Jacob, this subjection must be understood of his posterity. Under David and Solomon the kingdom of Edom was subject to Israel, and on several occasions it was subject to their successors; but Edom (or Esau) always freed himself, until he shook off entirely the yoke. Edom was always the unrelenting enemy of Israel, the hatred of the parents passing down to their children. The Prophecy of Obadiah (587 B. C.) was spoken against the people of Edom, at the time of the wars of Nebuchadnezzar, because of their bitter hatred against Judah, because of their unseemly rejoicing at its calamities, and because of the treachery with which they slew those of the captives who fell behind in the desert (Obad. 10, 14); because of "the *perpetual enmity.*" Ezek. 35: 5.

[It may be of interest to remark in passing, that Herod the Great, the last king of Judea, was a descendant of Esau, an Idumean by the side of both father and mother; and this circumstance no doubt was the foundation for that irreconcilable hatred with which the Jews regarded him during his long reign, aggravated by his cruelties and other crimes, and in spite of his magnificent endowments and the great services he conferred on the nation.—Tr.]

27: 41—46. WITH DEADLIEST HATRED, ESAU LAYS HIS PLANS TO KILL JACOB. (1760 B. C.)

41 And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand: then will I slay my brother Jacob.

42 And the words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah; and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him,

Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, *purposing* to kill thee.

43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran;

44 and tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away;

45 until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?

46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these, of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

The effects of this cruel and impious fraud were what might have been expected. It seems that they were all looking for the early death of Isaac; which lends support to the supposition that he was at the time sick, or in very infirm health; but instead of the expected death of his father softening the heart of Esau, he took encouragement therefrom to lay his plans to kill Jacob as soon as his father was dead: "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then shall I slay my brother Jacob." So "Esau said in his heart"; but he did not avoid saying so with his mouth; of which, when his mother was advised, the watchful and quick-sighted Rebekah found herself "taken in her own craftiness;" and calling Jacob, she informed him that Esau was about to avenge himself by killing him, and that it would be necessary for him to go away for some time, in order to save his life. For the Orientals, vengeance is the most exquisite pleasure and the most precious consolation; and by this natural association of ideas this Hebrew verb *nacham* comes to signify, at the same time, to *suffer*, to *lament*, to *be sorry*, to *repent*, to *console*, and to *avenge one's self*. Valera and the English Versions say: "comfort himself," but to "avenge himself" comes nearer to our use and mode of expression. Rebekah gained for her favorite son the coveted blessing, but in consequence thereof she was going to lose forever her beloved Jacob; although she little thought so. She had not understood, and did not yet understand the character of her brave, daring and resolute son Esau. It moves us with pity to hear the poor mother, always fertile in expedients, say: "Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother, to Haran; and *tarry with him a few days* until thy brother's fury turn away; until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him; then will I send and fetch thee from thence." Never during her lifetime did she find the favorable juncture to bring him home again. For twenty years Esau carried the

purpose of vengeance in his heart, and when Jacob returned from Padan-aram, under the safe-conduct of the Most High (ch. 31: 3; 32: 9), Esau went out to meet him with 400 armed men, with the purpose of shedding his blood. Ch. 32: 6.

Rebekah's question: "Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?" gives us a glimpse of the administration of justice in those times. As in the days of the patriarchs there were no written laws nor State tribunals, to judge and punish criminals, every chief of a tribe or clan administered justice in his own manner. If Esau had killed Jacob while Isaac was alive, his own father would have had to judge and punish him; which was another reason, or the special reason, why Esau would attempt nothing against the life of his brother, until after the death of his father; when he himself would be the chief of the little State. This was then the desperate case in which Rebekah and her favorite son found themselves. But she was careful not to explain the situation to the old blind man. The Oriental mind and heart do every thing *by indirection*, and she had other motives besides, for not explaining things to Isaac with the same liberty that she did to Jacob, her accomplice in the sin which placed them in this great strait. To Isaac, therefore, she presented the subject from a different point of view: "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these, of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?" Vr. 46.

### CHAPTER XXVIII.

VRS. 1—5. JACOB IS SENT AWAY TO PADAN-ARAM, OSTENSIBLY TO TAKE A WIFE OF HIS OWN KINDRED; THE IMMEDIATE MOTIVE BEING TO PUT HIMSELF IN A PLACE OF SAFETY. (1760 B. C.)

1 And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

2 Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.

3 And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a company of peoples;

4 and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land of thy sojournings, which God gave unto Abraham.

5 And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Paddan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.

It seems strange that Jacob, in the line of promise, and dependent on whom were the spiritual hopes of the world, should



remain unmarried for 30 or 35 years after the marriage of Esau. Ch. 26: 34. It is probable that his indolent and domestic disposition, without any spirit of enterprise, and little inclined to adventures of any kind, was responsible for that, and also that God, as is his wont, made use of the sins and calamities of Jacob and his mother, to force him into new relations. Why Isaac did not seek a wife for Jacob (and in fact for both of his sons), as Abraham had sent to Haran to take a wife of his own kindred for him, we cannot tell; but doubtless there were reasons for it. Perhaps the impatient and worldly spirit of Esau hindered it, in his case; and in the case of Jacob, the rivalries and jealousies existing between the two sons may have had the same effect. And when, at last, Jacob set out himself to go to Padan-aram, with this commission, why he should have to go afoot, empty-handed, without a servant, without a companion, his father being so rich and important a personage; and why his father should place him in the hands of the selfish and pitiless Laban, without resources, where he would suffer without any remedy the exactions of such a grasping kinsman, we cannot explain; but doubtless there were reasons, on the human side, for it; and on the divine side, God no doubt so arranged it, in order to apply a remedy to the many and grievous spiritual maladies of Jacob, and to bring him, sincerely converted, to the feet of his God. It is also probable, or certain, that the case did not admit of any delay, and that the secrecy which the circumstances demanded did not allow of the accompaniment either of men or beasts. It is probable that his departure took place at night, without any one knowing anything about it, and that the secret was carefully kept for some days, until Esau lost the hope of overtaking him. However that may be, Jacob was sent away alone, and with great haste and sudden alarm.

On sending him to Padan-aram, his father told him that he should marry a first-cousin, one of the daughters of his maternal uncle, Laban. Abraham married his niece, or his half sister; Isaac married his first-cousin, and now he gives express directions to Jacob for him to do the same; and this kind of marriage with near relatives is still very usual among the Jews. The father of Moses married his paternal aunt (Ex. 6: 20; Num. 26: 59),—a thing which was afterwards prohibited by the law of Moses. The marriage of first-cousins is never forbidden by the Bible; but it is, by civil statute, in many of the States of the American Union; and it is generally regarded

as inexpedient, on account of the results which are often seen in the children of such marriages.

On sending him away, Isaac blessed him, this time more sincerely and with deeper feeling than before, constituting him, as far as he could do it, heir of the great promise, and invoking upon him the richest blessings of God, including "the blessing of Abraham," and the possession of the land promised to him. It is worthy of repetition that Esau entered at once into the enjoyment of "his good things," as corresponded with his impatient and worldly character: Jacob, as he had to serve the divine purposes, incomparably higher, had to wait. Canaan was not to him personally anything more than "the land of his sojournings," which 400 years after the covenant made with Abraham (ch. 15: 13, 16), his descendants, under Joshua, came in to possess.

28: 6—9. THE PRETEXT WHICH ESAU HAD FOR TAKING STILL ANOTHER WIFE. (1760 B. C.)

6 Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram, to take him a wife from thence: and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan;

7 and that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Paddan-aram;

8 and Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father;

9 and Esau went unto Ishmael, and took, besides the wives that he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

We cannot understand why Esau should come to believe that by marrying a daughter of his uncle Ishmael, he might remedy, in the opinion of his parents, the error which he committed 35 years before, in joining himself in marriage with two Hittite women. Ishmael was the half-brother of his father, and Mahalath was his first-cousin. She was the sister of Nebajoth; whose mention here gives us to understand that he was the most distinguished of the sons of Ishmael, a man well known in his day, and also assures us that there existed good relations between the two families. The harm of his former marriages was already done, and would not be diminished by his taking three wives instead of two; so that it looks like a mere pretext for following his own inclinations. His other wives were now old, and the daughter of Ishmael was no doubt young, and would have for him greater attractions than the daughters of Heth. The words "took unto the wives he already had," seem to carry a covert reproof of his conduct. Men of little conscience are

never at a loss for "good and weighty reasons" to do what their inclinations crave.

28: 10—15. JACOB IN BETHEL. HIS DREAM. (1760 B. C.)

10 And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran.

11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep.

12 And he dreamed; and, behold, a ladder\* set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

13 And, behold, Jehovah stood above it, and said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

14 and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

\**M. S. V.*, a stairway.

The mention of Esau's new marriage broke the thread of the story of Jacob's flight to Padan-aram; we resume it here. Vr. 10 informs us (which we did not know before) that the events now related took place in Beersheba, where Isaac and his family had probably resided since before the marriage of Esau with his two Hittite wives. See ch. 26: 23. Jacob set out from Beersheba, then, and he departed with haste and alarm. The prophet Hosea says with allusion to the distress and danger of Jacob at this point of his history:

"Jacob fled into the country of Syria,  
and Israel served for a wife,  
and for a wife he kept sheep." Hos. 12:12.

That was a precipitate flight of his, and the feelings which filled his heart are painted vividly in ch. 35: 1 and 3, where Jehovah told him, in a time of even greater distress, to go up to Bethel, and make there "an altar unto God who appeared unto thee when thou fleddest *from the face of Esau* thy brother"; Jacob also said to his people: "Let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there unto God who answered me *in the day of my distress.*" That recollection of "*the face of Esau,*" the cause of his mortal anguish, could never fade from the memory of Jacob.

Having made the arrangements aforesaid with much haste and secrecy, in order that neither Esau nor any one else in the encampment should know of it, he set out with his staff

for his only companion (ch. 32:10), at midnight, or long before daylight, judging by the distance he traveled in that first day's journey. Beersheba was 25 miles from Hebron, and Hebron was 20 miles south of Jerusalem, and Bethel, 12 miles to the north of Jerusalem—57 miles in all, if he took this route; and the history tells us that he arrived there at night-fall on the first day of his long journey; for evidently he had that vision in Bethel on the night of the first day. He was there near to the city or town of Luz; but for the frightened fugitive the outlying country had greater attractions than the town; and he slept in the open field. In all that long first day's journey he would often look backwards to see if Esau with his avenging sword, or his far-reaching arrows was coming in pursuit of him. Panting, therefore, hungry and utterly exhausted, he took one of the stones of that place, and putting it for his hard pillow, he lay down on the cold ground; but instead of dreams of the terrifying "face of Esau," he had there visions of God! He dreamed a dream which forever must be memorable in the annals of God's people. If for us this story never loses anything of its vivid interest, how much more for Jacob, and for the godly of those remote times, before a page had been written of those Scriptures which illumine us with their great light! HEAVEN! What did Jacob and those of his day know about heaven? Jehovah had come down to talk with Abraham, and had even partaken of the hospitality of his tent; but *what did Abraham know about heaven?* Doubtless he knew more than we suppose; but for the pious servants of God in those remote times, this dream of Jacob (which was no fantasy of his, but a true revelation of God and of his mercy towards men) came to shed a flood of light upon the certainty of such a place, the facile communication there was between heaven and earth, and the profound interest which God and holy angels felt in the affairs of men. Jacob dreamed: and behold a stairway (not "a ladder"), broad and convenient, whose base was upon the earth, and its top reached to heaven, upon which numerous companies of angels passed each other, ascending and descending! This serves as a commentary upon the words of Paul, or an example of what he says in Heb. 1:14: "Are they not all [the angels] ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" or those of Jesus: "I say unto you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Luke 15:10. But that which more than anything else called his attention was the circumstance that above it

Jehovah himself was standing, and spoke to him, saying: "I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac;" and he confirmed to him the covenant already made with them, not merely with regard to the possession of that land, but that "in him and his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed." Thus God, with his own hand, traces the line of the promise, and unfolds and widens the scope of the primordial promise with regard to the seed of the woman. Gen. 3: 15.

In those ancient times, one and the same promise embraced these two things, which for us, of Gentile race, are widely different; and well has Paul extended the promise with regard to that land, so as to embrace "*the inheritance of the world*" (Gr. kosmos), for all the spiritual children of Abraham, whether Jews or Gentiles (Rom. 4: 13, 16—18); according as Jesus himself teaches us, that "*the meek shall inherit the earth,*" in the day when "*the kingdom shall come, and the will of God be done, as in heaven, so on earth*" (Matt. 5: 5 and 6: 10); and also that in the last Judgment Day, the righteous shall be placed in possession of *the kingdom prepared for the just* (rather than for sinners) "*from the foundation of the world.*" Matt. 25: 34.

In the tender compassion of our God, he desired not only that the frightened Jacob should derive security and comfort from the repetition and confirmation of these great promises in his own person, but he accommodated the relief to the part where the danger and distress was most pressing, promising him that *he himself would be the companion of his solitary journey*, and of his long absence from the paternal home; and that he would keep him wherever he should go, and would bring him again in safety to that land of his fathers; because he would not leave him until he had fulfilled all that he had promised with regard to him.

We naturally ask, What had the fugitive Jacob done to obtain for himself so great promises and so opportune succor from God? No answer can be given but this: "NOTHING!" Cunning trickster that he was, an artful supplanter, and at that very hour a fugitive in consequence of the just resentment of his frank and fearless brother, towards whom his attitude had always been that of a rival and a competitor, aspiring to rob him of the prerogatives which were his by the right of primogeniture. The plain and extremely important lesson is that Jehovah was not dealing with Jacob according to his merits or demerits, but that he was carrying forward his own

plans of mercy towards a world of wholly unworthy sinners, of whom Jacob was one, and whom he was thus drawing to himself by these great mercies. In the last day, God will reward every man "according to his works." BUT NOT BEFORE. Matt. 16: 27; Luke 14: 14; Rom. 2: 6—16; 2 Cor. 5: 10. It is most important that we always keep before us the fact that neither with the wicked nor with the righteous does God now deal on the footing of an exact and faithful administrator of justice, but rather as the compassionate God of a salvation which we do not deserve, and which in general we do not even seek, till arrested by his grace.

"But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity  
and destroyed them not;  
yea, many a time turned he his anger away,  
and did not stir up all his wrath;  
for he remembered that they were but flesh;  
a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again."

Ps. 78: 38, 39.

"He hath not dealt with us after our sins,  
nor rewarded us according to our iniquities;  
for as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is his mercy toward them that fear him;  
as far as the east is from the west,  
so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

Ps. 103: 10, 11.

It is plain that Jacob was still a worldling, completely a stranger to the life of God and the practice of piety; and Jehovah thus began with him that long series of special providences, by means of which he not only carried forward his glorious plans of mercy toward the ruined race of man, but by the manifestation of his goodness and love, he brought him personally to the experimental knowledge of the grace and salvation of God.

28: 16—22. JACOB AWAKES IN AMAZEMENT. HIS VOW. (1760 B. C.)

16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely Jehovah is in this place; and I knew it not.

17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

19 And he called the name of that place Beth-el:\* but the name of the city was Luz at the first.

20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and  
\*That is, The house of God.

will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

21 so that I come again to my father's house in peace, and Jehovah will be my God,

22 then this stone, † which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

†Or, then shall Jehovah be my God, and this stone, etc.

This dream and this revelation, so different from all the revelations of himself which God had till then made in the history of the human redemption, produced in Jacob (as the vision on the way to Damascus did on Saul of Tarsus, Acts ch. 9) an indescribable effect. Beautifully natural, and life-like in the highest degree, is the exclamation with which he awakes: "Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew it not!" "How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" Exclamations which carry on their very face the seal of their exact truth and authenticity.

Jacob probably did not sleep any the rest of that night; but rising up early in the morning, he took the stone which had served him as a pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. It is difficult for us to assign a satisfactory reason for this act of Jacob's. There are so many superstitions that in later times have been associated with *stones*, and the veneration and worship of stones reputed to be miraculous has been so common among the nations, that it is a thing as easy as it is unjust to attribute to this act of Jacob's a use and signification which at least approaches to those Gentile superstitions which are so often condemned in the word of God. It is probable that Jacob, who was distinguished for the pillars (or monuments) which he erected during his life-time (see vr. 22; ch. 31: 45; 35: 14; 35: 20), set up this stone, which was suitable for that purpose, without any superstitious motive, and erected it as a monument in the place where God had so highly favored him; and as he could not then and there offer a sacrifice and pour out drink offerings, as was the custom of those times (because he was going in great haste), from his scant supply he poured oil upon it, as a sign of consecrating it to God,—a use and signification of anointing with oil which dates from very ancient times. Some 30 years, more or less, after this, when Jacob returned to Bethel, to fulfil his vow, he offered there great sacrifices (see ch. 35: 7 and comments); and when Jehovah appeared to him a second time, and repeated and confirmed the covenanted

promises, Jacob erected in more enduring form another pillar "in the place where God had spoken to him," "a pillar (or monument) of stone, and poured out a drink offering thereon, and poured oil thereon." Ch. 35: 14. That which particularly calls our attention here is the fact that "Jacob's stone," which has been the object of so many ridiculous stories and so many superstitions, is not mentioned: we are not told whether he so much as found it there on the second occasion or not; or whether it entered as a component part, or any part whatever, of "the pillar of stone" which on the second occasion he erected there: the sacred historian did not regard it of sufficient importance to tell us anything about it; which of itself is enough to refute those silly stories which some yet seek to accredit by means of this passage, and Gen. 49: 24.

He gave also to the place the name of Beth-el (=The house of God); although before that, and for many ages after, it bore among the Canaanites the name of *Luz*. Judg. 1: 23—26. When the Israelites took possession of the land of Canaan, 300 years after this (some say 500), the name *Bethel* wholly supplanted the old name of *Luz*.

Jacob also made there a vow, before he continued his journey; a vow which although he delayed long to fulfil it, Jehovah did not forget, but made Jacob to remember it on two occasions of very bitter trial for him, and told him that he kept it fresh in mind, and demanded fulfilment. Ch. 31: 13 and 35: 1.

This is the first vow of which we have any mention in the Scriptures, and the subject is deserving of a little attention before we pass on. Vows are either *general*—like the public vows of the people of Israel in the ancient times (Num. 21: 2) or those of Christian people in baptism and the Lord's supper—*sacraments* which are also *vows*; or they are *particular*, with reference to some special thing which an individual promises to do. Vows were very common under the Old Testament. In the New Testament they are mentioned only twice: in Acts 18: 18, where "Paul had shorn his head in Cenchrea, because he had a vow;" and Acts 21: 23, 24, where Paul took at his charges four men who had a vow; in order to pay the cost of the sacrifices and other expenses of the ceremonial observance: but both of these were vows under the law of Moses, in which Paul took part in order to disarm the prejudices of the Jews; and they had nothing whatever to do with primitive Christianity. Besides these, there is no mention whatever of vows in the New Testament; from which we infer that the particular vow is lawful under the Christian dispensation, but is nowhere



recommended, and it would appear that it was never practiced as a Christian institution. In this matter of vows, that is to say, of *particular vows* to do or not to do such and such a thing, we can profit by the wise maxim of Solomon, in Ecc. 4: 4, 5: "When thou vowest a vow unto God [for it should be made to no other], defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed! Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay." The general and sacramental vows to love and serve God, are enough for all the intents of the Christian life; nor were any vows but these practiced during many centuries of the Christian Church. Neither Bingham in his "*Ecclesiastical Antiquities*," nor Cavalario in his "*Derecho Canónico*" mention the matter of particular vows for many ages after the Christian Era. In fact, Cavalario says in Part 1, Ch. 41, Sec. 1, that "*in the ancient discipline, the monks made no vow whatever.*"

The whole system of vows and "promises," which forms a distinctive feature of Romanism, is not merely *aside from* the Christian system, but is totally contrary to it. Vows to the saints, "promises" to some one or other of the many "Virgins" of their "advocation," vows of celibacy, of poverty and *obedience* (not to God, but to an ecclesiastical superior), are out and out the institutions of men, which have for their object and effect to cast down the institutions of God. Comp. Mark 7: 6—13. Let it be borne in mind that the vow is never mentioned in the New Testament, except as an observance of the old Levitical law, which was about coming to its close, and it will be seen in a moment that this wide department of the Romish system is in great part Jewish, and in another great part pagan, but in nothing Christian.

[NOTE 26.—*On Jacob's Vow.* The vow of Jacob is severely criticised by some, as revealing the cautious and *trafficking* spirit of the man; who instead of accepting, after the manner of Abraham, with joyful confidence, the great promises which Jehovah had given him unconditionally, interposes his own doubts in the conditional form of his vow: "*If God will be with me,*" etc., "*then Jehovah shall be my God,*" etc. At first sight, the criticism seems to be well founded, but it is not really so, or not so much as it would seem. The conditional Hebrew "*im,*" which is translated "*if,*" expresses likewise various other relations, such as, "*so then,*" "*since,*" etc.; (see Job 14: 5, "*seeing his days are determined,*" etc., A. V. and R. V.), and is more vague and of wider application than "*if*" in English. Jacob also was but a novice in the things of God; he had as yet no

experience in the ways of Jehovah, and with this vision began the slow work of his conversion to God; and if his language does express some uncertainty, it is that of one who for the first time receives a communication from heaven. His words express the joyful acceptance of the divine promise and revelation, rather than distrust and the desire to bind God with conditions about what he had promised unconditionally; and they may be translated: "*Since then God will be with me, etc., etc., Jehovah shall therefore be my God,*" etc. If this had been a conditional vow, Jacob would have waited 20 years to see how Jehovah fulfilled his part, before taking him as his God; whereas it is clear that from that moment, *Jehovah became the God of Jacob*, and that locality came to be for him, and for his, a place peculiarly holy, as the site in which Jehovah had twice revealed himself to his servant Jacob. Such seems to be the meaning of his words with regard to Bethel (=House of God), and not that he would build there a house for Jehovah, nor that there he would establish an altar for the national worship of Jehovah. This did not happen till Jeroboam placed there, in Bethel, the principal for his golden calves (1 Kings 12: 32, 33); and it is probable that he alleged that this fulfilled to the letter the vow of Jacob.

With regard to *the tenth* of all that God should give him, which Jacob promised to pay to Jehovah, *it is probable that he paid it once, and once for all*, in an enormous hecatomb which he offered there seven or eight years after his return from Padan-aram. The fact is that Jacob delayed so long to fulfil this part of his vow, that God took occasion from the rape of his daughter Dinah, together with the horrible vengeance taken by her brothers and the imminent danger that the Canaanites would combine for the extermination of Jacob and his race and tribe (chs. 34 and 35: 1), to remind him of his forgotten vow, and sent him to Bethel, as a place of secure abode, where he should fulfil that forgotten vow. And there *he built an altar* "to the God who had answered him in the day of his distress," and there he fulfilled his vow. Ch. 35: 1—7. The attempt is as futile and forced, as it is frequent, to base on the example of Abraham (see the comment on ch. 14: 20), and on that of Jacob in this place, the obligation to pay tithes. Abraham and Jacob paid tithes only once; the former, "the tenth part of the spoils" taken in war (Heb. 7: 4), and the latter the tenth part of the flocks and herds he had acquired in Padan-aram; but they did not continue to do so year after year; and as they had no temples to build, nor order of priests to

support, nor religious institutions to maintain, nor poor to provide for (since they were masters and proprietors of all that people, and bound to look after their subsistence), it is clear that there was *no one for them to pay tithes to*, nor any object in which to employ them, year after year, in religious worship. See comments on ch. 31: 13 and 35: 1—3.

[TRANSLATOR'S NOTE 3.—*On the Tithe.* Those over-zealous Protestants who have been anxious to fasten on the Evangelical Church, or on the consciences of individual Christians, the "*Law of the Tithe*," seem not to have examined carefully the history of the question. The Roman Catholic canonist, Domingo Cavalario, in his *Derecho Canónico*" (Part II. Ch. 34) says that "in the first ages, the ministers of the altar were sustained by the voluntary contributions of the faithful." As this source of revenue gradually dried up, with the decline of the primitive type of Christianity, the Jewish tithe law was appealed to to supply the deficiency, as being of divine obligation still; and by the 8th century it was very generally established in Europe, and enforced by civil and canonical laws. He says that "*the tithe was not admitted in the Oriental Church, or if admitted, it was afterwards abolished.*" It is easy to see that except for its tithes, "first fruits" and other compulsory contributions, the civil and political power of the Romish Church, and its mighty corruptions, could never have reached the pitch they did at and before the time of the Reformation. Christ based his *Financial System* on the principle of voluntary contributions; *intending that his people's love to his Person, and their belief in his Kingdom, should be the exact measure of their pecuniary sacrifices for his sake.* Under such a system, the past and present oppressions of the Papal Church would be simply impossible: no other Church but the Roman ever enacted *the Law of the Tithe.*

The following points about *the Mosaic tithe law* can be easily maintained:

*First,* That the Mosaic tithe was marked by this evangelical feature, that *it was entirely voluntary.* The Papal Church in the days when it had the civil power to back it, had always *tithe collectors*, and it farmed out this, like any other branch of revenue. Moses, on the contrary, made no provision whatever for collecting tithes; each individual paid his tithes, or not, as he pleased; "none did compel." See Deut. 26: 14; Mal. 3: 10.

*Second.* The tithe was a *land-tax* (which God claimed as the great Land-owner, Lev. 25: 23) *on the produce of the soil and*

*the increase of the cattle*; and there is no indication in the Bible that any but land-owners ever paid it. It was paid to the tribe of Levi expressly on the ground *that they had no part in the division of the land* of Israel. Num. 18: 20—24; Deut. 10: 9; 12: 12. Yet they had *the "suburbs" of 48 cities*, which extended 1,000 yards ("2000 cubits") in every direction outside of the city wall, "for their cattle, and their substance, and their beasts"; which was no small "possession" in itself (Num. 35: 1—7), aside from the perquisites of their office, which were generous. In the days of Christ, the priests were the wealthy class of the community, and seemingly more numerous than the Levites.

*Third.* The Mosaic tithe was no *cast-iron* institution, sacred to the use of the Levites, and which it would be sacrilege to use for any other purpose. On the contrary, the people were allowed and expected to furnish themselves therefrom (and from the firstlings of their flocks and herds as well), *and eat thereof before the Lord, as an act of worship*, when they went to attend the great feasts. Deut. 12: 17, 18; 14: 22, 23. The allegation sometimes made that this has reference to a *second tithe*, or even a *third*, has nothing to stand on, except the groundless assumption that "*all the tithe of the land*" belonged to the Levites, and that no part of it could be diverted to any other use. On the contrary Moses says: "*All the tithe of the land is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord*" (Lev. 27: 39), and only in a general way did he give it to the Levites and priests, requiring his people also to eat a part of it before him, in the place "where he recorded his name to dwell there." It would be as reasonable to try to make out a *second set of "firstlings" of the flocks and herds* (of which also they were to eat before him), on the ground that God claimed the firstlings of the flock and herd as his, and they were to be given to the priest. *An honest tithe* of the produce of the twelve tribes of Israel *would have been vastly more than the Levites' share*; and that without the trouble of working for it.\* Christ's "yoke was easy and his burden light" to his willing and obedient people, under the Old Dispensation as well as under the New.

"*The Law of the Tithe,*" so far as I can learn from the Bible, was a very different thing in Moses' hands from what many persons suppose: and yet it has no place whatever in *the Financial System of Jesus Christ*. The rule of a *tenth all*

\*"The tithe of the land" alone in the United States, to say nothing of its arts, manufactures, mines, commerce, trades, professions, etc., if claimed by and paid to the churches and their ministers, as of divine obligation would be *more than sufficient to ruin them all*.—Tr.

*ground* impeaches the wisdom as much as the mercy of God. To say that the railroad magnate and the poor widow; the wealthy planter and the "one-horse-farmer"; the successful and the unfortunate man; the baker, the butcher, the doctor, the lawyer, the small shopkeeper and the merchant prince; the clerk, the day-laborer, the "coal baron," the great landed proprietor; the prosperous banker, the great or small manufacturer, the millionaire and the multi-millionaire, are all alike bound by "*the law of the tithe*," is to attempt to father the mistakes of earnest and misguided men on the infinite wisdom of God. CHRIST CLAIMS, NOT HIS PEOPLE'S TENTH, BUT THEIR ALL; claims it from the poorest of them, as well as the richest; but it lies with the judgment, the piety and the discretion of each individual, and his choice as well, to determine what part of it he will spend on his Master and Lord, and what part on himself; remembering the account "the steward" will have to render at last as to *how he has spent his Lord's money*. PROPORTIONATE GIVING (wherever possible), is of first-class importance in Christian living; but the proportion must be left where God has left it. Paul lays down this general principle that governs the whole subject: "Every one *as he hath purposed in his heart*, so let him give—whether the twentieth, or the tenth, or two-tenths, or five-tenths, or nine-tenths—not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth the cheerful giver." 2 Cor. 9: 7.]

## CHAPTER XXIX.

VES. 1—8. JACOB JOYFULLY CONTINUES HIS JOURNEY. HIS MEETING WITH THE SHEPHERDS OF HARAN. (1760 B. C.)

1 Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the children of the east.

2 And he looked, and, behold, a well in the field, and, lo, three flocks of sheep lying there by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and the stone upon the well's mouth was great.

3 And thither were all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in its place.

4 And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence are ye? And they said, Of Haran are we.

5 And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him.

6 And he said unto them, Is it well with him? And they said, It is well: and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep.

7 And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go and feed them.

8 And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep.

In the Hebrew, vr. 1 begins thus: "And Jacob lifted up his feet and went," etc. The most natural sense of this (following immediately as it does upon the vision of the preceding chapter), is that in the joy of that interview with the God of his father (the first he ever had), and the great promises which he had made him, Jacob journeyed with light feet the rest of that long journey (something like 500 miles), which he had scarcely begun, and soon reached its end; or if not so soon as he would have desired, the journey seemed short in view of the satisfaction he carried within his bosom; much like what is told us in vr. 20, that the seven years he served Laban, for his daughter Rachel, "seemed to him but a few days, for the love that he had to her." A Jewish commentator says that "*his heart lifted up his feet.*" The same phrase, or one like it, is used in Ps. 74: 3: "*Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations*"; which seems to say: "Come quickly, to see and remedy our woeful lot!"

Jacob reached Haran without knowing where he was; but seeing a well in the field and three flocks lying about it, waiting for the hour of watering, he asked, and he learned from the shepherds that he had at last reached the end of his journey. It is possible that this was not the same well where the steward of Abraham, a hundred years before, met with Rebekah (ch. 24: 11, 13); or if it was the same, that in the time which had elapsed it had varied much in form; because then it was a "fountain," and Rebekah went down by steps and brought up the water in her pitcher, and continued to go down and up until she had watered the ten camels (ch. 24: 16, 22); whereas here the mouth of the well was closed with a stone placed over it, in order to protect the precious supply of water.

The salutations which passed between the shepherds and Jacob are of interest, as indicating the courteous address which was usual in that day. True politeness is not tied to place or time. On asking of them information about Laban, they told him he was well, and informed him that his daughter Rachel was just then coming with her father's sheep.

29: 9—14. RACHEL THE SHEPHERDESS. (1760 B. C.)

9 While he was yet speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she kept them.

10 And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

11 And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.

12 And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father.

13 And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things.

14 And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month.

The fact that the beautiful Rachel was the shepherdess of her father's flock seemingly indicates, (1) that her father's cattle interest was small, if a woman, and apparently one woman, could manage it all; (2) that the sons of Laban put off the work of caring for the flock on their younger sister; for there is nothing to indicate that they were not old enough, or that they were younger than their sister;—at a later period, when the flocks were more numerous, they took charge of them (ch. 30: 35); (3) that the morals of those simple folk must have been good, and the estimation in which they held the honor and virtue of women must have been high, for a young and beautiful woman, like Rachel, to expose herself to the hazards of pastoral life without continual risk. But the personal habits of people make a great difference in their national customs. We know that among many primitive peoples (and among some modern ones), the honor of a woman is worth more than her life, and the man who does violence to it exposes himself to the gravest consequences; of which ch. 34: 1—7, 31 brings us a frightful and horrible example; and under such circumstances women know how to take care of themselves, and men learn to respect them accordingly. In Ex. 2: 16—17 we find the seven daughters of Jethro, the priest-prince (or prince-priest) of Midian, taking care of the sheep of their father, among rude shepherds who understood nothing of courtesy. Among the ancient Greeks it was also the usage that the daughters of princes often performed the same office; and even today, among the Arabs of the desert, unmarried women expose themselves without harm to the same class of dangers. The gist of it lies in the much or little esteem in which the honor and purity of woman is held, and the responsibility that is thrown on her to take care of them: a lesson which it were well that our evangelical women in Latin America and elsewhere learn soon and thoroughly. See comments on ch. 34: 31.

On seeing the beautiful young woman, and learning the near relationship which united them, the feelings of Jacob overcame him completely: "When Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, *his mother's brother*, and the sheep of Laban, *his mother's brother*, he went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban, *his mother's brother*"; phrases all which attest the flood of tender memories which, in that moment,

rushed upon the mind of the favorite son of Rebekah;—"his mother!" and from that moment the beautiful Rachel would be ever associated with that passionately fond mother that he was never more to see; so that without taking counsel of social usages, and obeying only the impulses of his heart, Jacob, in the first place, after watering her flock, impressed a kiss upon her lovely face, and wept with effusion; and afterwards he entered into explanations as to his strange behavior, telling her who he was, and of the close relationship which authorized such liberties at his first interview with her. Jacob was at this time about seventy-five years of age; Rachel was perhaps twenty; but this did not prevent that on his part there should thus commence here a story of love and tenderness the most romantic and tragic recounted in sacred history. As to Rachel herself, we need ask nothing; for in matrimonial affairs the women of the East were and still are taught to do as they are bidden.

[We note, in vr. 12, that Jacob calls his uncle Laban his "brother" = near kinsman; and, in vr. 15, that Laban also calls Jacob his "brother."—Tr.]

Thoroughly surprised and frightened, Rachel runs to carry the news to her father's house; Laban runs to meet the son of his sister; he embraces him, and brings him home, where Jacob gives the news of all the family, and in particular tells him of "all these things"; that is to say, of the precipitate flight, of the cause of it, and, in general, of what had happened to him in the way. Tender and beautiful (although in ill accord with the character of the hard, rapacious and artful Laban) was the reply which he made to this story of Jacob's: "Surely thou art my bone and my flesh!" The phrase "*flesh and bone*," in the Bible always signifies the nearest and most enduring relationship (Gen. 2: 23; 2 Sam. 19: 12, 13; Eph. 5: 30; comp. Luke 24: 39):—"flesh and blood" is altogether a different thing, and signifies *human nature considered as corrupt and fallen*; it is a symbol of corruption (Matt. 16: 17; 1 Cor. 15: 50; Eph. 6: 12); so that the two phrases ought never to be confounded.

29: 15—20. JACOB MAKES A CONTRACT WITH LABAN FOR HIS DAUGHTER RACHEL TO BE HIS WIFE. (1760 B. C.)

15 And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be?

16 And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.

17 And Leah's eyes were tender; but Rachel was beautiful and well-favored.



18 And Jacob loved Rachel; and he said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.

19 And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me.

20 And Jacob served seven years for Rachel: and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.

Jacob spent a month with Laban as a visitor; but he did not pass it idly, as is evident from the words of Laban, at the end of the month: "Because thou art my brother, shouldst thou therefore serve me for naught? tell me what shall thy wages be?" Jacob's past life, according as the Bible reveals it to us, had been a life of indolence, without ambition and without effort; he had passed it "seated among the tents," or at most in some womanish occupation. Ch. 25: 27—29. But after he had encountered alone the perils of the desert, no less terrible then than now (Ezra 8: 22), and had entered the house of Laban and set his heart on Laban's younger daughter, God began to apply the remedy to this deeply rooted vice of his former life. Voluntarily, therefore, he occupied himself with various services during the month he passed as Laban's guest.

Laban had two daughters, grown women, but unmarried, *and therefore young*; for they had not yet been sought in marriage (vr. 19), and there was "good money" in unmarried daughters. Of his sons we only know that fourteen years afterwards they were occupied with the care of their father's sheep (ch. 30: 35); and since Laban was as old, if not older than Jacob's mother (ch. 24: 50, 51, 55), his sons were certainly much older than their unmarried sisters. Leah, the elder daughter, if not homely, had at least some affection of the eyes which gave her a more or less repulsive aspect. The phrase "Leah was tender-eyed" is disputed; but there seems to be no good reason to abandon the old and well accredited translation of "tender-eyed," or "sore-eyed," as Amat renders it. Some of the rabbins have maintained that Leah was much given to meditation and prayer, and that by reason of her many tears, her eyes had become inflamed; and that for her piety Jehovah had given her the preference above her beautiful sister. But this is purely a rabbinical conceit. The Bible tells us nothing of the kind; and Leah was certainly born and bred an idolatress and a pagan. See comments on ch. 31: 19, 20, and 35: 2. Her tender eyes were no doubt a natural defect, as the extreme beauty of Rachel was natural. The English translation "beautiful and well favored" does not bring out the exact sense of the Hebrew, which is, as given in the Modern Spanish Version, "of a handsome figure and beautiful countenance"—two things that go to constitute the perfection of beauty, both in women and men. With

these identical words the Hebrew text describes the manly beauty of the son of Rachel, Joseph, in ch. 39: 6. From the first day, therefore, Jacob, who came to Haran for the purpose of seeking a wife among the daughters of Laban, had already made his choice; and in the act he answered Laban: "I will serve thee seven years for Rachel, thy younger daughter!"

It appears to us unaccountable that Jacob, whose father was rich and recognized as a great man in the land of Canaan (ch. 26: 13—16), and who seemingly would have had no difficulty in making the fact undubitably certain that he was the son of Isaac and Rebekah, should find himself in the necessity of paying so dearly the dowry of a wife; and that, to the brother of his mother, who without a single day's delay had consented to send her off with the steward of Abraham, to be the wife of Isaac. Ch. 24: 50, 51. Those ten camel-loads of the choicest of Abraham's possessions appear to have made the difference, in those days, when the husband, or his family, paid the dowry to the father of the woman; instead of the woman (as in our day is the frequent custom) bringing the dowry to the husband. Isaac well understood the Oriental usage, and could hardly have believed that Jacob would obtain a wife from among the daughters of his uncle, without paying the inevitable dowry; which varied in quantity according to the quality and resources of the suitor. Perhaps Isaac did not dare to send after him the dowry which would give effect to his solicitation; perhaps he could not do it before the question of the birthright was settled and it was determined what part of the estate would fall to each of his sons; perhaps it was (and this is the more probable) that the blind passion of Jacob, singular in a man of his age, and his impatience to make sure of the woman of his choice, did not allow his father time; for without waiting for his father to have notice of his safe arrival, he at once took advantage of Laban's question to rush into his ill-advised offer and engagement to serve him seven years for his daughter Rachel,—an agreement which for fourteen years placed him completely in the power of a pitiless master, "whose tender mercies were cruel." Perhaps also Laban, who in a month's time had become perfectly well acquainted with the blind passion of his nephew, had already traced out this plan to gain a most useful worker without cost to himself; but in any case, the working out of this matter was of the Lord, who chose his own means for the conviction, the conversion and the salvation of Jacob, putting him in the hands of a man even more rapacious, more calculating, more astute, and less scrupulous than he himself had been.

It was and is still said to be the custom among the Orientals (the Bedouin Arabs, for example), to give the daughter in marriage to the first near kinsman who claims her, amongst those who may legitimately take her; and the first-cousin always has the most privileged claim to the hand of his cousin; provided the dowry he pays be satisfactory, and there be no other impediment; which well explains the prompt reply of Laban: "It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man; abide with me"; with which words he concluded and closed the business, which was truly a good bargain for him, and a very bad one for Jacob; but just there entered the rod of correction for his many and great sins. Any other man in Haran might have married Rachel, if Jacob had not claimed her, by means of the payment of fifty sheep, or six camels, or a dozen cows; while Jacob bargained for *seven years'* service of a slave, and paid them with *fourteen years* of such service (ch. 31: 38—42); and under the favoring hand of God, he caused the few sheep that Rachel had tended to grow into a great multitude. Ch. 30: 30. Beautiful and touching is the declaration that "Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had to her." Vr. 20. In our day such a lover would have died of impatience in much less than seven years; but the Orientals were and are of a different disposition, and know how to wait calmly for many years, in order to effect a purpose, whether of love or of vengeance, on which the heart is set.

29: 21—30. THE BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT THAT OVERTAKES JACOB, WHO, MONOGAMIST AS HE WAS, GREATLY AGAINST HIS WILL FINDS HIMSELF IN POSSESSION OF TWO WIVES, INSTEAD OF ONE ONLY. (1753 B. C.)

21 And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her.

22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast.

23 And it came to pass in the evening that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her.

24 And Laban gave Zilpah his handmaid unto his daughter Leah for a handmaid.

25 And it came to pass in the morning that, behold, it was Leah; and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?

26 And Laban said, It is not so done in our place, to give the younger before the first-born.

27 Fulfil the week of this one, and we will give thee the other also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.

28 And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife.

29 And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her handmaid.

30 And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.

But before his seven years had expired, the astute Laban had other plans laid. Jacob's management and service had been so profitable to him (ch. 30: 27—30), that without having any pity for the poor man, he devised the most cruel deception that a demon could invent or a Laban execute, and which left the unhappy Jacob without any recourse whatever, except to bow his head submissively, and serve his father-in-law fourteen years, instead of seven, in order to get possession of the woman he loved: not that he served the second period of seven years before taking Rachel, but he gained possession of her under promise of seven years more of the service of a slave; a promise which he was obliged to fulfil, under penalty of finding himself deprived of both wives and of all the property he may have acquired. Ch. 31: 31—42. We do not know whether Laban had in mind the tricks and deceits by which Jacob had robbed Esau of his birth-right and his blessing; but God doubtless had them in view, and he made Jacob to reap accordingly as he had sown, and during the twenty years he spent in the house of Laban, he doubtless often brought it to Jacob's remembrance, in order to bring him to repentance for these and all his sins.

When the term of the first seven years had expired, Jacob claimed from Laban the possession of the woman for whom he had toiled with patient hope. Laban readily consented to this, and celebrated the marriage of his daughter with a great feast, to which he invited "*all the men of the place*"; according to the usage of those times; the women did not participate in the feast, or in the ceremony either—if there was any ceremony. It would seem that there was none, any more than there was in the case of Isaac and Rebekah. Ch. 24: 67. The wickednesses of men have made necessary both civil laws and religious rites in connection with marriage, which among us ought to be always observed. It is clear that in the case of Jacob there was no ceremony, nor any marriage vows. All the guests knew that it was the marriage feast of Jacob and Rachel. Jacob had paid the dowry, and very dearly, and *the woman was his property*, without anything further; and Laban had no choice but to deliver her person, in order that Jacob might have her in complete possession. So it is that Rachel and Leah speak of the matter in ch. 31: 14, 15: "And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him: 'Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? For *he hath sold us*, and also hath quite devoured our money.'" Matrimonial vows are only pro-

nounced between free persons. Rachel was not free, but bought and paid for; neither was Leah free, except to do her father's bidding. And in fact, in Hebrew the only word (and an unfrequent one) for "husband" is "baal," which signifies *owner* and *lord*. See Isa. 62: 5.

Everything went well in the marriage feast of Jacob and Rachel, until the conclusion of it, when the cunning Laban carried Leah, completely covered with her veil, to the tent of Jacob; and in silence and darkness she came to be the wife of the deceived lover of Rachel.

The excuse which Laban offered when the next day Jacob reproached him bitterly for the deceit he had practiced on him, may possibly have some appearance of truth, according to the custom which is said to obtain among the Hindus, that both the sons and the daughters ought to marry in the order of their birth; but there is nothing in the Bible which goes to show that there was any such usage among the Hebrews, or among the pagans, except in this place; and here it is evidently a falsehood in its principal part, if not altogether. If it were not so, the elder would likewise have to be bargained for before the younger; or at least the younger would have to be promised on condition of the previous marriage of the elder. The dowry having been paid, there was neither usage nor law that would tolerate the exchange of one daughter for the other, any more than the exchange of one ox or ass for another, after the price agreed upon had been paid. Jacob had lived seven years in that country; sufficient time to have become acquainted with its customs, and to know whether he could marry the younger daughter or not; something, too, which would have also called the attention of the guests, if such had been the usage in Haran. The commentators who accept for truth the allegation of Laban, little know how much easier it was and is for the Orientals to lie than to speak the truth. Laban had traced out his plan—a plan which left Jacob no remedy except to be silent and submit. Jacob was completely in the power of Laban, and was as far from the possession of the beloved Rachel as he was when he made his ill-advised contract seven years before; and though he did not wish to serve seven *days* for the possession of Leah, he found himself in the necessity of serving seven years more, 14 years altogether, to gain possession of Rachel. He accepted, therefore, with ill grace, the iniquitous terms which Laban imposed upon him, of fulfilling Leah's week, giving thus his public consent to his union with her; after which Laban gave him Rachel also, on the express condition that he was to continue his past service for seven years longer: and Jacob took Rachel,

apparently without any marriage feast, or any marriage ceremony. This remark, which I frequently repeat, will not be needless among Roman Catholic peoples, who believe that marriage is a sacrament, and that its validity consists in the rite or the form with which it is celebrated, and the power and intention of the celebrant. Until the day of his death, Jacob did not regard any woman but Rachel as his rightful and proper wife; and not without good cause (see ch. 44: 27. Comp. ch. 33: 2); and until his dying day his heart still burned in singular tenderness toward this woman, then more than 40 years dead. Ch. 48: 7. On their marriage, Laban gave to Leah his servant Zilpah as her waiting-maid: and to Rachel he gave Bilhah.

29: 31—35. LEAH BEARS FOUR SONS TO JACOB, AND RACHEL NONE.  
(From 1752 to 1749 B. C.)

31 And Jehovah saw that Leah was hated, and he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren.

32 And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Because Jehovah hath looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me.

33 And she conceived again, and bare a son: and said, Because Jehovah hath heard that I am hated, he hath therefore given me this son also; and she called his name Simeon.

34 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have borne him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi.

35 And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, This time will I praise Jehovah: therefore she called his name Judah; and she left off bearing.

All the six sons of Leah and one daughter were born before Joseph, whose birth did not occur till after Jacob had completed his fourteen-year contract, and just before he began a new arrangement with Laban. Ch. 30: 25—34. The seven children of Leah, therefore, were born in the space of seven years. Jacob married at the end of the first seven years he had spent with Laban; Joseph was born at the end of his fourteen years of service; after which he made his contract for the last six years of service, in which he gained his property; and Joseph was the youngest of the eleven children born in Padan-aram; so that the Bible shows that children were born to Leah with extraordinary rapidity,—one each year, for seven consecutive years.

We have already observed, and more than once, the particular providence of God in the reproduction of the human race, as is expressly declared in Ps. 127: 3 and John 9: 2, 3. We have also called attention to the little difference which the Bible makes between what God does directly and indirectly; that is to say, by his immediate power, or by the interposition of second causes. If it

be the purpose of God and part of his plan, it little matters what are the means by which he effects it, be they many, or few, or none whatever. The distinction is for us important; but in view of the pantheistic tendency of the day to refer nothing to God, which can be accounted for by secondary causes, it is often yet more important to lose sight of the distinction (as is seen in vr. 31 and ch. 30: 2), and say with Jesus: "Your heavenly Father *maketh his sun to rise* on the evil and the good, and *sendeth rain* on the just and the unjust"; and, "*If God so clothe the grass* of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, oh ye of little faith?" Matt. 5: 45.

*"Whatsoever Jehovah pleased, that hath he done,  
in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps."*

Ps. 135: 6.

"And Jehovah saw that Leah was hated," and he gave her the compensation and happiness of bearing children; but Rachel was barren. After the horrible imposture which Laban had practiced on Jacob, and in which Leah, whether contrary to her will, or with her full consent, took a principal part, it was not humanly possible that he should fail to hate her. If therefore he regarded her with indifference before, on seeing and knowing the infamous deception by which they had wounded him in so tender a part, he could not regard her with less than undissembled repugnance; *which it cost him many efforts and long years to overcome*. Those commentators, therefore, lose their time who would draw from this text of the Bible the inference that the word "hate" is sometimes used in the sense of *to love less*.\* The Oriental manner of contracting marriage makes the love of husband and wife a thing little known among them (see comment on ch. 24: 67); how much more, then, in the case of Jacob and Leah? The names which she gave successively to her first four sons, and in fact to all her seven children, clearly reveal the thought which continually occupied her heart,—some means of winning the love of her husband. She called the first "Reuben" which means to say "Behold a son!" The second: "Simeon," which means "Heard!" the woman was asking God for children. The third, "Levi" = "Union" or "United with," making clear every time the thirst of her heart

\*This, I imagine, is not maintained seriously, but only as an awkward attempt to explain the difficult words of Christ, in Luke 14: 26. But there the supposed disciple is to "hate his father, and his mother," etc., only in the same sense as he is to "*hate his own life also*"; and this, only in the same sense as Samson's wife said to him: "*Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not!*" (Judg. 14: 16);—"because, forsooth, he would not do as she wanted him to do!"—Tr.

for some part of the tenderness which Jacob lavished upon the beloved but barren Rachel. In some respects this reminds us of the case of Elkanah and Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel. 1 Sam. 1: 2—8. In those days when a numerous family was regarded as a special favor and gift of God, Leah could not understand why her husband should not love her, at least for the children she bore him. The fourth, therefore, she called "Judah" (= Praise), exclaiming: "Now will I praise Jehovah!"

## CHAPTER XXX.

## VES. 1—13. JACOB WITH FOUR WIVES, INSTEAD OF ONE ONLY.

(From 1749 to 1747 B. C.)

1 And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and she said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.

2 And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?

3 And she said, Behold, my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; that she may bear upon my knees, and I also may obtain children by her.\*

4 And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her.

5 And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son.

6 And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan.

7 And Bilhah Rachel's handmaid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son.

8 And Rachel said, With mighty wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali.

9 When Leah saw that she had left off bearing, she took Zilpah her handmaid, and gave her to Jacob to wife.

10 And Zilpah Leah's handmaid bare Jacob a son.

11 And Leah said, Fortunate! and she called his name Gad.

12 And Zilpah Leah's handmaid bare Jacob a second son.

13 And Leah said, Happy am I! for the daughters will call me happy: and she called his name Asher.

\**Heb.* be builded by her.

Jacob who was the most passionate of lovers, and who was a monogamist by conviction and preference, saw himself by circumstances forced to become a polygamist, and in possession of four different wives. Rachel regarded with envy the increasing family of her sister; and her desperation increased to such a pitch that she said to Jacob: "Give me children, or else I die!" Jacob wearied with the petulance and complaints of his wife, answered her angrily: "Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?" To remedy the case, Rachel made use of Sarah's expedient (ch. 16: 2, 3), and gave to her husband her servant Bilhah, in order to "*build herself up*" (according to the Hebrew phrase) by her means, in the understanding



that the mother being her slave, the child would be hers also. It is the same word that Sarah uses in ch. 16: 2; and it is important to bear in mind this use of the phrase "build herself up," or "build her house"; for there are passages in the Bible which cannot be properly understood without the use of this key. See Ruth 4: 11; Prov. 14: 1.

Out of the family of Abraham, God chose only one; out of the family of Isaac, only one; but it was time that the family should begin to expand itself, in order to become a nation; and in the family of Jacob we find "the twelve patriarchs" (Acts 7: 3), the heads of "the twelve tribes of Israel." With a view to this, God made use of the emulation of the two sisters, in the work of "building the house of Israel." Ruth 4: 11. Rachel obtained her object in having a son by her servant Bilhah, and under the impression that God had at last done her justice, she called him "Dan" (= Judge or Judged),—*to do justice* to one being the most common sense of "to judge" in Hebrew. See Ps. 43: 1; Luke 18: 3, 7. Again she bore him a son, whom Rachel named Naphtali, (= My wrestling), saying "With mighty wrestlings (*Heb.* wrestlings of God) I have wrestled with my sister, and have prevailed!"—words which bear testimony to the vehemence of the envy that consumed her; and the variance and strifes of the two mothers were of evil augury for the peace of the numerous family that was being founded.

Leah, not to see herself overtaken in this rivalry of "building the house of Israel," took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob for his fourth wife; and she bore him a son, whom Leah called "Gad" (= Good fortune), exclaiming: "Fortunate!" Others who give to Gad the sense the word has in ch. 49: 19, "a troop," give as her exclamation: "A troop cometh!" which probably would express her desire of numerous and valiant posterity. When Zilpah gave her another son, she called his name "Asher" (= Happy), exclaiming "How happy am I! for the daughters will call me happy."

30: 14—21. LEAH HAS TWO MORE SONS AND ONE DAUGHTER.  
(1748-1745 B. C.)

14 And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.

15 And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken away my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to-night for thy son's mandrakes.

16 And Jacob came from the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for I have

surely hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night.

17 And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob a fifth son.

18 And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I gave my handmaid to my husband: and she called his name Issachar.

19 And Leah conceived again, and bare a sixth son to Jacob.

20 And Leah said, God hath endowed me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun.

21 And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

On the supposition that Dinah was born but little before Joseph, he being born when Jacob had finished fourteen years of the twenty he served Laban (vrs. 25—28; ch. 31: 41), Reuben would at that time be about six years of age. The mention of the wheat harvest, in which time mandrakes ripen, gives us to understand that Jacob and Laban did not occupy themselves exclusively in the raising of cattle, but that they took some part in the cultivation of the soil. The "mandrakes" which Reuben found in the field and brought to his mother, is a word, which in Hebrew signifies "love apples," for their supposed virtue in promoting the conception of children; an opinion which still exists in Oriental countries. This gives a particular significance to Rachel's request that Leah would give her a part of the mandrakes of her son; and the hard reproof which Leah administers in response to her petition, together with the agreement that the two entered into, give a sad proof of the petulance and selfishness of Rachel, and of the complete control which she at that time exercised over the mind and the person of Jacob. This time it is Leah who envies her sister, who had taken exclusive possession of the husband. Vr. 17 bears testimony as to how the afflicted Leah besought of Jehovah children and more children: "God hearkened unto Leah," and she bore a fifth son to Jacob, in addition to the two she had given him by her servant Zilpah. It is singular how she, in the ignorance of her scanty spiritual illumination, converts into a meritorious good work her having given to her husband her maid-servant for a wife. So far was she from regarding polygamy as a sin, that she accepted this new son as a recompense which God had given her for so excellent a work! an ideal which she incorporated with the name "Issachar (= "Hire" or "*Recompense*") which she gave him. There are still a multitude of opinions and judgments which men hold, especially in questions of morals and religion, which are not less extravagant than this of Leah, although they regard them as very correct. Once more Leah gave birth to a son, and, sighing always for the good she had not yet obtained, she said: "God hath endowed me with a good

dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons! and she called his name Zebulon = "Dwelling." Once more she became a mother; but this time a daughter was born, whom she called "Dinah" (= "Judged, or Vindicated," the feminine form of "Dan"); thinking always on the justice which God, if not man, had done her.

With regard to the delicate (or "indelicate") matters treated of in this paragraph, and some others of the chapter (and of the book as well), which serve for the scandal of unreflecting or ill-intentioned persons, it will be sufficient to remind the reader that these histories were not written from the point of view of the 20th century of the Christian Era, but in the realistic style of the simple people of past ages; and it would have been a great pity to deprive the people who lived 3000 or 4000 years ago of the style and usage proper to their country and their day, in order to meet the views of the cultured and the uncultured people of this 20th century of grace. Persons of real culture and good sense in our day, who wish to derive profit from what in ancient times the Holy Spirit was pleased to have written for the instruction of all ages, will know how to accommodate themselves to the uses and circumstances of remote times, without being scandalized that the ancients did not, in their social intercourse, speak and act in our present accepted style.

30: 22—24. RACHEL IS AT LAST A MOTHER (1745 B. C.)

22 And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.

23 And she conceived, and bare a son: and said, God hath taken away my reproach:

24 and she called his name Joseph, saying, Jehovah add to me another son.

Seven years of reproach and of impatient waiting she had borne, and her first exclamation bears witness to her immense satisfaction on seeing "her reproach among men taken away" Luke 1: 25. She called him "Joseph" (= "Will add"), saying: "Jehovah will add to me another son"; manifesting thus the force of her passion to have children; without even suspecting how much that second son was to cost her. Ch. 35: 18.

30: 25—36. THE NEW CONTRACT WHICH JACOB MAKES WITH LABAN.  
(1745 B. C.)

25 And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban. Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country.

26 Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service wherewith I have served thee.

27 And Laban said unto him, If now I have found favor in thine eyes, *tarry: for* I have divined that Jehovah hath blessed me for thy sake.

28 And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it.

29 And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle have fared with me.

30 For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it hath increased unto a multitude; and Jehovah hath blessed thee whithersoever I turned:\* and now when shall I provide for mine own house also?

31 And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me aught; if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed thy flock and keep it.

32 I will pass through all thy flock to-day, removing from thence every speckled and spotted one, and every black† one among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and *of such* shall be my hire.

33 So shall my righteousness answer for me hereafter, when thou shalt come concerning my hire that is before thee: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black† among the sheep, that, *if found* with me, shall be counted stolen.

34 And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word.

35 And he removed that day the he-goats that were ringstreaked and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white in it, and all the black† ones among the sheep, and gave them into the hand of his sons;

36 and he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

\**Heb.* at my foot.

[†A. V. brown.]

For the first time in fourteen years Jacob was a free man. He had at last escaped from the ill-made engagement in which his imprudent precipitation to secure possession of his beloved Rachel, had involved him. He had now four wives and twelve children, eleven sons and one daughter, but nothing more. Notwithstanding this, Joseph was hardly born when Jacob resolutely demanded that Laban send him away, in order that he might return to his own country and the house of his father. He doubtless counted upon "the part of the goods" of his father which was to "fall to him," as the younger son. Luke 15: 12. In any case, he wished as soon as possible to get away from the house, and the power, and the presence of that man who had always behaved so unjustly toward him. Laban, however, who knew by experience the value of the labors of his son-in-law, or as he himself expresses it, *how much Jehovah had blessed him for Jacob's sake* (vr. 27), did not wish to terminate an association which had been so advantageous to himself; and, speaking as to his own equal, he tells him to name his wages and that he would cheerfully pay them. The words "I have divined (Mod. Span. Ver. 'I have carefully observed') that Jehovah hath blessed me for thy sake," are in Hebrew: "I divined by serpents," etc. This is the first time that we meet with *divination* in the Bible,

and it manifests from what remote ages the arts of divination have been practiced, when the word itself had become a synonym for patient and profound investigation, as in this place: it teaches us also how divination goes hand in hand with idolatry.

When, therefore, Laban asked the second time, under what conditions Jacob would continue in his service, and how much he should pay him, Jacob replied that he should not pay him anything; but that he would be satisfied to take as his hire a certain class of the cattle, to wit, the black among the sheep and the spotted and speckled among the goats, after having separated all such from among the cattle of Laban; saying that these alone should thenceforward constitute his pay, and that any others found among the cattle which he claimed as his should be accounted as stolen. Doubtless Jacob had already carefully studied out his plan, which seemed to make it certain that all the increase of the cattle would be for Laban. The astute and selfish father-in-law accepted the proposal with rejoicing, and on that same day he set apart all the speckled and spotted and striped, and, in a word, all that had any white in them, among the goats, and all that was black among the sheep, and committed them to the charge of his own sons, separating these from Jacob by a three days' journey; so then only a gift of God could place cattle of such marks among those which remained in the keeping of Jacob.

- [It is not quite certain just what were the "black" sheep that were to fall to Jacob's lot, according to the Revised Version. The A. V. translates the word "brown;" and as the Hebrew *Hum*, or *chum*, so rendered, occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible, it can only be inferred from its derivation from an obsolete root meaning to be *burned* or *scorched*, that any swarthy, or blackish brown, color will do as well. Probably no sheep are ever really *black*. The Reina-Valera Version translates it "of a dark color."—Tr.]

30: 37—43. THE INVENTION OF JACOB TO CHANGE THE COLOR OF THE YOUNG THAT SHOULD BE BORN. (From 1745 to 1739 B. C.)

37 And Jacob took him rods of fresh poplar, and of the almond and of the plane-tree; and peeled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods.

38 And he set the rods which he had peeled over against the flocks in the gutters in the watering-troughs where the flocks came to drink; and they conceived when they came to drink.

39 And the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth ringstreaked, speckled, and spotted.

40 And Jacob separated the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstreaked and all the black in the flock of Laban: and he put his own droves apart, and put them not unto Laban's flock.

41 And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger of the flock did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the flock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods;

42 but when the flock were feeble, he put them not in: so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.

43 And the man increased exceedingly, and had large flocks, and maid-servants and men-servants, and camels and asses.

With regard to the expedient which Jacob adopted in order to change the colors of the young of the cattle which remained exclusively in his care, I do not regard myself as competent to express an opinion. It is well known that in certain conditions of pregnant females, both of animals and of the human family, any vivid impression which is made upon the senses, is capable of being impressed on the young with indelible characters; and it was of this fact that Jacob availed himself to produce such impressions at the time of conception. Whatever may have been the natural effect of his expedient, Jacob always attributed the result to the particular providence of God; so he desired that it should appear, and so it doubtless was, whether by the means which Jacob adopted, or without them. See ch. 31: 8—16. The sense of vr. 33 of the preceding section is clear, but the proper translation is difficult. It means to say that when Laban came to examine the flocks of his son-in-law, the very color of the cattle would bear testimony to Jacob's unquestionable honesty; and so it happened, in fact, that when Laban and his sons became more and more irritated against Jacob, because of his sudden and extraordinary prosperity, they could not find among the cattle of Jacob any that was not his, according to the terms of the contract made with Laban. With regard to the honorableness of his expedient, I have less difficulty. Dealing with a heartless extortioner like Laban, "whose tender mercies were cruel" (Prov. 12: 10), any means, short of robbery or cheating, would be honorable, in order to gain a just part of the fruit of his twenty years of arduous toil; especially when it was God who protected and favored him therein. See ch. 31: 12, 13. It seems that Jacob himself had no great confidence in his invention, but that he and his wives attributed the astonishing increase of his riches to the direct providence of God.

The distinction which vrs. 41 and 42 make between the stronger and the weaker cattle, demands an explanation. The cattle born in the early spring-time are the stronger; those that come later are the weaker. The meaning of the passage is that in the spring season, when the stronger cattle was in breeding, Jacob made use of his invention; but when the time of the less vigorous came, he did not use it; gaining thus not only in the

quantity but in the quality of his cattle. And God condescended to make use of this natural means, to defend his servant Jacob against the rapacity of Laban, and make amends to him for the years lost in the service of a cruel master. "So the man increased exceedingly, and had large flocks, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses." Thus Jehovah showed that he had not forgotten the promise he made in Bethel to the fugitive Jacob, but that even in the years when his work seemed to inure only to the profit of Laban, he was laying solid foundations for the future prosperity and greatness of Jacob.

"Trust in him at all times, ye people!

pour out your heart before him:

God is a refuge for us!" Ps. 62: 8.

### CHAPTER XXXI.

**VRS. 1—3. THE SUDDEN PROSPERITY OF JACOB COMPLETELY RUPTURES HIS GOOD RELATIONS WITH LABAN AND HIS SONS. GOD COMMANDS HIM TO RETURN TO HIS OWN LAND. (1739 B. C.)**

1 And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory.

2 And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as beforetime.

3 And Jehovah said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.

Laban and his sons were thoroughly satisfied during the fourteen years that God blessed the estate of Laban for the sake of Jacob; but when the latter had now an interest of his own, and God was blessing him surprisingly, the sons of Laban accused him of robbing their father to enrich himself. Jacob had foreseen this case, and as he had none among his cattle of the colors that belonged to Laban they had no real basis of complaint; especially as their father had gladly accepted the agreement. Ch. 30: 33, 34. Apparently Laban said nothing; but his sons talked, and talked with the intention of being heard. As they had taken away from Jacob all human possibility of having even one animal of these particular colors, and according to the allegation of Jacob in vrs. 7 and 8, Laban, to suit himself, had changed the conditions of the contract "ten times," that is to say, a great many times, but still the young of the flocks were born more numerous and better for Jacob than for Laban, it is plain that it was God who did it; and as Jacob was not capable of giving new and different skins to the cattle which, as they

said, he had stolen from their father, it is probable that they accused him of using magic or witchcraft to gain his purpose; an accusation to which the *peeled rods* of Jacob would lend the appearance of truth, if they had notice of them. But besides the loquacious upbraidings of the sons, Jacob noticed that, although Laban himself said little or nothing, his countenance had completely changed toward him; which gave him concern, knowing perfectly as he did what Laban was capable of doing. But God came to resolve his doubts with a positive command that he should return to his kindred and to the land of his fathers; giving him besides the express promise that he would be with him. In giving him this command, he made use of a favorable juncture, when Laban was absent from home, having gone a three days' journey to attend the shearing of his sheep (vr. 19); which was always a time of feasting and of general rejoicing. Ch. 38: 14; 1 Sam. 25: 2—7; 2 Sam. 13: 23, 24.

31: 4—16. JACOB CALLS HIS WIVES, HE EXPLAINS TO THEM THE CASE, AND TELLS THEM OF THE ORDER WHICH GOD HAD GIVEN HIM TO RETURN TO HIS OWN COUNTRY; ALL OF WHICH THEY AT ONCE AGREE TO. (1739 B. C.)

4 And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock,

5 And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as beforetime; but the God of my father hath been with me.

6 And ye know that with all my power I have served your father.

7 And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me.

8 If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the flock bare speckled; and if he said thus, The ringstreaked shall be thy wages: then bare all the flock ringstreaked.

9 Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me.

10 And it came to pass at the time that the flock conceive, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the he-goats which leaped upon the flock were ringstreaked, speckled, and grizzled.

11 And the angel of God said unto me in the dream, Jacob: and I said, Here am I.

12 And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see: all the he-goats which leap upon the flock are ringstreaked, speckled, and grizzled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee.

13 I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst a pillar, where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy nativity.

14 And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?

15 Are we not accounted by him as foreigners\*? for he hath sold us, and hath also quite devoured our money.

16 For all the riches which God hath taken away from our father, that is ours and our children's: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.

[\*A V., M. S. V., strangers.]



The paragraph is very clear and requires no explanations; but there are three things which especially call our attention:

1st. That the "Angel of God" by whose particular providence the wealth of Jacob had increased so astonishingly, tells him expressly: "*I am the God of Bethel*, where thou anointedst a pillar and where thou vowedst a vow unto me" (vr. 13); the which "Angel" and the which "God of Bethel" were indisputably the same "Jehovah" whom he had seen in vision at the top of the stairway (not the "ladder," as it is commonly called), and who there said to him: "I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac." Ch. 28: 13. "Angel" means a "messenger" or "one sent." If therefore this Angel was *sent*, who was it that sent him? More than *sixty* times in the New Testament Jesus calls himself, or is called, in one or another form, "THE SENT ONE." See John 7: 16; 12: 49; 1 John 4: 14. How faithful is our God in fulfilling his promises! and of how much needed good and restfulness of spirit we deprive ourselves by not trusting in him with illimitable confidence! For more than fourteen years it seemed that "the God of Bethel" had completely forgotten his promise, while he was only waiting the most favorable juncture to work.

2nd. These Oriental women, while submitting to the command and disposal of their father, did not on that account fail to see the injustice of his procedure, and the dishonor with which he was treating them: "Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not accounted of him strangers? For he hath sold us, and he hath also quite devoured our money." They were therefore ready to accompany Jacob at once, in obedience to all that God had commanded.

3rd. In vrs. 4 and 14 the name of Rachel takes precedence of Leah's; a distinction which Jacob never failed to make, in recognition of the fact that she only was his proper wife. Comp. Ruth 4: 11, and see the comments on chs. 33: 2; 44: 27.

31: 17—21. JACOB ARRANGES HIS ESTATE, AND SETS OUT UPON HIS JOURNEY, FLEEING WITH SECRECY. (1739 B. C.)

17 Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon the camels;

18 and he carried away all his cattle, and all his substance which he had gathered, the cattle of his getting, which he had gathered in Paddan-aram, to go to Isaac his father unto the land of Canaan.

19 Now Laban was gone to shear his sheep; and Rachel stole the teraphim\* that were her father's.

20 And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban† the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled.

[\*=household gods.]

†*Heb.* stole the heart of Laban.

21 And he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the River, and set his face toward the mountain of Gilead.

When Laban divided his cattle into two parts, and placed in the hands of his sons all those whose produce would be to the profit of Jacob, he placed a three days' journey between the two, leaving in Jacob's hands only the cattle whose young would naturally fall to Laban. Ch. 30: 35, 36. Laban's home was no doubt in Haran as before, and it is probable that the family of Jacob was there also, he having his cattle in the fields or country near by. Laban had gone at that time to the shearing of his sheep, which were a three days' journey from home; so that Jacob without difficulty or embarrassment arranged his affairs, gathered his family, his cattle, and all his property—all that was properly and indisputably his own (vrs. 21, 36—38), and straightway took his journey. Doubtless he had for days past been making the necessary arrangements; so that without difficulty or loss of time he set forth, and forded the river Euphrates (called constantly "the River," in the Old Testament), which was a comparatively short distance away; and turning short to the left, he took a S. W. course, directing his steps toward the mountain region of Gilead, to the east of the Jordan. Jacob had stolen away, and took all possible care to get as far ahead as he could, before Laban had word of his departure. That is a singular Hebrew phrase which expresses the idea of this secret flight. Vr. 20 says literally: "And Jacob *stole the heart of Laban* the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he fled."

For the first time we have here a reference to "household gods" (or "domestic idols," *Heb.* teraphim), so well known among the ancient Romans under the name of "lares" or of "penates," and no less well known among modern Roman Catholics under the name of "tutelar saints" or "patrons"; before whose images or pictures, carefully guarded in the house, they burn lamps or candles, night and day. All this is one and the same thing, with a change of names. The teraphim—the family gods, or domestic idols, so often mentioned in the Bible, were of different kinds and sizes. Michal, the daughter of Saul and wife of David, had one of them in her house, of the size of a man, or which might well represent a man, covered with the bed clothes, and with his head lying on a pillow of goat's hair. 1 Sam. 19: 13. But here they were so small that Rachel could without difficulty place two or more of them underneath her, among the baggage of her camel, on which she took her seat. It is probable that Laban called these (as read in the Modern Spanish Version) "the gods of Abraham and the gods

of Nahor, the gods which were of their father," Terah. Vr. 53. We know from ch. 35: 2, that the people and immediate family of Jacob brought with them from Haran, and retained still in their possession, their strange gods (which, if teraphim, or household gods, would be of the same class), until Jacob demanded them, and buried them beneath an oak or terebinth, in Shechem; and it costs us no difficulty to believe that Rachel stole those of her father for her own use, or, in any case, by way of precaution, to deprive him of the help she supposed they might give him at a time so critical as that of the flight of Jacob. The daughters of Laban naturally participated in the idolatries of their father and his family, and only little by little were they thoroughly cleansed of it. See ch. 35: 2. It is important to know Jacob and his family just as the Bible represents them, and not as we would wish they had been; as is the use of many persons, and even of some commentators.

31: 22—30. LABAN FOLLOWS AFTER JACOB, AND OVERTAKES HIM IN THE MOUNTAIN COUNTRY OF GILEAD. (1739 B. C.)

22 And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled.

23 And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and he overtook him in the mountain of Gilead.

24 And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream of the night, and said unto him, Take heed to thyself that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.

25 And Laban came up with Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountain: and Laban with his brethren encamped in the mountain of Gilead.

26 And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters as captives of the sword?

27 Wherefore didst thou flee secretly, and steal away from me, and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp;

28 and didst not suffer me to kiss my sons and my daughters? now hast thou done foolishly.

29 It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt; but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take heed to thyself that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.

30 And now, *though* thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, *yet* wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?

On the third day after Jacob had fled, Laban had word of it; and "taking with him his brethren," he started with all speed in pursuit of Jacob. In order to do this, he would need, first, to return home (ordinarily a three days' journey), and then gather his people and friends, a numerous company (Esau went on the same errand with 400 men, ch. 32: 6), all which would require some time. The words "his brethren" (comp. ch. 29: 4; 31: 37) is used with much latitude in the Bible, and does not confine us

by any means to his own immediate family, though the connection was large (ch. 22: 20—24), but embraced his and their partizans and friends and neighbors, dependents and servants, who all readily enlisted; for poor Jacob had evidently few friends in Haran, after twenty years of residence there; he was not the man to make friends readily. With these he pursued after Jacob a seven days' journey, and overtook him in the mountain country of Gilead; "Mount Gilead," say Valera and the English Version; "in the mountain of Gilead," says the R. V. These were naturally *forced marches*, and give us no idea of the distance he traveled. Nor do we know how much time he would lose in returning to Haran, and gathering his people, before he set out on this seven days' journey. The distance for Jacob would not be less than 350 miles, under the most favorable circumstances and by the shortest route; and with a large encampment and several thousand head of cattle of all kinds (see the comment on ch. 32: 14, 15), however much he might hurry his march, he would need fifteen or twenty days to cover the distance between Haran and the mountains of Gilead where they met. Laban came prepared to recover everything, and with the probable intention of killing Jacob, or reducing him to his former servitude. But God came to him in dreams of the night, and commanded him: "See that thou speak not to Jacob either good or evil;" words which of course are not to be understood as they read; but they gave him to understand that he should take good care what he said or did to Jacob; for He was his protector, and would see to his defence. In days like these, in which unbelievers abound, who deny the possibility of a divine revelation, it is important to fix attention on the fact that God had no more difficulty in communicating with bad men than with good; and that Laban had no more doubt of what God said to him than of what Jacob said to him.

In Hebrew, "mount," "mountain," "mountain country" and "cordillera" or "mountain range" are all one; so that it comes to be impossible to distinguish between the "mountain country of Gilead" and "Mount Gilead;" the former being the name of an elevated region to the east of Jordan, some 60 miles long by 20 wide, of 2,000 or 3,000 feet elevation above the ocean, or 4,000 feet above the river Jordan and the waters of the Dead Sea; while "Mount Gilead" is the most elevated point of this mountain range, situated some miles south of the river Jabbok, and which bears till today the same name in Arabic form. From this there results a complete entanglement in our endeavors to clear up the movements of Jacob in these chapters; and no

commentary that I have seen even attempts to make them plain. Let the reader bear in mind that the geography of this region to the east of the Jordan is still but little known, and that the Biblical maps are in disagreement with regard to many of the principal points mentioned; so that it is not possible to trace this journey of Jacob in accordance with any one of them. After many weeks of hard study of these chapters (31, 32, and 33), I have become convinced that the "Mount Gilead" of Valera and the A. V. should be the "mountain country of Gilead," already mentioned, toward which Jacob naturally and necessarily directed his steps in going from Haran to Beersheba, in a S. W. direction. Laban overtook him encamped on one of the eminences of this mountain range, called in vr. 25 "the mount," and Laban himself encamped "in the mountain range of Gilead," near to him. The particular mountain where Jacob encamped and where he and Laban made their compact of peace, was named by them "Galeed" and "Mizpah" (vr. 47, 48), the which Mizpah (or Mizpeh) of Gilead was famous in the history of Jephthah, Judg. 11: 29. To suppose that "the mountain" was "Mount Gilead," to the south of the Jabbok, would not only be to confound places distant from each other, but would place Jacob under the necessity of crossing the river Jabbok four times: (1) when pursued by Laban; (2) recrossing it again, so as to be found on the north of the Jabbok when Esau came against him with 400 men; (3) crossing it again to the south of the river, in order to meet Esau who came from the south, from the country of Seir; and (4) passing over to Succoth, which was to the north of the Jabbok, after the reconciliation between Esau and himself; while on the contrary, the Bible text seems to give us to understand *that Jacob kept constantly on his way to the S. W.*, in the direction of Beersheba or Hebron; until after his meeting with Esau (who proposed to accompany him in his journey, ch. 33: 12); when for some unknown reason Jacob turned short about, and instead of going on towards Beersheba, went to the north, or N. W., to Succoth, and from thence he passed to Shechem, on the western side of the Jordan.

I shall not perplex the reader with the details of the case; it will be sufficient to say that after long study of the point I am satisfied that the place of the meeting of Jacob and Laban was the unknown location of "Mizpah of Gilead," or "Ramoth Mizpah," some distance to the north of the river Jabbok,—Mahanaim would lie S. W. of this. and probably not far from the Jordan (2 Sam. 17: 16, 27); that Peniel or Penuel was on the river Jabbok, at the point where Jacob had his contest with the angel, north of the

river; that the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau took place to the south of this river; and from thence Esau returned towards the south, to Seir, while Jacob turned suddenly to the north, and recrossing the river, passed on to the city of Succoth, where he built for himself a house and remained several years. I believe that Laban did not cross the Jabbok, so as to arrive at Valera's supposed "Mount Gilead," at all, and that Jacob only crossed it twice. After this long digression we will resume the thread of the story.

In spite of the divine admonition, Laban, as soon as he saw Jacob, began with bitter reproaches, to the effect that he must have committed some great wickedness, and for that cause had fled away secretly, carrying away his daughters, as if captured by the sword. What more could he say (as God had tied his tongue and his sword), except to accuse Jacob of cowardice, in depriving the magnanimous Laban of the privilege of sending him away with festivity and song; and did not even allow him the opportunity of giving to his sons and daughters the farewell kiss! A foolish procedure, he said, was this on the part of Jacob; knowing as well as Jacob himself did, that only thus was it possible for him to escape at all from the pitiless hands of his father-in-law; and confessing at the same time that he came with the power and will to do him harm, had it not been that the God of Isaac ("the God of your father") had put into his mouth a powerful and effective bridle. But, allowing that he could not longer resist the desire to return to his father and to his country, he asks him: "Why hast thou stolen my gods?" The ignominy of idols, impotent to defend even themselves against robbery and ill usage, is what Laban and other idolaters never see; and even in Christian countries, Romanists go on following in their footsteps, with idols and images, as helpless as the other, and with "consecrated hosts," or wafers (impiously called "His Divine Majesty"), which even a mouse is able to "steal," and carry away to his hole!

It is also interesting to notice how, with the repeated mention of "the God of your father," Laban is giving emphasis to the fact that the actual God of Abraham and his children was not his god, nor the ancestral god of the family,—gods which Abraham had abandoned. See comment on vr. 53.

31: 31—35. JACOB GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF AND OF HIS CONDUCT. LABAN SETS ABOUT TO OVERHAUL THE EFFECTS OF JACOB, SEEKING HIS LOST GODS. (1739 B. C.)

31 And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Lest thou shouldst take thy daughters from me by force.

32 With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, he shall not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them.

33 And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the tent of the two maid-servants; but he found them not. And he went out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent.

34 Now Rachel had taken the teraphim, and put them in the camel's saddle, and sat upon them. And Laban felt about all the tent, but found them not.

35 And she said to her father, Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise up before thee; for the manner of women is upon me. And he searched, but found not the teraphim.

Jacob justified his secret flight with the frank declaration, of what was probably the truth, that if he had not got away in such a manner, Laban would have taken from him his daughters by force; to which he later adds, that he would have taken away everything else that he had gained in his twenty years of arduous toil. Vr. 42. In regard to his gods (without even suspecting that his beloved Rachel had them hidden underneath her), Jacob said that with whomsoever Laban might find them, he should die. It does not appear that this was in those days the penalty for stealing gods, or whether Jacob, indignant at such baseness and superstition, vented his wrath in strong words. Jacob told him to search all his effects and take all that he found of his own. Vr. 37. Laban began the search, examining and *feeling* (vr. 34) everything. Rachel could hardly have escaped in such a rigorous scrutiny as that which Laban was making, beginning with the tent of Jacob, and passing thence to those of Leah and the two maid-servants, and coming at last to her own. But she was quick-witted, and in a moment she placed the idols under the furniture of her camel, and seated herself upon it, pretending to be with her periodical sickness (which by euphemism is called in the Bible "the manner of women") and unable to rise; with which falsehood she excused herself from rising up in the presence of her "lord," as she called him, when he entered. We see here in embryo that provision of the Mosaic law, that in such a condition a woman was unclean, and ought to touch nobody, and nobody to touch her, nor anything she was seated upon, nor the things that she had touched. Lev. 15: 19—23. In this way Rachel gained her point, and her father at once withdrew, without examining, *or feeling*, the pile of things on which she was seated, where she had hidden his family gods.

31: 36—42. THE ENERGETIC PROTEST WHICH JACOB MAKES OF HIS HONORABLE DEPORTMENT, AND AGAINST THE ILL TREATMENT HE HAD RECEIVED ALWAYS FROM LABAN. (1739 B. C.)

36 And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban. What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast hotly pursued after me?

37 Whereas thou hast felt about all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? Set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us two.

38 These twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flocks have I not eaten.

39 That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night.

40 Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep fled from mine eyes.

41 These twenty years have I been in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy flock\*: and thou hast changed my wages ten times.

42 Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now hadst thou sent me away empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.

[\*A. V., M. S. V., cattle.]

When Laban withdrew mortified and empty-handed from Rachel's tent, after he had searched in vain for his gods, or anything else of his that was among Jacob's effects, the latter, moved with vehement indignation, loosed his tongue to berate him for the manner in which he had always treated him. Laban had insinuated that he fled away secretly, after the manner of some fugitive evil-doer; and Jacob, in his turn, asks him why he had so hotly pursued him, as if he was a thief, since he was unable to find among his effects anything that was his. After setting forth his untiring zeal in the service of Laban, his perfect integrity, and the rigor with which Laban had ruled him, as a pitiless master, he tells him that in the twenty years he had served him, his sheep and his goats had not lost their young, and that he had never eaten the rams of his flocks,—it being the usage of herdsmen to eat the males and not the females. Thus with ceaseless toil he had served him day and night, bearing himself (by the requirement of Laban) the loss of what was carried away by wild beasts; and withal, if it had not been, he said, for "the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, who reproved thee last night," Laban would have dispatched him after twenty years of such service, as poor as he came. Jacob resents, in *vr.* 29, the imputation which Laban had insinuated with regard to the God of his father, laying emphasis on the fact that "the God of his father" was no other than "the



God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac;" without entering on the question of the abandonment of the ancestral gods of Terah, and Nahor, and Bethuel, and Laban. See comments on vr. 53.

31: 43—55. LABAN AND JACOB ENTER INTO A COVENANT OF PEACE.  
(1739 B. C.)

43 And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, The daughters are my daughters, and the children are my children, and the flocks are my flocks, and all that thou seest is mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children whom they have borne?

44 And now come, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee.

45 And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar.

46 And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made a heap: and they did eat there by the heap.

47 And Laban called it Jegar-saha-dutha:\* but Jacob called it Galeed.†

48 And Laban said, This heap is witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed:

49 and Mizpah,‡ for he said, Jehovah watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.

50 If thou shalt afflict my daughters, and if thou shalt take wives besides my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee.

51 And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold the pillar, which I have set betwixt me and thee.

52 This heap be witness, and the pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm.

53 The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God§ of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the Fear of his father Isaac.

54 And Jacob offered a sacrifice in the mountain, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread: and tarried all night in the mountain.

55 And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed, and returned unto his place.

\*That is, The heap of witness, *in Aramaic*.

†That is, The heap of witness, *in Hebrew*.

‡That is, The watch-tower. §Or, gods.

To these protests, as deeply felt as they were well founded, Laban only replied with bravado and idle boasting; and then proposed that the two should make a covenant of peace, and mutually swear that neither of them would pass beyond that point with hostile intent. In fact they made there a covenant which was to serve as a testimony between the two. Jacob again set up a stone for a pillar (see ch. 28: 18), and then, gathering stones, all of them, they made a heap or mound of stones, and ate on that mound; which rite of eating together, served as security for peace and harmony, according to the usage still prevailing among the Orientals. The marked difference between the names which Jacob and Laban gave to that heap of stones,

is evidence of the difference there was between the language of Haran, which was Aramaic or Syrian, and that of Canaan, which Jacob and his descendants spoke, and is one of the incidental proofs alleged to prove that Hebrew was *the language of Canaan*, which Abraham adopted when he emigrated from his own native country to the land of promise. See Comments on ch. 11: 1.

The beautiful Mizpah benediction of the Society of Christian Endeavor, which is for its members the expression and pledge of mutual fidelity, had originally in the mouth of Laban a significance and purpose which was precisely the opposite, as the language of jealous suspicion and distrust. Two things Laban demanded, careless as he had till then been of the welfare of his daughters: (1) That Jacob should not oppress them, when far from the house of their father; and it may be that the past differences and dissensions between the two sisters gave occasion for this demand. See ch. 30: 1, 15; and (2) that he should not take any more wives in addition to those he already had. Laban counted his two daughters as the wives of Jacob (and so does Moses, ch. 32: 22), and the two servants as his concubines. Jacob was inclined to count Rachel as his only legitimate wife. Ch. 44: 27. To bind Jacob to the performance of these stipulations, Laban set Jehovah as a sentinel in a watch-tower (= Mizpah) to watch over their fulfilment. And in testimony that neither of the two would pass that pile of stones with hostile intent, he put for witness the pile and the pillar which they had reared in that place. They pledged their solemn oath to this effect. Laban makes his appeal to the ancient gods of the family, "the gods of Abraham and the gods of Nahor, gods that were of their father" before them. Jacob who knew that Abraham had been at one time a worshiper of Laban's gods, whom he had renounced to love and serve Jehovah alone, did not wish to swear by the "God of Abraham," an expression which he and Laban used in different senses; and for this reason "he swore by the Fear of his father Isaac"—that new God of Abraham whom alone Isaac had feared. In vr. 53 *the verb and noun (God) are both in the plural*, manifesting that "the gods of Abraham," etc. and not "the God of Abraham," is the correct translation.\* See also comments on ch. 12: 1; 31: 19, 30 and 42.

When these ceremonies were finished, or, more probably, as

\*The Revised Version, both English and American, is, I think, partial and unfair,—it is positively misleading, in this place, in appending the alternative rendering "or, *gods*," to "the God of their father"—Terah, but not to "the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor." In the Hebrew text, the plural verb is attached immediately to "the gods of Abraham and the gods of Nahor," rather than to "the gods of their father."—Tr.

part of them, Jacob offered sacrifices in the mount, and invited his brethren or friends (as they all were at that moment), and celebrated a great feast; which was always a part of the sacrifices of peace-offerings (Lev. 7: 11—18); and they all passed the night in the mount; and in the morning Laban, with kisses and benedictions set out on his journey and returned to his place. Happy end to which God brought the armed expedition of Laban, which might well have cost Jacob his life! "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Prov. 16: 7. The ways of Jacob had begun to please the Lord.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## VRS. 1, 2. JACOB IN MAHANAIM. (1739 B. C.)

1 And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

2 And Jacob said when he saw them, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

There is much uncertainty in our Bible maps with regard to the localities mentioned in chapters 31 and 32. The most of them put Mount Gilead to the south of the river Jabbok; one that I have before me places it to the north. Most of them place Mahanaim to the north of the Jabbok, 20 miles or more from the Jordan: it is probable that it was near the valley of the Jordan, a few miles from the river; for it would seem that David in his precipitate flight from Absalom arrived there on the second day after leaving Jerusalem; and the reason given why Ahimaaz outran the Cushite, in carrying to David the news of the battle, was that he "ran by the way of the plain (of Jordan)" 2 Sam. 17: 27—29; 18: 23. "The wood of Ephraim," to the east of the Jordan, where that battle was fought, took name probably from the slaughter which Jephthah there made of 42,000 Ephraimites, at the fords of the Jordan, in the days of the Judges. Judg. 12: 5, 6. Others still locate Mahanaim on the south of the river Jabbok, to the north of "Mount Gilead." Some maps locate Ramoth Gilead (which is probably the same as the "Mizpah" of ch. 31: 49, or "Mizpeh of Gilead," famous in the history of Jephthah (Judg. 11: 29, 34), to the north of the Jabbok; and others, erroneously I think, to the south. Until therefore the geography of the region "beyond Jordan" is better understood, it will be allowed me to maintain the opinion already expressed, that the "Mount Gilead" of the maps was not the place of the meeting of Laban and Jacob, and that Jacob did not march to the south, then to the north, after that to the south, and at last toward the

north, fording the dangerous torrent of Jabbok four times without cause; but that he "went on his way" always toward the south, as the text states, until he changed his route, after his meeting with Esau, and, abandoning the road to Beersheba, turned to the north and went to Succoth.

After the departure of Laban, Jacob continued his journey, going south. In Mahanaim the angels of God came out to meet him; as if to congratulate him, and bid him welcome, after the spiritual victory he had gained over Laban. This company of angels would naturally remind him of "the stairway," in his vision at Bethel, by which companies of angels ascended and descended. Ch. 28: 12. We would desire to know more about this visit of angels, which has for its only parallel in the Bible that of the multitude of the heavenly host who announced "glory to God in the highest and on earth peace," on the night of the Holy Birth (Luke 2: 13, 14); but all details are lacking. Whether it was by day or by night, Jacob received much consolation and cheer from this visit; and well did he need it for the trial, more terrible still, that awaited him. The company must have been numerous, judging by the name Jacob gave to the place "Mahanaim" (= *two encampments*, or armies); so called, either on account of two companies that the angels formed, or because there were two armies or encampments, of which one was that of Jacob.

32: 3—8. JACOB HAD SENT MESSENGERS TO HIS BROTHER ESAU, AND THEY RETURN IN HASTE WITH TIDINGS THAT ESAU WAS COMING AGAINST HIM WITH FOUR HUNDRED MEN. (1739 B. C.)

3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the field of Edom.

4 And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye say unto my lord Esau: Thus saith thy servant Jacob, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now:

5 and I have oxen, and asses, *and* flocks, and men-servants, and maid-servants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in thy sight.

6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and moreover he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and was distressed: and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks, and the herds, and the camels, into two companies;

8 and he said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the company which is left shall escape.

As the journey from Mahanaim to the country of Seir was a journey of several days duration, Jacob would wait some time there for the return of his messengers, in order to have certain intelligence about his brother, and know his feelings toward him;

and yet as Esau met him near Penuel, or Peniel, after he forded the river Jabbok, going south, it is clear that Jacob had removed from Mahanaim to the vicinity of the river Jabbok, which there crosses the high table-land of Gilead through a *canyon*, from 1500 to 2000 feet deep, between precipitous banks, or mountain slopes, of that elevation; and it is probable that there, near to the Jabbok, he waited the outcome of the event. Penuel, it seems, was to the north of the river Jabbok, and the place of his meeting with Esau to the south. It is evident also that Jacob must have made a considerable delay in those parts, in order that notice of his unexpected and precipitous flight from Padan-aram should come to the ears of Esau (to the south of the Dead Sea) so opportunely that he had time to arm 400 men, and meet with the messengers of Jacob on their journey south.

Jacob then had sent to inform Esau of his coming, to give an account of himself, and to offer his humble submission, as his servant. Ch. 32: 4, 18, 20; 33: 5, 8. With good reason he feared the vengeance of the brother whom he had wronged so cruelly; notwithstanding which, we do not know how to excuse the abject and servile spirit which he manifested, after the great promises and signal mercies which God had granted him. But this was Jacob, naturally timid and "of a fearful heart," who was by nature astute, cunning and crafty, rather than valiant. The mention he makes of his riches and of his numerous possessions, was not done in the spirit of boasting, but in order to evoke the consideration and respect of Esau, who naturally held him in contempt, as well as hatred. But he obtained nothing; perhaps his messengers did not even have time to perform their mission; because they returned precipitately, reporting that they had come upon Esau in the way, and that he was coming against him with 400 men.

This report filled Jacob with consternation. He had evidently hoped that after his twenty years of absence, Esau would have forgotten, or pardoned, the double injury he had done him; but he now saw his mistake. He therefore, as his first act, in great anguish of spirit, divided the people and property which he had brought, into two parts, so that if Esau should come and smite the one, the other would have opportunity to escape.

32: 9—12. HIS PRINCIPAL RECOURSE, PRAYER. (1739 B. C.)

9 And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, O Jehovah, who saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will do thee good:

10 I am not worthy of the least of all the loving kindnesses, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my

staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two companies.

11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he come and smite me, the mother with the children.

12 And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

The case demanded haste; he took, therefore, the steps already related, and then betook himself to prayer; which has always been the principal recourse of the people of God in times of strait and great danger; like Job who thus expresses himself:

“My friends scorn me;

but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.” Job 16: 20.

and David:

“For my love they are my adversaries;

but I give myself unto prayer.” Ps. 109: 4.

And so Jacob, after doing what at the moment prudence counseled, goes hastily to God, in order to place himself beneath his promised protection; and his prayer is extremely beautiful, simple and soul moving. It is so clear, that to comment upon it would be to detract something from its beauty and force. As this, however, is the first prayer that we find related in the Bible (for that of Abraham, in ch. 18: 23-33 is rather a conversational intercession, than a prayer to the unseen God), it will not be amiss to fix attention on its several parts: (1) The invocation, addressed to the God of the covenanted promises: “God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac”; (2) The same who had commanded him to set out on this journey, under his safe-conduct and protection; (3) The humble and feeling confession of his unworthiness, and of the fidelity of God toward him, in changing the solitary fugitive into a rich chieftain, at the head of two encampments, as is said in vrs. 7 and 8; which no doubt presented an imposing aspect, with its tents and many thousands of cattle; (4) The petition that he would deliver him from the danger which was right upon him; (5) He shelters himself yet again under the sure promises of God: “Thou, thyself didst say: Certainly I will be with thee,” etc.

32: 13—21. THE WISE STEPS WHICH JACOB TAKES, TO SOFTEN THE HARD AND FIERCE HEART OF ESAU. (1739 B. C.)

13 And he lodged there that night, and took of that which he had with him a present for Esau his brother:

14 two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams,

15 thirty milk camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten foals.

16 And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove.

17 And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee?

18 then thou shalt say, *They are thy servant Jacob's*; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, he also is behind us.

19 And he commanded also the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him:

20 and ye shall say, Moreover, behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept me.

21 So the present passed over before him: and he himself lodged that night in the company.

Jacob had prayed well, apparently in the very spot where he stood (the Jews usually prayed standing Mark 11: 25; Luke 18: 11, 13); but after he had done this, he set himself to work in accordance with his prayer, and as if himself to give effect to it. It is more than doubtful whether he would have obtained his petition, or would have obtained so abundant an answer, if he had acted in a different manner, or if he had left the matter in the hands of God, without doing any more himself. Thus it often happens that our prayers yield little or no fruit, because we do not act in accordance with what we ask. Without waiting till night, Jacob set some 580 head of cattle, of different kinds, in five different droves, and delivered them into the hands of servants in whom he had entire confidence, commanding them to leave a good space between drove and drove, so that each drove that Esau met would be a fresh surprise; and he put into the mouths of the servants in charge the same humble message; so that this would be five times repeated in the ears of Esau, before he would meet with Jacob. All this, which formed, as the Hebrew reads, a small "army" in itself (see ch. 33: 8), he sent away at once; in which promptness he acted like a sensible man; "I will appease his wrath (he said) with the present that goeth before me and after that I will see his face; peradventure he will accept me." Vr. 20. The wise king has said:

"A man's gift maketh room for him,  
and bringeth him before great men." Prov. 18: 16.

Thus Jacob prayed, as if everything depended on the mere and sovereign will of God; and thus he worked, as if everything depended on the wise providences that he himself should take; and in both he acted well.

32: 22—32. THE VICTORIOUS CONTEST OF JACOB WITH THE ANGEL.  
(1739 B. C.)

22 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two handmaids, and his eleven children,\* and passed over the ford of the Jabbok.

23 And he took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over that which he had.

24 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained† as he wrestled with him.

26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

27 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.

28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel‡: for thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

29 And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel||: for, *said he*, I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

31 And the sun rose upon him as he passed over Penuel, and he limped upon his thigh.

32 Therefore the children of Israel eat not the sinew of the hip which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip.

[\*A. V. sons.]

[†A. V. and M. S. V., out of joint.]

‡That is, He who striveth with God.

||That is, The face of God.

Verse 3 tells us that "Jacob sent (that is, he had sent) messengers before him to Esau his brother, to the land of Seir, the country of Edom." At that time Jacob was probably in Mahanaim, traveling towards the south, while Esau was coming to meet him from the land of Seir, marching towards the north. The river or torrent of Jabbok lay between them, and Esau was now very near. Jacob thought it would be the wiser part to pass onward and meet him in the way, rather than to betake himself to flight, or wait timidly for him on the north of the river. Having therefore sent before him, on the previous evening, the magnificent present of nearly six hundred head of cattle, and having granted to his people some repose, in which he took no part, he arose in the night, and caused his family, and his people, and all his possessions to pass over the ford; and Jacob remained alone. It is a very common opinion that Jacob remained behind in order to seek God in prayer, and that while he was praying he had his contest with the Angel. But this is in itself improbable, and the text says nothing about it. Verse 21 says, that having dispatched his presents for Esau, he himself passed the night



in the encampment. It would be midnight when, having conceded some rest to his people, he broke up camp and passed the river Jabbok. This would consume the greater part of the night that remained. He could pray better, and with all the privacy that he needed, on the same side of the river with his people; so that he was not seeking this retirement, with the river between them, separated from his family and his people. On the contrary, it is probable that Jacob remained behind until he was left alone, looking after the security of all, and that he was hastening to rejoin his family when that unknown person attacked him in the dark; and that this unlooked for delay, with the fright it caused him, had the especial aggravation, that it detained him from his family when it was most important that he should be with them. The contest was hand to hand and long, until the "dawning of the day." Undoubtedly he who at the beginning most desired to loose himself from the embrace of the other, was Jacob; but comprehending during his struggle that this had something to do with his own security and that of his family, Jacob put forth all his powers, striving manfully. Little by little it dawned upon him that he whom he had within his embrace was more than human; especially when the Angel, seeing that he could not prevail against him (accommodating the phrase to the human weakness that fought with divinely imparted strength), touched the hollow of his thigh; which in the act was put out of joint; but Jacob continued tenaciously the struggle. The Angel was now the party who wished to disengage himself from the firm hold of Jacob (restraining in pity and compassion his strength, so as to equal his powers with those of his antagonist), and he said: "Let me go, for the day breaketh!" But Jacob saw his opportunity, and returned as his only reply: "I will not let thee go until thou bless me!" and continued resolutely the struggle. The Angel then asked him what was his name; and on replying: "Jacob," he took away the opprobrious name of "Jacob" (= Supplanter), and gave him the honorable name of "Israel" (= "Striver with God," "Warrior or soldier of God," or "Prince who fights with God," etc., according to the individual pleasure and preference of different commentators); "for (said he) thou hast striven with God and with men and hast prevailed." Jacob undoubtedly understood that "the God" with whom he had striven was no other than the Angel himself with whom he was talking, and the "men" were doubtless Esau and his 400 men; but including Laban also. "Israel" in Hebrew seems to be a name derived from "Sarah,"

the "*princess*"; although the Hebrew verb is never used except with reference to this memorable contest, and that only twice, here and in Hos. 12: 3, 4; and in both of them it is rendered in the Modern Spanish Version "*he strove*," or "*contended*." The A. V. renders the word in the former passage, "*as a prince thou hast power* with God and with men": and in the latter "*he had power* over the Angel"; which also the R. V. retains.

Jacob, delighted beyond measure with having gained his cause, dared in his turn to ask him: "Tell me, I pray thee, *what is thy name?*" The other refused to tell him, but he blessed him there. Jacob nevertheless gave to the place the name of "Peniel"—"Face of God" (the ancient form of Penuel), saying: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved"; with allusion to the popular belief that on seeing the face of God, anyone would die. Ch. 16: 13; Ex. 24: 11; Judg. 6: 22. Very different is this case from that in which Moses besought that he might see the glory of Jehovah, of which he already had a large experience; and Jehovah replied: "Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live." Ex. 33: 20. With respect to his divine essence, John 1: 18 says: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him"; and with respect to his glory, as manifested in Mount Sinai, Moses himself said: "I do exceedingly fear and quake." Heb. 12: 21. But the invisible God has many times made visible manifestations of himself, in which he could be seen and known, as in the case we have before us; and for this purpose he has manifested himself under such forms. That popular belief, therefore, was without foundation. See the reasoning of Manoah's sensible wife with him, on this point, in Judg. 13: 21—23.

And as the soldier glories in the scars which bear honorable testimony to the battles from which he has come forth victorious, so Jacob "as he passed over Penuel, halted on his thigh"; and till the day of his death he carried with deep satisfaction this mark of that conflict, in which he came forth as conqueror both with respect to God and man. With regard to "the children of Israel not eating of the sinew of the thigh," or "the hip," I frankly confess that I do not understand it, for the *tendon*, or *sinew*, is not eaten; and till now no commentator I have seen has been able to shed light upon the point.

This history, so interesting in itself, and so consolatory for the people of God, is thus related by the prophet Hosea:

"In the womb he took his brother by the heel;  
 and in his manhood he had power with God:  
 yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed:  
 he wept and made supplication unto him:  
 he found him in Bethel,  
 and there he spake with us;  
 even Jehovah, the God of Hosts:  
 Jehovah is his memorial" (or memorial *name*).

Hos. 12: 3—5.

Blindly prejudiced must be that mind, or better said, that heart, which does not see in this history still another narrative of the corporeal manifestation of that divine Word, who 1700 years later "was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1: 14); no longer to take and lay aside the human form as occasion might require, but to become truly and forever *one of the race which he came to redeem*, and to bind up his personal destinies eternally with our own; "the first-born from among the dead"; "the beginning of the [new] creation of God." Col. 1: 18; Rev. 3: 14.

In this contest of Jacob with "the Angel of the covenant" (which was really the conclusion and completion of the prayer which he offered in vrs. 9—12), we ought all to learn how to pray; and particularly in that declaration of his: "*I will not let thee go until thou bless me!*" Jesus said: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and *the violent take it by force.*" Matt. 11: 12. The negligent hand and the lukewarm heart will never be able to obtain the blessing. Rev. 3: 16. If in prayer we are going to leave off for any trifle, being inconstant and of a "double mind," as James says: "Let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord." James 1: 7. In the parable of the Unjust Judge, Jesus teaches us effectively "that it is necessary to *pray always, and not to faint*" (Luke 18: 1—8); and in Luke 11: 5—8, he sets before us the effect and fruit of *importunity*, in the parable of the man who wanted three loaves of bread at midnight, and could not get them, because everybody was gone to bed; but he would take no denial, and *kept on knocking* till he got what he needed. "Because of *his importunity*" is in the Greek "because of *his shamelessness,*" as if he, knocking, said: "*I will not go until I get it!*" So it was with Jacob: "I will not let thee go until thou bless me!" "Lord, *teach us to pray!*" Luke 11: 1.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

VRS. 1—11. THE MEETING BETWEEN ESAU AND JACOB. (1739 B. C.)

1 And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau was coming, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids.

2 And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost.

3 And he himself passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

5 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are these with thee? And he said, The children whom God hath graciously given thy servant.

6 Then the handmaids came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves.

7 And Leah also and her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves.

8 And he said, What meanest thou by all this company which I met? And he said, To find favor in the sight of my lord.

9 And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; let that which thou hast be thine.

10 And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found favor in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand; forasmuch as I have seen thy face, as one seeth the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.

11 Take, I pray thee, my gift that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it.

It would seem from ch. 32: 10 ("with my staff I passed *this Jordan*"), that the ford of the Jabbok, where Jacob crossed the river on this occasion could not be very far from the place where it empties into the Jordan. Farther up, the Jabbok passes as a foaming torrent through the elevated table-land of Gilead, between banks or mountains that rise from 1500 to 2000 feet above its waters, and the ford would be very difficult, and even dangerous, by night. On crossing the river in the morning, to rejoin his family and encampment, the sun arose upon him, when he was passing the site where later stood the city of Penuel. From that point, or on passing the river, he saw Esau coming with his 400 men. He hastily divided the children, putting each child with its own mother; placing the two maid-servants with their children first, and Leah with her six sons and one daughter, second, and Rachel with Joseph, last; but he himself passed on ahead of them. He placed the two maid-servants and their children first, as was natural and proper; he placed Leah and her children second; for although she was his first wife, she was such by the trickery and cruel deceit which Laban practiced upon him; and in my opinion he did not do wrong in this. They had necessarily to march in

a certain order, and this was as good as any other. Rachel, whom he always regarded as his only proper and legitimate wife (see ch. 44: 27), and whom he loved with an ardor that not even her cold ashes of forty years, nor the scanty and hoary hairs of his own extreme old age were able to chill, he put her and her son last. In conformity with Oriental usages and the unavoidable results of polygamy, he was right in this also; although his declared partiality for the son of that wife was going to cause him very many and bitter afflictions. Jacob then passed on before them, and bowed himself to the earth seven times, till he came to his brother. But God, who had wrought such a notable change in the feelings and purposes of Laban, wrought no less powerfully in those of Esau; so that he could not wait the humble approach of his brother, but ran to meet him, and throwing his arms around his neck, he kissed him; and they wept together.

Among the persons who affect new and strange opinions, there are not wanting some who maintain that Esau did not go out to meet Jacob with any hostile intent, but came with his 400 men only to receive his brother worthily and do him honor! as if the great fear which took possession of Jacob on receiving the reply which his messengers brought him, was that of the "wicked who flee when no man pursueth" (Prov. 21: 8); or as if the victorious contest which he had sustained with the Angel the night before were only a combat with phantasms. On the contrary, it was a very real danger that faced him, and a very marvelous deliverance which God wrought for him; and so the Bible always treats of the matter. Whatever may have been the moment in which God wrought this notable change in the feelings and purposes of Esau, who left Seir with 400 armed men, and with hostile intent, it is probable that his conduct on this occasion was as unexpected to his own people as to Jacob, and that the change was no less a surprise to himself than to them. The prayer of Jacob, who placed himself under the protection of the promise and *the safe-conduct of his God*; the messengers with their separate droves of cattle, which he had sent the evening previous; the victorious contest he maintained with the Angel until the morning, and his own humble submission, accompanied by his seven prostrations, all no doubt had part in working so unexpected a change in the feelings of Esau, whose reconciliation with his brother it would appear was complete and permanent.

Esau then asked about the women and the children who at a little distance were coming toward him. Jacob without mak-

ing any account of the women (according to Oriental usage), replied: "They are the children whom God has graciously given thy servant,"—a pious sentiment which it would be well in our day to awaken in the breasts of many people, and even of many people professing godliness. When asked with regard to the five herds of cattle which Esau had met in the way, and about which he no doubt had already received word from their drivers, Jacob replied that they were a gift, "to find favor *in the sight of my lord.*" And when Esau excused himself, alleging that he already had enough, and that Jacob should keep what was his, Jacob insisted, and Esau accepted them. No doubt it was a great satisfaction to Jacob to pass more than 500 head of cattle over to the possession of Esau, not only to vent the deep satisfaction of his rejoicing heart, that he had seen the face of Esau (that terrible face from which twenty years before he had fled in terror—see ch. 28: 10, 11; 35: 1 and comments), "as one who sees the face of God"; but also because it was to him a guaranty of peace for all time to come. We cannot indeed excuse the low servility of Jacob, who seems to have forgotten his new name (ch. 32: 28); but we must remember that it was Jacob, and not Abraham; and Jacob was always timid and distrustful.

33: 12—17. THAT SAME DAY, SEPARATING FROM JACOB IN PEACE AND HARMONY, ESAU SET OUT ON HIS RETURN TO SEIR. (1739 B. C.)

12 And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.

13 And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and that the flocks and herds with me have their young: and if they overdrive them one day, all the flocks will die.

14 Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on gently, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come unto my lord unto Seir.

15 And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the folk that are with me. And he said, What needeth it? let me find favor in the sight of my lord.

16 So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir.

17 And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him a house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.\*

\**That is, Booths.*

Esau then generously proposed that, as they were going in the same direction, toward the south, they should travel together, and that he would go before Jacob, as if for his defence; for in returning to Seir, Esau might march either to the east or the west of the Salt Sea. It would have been an interesting sight if the two brothers had thus returned to the

paternal home. But Jacob excused himself, for reasons which appear to us but little satisfactory, after the forced march of 400 miles which he had made from Padan-aram to the mountain country of Gilead, in some fifteen or twenty days. Ch. 31: 23. Esau therefore offered to leave with him a part of the men he brought with him: but Jacob, suspicious and distrustful, whose natural temper again manifested itself in unfavorable contrast with the frank generosity of Esau, did not feel comfortable in the presence of those armed men, whose coming had caused him so great alarm. It is plain that he still distrusted Esau and his people, and could not feel at ease until he had got completely rid of them. He excused himself, therefore, from the second offer as he had done from the former, with the promise of following on slowly, until he came to *his lord Esau* in the land of Seir. It is probable that this was nothing more than part of the excuse, to get rid of his brother, whose superiority and lordship Jacob confessed with too great frequency and servility, to feel quite easy in his presence. On that same day, therefore, Esau took leave of Jacob, and began his march to the land of Seir, at the south of the Salt Sea, and naturally by the shorter route, to the east of the sea.

It seems that Esau had left his father Isaac in the land of Canaan, although old and blind, and had gone to Seir some years before; to judge by the ascendancy which he had already acquired there. Ch. 36: 6—8 seems to indicate that he went back to Canaan after Jacob's return, and that after this he again returned to the land of Seir, for the same reason that Lot separated from Abraham; to wit, the immense multitude of their flocks and herds. Ch. 13: 6. In any case, it is extremely doubtful whether Jacob, who had received commandment from God to return to the land and home of his father, had any intention of following Esau to Seir, which was far to the S. E. of Beersheba; and this seems to have been the thought of the historian, who goes on to say that Jacob, changing at this point his direction, removed his encampment to the north, or N. W. (crossing anew the Jabbok for this purpose), and went to "Succoth"; *where he built for himself a house; and made booths for his cattle*, with the purpose of wintering there. From this circumstance the location took the name of "Succoth" (=Booths). Succoth was to the north of the Jabbok, in the plain of the Jordan, on the eastern side of the river. 2 Chron. 4: 16, 17. It is not difficult for us to understand why Jacob did not follow his brother to Seir; but

it does cause us no little surprise that he did not continue his journey to Beersheba, where he had left his aged parents twenty years before. See ch. 35: 27 and comments. Perhaps the slowness of Jacob in returning to his father's side, and the reason why Esau had withdrawn from his encampment to establish himself in the mountain country of Seir, may have one and the same explanation; having to do, perhaps, with the senility or dotage of the blind old man, who twenty years before was such an invalid that he himself and everybody else believed that he was soon to die. Ch. 27: 2, 41. In this view of the case, it is likely that Jacob changed his plan and took his journey towards the north, in virtue of information which Esau had given him of the family—the death of his mother, and the imbecility of his father.

33: 18—20. JACOB CROSSES THE JORDAN, AND GOES TO THE CITY OF SHECHEM. (Of uncertain date.)

18 And Jacob came in peace to the city\* of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram; and encamped before the city.

19 And he bought the parcel of ground, where he had spread his tent,† at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of money.‡

20 And he erected there an altar, and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

[\*Or, to Shalem, a city, etc.]

[†*Mod. Span. Ver.* pitched his tents.]

‡*Heb.* kesitah.

Jacob must have remained several years in Succoth, where he built for himself a house and made booths for his cattle. Vr. 17. This would be but a few months after his departure from Padan-aram; a time when Joseph and Dinah (who were nearly of the same age) were a little more than six years old (ch. 30: 25, 32; 31: 41); and it would seem from vrs. 17 and 18 that Jacob passed straight from Succoth to Shechem, where the rape of Dinah took place, seemingly only a few months after the family had arrived there. She must at that time have been twelve or fourteen years old; so that Jacob would necessarily have spent seven or eight years in Succoth, or in some other place not mentioned, before going to Shechem. During these seven or eight years it must have been that "Judah, separating himself from his brethren" (being at the time a youth of 15 years perhaps), crossed the Jordan, and formed in the land of Canaan that matrimonial alliance which cost him and his family so dear. See comments on ch. 38: 1, 2.

Leaving at last his house and his cattle-booths in Succoth, Jacob crossed the river Jordan, and removed to the city of Shechem, in what was afterwards the mountain country of



Ephraim, and bought for himself a large tract of land, where he had encamped before the city. The text says "he bought a part of the field"; because the cultivated land around the cities was all open, and without fences, and every owner had "his part" determined by landmarks, or heaps of stones. See Ruth 2: 3; Deut. 19: 14.

The lexicographer Gesenius denies that the word "kesitah" signifies a sheep or a lamb (as given in the margin of our English Bible), and fixes its value at about four shekels, or \$2.40, each, of our money; which would make the price of that piece of land equal to that of the field and cave of Machpelah which Abraham bought in Mamre, near to Hebron, 130 years before (ch. 23: 16); to wit, 400 shekels, of 60 cents each, or \$240 of our money. We shall judge the price exorbitant in both cases, when we consider that many years after this, a slave was worth 30 shekels (Ex. 21: 32), and the hire of a free and intelligent man, "a father and a priest," did not exceed ten shekels a year, with his victuals, and a suit of apparel. Judg. 17: 10. Abraham weighed the money in balances, while Jacob apparently made payment in pieces of recognized value called *kesitahs*. As the art of coining money was not invented for many ages after this, these pieces of money would be bars or ingots of metal, cut or moulded, and having their value stamped on them. But the use of money, in pieces of determined value, marks a great advance in the transaction of business.

The words "came in peace" may signify that there had been some disturbance of the peace in Succoth; or it may contain an allusion to his *return in peace* to the land of Canaan (which always in the Bible signifies the country to *the west of the Jordan*), from whence he had gone forth 27 or 28 years before, and seems to indicate the fulfilment of the term named in his vow—"so that I *return in peace* to the house of my father." Others, however, prefer to translate it: "And Jacob *came* to Shalem, a city of Shechem"; which would perhaps give us to understand that *Shalem* was, at that time, the name of the city of Shechem, the son of Hamor, which later was called by his name,—a famous city of Israel, situated in what was and still is the most beautiful and fertile part of the country.

There Jacob built an altar and called it: "El Elohe-Israel" (=God, the God of Israel; or, the Mighty God of Israel), making use for the first time of the new name which the Angel gave him when Jacob contended victoriously with him.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

VER. 1—5. DINAH, THE ONLY DAUGHTER OF JACOB, IS RAVISHED.  
(1732 B. C.)

1 And Dinah, the daughter of Leah, whom she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.

2 And Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her; and he took her, and lay with her, and humbled her.

3 And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel.

4 And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.

5 Now Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter; and his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they came.

In the midst of such distinguished mercies, and so great honors, which God granted to his servant Jacob, there befell him the bitterest and most humiliating of calamities. His daughter Dinah, being of nearly the same age as Joseph (who when sold into Egypt was 17 years old, ch. 37: 2), must have been at this time twelve or fourteen. They had lived probably some little while before the city, and would be well known by the people, when Dinah went out one day "to see the daughters of the land." It is probable that she went out more than once, though there is nothing in the Hebrew to indicate it, and it may be that consequences so fatal to many followed upon the first act of indiscretion which she committed. The Jewish historian Josephus says that it was on the occasion of some feast of the people, and that Dinah's curiosity being awakened, she "went out to see the finery of the women of the land." It seems impossible that she should have gone out without accompaniment. But it is very plain that she did not have the attendance of persons capable of protecting her in the emergency which presented itself; and for that reason it is probable that she went out without the knowledge of her father, who was well acquainted with the customs, none too pure, of the Canaanites. There Shechem, the son of Hamor, the prince of the country, saw her, and at once became so enamored of her, that he took her by force and violated her person. It is probable that as a prince, accustomed to make use of his authority to effect his ends, he did with her as he would have done with one of his own people. Nevertheless he loved the damsel very sincerely, and consoled her in her sorrow and humiliation with his caresses, and with the promise of honorable marriage. He kept her in his own house, by force no doubt, but did everything in his power to make reparation for the crime committed, proposing and promising to marry her openly and honorably.

Barring the crime already committed (which for people of their degraded customs would have been accounted a signal honor, rather than a misfortune, if accompanied with a promise of marriage to a prince), the procedure of the young man was in every respect gentlemanly and worthy of a prince. Jacob heard of what had happened, but he held his peace until his sons returned from the field or country, where they were with the cattle.

34: 6—12. HAMOR AND SHECHEM, HIS SON, GO OUT TO THE ENCAMPMENT OF JACOB TO TREAT OF THE MATTER WITH HIM AND HIS SONS. (1732 B. C.)

6 And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him.

7 And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done.

8 And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you, give her unto him to wife.

9 And make ye marriages with us; give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you.

10 And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein.

11 And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find favor in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give.

12 Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.

In this case, as in every other, the Bible, wholly different from all merely human writings, does not dissemble or excuse the wickedness of the sons of Jacob, nor minimize in any respect the noble frankness and generosity of Hamor and his son. In possession of their own city (a walled city, vr. 20), and in the most prosperous part of the land of Canaan, they might well have retired within their defences, and from thence have defied Jacob and his encampment of nomads. But on the contrary, and without waiting for the complaints of the father and brothers of Dinah, they presented themselves in the encampment of Jacob to treat of the matter and to remedy as far as possible the wrong already done, with offers of legitimate and honorable marriage. The sons of Jacob who were in the field, on hearing of it, left their cattle with their herdsmen, and came to the city, distressed, chagrined and burning in anger. Hamor, as the prince of the country, made them from his point of view the most flattering offers, together with a part in what is still the most desirable region of Palestine; while the young man, with a humility and courtesy above all praise,

offered them that he would do whatever they said, and pay dowry and gifts as much as they might appoint, provided only they would give him the young woman for his wife; who must have been very beautiful to inspire him with such a passion. Of course the offer of Hamor and his son, that the two peoples should unite by means of intermarriages, and become one nation, was totally contrary to the purpose of God in separating the children of Abraham from all other peoples and nations; but it was not on that account the less honorable on their part, or the less advantageous for Jacob and his sons, from their point of view.

34: 13—17. THE TREACHEROUS REPLY OF THE SONS OF JACOB.  
(1732 B. C.)

13 And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father with guile, and spake, because he had defiled Dinah their sister,

14 and said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us.

15 Only on this condition will we consent unto you: if ye will be as we are, that every male of you be circumcised;

16 then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.

17 But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.

The sons of Jacob had evidently consulted among themselves about the case and the proposals made, and it may be that they had arranged some plan of vengeance before they returned from the field; and intent on taking a complete revenge, rather than on remedying as far as possible the wrong done their sister, they accepted the offer of Hamor and Shechem, but with one indispensable condition, to wit, that these princes and all their people should become Hebrews, by receiving the distinctive rite of circumcision. Horrible prostitution of a religious rite, and this to cover the blackest and most infamous treachery! It is difficult to conceive of so artful a plot and so hideous a crime being arranged in a moment; for which reason it is natural to suppose that they heard in the field something with regard to the proposals of Shechem and his father, and had already their plan well prepared. On this condition, therefore, they agreed to accede to the wishes of Shechem and his father, with the understanding that they should become Israelites, rather than that Jacob and his people should become Canaanites. In this Jacob was not consulted; a circumstance to which he perhaps refers in the words:

“Oh my soul, come not thou into their counsel;  
unto their assembly, my glory, be not thou united!” Ch. 49: 6.

34: 18—24. HAMOR AND SHECHEM ACCEPT THE CONDITIONS, AND GAIN THE CONSENT OF THEIR PEOPLE: THEY ALL RECEIVE THE DISTINCTIVE RITE OF ISRAELITES. (1732 B. C.)

18 And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son.

19 And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was honored above all the house of his father.

20 And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying,

21 These men are peaceable with us: therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for, behold, the land is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.

22 Only on this condition will the men consent unto us to dwell with us, to become one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised.

23 Shall not their cattle and their substance and all their beasts be ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us.

24 And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

Shechem and his father, without suspecting any malice, saw the reasonableness of the change proposed in their own plan, and accepted the modification; since it little mattered to them (as is true of worldly people generally), whether they were Israelites or Canaanites, so that they gained their object: Shechem would gain his beloved Dinah, and Hamor, as the prince of the country, would perhaps double the numbers and the riches of his principality. Without any difficulty, therefore, they made the agreement; and as the young man, different from ravishers in general, was more and more blindly in love with the daughter of Jacob, he did not wish to delay for a day or an hour the fulfilment of the condition inexorably imposed on them: and he was the most distinguished (not the “most honorable,” as says our common English Version) of the family of his father—the most popular, and the one who had most influence among the people, both for what he was, and for what he was going to be, as the presumptive heir of his father.

The two princes repaired at once to the gate of the city, where all public business was transacted, and made use of arguments and persuasions with the people; and their authority gave double effect to their words. “Obeyed,” in the Spanish of vr. 24, is the ordinary translation of the Hebrew to “hear” or “hearken” when it has reference to the words of one who has authority to command. The arguments which they used were (1)

that the land was amply large for both peoples; (2) that Jacob and his people were highly respectable and rich, and would be a valuable acquisition for the State; (3) the prospect of new matrimonial alliances; which would not fail to have a powerful attraction for the young people of both sexes; as it happened with the young prince; (4) the great increase of political power, which the incorporation of the two peoples would give them, was an argument which appealed to the patriotic spirit of all; and (5) the increase of material riches would put in vibration a cord of the human heart which all the world understands. Some years later, when this same Jacob and his sons went down into Egypt, Pharaoh himself regarded their coming, with all their possessions, as an event both interesting and important for his kingdom. Ch. 45: 16—20.

As Jacob apparently had no other daughter but Dinah, and his older sons had hardly begun to have families of their own, it is plain that the marriages proposed were with women of Jacob's encampment—his servants, or slaves, "born in his house or bought with his money" (ch 17: 13, 27); which gives us a surprising idea both of his riches and of the numbers of his people; and besides, it also greatly modifies the ordinary idea of the slavery of those ancient times. See the comment on ch. 15: 2, 3. Here we see that the free-born Canaanites did not disdain matrimonial alliances with the women-servants of Jacob, but exactly the contrary; and we shall see farther on that the very sons of Jacob married women of the same class, with such uniformity, that one of the sons of Simeon bears the mark or note of being "the son of a Canaanitish woman" (*Heb.* the Canaanitess, ch. 46: 10); and we are particularly told (as of an exceptional case) that all the family of Judah proceeded from two women of the country, Canaanites likewise. Ch. 38: 2, 6, 11.

These arguments and persuasions, backed by the influence and authority of the two princes, had the desired effect; and they all submitted to the administration of the rite of circumcision—"all that went out of the gate of the city." The necessity of entering in and going out by one or a very few gates, greatly facilitated the matter; and when the princes, and the grandees, and the generality of the people set the example, such is the disposition and character of mankind, that the rest would of themselves seek the rite which was already "*the mode.*" In this way the treacherous sons of Jacob gained their object, *viz.*, that of putting Hamor and Shechem, with all their male subjects, in such a condition that they were incapable of defending

themselves. In this we see manifested the illimitable confidence which Joshua and the princes of Israel had in their God, that they obeyed without hesitation the divine order to put the whole encampment of Israel in the same defenceless condition, after they had crossed the Jordan and were in the very presence of the Canaanites. Josh. 5: 2—8.

34: 25—29. THE INHUMAN AND SACRILEGIOUS VENGEANCE TAKEN BY SIMEON AND LEVI, AND BY THE OTHER SONS OF JACOB. (1732 B. C.)

25 And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city unawares,\* and slew all the males.

26 And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went forth.

27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because they had defiled their sister.

28 They took their flocks and their herds and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field;

29 and all their wealth, and all their little ones and their wives, took they captive and made a prey, even all that was in the house.

\*Or, boldly.

On the third day, when the men of the city were incapable of self-defence, Simeon and Levi, brothers of Dinah by the same mother, girded on each his sword, and entered boldly into the city, and going from street to street, and from house to house, they put to the sword all the males; and all this on account of the crime of a single man! We do not know what were the determining reasons why only Simeon and Levi should undertake this diabolical work—they only of all the sons of Jacob, they only of all the six full brothers of Dinah; unless it be that the atrocity of the crime and the terrible consequences to which it would expose them all, at the last moment deterred them from the execution of what was evidently the plan of all. What is said in vr. 13 does not permit us to suppose that the audacious act of Simeon and Levi prevented the performance of an agreement which the rest had made with Hamor and Shechem in good faith. All of them, then, took part in the plan, and all of them rushed upon the booty, although Simeon and Levi only, because more resolute, daring, or rash, attacked the city and put to the sword all the men. The curse (for it was nothing less) which their father pronounced upon these two sons at the time of his death, shows that their crime was more aggravated and horrible than the part which the rest took in the matter. It is probable that if they had not attacked the city, the others would have

done nothing. The words of their father, forty years after, show his concentrated abhorrence of the act:

“Simeon and Levi are brethren;  
weapons of violence are their swords [M. S. V., their  
compact.]

Oh my soul, come not thou into their council;  
unto their assembly, my glory, be not thou united;  
for in their anger they slew a man [*or men*],  
and in their self-will they hocked an ox [*or oxen*].  
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.”

Ch. 49: 5—7.

This terrible vengeance we are three times told was because (in the person of their young prince) the Shechemites had violated their sister.

34: 30, 31. JACOB IS GREATLY TROUBLED, AND HEAPS BITTER REPROACHES ON SIMEON AND LEVI: THEY JUSTIFY, OR EXCUSE, THEIR CONDUCT BY THE DISHONOR DONE TO THEIR SISTER. (1732 B. C.)

30 And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me, to make me odious to the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and, I being few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and smite me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.

31 And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with a harlot?

Jacob was naturally timid; but if he had been as valiant as he was timid, this act of Simeon and Levi, as insane as it was criminal, and the sack of the city in which all his sons took part, placed him in circumstances such as would fill him with terror. But when he reproached bitterly and with deep feeling their conduct and the extreme peril which was threatening them all (and which only the divine interposition averted, ch. 35: 5), they gave for sufficient answer: “SHOULD HE DEAL WITH OUR SISTER AS WITH A HARLOT?” Notable from every point of view is this reply, and serves in part to explain, and in part has served to perpetuate, what has been and still is a distinctive trait of the Jewish people. It is the prerogative of God to bring good out of evil; and there can be no doubt that, however horrible the crime of the sons of Jacob in this matter, it has served powerfully to mould the social customs of that nation, in all their wanderings, whose women, taken as a whole, are perhaps the most virtuous in the world. Even in the days of Solomon, the adulteress, the harlot, the courtesan,



whom he paints in the book of Proverbs, is ordinarily "the strange (or foreign) woman" in Hebrew, and "the daughter of a strange (or foreign) land." See Prov. 2: 16; 5: 20; 7: 5. Indelible has been the impression produced by this most horrible deed in the mind of the people of Israel,—but beneficent. The honor of woman is worth more than her life; and when any people or nation comes to regard it with indifference, or to palliate as a mere slip the dishonor of their women, its ruin is near at hand.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

VRS. 1—5. GOD INTERPOSES TO PREVENT AN EXEMPLARY AND WELL MERITED PUNISHMENT PUTTING AN END TO THE HOPES OF THE WORLD. (1732 B. C.)

1 And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, who appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.

2 Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the foreign gods\* that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments:

3 and let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.

4 And they gave unto Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hand, and the rings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak† which was by Shechem.

5 And they journeyed: and a terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.

\*A. V and M. S. V., strange gods.

†Or, terebinth.

In this moment of supreme exigency and perplexity for Jacob, and of the gravest danger to the cause of God in this world, the "Keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps" (Ps. 121: 4), interposed his arm, not for the protection of criminals, but for the defence of his own cause and kingdom, and to carry forward his plans for the redemption of mankind;

"Remembering his holy covenant,

the oath which he sware unto Abraham our father."

Luke 1: 72, 73.

He therefore commanded Jacob to break up his encampment, and remove southward to Bethel, and dwell there; and to make there an altar (and offer its corresponding sacrifices, of course), to the God who had appeared to him on another occasion of imminent peril, "when he was fleeing from the face of Esau his brother." This plainly reminded Jacob of his sin in deferring for seven or eight years the fulfilment of the

vow he had made in Bethel and seems to give us to understand that God took occasion from the rape of Dinah and the crime and the peril consequent thereupon, and from the anguish of the patriarch, to bring to his memory his neglected duties. It is useless to ask why he did not remind him of this sooner: God usually makes the errors of his children to serve likewise for their correction.

When we call to mind the act of Rachel, the favorite wife of Jacob, in stealing the gods of her father and hiding them beneath her, as a treasure (ch. 31: 19, 30, 34), and the fact related in vr. 2 of this chapter, that the family and all the encampment of Jacob was still *infested with "strange gods,"* we will not allow to pass unobserved the circumstance, twice repeated, that he was going up to Bethel to worship the God of Abraham, the same who appeared there to him, when he was fleeing from the face of Esau;—the God who had answered him in the day of his distress.

This slowness of Jacob to fulfil the vow made in Bethel, which he ought to have performed when he "returned in peace" from Padan-aram, rather than seven or eight years after his return, naturally produced other acts of carelessness and negligence in the service of God. It does not strike us as strange, therefore, that by consent or connivance of Jacob, the idolatries of Haran were still practiced by the generality of his people, and even in the bosom of his own family. "Then Jacob said *unto his household and unto all that were with him:* Put away the strange gods that are among you," etc. Vrs. 2, 3. The mercy, goodness and fidelity of God, of which Jacob makes so feeling mention in these verses, place in an odious light, his long delay in performing what he had vowed to do 28 years before. But although late, Jacob began in Shechem to cleanse his encampment of idolatry, as became the vow of him who had said: "*then shall Jehovah be my God,*" and, by necessary implication, the God of his encampment. "So they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods that were in their hands, and the rings that were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak (or terebinth) which was in Shechem." The ear-rings it is to be supposed, would bear some insignia of the idolatries of Haran; which placed them in the same condemnation. We have here "*ear-rings*" instead of the "*nose-ring*" of ch. 24: 47. Three hundred years later, Joshua celebrated a covenant with the people, likewise in Shechem, and he made them to swear that they would *put away the strange gods that were among them,* in order to serve Jehovah alone; and taking a great

stone he raised it up there beneath the oak that was by the Sanctuary of the Lord, to serve as a witness of this oath. Josh. 24: 26. The two "oaks" mentioned may have been the same tree; oaks were long-lived in Palestine, and both are spoken of as "the oak": yet in Hebrew the words are not quite the same, and the former has the alternative rendering, "or *terebinth*," given in the margin; words derived from the Hebrew root "el" (= strong, mighty), and supposed by many to be applied loosely to any of the great and "mighty" trees of ancient Palestine.

The words "purify yourselves and change your garments" have reference to the ablutions of their persons and their clothing; which signified the putting away of their past customs and the preparation of their hearts to appear in Bethel before God.

So they did, and Jehovah caused to fall on the cities round about them such a terror, that they took no further steps to punish the sons of Jacob, for the crime that they had committed (comp. ch. 34: 30); which does not mean that God protected vice and wickedness, but that he carried forward his own plans and fulfilled his holy covenant, in spite of the wickednesses of the sons of Jacob; and so he yet does.

35: 6—8. JACOB IN BETHEL. (1732 B. C.)

6 So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan (the same is Beth-el), he and all the people that were with him.

7 And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el;\* because there God was revealed unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.

8 And Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried below Beth-el under the oak: and the name of it was called Allon-bacuth.†

\*That is, The God of Bethel.

†That is, The Oak of Weeping.

The place was still called "Luz"; its old name, which it preserved till the days of the conquest; when the Israelites took it by assault, and fixed thenceforward its name as "Bethel." Judg. 1: 23, 26. As we have already observed more than once, "the land of Canaan," in the Bible, is always the country to the west of the Jordan (Josh. 22: 11—19), in which Jacob had been ever since he passed over from Succoth to Shechem. There, in Bethel, he built an altar to Jehovah, who in this place had revealed himself to him, when he went fleeing from the face of Esau; and he fulfilled there his vows; which fact is implied in the mention of the altar which he built; on which it is to be supposed that he offered very numerous sacrifices according to the tenor of his vow—"and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all

that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Ch. 28: 22. Many hundreds of victims would he sacrifice on that altar, if he offered there a tenth of all the flocks and herds he brought back with him from Padan-aram, according to the terms of his vow.

In vr. 1 of this chapter, God said to Jacob: "Go up to Bethel, *and dwell there*"; a word which signifies a long residence rather than a short one; and according to the common chronology it was of two or three years' duration. How long the time was we have no means of determining; but there Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, Jacob's mother died. It is worthy of remark that we have no notice whatever of the death of Rebekah, but we have of her nurse and handmaid, of whom we have express mention that she accompanied her young mistress from Haran, 100 years before (ch. 24: 29); and she died, not in the encampment of Isaac, but in that of Jacob; not in Beersheba, or in Mamre, but in Bethel. Rebekah was doubtless already dead, and it is probable that her nurse, not finding herself comfortable in the encampment of Isaac (probably for the same reason that Esau had left it, and Jacob had not returned to it), she transferred herself to the encampment of Jacob when he came back to the land of Canaan, in order to be near to the favorite son of her mistress. There it seems that she was very highly esteemed; for the tree beneath whose shade they buried her, was called "The Oak of Weeping," on account of the lamentation they made over her. Comp. ch. 50: 11.

35: 9—15. GOD AGAIN APPEARS TO JACOB, AND CONFIRMS TO HIM ALL THE PROMISES AND BLESSINGS PREVIOUSLY GIVEN. (1732 to 1729 B. C.)

9 And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him.

10 And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel.

11 And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;

12 and the land which I gave unto Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

13 And God went up from him in the place where he spake with him.

14 And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he spake with him, a pillar of stone: and he poured out a drink-offering thereon, and poured oil thereon.

15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Beth-el.

Notable was this appearing of God, visible and palpable; for verse 13 informs us that God spake to him *in a certain determinate spot*, and from that very place he went up, on departing from him; and vr. 14 tells us that Jacob (who was distinguished for the pillars, or monuments of commemoration, which he erected), set up a pillar to mark this particular spot, and poured upon it oil and libations of wine, and he again named it Bethel=House of God. We have already said (on ch. 28: 18, 19) that "House of God" did not signify any material edifice; for although the place was always esteemed sacred, we do not read that any altar or sanctuary was erected there, till Jeroboam I. consecrated it to the worship of his golden calves. 1 Kings 12: 29, 31; Amos 7: 12, 13. And yet there are several references to "Bethel," particularly in the book of Judges—a period of confusion and disorder, both in political and religious matters—which are extremely difficult to explain without supposing that there was some kind of sanctuary there (see Judg. 20: 18, 26; 21: 2); unless "Beth-el" in these places be translated "House of God," as is found in the common English Version and the Spanish Reina-Valera. Not "Beth-el," however, but "*Beth-haelohim*" is the Hebrew of invariable use for "the House of God"; unless these two passages be an exception.

35: 16—20. THE DEATH OF RACHEL. (1729 B. C.)

16 And they journeyed from Beth-el; and there was still some distance to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labor.

17 And it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; for now thou shalt have another son.

18 And it came to pass, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-oni:\* but his father called him Benjamin.†

19 And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath (the same is Beth-lehem).

20 And Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave; the same is the Pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.

\**That is*, The son of my sorrow. †*That is*, The son of the right hand.

After dwelling some years, as we suppose, in Bethel, Jacob broke up camp, traveling toward the south. Bethel was situated 12 miles to the north of Jerusalem, and Bethlehem 6 miles to the south;—18 miles of tragic interest for Jacob and his beloved Rachel. It seems strange that after so long a residence in Bethel, Jacob should depart for the south at a time so critical for his wife; but so it was, and it may well have been that this lack of foresight contributed in part to so distressing a death. Thus it is that we walk as blind men in this life, and many

are those of us who have to deplore too late some mistake, or want of foresight, the consequences of which have been irreparable. "Ephrath" or "Ephratah" seems to have been the old name of Bethlehem, which once bears the two names together,—*"Bethlehem Ephratah."* Mic. 5: 2. Near to that place, on the way there, and lacking but a little to arrive, Rachel gave birth to a son, and so hard was her labor, that in giving to her husband her second son, she herself gave up her life. Before she died she named the new-born one "Ben-oni" (=Son of my sorrow); a name which his father could not endure; and so he named him "Benjamin"—Son of the right hand. With good cause, Jacob, although his heart was lacerated with grief, would not consent that the child should bear a name of sadness such as might influence his character and destiny; and instead of that name of anguish, he gave him another of joy; although for himself the birth of the child was the burial of the hopes and the joy of his life.

This is the first notice we have in the Bible of the extreme form of that curse which fell on the woman in the day that she ate the forbidden fruit (ch. 3: 16); but many (alas, how many!) are those who have given up their life on giving being to their "Ben-oni," or have had them buried with them in their own grave! Another new pillar, or funereal monument Jacob raised up to mark the spot where he laid to rest the mortal remains of that beautiful woman who had been the mistress of his life, and whose sorrowful death may well have imparted to him that air of sadness which thenceforward characterizes the life of this patriarch, to whose lot a superabundance of evils had been appointed: "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been!" Ch. 47: 9. Until the days of Moses, and until the times of Samuel and Saul (1 Sam. 10: 2) did that monument of mortal anguish remain there; and it appeals so deeply to the most sacred feelings of the heart, that the Mohammedans still mark the site with a monument of solid masonry, such as will endure until the trumpet of the Archangel awakens this mother of Israel, in the last day.

35: 21, 22. MORE CALAMITIES FOR JACOB. (1729 B. C.)

21 And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Eder.

22 And it came to pass, while Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard of it.

From Bethlehem it was but a short distance to Mamre or Hebron—some 15 miles. But in this brief interval Jacob had

occasion to encamp "beyond the tower of Eder" (= "Tower of the flock");—the first tower of which we have any mention in the Bible; which Jerome, in the 4th century of the Christian Era, located about 1000 paces from Bethlehem;—an opinion which we need not accept.

"And while he dwelt in that country," so near to his father's home, his eldest son, Reuben, defiled the bed of his father; a horrible crime, in which the first-born son and the concubine of Jacob, the hand-maid of Rachel, took part. The death of his beloved Rachel was a distress not so hard to bear as this act of incest, on which the Bible makes this single comment, "And Israel heard of it;" although the Hebrew text indicates the fact with a blank, or hiatus; as if it were better to meditate on the case than to speak of it. It does not appear that Reuben was punished for this sin, which afterwards, by the law of Moses was to be punished by the death of both parties, (Lev. 20: 11); but on account of it Reuben lost his birthright; and in the blessing of his sons at the time of his death, Jacob spoke thus of him:

"Reuben, thou art my first-born,  
 my might, and the beginning of my strength;  
 the pre-eminence of dignity, and the pre-eminence of  
 power!  
 Boiling over as water, thou shalt not have the pre-emi-  
 nence;  
 because thou wentest up to thy father's bed;  
 then defiledst thou it. He went up to my couch!"

Ch. 49: 3, 4.

The words "then defiledst thou (it)" may with equal propriety be translated "then thou madest (thyself) vile"; and one sense is as good and as suitable as the other.

#### 35: 23—26. THE ENTIRE LIST OF THE SONS OF JACOB.

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:

23 the sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's first-born, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun;

24 the sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin;

25 and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid: Dan and Naphtali;

26 and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid: Gad and Asher: these are the sons of Jacob, that were born to him in Paddan-aram.

All these, with the exception of Benjamin, were born in Padan-aram. It is entirely conformable with Hebrew usage, speaking of them as a whole, to say they were born in Padan-aram, without making account of the exception just related,

seven verses before, telling how Benjamin was born, and Rachel died at the same time, near to Bethlehem. And it is a good illustration of many of the alleged errors and contradictions of the Bible.

35: 27—29. JACOB AT LAST COMES TO HIS FATHER IN MAMRE; WHERE, THIRTEEN YEARS AFTERWARDS, ISAAC DIED AND WAS BURIED. (1729 to 1716 B. C.)

27 And Jacob came unto Isaac his father to Mamre, to Kiriath-arba (the same is Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac sojourned.

28 And the days of Isaac were a hundred and fourscore years.

29 And Isaac gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people, old and full of days: and Esau and Jacob his sons buried him.

According to the common chronology, given in our Bibles, Jacob came to his father in Mamre ten years after leaving Haran, or Padan-aram, in the same year (1729 B. C.) in which Joseph was sold into Egypt, when 17 years of age. But if Joseph was six years old when his father left Haran (ch. 30: 25; 31: 41), and ten years had elapsed since that time, he must have lived one year with his grandfather Isaac, before he was sold. Jacob was, at that time, 105 years old, and died in Egypt 42 years after, when 147 years old. Isaac, who was 60 years old when Esau and Jacob were born, would be then 165; and dying at 180, he must have lived 15 years after the return of Jacob, with his encampment, to his father's house; so that between vrs. 27 and 28 of this paragraph there intervenes a space of 13 to 15 years. It is important for the reader to bear in mind how thorny and difficult is the chronology of the Bible; nor is this to be thought strange in a history so extremely abbreviated, where we leap, as in this case, fifteen years in going from one verse to another, without any notice given of the lapse of time. We have already called attention to the fact that chronology, which is so essential a matter in all modern history, was held to be of comparatively little importance in the ancient time, whether in the Bible, or in the classical histories of the Greeks and Romans.

But it is not to be supposed that during those ten years of delay on Jacob's part, he did not see his father, either in Beersheba, where he left him, or in Mamre, where at last he found him (vr. 27); so that when it is said in this verse that "Jacob came unto his father in Mamre," what is intended to be said is that he then *came with all his encampment*. The interesting fact, on which we have already commented (vr. 8), that Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died in Bethel, in the encampment



of Jacob, is proof positive that before this she had removed there from the encampment of Isaac; which shows with how much facility, and more or less frequency, they passed from one encampment to the other—a distance of 32 miles, at most; and this of itself furnishes us with sufficient evidence that Jacob would be one of those who thus passed, not only to see his father, but for the purpose of looking after the important interests which he and Esau had in common under his hand. Notwithstanding this, the fact that Esau had withdrawn from the neighborhood of his aged and blind father, even before Jacob had left Laban, and that Deborah did the same thing, as soon as Jacob returned to Canaan, in conjunction with the circumstance that Jacob himself delayed ten years in returning to his father's house, without any notice of his meeting with him, either before or after his arrival at Mamre, gives us an almost absolute certainty that something had happened to him; and it is most probable that the poor old man was in his dotage, blind already for 30 years, and having still from 13 to 15 years to walk in darkness! Since the time that Isaac and Rebekah sent Jacob to Padan-aram, 30 years before, when he himself and all the family believed that he was near to death's door (ch. 27: 1, 2, 41), we have no notice whatever of the old blind man; nor any until his death, 15 years later. It seems probable that he passed these 45 years sickly and infirm, and perhaps querulous, as well as blind:—after what had happened, his home could not have been a happy one; and in his last 25 years, or ever since Jacob forsook the house of Laban to return home, he was probably weak-minded, or in his dotage, besides. We recall with pain the clumsy artifice with which his own wife, Rebekah, expected to deceive him, in the matter of "the blessing," even before Jacob's flight to Padan-aram, and succeeded only too well. What a sad old age was that of Isaac! When we see old people sickly and infirm, or obliged for long months or years to keep their bed, to whom (and to their attendants as well) life itself seems a useless burden, it will be convenient for us to bring to mind the infirm and blind old man in Beersheba and Mamre.

But at last he laid down his burden: he died, "and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him." So the reconciliation of the two brothers must have been complete and permanent; thanks to the blessing with which the Angel blessed Jacob on that memorable night in Penuel. Ch. 32: 29. Ch. 36: 6—8 seems to give us to understand that either before the death of his father, or afterwards (or perhaps both the one and the other), Esau and Jacob lived together in the land of Canaan, taking joint care of their

great cattle interests; that is to say, of their own individually, increased by those that had been in the care of their father; and that after this, they separated in peace and harmony, Esau returning again to the mountain country of Seir, to the south and S. E. of the Salt or Dead Sea, and Jacob remaining in the land of Canaan; the vast multitude of their cattle not permitting them to live longer together.

We have already observed, with respect to the death of Abraham (see ch. 25: 8 p. 296), that the words "he gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered to his peoples" are an indubitable indication of the popular belief in the continued existence of men after they were dead. It says nothing of their individual condition, for the same phrase, or others to the same purpose, are used indifferently of the good and the bad; but it does reveal the popular belief that death did not interrupt their personal existence. It is equivalent to "he breathed his last breath, and (consequently) he died, *and something more*"; and this something more is, that after he was dead he was gathered to the company of his peoples"; a singular phrase, and hard to explain; but in spite of this, we *feel* its force. The corresponding phrase, "gathered to their fathers," seems to represent the popular idea that the fathers, having finished their course, waited yonder the coming of their children also, who when they died were gathered to the congregation of the departed. Of the brute animals it would be an absurdity to say that "they gave up the ghost, and died, and were gathered to their fathers." With this simple demonstration we refute the allegation of some infidels and semi-infidels that the books of Moses bear no testimony whatever to a future state of existence. Compare the exclamation of the wicked Balaam, in Num. 23: 10: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" Pray, what did Balaam mean, if there was no *hereafter* for the righteous? The Hebrew means literally, "let my *hereafter* be like his."

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

VRS. 1—8. MEMOIRS OF ESAU. (1796 to 1715 B. C.)

- 1 Now these are the generations of Esau (the same is Edom).
- 2 Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite,
- 3 and Basemath Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebaioth.
- 4 And Adah bare to Esau Eliphaz; and Basemath bare Reuel;

5 and Oholibamah bare Jeush, and Jalam, and Korah: these are the sons of Esau, that were born unto him in the land of Canaan.

6 And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the souls of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his possessions, which he had gathered in the land of Canaan; and went into a land away from his brother Jacob.

7 For their substance was too great for them to dwell together; and the land of their sojournings could not bear them because of their cattle.

8 And Esau dwelt in mount Seir: Esau is Edom.

The natural relations which existed between Jacob and Esau, and the enmity which until the end—"a perpetual enmity," Ezek. 35: 5—subsisted between the Edomites and the people of Israel, seem to have furnished the motive for the introduction of these memoirs of Esau here.

In ch. 26: 34, the two first wives of Esau are called "Hittites," here we are told that they were "of the daughters of Canaan," and in vr. 3 we are particularly told that the second one was "the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite"; and farther on we are told that this Zibeon (because it could not be any other), was "the son of Seir the Horite." Vr. 20. This example is very interesting, because it manifests how amid that mixture of races which occupied so reduced a territory, where in the days of Joshua there were from seven to ten "nations," one could at the same time be a Hittite, a Hivite, a Horite and a Canaanite. It is important to keep this fact in mind. In chapter 28: 1 those Hittite women are in fact called *Canaanites*—"daughters of Canaan." Another circumstance of still greater difficulty is found in the fact that the names of those two wives of Esau, and even of the third, the daughter of Ishmael, whom Esau married many years later, are different from those we find in ch. 26: 34 and 28: 9. The difficulty is more apparent than real; for it is a well recognized fact that in Bible times the same person frequently bore several different names. The author of the first Gospel is called "Levi" by Mark and Luke, and "Matthew" by himself (Mark 2: 14; Luke 5: 27; Matt. 9: 9); and Judas, the brother of James, is likewise called "Lebbeus" and "Thaddeus." And the wife of Abraham has given us enough to do, as we have seen, with one of the three names which she bore—"Iscah," "Sarai," and "Sarah." See comments on ch. 11: 29.

Comparing vrs. 2 and 14 with vrs. 18, 24, 25, 29, it appears evident that "Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite" is an error of the copyist, and it ought to be "son" (and so some ancient authorities have it); for the said Anah is evidently a man and not a woman. See comment on vrs. 29 and 30.

It is to be noted that Esau did not have by his three wives

more than five sons; a paucity which we observe not only in him but in many others besides, and which manifests that the ancients were not as prolific as we commonly suppose. It is nevertheless to be borne in mind that it was not the custom of the ancient Hebrews to mention the daughters in the list of sons; for it is said in vr. 6 that "Esau took his wives, and his sons, *and his daughters* (of whom no mention whatever had been made), and went to another land." Esau therefore took his three wives and his five sons, with his daughters of indeterminate number, and went into another country (which was "the land of Seir" to the south and S. E. of the Salt (or Dead) Sea, on account of his brother Jacob; with entire omission of his residence there before the return of Jacob from Padan-aram (ch. 32: 3) and his second residence in Canaan, where all his children were born. Vr. 5. The mention of the immediate motive for his withdrawing to the mountain country of Seir, excludes the idea that this withdrawal took place previous to the return of Jacob; and confirms the idea that, as is frequent in the Scriptures, his two goings to Seir are treated of compendiously as one, in order to economize time and space.

Four times it is repeated in different forms in this chapter that "Esau is Edom"; a circumstance which for some cause or other is repeated to us from the time of his birth. Ch. 25: 25, 30. The names "Esau" and "Edom" both of them signify "red," the which Esau, or Edom, was "the father of the Edomites" (*Heb.* Edom).

36: 9—14. THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF ESAU ARE REPEATED, AND THOSE OF HIS GRANDSONS, BORN IN SEIR, ALL OF WHOM CAME TO BE HEADS OF TRIBES, OR CLANS.

9 And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir:

10 these are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau.

11 And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz.

12 And Timma was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these are the sons of Adah, Esau's wife.

13 And these are the sons of Reuel: Nabath, and Zerah, Shamamah, and Mizzah: these were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife.

14 And these were the sons of Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife: and she bare to Esau Jeush, and Jalam, and Korah.

Eliphaz the first-born of Esau had five sons by his wife, and one by his concubine—the famous Amalek; so that the mention of "the country of the Amalekites" previously to this, in ch. 14: 7, refers to the territory which they at a later date had in possession.

Reuel, his second, had four sons, grandsons of Esau like the six just named, and heads of clans or tribes in Edom. As we have already seen (ch. 28: 6—9), Esau married a daughter of Ishmael, many years after his marriages with his other two wives; so that the three sons that he had by her came to be heads of clans or tribes, together with his grandsons, descended from those first two Hittite wives; and so it is probable that those thirteen chieftains were more or less of the same age; ten grandchildren of Esau, and three sons of his own that were born of his younger wife.

### 36: 15—19. THE CHIEFS OF THE HOUSE OF ESAU.

15 These are the chiefs of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz the first-born of Esau: chief Teman, chief Omar, chief Zepho, chief Kenaz,

16 chief Korah, chief Gatam, chief Amalek: these are the chiefs that came of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Adah.

17 And these are the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: chief Nahath, chief Zerah, chief Shammah, chief Mizzah: these are the chiefs that came of Reuel in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife.

18 And these are the sons of Oholibamah,\* Esau's wife: chief Jeush, chief Jalam, chief Korah: these are the chiefs that came of Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife.

19 These are the sons of Esau, and these are their chiefs: the same is Edom.

*A. V. and M. S. V., Aholibamah.*

The six sons of Eliphaz already mentioned came to be the heads of tribes, clans or chieftaincies, to whom in vr. 16 is added another, one Korah, not mentioned in the previous list, and uncle of the Korah (son of Aholibamah) mentioned in vr. 18; making fourteen chieftains descended from Esau, who came to be heads of clans or tribes in the land of Edom. Certainly very great was the ascendancy which the valiant and worldly Esau had acquired in the land of his adoption, for his sons, of the first and second generations, to become chiefs\* or princes in that land, occupied still by the descendants of Seir the Horite. It is clear from Deut. 2: 22 that this was not a pacific conquest, but was at least in part effected by force of arms; and nevertheless the memoirs of Seir the Horite, which we have in vrs. 20—30, furnish us with data for believing that relations of friendship and kinship subsisted between Esau and at least a part of the Horites; and that at last the two peoples were united so as to become one only, called the chil-

\*The translation "dukes" which figures so largely and so inopportunistically in the Reina-Valera, and in the A. V. & R. V. of this chapter, has been wisely changed by the American revisers into "chiefs," as is seen in the Scripture text.—Tr.

dren of Edom; although their land continued to be called the land, or mountain country of Seir.

36: 20—28. MEMOIRS OF SEIR, THE PREDECESSOR OF ESAU IN THE LAND OF EDM.

20 These are the sons of Seir the Horite, the inhabitants of the land: Lotan and Shobal and Zibeon and Anah,

21 and Dishon and Ezer and Dishan: these are the chiefs that came of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom.

22 And the children of Lotan were Hori and Heman; and Lotan's sister was Timna.

23 And these are the children of Shobal: Alvan and Manahath and Ebal, Shepho and Onam.

24 And these are the children of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah; this is Anah who found the hot springs\* in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father.

25 And these are the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah.

26 And these are the children of Dishon: Hemdan and Eshban and Ithran and Cheran.

27 These are the children of Ezer: Bilban and Zaavan and Akan.

28 These are the children of Disdain: Uz and Aran.

\*A. V. and M. S. V., mules.

Of this notable man who gave name to the country of Edom, a name which it never lost, we only know that he was the father of the Horites, the primitive inhabitants of that country, even before the calling of Abraham. See ch. 14: 6. The name "Horite" seems to indicate that they were *cave-dwellers* (*Heb.* hor = cave, pl. horim); of which caves there still remain a vast number cut in the cliffs of sand-stone, and in the mountains of Edom; and notably the famous city of "Sela," "Selah" or "Petra." 2 Kings 14: 7; Obad. vrs. 2, 3. The relations of intimate kinship that were formed between Esau and some of the family of Seir, by his marriage with Aholibamah, great-granddaughter of Seir, and by means of Timna, who was the concubine of Eliphaz, and mother of Amalek (vr. 12), seem to have been the cause of the insertion of these memoirs here, as being part of the family history of Esau.

Among the sons of Dishan (vr. 28), the seventh son of Seir, we meet with *Uz* as his first-born; and it would seem that he is the same who gave name to "the land of Uz," which was the native country of the patriarch Job (Job 1: 1). This seems more probable than to refer the name to Uz the son of Aram (Gen. 10: 23) the only other of the name, who was a Syrian; while Job was an Arabian, and his friend Eliphaz the Temanite was of "the country of the Temanites," mentioned in vr. 34.

There has been much dispute with regard to the discovery,

or the *find*, which Anah, the father of Aholibamah, made in the desert, "when he was feeding the asses of Zibeon his father" (vr. 24), which some would translate "hot springs," as the Latin Vulgate has it, and the R. V. of the English Bible, given above. The word occurs but this once in the Hebrew Bible, and hence the difficulty of determining its meaning. Others would understand that the word means "giants." But "hot springs" were not a thing so extraordinary in a volcanic country, like that around the Dead Sea, that it should deserve such mention; nor were the "giants" either, where there had formerly been several races of gigantic stature. Deut. 2: 10—12 and 20: 23. For my own part, I believe that the ordinary opinion of the Jewish commentators is the correct one, and that the Common Version of the English Bible and the Modern Spanish Version give the true sense, translating it "*mules*"; although the ordinary Hebrew word for *mules* is different. The Jewish doctors say that this Anah (a pagan Horite) discovered the procreation of mules, through a prurient curiosity to mix the different races of animals—a very frequent thing among the ancient pagans, as the impure and corrupting stories of the Greek and Roman mythologies attest. It is incorrect to allege, in opposition to this (as does Bush), that the Heb. word *natsa* (= to find) does not have the sense of *discover*; for it is precisely the word which Samson used when he said:

"If ye had not plowed with my heifer,

Ye would not have *found out* (Heb. "found") my riddle."

Judg. 15: 18.

The Reina-Valera Version, of the year 1602, says that he "*invented mules*"; and such an invention, or discovery, was well worthy of commemoration; for the result of this mixture of the ass and the horse has been most useful in all the world, and it is still found among all nations; though such mixture of different animal races is expressly prohibited in the Mosaic law (Lev. 19: 19), and only by the art and contrivance of men has the ass been *depraved* so as to sin thus against the instincts of its own nature. This I take it was the "invention" of Anah, the son of Zibeon the Horite. Mules were used in Israel itself (whether bred there, or imported from the nations around), before horses were allowed even for the purposes of war. 2 Sam. 13: 29; 18: 9; 1 Kings 1: 33. Comp. Josh. 11: 6, 9; 2 Sam. 8: 4.

36: 29, 30. THE HORITE CHIEFS, WHO PRECEDED THOSE OF THE RACE OF ESAU.

29 These are the chiefs that came of the Horites: chief Lotan, chief Shobal, chief Zibeon, chief Anah,

30 chief Dishon, chief Ezer, chief Dishan: these are the chiefs that came of the Horites, according to their chiefs in the land of Seir.

It is evident that "Anah" of vr. 20 was the name of a man and not of a woman, the uncle of the Anah of vr. 24, who was the father of Aholibamah, the second wife of Esau; since in vr. 29 he figures as a chieftain, just as Zibeon, his brother, and he is clearly to be distinguished from the Anah who discovered the mules, vr. 24. So that there were two chieftains of the name of Anah, uncle and nephew, just as in vrs. 16 and 18 we have two chieftains named "Korah," who were half brothers. Since then it is evident that Aholibamah, the wife of Esau, was the daughter of one Anah and the niece of another; and since her father Anah was the son of Zibeon, it seems clearly impossible that she should be at the same time daughter of a *woman* named Anah, who was "daughter of Zibeon the Hivite." It appears, therefore, certain that the "Anah" of vrs. 2 and 14 was the name of a man rather than a woman; and that the word "daughter of Zibeon" is an error of the copyist, and should read "son"—unless we have recourse to a supposition at which the mind revolts. Rabbi David Kimchi, however, as quoted by Adam Clarke, makes the still more revolting statement that this Anah, so much addicted to impure mixtures, was himself the offspring of one, being both the son and the brother of Zibeon. Zibeon, so far as I can follow the tangled thread of this chapter, is called a Hivite in vr. 2, and a Horite in vrs. 20 and 29. See comments on vr. 2. It is important for us to bear always in mind the unspeakable abominations that were common among those pagan peoples. See Lev. 18: 24—28; Deut. 18: 25, 27.

36: 31—39. THE KINGS WHO REIGNED IN EDMO BEFORE THERE WERE KINGS OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

31 And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.

32 And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom; and the name of his city was Dinbabah.

33 And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead.

34 And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his stead.

35 And Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who smote



Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Avith.

36 And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead.

37 And Samlah died, and Shaul of Rehoboth by the River reigned in his stead.

38 And Shaul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead.

39 And Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died and Hadar reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Pau; and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Me-zahab.

The first king of the children of Israel was Saul, who began to reign about 350 years after Moses; so that it is clear that this paragraph was added by some copyist or editor, who lived several centuries after Moses. The entire paragraph, with a few variations, is found in 1 Chron. 1: 43—50; and some have believed that from there it was taken and added to this chapter. The books of the Chronicles bear evident traces of having been composed, or at least edited, after the Babylonish captivity; see 2 Chron. 36: 22 and 1 Chron. 3: 19, where the list of the descendants of David is carried several generations beyond Zerubbabel; and it seems much more probable that 1 Chron. 1: 35—54 was taken from here, according as it stood in the days of Saul, or of David (or even later), after this paragraph had been added.

The last of the kings mentioned presents us with a circumstance of some interest, in the name of the grandmother of his wife, which was "Me-zahab" (= "Waters of gold," vr. 39), a name which most likely was given her on account of the abundance of her beautiful golden hair; an object of pride for her, and of admiration and envy for her companions. Such is human vanity, and so it ends! Some particular reason there must have been, and of interest to the first readers of the book, for giving in this place the names of these three women; that being contrary to ordinary Hebrew usage. Esau likewise had red hair (ch. 25: 25) and David also, or of auburn color (1 Sam. 16: 12); adjectives which are one and the same in the Hebrew text.

From this chapter it is evident that the government of Edom, both under the house of Seir and under that of Esau, was by *captaincies*, or clans (of which we have seven of the race of Seir, and fourteen of that of Esau), and that afterwards, with the increase of population and riches, there arose a dynasty of kings, of whom eight individuals are given in the text, as having reigned before there was a king in Israel. When Israel went out of Egypt, this change had already taken place in Edom; although the two institutions existed together. For we

have mention of the "chiefs (A. V. 'dukes') of Edom" in the triumphal song of Moses, Ex. 15: 15; and in Num. 20: 14, we find that Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom, asking his permission for Israel to pass through his territory.

36: 40—43. ANOTHER AND A DIFFERENT LIST OF THE CHIEFS OF EDMOM.

40 And these are the names of the chiefs that came of Esau, according to their families, after their places, by their names: chief Timna, chief Alvah, chief Jetheth,

41 chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon,

42 chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar,

43 chief Magdiel, chief Iram: these are the chiefs of Edom, according to their habitations in the land of their possession. This is Esau, the father of the Edomites.

All this chapter has its difficulties, which we do not know how to resolve satisfactorily (but we do not on that account believe that it has no place in a divinely inspired record); and in several places the narrative seems to be disjointed; so that it will not be difficult to suppose, that as vrs. 31—39 are undoubtedly an addition by copyists or editors, long after the days of Moses, other parts also may be in the same case. And these last four verses are not the least difficult part of the chapter. This list of the chiefs of Edom, which comes in after the list of the kings of Edom, is entirely different from that given in vrs. 15—19. Only two of the eleven names (Kenaz and Teman), are identical with those of the other list, which number fourteen; while two of them bear the names of women; Aholibamah and Timna; although like "Anah" and "Anah," of the preceding list, it may be that the names were used of both sexes alike. I suppose that they are two different lists, and have reference to different persons and times; but I cannot ascertain any motive or reason for introducing them here. The chapter ends as it began, repeating for the fourth time that "Esau is the father of Edom" or of "the Edomites." The writer must have had some special purpose in view, for this repetition, which it is not given to us to find out.

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

VRS. 1—4. WE BEGIN AGAIN THE INTERRUPTED HISTORY OF JACOB, WITH MEMOIRS OF HIM AND OF HIS SON JOSEPH. (1729 B. C.)

1 And Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan.

2 These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and he was a

lad with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought the evil report of them unto their father.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors.\*

4 And his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren; and they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

\*Or, a long garment with sleeves.

Isaac having died, and Esau having removed to the land of Seir, Jacob continued to dwell in the land of the sojournings of his fathers, the land of Canaan, which God had before promised to Abraham and his posterity. Verse 43 of the preceding chapter says that the children of Esau dwelt "in the land of *their possession*"; meanwhile for Jacob and his descendants, the same as for their fathers, the land of promise "in which they dwelt as strangers," was to them but "the land of *their sojournings*." On this circumstance the apostle fixes attention, in Heb. 11: 9—16, to extol the faith which these holy patriarchs had in God, and the heavenly nature of their hope; constituting them types of *the people of God, who still wait for* "the city that hath the foundations" (Rev. 21: 14, 19, etc.), "whose builder and maker is God." Heb. 11: 10.

The word "generations," in vr. 2, has undeniably the sense of *memoirs* or *family history*; for of "generation" and "generations" in the ordinary sense of the word, nothing whatever is said. These memoirs have to do with the history of Joseph; and there begins at this point a most interesting and in some respects one of the most important histories of the Old Testament. We see here the preliminary steps which led to the abandonment of pastoral life by the children of Abraham, their entrance on a truly national life, and their preparation for those high destinies to which God had called them as his chosen people; in order that they might be to him a "kingdom of priests, a holy nation" (Ex. 19: 5, 6), and a fruitful source of blessing to the world.

Three things are very evident to us, although they were not so to them: 1st. That it would be morally impossible, there in the land of Canaan, for the children of Israel to increase until they were sufficiently numerous to take possession of the land which God destined for them; 2nd. That even though the Canaanites were exterminated and destroyed from before them by pestilence or by war, a nation of shepherds did not possess the qualifications to perform that high mission to which God had called them; it was necessary to *educate them* for their high vocation; 3rd. Esau had already withdrawn to the land of Seir, separating himself from Jacob, for the reason that there

was not room enough for them to dwell together, with their numerous flocks and herds. Ch. 36: 7. It was therefore necessary to do something to remedy this difficulty, which was always an increasing one; otherwise, as there had been strife between the herdsmen of Abraham and those of Lot, so there would necessarily be between the Canaanites who were filling up the country, very sparsely peopled in the days of Abraham (ch. 13: 6, 9), and the children of Israel, who went on increasing and multiplying, as "strangers and sojourners" in the midst of them. This chapter therefore gives us the first scene in that great drama of divine providence, which gave effect to the designs of God, with a view to fulfilling the promises sworn to Abraham, and operating on a wider scale for the redemption of the world, beginning with one family and people chosen out of the other nations.

We see now the flocks and herds of Jacob divided into different portions, and Joseph as the companion of the sons of the servant-wives of his father, Bilhah and Zilpah; a clear indication that the rivalry which had existed between the two wives of Jacob, was continued in their respective families. Joseph would naturally prefer to be with the sons of the two maid-servants rather than with the sons of his aunt.

The language of vr. 2 is singular and admits of different senses. It is said that "Joseph was feeding the flock with his brethren," and then it is added (according to the R. V.), "that he was a lad with the sons of Bilhah," etc. Others understand that the word "boy" or "lad" is used, as it frequently is in both the Old and the New Testaments, for a *man-servant*; which is simply incredible, considering the preference which his father always gave to him. The translation given in the Modern Spanish Version ("he as a boy, was with the sons of Bilhah," etc.), is good, and suggests the idea that he was a mere boy, and kept the company of his half-brothers, the sons of the maid-servants of Leah and Rachel.

It is to be feared that Joseph, however good may have been his moral and religious character, had as yet all the inexperience of a boy bred at home, and did not deport himself with the wisdom and tact demanded by the difficult circumstances in which he found himself placed. His four brothers with whom he was, were bad men; and Joseph reported their bad conduct to his father. It may be that it was his duty to do so; but to judge by his lack of good sense in the matter of his dreams, we may suppose that in this case also, fulfilling the most difficult part of his duty, he did not proceed with that degree of

prudence and tact which was to be desired, but rather with the inexperience of a mere home-bred boy of seventeen years. It would seem that all his older brothers were bad men; and the fact that he was righteous and they were wicked, was of itself sufficient reason why they should regard him with aversion; but when to this he added the character of an *informer*, they would come to regard him as a spy upon their actions, and his presence among them would become insupportable. To make matters worse, Jacob too plainly manifested his partiality for the elder son of his beloved Rachel, of whom he was the living image (or at least the extraordinary beauty of the mother and that of the son are represented to us in the identical words in Hebrew, which occur nowhere else, ch. 29: 17 and 39: 6); and not only so, but he made him a robe of a special kind which published abroad the greater love and confidence which his father cherished toward him. This of itself would have been sufficient, without accepting the translation and interpretation which some wish to give to vr. 2, to the effect that his father had constituted him the chief, the "pastor" or "shepherd" of his brethren, on account of the greater confidence that he had in him; he being but a mere boy. But it seems impossible that the partiality of Jacob should reach to such a pitch of folly. In any case, his older brethren hated him all the more for the affection which his father manifested towards him; to such a degree that they could not speak peaceably with him.

With regard to the tunic, coat or robe, which served him as an insignia of distinction, we have no certain knowledge. The same word is used in 2 Sam. 13: 18, with reference to the robe of Tamar, the sister of Absalom, whom Amnon violated; the writer adding that it was a robe which the virgin daughters of the king were accustomed to wear. The Greek Version of the LXX and the Latin Vulgate say a tunic or coat "of many colors," as it is given also in our English Bibles. The Hebrew text says a tunic or coat "of *palm*s of the hand" (or "of *soles* of the foot"); which some understand to mean a tunic made of pieces of cloth *of the size of the hand; supposed to be of different colors*. Gesenius interprets the phrase (for it cannot be translated) as describing a robe or garment reaching to the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet; or, in other words, "a long garment with sleeves"; as found in the note to the Bible text; and this, in the opinion of the learned, is the proper meaning of the phrase. It was a long robe, different from the ordinary dress of the Orientals, whether men or women. So it was that when Joseph, dressed like a prince, appeared in the

midst of his simply clad shepherd brothers, the very sight of him became every day more and more insufferable.

37: 5—11. THE DREAMS OF JOSEPH. (1729 B. C.)

5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:

7 for, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves came round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed yet a dream; and, behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars made obeisance to me.

10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren; and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

11 And his brethren envied him; but his father kept the saying in mind.

Although the imprudence of an inexperienced boy (who as yet knew nothing of the world) and the culpably manifested partiality of his father had a great deal to do with the enmity which his brothers bore to him, the two combined form one of the most important elements in the plans of divine Providence; and this without at all excusing or palliating their wickedness. The Psalmist says:

“He sent a man before them;

Joseph was sold for a servant” (Ps. 105:17);

and this was the means which God employed to send that man before them, in order to prepare them a place in Egypt; and a privileged place, such as corresponded with the purpose which he had in view in sending Jacob and his sons into Egypt.

God still makes use of dreams, of strong impressions, and of presentiments, in order to influence the conduct of men; of which we have all heard of numerous examples; but these are in no sense revelations of the will of God, and one would be foolish indeed who allowed himself to be governed by dreams and presentiments of this kind. But the case was different in the ages in which men had no written revelation of the will of God, and in which Jehovah communicated his will to men by different kinds of revelations (Heb. 1: 1), one of which was dreams. For important reasons, then, God prepared Joseph for the terrible trials that awaited him, by means of two dreams, or rather a double dream, which gave him a strong presentiment of his

coming elevation and greatness; Jacob also received through them a strength he greatly needed for the twenty years of deep suffering which he was called to endure, before he found out what had become of his lost son. We must confess that Joseph did not deport himself prudently in this matter, when he related his dreams to his brothers, well knowing how they regarded him; and his relating the two dreams successively, when he had seen how deeply they were offended by the first, reveals a lack of good sense and of tact in a lad of seventeen years, which gave no great promise for the future governor of Egypt. But not only to his brothers did he tell his dreams; he told his father also the second dream; and his father rebuked him, for he clearly saw the direction in which his dreams were pointing. It is worthy of remark that his father, in this reproof, after the death of Rachel, speaks of Leah as "thy mother." Vr. 10. "His brothers envied him and hated him the more, on account of his dreams and his words"; for it seems that he talked about them in an unbecoming manner; but his father kept his words in mind, and meditated on the incident. There was in it a something, and particularly in the double form of his dream, which fixed the old man's attention; as he questioned with himself whether or not it might have some practical significance with reference to his favorite son.

37: 12—17. JOSEPH IS SENT FROM HEROD TO SHECHEM, TO BRING HIS FATHER SOME WORD FROM HIS BRETHREN. (1729 B. C.)

12 And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

13 And Israel said unto Joseph, Are not thy brethren feeding the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I.

14 And he said to Him, Go now, see whether it is well with thy brethren, and well with the flock: and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

15 And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man found him, saying, What seekest thou?

16 And he said, I am seeking my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they are feeding *the flock*.

17 And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

We know from vr. 14 that at this time Jacob was still in Mamre, or Hebron, where his father Isaac died; for Mamre and Hebron are used in this history as equivalent terms (ch. 23: 19), the oak-grove of Mamre being in the immediate neighborhood of that city. The sons of Jacob had gone with their father's flocks to Shechem; the scene of the terrible reprisals which they had there taken for the dishonor done to their sister Dinah.

His father was naturally concerned about them, and receiving no word from them, he at last became so restless, that he sent Joseph to bring him certain intelligence of their welfare. At that time, therefore, Joseph was not "feeding the flocks with his brethren the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah"; and it may be supposed that the relations existing between him and his brothers were such that it was thought best for him to remain at home with his father. It was 55 of 60 miles from Mamre to Shechem, journeying toward the north; but when he arrived there, his brothers had gone. Wandering about the field with no certain course, a man he met gave him the information that they had gone to Dothan, some 20 miles farther to the north; a place famous in the days of the prophet Elisha for the protection which God there granted to his servant. 2 Kings 11: 23. So Joseph followed on and overtook them there.

37: 18—22. WHILE HE WAS APPROACHING, THEY CONSPIRED AGAINST HIM TO KILL HIM. (1729 B. C.)

18 And they saw him afar off, and before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say, An evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

21 And Reuben heard it, and delivered him out of their hand, and said, Let us not take his life.

22 And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood; cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but lay no hand upon him: that he might deliver him out of their hand, to restore him to his father.

In those lands devoted to the pasturage of cattle, there were natural cisterns, or cisterns cut in the solid rock, in order to collect and store the water which fell in the rainy season; and while Joseph was coming up to them, his brothers devised the plan of killing him and casting him into one of those cisterns, either to conceal his body, or to create the impression that he had himself fallen and perished there. Reuben, the same who had profaned the couch of his father (ch. 35: 22), here presents himself to us under an extremely favorable aspect. It seems that he was a man of good and humane instincts, but weak in his character and naturally a sensualist—a very common combination; so that although he had committed that great crime which cost him his birthright, he was not willing to take part in the deed which his brothers were devising against Joseph. But seeing that they were so set on it, that it would be useless to oppose their purpose, he affected to concur with them, provided they themselves would not shed his blood, but cast him alive



into one of those cisterns and leave him to his fate; intending in this way to deliver him from certain death, and, drawing him up secretly, to return him to his father. To this proposal of his the others agreed.

37: 23—30. JOSEPH IS SOLD TO A CARAVAN OF ISHMAELITISH AND MIDIANITISH MERCHANTS. (1729 B. C.)

23 And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph of his coat, the coat of many colors that was on him;

24 and they took him, and cast him into the pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.

26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood?

27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother, our flesh. And his brethren hearkened unto him.

28 And there passed by Midianites, merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they brought Joseph into Egypt.

29 And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes.

30 And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?

If Joseph was expecting a kind or even a decent reception by his brothers, with inquiries after the health of their old father, and of their mothers and families, he was quickly undeceived. Even before he reached them, he might have read in their averted eyes and their scowling faces the fact that they received him with ill-will, and were already prepared to vent their spite on him. All was in fact arranged beforehand; and when he came up to them, without loss of time, they laid hold on him, and despoiling him of the hated coat, or tunic, which he had on, and shutting their ears against his piteous entreaties (ch. 42: 21, 22), they cast him into a cistern which was empty, either for lack of rain, or because it was one of those of which Jeremiah speaks, "broken cistern that can hold no water." Jer. 2: 13. This done, those heartless men "sat down to eat bread"—the term in ordinary use in the Bible for partaking of their daily food. But while they were eating, they lifted up their eyes and saw that there was coming toward them a caravan of Ishmaelites (who in vrs. 28 and 36 are also called "Midianites") going down to Egypt; their camels being loaded with balm—the precious balm of Gilead—and resinous gums; and Judah, who was always the prince among his brethren (see ch. 49: 8—12),

proposed that instead of killing him by hunger and thirst in the cistern, they should take him out and sell him to those traveling merchants; for by so doing they would get rid of him as effectually as by his death, and at the same time would derive some profit from the sale. With him they all agreed, except Reuben, who was not present; and calling the Midianitish merchants, they sold Joseph for twenty pieces (or shekels) of silver—thirty shekels being the price of a slave. Ex. 21: 32.

The Ishmaelites and Midianites were both alike descended from Abraham; the former by the line of Ishmael, and the latter by Keturah, the concubine of Abraham, whose fourth son was Midian (ch. 25:2) whom, together with his other brethren, Abraham, during his lifetime, had sent away into the country of the East; that is to say toward the east of Beersheba, where he then resided. When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he rent his clothes, and hurried to his brethren with the bitter exclamation on his lips: "The child is not! and I, whither shall I go?" They, making small account of his anguish, undeceived him, and at once took the necessary steps to deceive their old father as to the fate of Joseph, and to hide their crime.

It costs us no effort of imagination to picture to ourselves the distress and desperation of the poor boy while this was going on. But fortunately they themselves have painted for us in vivid colors that scene, which none of them could ever blot from their memory: and yet their bowels of brass never repented. When Joseph, many years later, held them all prisoners, their grief and desperation brought to memory their great crime, and they said: "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. And Reuben answered them saying: Spake I not unto you, saying: Do not sin against the child! and ye would not hear? Therefore behold also his blood is required." Ch. 42: 21, 22. This happened twenty-two years after that atrocious crime was committed. How difficult it was for them, ten in number, to keep that secret! How difficult for Reuben, in particular, who took no part in it! and we shall see that they did not keep it so well but that Jacob suspected the treachery which they had committed. Heavier than a mill-stone, the consciousness of their crime weighed upon their soul! Yet they never confessed it, to lighten the burden of that mill-stone! Such is sin, and such is its natural operation, from bad to worse.

37: 31—36. JOSEPH'S COAT. THE AFFLICTION OF HIS FATHER.  
JOSEPH IS SOLD INTO EGYPT AS A SLAVE. (1729 B. C.)

31 And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a he-goat, and dipped the coat in the blood;

32 and they sent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father, and said, This we have found: know now whether it is thy son's coat or not.

33 And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces.

34 And Jacob rent his garments, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down to Sheol\* to my son mourning. And his father wept for him.

36 And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard.

[\*A. V. into the grave. *Mod. Span. Ver.* to the grave.]

One sin naturally leads to another. Having dyed the coat of Joseph in the blood of a he-goat, they sent it to their father, making some one carry it (while they followed behind) with the cold and pitiless message: "This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or not!" Jacob at once knew it, and was plunged into the bitterest grief. Extremely moving is the account given us of the affliction of the poor old man: "He rent his garments and put sackcloth on his loins—symbols of grief, humiliation and anguish, mentioned here for the first time—and mourned for his son many days." Many days, or rather, *many years* his father lamented him; and when all his sons, who followed after the messenger that brought the blood-stained coat, arose, with all his daughters, to comfort him, he refused the comfort which they offered, saying: "for I will go down to the grave unto my son mourning." It seems to me that the efforts which Joseph's brethren made to comfort their father would be so heartless and mechanical, and of such transparent hypocrisy, as would at once give occasion for him to suspect their good faith. In any case, twenty-two years later, Jacob made them this formal accusation, without circumlocution: "*Me ye have bereaved of my children!* Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away!" Ch. 42: 36. "All his daughters," in addition to "all his sons," naturally refers to Dinah and the wives of his married sons. But since, as a general rule, the daughters are omitted in the genealogies of the sons, unless there be some notable circumstance to distinguish them, it is at least possible that Jacob had by his four wives more daughters than the unhappy Dinah; but their names are not given in the history.

[NOTE 27.—On “*Sheol*,” or “*Hades*.” For the first time we have here the Hebrew word “*sheol*,” which in the Greek Version of the LXX is always rendered “*hades*”; and the latter is used in the same way *eleven times* in the Greek text of the New Testament. The word is translated in the text of the Modern Spanish Version (as in the common English Version), “*the grave*”—“I will go down unto my son, mourning, *to the grave!*” The dispute as to whether “*sheol*” or “*hades*” is *a place*, or only *a condition*, or *psychological state*, will probably never be settled in this life, nor till we, each for himself, enter into that state or condition, and find out in our own experience what it is.

Among those who sustain that *sheol* and *hades* designate A PLACE, there are several opinions, of which I shall cite only that of the Roman Catholic Church, which teaches that it is a vast subterranean receptacle for the souls of the dead, furnished with various departments; such as “*Limbo*,” “*Purgatory*,” the “*Hell*” of the lost, etc. But it is to be noted that the Bible never speaks of or refers to different departments of “*sheol*” or “*hades*.” It is, in my belief, the same thing in fact as that phrase we have already twice considered, to wit, “*give up the ghost, died and was gathered to his peoples*,” or “*to his fathers*,” which is used of good and bad indifferently (see comments on ch. 25: 8; 35: 29), in the same way as “*death*” and “*the grave*”:—as “*the shade*” of Samuel said to Saul: “*and tomorrow thou and thy sons shall be with me*” (1 Sam. 28: 19); without reference to either *heaven* or *hell*, but simply, *among the dead*; or just as David said of his dead child: “*I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*” 2 Sam. 12: 23. The words have *no local significance* whatever. The different departments of *sheol* or *hades* are simply a wild conceit which grew up in the Ancient Church *borrowed, without acknowledgment, from the mythology of the ancient Greeks and Romans*. Of that form and manner of life (that of souls divested of the body) we know nothing, because God has not revealed it to us; and it is probable that he could not reveal it to us, for the reason that *the psychological condition of the dead is an unfathomable mystery, a mode of being of which we are not able to form even a just conception*; for which cause all the language that is used in reference to it is necessarily figurative. The ordinary idea that a disembodied soul is an organized being (like angels and the heavenly intelligencies), ready for any class of service, is an extravagance which finds no foothold whatever in the word of God. Of which of “*the spirits of just men made*

perfect" (Heb. 12: 23) is such a thing ever said or implied? Over this whole field of inquiry the Scriptures observe a profound silence, strangely in contrast with the voluble loquacity of all man-made religions. It is my firm conviction, after a great many years of profound study of this point, in the light which God's word throws on it, *that sheol or hades is not a place at all, in any right sense of the word, but a condition or psychological state—the mode of existence of souls separate from the body, in the time intermediate between death and the resurrection.*

When Jesus died, his soul entered *locally* into heaven; for in dying he cried: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!" (Luke 23: 46); and to the penitent "thief," or highwayman, he said: "Today shalt thou *be with me in paradise!*" (vr. 43); and *paradise is heaven* according to 2 Cor. 12: 2—4; where Paul speaks of "paradise" as being the same thing as "the third heaven," wherever that be; and also Rev. 2: 7 (the only three passages in the Bible in which the word occurs), where John speaks of "the tree of life, *which is in the paradise of God*"; and it needs no argument to prove that *the tree of life does not grow in the realms of death!* This does not admit of doubt or reply; but *psychologically* speaking, Christ entered at the same time into "sheol," or "hades"; that is, into the state or condition of souls separate from the body; out of which he came on the third day, when he rose again, and his soul was reunited with his body forevermore. Jesus left the penitent "thief," in *hades, or sheol*, where he will remain till the resurrection of the body; because while divested of the body, he is necessarily in *hades or sheol*; notwithstanding which, he has been all these ages "with Christ" in heaven; because Paul again says: "While present in the body, we are absent from the Lord"; "absent from the body, we are *present with the Lord*"—"to depart and *to be with Christ*, which is very far better." 2 Cor. 5: 6—8; Phil. 1: 23.

(So also, the dying martyr Stephen, looking upwards, saw the heavens opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and cried: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" in the persuasion and certainty that he would *then* take his departing soul to himself, where he saw him standing—as if to receive his faithful servant at his coming. The Roman Catholic belief that immediate admittance into heaven is the special privilege of *the martyrs*, in which ordinary, though real, Christians have no share, like most other inventions of Romanism, has no foundation whatever in the word of God. We are sanctified and saved *by Christ's blood, and not by our own.*

Covering the whole field of Scripture statement—part only of which is given in this *Note*—comes this express declaration of Paul's: "WE KNOW that if the earthly house of this tabernacle (*marg.* or bodily frame) be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, *in the heavens.*" 2 Cor. 5: 1. The earthly house of Paul's bodily frame was dissolved 1800 years ago; but all this while, his disembodied soul has had from God a home in heaven, in the "house not made with hands." This we have from his own mouth. When the earthly tabernacle was dissolved, then without conditions or delay came "the building from God, the house not made with hands"—"heaven"; not receiving his reward, but *waiting for it* "at the resurrection of the just"; "*waiting for the adoption*, to wit, the redemption of our body"; not wearing his crown, but *waiting for* "the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous JUDGE, shall give him in that day" (2 Tim. 4: 8)—*waiting "with Christ" while he "waits*, till his enemies be made his footstool." Heb. 10: 13. Now if this was certainly "KNOWN" by Paul and his fellow believers in his day, why should any in our day put it in doubt?—Tr.)

Another conclusive proof that *sheol*, or *hades*, is a state, and *not a material place*, is found in the way it is associated with "death" in three passages in the New Testament: 1st. In Rev. 1: 18, the risen Jesus says: "I have *the keys of death and of hades*," to open and to shut. But *as death is not a place* to have gates and keys, except in a metaphorical sense, so neither is "hades" a place, except in a metaphorical sense; the two are in one identical case. 2nd. In Rev. 6: 8, John in vision saw "a pale horse, and he that was seated upon him was called *Death*; and *Hades* followed with him." But it is a gross absurdity to suppose that John saw a vast subterranean region, which went flying through the air, in pursuit of Death—something that has no existence whatever, material or spiritual. As then, *death* is a state, and not a material thing, so also *hades* is a state and not a material thing. 3rd. In Rev. 20: 14, after the resurrection both of the just and unjust, "death and hades were cast into the lake of fire"; that is to say, *death and the disembodied state* were completely and forever destroyed. Now then, as "death" is *not a thing*, but only the separation of soul and body, it could not be cast materially anywhere; and it is evident that "hades" was in the same case. John did not see a place of enormous dimensions called "Hades" lifted up in bulk and thrown into another place still larger, called "the lake of fire." As *death* is not a thing, so *hades* or *sheol* is

not a thing, but both of them are correspondent *states*, to wit, the violent and contra-natural separation of soul and body (as a result of man's sin), and the state or condition, incomprehensible to us, of such separation. As Calvin says (and his words will well bear repetition), speaking of that disembodied life of the dead (a mode of being totally foreign to the proper nature of man, as God created him): "*The wonderful counsel of God devised a middle state, that without life they should live in death.*" *Institutes*, Book III., Ch. 25, Sec. 9. See also the comments on ch. 42: 38.]

While Jacob was thus lamenting his son as dead, the Ishmaelites and Midianites carried him to Egypt, and sold him to Potiphar, captain of the body-guard of the king; who were also, as the Hebrew text calls them, "slaughterers," or executioners of the prisoners of state, when so ordered by the king. The word "officer" is in Hebrew *saris*—"eunuch," a word which in the opinion of many, is used with some latitude in the Hebrew; as is seen in the case of the chief of the butlers of Pharaoh, and the chief of his bakers, who are both called "eunuchs" (ch. 40: 2); and it seems evident that the word often designates any officer of the court. The circumstance that he was a married man is not a decisive proof that he was not really a eunuch; because, being one of the principal officers of the court, he might have taken a wife for sheer ostentation. More decisive is the circumstance that he was the captain of the royal guard, and it is scarcely credible that one of these unfortunates (emasculated from childhood, in order to serve in the harem of despotic and polygamous kings) should be appointed to the command of troops, to guard their royal persons. But neither is this decisive; and the most respectable authorities maintain that the Hebrew word *saris* means "eunuch" always, in the strict sense of the word. See also comments on ch. 40: 2.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

**VER. 1—5.** JUDAH SEPARATES FROM HIS BRETHREN, AND MARRIES A CANAANITISH WOMAN. (Of uncertain date. Perhaps 1744 B. C.)

1 And it came to pass\* at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.

2 And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; and he took her, and went in unto her.

[\*M. S. V. It had (already) happened.]

- 3 And she conceived and bare a son; and he called his name Er.  
 4 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan.  
 5 And she yet again bare a son, and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him.

The history of Joseph is interrupted at this point, in order to relate an episode which has to do with the history of Judah, and so with the descent of king David (Ruth 4: 18—22), and thus with the genealogy of Jesus, the Redeemer of the world. Matt. 1: 3.

At the time that Joseph was sold into Egypt, this unfortunate union had already taken place\* of Judah with that Canaanitish woman, of whom we do not know even her name; but we have those of her three sons, whose character, or at least that of the two elder, was entirely conformable to their Canaanitish and pagan extraction.

It is very difficult to determine the time at which this took place; but it must have been a very little time after Jacob's return from Padan-aram, while still he was at Succoth, and before the rape of Dinah, related in chapter 34. It is not necessary to detail the proofs of this here. It will be sufficient to state that when Jacob and his family went down into Egypt, some 32 or 33 years after said return, Pharez (whose birth is related in vr. 29 of this chapter) carried with him two sons, Ezron and Hamul. Ch. 40: 12. Judah and his two older sons, and his son Pharez (who came of this act of incest) must all have taken wives (or "women") when very young, in order that all this should have happened in the interval between the return of Jacob from Padan-aram, and his going down into Egypt. But as it all had to do with pagan people, whose customs were none too clean, and their ideas of marriage were not strict, it might well have been so. For chronological reasons, therefore, we suppose that this fatal error of Judah took place shortly after Jacob and the rest of the family settled in

\*The English Version, and also the Revised, given in the Bible text, say: "It came to pass at that time," etc.; which the reader naturally and necessarily understands to mean *at the time that Joseph was sold into Egypt*; although it certainly happened eight or ten years before that. As is very frequent in Hebrew, "at that time" has a wide (and sometimes a very wide) reach, and it here embraces all that is related since the time of Jacob's return from Padan-aram. The Modern Spanish Version seeks to relieve the difficulty by the perfectly legitimate rendering: "It had (already) happened at that time," in the full knowledge of the fact that it happened not less than eight or ten years before. This is not merely admissible, but indispensable, if the very object of a translation be, not to mislead, but to put the mind of the reader in correct and satisfactory communication with the mind of the writer. See comments on ch. 25: 1—4.—Tr.



Succoth, some years before he crossed the Jordan, and came back into the land of Canaan. See comments on ch. 33: 18—21.

[In Hebrew, and New Testament Greek also, "wife" and "woman" are one and the same thing; the same is true in Spanish till today; so that "my woman" means "*my wife*," and "his woman" means "*his wife*"; and in fact in Hebrew and New Testament Greek there are properly no other terms for "husband" and "wife," except "man" and "woman"; so that, in vr. 2, Judah saw there a woman "*and took her*" does not necessarily imply that *he married* her in our sense of the word; nor were those pagans very strict about such matters anyhow.\* In Mexico and South America, today, and in the Spanish Philippines, from one-third to one-half, or more, of the men *take women* without ever being *married* to them; and in parts of Roman Catholic Europe much the same state of things exists. See footnote on *Amancebamiento* on page 35. Judah no doubt took this woman before he was of marriageable age, according to our standard of things. In this, the usages of different peoples vary not a little. Our American newspapers have lately contained the statement that in Spain the legal age of marriage is *fourteen* for men, and *twelve* for women, and that a bill has been introduced in the Spanish *Cortes* to alter the law on that point, advancing the legal age for marriage. But whatever may or may not be the legal age in Spain, the statement shows that there is nothing improbable in what is here said about Judah, and his sons, and his grandson. It may not be amiss to add that the Roman Catholic canonist, Domingo Cavalario, lays down the same rule for the legal age of marriage. *Derecho Canónico*, Part II, Ch. 21, Sec. 4; so that, according to this rule, Judah, and his sons, and his grandsons, may all of them have had "lawful marriage" at fourteen years. A recent commentator, A. R. Fausset, in commenting on Mal. 2: 14, says: "The Jews still marry very young, the husband being often but *thirteen*, the wife younger."—Tr.]

The chapter is extremely shameful for Judah; but the most substantial part of it is referred to in Matt. 1: 3, on relating the genealogy of Jesus Christ according to the flesh; in order to give emphasis to the fact that "God sent his Son *in the like-*

\*The same thing is true of all pagan countries today; and this constitutes the peculiar peril (to young men especially) of life in India, China and Japan. A recent magazine article says it is common usage in China to hire young women in this capacity from their parents *by the year*; all obligation ceasing when the contract time is expired! It is well for Christian people at home to know enough about the ways of the world they live in.—Tr.

ness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3); and thus it was that he bound up his personal destinies with those of our fallen race.

Judah began the great error of his life by *separating from his brethren* (Heb. he "went down from them"—to the Jordan, probably, and beyond it), instead of living in perpetual union with the altar of his father, in the midst of a race of pagans, whose customs were bad, very bad. See Lev. 18:24—27; 20:23; Deut. 12:31. Instead of this, being nothing more than a boy, he separated from his brethren, and joined friendship with one Hirah, an Adullamite,—from Adullam (far to the south), which later was a royal city of the Canaanites, and apportioned to the tribe of Judah. Josh. 12:15; 15:35. There, in the midst of these gentiles, he saw a Canaanitish woman and took her as his wife. The children which came of this union were worse than might have been expected even of a Canaanitish and pagan mother; or at least the two elder were so.

#### 38: 6—11. THE CHILDREN OF JUDAH AND THE CANAANITISH WOMAN.

6 And Judah took a wife for Er his first-born, and her name was Tamar.

7 And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of Jehovah; and Jehovah slew him.

8 And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her, and raise up seed to thy brother.

9 And Onan knew that the seed would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest he should give seed to his brother.

10 And the thing which he did was evil in the sight of Jehovah: and he slew him also.

11 Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter-in-law, Remain a widow in thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown up; for he said, Lest he also die, like his brethren. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

When Er, the first-born of Judah, was grown, or at least marriageable, his father took him a wife (likewise a Canaanite), named Tamar; but such was the wickedness of the husband, that Jehovah slew him. What may have been the nature of his wickedness, we do not know; but since it is related as the wickedness of a married man, and besides, as carnal sins were those to which the Canaanites were especially prone, and as his brother Onan died for like cause, it is natural enough to suppose that it was for secret sins of uncleanness, not once, but many times committed, in the bonds of matrimony. Upon the sins which are committed in the state of marriage, the Bible tells us very little; although the Roman confessional is occupied largely with them, and with their most horrible and revolting details. It is worthy of remark that God has regarded

as most convenient and proper to draw the veil of a decent reserve over the intimate relations of married people, intending that his word, with its exhortations to purity and holiness of life, should work in each one (and on his individual responsibility), a sound morality in this, as in all the other relations of life: "Husbands love your wives, *as Christ also loved the Church* and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it," etc. Uncleanness and indecency stand paralyzed before such a precept. Eph. 5: 25—27. "Likewise ye husbands dwell with them according to knowledge (or good sense), giving honor to the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; *that your prayers be not hindered.*" 1 Pet. 3: 7. The Papal Church, which removes the Bible from the sight and knowledge of the people, *even in its acts of public worship*, substitutes therefor a Latin service and the Romish confessional, as a much more effectual means for regulating the life both of the married and unmarried; but who that is capable of observation and the exercise of his own reason will judge that the filthiness and shameful impertinences of the Confessional are means of repressing vice and wickedness to be compared with the only plan and system which God has approved, and which has borne such precious fruit wherever this method of God's choice and appointment is adopted and followed? for although all men do not fear God, nor lead a virtuous and holy life, the Bible forms *an elevated social and public opinion*, which next to personal grace, is the most powerful means of purifying and elevating society.

In conformity with the law of the *levirate* (Deut. 25: 5—7), established under the Mosaic economy for the case of married brothers who died without issue, and which from this passage appears to have been of very ancient use, Judah told Onan, his second son, to take the wife of his brother, in order that the latter should not remain without a son and heir. But Onan added to the character of a low sensualist that of a malicious despiser of his deceased brother; abusing at the same time the person of the widow, and defrauding her just hopes. This conduct of his (which was his use and custom), so angered Jehovah, that he slew him also.

This history of Onan and of Tamar has been severely criticised by those who regard themselves as wiser and purer than the God who made them. But Paul says that "*all Scripture* (including this entire chapter) is given by inspiration of God, AND IS PROFITABLE for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim. 3: 16. The matters treated

of in this chapter are of a delicate character undoubtedly, or, if you please, indelicate, and are not proper for public reading, nor for that of the family; but the narrative is "profitable" and was placed here to be read in private; and it "is profitable for the correction" of those who are addicted to secret vices and social impurity. We live in a world of sin and of sinners, and it is impossible wholly to avoid contact with them. In strongest contrast with the corrupt literature of the day, the Bible sets before us the wickednesses of men as they are, without any disguise, in all their hideous nakedness; and close to the narrative of real facts, it always places the antidote or remedy. A thousand times better that our sons, and our daughters likewise, learn something of the sins and wickednesses of men as the Bible presents them, rather than come to know them by their own experience of what men are and of what they are capable, or by the reading of books and witnessing of theatrical representations, which, without the use of words disallowed by polite society, inoculate the soul with a deadly poison.

It is not revealed to us in what way Jehovah slew these two wretches; but it is clear that it happened in such a manner that suspicions fell on the young wife, twice widowed, and probably within the space of a few months. It devolved on Shelah to take the widow of his two brothers; but his father was fearful that their untimely end might become his likewise. He therefore told Tamar to return home and remain as a widow (clad in the garments of widowhood, vrs. 14, 19), in the house of her father, until Shelah was grown; and she did so.

#### 38: 12—23. THE ARTIFICE OF TAMAR.

12 And in process of time Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheep-shearers to Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

13 And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold, thy father-in-law goeth up to Timnah to shear his sheep.

14 And she put off from her the garments of her widowhood, and covered herself with her veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gate of Enaim, which is by the way to Timnah, for she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she was not given unto him to wife.

15 When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a harlot; for she had covered her face.

16 And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Come, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee: for he knew not that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?

17 And he said, I will send thee a kid of the goats from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it?

18 And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet and thy cord, and thy staff that is in thy hand. And he gave them to her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.

19 And she arose, and went away, and put off her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.

20 And Judah sent the kid of the goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman's hand: but he found her not.

21 Then he asked the men of her place, saying, Where is the prostitute, that was at Enaim by the wayside? And they said, There hath been no prostitute here.

22 And he returned to Judah, and said, I have not found her; and also the men of the place said, There hath been no prostitute here.

23 And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we be put to shame: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her.

Tamar was astute and a woman of resolution, and seeing, with the lapse of time, that Judah was not going to give her to Shelah, but was trying rather to get rid of her, like a pagan and a Canaanite, she resolved to take reprisals on himself; since it was not lawful for her to marry another while Shelah lived. It is not necessary to enter into the details of this artifice of hers; the text is plain enough:—she claimed her place in the family of Judah, while he was evidently trying to separate her from him. In this plan of hers we see, *first*, that in point of moral character, Judah was no better than a pagan; and *second*, that Tamar was well acquainted with that fact, and on this knowledge she based her plan to ensnare him, and obtain the place in his family that was hers of right. With much shrewdness she protected herself against the consequences of such an act, taking undeniable pledges from the father of her child. She withdrew at once with the pledges obtained, which she carefully kept for the proper occasion.

The word "prostitute," in vrs. 21 and 22, fills us with blushing and shame, on considering what men are capable of being and doing, even in the matter of religion! It is the selfsame word that in the worship of Jehovah and of our Lord Jesus Christ, is rendered "*holy*," "*saint*," or "*consecrated*" one, which was used even in times so remote, for those who "consecrated" their persons to the service of the filthy gods and goddesses of paganism. Even before the word is used of the "*saints*," or "*consecrated ones*" of Jehovah, we find it in current use for women who prostituted their persons to the shameless rites of Astarte, the "*Venus*" of the Syrians and Canaanites. Horrible prostitution of words, as well as persons! The masculine form of the word was used for those of the opposite sex who prostituted their persons on the altars of the same pagan goddess, consecrating themselves to her, for the practice of vices which may not be named. See Deut. 23:17. Compare also what Moses says of the same impure rites in Deut. 20:18

—"all their abominations, *which they have done unto their gods.*" What "saints" are these of paganism! and what gods! Thus it was done in Rome itself, in the days of its greatest glory and corruption, among all classes! (read the record in Rom. 1: 24—27); and our missionaries tell us that the same impure religious rites are common in Hindustan today, even under British rule.

The Rev. Dr. A. P. Mendes, referred to on p. 244, corrected my translation of vr. 23 thus: "*Lest we make ourselves ridiculous*"; but whether it be "appear ridiculous," or "fall into contempt," as the Mod. Span. Ver. has it, or "be put to shame" as in the English text, it is instructive to notice in how much greater esteem sinners hold the good opinion of men than the good opinion of God. As Jesus says: "They love the praise of men more than the praise of God." John 12: 43.

38: 24—26. JUDAH CONDEMNS HER TO DEATH; BUT TAMAR FREES HERSELF BY MEANS OF THE PLEDGES SHE HAD TAKEN FROM HIMSELF.

24 And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter-in-law hath played the harlot; and moreover, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.

25 When she was brought forth, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and the cords, and the staff.

26 And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She is more righteous than I, forasmuch as I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more.

We see here that in Canaan, the same as in other nations and peoples of ancient times, adultery was punished with death; but in the midst of the ruling corruption of social habits, it is certain that they did not look to the moral side of the question, so much as to the inconvenience arising from the disturbance of the peace of families, and particularly to the inability of the husband and father to distinguish between his own children and those of another. Even that great Roman, Cicero, said, as is related of him, that adultery was a grave crime, but that simple fornication among the unmarried was a matter of small importance. [And Herodotus, "the father of history," particularly describes the public prostitution of their persons, with some stranger, which every young woman in Babylon, from the highest to the lowest, was expected to make, in the temple of Melitta, the Babylonian Venus, before she was eligible for marriage. See Adam Clarke's Commentary on 2

Kings 17: 39. It is every way important for our people to understand the extreme corruption of manners that prevailed in Bible lands, instead of judging of them more or less by people in Christian lands, as most people seem to do. Without this, the Bible can never be properly understood, nor can we truly know from what a bottomless abyss of corruption the word and revelation of God has delivered us.—Tr.]

It would seem also that without appealing to judges or tribunals, the father was the competent judge to decide in such cases, and even to punish with death. Among the ancient Romans also, the "pater familias" exercised the power of life and death, not only over his slaves, but over the members of his own family. Judah, who as we have seen in the case of Joseph, was not a bit compassionate with his own brother, was still less so with his daughter-in-law, who being the widow of his two elder sons, and pledged to be the wife of the third, was reputed an adulteress; so that without entering on any investigation of the matter, he decided summarily the case, and ordered that she be taken out and burnt. Such promptitude and such severity in judgment show the little estimation in which human life was held; and seem besides to manifest a certain degree of malevolence towards her on the part of Judah (without being able to prove anything against her), as the cause of the untimely and suspicious death of his two elder sons. It gives us a bad opinion of the administration of justice in those times, to see that she was not so much as brought into the presence of her father-in-law, before she was sentenced and even led out to be burnt; so that she, without having the opportunity to defend herself, or even to deliver in person the pledges into his hands, was obliged to send them to him, with the message which opened his eyes to his injustice, if not to his sin. Judah recognized the pledges, the signet, the cords and the staff, which he himself had given her, and said: "She is more righteous than I; forasmuch as I gave her not to Shelah my son;" but of his own sin of adultery and of incest he seems not to have made much account. He had condemned her to death by fire, for a sin in which he had taken the principal part! God will not thus decide in that day when he will "judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ." Society makes (and perhaps necessarily), a distinction of sexes in sins of unchastity; but not so with God: the man will always be held as equally guilty with the woman, and in most cases as more guilty than she. And in the penalties

imposed under the Mosaic law, the same punishment was meted out to the one as to the other.

The penalty of death by fire it would seem was not unfrequent among the pagans. According to the Mosaic law, that penalty was imposed in but a single case—that of the daughter of a priest who gave herself up to a life of social impurity, profaning thus both herself and her father. Lev. 21: 9. But in her case it is to be supposed that she was to be *burnt after she was stoned*; as was actually done to Acan; in whose case we have a particular account of this identical sentence, and of the manner of its execution. Josh. 7: 15, 25, 26.

### 38: 27—30. THE ACCOUCHEMENT.

27 And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb.

28 And it came to pass, when she travailed, that one put out a hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first.

29 And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, Wherefore hast thou made a breach for thyself? therefore his name was called Perez.

30 And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zerah.

Tamar gave birth to twins, of which the elder was Pharez, or according to the Hebrew, Perez—a name of distinction in Israel. From him was descended David, and through him, Jesus Christ our Lord. Ruth 4: 18—22; Matt. 1: 3. The second was Zerah, of whom we know only that, Er and Onan having died childless, he with Shelah and Pharez were the progenitors of the tribe of Judah. It is to be noted that, in spite of the blot that darkens the good name of Tamar, she and her son Pharez appear to have always been favorites among the people of Israel; due perhaps to the decision of character and resolution of spirit which she manifested, and the tragic interest that invested the birth of the boy. Thus it was that the elders and the people of Bethlehem blessed Boaz, when he took to wife Ruth the Moabitess, saying: “And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which Jehovah shall give thee of this young woman!” Ruth 4: 12.

We will not leave this chapter without calling attention again to the fact that in the genealogical table of the descent, according to the flesh, of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, with which Matthew begins his Gospel, he, by direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit, brings to mind the fact that the Son of God and Redeemer of men came of this very act of both



incest and adultery, of which the account is given in this chapter: "And Judah begat Pharez and Zerah of Tamar; and Pharez begat Hezron," etc. Matt. 1: 3. And if some fastidious reader, who presumes to be more pure and prudent than Moses and Matthew, and than the Holy Spirit who guided their pens, shall ask: "What is the practical utility of this indecorous story that we have in this chapter?" it will be sufficient (in addition to the reasons previously given), to reply: "In order that it may be known to all that Jesus Christ *was not born of "an immaculate vessel,"* as Roman Catholics persistently affirm that *it must have been,*—(though the Bible says not a word about it, and the Papal Church itself could not decide the matter of the immaculate conception of Mary to its own satisfaction, after centuries of wrangling about it, till 1800 years after her death); affirming rather that Christ, the Redeemer, *came of a sinful race, and that his line of descent was stained with the worst of sins and crimes;* and no doubt for this very reason the Holy Spirit has given us detailed accounts of Tamar, and of Rahab, and of Bathsheba; each one of whom figures by name in this genealogical table with which Matthew's Gospel begins—"The genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham"—the only genealogy in the Bible that calls attention to the scandalous sins committed in the line of any man's descent. "God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." Rom. 8: 3.

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### CHAPTER XXXIX.

VRS. 1—6. THE INTERRUPTED HISTORY OF JOSEPH IS HERE RESUMED.  
(1729 B. C.)

1 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hand of the Ishmaelites, that had brought him down thither.

2 And Jehovah was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

3 And his master saw that Jehovah was with him, and that Jehovah made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

4 And Joseph found favor in his sight, and he ministered unto him; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.

5 And it came to pass from the time that he made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that Jehovah blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of Jehovah was upon all that he had, in the house and in the field.

6 And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not aught *that was* with him, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was comely, and well-favored.

That episode with regard to the family of Judah being finished, the history of Joseph is resumed at the point where we left him, at the close of chapter 37, sold as a slave to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, in Egypt. At every step we here see the hand of the divine Providence. With respect to this special providence which carried Jacob and his family into Egypt, to make of them there a strong nation, and educate them for the high destinies that awaited them, the Psalmist says:

“He sent a man before them;  
 Joseph was sold for a servant:  
 his feet they hurt with fetters;  
 he was laid in chains of iron,  
 until the time that his word came to pass,  
 the word of Jehovah tried him.  
 The king sent and loosed him,  
 even the ruler of peoples and let him go free.  
 He made him lord of his house,  
 and ruler of all his substance;  
 to bind his princes at his pleasure,  
 and teach his senators wisdom.  
 Israel also came into Egypt,  
 and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.”

Ps. 105: 17—23.

In all this, it was the purpose of God to educate this pastoral people and fit them to act in the world the most important part that any nation has ever performed; and he took care that the circumstances should be the most favorable possible for this end. If there be a history that should be called *par excellence* “The Drama of Divine Providence,” it is this of Joseph; and yet neither he, nor his father, nor any one else in those ages was capable of understanding it, except in disjointed and incomplete parts.

In the midst of his calamities, Jehovah was with Joseph, and made him “a prosperous man,” to such a degree that his master could not but perceive it; and he entrusted to his hands all that he possessed. Joseph’s personal endowments, which from a child had almost infatuated his father, did not fail to secure him the high esteem of his master also, and when to this was added that notable prosperity with which Jehovah blessed him, for Joseph’s sake, the confidence which he reposed in him became unbounded. The declaration that “his master saw that Jehovah was with him,” etc., makes it evident that Joseph did not leave, like too many, his religion

in his father's home, nor concealed it in the house of his Egyptian master. He did not forget, nor was he ashamed of *the name of Jehovah* his God. It was no Egyptian god who, in the conviction and by the confession of Potiphar, blessed him for Joseph's sake. The Egyptian had the good sense not to esteem him the less on that account; and it is probable that because he had "let his light shine before men," his master did not give too much credit to the crime which his own wife laid to the charge of Joseph.

The statement in vr. 2 that "he was in the house of his master the Egyptian," means to say that Joseph was occupied in domestic duties and in the management of his master's dwelling, where he was in constant and familiar intercourse with his family; and from that circumstance came his principal danger, on account of those very personal endowments which everywhere gained him the good will of all. The words "and Joseph was comely and well favored," or, as more exactly given, according to the Hebrew text, in the Modern Spanish Version, "was of a handsome figure and beautiful countenance," are precisely those with which in ch. 29: 17 is described the extraordinary beauty of his mother Rachel; and as these same words are never used of any others, it is reasonable to infer that the mother and the son were much alike, and that a manly beauty such as his was something seldom seen, particularly among the swarthy Egyptians. Extraordinary beauty is a very great gift of God, which, since sin entered into the world, is fortunately very rare; for it is the cause of many sins, and is always attended with constant dangers. And yet we may be very sure that every variation from the absolute perfection of face and form, in our race, is due directly or indirectly to the sin of man; and is perhaps the least important and deplorable of its consequences. But when redeeming grace shall have fully accomplished its work, and "Israel is saved in the Lord with everlasting salvation," we shall know forms of beauty of which we now can but dimly conceive. "*He shall beautify the meek with salvation.*" Ps. 149: 4. "*Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us!*" Ps. 90: 17. God will have no homely children in that his coming kingdom of righteousness and life eternal, where we shall see beauty without impure desire, and another's prosperity and happiness, without one envious thought. The manly beauty of Joseph was worth no little to him in his master's esteem, and served him a valuable purpose when he was exalted to the second place in Pharaoh's

kingdom; but in so far as concerned his mistress, his master's wife, it came little short of costing him his life.

39: 7—18. THE TEMPTATION AND TRIAL OF JOSEPH.

(Of uncertain date.)

7 And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.

8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master knoweth not what is with me in the house, and he hath put all that he hath into my hand:

9 he is not greater\* in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.

11 And it came to pass about this time, that he went into the house to do his work; and there was none of the men of the house there within.

12 And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,

14 that she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in a Hebrew unto us to mock us: he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice:

15 and it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment by me, and fled, and got him out.

16 And she laid up his garment by her, until his master came home.

17 And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, whom thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me:

18 and it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment by me, and fled out.

[\*A. V. and R. V., there is none greater.]

Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold into Egypt. I suppose that any attentive reader of what had happened since then would say that at this time he could not have been less than 23 to 25. The things here related are not those of a boy of seventeen. So that the common chronology, which is given in our Bibles, is in conflict with this intimate conviction of every reader; for it gives one and the same date to all these happenings: so that Joseph was 17 years old when sold into Egypt; 17 when made steward of all his master's estate; 17 when his mistress tempted him to do that great wickedness and sin against God; 17 when upon her false accusation he was cast into prison, and there became, in fact, keeper of the king's prisoners; where he passed the 13 intermediate years, till, when 30 years of age, he was presented before Pharaoh. This fact sets in a clear light the uncertainty of many of the dates given in the margin of our Bibles. See *Note 12*,

on Biblical Chronology. We take for granted, therefore, that the prosperous state of Joseph lasted from five to eight years in the house of his master, and that he was from twenty-three to twenty-five years old when his mistress put his virtue and piety to such sore proof; so that he would not pass more than from four to seven years in prison, till the time that he was presented before Pharaoh. The commentator Adam Clarke gives him nine years in his master's house, and only four years in prison.

The trial of Joseph came to him in a form the most impossible to evade, and the hardest to resist. When a woman, and especially a married woman, puts aside her honor, and resolves at all hazards to do her pleasure and effect her purpose, there is nothing in the world more dangerous than she. Solomon has said: "I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and whose hands are bands; whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her." Eccl. 7: 26. The duties of Joseph kept him precisely at home, and he could not be in the house without being in the way of temptation; and every day his master's wife renewed her criminal solicitations. By yielding to them, Joseph would for awhile have passed a life of ease and sinful indulgence; by resisting her demands, he ran the risk of almost certain ruin. But the fear of sinning against God (as he frankly confessed to her), and not the dictates of a merely human prudence, nor merely gratitude towards his master who had entrusted his honor and all his interests to his hands, detained him, even though it should cost him his life. So that he not only rejected her proposals, but would not even consent to be near her. More than this he could not do, without fleeing from the house; which, being a slave, he was unable to do. His master's wife, therefore, finding herself unable to gain her end, determined to wreak her vengeance on him; and the vengeance of a wicked woman knows no bounds; so that if her husband had had entire confidence in her, he would probably have taken Joseph's life without further delay, as she had in her hand his garment, to accredit her words.

39: 19—23. JOSEPH IN PRISON. (Of uncertain date.)

19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.

20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

21 But Jehovah was with Joseph, and showed kindness unto him, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.

23 The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand, because Jehovah was with him; and that which he did, Jehovah made it to prosper.

The wise king has said: "There is a righteous man that perisheth in (or by) his righteousness; and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in (or by) his evil-doing." Eccl. 7: 15. Undoubtedly Joseph knew perfectly with whom he had to do, but it is clear that he was resolved to "resist unto blood, striving against sin." Heb. 12: 4.

One of two things: either his master being a eunuch, as says the Hebrew text, believed that the wife did not behave any worse with him than he with her; or, doubting of her good faith, although burning in anger, he thought best to examine the matter more thoroughly, before punishing with greater severity his favorite slave and the most valuable attendant he had; he therefore cast him into prison, the prison in which were kept the king's prisoners, and of which he, as captain of the guard, had the command; although he had a jailor under him, to whom he committed the immediate care of the prisoners. We know by ch. 40: 3, 7, that the prison was "in the house of the captain of the guard," and by vr. 15, that it was a "dungeon" (*Heb.* pit). The word "prison" (ch. 39: 20; 40: 3) in the Hebrew text is "round house," or castle; so that Joseph did not go out of the house of his master, but was in the subterranean part, or dungeons, of the same, which formed the jail of the prisoners of the king.

In the midst of these great trials which he suffered "for righteousness sake," God granted him marked tokens of his approval, "and gave him favor in the eyes of the keeper of the prison," just as he had given him grace or favor in the eyes of his master, when he was first brought to Egypt. Ch. 39: 4. It is most important for us in times of severe affliction and trial, when we are sure that we are walking the path of duty and in the way of righteousness, to look for those favorable providences with which God ordinarily sustains the hope of his people, and interpret them as indications of his favor and love; that we may be of good cheer and not faint under the burden. Thus it happened with Joseph; and the keeper of the prison put into his hands the internal management of the prison; and he gave himself no care about it, "because Jehovah was with Joseph, and that which he did

Jehovah made it to prosper”—a repetition of the words which describe in vr. 3, the prosperous estate which at one time he enjoyed in the house of his master, and the unlimited confidence which his master reposed in him. If it be asked what right the jailor had to delegate to Joseph the obligations which were officially and personally his own, ch. 40: 4 will give us the proof that he did so with a full knowledge and consent of the captain of the guard; because when the chief of the bakers and the chief of the butlers sinned against Pharaoh, and were cast into prison, the captain of the guard himself, Joseph's master, gave him the charge of them. Ch. 40: 4. It is clear, therefore, that what had passed with his wife had not at all diminished the esteem in which he held Joseph, and that he had yet entire confidence in his rectitude.

## CHAPTER XL.

VER. 1—4. THE CHIEF OF PHARAOH'S BUTLERS, AND THE CHIEF OF HIS BAKERS. (1718 B. C.)

1 And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their lord the king of Egypt.

2 And Pharaoh was wroth against his two officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers.

3 And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound.

4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he ministered unto them: and they continued a season in ward.

With these new favors which God granted him, the hard lot of Joseph was gradually improved. To be esteemed, and to see that unlimited confidence is reposed in one's rectitude, can sweeten even life in a prison. Besides this, the supreme command of the house of his master, and afterwards the command and direction of the affairs of a prison, was no small part of his education to preside later in the government of the land of Egypt.

These two officers of Pharaoh are called "eunuchs" in the Hebrew text. "Such persons from ancient times have been and still are employed in Oriental courts, as the guards and attendants in harems; and others of the same class often hold offices of even greater importance. They are frequently cowardly, jealous, intriguers, and the instruments of despots and libertines, ready for every evil work; being shameless and cruel. They are also peculiarly disposed to melancholy, and, as the only means of ridding themselves of the insupportable burden of life, to suicide. Eunuchs are a natural consequence of polygamy, and are numerous in Oriental cities. In ancient

Rome there were many; as also in Greece during the Byzantine period. There are even today in Rome at least a few, who sing soprano in the Sixtine Chapel—the only example of it to be found in Christian countries.” Schaff’s *Bible Dictionary*, “*Eunuch*.” This barbarous and cruel usage, tolerated in Rome under the very eyes of the Pope, is condemned by the Mosaic law in every form. Deut. 23: 1; Lev. 21: 20. Comp. Lev. 22: 24. Some have believed, and still believe, that in the Bible the word is often merely a title of office, and designates any officer of the court. But the better the usages and customs of the Orientals, both ancient and modern, are known, the more does the opinion of the learned incline to the belief that the word ought always to be understood in its strict and natural sense. For me, the most conclusive proof that, with use and custom, the Hebrew word *saris* came to acquire the secondary sense of “chamberlain,” or any officer of the court, is found in the fact that in one of the books of the Bible of most recent date (1 Chron. 28: 1), composed probably at the time of the Babylonish captivity, or yet later (see 1 Chron. 3: 19—21), “eunuchs” are mentioned—(“chamberlains” in the Modern Spanish Version, “officers” in the English Versions) among *the principal men of the court of David*; and we can hardly bring ourselves to believe that this infamous institution of Oriental courts, introduced probably under the reign of Solomon, with his “seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines” (1 Kings 11: 3), was known in Israel in the days of David.

We cannot tell what may have been the offence of these officers of Pharaoh. They were not ordinary prisoners, but state prisoners; and as it was so that their respective offices had to do more immediately with the person of the king, they were probably of the privileged classes of the kingdom, and of noble families.

40: 5—19. THE BUTLER AND THE BAKER OF THE KING DREAM DREAMS, AND JOSEPH INTERPRETS THEM. (1717 B. C.)

5 And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream, in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were bound in the prison.

6 And Joseph came unto them in the morning, and saw them, and, behold, they were sad.

7 And he asked Pharaoh’s officers that were with him in ward in his master’s house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sad to-day?

8 And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell it me, I pray you.

9 And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me;



10 and in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, *and* its blossoms shot forth; *and* the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes:

11 and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

12 And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: the three branches are three days;

13 within yet three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head, and restore thee unto thine office: and thou shalt give Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.

14 But have me in thy remembrance when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house:

15 for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.

16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, three baskets of white bread were on my head:

17 and in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of baked food for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head.

18 And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: the three baskets are three days;

19 within yet three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

Dreams, in those days in which there was no written revelation, and when God often revealed himself by means of them (Num. 12: 6), performed a very important part in the life of Joseph, as we have seen, and shall continue to see. With regard to a prophet who was such by office, the case was very clear; the prophet had as intimate knowledge and security of the fact, when God spoke to him in dreams, as when he spoke to him in any other way. In the case of those who were not prophets, a deep and lively impression, accompanied by an insatiable desire to understand the dream, might well serve the divine purpose; which in this case was to open the way for the liberation and promotion of Joseph. In the case of Pharaoh, in the following chapter (ch. 41: 8), the Hebrew text may be literally translated, "in the morning his spirit *was pounded*," as by the blows of a hammer; that is, was agitated and troubled.

We see in vrs. 6 and 7 a proof of Joseph's zealous fulfilment of his new duties, as the keeper of the prison, and a proof of his humane spirit, in the interest he manifested in the welfare of every one of the prisoners committed to his care, and in his anxiety to alleviate the painful concern which at any time he noticed in their troubled faces. We do not know whether Joseph possessed the gift of interpreting those notable dreams of his own when he dreamed them (ch. 37: 5—11); it

is probable that he had a strong suspicion of their meaning when he related them to his father and brothers, and that this softened or removed the appearance of self-conceit, or presumption, which his conduct might otherwise wear to us; but in the years of his long affliction and of his unjust imprisonment, it is certain that the spirit of inspiration would open to him the meaning of his own dreams, for his comfort and support; and this would give him greater confidence to interpret the dreams of others; it is hardly possible that he should have the gift of interpreting the dreams of others, without being able to penetrate the meaning of his own. To these dreams the Psalmist probably refers in Ps. 105: 19:

“Until the time that his word was fulfilled,  
the promise of Jehovah tried his (faith).”

—Mod. Span. Vers.

However that may be, God communicated to him on this occasion the greatest assurance, not only that “interpretations belong unto God,” but that God had imparted to him the gift of interpreting them with infallible certainty. The dream of each of the two had to do with his peculiar office; and from them any person moderately clever would be able to draw a specious meaning. The merit of the thing consisted in drawing from them a true and certain sense, and in declaring it with a confidence which is born of absolute assurance. This Joseph had, and when the butler declared to him his dream, he without hesitation told him that his dream signified that within three days Pharaoh would show him his former favor, so that he would be restored to his old place of honor and confidence; and Joseph did not lose the opportunity of charging him that in the day of such good fortune to himself, he should not forget the Hebrew prisoner, but make favorable mention of him before the king, and have him taken out of that dungeon where he so unjustly suffered.

The chief of the bakers, who was listening with hungry soul to this beautiful interpretation, took confidence from it to relate with freedom his dream; but a cruel undeceiving awaited the poor man. In both cases “to lift up the head” means to say *to distinguish some individuals among the rest*, or to bestow on him a special attention, whether for good or for evil (vr. 20); so that in the one case it was for good to the butler, but in the other it was to bring capital punishment on the baker. Nevertheless, in vr. 19 “he shall lift up thy head *from off thee*,” seems to carry in it the idea of *to take away*, and

thus would seem to imply decapitation, before the body was hung on the tree. The words of Joseph seem to us very hard and dry, in making so heart-rending an announcement; but it is that the Bible does not make use of those embellishments and delicate shadings of thought which are so necessary in merely human writings; and we may be sure that Joseph, who looked so humanely after his prisoners, and hastened to dissipate any shadow which he saw on their troubled faces, would not fail to give to this unfortunate man the comfort and sympathy of which his case admitted.

[NOTE 28.—*On the use of wine in Egypt.* At a time not very remote unbelievers and infidels declared this story to be false, confidently alleging that the vine and grapes were not known in Egypt; but since that time the representations that are found on the monuments of Egypt have come to confirm the exact correctness of the Bible, furnishing us as they do with pictorial proofs that the vine and its fruit abounded there. With equal lack of reason, some would draw from vrs. 9, 10, 11, that in Egypt wine was unknown, and that even kings drank only the juice of the grape newly expressed by the cupbearer. But the proof alleged is aside from the truth. From the days of Noah (ch. 9: 20, 21), and probably before that, the art of converting grapes into wine was well known; and the monuments of Egypt present us with pictures vividly portraying not only vines and grapes, but wine-presses also, and men who trod the grapes with their feet, to express the juice, for the purpose of making wine. See *Smith's Bible Dictionary*; Articles on the *Vine* and *Wine*.]

40: 20—23. THE OUTCOME OF THE CASE ON THE THIRD DAY.

20 And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and the head of the chief baker among his servants.

21 And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand:

22 but he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them.

23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

As Joseph had interpreted the dreams, so it happened on the birthday of Pharaoh, which occurred three days afterwards. It is interesting to observe here the first notice that we have in the Bible of the observance of birthday celebrations.

The chief of the butlers, nevertheless, in his day of good fortune, forgot Joseph, or at least he regarded it as convenient to risk nothing of the good which he had, in order to do a

favor to an unfortunate fellow. That is to say, *he was politic*—a policy which is much in vogue till today, among those who regard themselves as “knowing much of the world.” So selfish is the human heart! Joseph without doubt, in those two years of misfortune which followed this disappointed hope, many a time reproached the forgetfulness and ingratitude of Pharaoh’s chief butler; but if he had done his utmost to liberate Joseph, and, as a man of influence, had obtained his purpose and secured a place of honor and profit for Joseph in the court of Pharaoh, Jacob’s pious son would no doubt have received it as a signal mercy which his God had granted him; but *the Joseph of sacred history would never have come on the stage of action*; his part in the drama of Divine Providence would have been spoiled! If one year, or one month, or even one day before the time appointed by God for the realization of his plans, Joseph had obtained justice and favor, he would have passed into oblivion. The most glorious distinction of Joseph was that he performed just the part to which God had destined him. Let us learn the lesson.

*“It is good to hope, and silently to wait for the salvation of Jehovah.”* Lam. 3: 26. Mod. Span. Version.

## CHAPTER XLI.

VER. 1—7. TWO YEARS AFTERWARDS, PHARAOH ALSO DREAMS DREAMS.  
(1715 B. C.)

1 And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river.

2 And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, well-favored and fat-fleshed; and they fed in the reed-grass.

3 And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill-favored and lean-fleshed, and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river.

4 And the ill-favored and lean-fleshed kine did eat up the seven well-favored and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke.

5 And he slept and dreamed a second time: and, behold, seven ears of grain came up upon one stalk, rank and good.

6 And behold, seven ears, thin and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them.

7 And the thin ears swallowed up the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream.

In the designs of God time is always an indispensable element, and long patience and imperturbable confidence is most necessary on the part of those who have faith in him. Jesus our Lord had for a favorite aphorism of his: *“Mine hour is not yet come.”* John 2: 4; 7: 6.

But at last came the hour of favor for Joseph. Pharaoh had

two dreams, and there was no one to interpret them. In this case as in the former, a quick and penetrating genius would have been able to draw from such striking dreams something that would wear the semblance of truth; but to trifle with the credulity of the king would have been as dangerous to him, as to fail in their office was to the wise men of Nebuchadnezzar. Dan. 2: 9. What the king asked was truth, and not specious words. Meanwhile the faith and patience of Joseph, his self-control and above all his triumphant faith in Jehovah, the God of his fathers and his prompt and affectionate obedience to his word were gradually unfolding, and constantly strengthening and forming him for the elevated position to which he was destined; a position and office which demanded qualities of mind and heart which were not yet his, except in embryo.

“The Nile is Egypt,” as has been well said. The country is a complete desert, from unknown ages, with only a narrow strip of very fertile land on both sides of the river, bounded by rocky mountains and deserts; and annually the inundations of the Nile (which last three or four months), caused by the rains that fall and the snows that melt in Central Africa, leave a very thin deposit of alluvial soil, with abundant humidity, on lands which would otherwise be a sterile sand-bed. The gradual rise of the waters, due to the enormous distance from which they come (for it does not rain in Egypt), prevents the inundations from becoming freshets which would desolate and destroy the land. When there are copious rains in Central Africa, the Nile rises sufficiently to inundate that narrow strip on both sides of the river, and the crops are superabundant; but when the waters fail, the Nile does not overflow its banks, and there is neither seed-sowing nor harvest. In lower Egypt, the river is divided into numerous branches, and discharges its waters into the Mediterranean Sea, through many mouths. There was necessarily much reed-grass in the low and marshy places; which forms the back-ground for Pharaoh’s first dream.

So Pharaoh’s first dream had to do with cows coming out of the river, and they fed in the reed-grass; seven of them, beautiful, sleek and loaded with flesh; and after them seven other cows, which came up out of the river also, ill-favored and lean-fleshed to the last degree, and they ate up the seven first fat cows, without improving in the least their own leanness. Both kinds came up out of the river, not because this is the usage of cows, but because the years of good and bad harvests which they represented, depended entirely on the river.

The second dream had to do with wheat, the principal product of Egypt, which was formerly called the granary of Italy. This kind of wheat is still found in Egypt—seven heads on a single stem. Pharaoh saw in his dream seven extremely beautiful heads which came up on the same stalk, or stem (it is said to have a solid stem), and after them seven other heads, dry and empty; which ate up the seven good heads. It is not the usage of cows to eat cows, nor still less of heads of wheat to eat heads of wheat; but in this consisted the peculiarity of the dreams which most attracted the attention of the king; and it filled him with impatience and concern to know what significance so singular a double dream might have.

41: 8—13. AS THE KING COULD NOT FIND ANY INTERPRETER OF HIS DREAMS, THE FORGETFUL BUTLER REMEMBERS JOSEPH, AND MAKES MENTION OF HIM TO PHARAOH.

8 And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

9 Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day:

10 Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, me and the chief baker:

11 and we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream.

12 And there was with us there a young man, a Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret.

13 And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.

The two dreams evidently pointed to the same event, and it would have been easy for the wise men of Egypt to invent some explanation which would have been at least plausible (as Nebuchadnezzar accused the wise men of Babylon of wishing to do in like circumstances, Dan. 2: 9); but either by the particular providence of God they could not agree upon anything worth while repeating, or, as is more probable, they did not dare to venture on conjectures where the king demanded certain knowledge; so that the forgetful butler of Pharaoh came to himself, and related what had passed with Joseph in the prison, two years before, and the facility and exactness with which Joseph had interpreted his dream and that of his unfortunate companion. Here we see the hand of that special Providence which reserved this information for the opportune moment, making use of the culpable forgetfulness, or the cowardly negligence, of the chief butler for that purpose.

41: 14—24. JOSEPH IS CALLED, AND PHARAOH RELATES TO HIM HIS DREAMS. (1715 B. C.)

14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

15 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that when thou hearest a dream thou canst interpret it.

16 And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

17 And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the brink of the river:

18 and, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fat-fleshed and well-favored; and they fed in the reed-grass:

19 and, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill-favored and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness:

20 and the lean and ill-favored kine did eat up the first seven fat kine:

21 and when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill-favored, as at the beginning. So I awoke.

22 And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up upon one stalk, full and good:

23 and, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them:

24 and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears: and I told it unto the magicians: but there was none that could declare it to me.

With all haste Joseph was called from the prison, or dungeon, and having shaved and changed his garments, he was presented before Pharaoh. The particular notice of *shaving*, something entirely foreign to the habits of the ancient Hebrews, furnishes us with an incidental proof of the minute accuracy of this history, according to the testimony of the monuments of Egypt today; where the Asiatics are represented with beards, and the Egyptians, and the foreigners admitted to their service, are clean-shaved, leaving their hair and beard to grow only when they were in mourning. The king informed Joseph that he had had dreams which his wise men could not interpret; but that he had been informed of him that he possessed the faculty of interpreting dreams. Joseph answered him that such a faculty did not reside in him, but that God would give to Pharaoh an answer of peace. What calls attention in all this procedure on Joseph's part, both in the case of Pharaoh and in that of his two officers, is the absolute certainty he had that God was speaking by his means, in interpreting these dreams, which were so important in the history of Joseph, and as bearing on the cause and kingdom of God in this world; and in this we see the spirit of prophecy which had been given him. There was no place here for conjectures and calculation

of probabilities. If the dream was of God, it is clear that from him also must come the correct interpretation; for it was not given as a matter of guesswork, or a solution of riddles.

41: 25—36. JOSEPH INTERPRETS THE DREAMS OF PHARAOH, AND WITH EQUAL CONFIDENCE GIVES HIM, UNASKED, ADVICE ADEQUATE TO THE OCCASION. (1715 B. C.)

25 And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: what God is about to do he hath declared unto Pharaoh.

26 The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one.

27 And the seven lean and ill-favored kine that came up after them are seven years, and also the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind; they shall be seven years of famine.

28 That is the thing which I spake unto Pharaoh: what God is about to do he hath showed unto Pharaoh.

29 Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt:

30 and there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land;

31 and the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine which followeth; for it shall be very grievous.

32 And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

33 Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt.

34 Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint overseers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.

35 And let them gather all the food of these good years that come, and lay up grain under the hand of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it.

36 And the food shall be for a store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

Joseph well knew with whom he had to do, and that to deal in conjectures with a king of Egypt would cost him his life, as soon as the fraud was detected; but with absolute confidence that he possessed the truth, he interpreted the dreams as a revelation of things to come which, for the purpose of securing important ends, God wished to make known to Pharaoh. Joseph could not perceive the real object of all this, as we see it, nor in all his life did he come to see it in its entirety and in its proper relations; nor was it necessary that he should so see it; but he saw that it was the hand of God, although he could not at that moment see anything beyond the divine purpose of forewarning the king of an enormous calamity which was about to come upon the country, in order that he might in good season take suitable measures to prevent the utter



ruin of Egypt. Joseph was very far from imagining that the family of his father Jacob was more important to God, and to his kingdom in this lost world, than all the riches and greatness of Pharaoh and his country. The same thing happens today; we see only that part of the web of divine providence which lies immediately before us.

Such years of abundance and of famine were well known in Egypt, although nothing was then known of the cause of the rising and falling of the river which made them. The annals of Egypt relate many such events; but in this case the special providence consisted in making it known beforehand, with the purpose that Jacob and his family might leave the pastoral life of Canaan, and settle for several centuries in the most civilized country of the world; there to be formed into a nation, and educated and trained in everything necessary to their taking possession of the country which God had given to Abraham. So Joseph not only interpreted the dreams, but did so with such conviction of the truth and certainty of the interpretation, that he passed at once, and without a semblance of presumption, to give such advice as was most suitable to the occasion; this being as truly inspired as the interpretation of the dreams. Who but God was able to know beforehand the succession of seven years of unexampled abundance, followed by seven more years of famine, due wholly to superabundant rains, or the lack of them, in the interior of Africa, 3000 or 4000 miles away from Pharaoh and his court?

41: 37—46. PHARAOH AND HIS PRINCES APPROVE AND SANCTION BOTH JOSEPH'S INTERPRETATION AND HIS ADVICE; AND HE IS PLACED OVER ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT, TO CARRY INTO EFFECT HIS OWN COUNSEL. (1715 B. C.)

37 And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

38 And Pharaoh said to his servants, Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the spirit of God is?

39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou:

40 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.

41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

42 And Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

43 and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he set him over all the land of Egypt.

44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without

thee shall no man lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt.

45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-phera priest of On. And Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

46 And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

That same divine influence which guided Joseph, co-operated also to predispose Pharaoh's mind and that of his counsellors to believe the announcement and accept the counsel given; and this with as much confidence and security as had been granted to Joseph. It is certain that, as the years of abundance came first, if that part of the prediction had failed, which Joseph made in relation thereto, it would have cost him his position and perhaps his life; but this kind of guarantee it seems did not enter into the calculations of the king and his princes. God had his own plans to carry into effect, and the means were not wanting to fulfil them.

"As the (irrigating) streams of water,  
so is the heart of the king in the hand of the Lord;  
whithersoever [or to whatsoever] he will he turneth it."

Prov. 21: 1. M. S. V.

Pharaoh, therefore, with the approbation of his "servants" (who were no other than the most distinguished princes of his court and kingdom), appointed Joseph governor of all the land of Egypt, and endowed him with ample power to carry into effect the measures which he himself had advised, referring it all to God; in the security that, as God had given him to know so much, he would likewise attend him with strength and wisdom to put it into execution. He changed his name, and converted the Hebrew slave into an Egyptian prince. The signification of his new name is doubtful. The rabbins understand that it is a Hebrew word, and signifies "Revealer of what is secret"; others understand that it is an Egyptian word, and others still that it is Coptic, and signifies "Saviour of the world," or "Upholder of the age."

He at once appointed him as his prime minister, and governor of all the land of Egypt; and taking off from his hand his signet ring, he gave it to Joseph; thus clothing with his royal authority all Joseph's edicts and providences; the seal of Pharaoh being really *his official signature*, in those days in which the art of writing was limited to a small number of persons; for which reason the seal was ordinarily carried secured to the owner's person by a cord, as in the case of Judah (ch. 38: 18, 25); or engraved on a signet ring, which was car-

ried on the finger, as here. Comp. Esth. 3: 10; 8: 2, 8, 10. He clothed him with a vesture of fine white linen, in a style suitable to his elevated rank, and put a golden chain about his neck, and made him to ride forth in the second chariot of state which he had, in order that he might go abroad with public acknowledgment into all parts of the country, making proclamation before him: "Bow the knee!" placing him thus over all the land of Egypt. In this sudden and unlooked-for way was the elevation of Joseph effected by the particular providence of God, in whose hand are the hearts of men, to turn them to the fulfilment of his high designs; as the husbandman, in irrigating his land, turns the streams of water, with his hoe or with his foot, to any part that he pleases. In the same way, and quite as suddenly, Mordecai the Jew was elevated in the court of the Ahasuerus, king of Persia, when God wished to protect his people, and defend the cause of his kingdom in the world, at the very time that the impious Haman had everything arranged for their complete extermination. When any great emergency calls for it, God still moves and directs the hearts and counsels of men in the most surprising way; as in these days of the Boxer uprising (Sept. to Nov. 1900) he is doing it to prevent the destruction of his cause in the great Chinese Empire.

The infidels and unbelievers who say that all this is a tissue of incredible stories, and that no king would be capable of acting in this manner, do but expose their ignorance (or forgetfulness) of the usages of the despotic kings of the East. Instead of being incredible, these things are entirely in keeping with many undeniable facts, and are so true to Oriental life, that the poets and inventors of stories and rehearsers of legends among the Turks and Arabians delight in just this class of sudden transformations; as any one may see for himself in the "*Thousand and one Nights*."

But even so, Pharaoh well knew that this sudden outburst of enthusiastic consent to the elevation of Joseph could not of itself last long; and that to see a man of thirty years of age, a foreigner, and an ex-slave also, taken out of the prison to rule over princes, would ultimately cause such a storm of opposition that even the absolute power of a Pharaoh would not be sufficient to render Joseph's position secure in such a charge. He took care, therefore, to marry him into the most distinguished and powerful family in his kingdom, that of the priest-prince of On (called Heliopolis by the Greeks). The name of this priest is so much like that of Joseph's former

master, that some have brought themselves to believe that it was into his family that Pharaoh made the ex-slave to marry; but if the names are similar, the offices were so different that one and the same person could not fill them both; even if Potiphar had a family of his own.

Joseph therefore, at the age of thirty, was constituted governor of the land of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself; and he drove forth in his chariot of state, as one who was in command of the whole kingdom. Then began to bring forth profitable and plentiful fruit those thirteen years of trial through which Joseph had passed, since he went out from the home of his father, and of those lessons in the art of government which he had learned first as a steward, and then as keeper (for such he was in fact) of a prison. Let the reader see all this as poetically set forth in Ps. 105: 16—22.

41: 47—49. THE SEVEN YEARS OF ABUNDANT HARVESTS. (From 1715 to 1708 B. C.)

47 And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

48 And he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same.

49 And Joseph laid up grain as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left off numbering; for it was without number.

The seven years of extraordinary abundance began at once; but instead of wasting the produce of the land, or selling it to the countries around, Joseph began without loss of time to gather up and store the fifth part of it, arranging that every city should serve as a place of deposit for the harvest of the fields around it. In order to do this, a firm hand was necessary, a faith in the divine oracle that was proof against all temptation, and a very deep conviction of the necessity that would arise for all of this store of food; because it was gathered up in such vast quantities that it might well have come to be esteemed of little value. These treasuries of grain kept perfectly in that singularly dry climate of Egypt, with its burning deserts on each side of the narrow strip of fertile land that bordered on the river.

With regard to the right which Pharaoh had to take the fifth part of the produce of the land in those seven years of abundance, that was entirely in keeping with the despotic government of the time and country, where there was no law except the arbitrary will of the king; but the remaining four-fifths was so abundant that nobody would miss the one-fifth part, which they

all understood was gathered and deposited for the coming years of famine. The rich and well-to-do might imitate Pharaoh up to a certain point, in laying up grain for the time of need; but without that general providence of the king, the people of the country would soon have perished with hunger, once the famine set in.

41: 50—52. THE FAMILY OF JOSEPH. (Between 1715 and 1708 B. C.)

50 And unto Joseph were born two sons before the year of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-phera priest of On, bare unto him.

51 And Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh: For, *said he*, God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.

Before the years of the famine began, the daughter of Potiphera had borne to Joseph two sons, to wit, Manasseh and Ephraim, both of whom served in their very names as remembrancers of the signal mercies of God, as seen in the changed fortunes of Joseph. This pious custom was very common in the days of the Old Testament; but such is the perversity of human nature, that in most cases it came to be little better than a profanation of holy things; and many of the most villainous wretches made this vain show of pious names.

41: 53—57. THE SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE BEGAN TO COME. (1708 B. C.)

53 And the seven years of plenty, that was in the land of Egypt, came to an end.

54 And the seven years of famine began to come, according as Joseph had said: and there was famine in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

55 And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.

56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: and Joseph opened all the store-houses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine was sore in the land of Egypt.

57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was sore in all the earth.

The prediction of Joseph, when he interpreted the dreams of the king, continued to fulfil itself year after year for seven consecutive years; but when they ceased, and the years of famine began to come, the last vestige of doubt was removed from the most incredulous mind. The Nile did not rise at its proper season, the customary inundations did not come, and the seed-sowing could not be made, because in Egypt it does not rain; and every hope of a harvest depends on the inundation (which for three or four months of the year over-

flows the harvest land), and of necessary consequence there was no harvest: and this happened year after year for the space of seven years; although it is possible that when the providential design had been accomplished, the famine became less rigorous toward the conclusion of the seven years, until at last the customary rains again fell in Central Africa, followed by the rise of the river, the inundations of the land, and the abundant harvests of former years; for Egypt was always celebrated for its abundant harvests, and was called, as has been said, "the granary of Italy."

The reader should remember that as in Egypt it does not rain (except very rarely, and that along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea), and those waters come a distance of 2,000, 3,000 and even 4,000 miles, the rise of the river is very gradual, in proportion as the rainy season in the interior sets in; so that there never is "*a freshet*" in the river. On the contrary, the waters of the river rise constantly and gently, and remain flooding the lands for several months; and in many cases the land is sown upon the surface of the waters (Eccl. 11:1), leaving the seed to be covered by the alluvial soil which is deposited from the turbid waters of the river. At the end of the time of the inundations, the waters fall as gradually and gently as they had risen. Meanwhile the people occupy the cities and villages built on the hills and elevated lands (natural or artificial) of each district.

This famine was general in all the surrounding countries. If there had been grass and good harvests in the land of Canaan, Jacob and his family would never have removed to Egypt: to effect that removal was the principal object of the special providence which sent Joseph there before them. To answer this purpose it was not necessary that the famine in Canaan should last as long as in Egypt; but it was necessary that Joseph should be able to say to his brethren that the famine would last five years longer, in order that they should not excuse themselves from seeking an asylum in Egypt. Ch. 45: 6.

## CHAPTER XLII.

VER. 1—4. THE BRETHREN OF JOSEPH GO DOWN TO EGYPT TO BUY GRAIN. (1707 B. C.)

1 Now Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?

2 And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.

3 And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy grain from Egypt.

4 But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure harm befall him.

About two years (ch. 45: 6) of the famine had passed, and not only in Egypt, but in Canaan also, the resources of the people were exhausted. In doubt and uncertainty as to what they should do, the sons of Jacob, in the expressive language of vr. 1, stood idly *looking at each other*. They had intelligence that there was grain in Egypt, for many from Canaan were going down there to buy. Jacob and his sons were rich, and their supply of provisions would last longer still; but although they could foresee the inevitable, they yet hesitated. Jacob reproached them with their irresolution, and they at last resolved to go without longer delay. The ten older sons went down to Egypt; for Jacob would not consent that Benjamin, the only relic of his mother, the beloved Rachel, should go with them, for fear that some harm might befall him there.

42: 5—20. JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHERN. (1707 B. C.)

5 And the sons of Israel came to buy among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

6 And Joseph was the governor over the land; he it was that sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves to him with their faces to the earth.

7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly with them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.

9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies: to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

10 And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.

11 We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies.

12 And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

13 And they said, We thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.

14 And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies:

15 hereby ye shall be proved: by the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither.

16 Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be bound, that your words may be proved, whether there be truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies.

17 And he put them all together into ward three days.

18 And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God:

19 if ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in your prison-house; but go ye, carry grain for the famine of your houses:

20 and bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

In the midst of many others who were coming from Canaan and other countries, the brothers of Joseph also came; and he knew them. The grain was deposited in all the cities of the country (ch. 41: 48), and there it was sold to the people of the land; but these men came from foreign parts, and, as foreigners, it was necessary for them to appear before the governor, and give an account of themselves, and obtain his permission to traffic in the country. Vrs. 9, 13, 34. Thus it was easy and even unavoidable that Joseph should see his brothers when they came the first time; yet he was expecting their coming, because from the many who were going down to Egypt, he had learned that the famine was severe in Canaan. So he knew them at once, and doubtless he had already arranged the plan which he would pursue with them. He took good care that it should not in any wise dawn on them that he knew them; and he therefore spoke with them through an interpreter, and affected towards them a harshness which he did not feel; treating them as spies from foreign parts, who had come to search out the defenceless condition of the country, at a time of such rigorous famine. Their humble prostration at his feet, when they presented themselves before him, reminded him of the dreams he had dreamed about them—that of the sheaves, and of the sun and moon and eleven stars (ch. 37: 5—11); the lively recollection of which rendered necessary the tone of severity which he affected, in order not to discover himself. Before this time Egypt had been invaded from Asia, and a dynasty called that of the “Hyksos,” or the “Shepherd Kings,” had seized upon the throne; and it is believed that the reigning dynasty in the days of Joseph was that of these usurping Asiatics. The accusation, therefore, which Joseph made against his brethren, that they were spies, who were perhaps preparing another invasion of the country in that calamitous time, was the most serious that could be laid against them. Defending themselves against the accusation of being spies, which might have brought upon them the most terrible consequences, they related enough of their family history to put again to the proof all the self-command of Joseph. It is to be noticed that they were careful not to say that Joseph was dead, although the words “is not” ordinarily had that meaning; as in Jer. 31: 15 and Matt. 2: 18; but it is clear that it does not have that sense in vr. 36, with regard to Simeon, whom their father charged them that they should bring back with them on their



return. Ch. 43: 14. Joseph affected not to believe their statements, and he told them at first that they should not go out from thence until one of their number went and brought Benjamin, that they might thus prove the truth of what they had told him; and meanwhile he put them in prison three days.

In all this history of the brethren of Joseph, and the repeated journeys they made to Egypt, nothing is said of any except the sons of Jacob, ten men, and later eleven, and "every one with his ass," to carry the grain; without there being any allusion whatever to the numerous accompaniment of dependents or servants they carried with them. It is important to fix attention on this peculiarity of the Biblical narrative, in order that in other cases we may supply in the interpretation what may be wanting in the text. Ten asses well loaded (about four or five bushels each) would hardly supply the encampment of Jacob with breadstuffs for a single week; and yet it is evident from ch. 43: 2—10, that they carried enough to last them two or three months; for each journey occupied several weeks, two or three in going, and as many in returning. It is therefore certain that they carried with them many servants and a numerous train of beasts of burden; 250 or 300 lbs. (5 bushels apiece) being a full load for asses; no mention is made of camels.

All this caravan, therefore, stood idly waiting the three days that their masters were in prison. But Joseph remembered the need of their families, and changed his plan on the third day, retaining but one of their number, and sending the rest of them to their father. As the phrases "three days" and "on the third day" figure so notably in the account of the death and resurrection of Christ, it will be very proper to observe in vrs. 17 and 18, the vague and indeterminate Hebrew way of using the words. If he had them shut up *three days*, then according to our usage it would be the *fourth day* when he changed his plan, and keeping only one of them in prison, sent the nine to carry home the provisions bought, and to bring Benjamin. But instead of this, they were in prison two nights and the intermediate day, together with part of the first and third days—precisely the time that Jesus was among the dead; and there is no more reason to accuse the Bible of inaccuracy and self-contradiction in the one case than in the other. In Spanish also we say ordinarily, or always: "in eight days," for *in one week*, and "in fifteen days," for *in two weeks*.

The words "I fear God," in vr. 18, must have been extremely consolatory to these men, there in Egypt; however little of the fear of God they themselves possessed, and although they

were then suffering the consequences of the atrocious crime which, without any fear of God whatever, they had committed against the defenceless child, their brother, who, without their knowing it, stood then before them.

42: 21—24. CONSCIENCE STRICKEN, THEY ACCUSE THEMSELVES: JOSEPH WEEPS AT BEHOLDING THE SCENE. (1707 B. C.)

21 And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.

22 And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore also, behold, his blood is required.

23 And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for there was an interpreter between them.

24 And he turned himself about from them and wept: and he returned to them, and spake to them, and took Simeon from among them, and bound him before their eyes.

All the business intercourse and the conversation which had taken place between Joseph and his brothers was by means of an interpreter. Vr. 23. When therefore he was not present, they thought themselves secure, and spoke without reserve in the presence of Joseph. The straits in which they found themselves vividly reminded them of those in which they had placed their brother twenty-two years before, and of the passionate but fruitless appeals he had made to them to have mercy upon him. Reuben also exonerated himself of all part in that proceeding; and yet in twenty-two years he had preferred to keep the peace with his brothers, in the matter of this horrible secret, rather than relieve the mortal anguish of his aged father, by telling him that Joseph was not dead, but had been sold into slavery.

All this passed before the eyes of Joseph, they believing that he did not understand them; and it so deeply affected him, that he had by a great effort to restrain his emotions, lest his tears should betray him before the time. He turned about, therefore, into his bed-chamber (ch. 43: 30), and wept there, before he was able to take Simeon from among them and bind him in their presence, in order to deliver him again into prison.

42: 25—28. THE MONEY OF EACH MAN IS RESTORED TO HIM, BEING PLACED IN THE MOUTH OF HIS SACK. (1707 B. C.)

25 Then Joseph commanded to fill their vessels with grain, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus was it done unto them.

26 And they laded their asses with their grain, and departed thence.

27 And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the lodging-place, he espied his money; and, behold, it was in the mouth of his sack.

28 And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored: and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they turned trembling one to another, saying, What is this that God hath done unto us?

It would seem that the object of Joseph in this procedure was to multiply unlooked-for events, to complicate more and more the situation in which his brethren found themselves, and to awaken to the highest degree their fears for their own security. They were furnished with provisions for their personal use in the way, so that an air of mystery held them in expectation of something, and an experience of unlooked-for favor was mingled with other circumstances that threatened them with severe punishment, if not with ruin. This mixture of opposite sentiments greatly favored the purpose of Joseph. Only one of them opened his sack to give provender to his ass at the lodging-place; and in spite of the surprise and apprehension which finding his money caused them, it seems that the rest did not open their sacks till they came to their father (vr. 35),—a journey of twelve to fifteen days: which brings us another incidental proof that the servants who accompanied them, with many loads of grain, supplied their masters and their asses with all that they needed in the long journey. Their exclamation at seeing with surprise and alarm the money in the mouth of the sack of the one who opened his at the lodging-place: "What is this that God has done unto us?" puts in a clear light the general belief of them all that God had begun to surround them with a net from which with difficulty they would escape.

The word "inn," in most of our Bibles, ought not to induce any reader to believe that there was then, or that there are now, houses of entertainment in the East: these were an invention of the Middle Ages. The word "inn," even in the New Testament (unless Luke 10:24 be an exception), refers to places supplied with water, and conveniently arranged for travelers and caravans to spend the night, they carrying their own provisions for the way; and were and are rather *caravan-saries* than *inns*, where lodging and food are furnished to all who ask and pay for it; "lodging-places," as said in the text, vr. 27.

42: 29—34. THEY ACQUAINT THEIR FATHER JACOB WITH WHAT HAD HAPPENED WITH THE GOVERNOR OF EGYPT. (1707 B. C.)

29 And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that had befallen them, saying,

30 The man, the lord of the land, spake roughly with us, and took us for spies of the country.

31 And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies:

32 we are twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.

33 And the man, the lord of the land, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men: leave one of your brethren with me, and take *grain* for the famine of your houses, and go your way;

34 and bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffic in the land.

What Jacob most dreaded had actually happened. Benjamin was the youngest of all, thirteen or fourteen years younger than Joseph; and for this reason they were accustomed to treat him as *the child* of the family, although at this time he could not have been less than twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, and had several children; for when a few months later, Jacob and all his sons went down to Egypt, Benjamin carried with him a larger number of children than any of his brothers. Ch. 46: 21. Jacob did not wish "little Benjamin" (Ps. 68: 27), to pass out of his sight. He had not allowed him to go down to Egypt with his brothers on the first trip, for fear that some harm might befall him; and lo! the fatality of events had placed him in such a position that Benjamin had of necessity to go to Egypt, the second time; now, not only to buy grain, but to liberate Simeon (who was held as a hostage) from prison, or from death.

42: 35—38. ON SEEING THE MONEY OF EACH IN THE MOUTH OF HIS SACK, JACOB ALSO IS FILLED WITH FEAR, AND REPROACHES HIS SONS WITH BEING THE AUTHORS OF HIS CALAMITIES. HE RESOLUTELY REFUSES TO LET BENJAMIN RETURN WITH THEM TO EGYPT. (1707 B. C.)

35 And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were afraid.

36 And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have you bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.

37 And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons,\* if I bring him not to thee: deliver him unto my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.

[\*M. S. V., "two of my sons." See ch. 46: 9.]

38 And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he only is left; if harm befall him by the way in which we go, then will ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol†.

[†A. V. and M. S. V. to the grave.]

If they saw with surprise and dismay the money of one of their number in the mouth of his sack when he opened it at the inn (see ch. 46: 9), when they emptied their sacks at home and discovered that they all were in the same case, they naturally would believe that somebody was working out a scheme for their ruin;—a feeling in which their father fully shared; and on seeing this with his eyes, feeling in his trembling heart a bitter presentiment of the calamities which one after another were coming upon him, he could not longer restrain himself, but broke forth in bitter and sinister accusations against them. How little did he know (and how little do we know in like circumstances) of the mercies of our God, who was then working out precisely the result which Jacob most desired, and carrying into execution the deep designs of his own wise providence; exclaiming with Jacob, as our afflicted and burdened hearts often do: "*All these things are against me!*"

In vrs. 37, 38, we have another portrait of the weak and inconstant Reuben (ch. 49: 4), and we see how little weight his most violent protestations had with his father. Many of our Versions say: "*Slay my two sons, if I bring him not back to thee.*" But the translation is *not correct, although it be literal; for Reuben had four sons instead of two.* Ch. 46: 9. The M. S. V. reads: "*Slay two of my sons*"; what he meant to say was: "*I will give two lives for one*"; "I will answer for the life of thy son with the life of two of mine;"—as if with the violent death of two grandsons the venerable old man would receive comfort and reparation for the loss of Benjamin! Such was Reuben; a man of good instincts, but inconstant, passionate, without due self-command, and of little weight with his brothers and his father. See ch. 49: 4. "My son shall not go down with you!" exclaimed the old man; and Judah, "the prince among his brethren," resolved to wait for a better opportunity to convince him of the contrary.

"Ye will cause my gray hairs to go down with sorrow to the grave," is, in the Hebrew text, "*to sheol,*" once more. See Note 26 on "Sheol," or "Hades," in the comment on ch. 37: 35. There it is shown with abundance of evidence that "*sheol*" or "*hades*" is *not a place, but the psychological condition or state of souls separated from the body.* Here, as it is clear that his gray hairs could not descend lower than the grave, it is evident

that *sheol* or *hades* is not, as many imagine, a subterranean abode of vast dimensions, with different departments, separated by impassable gulfs, for different classes of dead persons; but *the common state of the dead, without any distinction between good and bad*, and is equivalent to the "grave" as in the Modern Spanish Version, and in the Common English Version. "*Sheol*" is literal enough, but *it does not put the reader in touch with the mind of the writer* (which is the real object of a translation); and "Hades," as that word is now understood and used, puts him even farther from it. The notion that there are different departments for different classes of dead persons in *hades* or *sheol*, is I believe a gentile conceit borrowed without acknowledgment from the mythology of the Greeks and Romans, and finds no solid footing either in the Old or the New Testament. There is nothing in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19—31) that even remotely suggests the idea that the "bosom of Abraham," where Lazarus was "comforted" after death, was a certain department of *hades*, in another department of which the rich man was "tormented." What the rich man saw was not another region of *hades*, different from his own, but A PERSON—"Abraham (the common father of believers), and Lazarus in his bosom." *Besides these two persons, he did not see anybody*; and it is an abuse of the parable to suppose, and much more to affirm, that "Abraham's bosom," of which Jesus speaks, *was of any more ample dimensions than that of any other father who wishes to embrace and console his afflicted child*; while the emphatic words of Jesus himself assure us that when he and the penitent thief (or malefactor) died, *the two, in that very day, were together in Paradise*. And we know, by 2 Cor. 12: 2—4, that "the third heaven" and "paradise" are one and the same thing; and from Rev. 2: 7 we learn that "*the tree of life is in the midst of the paradise of God*"; and it is past all dispute that *that tree* does not flourish in subterranean regions, nor amidst the shades of death.

[It may be objected to the above by some reader of Josephus, that in his "*Discourse to the Greeks concerning Hades*," he depicts minutely the whole thing, "Abraham's Bosom," and all! And this spurious production is sometimes referred to as proof of the popular belief of the Jews in Christ's day, and as explanatory of his allusion to *Abraham's bosom*, in this parable! The absurdity of a Jew's instructing the Greeks concerning Hades does not seem to have dawned upon the minds of such persons. This invention of idle monks, which the Jews do not accept, is found in the Appendix to Whiston's "*Complete Works*

of *Flavius Josephus*"; but in "*The Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus*," it is simply discarded, without even an apology for the omission. In the undisputed Works of Josephus (Wars of the Jews, Book III, Ch. 8, Sec. 5), he gives us this testimony as to the popular belief of the Jews in his day (in dissuading his soldiers from committing suicide): "*Do ye not know that those who depart out of this life according to the law of nature . . . their souls are pure and obedient, and obtain a most holy place in heaven? from whence in the revolution of ages they are again sent into pure bodies; while the souls of those whose hands have acted madly against themselves are received by the darkest place in Hades?*"—Tr.]

## CHAPTER XLIII.

VRS. 1—10. MUCH AGAINST HIS WILL, JACOB HAS AT LAST TO SEND BENJAMIN, UNDER THE GUARANTY WHICH JUDAH OFFERS HIM. (1707 B. C.)

1 And the famine was sore in the land.

2 And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.

3 And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.

4 If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food:

5 but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down; for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.

6 And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?

7 And they said, The man asked straitly concerning ourselves, and concerning our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we in any wise know that he would say, Bring your brother down?

8 And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones.\*

9 I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever:

10 for except we had lingered, surely we had now returned a second time.

[\*M. S. V., our families.]

The journey from Hebron, where Jacob then lived (ch. 46: 1), to Zoan in Egypt, where Joseph probably resided, would be little if any short of two weeks; and Judah said that if they had not delayed, since the time Jacob had refused to send Benjamin with them, they might have returned twice, or "a

second time"; from which we can form some conception of the loads of grain which they brought with them the first time, and of the size of their caravan, in order to supply moderately their encampment for two or three months. We see also how great must have been the riches of Jacob, in order to bring from Egypt grain in sufficient quantity to maintain so large an encampment as his. Jacob, who had resolutely refused to send Benjamin with his brothers, and had delayed as long as possible in yielding to the inevitable, had at last to tell his sons to return and buy more provisions. Judah, therefore, told him plainly that with Benjamin they would go, but that they would in no wise go without him; because "that man," the governor, had solemnly protested to them that unless they brought with them their younger brother, they absolutely should not see his face. The poor old man, with much naturalness, complained that they had done him a wrong by informing the governor that they had yet another brother; and from the reply they made him, we know, for the first time, how minutely Joseph had informed himself with regard to all the family; and they had told him the truth, without any suspicion that he was going to oblige them to bring Benjamin into Egypt. Judah then, to very different purpose from Reuben, offered him such reasonable guaranties that, under the circumstances, the poor old man could not do less than accept them.

43: 11—14. AS THERE WAS NO HELP FOR IT, JACOB GIVES ORDERS WITH REGARD TO THE SECOND JOURNEY; AND HE COMMITS THE ARDUOUS UNDERTAKING TO THE MERCIFUL PROVIDENCE OF GOD.  
(1707 B. C.)

11 And their father Israel said unto them, If it be so now, do this: take of the choice fruits of the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spicery and myrrh, nuts, and almonds;

12 And take double money in your hand; and the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks carry again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight:

13 Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man:

14 And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release unto you your other brother and Benjamin. And if I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.

Of the choicest fruits (*Heb.* the song) of the country, for there was in any case something left although they had no harvests, Jacob ordered that they should carry a present to the governor—"that man," so terrible for Jacob—with a double quantity of money, and besides this, the money returned in their sacks, and that, taking with them their brother Benjamin,



they should return to Egypt: and he commended them to God, praying that he would grant them mercy before "that man," in order that he might loose Simeon and restore Benjamin; resigning himself to the inevitable, if after all, he was to be deprived of his sons: "*If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved!*" This celebrated saying of Jacob is very like to that other which was used by Queen Esther (and it was dictated by the same emotions), when she exposed herself to death, in order to deliver her people, by going uncalled into the presence of king Ahasuerus; ordaining that all the Jews in the metropolis should pray for her (because *fasting* there is tantamount to *prayer*), adding, "*And if I perish, I perish!*" Esth. 4: 16.

43: 15—25. ANOTHER PAINFUL SURPRISE FOR THE BROTHERS OF JOSEPH. (1707 B. C.)

15 And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

16 And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, bring the men into the house, and slay, and make ready; for the men shall dine with me at noon.

17 And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men to Joseph's house.

18 And the men were afraid, because they were brought to Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in: that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses.

19 And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they spake unto him at the door of the house,

20 and said, Oh, my lord, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food:

21 and it came to pass, when we came to the lodging-place, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand.

22 And other money have we brought down in our hand to buy food: we know not who put our money in our sacks.

23 And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.

24 And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender.

25 And they made ready the present against Joseph's coming at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

With such precautions the men went down into Egypt and presented themselves before Joseph; who when he saw that Benjamin was with them, resolved to give them a magnificent reception. He therefore ordered his steward to carry them into his house and to prepare a banquet, that they might dine with him at midday. The word "slay," in vr. 16 (*Heb.* slaughter a slaughter) indicates that it was not an everyday affair; it

signifies a costly and abundant dinner of slaughtered animals, in true Oriental style (Matt. 22: 4); for the Egyptians *worshipped* animals rather than *ate* them. But his brothers knew nothing of these orders, and on seeing themselves taken into the house of Joseph, they suspected some design or plan to entrap them; and going to Joseph's steward they began to excuse themselves in reference to the money which was returned in their sacks, protesting their innocence of all evil-doing. The steward tranquilized their fears, the best he could, and brought Simeon forth to them. He gave them also water to wash their feet, as the guests of Joseph, in order that they might prepare themselves for the banquet at midday; and he also provided food for their asses. In the meantime they made ready their present for Joseph when he should return home. For that pagan, it was perfectly in accord with gentile usages to say: "Your God and the God of your father has given you (hidden) treasure in your sacks;" implying at the same time that their God was nothing to him; just as Laban had said to Jacob, in ch. 31: 29. So the ancient pagans made no exclusive claims for their own gods, but cheerfully confessed the virtue and power of the gods of the different nations, every one towards his own people. See 1 Kings 20: 23—28. And no more reasonable is the protest of a multitude of persons we meet, that Protestantism may be an excellent thing for Protestant nations, but is quite unsuited to Roman Catholic countries; whose special patrons, for many ages past, are Mary and the canonized saints.

43: 26—34. JOSEPH COMES AT MIDDAY, AND CELEBRATES A BANQUET WITH HIS BRETHREN. (1707 B. C.)

26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down themselves to him to the earth.

27 And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?

28 And they said, Thy servant our father is well, he is yet alive. And they bowed the head, and made obeisance.

29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw Benjamin his brother, his mother's son, and said, Is this your youngest brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.

30 And Joseph made haste; for his heart yearned over his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.

31 And he washed his face, and came out; and he refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.

32 And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, that did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

33 And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birth-right, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one with another.

34 And he took *and sent* messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry\* with him.

\**Heb.* drank largely.

That "present" about which they were so much concerned to have it ready, would naturally be several ass-loads of the most precious products that yet remained to them in Canaan, after two years of famine—bales or packages which they left outside the house until the hour of Joseph's coming, when they were brought inside, to be presented to him; prostrating themselves at the same time with their faces to the earth. "The house of Joseph" was not an isolated building, but a part, or department, of what is called, in ch. 45: 16, "the house of Pharaoh"; which occupied a great many acres of ground, with its edifices, its store-houses, offices, barracks, and dwellings for thousands of soldiers and others, besides those who properly formed the royal court. Compare "Caesar's household" in Phil. 4: 22. The part which is called "the house of Joseph," where he not only lived with his family, but dispatched the vast business of his high office, must have been near to the part occupied by Pharaoh and his family; for we are told in ch. 45: 2, that when Joseph could no longer restrain himself, but wept aloud, "the Egyptians heard, *and the house of Pharaoh heard.*" Ch. 45: 2.

When he had asked his brethren after their welfare and the health of their father, he allowed his eyes to rest, seemingly for the first time, on his brother Benjamin, his own mother's son; and he asked if this was the younger brother of whom they had spoken; and said to him: "God be gracious to thee my son!" This was now more than Joseph was able to stand, and he hastened to go out before his emotions and tears should betray him; and entering into his bed-chamber, he wept there. Laying then a strong restraint upon himself, he washed his face, and came out. He then commanded the servants to serve the dinner; which they did, for him apart, for his brethren apart, and for the Egyptians who ate with him apart; for, as happens now between the different *castes* of Hindustan, it was not lawful for the Egyptians to eat with the Hebrews. By order of Joseph, his brethren were seated before him according to their respective ages; something which called their attention and filled them with amazement; Joseph arranging all the acts of this drama so that little by little it should dawn on them that he was the brother whom they had sold, before they reached

the final outcome of the affair. He himself served the portions, or messes of meat, and he honored his brother Benjamin with a portion of food five times greater than that of any of the others. The same form of honor was used by Samuel towards Saul, when he commanded the cook to bring the portion which he had reserved for this special guest, ever since the time that the people were invited; "and the cook took up the thigh (or shoulder), with what was upon it, and set it before Saul." 1 Sam. 9: 24. The brothers of Joseph were at last able to lay aside their fears, and to eat, and drink, and make merry with him; which is another proof that the Egyptians both made and drank wine. See ch. 40: 11, and *Note 27*.

#### CHAPTER XLIV.

##### VRS. 1, 2. JOSEPH'S SILVER CUP. (1707 B. C.)

1 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.

2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his grain money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

But their mirth was of short duration. The dinner was hardly finished when Joseph commanded his steward (a man of confidence, and whom it is probable he had informed, partly at least, of his plan and object), to fill the sacks with as much as they would hold, putting each man's money into the mouth of his sack, and to place the silver cup of his own individual use in the sack of Benjamin; an artifice which fortunately they did not suspect; for otherwise, they would have slept little that night.

Joseph's "*silver cup*," in addition to other circumstances of this history, seems to refute a great part of what some writers allege as to the luxury and splendor of the court of the Pharaohs in the time of Joseph; affirming that it rivalled the European courts of modern times. This seems to me a piece of pure extravagance. Esth. 1: 4—7 describes minutely the splendor and extravagant luxury of the court of Persia; of which we do not find a trace in the book of Genesis, when treating of the court of the Pharaohs. *The two famous chariots which Pharaoh had for his personal use* (ch. 41: 43), the second of which he gave to Joseph, do not suggest to us the idea of any extravagant luxury; and this cup of Joseph likewise, "*his silver cup*," seems to tell the same story. In the days of Solomon, silver was lightly esteemed; and "all his drinking vessels, and all the

vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold." 1 Kings 10: 21.

44: 3—13. JOSEPH'S CUP IS FOUND IN BENJAMIN'S SACK. (1707 B. C.)

3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses.

4 *And* when they were gone out of the city, and were not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?

5 Is not this that in which my lord drinketh, and whereby he indeed divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.

6 And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these words.

7 And they said unto him, Wherefore speaketh my lord such words as these? Far be it from thy servants that they should do such a thing.

8 Behold, the money which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?

9 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.

10 And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words; he with whom it is found shall be my bondman; and ye shall be blameless.

11 Then they hasted, and took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack.

12 And he searched, *and* began at the eldest, and left off at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

13 Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

At dawn of day the men set out on their journey. A blending of good and evil is what Joseph thought most convenient to work in them the effect he desired to produce. They set out joyfully and very early, for everything had turned out according to their highest expectations and wishes. But scarcely had they got outside of the city, when Joseph's steward overtook them, and laid against them the formal accusation of having committed a robbery in the house of his lord, returning evil for good, in recompense of his having admitted them into his dwelling and to his own table. They exculpated themselves with the utmost sincerity, and carried the protest of their innocence to the point of saying that whichever of them was found in possession of the missing cup should die, and all of them would be servants of his lord. The steward accepted the proposal, with the modification that none should die, and that one only should be his servant—the man with whom the cup was found. They hastily took down their sacks from their asses, while he examined them, beginning with the eldest; and the cup was found in the sack of Benjamin! They therefore, all of them, rent their garments, in

token of grief and desperation; and re-lading their asses, they returned to the city.

44: 14—17. THEY PRESENT THEMSELVES AGAIN BEFORE JOSEPH.  
(1707 B. C.)

14 And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; and he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground.

15 And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? know ye not that such a man as I can indeed divine?

16 And Judah said, what shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's bondmen, both we, and he also in whose hand the cup is found.

17 And he said, Far be it from me that I should do so: the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my bondman; but as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

Joseph was waiting for them in the same place, and they cast themselves at his feet, overwhelmed with desperate affliction. Prostrate thus before him, and understanding how completely they were in his power, to mete out to them life or death, according to his will, as spies and thieves, Joseph upbraids them with their conduct, asking if they did not know that such a man as he must understand divination (an art much practiced in Egypt), so as to be able to know of the robbery which had been committed. It seems almost an act of cruelty on his part to place his brother Benjamin in so false a situation, even for one hour; but his plan did not admit of any other procedure; and oftentimes in things even more serious the innocent must suffer for the guilty.

Judah then began, and in words of deepest feeling he manifested how profoundly all their hearts were moved with the sense of their guilt: "What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants!"—"iniquity," which in their mouth could only refer to the great crime committed against Joseph twenty-two or twenty-three years before; without even knowing (though doubtless they had begun to suspect it), that that brother was the same man who stood before them. This result, with the conviction and confession of their sin, the plan of Joseph had admirably worked out in them; and all of them, the guilty together with the innocent Benjamin, surrendered themselves at his feet as bond-servants. This offer Joseph solemnly protested he would not accept, declaring his purpose to retain only the one with whom the cup was found, and to send away the rest, that they might go to their father in peace.

44: 18—34. THE ELOQUENT AND SOUL-MOVING ARGUMENT WITH WHICH JUDAH PLEADS WITH JOSEPH TO RELEASE BENJAMIN, AND RETAIN HIM AS BOND-SERVANT IN HIS STEAD. (1707 B. C.)

18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh, my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant; for thou art even as Pharaoh.

19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?

20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother; and his father loveth him.

21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.

22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die.

23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.

24 And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

25 And our father said, Go again, buy us a little food.

26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us.

27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons:

28 and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I have not seen him since:

29 and if ye take this one also from me, and harm befall him, ye will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol.\*

30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad is not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life;

31 it will come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not *with us*, that he will die: and thy servants will bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to Sheol.

32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then shall I bear the blame to my father for ever.

33 Now therefore, let thy servant, I pray thee, abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

34 For how shall I go up to my father, if the lad be not with me? lest I see the evil that shall come on my father.

\*A. V. and M. S. V., the grave.

The paragraph needs no explanation and admits of no embellishment. Vr. 28, however, fixes our attention on the circumstance that in all those twenty-two or twenty-three years of bitter grief for his favorite son, Jacob had not yet lost the hope of seeing him again. It is true that he says: "and the one (Joseph) went out from me, and I said: Surely he is torn in pieces!" but he ends the same sentence, adding "and *I have not seen him since.*" It is clear from indications already given that the aged patriarch distrusted the good-faith and loyalty of his sons, and suspected some treachery on their part. The wives of his sons had no doubt grave suspicions of a truth which *they* had not been able to keep secret for twenty-two or twenty-three years; and thus it would

not be possible to conceal it entirely from the distrustful and distressed old man. This outburst of true and moving eloquence, which will be always famous among people who read the Bible, as a jewel of inimitable beauty, had more effect than Judah expected; for it broke Joseph's heart to pieces, and tore from his face the mask of cold reserve and strangeness which he had till then affected.

## CHAPTER XLV.

VRS. 1—15. JOSEPH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN.

(1707 B. C.)

1 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians heard, and the house of Pharaoh heard.

3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5 And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

6 For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and there are yet five years, in which there shall be neither plowing nor harvest.

7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance.

8 So now it was not you that sent me hither. but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not;

10 and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:

11 and there will I nourish thee; for there are yet five years of famine; lest thou come to poverty, thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast.

12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you.

13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen: and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

15 And he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

Joseph had acted with greater or less skill a part which he he was no longer able to represent. It was indispensable for him at this point to remove the mask and give vent to the over-mastering feelings of his heart. He therefore cried in a loud voice that



all should go out from his presence; and no one remained with them, when, giving loose rein to his emotions and liberty to his bursting heart, he broke forth in loud and prolonged weeping. For some time Joseph's steward and those who attended most constantly at his side had waited with interest and anxiety the outcome of a drama, whose separate acts they could not comprehend; but on hearing the loud weeping which Joseph could no longer suppress, they found the expected explanation: "The Egyptians heard and the house of Pharaoh heard." Here we see that "the house of Joseph" was no more than a part of "the house of Pharaoh," and both were of vast extent. After the first paroxysm of weeping had passed, and he was able to control his emotions, Joseph said to his brethren: "I am Joseph!" And not satisfied with the certainty of what they had already told him, with great naturalness he asks them once more: "Doth my father yet live?"

The Bible paints all this scene with wonderful vividness, as only the Bible can paint it. Overwhelmed by emotions which could not find expression in words, they stood silent and terror-stricken before Joseph. The positive certainty of what they had before only suspected took away their breath, and instead of drawing near to him, they rather withdrew from him. Joseph then besought them to come near; and they having done so, he repeats: "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt!" and as the horror of their sin and crime, thus awakened, visibly overcomes them, Joseph adds, that they should not be angry with themselves for this, since by its means God was saving life, and carrying into effect his purposes of great mercy. While the purpose of God did not at all diminish the atrocity of their sin, Joseph carried this thought to the extreme of saying to them: "It was not you that sent me hither, but God!" with the purpose of diminishing in some degree the alarm and terror which had seized upon their minds. In the same manner Peter exhorted the people to repent and turn to God, by the consideration that their atrocious crime in putting to death their promised Messiah (= "the Christ") took place "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2: 23, 38) for their salvation and that of the world: and some days later he said to them that what God had before announced by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ (or Messiah) should suffer, he had fulfilled, by means of their ignorance and sin; and he used this as an argument why they should repent and turn to God. Acts 3: 17—19.

Giving expression, then, to his ardent desire to see his aged father, he hastens them, even before he had given them his brotherly embrace, to bring him at once, and tell the old man,

bowed down still with grief, of all his glory and power in Egypt, and inform him that he had already a place prepared for him and for all his; manifesting thus that Joseph had his plan well studied out beforehand in all its details. But it was not till after he had fallen on their necks and wept upon them all, commencing with his own brother Benjamin, that his brethren regained sufficient composure and confidence to speak with him. Most admirable is this scene as the Bible paints it for us, and of inimitable beauty! Beautiful also is the application which all this has to the case of *our brother Jesus*, brought out from the prison-house of the grave, and "exalted to be a Prince and a Savior" (Acts 5: 31); and those who receive him unto salvation, receive him more or less in the same way as these brethren of Joseph: with repentance and sorrow of heart for their past sins and want of love toward him. Likewise, as Joseph did not impose on them three months of penance, till they had proved themselves worthy men, but gave them at once the embrace and kiss of reconciliation, so also does our brother Jesus with us, when we turn to him with repentance and faith and sincere purpose of a new life;—without which repentance is a sham.

45: 16—20. WHEN THE NEWS IS HEARD BY PHARAOH, IT CAUSES HIM GREAT SATISFACTION, AND HE GIVES THE NECESSARY ORDERS FOR JOSEPH'S FATHER AND KINDRED TO COME WITHOUT DELAY. (1706 B. C.)

16 And the report thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants.

17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye: lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan;

18 And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.

19 Now thou art commanded, this do ye: take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.

20 Also regard not your stuff: for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.

When the loud weeping of Joseph was heard by "the house of Pharaoh," the king did not long delay in finding out what had happened; and that God who was fulfilling his own high purposes in Joseph and his kindred, so disposed the minds of Pharaoh and his counselors that the event gave satisfaction and pleasure to them all; so that the king at once took the necessary steps for the immediate removal of Jacob and all the clan, or tribe, into Egypt. With such favor he looked upon the matter, that he put at their service the best that the land of Egypt contained. Vr. 20. It is

believed that at this time the reigning dynasty was that of the *Hyksos*, or "Shepherd Kings,"—Syrians or Asiatics who had invaded Egypt, and had seized upon the kingdom, and who were ill-regarded by the native races of Egypt; by whom they were finally expelled, more than 100 years later, at the time when "there arose another king (or dynasty) that knew not Joseph," as we are told in Ex. 1: 8; Acts 7: 18. It is reasonably believed that as they were foreigners and Asiatics, Pharaoh and his counselors looked with peculiar satisfaction on the coming of Jacob and his people, a large and powerful tribe of Asiatics, who would not only increase the power and riches of his kingdom, but would give additional firmness to his throne, against the discontent and disturbances of the native races. So wise is our God, and so wisely does he make use of all natural events to carry out his great enterprises; and one of the most precious lessons that we are taught by this history of Joseph, is that of having ever the most unlimited confidence in his power and providence, and in his inexhaustible love.

"Trust in him at all times, ye people;  
pour your heart before him;  
God is a refuge for us!" Ps. 62: 8.

45: 21—24. JOSEPH AT ONCE MAKES THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHAT PHARAOH HAD COMMANDED; HE ALSO GIVES GIFTS TO HIS BRETHREN AND SENDS A PRESENT TO HIS FATHER.  
(1706 B. C.)

21 And the sons of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way.

22 To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment.

23 And to his father he sent after this manner: ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with grain and bread and provision for his father by the way.

24 So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

In Bible times horses were only used for war (see Job 39: 19—25 and Ps. 20: 7); for which reason the Israelites did not use them until the days of David and Solomon. The wagons which Pharaoh sent to bring the women and children of the family of Jacob would naturally be ox-carts, as in fact the derivation of the word in Hebrew implies. Joseph, who had distinguished his own brother Benjamin in the feast which he made for his brethren, here distinguishes him again with even more signal marks of his preference, giving to each of them changes of raiment, but giving

to Benjamin five changes of raiment and 300 "pieces of silver"; by which phrase we ordinarily understand the shekel= 60 cents of our currency. To his venerable father he sent ten asses loaded with the most precious things of Egypt, and ten she-asses loaded with food for his father on the way. In the Hebrew text a distinction is always made between he-asses and she-asses, which are not the masculine and feminine forms of the same word, but words entirely different. For us it was impossible to appreciate the practical difference that there may have been between the two; but it seems that the preference was given to the she-ass, especially for riding. Comp. Job. 1: 3; 42: 12; Num. 22: 21; Judg. 5: 19,—a distinction between the two but seldom noted in our English Versions.

On dispatching his brethren, Joseph did not regard it as needless to charge them that they *should not quarrel by the way*; something that was very likely to happen under the circumstances.

45: 25—28. JACOB RECEIVES THE TIDINGS WITH A COLD HEART; BUT HIS SPIRIT REVIVES AT THE SIGHT OF THE WAGONS. (1706 B. C.)

25 And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father.

26 And they told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt. And his heart fainted,\* for he believed them not.

27 And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived:

28 and Israel said, It is enough: Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

[\**Mod. Span. Ver.*, his heart remained cold.]

We know by ch. 37: 14 that Jacob was residing in the valley of Hebron when Joseph was sold into Egypt; and we know from ch. 46: 1 that he was still residing there when Joseph sent for him; because he began his journey and came to Beersheba, which was 25 miles to the S. W. of Hebron, or Mamre, on the way to Egypt. The sons of Jacob passed over this road in haste, in order to carry their father the tidings of his son Joseph. It is certain, as we have seen, that Jacob believed his sons had deceived him with regard to the fate of Joseph; and the strange, mysterious and inexplicable events which had happened to his sons in Egypt the first time, had given him vague presentiments of good or evil, or of good and evil; and nevertheless when his sons explained it all, with the joyous cry: "Joseph is yet alive, and he is the governor of all the land of Egypt!" his heart did not answer to that announcement with any emotion, because he did not believe them; on the contrary, his heart fainted; (M. S. V., remained cold); but

when he had heard the messages which they brought him from his son, and when he saw the wagons sent to carry him and the women and children of his family, his spirit revived, and he exclaimed: "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die!" It is evident that the unaccustomed sight of that train of wagons, or ox-carts, created in him, and in all of them, a very deep impression. Old age is of itself sad; that of Jacob we know from his own mouth that it was so in a pre-eminent degree (ch. 47: 9); when, therefore, he heard the news of Joseph, he said that he would go to see him, after which he would die content; although he lived seventeen years after that.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

## VRS. 1—7. JACOB AND ALL HIS LINEAGE GO DOWN INTO EGYPT.

1 And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.

2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.

3 And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt: for I will there make of thee a great nation:

4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

5 And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

6 And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him:

7 His sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

Jacob therefore in all haste, with all his, and with all that he had that was removable, set out on his journey, and went to Beer-sheba (25 miles to the S. W. of Hebron), the old abode of his grandfather Abraham, and there upon the ancient altar of the family, he offered sacrifices to God; seeking information doubtless as to God's will; for vr. 3 gives us a clear indication that he had a certain dread of going down to Egypt, even after he had set out on the journey; and not without good cause; for the step was of the gravest importance, and of the most serious consequences. God therefore appeared to him in visions of the night, and tranquillized his fears, authorizing his descent into Egypt, and making him promises suitable to the case; and in particular, that he would there make of him a great nation; that he would go down with him, and he would bring him up again; and that Joseph should close his eyes in death. The three promises taken together make it impossible to understand "I will also surely bring

thee up again," of an early return, after the years of famine had passed; though Jacob and his sons evidently so understood it (see ch. 47: 4), not grasping the three in their true scope and intent, as seen after their fulfilment. They are to be understood primarily of his dead body, with regard to which he exacted an oath at the time of his death, that they should not bury him in Egypt; and again, the words are to be understood of his descendants, when they went up from Egypt to take possession of the land which God had given to their fathers. Not even at such a juncture as this was Jacob willing to leave the land given to them, without a divine authorization. Comp. ch. 24: 5—6.

Cheered, therefore, with these promises and with the divine authorization, Jacob and all his set out again on the journey. They carried with them their flocks and herds and all the movable goods and chattels which they had acquired in the land of Canaan. The "stuff" which Pharaoh said they should not concern themselves about (ch. 45: 20), would be that multitude of objects and conveniences which they had necessarily to leave behind them; but they were told to give themselves no concern about that, "because the good of all the land of Egypt is yours." So well did God care for the removal of his people into Egypt, that it might be verified under the most favorable conditions! The message which Joseph gave to Pharaoh was: "My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, *and all that they have*, are come out of the land of Canaan." Ch. 47: 1. All their servants and dependants, therefore, they doubtless brought with them, although the servants are not mentioned here; any more than in the repeated journeys they made to Egypt to buy grain. Abraham had 318 of them, "young men," born in his house, and trained to the use of arms, whom he took forth to war (without counting the men that he left for the protection of the encampment), when he pursued after Chedorlaomer and the other invading kings (ch. 13: 14); which would represent an encampment of not less than 1,500 or 2,000 persons. And if Abimelech king of Gerar had any cause to say to Isaac: "Go from us, for *thou art much stronger than we*" (ch. 26: 16), it is reasonable to believe that Jacob and his twelve sons, 100 years later, would carry with them into Egypt an encampment of not less than 3,000 or 4,000 persons. It is very important to bear this circumstance in mind, when we come to account for the enormous increase of the people in Egypt, in the space of 215 years,—almost seven generations of 30 years each. An incredible increase, it might well be esteemed, if we attended only to those mentioned in vrs. 7—27, the 70 souls of the family of Jacob who came into Egypt. But it is noways incredible

that 3,000 or 4,000 persons, masters and servants, all of them circumcised Israelites (ch. 15: 12, 13), should increase into a nation of two or three millions in the space of 215 years, doubling every 20 or 25 years; and the Bible says that they increased in a very extraordinary manner: *Heb.* they bred or swarmed (like fishes). Ex. 1: 7, 12. Comp. ch. 1: 20—21.

46: 8—27. A COMPLETE LIST OF THE LINEAGE OF JACOB WHICH ESTABLISHED THEMSELVES IN EGYPT, INCLUDING JOSEPH AND HIS SONS.

8 And these are the names of the children of Israel, who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob's first-born.

9 And the sons of Reuben: Hanoch, and Pallu, and Hezron, and Carmi.

10 And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman.

11 And the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

12 And the sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Perez, and Zerah: but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.

13 And the sons of Issachar: Tola, and Puvah, and Iob, and Shimron.

14 And the sons of Zebulun: Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel.

15 These are the sons of Leah, whom she bare unto Jacob in Paddan-aram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three.

16 And the sons of Gad: Ziphion, and Haggi, Shuni, and Ezbou, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli.

17 And the sons of Asher: Imnah, and Ishvah, and Ishvi, and Beriah, and Serah their sister; and the sons of Beriah: Heber, and Malchiel.

18 These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter; and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls.

19 The sons of Rachel Jacob's wife: Joseph and Benjamin.

20 And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-phera priest of On, bare unto him.

21 And the sons of Benjamin: Bela, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard.

22 These are the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob: all the souls were fourteen.

23 And the sons of Dan: Hushim.

24 And the sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shillem.

25 These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and these she bare unto Jacob: all the souls were seven.

26 All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, that came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six;

27 and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, that came into Egypt, were threescore and ten.

Dinah is expressly mentioned in the list of the children of Leah, and is counted among the 70 persons of the house of Jacob who went down to Egypt; excepting from the list only the wives of the sons of Jacob. Vr. 26. It would seem, therefore, that Jacob had no other daughter of his own, except Dinah, and that the

words "his daughters," in vr. 7 and ch. 37: 35, refer naturally to his *daughters-in-law*; since it is said in vrs. 26, 27 that *all the souls of his own immediate family*, "besides Jacob's sons' wives, . . . all the souls of the house of Jacob that came into Egypt were seventy." It is to be noted that Stephen says in Acts 7: 14 that Jacob and all his kindred who went down into Egypt were "seventy-five persons." This is because the Greek version of the LXX. for some reason adds to the Hebrew text several children of Manasseh and of Ephraim, and increases the total number to 75, without regard to the fact that at the time of the arrival of Jacob and his family, Manasseh and Ephraim could not have been more than seven or eight years of age; so that these sons of theirs were born to them many years later. But Stephen, a Greek-speaking Jew, naturally quoted from the Greek Version which was familiar to him; without feeling that it was his duty to stop in his discourse in order to correct the errors of the Greek text, even if he was aware of them. The mention of Shaul (or Saul), of the family of Simeon, as "the son of a Canaanitish woman" (Vr. 10) gives us to understand, as before said, that, with the exception of Judah, who also married a Canaanitish woman (ch. 38: 2), and Joseph, who married an Egyptian princess, the sons of Jacob married women of their own encampment.

46: 28—30. JACOB NOTIFIES JOSEPH OF HIS COMING; AND HE GOES FORTH TO MEET HIM AS FAR AS THE LAND OF GOSHEN. (1706 B. C.)

28 And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to show the way before him unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.

29 And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen; and he presented himself unto him, and fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.

30 And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, that thou art yet alive.

Judah, as "the prince among his brethren," was sent before, to notify Joseph of the coming of his father and his kindred, in order that he might be there beforehand to meet them. It seems that this is the sense of the Hebrew (A. V. "to direct his—Joseph's—face unto Goshen") which is somewhat indeterminate in this place. In fact, Joseph (according to vr. 29) was in Goshen to receive his father at the time of his arrival, Judah and Joseph traveling very rapidly, while Jacob and his encampment would travel slowly. The meeting of the aged patriarch with his son, so many years lost to him, is described in language beautiful and tender to the last degree, and which needs no embellishments on our part. Jacob was old, and he was not naturally of the most amiable disposition. His elder sons, as this history shows,



bore toward him little affection, and showed him little consideration; while Joseph, his favorite son, heaped upon him a wealth of affection and honor, which neither in life nor in death were ever chilled; and it is interesting in a high degree to observe such affection and such honor bestowed on an aged father.

To these manifestations of honor and affection Jacob answered with effusion of his soul: "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face; that thou art yet alive!" His words bring to mind those of the ancient Simeon, when he received into his arms the infant Jesus:

"Now lettest thy servant depart, oh Lord,  
according to thy word, in peace;  
for mine eyes have seen thy salvation," etc. Luke 2: 29.

46: 31—34. JOSEPH GIVES INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS BRETHREN AS TO HOW THEY SHALL ANSWER PHARAOH WHEN THEY ARE PRESENTED BEFORE HIM. (1706 B. C.)

31 And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and tell Pharaoh, and will say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me;

32 and the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.

33 And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation?

34 that ye shall say, Thy servants have been keepers of cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen: for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

It is evident that at this time the capital of the country and the court of the king were in Lower Egypt, not far from the land of Goshen, which was situated near the Isthmus of Suez. The arrival of a tribe of Asiatics so numerous and important, made it necessary that they should be presented before Pharaoh, and comply with the law and usage of giving an account of themselves, and asking permission to remain and traffic in the country. Comp. ch. 42: 34. The circumstance that Pharaoh had sent to bring them, did not modify this usage, and Joseph gave them instructions as to how they should reply to the inquiries of Pharaoh, in order to gain the object which so deeply interested him; to wit, that they should settle in the land of Goshen and nowhere else. In this also we see the hand of God. If the Israelites had been colonized in central Egypt, or in the south, or in the west, it would have enormously increased the difficulty of their exodus, when the time arrived for them to return to Canaan. As Pharaoh had said that Joseph should settle his father and his

brethren in the best of the land, he chose that part which would be the easiest and the best for them to enter, and for them to depart from; a great part of it desert, but very suitable for the pasturage of cattle, and which contained parts very suitable for the cultivation of the soil, being both rich and productive. Thus it would happen that whenever the time of the Exodus should arrive (a time unknown to them), the people would be already on the border of Egypt nearest to Canaan. And as the Egyptians held shepherds in abomination, the land of Goshen would be precisely the part where they would give least offence to the native races of Egypt. The detestation in which the Egyptians held shepherds and herdsmen is explained in part by the fact that the Egyptians did not eat flesh, and that the animals which the Israelites both ate and offered in sacrifice to God, were objects of Egyptian worship. Comp. Ex. 8: 26. It is also probable that it had something to do with the hatred which the Egyptians felt toward the usurpers of their throne, who were probably the reigning dynasty at that time,—foreigners come from Asia, and who go in history under the name of the "Shepherd Kings." It appears from ch. 47: 6 that Pharaoh himself had cattle, and desired that Joseph should provide him, from among his brethren, with active and able chief-shepherds for the management of them; which seems to indicate two things: (1) that the hatred of the Egyptians towards the office of shepherd, was prejudicial to his interests; and (2) that he was himself of Asiatic race, and raised cattle for his own use. Joseph, as we have seen, commanded his steward to slaughter animals for the banquet which he made for his brothers. Ch. 43: 16. So then the prejudice which the Egyptians had against shepherds helped to the attainment of the object which so much interested Joseph, to wit, that his father and brethren should not go far into the country, but settle on the northeastern frontier, which was nearest to Canaan.

#### CHAPTER XLVII.

VER. 1—6. JOSEPH PRESENTS FIVE OF HIS BROTHERS BEFORE PHARAOH.  
(1706 B. C.)

1 Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen.

2 And from among his brethren he took five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh.

3 And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and our fathers.

4 And they said unto Pharaoh, To sojourn in the land are we come; for there is no pasture for thy servants' flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.

5 And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee:

6 the land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and thy brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell; and if thou knowest any able men among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.

Without loss of time, Joseph acquainted Pharaoh with the fact of the arrival of his father and his kindred, informing him also that they were in the N. E. extremity of the country, in the land of Goshen; where he desired that they should remain. "From the totality (*Heb.* "the end"—whole number; as in Num. 22: 41) of his brethren he took five men, and presented them before Pharaoh," in order to comply with the established usage, and to gain his formal permission for them to remain in the land of Goshen: with all of which arrangements Pharaoh was well satisfied, and readily acceded to the request that they should dwell in the land of Goshen. It is to be noted here that they gave him frankly to understand that they came only to sojourn in Egypt, on account of the famine in the land of Canaan, and distinctly with the purpose of returning there soon. It is evident that though the designs of God were very different, Jacob and his sons had no other thought than that of returning to their country when the existing necessity had passed; and it is probable that they alleged this circumstance as a reason why he should permit them to remain in the land of Goshen. This part of the country is here called "*Goshen*," and in *vr.* 11 it is called "*the land of Rameses*." It is probable that the western part of Goshen, which touched upon the delta of the river Nile, and its system of canals for irrigation, was in fact the most fertile and the best of the land of Egypt, while the part toward the east and N. E., which touched upon the desert, would be the most convenient for the raising of cattle.

47: 7—10. JACOB ALSO IS PRESENTED BEFORE PHARAOH, AND BLESSES HIM. (1706 B. C.)

7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

8 And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How many are the days of the years of thy life?

9 And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage\* are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.\*

10 And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from the presence of Pharaoh.

\*Or, sojournings.

The apostle says in Heb. 7: 7, that "without any dispute, the less is blessed of the greater" (*Gr.* better: see 1: 4). Jacob, without presuming upon being greater or better than Pharaoh, as the prophet and priest of God blessed the king of Egypt, and at the end of the interview, he blessed him again; and it is probable that his "blessing" served likewise (as is also our use), to express his gratitude toward the friend and protector of his son, who in addition to this, bestowed with liberal hand great favors on Jacob and his family. When the king asked him: "How many are the days of the years of thy life!" (for it is probable that his age called the attention of Pharaoh, as being greater than was usual in Egypt), the patriarch, who was well-experienced in evils, responded in words which, if not elegant, are certainly notable, and are well-remembered by all who are intimately acquainted with the Bible: "The days of the years of my pilgrimage (*Heb.* sojournings) are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." Under the same remembrance of evils experienced, and of the good promised to the people of Jehovah, Moses the man of God exclaims:

"Return, Oh Jehovah; how long?  
and let it repent thee concerning thy servants!  
Oh satisfy us early with thy mercy;  
that we may rejoice and be glad all our days!  
Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast  
    afflicted us,  
and the years wherein we have seen evil!  
Let thy work appear unto thy servants,  
and thy glory unto their children;  
and let the beauty of Jehovah our God be upon us,  
and establish thou the work of our hands upon us;  
yea, the work of our hands establish thou it!"

Ps. 90: 13—17.

All the life of the patriarchs, from the time that God called Abraham out of his father's house and the land of his nativity, until they took possession of the promised land, is called a "pilgrimage,"—or "sojourning"—a temporary abode; the homeless life of one who lives in a *country not his own*, without the rights of citizenship; and thus Canaan is called the "land of their sojournings." It is not that their human life is called a sojourning, or pilgrimage, far from their country, Heaven; but the Old Testament Scriptures speak rather of the "sojournings of Abra-

ham," and those of Isaac and those of Jacob. Ch. 17: 8; 28: 4; 37: 1; Ex. 6: 4. In this very passage (vr. 9) the Hebrew text is *sojournings*, rather than *pilgrimage*. It is just and proper to understand the word in an accommodated and spiritual sense, as does the apostle in Heb. 11: 13—16; and in vr. 9 it is natural to understand the word, as translated in the singular number, of the mortal sojourning of Jacob: but in ch. 36: 7, Canaan is called "the land of the sojournings" of the worldly Esau, no less than of Jacob; and in Ezek. 20: 38, Babylon is called "the land of the sojournings" of those impious Jews who were not to return any more to the land of Israel. In the Hebrew text, the word is of frequent use to designate a temporary abode in a given place, in distinction from a permanent residence.

After blessing Pharaoh again, Jacob went out from his presence.

47: 11, 12. JOSEPH MAKES PROVISION FOR HIS FATHER AND HIS KINDRED. (1706 B. C.)

11 And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded.

12 And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families.

We know from vrs. 20—22 that during the long famine the Egyptian priests did not lose their lands (as did the common people of Egypt), because Pharaoh provided them with a daily ration, so that they did not have to sell their lands to buy food. But Joseph made a better provision for his father and his kindred; he "gave them a possession in the land of Egypt," and then provided them with subsistence during the five remaining years of the famine.

As Joseph enjoyed unlimited favor and unlimited power, and none denied or disputed the great benefits which Egypt owed to him, he was able to make these arrangements for the family of his father, without anybody being opposed to it: under other circumstances it would not have been possible for him to have done so. It is regarded as certain also, as has been said, that this happened under the government of one of the Shepherd Kings, who being Asiatics, naturally favored the foreigners who were of the same general stock as themselves; since they would assist in maintaining the ascendancy of that dynasty; which at a later day was dethroned and cast out of the country.

47: 13—26. "THE FIFTH FOR PHARAOH."

13 And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine.

14 And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.

15 And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for *our* money faileth.

16 And Joseph said, Give your cattle: and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail.

17 And they brought their cattle unto Joseph; and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, and for the flocks, and for the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread in exchange for all their cattle for that year.

18 And when that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide from my lord, how that our money is all spent; and the herds of cattle are my lord's; there is nothing left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands:

19 wherefore should we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, and that the land be not desolate.

20 So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine was sore upon them: and the land became Pharaoh's.

21 And as for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of the border of Egypt even to the other end thereof.

22 Only the land of the priests bought he not: for the priests had a portion from Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them; wherefore they sold not their land.

23 Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall now sow the land.

24 And it shall come to pass at the ingatherings, that ye shall give a fifth unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.

25 And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.

26 And Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; only the land of the priests alone became not Pharaoh's.

We know from secular history that the Egyptians paid to the king the fifth part of the produce of the soil, except the lands of the priests, which were exempt from this tribute: here we have given us the origin of both usages. Among the Israelites, God claimed, by the Mosaic law, the tenth part of the produce of the soil; although, as no provision was made for the collectors of tithes, it remained at the will of the individual to pay or not to pay. See Deut. 26: 12—15; Mal. 3: 10. Besides this tithe for God and his worship, Samuel said to the people who demanded of him a king, that their king "would take the tenth of their seed and (the produce) of their vineyards" (1 Sam. 8: 15), and would doubtless take care that this tithe was of necessity paid; but in both cases, in Egypt and in Canaan, the owners of the lands were few and the produce of the soil in good years was generally very

great; and *as the laborers did not pay*, but only the owners of the land, the tithe never became the heavy burden which it has always been where the Romish priests claimed the tithe as theirs of divine right, under the sanctions of the civil law, and appointed tithe-collectors to make effective their usurped and mis-called rights.

It would be a false inference to draw from vrs. 15—20 that before this the Egyptians in their generality were owners of land and cattle: the vast majority of them were always miserable slaves, or worse than slaves, without possessions of any kind, and without rights; 200,000 of whom, it is said, were occupied for the space of 20 years in building a single one of the pyramids.\* The paragraph speaks of persons who were owners of landed estate. Besides this, the cultivated districts were nothing more than a narrow strip of fertile land, watered by the annual inundations of the river Nile, the owners of which were necessarily rich or well-to-do people. In regard to the equitableness of appropriating the fifth part of the harvest in the seven years of abundance, and selling the same to the people during the seven years of famine, until their money was exhausted, and the people had to sell for bread, first their cattle, and last their lands and then their persons, in order to live, we are not in circumstances to judge the case accurately, so far as Joseph is concerned. The government in Egypt has always been despotic, and the fifth which was appropriated in the seven years of abundance, left still in the hands of the proprietors more grain than they needed or were able to use. For, as the sagacious Gideon said to appease the infuriated Ephraimites: "Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?" (Judg. 8: 2), the four-fifth parts of such harvests of the valley of the Nile would be more, in amount, and harvested with less labor, than the most abundant of our crops.

The Egyptians likewise had timely notice to make their own personal arrangements for the years of famine. But for a crisis like that, all the faith and wisdom of a Joseph was necessary, sustained by all the resources of the State, and the despotic power of an absolute monarchy, in order to save the nation from destruction. However that may have been, so manifest was the salvation which Joseph had wrought, that the Egyptians were well satisfied with the yoke which he laid upon them, when he established a law in Egypt, which lasted till the days of Moses,

\*"The building of the Great Pyramid, according to Herodotus, occupied 30 years time, and relays of men numbering in all eleven millions." Geike, *Hours with the Bible*, Vol. 1: p. 135.—Tr.

and still later: "*The fifth for Pharaoh!*" Meanwhile, and till the years of famine had passed, for the convenience of attending to the maintenance of the people, he removed them from the villages and the fields to the cities, and there sustained them at the expense of the public treasury; and when the years of seed-time and harvest again returned, he gave them lands and seed; with the understanding that the fifth part should be for Pharaoh, and the four-fifths for themselves; excepting always the lands of the priests. In this was manifested the *religiousness* of the ancient Egyptians, celebrated by Herodotus and other writers; but they did not on this account fail of being a people extremely corrupted and vicious in their moral character. The same thing happened in Babylon and Assyria, people extremely religious in their way, and where the priests exercised a preponderating influence in all their affairs; but morally corrupt to a degree that can hardly be believed in our day. So also in Europe during the Middle Ages, the clergy and barons had everything their own way, a priest was worth more than a king, and the "*keeper of the king's conscience*" was a more important officer than prime minister; but in regard to liberty, justice, purity of customs, and good morals, with security of person, of life and of the family, and especially the honor and safety of women, the case could hardly have been worse. There is only one religion with regard to which it is true that how much more fervently religious a people is, so much the more free, moral, intelligent, industrious, happy and well-governed it is; and that is the religion of the Bible—the only religion which is truly that of Jesus Christ: but the more intensely and fervently pagan, Mohammedan or *Roman Catholic* any people or nation is, so much the more unfortunate it will be in all these respects. Count them over and see. Jesus Christ has said, and still is saying: "*Call no man your father (=spiritual father) on the earth; for one (only) is your Father, who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one (only) is your Master, the Christ;*"—"one (only) is your Master, and all ye are brethren" (Matt. 23: 9, 10, 8)—a doctrine which "the priests" can never tolerate.

47: 27—31. JACOB LIVES SEVENTEEN YEARS IN EGYPT, AND WHEN NEAR HIS DEATH, HE EXACTS AN OATH FROM JOSEPH TO BURY HIM ONLY IN THE LAND OF HIS INHERITANCE. (1689 B. C.)

27 And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen; and they gat them possessions therein, and were fruitful, and multiplied exceedingly.



28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were a hundred forty and seven years.

29 And the time drew near that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found favor in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me: bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt.

30 but when I sleep with my fathers, thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place. And he said, I will do as thou hast said.

31 And he said, Swear unto me; and he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.

Jacob had passed seventeen years tranquilly in Egypt, living but a short distance from his son Joseph (ch. 45: 10), when he drew near to the inevitable hour of death. He sent therefore and called Joseph, and exacted of him a promise that he would carry his mortal remains to Canaan, and bury him in the sepulchre of his fathers. And when Joseph promised so to do, he was not satisfied, but required of him a solemn oath to that effect. The form of this oath, with the hand beneath his thigh is the same that Abraham made use of when he sent his steward in search of a wife for his son Isaac (ch. 24: 2, 3); both of them cases of the greatest importance, and in which it would be extremely easy to frustrate completely the purpose in view, without the possibility of a remedy. Only in these two cases have we notice of the use of this form of oath. The importance of this oath which Jacob exacted of Joseph did not, I think, turn on the natural desire, very ordinary among people of all nations (see 2 Sam. 19: 37), to be buried near the mortal remains of their fathers. The form of the oath communicated a special solemnity to the promise and the oath, and in both cases it seems to make allusion to the covenant of circumcision, and to the faith in the coming redemption, sealed by this rite. Rom. 4: 6. It is clear that Jacob looked to the promise given to Abraham, in not consenting that his remains should rest anywhere else but in the land of his inheritance. The apostle regards it as a singular act of faith in Joseph—the only one in fact which he mentions—that “Joseph when he was dying made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones.” Heb. 11: 22. See ch. 50: 24, 25. In this we are of course to see faith in the earthly and temporal promises given to Abraham, that his seed should take possession of the promised land at the end of four hundred years (ch. 15: 13—16); but Calvin, and I think with good cause, carries the faith of those ancient patriarchs much farther than that,—as looking beyond the grave, “to the spectacle of the future renovation”; and adds that Jacob,

“to testify to his posterity that the hope of the promised land did not forsake his heart even in death, commands his remains to be re-conveyed there.” *Institutes*, Book III, Ch. 25, Sec. 8.

The last sentence of the chapter has been the occasion of not a little dispute. The ancient Hebrew language, as written, had consonants or radical letters, but no vowels; these every reader supplied for himself, as in our old style of short-hand; so that we may read here “the head of his bed,” or “the head (or top) of his staff,” according as the three consonants, *m*, *t*, *h* be read *mittah* or *matteh*. The Greek translators, before vowels were added to the Hebrew text, as we now have it, gave their choice to the second, and translated, in the LXX: “he *worshipped on the top of his staff*”—the reading that is followed by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But when the Masorites came to put vowels to the text, in the sixth century after Christ, they chose that it should read “bed” and not “staff”; and thus we have the two different readings in the book of Genesis and in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “he *bowed himself on the head of the bed*,” in Genesis, and “he *worshipped* (leaning) *on the top of his staff*” in Hebrews. Some maintain that it could not be “the head of his bed,” inasmuch as the Orientals did not use, and do not use, the bed-stead, but only mats or rugs spread upon the floor; and because Jacob, although near to the time of his death (vr. 29), was not, they say, yet sick, nor kept his bed. But although all this were more certain than it really is (see Deut. 3: 11, “*a bed-stead of iron*”; ch. 49: 4, “*thou wentest up to my bed*”; Ps. 132: 3, “*I will not go up to my bed*”; and Mark 4: 21, “*to put a lamp under the bed*”), the point is of no great importance. The patriarch, being fully satisfied with this important arrangement, bowed himself *upon the head of his bed*, although it were no more than the rug on which he lay, or “he stayed himself *on the extremity*, or top, of his staff,” and worshipped God, in the firm faith of the exact fulfilment of his promises.

What is of most importance is the mistranslation that we find in Roman Catholic Bibles, to wit, “*he adored the top of his rod*”; with the understanding, as the note of Bishop Amat explains it, that the rod was probably that of Joseph, and the symbol of his authority, “in whom he saw prefigured the Messiah”; [“*a figure of Christ’s sceptre and kingdom*,” says the Rheims’ New Testament, of Archbishop Hughes,—Tr.];—and so a worthy object of adoration! But the Hebrew text, and the Greek of the LXX, and the latter as cited in Heb. 11: 21, all three say he “*bowed himself ON the head of his bed*”; or

“he worshipped ON the top of his staff,”—a little word which the Roman Catholic Versions omit, for the purpose of making it appear that the patriarch Jacob worshipped, as they do, a piece of wood! The word “leaning” in our versions of Gen. 47: 31 and Heb. 11: 21, are in italics; which means to say that they are not found in the original text; but “*worshipped on the top of his staff*” indicates clearly not the object of his adoration, but that on which the sick old man sustained himself while worshipping God.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

VER. 1—7. JOSEPH VISITS HIS FATHER, HEARING THAT HE IS SICK.  
(1689 B. C.)

1 And it came to pass after these things, that one said to Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim.

2 And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed.

3 And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me.

4 and said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a company of peoples, and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.

5 And now thy two sons, who were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine: Ephraim and Manasseh, even as Reuben and Simeon, shall be mine.

6 And thy issue, that thou begetteth\* after them, shall be thine; they shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.

7 And as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when there was still some distance to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way to Ephrath (the same is Beth-lehem).

\*Or, hast begotten.

On this occasion Jacob did not send to call Joseph, but he, hearing that his father was sick, took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim (who were then between twenty-two and twenty-five years of age, ch. 41: 50), and went to see him. Jacob also was notified of the visit of his son. He therefore made an effort (=strengthened himself), and sat up in bed. With firm faith in the promises of God, he related the revelation that he had in Bethel, or Luz, after his return from Padan-aram and the great promises that God there made to him personally, and to his descendants,—promises in comparison of which the worldly glories of Joseph and those of his two sons, as Egyptian princes, were in his esteem as worthless things. In this confidence, the aged patriarch disposes of that which his God had given him, with even greater confidence than he would dispose of his worldly estate, endowing the two sons of Joseph

with part thereof, as something incomparably better than all the brilliant prospects which they had, as princes of Egypt. Surely a triumphant faith in the divine promises, a justifying faith which overcomes the world, and rejoices in hope of the glory of God, was necessary in order that Jacob, a stranger in the land of Egypt, sick and near to die, could thus speak of the future blessings of those who have part in "the covenants of the promise!" Eph. 2: 12.

It would seem that Joseph and the Egyptian princess, Asenath, had no children except these two; but to guard against the possibility that they might have others, Jacob, as a prudent father, in this testamentary declaration of his last will, made provision for such a case, *adopting as his own the two sons* whom Joseph had before the coming of his father, and arranging that any other sons he then had, or might afterwards have, should be incorporated with the tribe of either of the two. Truly sublime is the operation of faith in this aged servant of God, who thus disposed of the events of future ages, with the security and certainty of one who has them already in hand!

What he ordained, then, was that there should be *thirteen tribes* of Israel, counting each of the eleven brothers of Joseph as *one*, and Joseph himself as *two*; and thus in fact it happened; only, as the sacerdotal tribe of Levi had no part in the territorial division of the land of promise, but was scattered rather throughout 48 of the principal cities of the other tribes (Deut. 18: 1, 2; Num. 35: 1—7), the nation preserved always unaltered the number of "the twelve tribes of Israel."

While he was thus disposing of the ample and sure inheritance which his God had given to him and to his posterity, it is truly touching to observe how the spirit of the old and almost dying patriarch turns in tenderness to the mother of Joseph, his beloved Rachel, whom he had buried on the road to Ephratah, or Bethlehem, forty years before, when he lacked but a little way of reaching that place. If Jacob was not the most amiable of the ancient patriarchs, none will deny him the title of having been the most faithful and fervent of lovers;—a rare thing among the Orientals.

48: 8—16. JACOB BLESSES JOSEPH, IN THE PERSON OF HIS TWO SONS.  
(1689 B. C.)

8 And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these?

9 And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me here. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.

10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not

see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them.

11 And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath let me see thy seed also.

12 And Joseph brought them out from between his knees; and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.

13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him.

14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the first-born.

15 And he blessed Joseph, and said, The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who hath fed me all my life long unto this day,

16 the angel who hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

In all this time Jacob had not perceived the two sons of Joseph; for his eyes were dimmed through age, so that he could no longer see; but a movement of theirs, or something else made him at this moment conscious of their presence, and on asking who they were, Joseph informed him that they were the same of whom he had just been speaking,—“the children whom God has given me in this place”:—according to Oriental usage, Joseph had not introduced them when he came in. Jacob therefore told him to bring them near to him, that he might bless them; and when he had done so, Jacob kissed and embraced them. It is evident that Jacob was sitting on the edge of a bed that was elevated above the floor; otherwise he would not have been able to perform these acts as they are related in the text. Every action of the old man is extremely natural here, even his exclamation, while he was embracing the two young men: “I had not thought to see thy face; and lo, God hath made me to see thy seed also!” According to the Modern Spanish Version, Jacob was seated on his bed, and the two young men were standing between *his* knees. As he had kissed and embraced them, it is evident they could not then be between the knees of Joseph. Joseph, therefore, took them from between his father's knees, and with veneration the august governor of Egypt bowed himself before his father, not merely with the reverence which children owe to their parents, but to receive himself, together with his sons, the blessing of the prophet of God (comp. ch. 20: 7) and the heir of the promises. After this, he placed them in the proper position to receive the blessing, Manasseh, the first-born, towards the right hand of the patriarch, and Ephraim towards his left; and in this order he made them again approach his father.

It seems evident that it was the purpose and desire of Jacob to transfer to Joseph, his favorite son (the son of his only proper and legitimate wife; so rated in ch. 46: 19) the birthright of which Reuben had deprived himself by his shameful crime (ch. 49: 3, 4); in which case Manasseh, in the succession of Joseph, would have been the chiefest of the tribes of Israel. But Joseph did not more than half execute his purpose, that being adverse to the purpose of God; with whom Judah (whose personal character was not comparable with that of Joseph) was, and was to continue, "the chief" or "prince" (see 1st Chron. 5: 2; 28: 4; comp. 49: 10); so that in the blessings pronounced in the following chapter, we see clearly that the principedom remained with Judah, although Jacob lavished on Joseph all the treasures of his personal affection.

In any case, his purpose and desire were sufficiently marked for Ephraim (who obtained the pre-eminence above Manasseh, and like him, carried in his veins the noblest blood of Egypt) to make himself always, and even till the destruction of the rival kingdom of Israel, to continue to be, the proud, formidable, jealous and untiring rival of Judah. Isa. 11: 13. It is said in 1st Chron. 5: 1, 2 that *the birthright of Reuben was given to the sons of Joseph*; of whom Jacob here gives the precedence to Ephraim. Yet it is certain that the birthright remained with Manasseh (Jos. 17: 1—5, 6), and he had two lots in the division of the promised land, one on each side of the river Jordan; but Ephraim always had, or always took, the precedence of him.

Jacob, therefore, moved by the Spirit of inspiration, placed the younger above the elder, and put Ephraim before Manasseh, without his knowing the young men, so as to have any preference of his own, and without being able to see them, so as to distinguish between the two. Crossing his hands (contrary to the plan and purpose of Joseph on presenting them before him in their proper order), he placed his right hand upon the head of Ephraim and his left upon that of Manasseh, and *in this manner "he blessed Joseph,"* in blessing his two sons. The form of this blessing is very notable. It is not the Supreme Being whom he invokes, nor simply "God, Most High, possessor of the heavens and the earth" (ch. 14: 22), but "the God before whom my fathers, Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who hath fed me [M. S. V., "who hath been my Shepherd," *Heb.* the one shepherding me] all my life long until this day, the Angel who hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and let them grow into a multitude in the

midst of the earth!" We live in days in which all sorts of people speak of God, and say they believe in him; it is therefore important for us to learn from Jacob not to be deceived by appearances, but to make clear and plain *who is the God* we believe in. What is more important than to "believe in God," is to believe in *the only true God*, Jehovah, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; the God and Father of Jesus Christ our Lord, "who *spared not his own Son* (his "only begotten Son"), but *delivered him up for us all*," that we "should not perish but have everlasting life." Rom. 8: 32; John 3: 16. No other "God," is the living and true God. It is important to note that vrs. 15, 16 speak of "the Angel" as one and the same person as the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and the God who was Jacob's Shepherd: in the Hebrew text, the same verb, in the singular number, governs all three, Jacob then designates and distinguishes him under three different aspects: *first*, the God who called Abraham, and before whom he and Isaac walked; *second*, the God who had been his Pastor (as David celebrates him in the 23rd Psalm) from his earliest existence; and *third*, "*the Angel* who hath redeemed me from all evil." See Note 22, on the "Angel of Jehovah," ch. 16: 7—10. "The Angel" (= *the sent one*) his Redeemer, points, as with the finger, to Gal. 4: 4, 5: "When the fulness of the time was come, *God sent forth his Son*, made of a woman, made under the law, to *redeem* them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

48: 17—22. JOSEPH INSISTS ON THE PRIMOGENITURE OF MANASSEH;  
BUT JACOB INSISTS ON ASSIGNING TO EPHRAIM THE PRE-EMINENCE.  
(1689 B. C.)

17 And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.

18 And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father; for this is the first-born; put thy right hand upon his head.

19 And his father refused, and said, I know *it*, my son, I know *it*; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: howbeit his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

20 And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee will Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

21 And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die; but God will be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

22 Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

Jacob through malice and deceit had taken away from Esau

the birthright and the blessing: Joseph did not wish that by error of his father, Manasseh should suffer the loss of his, and he endeavored to correct what he took to be a mistake on his father's part; but the patriarch gave him to understand that he knew perfectly what he was doing, and that in fact, without regard to the merits or demerits of either of the two, but by the allotment of God, the younger should be greater than the elder. It is worthy of notice, how often, from the beginning, God has preferred the younger above the elder, although he himself established, as a general rule, the rights of primogeniture, in his word (Deut. 21: 15—17):—Abel before Cain; Shem before Japheth; Abraham before Haran and Nahor; Isaac before Ishmael; Jacob before Esau; Joseph before Reuben; Ephraim before Manasseh; Moses before Aaron; David before his seven elder brothers, and Solomon before the other sons of David. Jacob continues blessing Joseph in the person of his sons, saying: "In thee will Israel bless, saying: God make thee as Ephraim, and as Manasseh!"

With perfect calmness, Jacob added: "Behold I die; but God will be with you and bring you again unto the land of your fathers!" It is evident that a triumphant faith in God and in his promises of coming redemption, had completely taken away from Jacob the fear of death.

The last verse of the chapter is very difficult. We know that a double portion of the inheritance appertained to the rights of primogeniture (Deut. 21: 16, 17), which it seems that Jacob with half disguised words wished to transfer to his pious and favorite son, Joseph; we know also that in the division of the land, Joseph (that is to say, Ephraim and Manasseh) received three tribal divisions of the land, two to the west of the Jordan and one to the east, any one of the three being larger than the lot of either of the other tribes, with the sole exception of Judah; and in this sense, Ephraim and Manasseh, faring "as Reuben and Simeon," received each one a separate lot, and the additional one was given to Manasseh, who was really the first-born, and retained the birthright. 1 Chron. 5: 1, 2. We know also that "the parcel of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph" (John 4: 5), was located near to Sichar, the ancient Shechem; so that this portion was not more than a small part of the territory of the tribe of Ephraim, of which Shechem was the principal city. We know still farther, that Jacob bought a parcel of ground in front of that city, from the sons of Hamor (ch. 33: 19); which well corresponds with the parcel of ground where was, and still is found, Jacob's well. John



4: 5, 6. But Jacob's *taking it out of the hand of the Amorite with his sword and with his bow*, is something of which we have no other notice in the word of God, it being morally impossible, that he refers to the sword of Simeon and Levi, and the horrible reprisals which they took in that city for the dishonor done to their sister. Chapter 34. It seems most probable, though not elsewhere mentioned, that Jacob, having withdrawn from that possession which he had bought, the Amorites occupied it; and refusing afterwards to give it up to Jacob, he found himself obliged to cast them out by force.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

VER. 1, 2. JACOB SKETCHES PROPHETICALLY FOR HIS SONS THE CHARACTER AND FUTURE LOT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE TRIBES. (1689 B. C.)

1 And Jacob called unto his sons, and said: Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the latter days.

2 Assemble yourselves, and hear, ye sons of Jacob;  
And hearken unto Israel your father.

This chapter is not properly a chapter of *blessings*, although vr. 28 so calls it in a general way; because the three first sons received no blessing at all, but rather a malediction. Vr. 1 properly characterizes it as a declaration of the things that were to happen to them "*in days to come*," as reads the Mod. Span. Version.\* The form is poetic, and like poetry, and impassioned poetry, it is to be interpreted. Aside from the poetic conception, and from that exaggeration, or poetic license, which is proper to all Oriental poetry, Hebrew poetry is characterized by the repetition of the same thought two, three or even four times, in different forms, or by contrasting therewith the opposite form of statement; with the object of explaining, confirming or giving emphasis to the principal affirmation.

It has been well said that *the poetic form*, in all languages, *consists in repetition*—the repetition of metrical cadences, the repetition of asonance and consonance, in the final syllables of the "verses," or the repetition of a certain number and arrangement of accents in each line. None of these things are found, except very rarely, in Hebrew poetry, but rather, as just said, the repetition of the same thought in different forms of words,

\*Conant's translation, "*in after days*" is certainly better than "*in the latter days*," as given by the A. V., R. V. and the Am. Revision. Most unfortunately, as I think, the Revisers did not always regard it as the *translator's business* to put the meaning of the writer in easy reach of the reader.—Tr.

or contrasting it with an opposite form of statement. See Ex. 15: 1—18, and comments.

49: 3, 4. REUBEN (first son of Leah).

- 3 Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength;  
The pre-eminence of dignity, and the pre-eminence of power.
- 4 Boiling over as water, thou shalt not have the pre-eminence;  
Because thou wentest up to thy father's bed;  
Then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.

By birth, pre-eminence in dignity and power was his; but by his unbridled passions he cast himself down headlong, and fell into merited contempt. "Boiling over as water" elegantly expresses the overflow of those sensual passions which caused his great sin against his father, of incest and adultery. In going up to his father's bed, he defiled it; or, according to another rendering, instead of "then defiledst thou (it)," we have: "then thou madest (thyself) vile." And both senses are equally appropriate: then it was that he precipitated himself from his pre-eminence of dignity and power. Ch. 25: 21, 22.

Reuben was a man of good and humane instincts, and for these he distinguished himself among all his brethren when Joseph was sold and carried into Egypt (ch. 37: 22, 29); but he was impassioned and inconsiderate, and for this cause he offered that his father, *might kill two of his four sons* if he would entrust Benjamin to him and he should fail to bring him back; he was of a weak character, and so his brethren and his father made little account of his words and offers; he was also unchaste, and a slave of sensual passions. And the characteristics of the father, it would seem, were perpetuated (as it often happens) in his descendants. The tribe of Reuben never attained to any distinction in Israel: it never produced one distinguished man: and Deborah in her song of victory mocked and upbraided the warriors of Reuben, who in the day of battle "sat among the sheep-folds to hear the bleatings (or pipings) of the flock"; and their "*great determinations of heart*" came to end "*in great deliberations of heart.*" Judg. 5: 15, 16. Mod. Span. Ver.

49: 5—7. SIMEON AND LEVI (second and third sons of Leah).

- 5 Simeon and Levi are brethren;  
Weapons of violence are their swords.\*
- 6 O my soul, come not thou into their council;  
Unto their assembly, my glory, be not thou united;

\*Or, compacts.

For in their anger they slew a man,†  
 And in their self-will they hocked an ox.‡  
 7 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.

†Or, men.

‡Or, oxen.

Several of the expressions used here are of doubtful significance. Instead of "compacts," others say "arms" or "swords"; and instead of "they hocked oxen," others say: "they digged down a wall." But the general sense comes to the same thing, although the specifications be different. The violence done to their sister Dinah made them unsheath their swords; but it did not justify or excuse the atrocities which they committed, in spite of the honorable reparation which, generously and without stint, Shechem and his father Hamor offered to make. It seems that the two were distinguished by the ardent temperament, jealous and revengeful, which on this occasion was guilty of such folly and madness that nothing but the prompt interposition of God was able to save the encampment of Jacob from utter extermination by the outraged inhabitants of the surrounding cities. Ch. 34: 30; 35: 5. The curse which their father pronounced on them prophetically was

"I will divide them in Jacob,  
 and scatter them in Israel."

This was fulfilled in a very different manner in the two tribes. It is common in our Biblical maps, to locate the tribe of Simeon on the south of the tribe of Judah; but Josh. 19: 1, 9, tells us expressly that the inheritance of the tribe of Judah was too large, and that the lot of the tribe of the children of Simeon fell to them "*in the midst of the inheritance of the children of Judah*"; and after the division of the nation into two kingdoms, we are told that in days of Asa and of Hezekiah, "strangers of Ephraim, of Manasseh, *and of Simeon,*" and of the cities of these tribes, came up to Jerusalem; giving us to understand that a part of Simeon, separated from the part which was in Judah, remained attached to the kingdom of the north (2 Chron. 15: 9 and 34: 6); so that Simeon seems never to have had a proper and independent tribal existence.

In regard to the tribe of Levi, the case was different. On account of his ardent zeal, and his impassioned defence of the cause of Moses and of God, at the critical period of the worship of the golden calf (Ex. 32: 25, and Deut. 33: 8—11), their curse was turned into a blessing; and though they were in fact "divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel," they were thus parceled out the

better to perform the office of priests and Levites among the people; occupying forty-eight important cities scattered through the entire nation, rather than a distinct territory which was properly their own. Num. 35: 7, 8; Josh. 21: 1—42.

49: 8—12. JUDAH (fourth son of Leah).

- 8 Judah, thee shall thy brethren praise:  
Thy hand shall be on the neck of thine enemies;  
Thy father's sons shall bow down before thee.
- 9 Judah is a lion's whelp;  
From the prey, my son, thou art gone up:  
He stooped down, he couched as a lion,  
And as a lioness, who shall rouse him up?
- 10 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.
- 11 Binding his foal unto the vine,  
And his ass's colt unto the choice vine;  
He hath washed his garments in wine,  
And his vesture in the blood of grapes:
- 12 His eyes shall be red with wine,  
And his teeth white with milk.

It is evident that the moral character and personal deserts of Judah had little to do with his pre-eminence among his brethren, or that of his tribe among the "thousands of the ten thousands of Israel." The part which he took in the act of treachery perpetrated against Joseph, and his slow intervention to prevent their taking his life (ch. 37: 26, 27), although they manifest *nerve*, reveal also much hardness of heart; and his own history makes it clear that in his private life he was little better than a pagan, and that the general character of his immediate family agreed well with their gentile origin. See chapter 38. But whatever may have been his moral and religious defects, Judah was born to be a prince among men, and his brethren and his father always recognized his ascendancy. Ch. 37: 27; 43: 3, 4, 8, 9. "Judah, thee shall thy brethren praise!" and these same personal endowments were perpetuated in his posterity. The tribe of Judah was always of recognized predominance. See Judg. 1: 2; 20: 18. It is not necessary to analyze the expressions in which Jacob, in spite of his open partiality for Joseph, celebrates the distinguished personal endowments of Judah and the distinctive traits of his tribe. As poetic and hyperbolic embellishments they are very beautiful, and they are too clear to need any explanation.

But vr. 10 contains one of the grandest of Messianic prophecies, according to the agreement of Jews and Christians, and well merits a particular attention. Judah was to be the royal tribe, and

“From him the sceptre should not depart,  
nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet,  
until Shiloh (= the Pacificator) come;  
and to him shall be (rendered) the obedience of the  
peoples (or nations).”

There is no dispute between Jews and Christians with regard to the terms employed in this great prophecy, and little or none in regard to their meaning. The Jewish Version of Isaac Leeser, says: “Until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be”—a translation which he takes textually from the Common English Version. The Revised Version translates, more correctly perhaps:

“Until Shiloh come;  
and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be.”

The only passage, except this, in which the word translated “obedience” occurs, is Prov. 30: 17, where it is translated “and disdains to obey his mother.” As to who “Shiloh” is, there is also no dispute. All confess that it is the promised Messiah, of whom the Jews say that he is yet to come; and the Christians, that he came once to suffer for us, and will come the second time to reign over us, and to give to his people the promised inheritance of glory and immortality. Heb. 9: 27, 28; Matt. 16: 27; 25: 34, 41. Of the various senses which are given to the word “Shiloh,” the most probable and the best, in my opinion, is that which is found in the text of the Modern Spanish Version, “the Pacificator” or Peace-Maker—Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9: 6.

Of him many Scriptures say:

“Unto us a Child is born,  
unto us a Son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder;  
and his name shall be called: ‘Wonderful, Counselor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father [or better, “Father of the  
Eternal Age”], *Prince of Peace.*”

Of the increase of his government and of *peace* there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom,” etc. Isa. 9: 6, 7.

“He shall *speak peace to the nations.*” Zech. 9: 10.

“In his days shall the righteous flourish,  
and *abundance of peace until the moon be no more.*”

Ps. 72: 7.

“Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth *peace,*  
Good will among men!” Luke 2: 14.

With regard to the second part—"to him shall be rendered the obedience of the nations," it will be sufficient to cite Ps. 72: 8—11:

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,  
and from the River unto the ends of the earth.  
They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him;  
and his enemies shall lick the dust.  
The kings of Tarshish and of the Isles shall bring presents;  
the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.  
Yea all kings shall fall down before him;  
all nations shall serve him."

And Phil. 2: 9—11: "Wherefore also God hath highly exalted him, and hath given unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, to the glory of God the Father.

And Matt. 6: 10: "Thy kingdom come! Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth!"

In the parable of the Tares of the field, Jesus himself teaches us that this will happen, not under the Christian dispensation in which we live, but "at the end of Age," in "the last day," when "the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom, all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire. THEN shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father. *He that hath ears to hear let him hear!*" Matt. 13: 41—43.

Others understand that "Shiloh" (suppressing the *h*, which is not essential) is the same as "Siloah," or "Siloam," and signifies "the sent one" John 9: 7—"Him whom the Father sanctified *and sent into the world.*" (John 10: 36); and this sense is good; for in fact, in one form or another, Christ calls himself or is called, THE SENT ONE more than sixty times in the New Testament. The phrase which follows may also be translated as in the English Version: "And to him shall the gathering of the peoples (or nations) be"—a legitimate and proper sense, which will be best explained by examining Ps. 102: 22; Isa. 11: 10—12; John 11: 32; and 2 Thes. 2: 1. This also will be in the last day,—the day of the Great Assembly (Luke 13: 29)—and thenceforward forever.

No reader should allow to pass unobserved the fact that since "Shiloh," the "Sent One," or the "Pacifcator," has come, "the sceptre has passed from Judah, and the governor (or law-

giver) from between his feet"; and for nineteen centuries the tribe of Judah has not had even a recognized existence.

49: 13. ZEBULUN (sixth son of Leah).

- 13 Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea;  
 And he shall be for a haven of ships;  
 And his border shall be upon Sidon.

Some of our maps locate the tribe of Zebulun as lying on the coast of the Mediterranean, and others as lying on the Sea of Galilee (= Chinnereth, Cinneroth or Gennesaret). It seems to me that there ought not to be any doubt on this point, when we observe that Matthew says that Capernaum (which was situated upon the Sea of Galilee), was "in the confines (or borders) of Zebulun and Naphtalim" (=Naph-tali); and that Jesus in establishing himself there (having abandoned Nazareth, where they wished to cast him headlong down a precipice), fulfilled the ancient prophecy of Isaiah, regarding the land of Zebulun and the land of Nephthalim. Matt. 4: 13, 15, and Isa. 9: 1, 2. The confines of these two tribes met on the Sea of Galilee, near to the city of Capernaum; although in the days of our Lord the boundary lines of the tribes had for a long time been obliterated. The names of the two always go associated together in Scripture, being contiguous the one to the other; and although sons of different mothers, it would seem that both they and their descendants were very much alike in disposition and character,—valiant and warlike. Of them Deborah sang in her triumphal song:

"Zebulun was a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death,  
 and Naphtali, upon the high places of the field."

Judg. 5: 18.

The occupations and dangers of their beautiful sea of Cinneroth (or Lake of Gennesaret), contributed to make them valiant, like Simon Peter and his companions, in the days of Jesus; who were almost all of them of these two tribes. The same renown of valor is given to Zebulun and Naphtali, among those who attended at the inauguration of the kingdom of David in Hebron. 1 Chron. 12: 33, 34.

With regard to the boundaries of Zebulun, the historian Josephus says (Antiq. 5: 1, Sec. 22), that the tribe of Zebulun extended *from the Lake of Gennesaret as far as Carmel and the Mediterranean*; which gives a very satisfactory signification to what is said here, "his side (or border) shall be upon (or by) Sidon"; not the city of this name, which was 50 miles

farther to the north, but the country of Phenicia, which in all its length, was called the country "of the Sidonians"; Josh. 13: 6; Judg. 18: 7 (see page 128); and with the extreme southern point of which (according to Josephus) Zebulun ought to have touched, or almost touched, if it reached as far as Carmel and the Mediterranean Sea.

[The failure of most of the tribes to "*drive out the Canaanites*," and in some cases even to take possession of the territory assigned them by Joshua (see Judg. chs. 1 and 2), has come to render impossible an accurate delineation of the boundaries of the several tribes; to which difficulty must be added the fact that after the Babylonish captivity the tribal divisions disappeared altogether: so that no two of our Biblical maps are agreed as to what they originally were. To Asher (see comment on vr. 20) was assigned by Joshua the plain of Phenicia, including "the great Sidon." Josh. 19: 28, 29. But it seems that they never attempted to take this part of their possession: so that their territory proper lay in the mountains between Phenicia, on the west, and Naphtali, on the east.—Tr.]

49: 14, 15. ISSACHAR (fifth son of Leah).

- 14 Issachar is a strong ass,  
 Couching down between the sheepfolds:  
 15 And he saw a resting-place that it was good,  
 And the land that it was pleasant;  
 And he bowed his shoulder to bear,  
 And became a servant under taskwork.

Of Issachar (as of Zebulun, Naphtali, Asher, etc.), we know nothing personally. The territory of Issachar was between Zebulun on the north and Manasseh on the south, and between the Jordan on the east and the mountain range of Carmel on the west; and it was considered one of the best and most fertile in Canaan, to which circumstance is attributed, in part their pacific and industrious character, more disposed to carry burdens than to carry arms. It is difficult to determine satisfactorily the meaning of the last phrase. As the original signifies to pay tribute as well as to bear burdens, some have supposed that Issachar was so devoted to labor and to the arts of peace, that he preferred to pay tribute rather than to expose himself to the toils and dangers of military service. But it does not seem that the men of Issachar were lacking in valor. Deborah celebrates their readiness to take up arms, and their courage in battle; and they are mentioned with distinction among those who came up armed to make David king. Judg. 5: 15; 1 Chron. 12: 32. Others suppose that the words



mean nothing more than that they cheerfully submitted themselves to labor and toil as arduous as that of slaves.

49: 16, 17. DAN (first son of Bilhah, handmaid of Rachel).

- 16 Dan shall judge his people,  
As one of the tribes of Israel.  
17 Dan shall be a serpent in the way,  
An adder in the path,  
That biteth the horse's heels,  
So that his rider falleth backward.

The name of Dan signifies "Judge," "judging," or "judged" (ch. 30: 6), and to this fact the blessing of his father alludes, in saying "that Dan shall judge his peoples (=the tribes of his nation), as any one of the tribes of Israel." M. S. V. Being the son of Rachel's slave (and the first of the four sons of the two maid-servants) it might be supposed that he would occupy a position subordinate to the free-born sons, but the words of Jacob indicate that he would be in all respects their equal. It is supposed also that there is here a covert allusion to Sampson, who was of this tribe, and was in some respects the most famous and popular of the judges of Israel. Judges, chapters 13—16. Dan had only one son (ch. 47: 23); but at the time of the exodus from Egypt he and his servants and dependants (who were counted with those of his tribe) numbered 62,600;—the most numerous of all the tribes, with the exception of Judah. In the march through the desert, the encampment of Dan, which included the tribes of Dan, Asher and Naphtali, formed the rearguard of the encampment of Israel, and was the strongest of the four divisions, with the exception of that of Judah, which formed the vanguard. As Dan was the most numerous of all the tribes, except Judah, we do not understand why he should be compared to "a serpent in the way, and an adder in the path"; since cunning and craft are the ordinary recourse of the weak. Some believe that allusion is here made to the incident of the expedition of the 600 Danites, who conquered for themselves a possession between Sidon and Damascus (Judg. 18: 7, 28, 29); which came to be the extreme northern limit of Israel (Judg. 20: 1; 1 Sam. 3: 20); the phrase "from Dan to Beersheba" representing the extreme dimensions of the country from north to south.

49: 18. JACOB'S SIGH.

18 I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah.

In the midst of these figures and emblems of wars, acts of treachery and human strife, the patriarch stopped a moment to

heave a sigh, sorrowful and prolonged, for the salvation of God. I believe that this cannot have more than one meaning; to wit, that Jacob in common with the pious servants of God before Christ, just the same as after Christ, longed, and under circumstances of distress and in times of public and private calamity, longed with vehemence, for the promised salvation, which Christ with his blood has brought for us; *which the people of God still wait for*, and will have to continue waiting for (*in heaven no less than on earth*), until Christ shall come in power and glory to bring us the promised "salvation," and to give us "the kingdom." *The sighed-for* "REST yet remaineth for the people of God." Heb. 4: 9; 9: 28; Matt. 25: 34; 1 Thes. 1: 10; 2 Thes. 1: 7—10; Rom. 8: 23; Rev. 11: 18, and 22: 12.

Thus David:

"Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!  
when God bringeth back the captivity of his people,  
Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad." Ps. 53: 6.

So Moses:

"Return, oh Jehovah; how long?  
and let it repent thee concerning thy servants! (or, "be  
sorry for thy servants!" M. S. V.)  
Oh satisfy us early with thy mercy,  
that we may rejoice and be glad all our days!  
Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast af-  
flicted us,  
and the years wherein we have seen evil!" Ps. 90: 13—16.

So Zacharias, at the circumcision of his son, the precursor of the Messiah, when "his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed":

"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;  
for he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people,  
and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of his servant David  
(as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have  
been since the world began);  
salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that  
hate us;  
to show mercy towards our fathers,  
and to remember his holy covenant;  
the oath which he sware to Abraham our father,  
to grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hand  
of our enemies,

should serve him without fear,  
in holiness and righteousness before him all our days."  
Luke 1: 66—75.

So Paul also: "And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even *we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*" Rom. 8: 23. Paul, in heaven, *no longer groans*, but he is still "waiting"—waiting "with Christ," while he is "waiting (= "expecting") till his enemies be made his footstool." Heb. 10: 13.

49: 19. GAD (first son of Zilpah, handmaid of Leah).

19 Gad, a troop\* shall press upon him;  
But he shall press upon their heel.

\**Heb. gedud*, a marauding band.

As there was nothing special to say of Gad, who acted no considerable part among the sons, nor among the tribes, of Israel, we have once more a play upon his name—"Gad," which had two significations: (1) "good fortune," and thus expressed the joy of Leah at having a son by her servant Zilpah, whom she had given to her husband as a wife, in the ardent competition which she had with her sister Rachel, in the matter of giving sons to Jacob (ch. 36: 11); and (2) "a marauding troop," or guerrilla band; in which sense the word is used here. Gad was one of the three tribes which had their inheritance on the eastern side of the river Jordan, and consequently were the most exposed to the attacks of invading enemies, and also to the guerrillas and marauding bands of the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites and other neighboring enemies. These tribes also were the first which were deported by the Assyrians under Tiglathpilezer. 1 Chron. 5: 26.

49: 20. ASHER (second son of Zilpah, handmaid of Leah).

20 Out of Asher his bread shall be fat,  
And he shall yield royal dainties.

To Asher (= "Happy") fell as his inheritance a narrow strip of land, fifty miles long, interposed between Phenicia, on the west and the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun on the east and south. On the north it reached to "the great Sidon," and on the south "to Carmel near to the Great Sea"—the Mediterranean (Josh. 19: 26, 28), which seems to be in disagreement with what Josephus says about it. See comment on vr. 13. His territory was considered one of the best in Israel, and corresponded with his name = Happy, or Fortunate.

49: 21. NAPHTALI (second son of Bilhah, handmaid of Rachel).

- 21 Naphtali is a hind let loose:  
He giveth goodly words.

Neither of him nor his tribe have we notice of anything worthy of mention, except what has been already said in connection with the tribe of Zebulun. His territory, in the division of the land, lay very far to the north, bounded on the S. E. and south by the Sea of Cinneroth (or Lake of Gennesaret) and the north of Zebulun, and extending northward very far into Mount Lebanon. His lands were naturally very much broken, but the scenery was of the most grand and beautiful character, and its valleys among the most fertile of Israel; and like mountaineers in general, his people were valiant. The "hind (or gazelle) let loose" is a beautiful figure of the free and independent spirit of the inhabitants of a picturesque country of mountains and valleys; and in fact, as we have already said, the people of Naphtali go always associated with Zebulun, as being among the most courageous of the warriors of Israel. In the war against Jabin king of Canaan, and particularly in the battle of Mount Tabor, Barak (who was of Kadesh-Naphtali), the assistant and lieutenant-general of the prophetess Deborah, made forever famous the name of his tribe by the part which he took in that memorable battle. Judg. chs. 4 and 5. Of the "goodly words," for which he was to be famous, we know nothing; although a land of beautiful valleys and picturesque mountains, and which lay at the foot of the majestic Lebanon, might well have awakened the muse of more than one poet, famous in his day.

49: 22—26. JOSEPH (first son of Rachel).

- 22 Joseph is a fruitful bough,  
A fruitful bough by a fountain;  
His branches run over the wall.  
23 The archers have sorely grieved him,  
And shot at him, and persecuted him:  
24 But his bow abode in strength,  
And the arms of his hands were made strong,  
By the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob  
(From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel),  
25 Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee,  
And by the Almighty, who shall bless thee,  
With blessings of heaven above,  
Blessings of the deep that coucheth beneath,  
Blessings of the breasts, and of the womb.  
26 The blessings of thy father  
Have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors  
Unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills:  
They shall be on the head of Joseph,  
And on the crown of the head of him that was separate from\*  
his brethren.

\*Or, that is prince among. [M. S. V., the Nazarite among.]

On reaching the name of his beloved Joseph, the handsome son of his beautiful and proper wife, it seems that Jacob laid aside the office of prophet, which we see conspicuous in the blessing of Judah, and gave loose rein to his poetic muse, and to the warm and out-gushing affections of his heart. There is here nothing to explain, nor indeed to comment upon, except, *First*, the words "shepherd and stone of Israel"; which some translate "by the name of the shepherd," etc.; and others suppose they see in them an allusion to that "Jacob's Stone" which figures in so many fabulous stories of different nations;—extravagances which it is not worth our while to relate here. See the comment on ch. 28: 18—22. In a Christian sense, both "shepherd" and "stone" have their highest fulfilment in Jesus Christ. See John 10: 11; 1 Pet. 5: 4, with Matt. 22: 42; Eph. 2: 20; 1 Pet. 2: 6. And in the usage of the Old Testament, it is Jehovah himself, under the aspect of the Redeemer of his people, who is *the Shepherd* and *the Stone*. See ch. 48: 15, 16; Ps. 23: 1; 80: 1, with Ps. 118: 22; Isa. 28: 16. And *Second*, the words "him that was separate from his brethren" (*Heb.* the nazirite of his brethren), in vr. 26. His personal character from a child and his subsequent elevation as viceroy of Egypt, separated him from them, placing him in a far higher plane. The word "nazirite" signifies *separated, consecrated to God*; for which reason the word separated (in the Modern Spanish Version) is supplied in italics, in order to make plain the meaning of Nazirite: "The Nazirite, *separated* from among his brethren." Among the Israelites, "nazirite" was always a noble title. Lam. 4: 7; Amos. 2: 11, 12. In this outpouring of his heart, Jacob alludes beautifully to the cruel persecutions which Joseph had suffered on the part of his elder brothers, to the help of God which had never forsaken him, and to the honors and glories which exalted and adorned his days of prosperity.

49: 27. BENJAMIN (second son of Rachel).

27 Benjamin is a wolf that raveneth:  
In the morning he shall devour the prey,  
And at even he shall divide the spoil.

Benjamin (=Son of the right hand)—a name which his father gave him instead of Benoni (=Son of my sorrow), which his mother gave him when she died, in the act of giving him birth—must have been a great favorite with his father to merit such a name; for his birth caused him as bitter pangs as to the mother, and forty years longer. See comments on ch. 48: 7. Of his character and personal deeds we know nothing; for every notice

that we have of him shows him in a passive rather than in an active form. On going down into Egypt he had more sons than any of his brothers (ch. 46: 21), giving promise thereby that his tribe would be the most numerous of them all; but it did not so happen; although it is important for us to remember that not the largest number of *sons* but of *servants* was the important consideration in determining the increase of population in the different tribes in Egypt. Dan went down with only one son, and he came up with 62,700, capable of bearing arms; Benjamin seemingly entered with ten sons (unless part of them were born later), and he went up with 35,400. Ch. 46: 23 and 21; Num. 1: 38 and 36. In the sad days of oppression and hard bondage which befell the people in Egypt, masters and servants (who were all circumcised Israelites, ch. 17; 12, 13) were confounded together, being all alike the slaves of Pharaoh. Jacob and his sons went down into Egypt with an immense multitude of servants; but we are not told how many servants or slaves (see Ex. 21: 21, 26, 27) they brought up from thence: all of them, including Moses and Aaron, were slaves there. Ex. 5: 4.

The words of the prophecy give us to understand that Benjamin, or rather, the tribe descended from him, would be warlike and even cruel in his instincts and character; and in fact his zeal in defending those "sons of Belial," in Gibeah, who made themselves as base as the sinners of Sodom (Judg. 20: 12—14), and his daring and valor in maintaining their defence against the united strength of all Israel, accredit at the same time his valor, his lack of good morals, and his want of sound sense; for such a heroic defence of those villains resulted in the almost complete destruction of their tribe. Judg. 21: 16, 17. In all this he manifested the characteristics of the wolf rather than the lion. Of this tribe also was Saul, the first king of Israel; and the tenacious purpose of the Benjamites, in a seven years' struggle, to oppose David and maintain the cause of "the house of Saul," shows in a strong light the same indications of a valor that was not tempered with discretion. 2 Sam. 2: 8; 3: 1; 16: 3, 5—11; 20: 1.

#### 49: 28—33. THE DEATH OF JACOB. (1689 B. C.)

28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them and blessed them: every one according to his blessing he blessed them.

29 And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite,

30 in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before

Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying-place.

31 There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife: and there I buried Leah—

32 the field and the cave that is therein, which was purchased from the children of Heth.

33 And when Jacob made an end of charging his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

Only in the sense of *last prophetic words* can we call this "the blessing with which their father blessed them"; for Reuben, Simeon and Levi received from him no blessing at all, but rather the opposite. All the circumstances of the death of Jacob were notable. He had been for a considerable time weak and infirm; but this poem, his last prophetic words, reveals intellectual gifts of a high order, and a force and vigor very rarely seen in a dying old man. After pronouncing these words with supernatural vigor, which God doubtless imparted to him, he made the necessary arrangements for his own burial, having already arranged with Joseph the most important part. Ch. 47: 29—41. This ended, he gathered up his feet into his bed, and with the cessation of the prophetic *afflatus*, which had invigorated him for this supreme effort, it seems as if in the act, he breathed out his last breath and "was gathered to his people" (*Heb.* peoples). We have already treated of the signification of this phrase in the comment on ch. 25: 8, and 35: 29. It is certain that it cannot refer to his burial; for all that happened in one and the same day, whereas he was not buried for nearly three months after. Ch. 50: 3—10.

It is very evident that this expectation of being "gathered to his people," "to his peoples," or "to his fathers," came to mitigate not a little the natural horror of death, in those times. One's going to his fathers, or to his peoples, would be to a dying man like returning to the bosom of the separated family. It lacked very much of the Christian hope, and in its popular use it was but natural that no discrimination was made between good and bad men (pp. 298, 299); but in any case it was something; and it clearly manifests the universal belief in those days in an existence after death: ["—a *hereafter*"; as is so forcibly expressed even in the words of the false prophet Balaam:

"Let me die the death of the righteous,  
and let my last end be like his." Num. 23: 10.

"Last end" is the rather unfortunate translation of a Hebrew word which means literally *the hereafter*: "LET MY HEREAFTER BE LIKE HIS"; as read in the Modern Spanish Version.—Tr.]

The last days of this venerable patriarch were seemingly his best days and the most tranquil, near to his beloved Joseph. Not only so, but we see the work of his conversion and sanctification carried to its culminating point, as we do not see it in the life and character of any other Biblical character. As before said, and it bears repetition, I find a great comfort in the phrase so often used in the Bible: "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Abraham was by nature and by his personal habits "a gentleman" in the highest sense of the word; one of "nature's noblemen." And in whatever modern society he might have been placed, he would have passed for a perfect gentleman; and by divine grace Abraham was the most noble type of a believing man,—“the father of believers.” Gal. 3: 9, 29 and Rom. 4: 16—18. But who and how many of us can either by nature or by grace aspire to the character and condition of an Abraham? Isaac was a weak, pacific, inoffensive man, indolent, and apparently too fond of good living (ch. 25: 28; 27: 4, and comments); and who passed apparently the last 45 years of his long life in darkness and silence. Divine grace without doubt wrought very effectually in him for the perfecting of his weak character, in those long years of sad silence. It is a very great comfort for the many *Isaacs* that there are in the family of God, lacking in *fièvre* and resolution, vacillating and of a weak character;—it is for all such a great comfort that Jehovah, the only true God, is not merely the God of the princely Abraham, but the God of the weak Isaac also. Jacob was undoubtedly the least amiable of all the good men whom Scripture presents to our view. His disposition and natural character always suffer when he is contrasted with the generous, dashing and valiant Esau. And on the religious side, I do not believe that he commenced to know himself, and to seek the favor and protection of the God of Abraham and of Isaac, until he had to flee and put himself in safety from the sword of the brother whom he had twice offended almost unpardonably. Very slow was the work of grace in his heart and life; but the work was genuine and enduring, and at last the displeasing, crafty and querulous Jacob came to walk with holy calm in the light of God, and to depart this life in the full assurance of faith;—in the triumphs of a faith fully assured that all that God had promised he was able also and faithful to perform. It is probable that, in all three, the work of divine grace wrought in accordance with the disposition and individual character of each. Yes, it is to



me an unspeakable comfort that Jehovah is "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob!"

## CHAPTER L.

VRS. 1—6. PREPARATIONS FOR THE BURIAL OF JACOB. (1689 B. C.)

1 And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him.

2 And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel.

3 And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of embalming; and the Egyptians wept for him three-score and ten days.

4 And when the days of weeping for him were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found favor in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying,

5 My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again.

6 And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear.

Very touching are the brief and sorrowful terms that relate to us the grief of Joseph for the death of his aged father; and we may be sure that these manifestations of his affection were very deep and sincere:—"he fell upon the face of his father, and wept over him, and kissed him." The rest was pure ceremony; the forty days of embalming formed a portion of the seventy days of mourning, on the part of official mourners, paid or appointed for the office. Eccl. 12: 5; Jer. 9: 17, 18; Mark 5: 38. As Joseph was an Egyptian prince, the mourning for his father would be carried out in Egyptian style; and we are told that in this official ceremony, the mourners were Egyptians. Vr. 3. It is not conceivable that Joseph would desist from the performance of his public duties for the space of seventy days; but while the official mourning lasted, Joseph could not present himself at the court of Pharaoh; so that when everything was ready for the burial, he bade some of the house or family of Pharaoh speak for him, asking Pharaoh's permission that he should leave the country, in fulfilment of the will of his father, and of the oath which he had required of him, to bury him in the land of Canaan; a permission that Pharaoh granted at once. It seems that thirty days was the time of official mourning among the Hebrews, for persons of high rank. Thus was done the mourning for Aaron and for Moses. Num. 20: 29; Deut. 34: 8. The time was more than twice this among the Egyptians. It seems that there was no

*official* mourning for the death of Miriam, the sister of Moses. Num. 20: 1.

50: 7—14. THE BURIAL OF JACOB. (1689 B. C.)

7 And Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt,

8 and all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house: only their little ones,\* and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen.

9 And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company.

10 And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, and there they lamented with a very great and sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days.

11 And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abel-mizraim,† which is beyond the Jordan.

12 And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them:

13 for his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field, for a possession of a burying-place, of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre.

14 And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

[\**M. S. V.*, their families.]

[†=Mourning of the Egyptians.]

This narrative of the burial of Jacob is interesting; and it reveals to us the high esteem in which Joseph was held by the family (or house) of Pharaoh. A numerous cortege, composed of all the men of the house of Jacob, with the most distinguished individuals of the court of Pharaoh, his princes and the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, accompanied the body to the threshing floor of Atad;—a very great cortege, with chariots and horsemen. “The elders of Egypt” and “the elders of the house of Pharaoh,” of course were not men of advanced age, but the words ought to be understood here, just as in all the Bible, as an official title of those who governed and exercised authority in the palace of Pharaoh and in the land of Egypt. See *Note 22*, on “the Elder,” ch. 24: 2. These with all his princes were “the servants of Pharaoh,” of whom we read in *vr. 7*, and in all this history.

We do not know just where the “threshing floor of Atad” was located; for the phrase “beyond Jordan,” or “the Jordan” means only that it was in the land of Canaan; as the same phrase ordinarily signifies in the Books of Moses: “beyond,” or “*on the other side*” from where Moses concluded his writing, and where he died and was buried. The phrase does not imply

that they went around the Salt or Dead Sea, in order to cross the Jordan and enter Canaan on the eastern side. They entered from the south undoubtedly, and by the same way they went out; and it is very doubtful, to say the least, whether they went anywhere near the river or valley of Jordan, where some would locate it. "Atad" was probably the name of the owner of the threshing-floor, or of the individual from whom it took name; just as in the case of "the oaks of Mamre." The land was doubtless very abundant in wheat, and would give ready subsistence and pasturage to the immense cortege and their beasts, during the seven days of mourning, and probably it was near to Hebron, or Mamre, where, in the cave of Machpelah, the body was deposited. The valley of the Jordan, near to Jericho, where many (following the opinion of Jerome), would desire to situate it, being from 1200 to 1300 ft. below the level of the ocean, would not be a suitable climate for wheat, nor a location for "threshing floors"; besides, that did not lie in the way from Egypt to Hebron. From the extraordinary mourning which they performed there for seven days, in addition to the seventy days of mourning done in Egypt, the Canaanites took occasion to call that locality "Abel-mizraim" = "Mourning of the Egyptians." We have occasion to congratulate ourselves that the good sense of modern times has abolished these mournings of ceremony, which answered no other purpose than to maintain that servile and almost idolatrous respect with which the common people regarded the person and the authority of kings and of the grandees who surrounded them. Abraham and Isaac were buried without any ceremony worthy of mention; but the funeral ceremonies of Jacob had necessarily to be celebrated in Egyptian style, with great ceremony, and with the participation of the most distinguished persons of the court of Pharaoh. Once these long and tedious ceremonies were ended, Joseph and his brethren, and all those who had accompanied him to the burial of his father, returned again to Egypt.

50: 15—21. THE DISTRUST OF JOSEPH'S BROTHERS. (1689 B. C.)

15 And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, It may be that Joseph will hate us, and will fully requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

16 And they sent a message unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,

17 So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the transgression of thy brethren, and their sin, for that they did unto thee evil. And now, we pray thee, forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

18 And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we are thy servants.

19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?

20 And as for you, ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones.\* And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

[\*M. S. V. your families; as in ch. 47:12.]

The official duties of Joseph and his exalted social position had prevented there being between him and his brothers anything of the familiarity of the days of their youth; and seeing that their father was dead, they imagined that the great lord (this obstacle being once removed), would take vengeance on them for the evil deeds that they had done to him. As it is impossible for us to believe that Jacob entertained any such thought and took this method of guarding against such an event, the message which Joseph's brothers sent to him wears all the appearance of an invention of their own, in order to work upon Joseph's feelings of filial piety, and gain more readily their purpose. They sent a messenger, therefore, to carry to Joseph, as the message of his dying father, this petition on their behalf. How terrible is the power of an accusing conscience, and how it fills the bravest heart with dread!

"Conscience makes cowards of us all."

During seventeen years of continual favors received from Joseph in Egypt, they still entertained a fear that he was going to punish them, having them completely in his power; and that only the presence of his aged father was shielding them from Joseph's wrath! Until then, they had regarded him as the great lord, and not as the loving and forgiving brother! Thus a corrupted and false Christianity teaches that our brother Jesus, bearing still "in his hands the print of the nails," is an exacting and severe Lord and a rigorous Judge, and that it is necessary to apply to Mary and to all the court of heaven, in order that, through their intercession for us, he may relent, and grant us pardon! See Ligouri's *Glories of Mary*, opening at random, anywhere. How different is the true Christ from the disfigured one which Romanism offers to sinners! *Joseph wept while their messenger was delivering the message*, in compassion for his brethren, and with sorrow that they should entertain such feeling with regard to him: and Jesus, too, might weep again, if tears could be shed in heaven, over the travesty

of his dying love and his rising power, which papal Christianity teaches in his name!

His brethren also followed after their messenger, and fell down before his face, exclaiming: "Behold, we be thy servants!" Joseph tranquilized their apprehension, and bade them dismiss their fears, repeating what seventeen years before he had told them, with the same object (ch. 45: 5—8), that God had made use of their wicked action in order to preserve the life of much people, and to carry forward his own plans of vast importance. Thus he consoled them with kind and tender words, and assured them of his love and favor. Nevertheless he was unwilling to weaken in them the conviction of the enormity of their sin; and we do very wrong if, in order to give comfort to those who suffer the consequences of their sins, we blot out from their minds the conviction of their dreadful guilt and of the danger which they have incurred, otherwise than through deep and true repentance, a thorough conversion from sin unto holiness, and a living faith in and following of our Lord Jesus Christ;—as Jesus said to the helpless cripple of *thirty-eight years* standing, whom he had healed: "Behold thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee!" John 5: 14. Joseph did not thus do; and in saying: "Am I in the place of God?" he indicated that it did not appertain to him, but to God, to judge and punish the sin which they had committed.

#### 50: 22, 23. JOSEPH AND HIS DESCENDANTS.

22 And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived a hundred and ten years.

23 And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were born upon Joseph's knees.\*

[\* = were received as his own? See ch. 30: 3. *A. V. and M. S. V.*, were brought up upon Joseph's knees.]

Joseph was 30 years old when he was presented before Pharaoh and made Governor of Egypt; and dying at the age of 110, he lived 80 years in his high office. He saw the children of Ephraim of the third generation, and those of Manasseh, until the second. From what is said here, and in other parts of the writings of Moses, it seems certain that Manasseh had no other son but Machir, from whom were descended all the families of this tribe, on both sides of the Jordan. The Hebrew expression is a very singular one which in *vr. 23* is translated in the English and the Modern Spanish Versions, "*were brought up upon Joseph's knees:*" *Heb.* "*were born upon Joseph's knees,*" as given in the text of the Revised Version. When Rachel gave her maid-servant Bilhah to Jacob for a wife, she said: "She

shall bear upon my knees, *that I also may have children by her.* Ch. 30: 3. It is not to be supposed that Rachel performed the office of mid-wife, and still less that Joseph did so. In both cases the sense is probably the same, and in the case of Joseph, as in that of his mother Rachel, the phrase very probably means, *that he received them for his own.* And nevertheless we see no reason why this should be said of the grandchildren of Manasseh, and not of those of Ephraim also; unless it be to give us to understand that Joseph, till the very last, gave the preference to Manasseh (see ch. 48: 17—20), and continued manifesting it in a certain way towards his lineage. Manasseh did not lose the birthright (Jos. 17: 1); and in the division of the promised land, his tribe received two portions, or “lots,” and Ephraim only one. Josh. 17: 5, 10. It is probable therefore that this singular expression has in Hebrew some proverbial sense, and signifies that Joseph lived to receive upon his knees, after they were born, *and cherish as his own,* all the children of Manasseh, until the second generation; so that the text of the A. V. and the Modern Spanish Version give the true sense; whereas the literal rendering, “were born upon the knees of Joseph” gives a very misleading one; in seeming forgetfulness of the fact that *the very purpose of a translation is to put the thought of the writer in easy reach of the reader.* Machir, the son of Manasseh, had several sons; but he, it seems, was the only son of his father. The point is somewhat involved; but Num. 26: 29—34; 27: 1, and Josh, 13: 31 make clear the fact that the two half tribes of Manasseh, to the east and to the west of the Jordan, both descended from this Machir.

50: 24—26. THE DEATH OF JOSEPH, AND THE OATH WHICH HE REQUIRED IN REGARD TO HIS BODY. (1635 B. C.)

24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

25 And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

26 So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

“By faith Joseph when he died, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones.” Heb. 11: 22. Joseph did not know *when* God would visit his people and bring them up out of Egypt; but he was fully certified of the fact itself by the promise of God, and he did not have the least doubt of it; so that he made the children of Israel to swear that whenever the time arrived, they would

carry up his bones with them. He well knew that the Egyptians would not permit the mortal remains of the most distinguished of their governors to be carried out of the country, as had been done with the body of Jacob; and for this reason he exacted an oath that when they went up, they would not leave his bones in Egypt. When he died, therefore, his body was embalmed, to preserve it from corruption, as had been done with that of his father; but instead of being buried, as was Jacob, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt and kept in some secure place for the day of the departure of the people. That mummified body was for a century and a half, or as some understand it, for three centuries and a half, a dumb prophecy of the exodus of the people from Egypt, a perpetual monument of the faith of Joseph, and a constant awakener of the faith and hope of the people, "strangers in a strange land," speaking by dumb but eloquent signs of the promise given to Abraham that "in the fourth century (=after "four hundred years") they should return there." Ch. 15: 13, 16. In this way he, like another Abel, "by it, being dead, was yet speaking." Heb. 11: 4.

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Here ends this noble book, the most ancient in the world, and in every sense the most important, with the exception of the four Gospels, which recount the life, the teachings, the redeeming death, and the life-giving resurrection of Jesus Christ. It gives us brief, but sufficient and trustworthy information, of the work of creation in general, and the work of the creation of man in particular; of his fall, from whence come all our sins and miseries, and the total corruption of our nature, which in all ages, and in all countries, and under the most varied conditions, shows itself to be one and the same corrupt thing; of the deluge of waters in the days of Noah, on account of the insupportable wickedness of men; of the dissemination of the nations after the flood; of the tower of Babylon and the confusion of tongues; of the incorrigible wickedness and pride of men, and the failure of all endeavors made to bring them back to God; of the consequent calling of Abraham and his descendants, and the abandonment of the other nations, that they "should walk in their own ways" and "according to the lusts of their own hearts." (Acts 14: 16; 17: 30, 31; Rom. 1: 24, 26); of the various steps by which God tried and disciplined this family which he had chosen, until he carried them down to Egypt, that they

might there be educated and become proficient in the arts, sciences, trades and industries of the most advanced civilization of that day, and might there increase into a nation, capable of taking possession of the land which he had given to their fathers; and there we leave them at the close of the Book of GENESIS;— a word which means to say “The Beginning”;—the beginning of all things, including the beginnings of the Christian Redemption; having laid securely the foundation for the history of Israel, and of the Church of God in this world apostate from its Maker.

END OF THE GENESIS.



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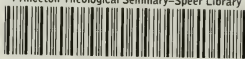
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