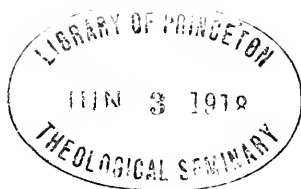


• THROUGH • THE • BIBLE •

GENESIS

WILLIAM EVANS

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By
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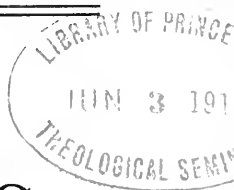
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THROUGH THE BIBLE—BOOK BY BOOK

THE BOOK OF
GENESIS



By

WILLIAM EVANS, Ph. D., D.D.

*Associate Dean, Bible Institute of Los Angeles, Cal.
Author of "Great Doctrines of the Bible," "Personal
Soul-Winning," "How to Prepare Sermons and Bible
Addresses," "Outline Study of the Bible," "Book Method
of Bible Study," "How to Memorize," "The Christian's
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Preface

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W. E.

Los Angeles, Cal.

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Introduction

THE book of Genesis is the oldest book in the world. It contains the oldest reliable information on the matter of which it treats. It covers a period of about 2,300 years of human history—from the creation of the world (yea, even before the creation, or reformation, of this present earth, i. 1) to the death of Joseph in Egypt.

Genesis is the seed plot of the whole Bible and the groundwork of the entire revelation as contained in the remaining sixty-five books composing the sacred Scriptures. The other books in the Bible refer to the great facts which begin in Genesis, for example, man, the Sabbath, marriage, sin, sacrifice, worship.

It is doubtless for this reason that Genesis has been called the “Book of Beginnings.” There is the beginning of everything but God in it.

Quotations from Genesis in other parts of the Scripture are numerous. In the New Testament alone, it is said that Genesis is referred to sixty times. Our Lord Himself quotes from it in about fifteen different places (cf. Matthew xix. 4-16; xxiv. 37-39; Mark vii. 4-10; x. 3-8; Luke xi. 49-51; xvii. 26-29, 32; John i. 51; vii. 21-23; viii. 44-56). May not this be the reason—the important place of Genesis in the Scriptures—why destructive higher criticism has turned its guns of attack against this book more than any other book in the Bible? It probably seems to them that if Genesis can be dethroned, it is a comparatively easy matter to do away with the other books of the Bible. And yet, although this book has been attacked for centuries, not one chapter of it has fallen.

This book still commences with the words, "In the beginning," and ends with Joseph's coffin in Egypt. Geology has changed its findings, and science its conclusions, again and again, but Genesis remains the same.

The Name of the Book. The name Genesis is probably derived from its title in the Septuagint (ii. 4—The book of "the generations of the heavens and of the earth," cf. with Matthew i. 1—"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ"). This title was adopted by the translators of the King James Version.

The Jews named it from its opening words, "In the beginning," and thus called it, "The Book of Beginnings." It is interesting to note the beginnings referred to in this book. We have the beginning of the world, the earth, man, the Sabbath, marriage, the family, sin, sacrifice, prophecy, promise, Israel, the nations, the Jew, language, death, arts and science, and many other things. Indeed, there is the beginning of practically everything in connection with the redemption and the world, the beginning of everything but God.

The Authorship of the Book. Genesis, being a part of the Pentateuch, was written, according to the testimony of Jewish history and tradition, of the Scriptures themselves, as well as of Christ, by Moses (cf. Joshua i. 7, 8; viii. 31, 34; xxiii. 6; 1 Kings ii. 3; 2 Kings xiv. 6; xxiii. 25; 1 Chronicles xxii. 12, 13; 2 Chronicles xxv. 4; xxxiii. 8; Ezra iii. 2; vi. 18; Nehemiah i. 7, 8; viii. 1; John i. 17; v. 45-47; vii. 19-23; Luke xxiv. 27, 44).

The Purpose of the Book. In order to understand the purpose of Genesis, we must get a glimpse of the purpose of the Old Testament in its entirety. The Old Testament is the book of Israel. It is true that other nations and peoples are dealt with, but only incidentally, and in so far as they are necessary to the development of Israel's

history, national and religious life. It is doubtless the main purpose of Genesis to set before us the beginnings of the nation of Israel, the chosen race, the nation selected by God to be the depository of His truth, and the disseminator of that truth among the nations of the world. It is true that the choosing of the nation does not really begin until chapter twelve—the call of Abraham. One cannot fail to recognize, however, that the preceding eleven chapters, dealing with the history of the world and the human race in general, are but a background for and lead up to the call of Abraham as the father of the chosen race. This background (chaps. i.–xi.) sets before us the relation of God to the material universe and to the creation of man and woman ; the environment in which our first parents were placed, and describes to us the temptation and fall, with the dire consequences attending that lapse from original integrity—consequences which affected, not only our first parents, but their progeny, and the entire race.

In Genesis i.–xi. we have the primeval history of the race and the origin of nations set before us, not so much for the value that these facts have in themselves, but more particularly because of their relation to the divine purpose and action in the selection of one nation as the divine depository of the sacred records and of the divine purpose in connection with man's redemption.

The main point of Genesis, then, is to trace the history of Israel, and describe the steps by which it became a nation, having a separate and distinct existence. The student soon discovers this purpose, and cannot fail to observe how other nations are mentioned but briefly and then dismissed, while his attention is continually fastened upon Israel. The tables of the nations and of the descendents of Noah disappear, except the line of Shem—the chosen line. After chapter twenty-five Ishmael

disappears, and Isaac—the chosen seed—alone remains. In chapter thirty-six Esau and his descendents disappear, and Jacob only—the chosen seed—is left. The purpose of Genesis, therefore, is very clearly recognized from a careful study of these facts.

The Divisions of the Book. Genesis may be divided, topically, genealogically, or according to its subject analysis.

Topically: I. Primeval History—History of the human race as a whole (chaps. i.-xi.). II. Patriarchal History—History of the Jewish patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph (chaps. xii.-l.).

Genealogically: According to the genealogies of Genesis, the book divides itself into eleven chapters, each one of which begins with the words, "These are the generations of." According to this method of dividing the book, Genesis has really but eleven chapters instead of fifty, and it is a very serious question as to whether this is not the proper way to study the book. According to this analysis, the following are the divisions of the book :

| | | |
|-------|------------------|---|
| I. | i. 1-ii. 3. | "In the beginning, God." Creation in general. |
| II. | ii. 4-iv. 26. | Generations of the heaven and the earth (creation of man). |
| III. | v. 1-vi. 18. | Generations of Adam—Seth, chosen seed (v. 7). |
| IV. | vi. 9-ix. 29. | Generations of Noah—Shem, chosen seed (xi. 10). |
| V. | x. 1-xi. 9. | Generations of the sons of Noah. |
| VI. | xi. 10-xi. 26. | Generations of Shem. |
| VII. | xi. 27-xxv. 11. | Generations of Terah—Abra- ham, chosen seed (xii. 1). |
| VIII. | xxv. 12-xxv. 18. | Generations of Ishmael. |

- IX. xxv. 19—xxxv. 29. Generations of Isaac—Jacob, chosen seed (xxv. 23).
 X. xxxvi. 1—xxxvii. 1. Generations of Esau.
 XI. xxxvii. 2—1. 26. Generations of Jacob—Joseph, chosen seed (cf. Genesis xxxv. 22; xxxix. 8, 9, with 1 Chronicles v. 1, 2).

Notes on this Genealogical Division :

1. Note the extra amount of space given to chapters seven, nine and eleven as compared with the other chapters. Why? Because they deal with the men through whom the promises were to be fulfilled, and who, consequently, were to play so large a part in the history of the redemption of the race.

2. Why was Joseph chosen rather than Reuben, the first-born, or Judah, as the one through whom the promised blessing should come? The answer is found by a comparison of the passages found under XI above. So does God punish sin, although at the time of its occurrence it seemed as if God had winked at it (cf. 2 Chronicles xvi. 9).

3. Note that those who are not in the direct line of the Messiah are given first, for example, Cain before Seth (iv. 17; v. 6); Japheth's (x. 2) and Ham's (x. 6) before Shem's (xi. 10); Ishmael's (xxv. 12) before Isaac's (xxv. 19); Esau's (xxxvi. 1) before Jacob's (xxxvii. 2). Why all this? Is it not in full accord with the divine order of, things as set forth in 1 Corinthians xv. 46—“Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual”?

General Subject Analysis :

- I. Generation—The Creation of the Heavens and the Earth (chaps. i.—ii.).
- II. Degeneration—The Fall of Man and Its Consequences on Adam and the Race (chaps. iii.—xi.).

III. Regeneration—The Call of Abraham and the Development of the Chosen Race (chaps. xii.-l.).

It has been claimed by some that Genesis i. 1, 2 sum up the contents of the whole book. This may be set forth as follows: Construction, i. 1—"God created the heavens and the earth"; Destruction, i. 2—"And the earth was waste and void"; Reconstruction, i. 2—"And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

Genesis may also be divided into two great divisions:

- I. The History of the Human Race as a Whole (chaps. i.-xi.).
- II. The History of the Chosen Nation—Israel (chaps. xii.-l.).

The Great Facts of the Book. It will help the student to get a comprehensive grasp of Genesis if he recognizes the great facts that are dealt with in this book. They are five: Creation (chaps. i., ii.); Fall (chaps. iii.-v.); The Flood (chaps. vi.-ix.); The Nations (chaps. x.-xi.); Patriarchs, including Joseph (chaps. xii.-l.).

The outline that we shall use in our study of Genesis is twofold: (a) The History of the Human Race as a Whole (chaps. i.-xi.). (b) The History of the Patriarchs (chaps. xii.-l.).

Under the first division, we shall group the contents as follows: The relation of God to the world (chap. i.); The relation of man to God (chaps. ii., iii.); The relation of man to fellowmen (chaps. iv., v.); The development of sin in the race—The penalty of sin (chaps. vi.-xi.).

Under the second division, we shall consider the contents of these chapters as grouping themselves around the patriarchs: Abraham (chaps. xii.-xxv.); Isaac (chaps. xxi.-xxviii.); Jacob (chaps. xxvii.-l.); and Joseph (chaps. xxxvii.-l.).

Synopsis

PART I

The History of the Human Race as a Whole (Chapters i.—xi.)

I. THE RELATION OF GOD TO THE WORLD (Chap. i.)

II. THE RELATION OF MAN TO GOD—SINLESS AND SINFUL (Chaps. ii.—iii.)

1. Man as Sinless and Unfallen (Chap. ii.).

(a) Man's Origin and Nature.

(b) Man's Environment—Eden.

(c) Man's Companion—Eve.

(d) The Dominion Given to Man.

2. Man as Sinful and Fallen (Chap. iii.).

III. THE RELATION OF MAN TO HIS FELLOWMEN (Chaps. iv.—v.)

IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SIN IN THE RACE—THE PENALTY OF SIN (Chaps. vii.—viii.)

PART II

The History of the Patriarchs (Chapters xii.—l.)

I. ABRAHAM, THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL (Chaps. xii.—xxv.)

1. The First Manifestation of God to Abraham —The Call to Separation (Chaps. xi. 31— xii. 5).

2. The Second Manifestation of God to Abraham —Encouragement (Chap. xii. 7—9).

- The First Episode—Egypt (Chaps. xii. 10–xiii. 13 ; cf. Chap. xx.).
 Lot—A Study in Backsliding—Another Episode (Chap. xiii. 5–13).
3. The Third Manifestation of God to Abraham—Reassurance (Chap. xiii. 14–17).
 The Second Episode—The Battle of the Kings (Chap. xiv.).
 4. The Fourth Manifestation of God to Abraham—The Promise of a Seed and the Land Reaffirmed (Chap. xv. 1–21).
 The Third Episode—Hagar and Ishmael (Chap. xvi. 1–16).
 5. The Fifth Manifestation of God to Abraham—Added Assurance (Chap. xvii. 1–27).
 6. The Sixth Manifestation of God to Abraham—Intercession (Chaps. xviii.–xix.).
 Fourth Episode—Abraham and Abimelech (Chaps. xx. and xxi. 22–33).
 7. The Seventh Manifestation of God to Abraham—The Supreme Test of Faith (Chaps. xxii.–xxv.).
 Fifth Episode—The Death of Sarah (Chap. xxiii.).
- II. THE HISTORY OF ISAAC (Chaps. xxv. 19–xxviii. 9, Chap. xxxv.)
1. Isaac's Birth and Name (Chaps. xvii. 17–19; xviii. 12–13 ; xxi. 6).
 2. The Marriage of Isaac (Chap. xxiv.).
 3. Isaac's Career (Chap. xxvi. 1–22, 23–33).
 (a) The First Manifestation of God to Isaac (Chap. xxvi. 1–22).
 (b) The Second Manifestation of God to Isaac—Beer-sheba (Chap. xxvi. 23–33).
 4. Isaac's Death (Chap. xxxv. 28, 29).
- III. THE HISTORY OF JACOB (Chaps. xxviii.–xxxv. ; xlv. 1–7.)
1. The First Manifestation of God to Jacob—Bethel—Flight (Chap. xxviii.).

2. The Second Manifestation of God to Jacob—
Padan-aram—Return (Chap. xxxi.).
3. The Third Manifestation of God to Jacob—
Mahanaim (Chap. xxxii.).
4. The Fourth Manifestation of God to Jacob—
Peniel (Chap. xxxii. 24-32).
5. The Fifth Manifestation of God to Jacob—
The Forgotten Vow (Chap. xxxv. 1-8).
6. The Sixth Manifestation of God to Jacob—
Bethel Again (Chap. xxxv. 9-15).
7. The Seventh Manifestation of God to Jacob—
Beer-sheba (Chap. xlvi. 1-7).

IV. THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH (Chaps. xxxvii.-l.)

1. The Chosen Vessel in Preparation (Chaps. xxxvii.-xli. 36).
 - (a) Joseph as a Son (Chap. xxxvii.).
 - (b) Joseph as a Slave (Chap. xxxix. 1-20).
 - (c) Joseph as a Prisoner (Chap. xxxix. 21-xli. 36).
2. The Chosen Vessel in Service (Chaps. xli. 37-l. 21).
 - (a) Joseph and Pharaoh (Chaps. xli. 37-57).
 - (b) Joseph and the Egyptians (Chaps. xli. 46-57; xlvii. 13-31).
 - (c) Joseph and his Brethren (Chaps. xlii. 1-45; l. 15-21; cf. Chap. xxviii.).
 - (d) Joseph and his Father (Chaps. xlvi. 1-l. 14).
3. The Dissolution of the Chosen Vessel (Chap. l. 22-26).

The Eight Great Words of Genesis

| I. History of Mankind, i.-xi. | II. History of Israel, xxii.-l. |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Creation - - i.-ii. | 5. Abraham - xii.-xxv. |
| 2. Fall - - - iii.-vi. | 6. Isaac - xxi.-xxviii. |
| 3. Flood - - - vii.-ix. | 7. Jacob xxvii.-xxxvii. |
| 4. Nations - - x.-xi. | 8. Joseph - xxxviii.-l. |

PART I

The History of the Human Race as a Whole

(Chapters i.-xi.)

Let us recall in this connection that these chapters are a background for the introduction of God's method, purpose, and dealing with the chosen race, the children of Israel.

I

The Relation of God to the World

(Chapter i.)

WE are not interested, in our present study, in the question as to how this record came, whether it was directly revealed to Moses by God, or came to the hands of Moses by way of tradition. The inspiration of the Scriptures vouches for the accuracy of the record, whether that record came by direct revelation, or is recorded from previously existing material. In our study of Genesis, we are assuming the inspiration of the Scriptures.

This chapter, with the probable exception of verse one, gives the account of the construction, or probably better, the reconstruction, or preparation of the earth as a dwelling place for the human race. It is likely that this chapter gives an account of an original creation—"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"—which, by reason of some catastrophe, probably the fall of Satan and his angels, had become "waste and void" (ver. 2, cf. Jeremiah iv. 23-26; Isaiah xxiv. 1; xlv. 18; also Ezekiel xxviii. 12-15; Isaiah xiv. 9-14). How long these original heavens and earth remained before they became "waste and void," we do not know. The words, "In the beginning," may represent all the millions of years that geologists speak about, and account for all fossil remains.

Beginning with the second verse and continuing throughout the chapter, we are told of a reconstruction of these heavens and earth, which by reason of some catastrophe

had become waste and void, into a fit dwelling-place for man. How wonderful are these preparations! The second day's creation did not take place until the first day had all been prepared for it, and so with each succeeding day. The animals were not made until the vegetation had been prepared for them. Man was not made until everything was in preparation for his appearance. Notice each day's preparation for what followed, and then remember that all this was for man. If the future be as momentous in its reality as the past was in its preparation, then we may ask, What is man? What kind of a being is he that God should make such wonderful preparations as this for him? The psalmist says: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels" (literally, a little less than God). I am not a creature of blind mechanical forces. I am the child of my heavenly Father. What a beautiful world this must have been! It is said that the creation was good "to look upon." God made everything beautiful in its season. We are told that Christ has gone into the heavens to prepare mansions for us. How beautiful those mansions must be!

It is not our purpose to set forth the relation between these early chapters of Genesis and the results of geology. It may be sufficient for us to say that the more clearly defined and conclusively stated the results of science are, the nearer they come to the truth of this chapter. Professor Dana of Yale is quoted as saying that not one definitely ascertained fact of science is contrary to Scripture. It is impossible to account for the harmony between true science and the first chapter of Genesis except on the theory of divine inspiration, so free is the Genesis account from conflict with science. The God of the Word and the world is one and the same.

All seeming difficult and impossible things in this chapter are made clear when we remember that God the Almighty is the actor in the scene. It may be for this very reason that the name of God occurs as many as forty-six times in the account of creation (i. 1-ii. 3). Genesis is a book for the man of God and faith. There are questions here that neither science nor reason can answer; questions that can receive a full and complete answer only when understood by that higher reason—faith.

It is interesting to note the distinction the writer of Genesis makes between the words "create" and "make." The word "create" means to bring a thing into existence out of nothing, the introduction of a new thing—as distinguished from the word "made," which refers to the making of a new thing out of existing material. "Create" is used in a unique sense three times in this chapter: In verse one, dealing with the creation of the original heavens and earth; in verse twenty-one, in describing the creation of animals, in contrast with plant life; and in verse twenty-seven, in describing the creation of man, as contrasted with the beasts of the field. It is remarkable to note in this connection that scientists are not able to find the missing link between plant and animal life, and between animal and man. The question may be asked whether there is any such thing as a missing link in this case, and whether the use of this word at these two strategic places does not indicate that God inaugurated a new order of things which cannot be accounted for by evolutionary processes.

Genesis is a book dealing with foundation facts primarily. Only such questions as concern the facts with which a man finds himself surrounded are dealt with: How did this world come into being? What is man? How did sin find its entrance into the human race? What provision is made for sin's disaster? One cannot

consider these matters without again asking himself the question, If the future be as momentous in results as the past was in preparation, is it not exceedingly important that we manifest some interest in participating in the blessed results?

The creation of man is the crowning act of this chapter. He is described as being "created in the image and likeness of God" (i. 26, 27). "Image" means the shadow or outline of a figure, while "likeness" denotes the resemblance of that shadow to the figure. These two words are practically synonymous. We may express the language as follows: "Let us make man in our image to be our likeness." That man was made in the "image" and "likeness" of God is fundamental in all God's dealings with man (cf. ix. 6; 1 Corinthians xi. 7; Ephesians iv. 21-24; Colossians iii. 10; James iii. 9).

What is the meaning of the term "image and likeness"? Are we to understand that God has parts and passions as a man, and that these terms designate physical likeness? Deuteronomy iv. 15 contradicts such a physical view of God: "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire." Nor does Psalm xvii. 15 denote physical likeness to God, for the Revised Version makes the verse read: "I shall be satisfied when I awake with beholding thy form." It is fair, however, to believe that erectness of posture, intelligence of countenance, and a quick glancing eye characterized the first man. The terms "image and likeness" are interpreted in Bible language as referring to moral, intellectual, and spiritual qualities: "knowledge, righteousness, and holiness of truth" (Ephesians iv. 23, 24; Colossians iii. 10). Probably dominion, authority over the rest of God's creation is involved in "image and likeness" (1 Corinthians xi. 7).

II

The Relation of Man to God—Sinless and Sinful

(Chapters ii. and iii.)

1. **Man as Sinless and Unfallen** (chap. ii.). Chapter two is not a second and different account of the creation recorded in chapter one, but a detailed account of one part of it, namely, the creation of man. Man is but a part of the general creation in chapter one, his creation being spoken of in connection with that of trees, plants, flowers, birds, beasts, and fishes. The second chapter separates man from all these, and discusses his origin, his nature, and his environment. In other words, in chapter one you have the account of the creation of man in general ; in chapter two, in detail. Here is shown God's interest in man as the crowning work of His creation. Four things, especially, are of interest in this chapter :

First. Man's Origin and Nature. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul" (ii. 7). From this verse we learn that man is dust inbreathed by deity. When God made the plant, He gave it a body. When He made the beast, He gave it a body and a soul (that is, a certain kind of soul, for the soul of the beast is different in origin, nature, and destiny from that of man. A beast may have will, but not self-will ; determination, but not self-determination ; consciousness, but not self-consciousness). When God made man, He gave him a body, as the plant ; a soul, as the beast ; but also a spirit from Himself, which was the result of divine inbreathing. It was the inbreathing into

man of the divine Spirit (or Spirit) that made man a living soul, and it is this very Spirit of God in man which differentiates him from the beast, and that unites him with God. A man without religion is not a man.

“ For what are men better than sheep or goats,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend? ”

Solomon says: “ Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole (duty of) man ” (Ecclesiastes xii. 13). A man without religion is not a full, complete, whole man. Any system of education that omits the religious element is not true education. Education has been defined as the “ development of the normal faculties of man. ” Greek, Latin, German, French, mathematics, and many other such studies are not absolutely necessary to a normal man. A man may be normal and not be versed in any of these subjects. Religion, however, is a normal faculty of man; and no man is educated and no system of education is truly worthy of the name that does not include the care of the soul. Our modern system of education is incomplete and insufficient in so far as it does not develop the religious, which is a normal faculty of man.

Man is body, soul, and spirit; or, more properly, spirit, soul, and body (cf. 1 Thessalonians v. 23; Hebrews iv. 12). The body is that which may be played upon by the spirit or soul, and thus a man, in as far as he allows either one of these to predominate over the body, is either “ soulish ” or “ spiritual. ” Paul speaks of the “ natural ” (soulish) man and the “ spiritual ” man (1 Corinthians ii. 14, 15).

Adam and Eve were created with sinless natures, but with the possibility of sinning.

Our attention is drawn to the intellectual power of our first parent. Genesis ii. 19 is very clear in its teaching that man was created and endowed with superior intellectual faculties. Adam had not only the power of speech, but the power of reasoning and thought in connection with speech. He could attach words to ideas. This is not the picture, as evolution would have us believe, of an infantile savage slowly groping his way towards articulate speech by imitation of the sounds of animals.

From all this it is evident that man's original state was not one of savagery. Indeed, there is abundant evidence to show that man has been degraded from a very much higher stage. Both the Bible and science agree in making man the crowning work of God, and that there will be no higher order of beings here on the earth than man. We must not forget that while man, from one side of his nature, is linked to the animal creation, he is yet supernatural—a being of a higher order and more splendid nature; he is in the "image and likeness of God." Man has developed not from the ape, but *away* from it. He never was anything but potential man. "No single instance has yet been adduced of the transformation of one animal species into another, either by natural or artificial selection; much less has it been demonstrated that the body of the brute has ever been developed into that of the man. The links that should bind man to the monkey have not been found. Not a single one can be shown. None have been found that stood nearer the monkey than the man of to-day."—*Agassiz*.

Second. Man's Environment—Eden. Adam and Eve were placed in the garden of Eden, in which everything was in a state of perfection. There was nothing to defile or destroy. Everything was beautiful in its season. This Edenic condition is called "Paradise." Its location

and boundaries are distinctly stated in this chapter (vers. 9-17). Just in what part of the world it was located, we may not be able definitely to state at the present. The work of man was to "dress it and to keep it." Here, doubtless, was work without weariness, a perfect environment for a perfect man. It may be of interest to note that the first two and the last two chapters of the Bible deal with a perfect condition or existence in which there is nothing to defile, hurt, or destroy. The first paradise was lost through sin; the second is regained through Christ, and can never be lost. The "tree of life" we read of in the second and third chapters of Genesis is not mentioned again throughout the whole Bible until we come to the book of Revelation, in which is described for us the environment of redeemed and glorified humanity.

Third. Man's Companion—Eve. Here we have the account of the creation of Eve, the companion of Adam. God's thought and purpose for man are indicated here—that purpose is marriage. God made them "male and female" for the purpose of marriage and the propagation of the race. Do men and women thwart God's plan when they do not carry out His intended purpose? God's creative purpose for the race is marriage. There are some recognized exceptions to this rule, of course (Matthew xix. 3-12), but otherwise the purpose of God is clearly declared. It is of interest to note that woman was taken, not from man's head, to be above him; nor from his feet, to be below him; but from his side, to be equal with him and his companion in life. Yet see 1 Corinthians xi. 2-11 for woman's relation to man.

In this connection we should remember that marriage is an institution ordained of God and has come down to us from man's state of innocency. The uniting in marriage of man and woman makes them forever one. Our

Lord Jesus bases very definite teaching regarding divorce on this passage, and leads us to believe that a second marriage contracted by either one of the parties during the lifetime of the other party constitutes adultery. Nothing but the death of the other partner gives the right to another marriage (cf. Matthew v. 32 ; xix. 3-9 ; Mark x. 2-12 ; Luke xvi. 18). It is the basis, also, of Paul's teaching (Romans vii. 1-3 ; 1 Corinthians vii. 10).

Fourth. The Dominion Given to Man. In man's hand was placed, by God, the scepter of dominion over all things that God had created. This dominion lasted until sin entered into the race. Without doubt the beasts of the field were subject to the will of our first parents. It is a characteristic of the millennial age that the beasts shall be subject to the will of the redeemed (Isaiah xi. 6-9). It is interesting to note that our Lord, during His temptation, was "with the wild beasts" in the wilderness (Mark i. 13), and yet they did not harm Him. All the creation was involved in the fall of man (Romans viii. 19-22). Now, instead of the beasts being afraid of man, man is afraid of the beasts. Some day it will be otherwise (Isaiah xi., xxxv.).

2. Man as Sinful and Fallen (chap. iii.). Man was created, not only sinless, but a free agent and a moral being. Communion with God was by obedience, and righteousness by testing. The purpose of this chapter is to show the entrance of sin into the *human race*—not into the *world*, for sin was in the world before Adam fell, and was probably introduced into the world by the fall of Satan and his angels (see page 21).

The doctrine of the fall of man (chap. iii.).

Other religions beside Christianity recognize this great and awful fact. Did we not possess such an account as we find in Genesis iii. of the fall of man from his original

condition, we would have to invent one, for without such a narrative the present awful condition of man in such striking contrast to the picture of chapters one and two would have to be accounted for. This chapter in Genesis gives the fullest account of this awful tragedy in the experience of mankind. Other scriptures, however, should be considered in this connection (Genesis vi. 5 ; viii. 21 ; Psalm xiv. ; Romans iii. 10-23 ; v. 12-19 ; 1 Timothy ii. 14). When we compare Genesis i. 26—man's original, sinless condition—with vi. 5—setting forth man's sinful and deplorably fallen state, we naturally ask for a reason for the difference between these two conditions. The reason is given in this account of the fall.

This chapter is to be looked upon as actual, literal history. It is not fair to call some parts of this chapter literal, and others allegorical, mythical, figurative. The whole chapter must be interpreted in the same manner. The geographical locations in connection with the story of the fall are historical. The curse pronounced on the man, the woman, and the ground, are certainly literal. Is it not a fact that death is in the world to-day as the wages of sin and not simply as a debt of nature? Is it not a fact that the ground brings forth thorns and briers? Is it not a fact that man earns his bread by the sweat of his brow? Is it not a fact that children are born into the world over the ever thorny way of a woman's pain, and anguish, and fear? Unquestionably Christ and the Scripture writers regarded the event as historical and literal (Matthew xix. 4 ; Mark x. 6 ; 2 Corinthians xi. 3 ; 1 Timothy ii. 13-15 ; 1 Corinthians xv. 56).

It must be kept in mind that Adam and Eve were free moral agents ; that while they were sinless beings, it was yet possible for them to sin, just as it was possible for them not to sin. A careful reading of the narrative leads to the following remarks on the fall :

The sin of our first parents was purely volitional ; it was an act of their own determination. Their sin was, like all other sin, a voluntary act of the will.

It came from an outside source, that is to say, it was instigated from without. There was no sin in the nature of the first human pair. Consequently there must have been an ungodly principle already in the world. Probably the fall of Satan and the evil angels had taken place already.

The essence of the first sin lay in the denial of the divine will ; an elevation of the will of man over the will of God.

It was a deliberate transgressing of a divinely marked boundary ; an overstepping of the divine limits.

In its last analysis, the first sin was, what each and every sin committed since has been, a positive disbelief in the word of the living God—a belief of Satan rather than a belief in God.

It is helpful to note that the same lines of temptation that were presented to our first parents were presented to Christ in the wilderness (Matthew iv. 1-11), and have been to men ever since (1 John ii. 15-17). Satan's program is short and shallow after all.

Looking at the effects of the fall in Genesis alone, we see its effect on Adam and Eve, chapter iii. ; their family—the murder of Abel by Cain, chapter iv. ; and on the race, ending with the flood, chapters v.-ix.

The results of the fall in the experience of our first parents were as follows :

The ground was cursed, so that henceforth it would not yield good alone (Genesis iii. 17).

Sorrow and pain to the woman in child-bearing, and subjection of woman to the man (Genesis iii. 16).

Exhausting physical labour in order to subsist (Genesis iii. 19).

Physical and spiritual death (Genesis iii. 19 ; iii. 2 ; v. 5 ; Romans v. 12).

Of course, with all this came also a fear of God, a shame because of sin, a hiding from God's presence, and finally, an expulsion from the garden (Genesis iii. 8-11, 22-24).

The results on the race may be summed up in the statement of Paul in Romans v. 12—"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "For the judgment was by one to condemnation" (v. 16). "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (v. 19). All men were in Adam when he sinned ; fallen he, fallen they. Herein lies the truth of the organic unity of the race. "In Adam all die."

All men, now, since the fall, without respect of condition or class, are sinners before God. There may be a difference in the degree, but not in the fact of sin. All men, Jew and Gentile, have missed the mark, and failed to attain to God's standard. There is none righteous, no, not one (Romans iii. 9, 10, 22, 23 ; Psalm xiv. ; Isaiah liii. 6). The whole world rests under condemnation, wrath, and curse : "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Romans iii. 19). The law of God demands a perfect obedience ; but no son of man can yield such obedience ; hence the curse of a broken law rests upon those breaking it (Galatians iii. 10 ; Ephesians ii. 3). The wrath of God abides on all not vitally united by faith to Jesus Christ (John iii. 36).

Unregenerate men are regarded as children of the devil, and not sons of God. "Ye are of your father the devil" (1 John iii. 8-10 ; John viii. 44). "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness (in the wicked one, R. V.)" (1 John v. 19).

The whole race of men are in helpless captivity to **sin**

and Satan (Romans vii. ; John viii. 31-36 ; Ephesians ii. 3).

The entire nature of man, mentally, morally, spiritually, physically, is sadly affected by sin. The understanding is darkened (Ephesians iv. 18 ; 1 Corinthians ii. 14) ; the heart is deceitful and wicked (Jeremiah xvii. 9, 10) ; the mind and conscience are defiled (Genesis vi. 5 ; Titus i. 15) ; the flesh and spirit are defiled (2 Corinthians vii. 5) ; the will is enfeebled (Romans vii. 18) ; and we are utterly destitute of any Godlike qualities which meet the requirements of God's holiness (Romans vii. 18).

What does all this mean? "It does not mean the entire absence of conscience (John viii. 9) ; nor of all moral qualities (Mark x. 21) ; nor that men are prone to every kind of sin (for some sins exclude others). It does mean, however, that man is totally destitute of love to God which is the all-absorbing commandment of the law (John v. 42) ; that the natural man has an aversion to God (Romans viii. 7) ; that all that is stated above is true of man ; that man is in possession of a nature that is constantly on the down grade, and from the dominion of which he is totally unable to free himself (Romans vii. 18, 23)."

—*Dr. Strong.*

In this chapter (iii. 15) we find the first Messianic promise. The Redeemer of the race is to be of "the seed of the woman," that is, human (cf. Galatians iv. 4 ; Matthew i. 16-18). God's gracious provision at the moment of man's awful sin is here set forth, and from this time on the entire Bible is occupied with the development and fulfillment of this Messianic promise.

III

The Relation of Man to His Fellowmen

(*Chapters iv. and v.*)

HERE is set before us the development of sin in the family life. The "image of God" had been lost in the fall, so we are now told that Adam "begat a son in his own likeness, after his own image" (cf. Genesis v. 1, 3). Note the expression "after his own image"—not after the "image of God." Did David have this thought in mind when he said: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm li. 5)?

Chapter four contains the story of the two brothers, their occupations and their offerings. In Cain we see the result of nursing evil thoughts until they grow into murder (cf. 1 John iii. 11-16). Cain's offering was rejected because of the condition of his heart. The heart, not the altar, sanctifies the gift (cf. 1 John iii. 12). Abel's offering was accepted because he was in right relations with God: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" (Hebrews xi. 4). There was no respect of persons with God. Had Cain been willing to turn from his evil way, the sin-offering was at the door; he could have offered that, and found favour with God, just as Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice. There seems to be no doubt but what our first parents and Cain and Abel had received instructions with reference to their proper approach unto God. Abel came in the right way, both as to life and sacrifice—by faith and with blood; Cain did neither, although he could have done both.

It seems apparent that the main purpose of chapters four and five is to set before us the beginning of two different lines of development—Cain, representing the godless (iv. 1–25), and Seth, representing the godly seed (iv. 25–v. 32). Chapter four shows the growth of the line from Cain, and it is worth noting that the line begins (iv. 8) and ends (iv. 23–25) with murder; whereas the line of Seth begins with godliness (iv. 26) and ends with translation into God's presence (v. 24). It is evidently the purpose of the writer of Genesis to set before us the beginning of the promised line, through which should come the Messiah. Here begin two different tendencies, dispositions, orders, two different races, as it were, two great classes with different attitudes towards God and His promises—the line of Seth and his posterity, submitting to God by faith; the line of Cain and his posterity, showing obstinate estrangement from God. These two lines show the development of evil, and the development and carrying out of the purpose of God in the world.

The line of Cain and his posterity is traced in iv. 1–25. The development of sin and wickedness is noticeable. Note the progress of worldliness in the building of cities which Cain named after his posterity, the invention of the arts and weapons of war; the line, finally, becoming so debased as to write poetry about murder. The seventh in the line of Cain was a murderer. That is, as it were, the completion of the development of this line.

In the line of Seth and his posterity (iv. 26–v. 32) is set forth the godly seed. This line is traced to its seventh, Enoch, who walked with God, and ends in endless life. Now men began to call themselves by the name of Jehovah (iv. 26; cf. Acts xi. 26). This would seem to indicate an opposition to those who probably called themselves after the names of idols.

Striking differences are noted in the genealogies of Cain

and Seth. The Cainites are mentioned first; the Sethites last (cf. 1 Corinthians xv. 46). No ages or particulars are attached to the line of Cain, but are always to the line of Seth. The line of Cain stands for an ungodly civilization as its ultimate aim, while the line of Seth represents a development built on principles governed by the fear of God.

IV

The Development of Sin in the Race—The Penalty of Sin (*Chapters vi.-viii.*)

IF chapters four and five show the development and results of sin in the family life, then chapters six to eight give us the results in the experience of the race. Chapter six presents an awful picture of the guilt of the race, its lewdness and moral depravity. The intermarriage of the Cainites and Sethites is doubtless accountable for it. By the "sons of God" here the writer believes the Sethites are meant, and by the "daughters of men" the descendents of Cain—the godly, and ungodly seed. The awful moral decay here described resulted from believers and unbelievers being unequally yoked together (2 Corinthians vi. 14-17). The "giants" spoken of here may refer as much to character as to stature. What is indicated is that might, not right, ruled in those days; that men were noted for their mighty deeds and achievements rather than for their godly character.

Amid this universal wickedness there is one exception—Enoch, who walked with God. So it is possible to stand alone, even in a godless world.

The evil condition of the race brought sorrow to the heart of God. He repented that He had made man. By "repent" we are to understand, not that God changed His mind, but His purpose and dealings only, with reference to the race. There was only one thing to do and

that was to wipe out the race and make a new beginning in Noah, which He did (vi. 5-10).

The Flood (vi. 13-viii. 19). The flood was a manifestation of mercy as well as of judgment. What other alternative could a holy God have? The Scriptural account of the flood is corroborated by the tradition of all nations. Geology also corroborates it. Yet the story is to be considered from the religious rather than from the scientific point of view. By the "whole earth" we are to understand the earth "that then was," by which is meant that part of the earth which was occupied by the race.

The enormous size of the ark need cause no concern. Men used to laugh at its tremendous size as being unwieldy. There are steamships to-day which exceed the ark in dimensions, and yet they are manipulated with ease.

There is no discrepancy between the command of God to Noah to take two animals of each kind, and the command, given probably a hundred years later, to take seven of each kind, into the ark. Doubtless the "two's" were for future increase, and the "seven's," being clean beasts, were for sacrifice.

The New Testament makes use of the flood in the following ways: To show the completeness of God's work, that He will have holiness at any cost (cf. 2 Peter iii. 4-16); that there is a Judge over the earth who is not too good to punish sin; that God will remember His covenant promise (cf. bow in the clouds, Genesis ix. 11-17); that the earth will some day be destroyed by fire (2 Peter iii. 4-16).

Other references to the flood in the Bible: Job xxii. 15, 16; Psalm xc. 5; Matthew xxiv. 38, 39; Luke xvii. 26, 27; Hebrews xi. 7; 1 Peter iii. 20; 2 Peter ii. 5; iii. 4-7.

The Second Probation of the Race in Noah (ix. 1-xi. 9). The deliverance of Noah and his family as the nucleus of a new race is set forth in ix. 1-19.

With Noah begins what may be called the second probation of the race, the first being in Adam, which was a total failure ending with the flood. The probation of the race in Noah also was a failure, ending with the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel (chap. xi.). The third probation of the race, beginning with Abraham (xii. 1) and representing the nation of Israel, the history of which is set forth in the entire Old Testament (after Genesis xi.), the gospels, and Acts, was also a failure. The fourth probation of the race in Christ, beginning with the gospels and ending with Revelation, is a glorious success. See Chart (p. 40).

The second probation of the race in Noah is signalized by the pronouncement of the same blessing upon Noah as upon Adam (cf. i. 28, 29 with ix. 1-3). A new covenant is entered into with Noah, the sign of which is the rainbow (ix. 11-17). The rainbow is for God to look at. We do not always see it, but, on the other side of the cloud, He does.

Noah's sin is then described (ix. 18-29). How frail a thing is man! How helpless without God! God had given Noah the earth—to use it, but now he abuses it. This is the first “drunk” recorded in the Bible, and the shame which accompanied it has accompanied all others. Noah fell in connection with his own occupation. He could face an ungodly world, and yet fell in his own home. Pure all the days of his youth and manhood, he falls in his old age. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians x. 12; Matthew xxvi. 41).

In the rebuke of Ham we see the folly of making a joke out of sin. Only fools make a mock at sin. The

THE PROBATION OF THE HUMAN RACE THROUGH FOUR REPRESENTATIVE MEN

| The Men | The Sign | The Condition | The Characteristics | The Result | The Effect |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| ADAM (Gen. i. 8) | Tree of life (Gen. ii. 9) | Obedience (Gen. ii. 16, 17) | Covenant of life (Gen. ii. 9) | Failure through disobedience (Gen. iii.) | On Adam (Death; and descendants) Deluge (Gen. iii. 7) On whole human race (Death) (Rom. v. 12; vi. 23) |
| NOAH (Gen. ix. -xi.) | Bow in the cloud (Gen. ix. 12-17) | Occupation (Gen. ix. 1-7) | Covenant of possession (Gen. ix. 1-3) | Failure through centralization (Babel, Gen. xi.; also ix. 21) | Dispersion and confusion of languages (Gen. xi.) |
| ABRAHAM (Israel) (Gen. xii.-Matt.) | Circumcision (Gen. xvii. 9-14) | Separation (Gen. xii. 1; xiii. 14) | Covenant of blessing (Gen. xii. 2, 3) | Failure through compromise and idolatry; rejection of Christ (Matt. xxiii. 37-39) | Cast off. Jerusalem trodden down (Luke xxi. 24) |
| CHRIST (Gospels-Rev.) | Holy Spirit (Matt. iii. 16, with Isa. lxi. 1) | Faith (Matt. iv. 1-10) | Covenant of grace (Heb. viii.) | Faithfulness (Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5) | A godly seed (Isa. liii. 11) (Eph. ii. 6, 7) (Phil. ii. 9) |

blessing of Noah on his children has been proven true by history. Canaan remains cursed until this day. Jehovah is the God of Shem, for throughout all the ages the Jews have preserved monotheism. Japheth has entered into the blessings of Shem, and his descendents control the world to-day.

Chapter ten gives an account of the generations of Noah, the second head of the race, just as chapter five gave the generations of Adam, the first head of the race. These genealogies are given to show the Messianic line. ~~These tables may be looked upon, also, as God's farewell to the nations, ere He chooses Abraham ; and yet they are a loving reminder that the nations are His, even as Israel, and that He is their Creator. This list of names is used almost unchanged in 1 Chronicles, showing that its correctness was recognized up to that time.~~

This chapter sets forth the beginning of nations. We have here the unity, division, and dispersion of the race. The fact of the unity of the race is also set forth. All mankind has sprung from one common source. God hath made of one blood all nations that dwell on the earth (Acts xvii. 26). This is an argument for the brotherhood of man.

Chapter eleven describes the building of the tower of Babel, and really belongs to chapter ten. God's command to Noah and his descendents to scatter and people the earth was evidently disobeyed, for here we find concentrated ungodliness, self-seeking, and defiance against God. Men would make a name for themselves rather than glorify God. God commanded diffusion ; men determined on concentration. The building of the tower of Babel was a manifestation of the defiance of God's command, the confusion of tongues an evidence of God's determination that His command to disperse should be carried out.

The confusion of tongues should be studied in connection with the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.) and Revelation vii. 9. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds.

One cannot read the genealogy in this chapter without being impressed with ~~the decrease of longevity since the flood.~~ It seems that the farther away we get from Eden, the shorter is the life of man. "Dying, thou shalt die." Methuselah lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years; the longest life in this genealogy (chap. xi.) is about five hundred years; David (Psalm xc.) says, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten;" the average length of life to-day is thirty-three years.

Notes on "The Nations":

1. Origin of Nations, Genesis ix. 18-x. 32.
2. Scattering of the Nations, Genesis xi. 1-9.
3. Babylon and Egypt founded by Ham, Genesis x. 6-20.
4. Assyria founded by Shem, Genesis x. 11, 12, 21, 31.
5. European Nation founded by Japheth, Genesis x. 2-5.
6. Abraham the father of { Israel, Genesis xii. 2.
Many Nations, Genesis xvii. 4-6.
7. All the Nations blessed in Abraham, Genesis xii. 3; xxii. 18.
8. Nations derived from Abrahamic stock, Genesis xix. 36-38; xxv. 12-16; xxv. 1-4; xxxvi. 6-8.

An interesting study of the doctrine of sin may be found in the chapters we have just covered (chaps. iii.-xi.):

- I. *Its Source* (chap. iii.).
- II. *Its Development* (chaps. iv., v.).
 1. In the family, Cain and Abel (chap. iv.).

2. In society—the two lines (chap. v.).
 3. In the race (chaps. v., vi.).
- III. *The Penalty and Punishment of Sin* (chaps. vi.-xi.).
1. The flood (chaps. vi.-ix.).
 2. The dispersion (chap. x.).
 3. The confusion of tongues—tower of Babel (chap. xi.).

PART II

History of the Patriarchs

The second main division of Genesis is occupied with the history of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and also with the life story of Joseph. Our study, then, of these chapters will be grouped around these four great characters : Abraham, xii.-xxv. ; Isaac, xxi.-xxviii. ; Jacob, xxvii.-l. ; Joseph, xxxvii.-l.

I

Abraham, the Father of the Faithful

(*Chapters xii.-xxv.*)

WITH Abraham begins the third probation of the race (cf. Adam, the first; Noah, the second). The study of Abraham's life is exceedingly important. He alone, of all men, is called the "Friend of God." He is recognized as the founder of the three great religions of the world: Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism. Of course, he is recognized as the founder of Christianity only in the sense that Christ is of the seed of Abraham. The importance of Abraham in Genesis is emphasized because of the relation in which he stands to the Jewish people.

From this point on, our attention is to be fixed, not upon individuals, but upon a chosen people. Genesis i.-xi. has been preparatory for all that follows after Genesis xii. The Cainites are all to go on their own way, building their towers, speaking against heaven, calling their lands and cities by their own names, with the inward thought that they would continue forever; while God is gathering out of the earth a people for His name, who confess that they are pilgrims and strangers in the earth, and are seeking a better country—that is a heavenly land (Hebrews xi. 13-16).

The history of Abraham centers around a series of manifestations of God, seven in number, each relating itself to some point in the patriarch's character that needed strengthening, or reaffirming a promise already given or a covenant made, and always resulting in an ad-

vanced step in the religious experience of Abraham. After visions two, three, four, six, and seven, there is recorded an episode, either historical or religious, setting forth some lapse or advance with reference to the patriarch's relation to God. The whole life of Abraham, then, can be grouped around seven divine manifestations, and five episodes in connection therewith.

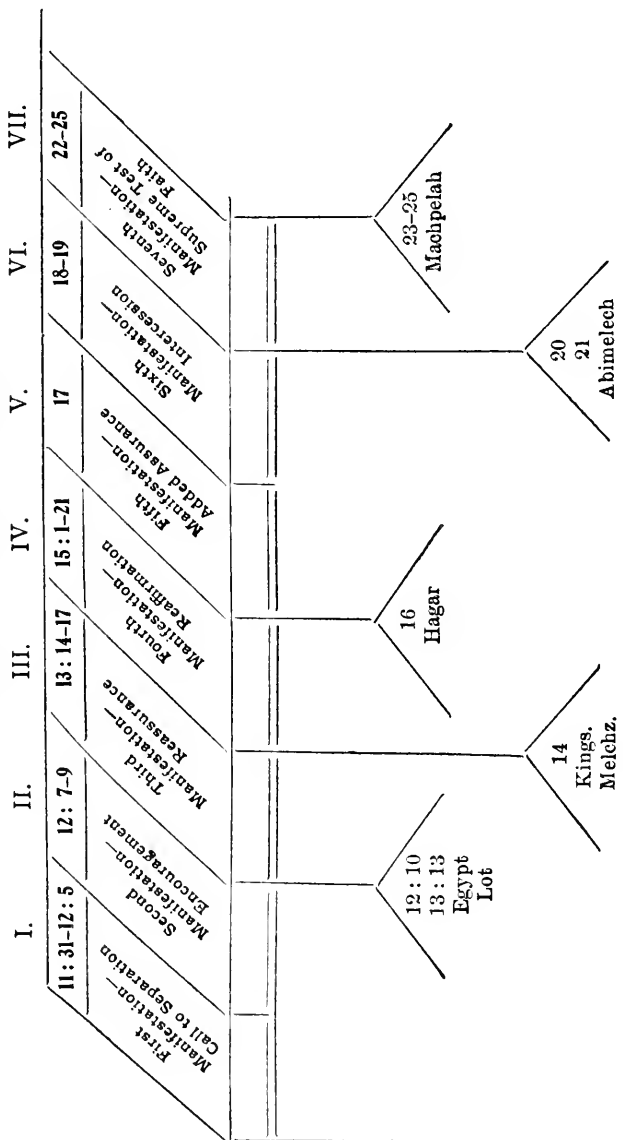
1. The First Manifestation of God to Abraham (xi. 31-xii. 5). This manifestation is connected with the call of Abraham to separate himself from idolatry (cf. Joshua xxiv. 3-15; Nehemiah ix. 7) and to surrender his life, with all of its plans and purposes, to God (xii. 1-4; cf. Hebrews xi. 8-17).

Abraham, apparently, had two calls (xi. 31; xii. 1; cf. Acts vii. 2-4; Isaiah li. 2). The response to the first call seems to have been partial. When God called the second time, Abraham surrendered completely (xii. 4, 5).

A threefold blessing is promised Abraham: a land, a seed, a blessing (xii. 1-3). He had left the land of his fathers, now God would be with him and be his Father (2 Corinthians vi. 14-17). Though one of the youngest of the family, his name would be made great, and the family blessing should come through him. Though childless, his seed would be innumerable. As compensation for the surrender of his life to God, he would be the source of blessing to all the families of the earth.

As God called Abraham, so He calls us to separation (2 Corinthians vi. 14-17), to surrender (Romans xii. 5), and to put the plans of our lives in His hands (Isaiah lv. 7; Ephesians ii. 10). How do we respond to this call? Partially? If so, there will be no full blessing or vision. Abraham did not receive a full vision until he had made the full surrender. If we fully surrender, then God will make us useful and a blessing to others.

HISTORY OF ABRAHAM



2. **The Second Manifestation of God to Abraham** (xii. 7-9). This vision of God was necessary, probably, because of what is said in verse six—"The Canaanite was then in the land." Courage was needed in the face of danger, if Abraham was to possess the land. The message of God is short: "Unto thee will I give this land." There were difficulties involved in the fulfillment of this promise: giants were in possession of the land.

Abraham's response to the call of God was manifested in building an altar and in pitching his tent. The "altar" indicated his dependence upon God, and the "tent" his surrender to a pilgrim life. His tent was pitched with Bethel, the house of God, in front of him, and with Hai, a heap of ruins, behind him. Like Moses, he looked to that city that had foundations (Hebrews xi. 15, 16; Philippians iii. 13).

There are practical lessons here for us. We, too, have enemies who contest the possession of our spiritual inheritance. These are the "wicked principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (Ephesians vi. 12-18). Our strength, too, must come through means. We have need to build an altar of prayer (Luke xviii. 1-8; Isaiah xl. 28-31). When tempted to be dazzled by the glory of the world and thus hindered in our pilgrim journey, we, as Abraham, must look away to the glories of our eternal home, and pitch our tents towards that city "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians v. 1).

The First Episode—Egypt (xii. 10-xiii. 13; cf. chap. xx.). In a sense, Abraham backslides; he deviates from the chosen path. We must expect to find temptations, although we are in the path of God's choosing. Even Jesus Christ was not free from temptation. But temptation is not sin, nor need it become so.

This is the first mention of Egypt in the Bible. Egypt

means "to bind," "to straighten," "to trouble." Egypt is always a type of the world. "Going down to Egypt" was not altogether like going back to Ur of the Chaldees. It was a kind of midway experience between the old life and the new. Egypt was not altogether irreligious, but it was not spiritual. The influence of this side-stepping is seen in Abraham's having to resort to lying, expediency, and compromise while in Egypt. The friend of God has become the servant in the palace of Pharaoh. How are the mighty fallen!

Abraham's statement regarding his wife being his sister was a half truth, for she was his half-sister (xx. 12). A half truth, however, is a lie when it is uttered with intent to deceive, as was clearly the case with Abraham. It is interesting to note in this connection that even as far back as Abraham's time, the marriage vow was held so sacred among the Egyptians that in order to possess another man's wife, the husband must first be killed. According to twentieth century moral standards, a man's wife may be taken from him while the husband still lives, and yet we talk about evolution and the progress in the civilization of the race. Abraham's selfishness is shown by the fact that he was willing to sacrifice his wife's honour to save his own life.

Just why God allowed Abraham to go down into Egypt, we do not know. He lets us follow our own way sometimes, that we may learn a needed lesson. The cause of the descent into Egypt was outwardly the famine, but, inwardly and really, it was a lack of faith in God.

Abraham prospered when in Egypt, but he was not happy, and the possessions he gained while there caused him great trouble in the future. He learned that it was better to be in Canaan with famine than in Egypt with prosperity; that it was better to "be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of wicked-

ness." He lost his fellowship with God, and his influence with his family. He was reproached by the heathen for his inconsistency of conduct. His extreme selfishness was shown in being willing to sacrifice the honour of his wife to save his own life. He must ever afterwards have seen that look of reproach in the face of Sarah, as she recalled this incident. Abraham had no vision, no altar, no worship while he was in Egypt. It was a sore mistake he made, and he suffered keenly for it.

There are instructive lessons in this episode in the path of Abraham for us. No child of God is free from temptation, yet no one needs to yield to temptation. Not temptation, but yielding to it, is sin. There is great danger to the child of God in stepping back half-way, not necessarily altogether, into the old life, but a step down from the point already reached in spiritual experience. The results are compromise in living, silenced testimony, lack of influence for God, no communion or fellowship with Him, the reproach and shame of the world, and the loss of joy and peace in one's own soul. We, with Abraham, must learn the lesson that God is well able, without our diplomacy, to carry out His own plans.

Abraham finally returned to Bethel. Note the expression, "went down" to Egypt, but "went up" to Bethel. He went back to the starting point. That was a brave thing to do in the face of his family, servants, and household. And that is the thing for the Christian to do—to go back to the point he left, unto the place of the altar, and do the first works over again—"back to Bethel."

The sad thing about this episode is that the time spent by Abraham in Egypt was lost time and could never be regained. The time spent by the children of Israel in Egypt is reckoned as lost time. The day of their deliverance was to be the beginning of years to them

(Exodus xii. 2). We do not really begin to live until we are made partakers of the life of God (John iii. 3, 5; xvii. 3; 1 Timothy v. 6).

Lot—A Study in Backsliding—Another Episode (xiii. 5-13). The strife between the herdmen of Lot and Abraham arose over the goods they had gotten while they were in Egypt. It is supposed by some that Lot got his wife there, too, and she was the cause of much of his trouble. The name Lot is said to indicate "the man with the veil on" (cf. 2 Corinthians iv. 4). Certainly his eyes were blinded to real spiritual values.

This incident gives us an insight into the selfishness of Lot and the magnanimity of Abraham. Lot chose the best of the land because it was good for cattle. He was too short-sighted to see that it was bad for his family. He chose "all the plain" (xiii. 10) because it was so attractive for its beauty. Later on we find that this plain was doomed (xix. 17), and Lot was bidden flee from it. It was to be abandoned for its danger, and was finally overthrown because of its wickedness (xix. 25).

Lot is an interesting study in backsliding.

Notice the gradual process. He beheld (ver. 10); chose (11); pitched his tent towards (12); dwelt in (xiv. 12); sat in the gate (xix. 1); lingered (xix. 15, 16); and was loath to leave Sodom (chap. xix.). He first went to sojourn, then he continued, and finally dwelt, in Sodom.

Satan's strategy is here illustrated. He does not plunge men all at once into sin. He leads them gradually, step by step. How careful the Christian needs to be in choosing a place of residence. Lot lost his family and almost his own soul; indeed, we would have thought that was lost too, had it not been for the reference in 2 Peter ii. 7, 8.

Abraham's magnanimity and peaceful disposition is here beautifully set forth. He is a good illustration of the apostle's injunction, "Let the peace of God arbitrate

in your hearts" (Colossians iii. 15), and, "The servant of the Lord must not strive" (2 Timothy ii. 24). How shall quarrels between Christians be settled? Shall we go to law (1 Corinthians vi. 1-8)? Or shall we yield as Abraham, trusting God to do for us that which is right and just?

3. **The Third Manifestation of God to Abraham** (xiii. 14-17). This vision of God was granted to Abraham for the reassurance of the promised blessing. It was doubtless to comfort him in the reaction which he must have suffered from his experience in Egypt and with Lot. It was also to reward him for his unselfishness in connection with the Lot episode. A personal element is introduced into this reassured promise. The land which had before been promised to his seed (xii. 7) is now promised to Abraham personally. The servants of Abraham, who, no doubt, had witnessed the controversy between Abraham and Lot, may have been tempted to think that Abraham was foolish in allowing his nephew to get the advantage over him in the choice of land. God would teach them, as well as His servant Abraham, that the "meek shall inherit the earth." We are told in xiii. 10 that "Lot lifted up *his* eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan." We are here told (ver. 14) that God said to Abraham, "Lift up now *thine* eyes and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever."

The Second Episode—The Battle of the Kings (chap. xiv.). It is not long since that destructive higher criticism sought to do away with the historicity of the events narrated in this chapter, but archeologists, in their excavations, have brought to light hieroglyphic writings which clearly establish their historical basis.

This incident shows Abraham as a soldier, fighting God's battles, as a man of generosity, looking after the needs of others rather than his own (ver. 24), as unworldly, in his refusing to accept the spoil of the battle, which action declared that he was not in the work of God for the money, consequently the spoils were of no interest to him. This stand he had taken in prayer and dedication to God (ver. 22; cf. Malachi i. 10). This incident also manifested Abraham's faith in God and zeal for His glory. He wanted no man to say that he, rather than God, had made Abraham rich. He refused the gifts of the king of Sodom because they were material, but received the blessings of Melchizedek, king of Salem, because they were spiritual. He believed that God would honour him according to His word, and therefore he would acknowledge indebtedness to God only.

Melchizedek. The introduction of this mysterious person (Melchizedek) into the narrative is interesting. It shows that even away back in that dim age there were traces of monotheism. A study of the first chapter of Romans would indicate that the race began monotheistic, and by reason of sin, became polytheistic. Not evolution, but devolution, characterizes the religious history of the race.

Melchizedek is mentioned three times in the Scriptures: in history (Genesis xiv.); in prophecy (Psalm cx.); in fulfillment (Hebrews v.-vii.). There is great need to-day of the study of the types of Scripture. Read the rebuke of the writer to the Hebrews (v. 10-14).

The reference here to tithing is important. Tithing is an acknowledgment of God's ownership in what we give, and a challenge to His faithfulness in what we keep. Tithing was evidently in existence before the law of Moses. This is the first mention of it, and it is not Jewish, or legal.

The "first mention" of things in the Bible is important to notice, because, as a rule, the characteristic features mentioned in connection therewith are usually true of every other mention of the same thing throughout the Scriptures, although more fully developed.

The God of Abraham. It is interesting to notice, as a deduction from this chapter, Abraham's conception of God as revealed in this book: "He is the Possessor of the heavens and the earth (xiv. 22; xxiv. 3); the Sovereign Judge of the nations (xv. 14), and of all the earth (xviii. 25); the Disposer of all the powers of nature (xviii. 14; xix. 24; xx. 17 ff.); the exalted (xiv. 22) and eternal One (xxi. 33); the only God, a personal God in closeness of fellowship with His people (xxiv. 40, 48). He is just (xviii. 25), righteous (xviii. 19), faithful (xxiv. 27), wise (xx. 6), good (xix. 19), and merciful (xx. 6).

4. The Fourth Manifestation of God to Abraham—The Promise of a Seed and the Land Reaffirmed (xv. 1-21). This divine manifestation was doubtless for the encouragement of Abraham after the great surrender he had made in connection with Lot's choice and the battle of the kings. It was also doubtless an encouragement to the patriarch in the reaction which he must have suffered from the tenseness and strain of the events of chapter fourteen.

There is an advance here in the promised blessing. Reference is again made to the promised land, and its specific boundaries are mentioned in connection therewith. It was to be a future possession of Abraham's seed.

Then, again, Abraham was promised a son out of his own loins. Before he had been promised a son, but not in the sense in which this promise is made. The promised seed should not be Ishmael nor Eliezer (cf. for ex-

pansion of the promise xii. 1-3, 7 ; xiii. 14-16). Abraham is herein shown that the promise is to extend beyond himself ; that the nation of which he is the father and its experiences are included in the promise. Abraham had asked two questions : regarding a son (ver. 3) and a land (ver. 8). These two questions God answers.

So far we have had the Adamic Covenant (chap. iii.), the Noahic Covenant (chap. ix.). Now we have the Abrahamic Covenant in this chapter.

The Righteousness of Faith. Abraham's attitude towards the promise of God is that of unwavering belief and faith, and this "was counted to him for righteousness." Here we have another "first mention"—faith. "Abraham believed God." This means that Abraham said "Amen" to God's promise—"What God says shall be." God had told Abraham that out of his loins, and by Sarah his wife, should come nations, children as numberless as the dust of the earth and the stars of the heavens. Natural laws were against the fulfillment of such a promise. God made no explanations as to how the promise should be fulfilled. This called for faith on the part of Abraham, which he exercised.

Here are three great Christian words which we do well to note : "believed," "counted," "righteousness." Paul tells us that this experience of Abraham was for our sakes (iv. 23, 25 ; Galatians iii. 6).

Faith is resting upon the word of the Lord ; acting upon it. Abram showed his faith by changing his name to Abraham, which means "father of a multitude," from that very moment. He also changed his wife's name from Sara to Sarah. Faith means also to live according to the word and promise. For twenty-four years Abraham saw no indication of the fulfillment of this promise. He believed against all odds. To believe when we cannot see, that is faith. So we are called upon to believe

God's testimony regarding His Son, and our faith is counted for righteousness.

The Third Episode—Hagar and Ishmael (xvi. 1-16). Sarah had become impatient because of the long delay in the fulfillment of God's promise. She conceives of a scheme which she thinks will help God to fulfill His promise. According to the moral standards of the time, Sarah did no wrong in giving her maid to Abraham to wife. That was the custom of the day and was really magnanimous on her part. Of course, it was a violation of God's purpose and intention in marriage, which was monogamy—that man should be the husband of one wife (Genesis ii. 24).

Probably Abraham was more to blame than Sarah for listening to and complying with her suggestions. Visions of God had been granted to Abraham that Sarah had not witnessed. Abraham should consequently have been the more spiritual of the two. Then, again, the promised heir was to be of the seed of Abraham, but the promise had not yet included Sarah, specifically, as the mother of the promised son. Impatient waiting was telling on Sarah, and Abraham apparently caught the spirit of impatience.

The result of not waiting for God's time was that a child was born of Hagar, the bondmaid of Sarah. She was doubtless a product of Egypt and was gotten when Abraham and Sarah went down there to sojourn. Here is another illustration of more trouble from Egypt.

There are some practical lessons we may learn from this interruption—the story of Hagar and Ishmael. We should wait God's time. If He tarry, let us wait for Him. We should never listen to unspiritual people, to worldly-wise men, nor even to unspiritual Christians. Sometimes our dearest can advise us wrongly (Deuteronomy xiii. 6-8). We should never use wrong means

for right ends. Our attention is drawn to the awful results of one sin, for the whole of the Mohammedan problem to-day, with its opposition to Christianity, is the fruit of this one sin. The flesh and the spirit can never get on well together (Galatians iv. 17-23). Results may be gotten without God's help or approval, but they always bring trouble.

The divine eye is an eternal detective. God knows and sees details. Did not God know that Hagar was "Sarah's maid" ? This chapter is not a mere household incident, but a record given to show the processes through which Abraham became father to the heir of the promised seed, even though the promise was long delayed. There is always something miraculous in connection with the birth of the promised seed.

5. Fifth Manifestation of God to Abraham (xvii. 1-27). This appearance of God to the patriarch is for the sake of emphasizing the promised blessing of a seed and a land, particular reference being made to the seed. There was need of just such encouragement as was conveyed in this theophany to Abraham, for over twenty years had passed since the covenant in chapter fifteen, and thirteen years since the birth of Ishmael. There had apparently been no word from God regarding his promised son and heir during these years, and Abraham is now about ninety-nine years old. Naturally the obstacles in the way of fulfillment of the promise of a seed that should be as numberless as the sands and the stars were bigger than ever. Satan himself would be very active in seeking to put doubt into the mind of Abraham, especially in connection with the line of the promised seed.

It is for this reason, doubtless, that the name "El Shaddi," which means the "all-sufficient, self-sufficient, almighty God," is the name given to Jehovah in this

manifestation. The promise in this vision includes multitudes of people (ver. 6), kings and princes (vers. 16, 20). God would have Abraham know that His power and ability to fulfill His promise is absolutely unlimited. This is a lesson we, too, need to learn.

There are seven things of which God is independent :

First—Of numbers. One with God is a majority. One shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight (cf. Leviticus xxvi. 8 ; Deuteronomy xxxii. 30 ; Judges vii. 4-7 ; 2 Kings vii. 3-7).

Second—Of money, wealth, and property. The silver is His and the gold is His (cf. 1 Kings xvii. 12 ; Haggai ii. 8).

Third—Of time. What it would take a man a hundred or a thousand years to accomplish, God can do in a moment or a day (cf. Psalm xc. 4 ; Isaiah lxvi. 8 ; 2 Peter iii. 8).

Fourth—Of man's wisdom (1 Corinthians i. 20, 21 ; ii. 6-8).

Fifth—Of human power (Psalm ii. ; Jeremiah xxxii. 17 ; Zechariah iv. 6 ; Daniel ii. 20-22).

Sixth—Of natural law, that is, of the ordinary operation of natural forces (Exodus xiv. 22—The Red Sea ; Daniel iii. 19-25—The fiery furnace ; vi. 22—The lions' den).

Seventh—Of all ordinary means (2 Corinthians vii. 6 ; xix. 35).

The previous promise in connection with the promised land is increased—it is to be an *everlasting* possession. The covenant is not only with Abraham and his seed, but with their children forever. A sign of circumcision is given, not only for Abraham and his children then living, but as a sign for the children not yet born. Here is another call for faith, for Abraham himself was almost a hundred years old.

This promise sets a time for the birth of Isaac (ver. 21; cf. xxi. 2), and names Sarah as the mother of Isaac (vers. 15-21).

Both Abraham (xvii. 17, 18) and Sarah (xviii. 11-15) laugh at the announcement of so great and glorious a promise, but the laugh of credulity passed into the laugh of faith: "By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted him faithful who had promised; wherefore also there sprang of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand, which is by the seashore, innumerable" (Hebrews xi. 11, 12, R. V.). Isaac's name, which means "laughter," the change in Abraham's (xvii. 5) and Sarah's name (xviii. 15) are indications of their faith in God (cf. Romans iv. 13-22).

What need there is of such faith to-day! What is more scarce in Christianity than faith? "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" How do we treat God's promises? Devoutness is common; piety is plentiful; contempt for evil is abundant; righteousness is everywhere manifest; but faith—"Who hath believed our report?" "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

6. The Sixth Manifestation of God to Abraham (chaps. xviii., xix.). These chapters record the visit of the three angels, one of whom is evidently the second Person in the Trinity, to Abraham in his tent. These heavenly messengers conveyed to the patriarch the impending doom of Sodom and Gomorrah.

This incident is more than a lesson in hospitality, even though an exhortation to practice that grace (Hebrews xiii. 2) is based on this incident. We have here an intimation of the incarnation—the doctrine of the Angel

of the Lord. When a Jew to-day tells us that we blaspheme when we pray to Jesus, we may ask him who that was to whom Abraham prayed in these chapters.

We have here given a glimpse into the intimate friendship existing between God and Abraham, and a revelation of the character of the patriarch. We are told that whom God foreknew, He did predestinate. God's friendship with Abraham was based on what He knew Abraham to be and what he would do (xviii. 19; cf. John xv. 14, 15; 1 Corinthians ii. 10; Psalm xxv. 14).

The question may be asked here, Why did God reveal the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah to Abraham? In reply we may say :

First. Because Abraham had been the depository of blessing for the nations. The patriarch had undoubtedly been pondering the oft-repeated promise of God, and had come to recognize himself as in some degree responsible for the nations. Were he to waken in the morning and see Sodom and Gomorrah going up in smoke, might he not wonder why this city had been removed beyond the sphere of his blessing without his having had a chance to intercede for it. Certainly there was a reason why in this sense God felt Himself under obligation to tell Abraham about this coming disaster (cf. Amos iii. 7; John xv. 15).

Second. It was an object lesson to Abraham's children. Abraham was a true head of a family. In setting before his children the awful results of sin, he could point them to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. So in all the ages to come, the Red Sea, which is said to cover Sodom and Gomorrah, would be a perpetual lesson and warning. Christ and the prophets refer to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as the wages of wickedness (Deuteronomy xxix. 22-25; Matthew x. 15; xi. 24; Mark vi. 11).

Third. It may be that God knew that in the future years there would come scoffing critics who would attribute the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah to natural causes. For this reason their destruction is predicted and foretold. The descent of meteoric stones from the sky is not a natural result of immorality. We have to do here with a supernatural act, a miracle. The destruction of Sodom was the punishment for its sin. Note the words, "The cry of the city is great, and its sin is grievous."

Fourth. This narrative shows the power of intercession. What a privilege the child of God has in being able to intercede for others! The Christian is "the salt of the earth." Who can estimate the value of a Christian in the home, in society, in the city, or in the nation? God could not destroy Sodom so long as Lot—poor specimen of a Christian though he was—abode in the city. The only thing that preserves this wicked earth now is the presence of the righteous in it. Here, then, is the power of a righteous man to intercede for others. It is worthy of note in the matter of intercession that Abraham, not God, surrendered first. The pity is that Abraham stopped asking as soon as he did.

The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The historicity of these facts is witnessed to by the prophets, by Christ, and by the apostles (Deuteronomy xxix. 23; Isaiah xiii. 19; Jeremiah xlix. 18; 1. 40; Lamentations iv. 6; Amos iv. 11; Luke xvii. 28-32; 2 Peter ii. 6; Jude 7).

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was an act of justice. These cities had completed their catalogue of sins, and their sinful condition demanded their obliteration (xviii. 20, 21). God had withheld the destruction of another nation previously because its cup of iniquity was not yet full (xv. 16). The grievous iniquity of

Sodom, an illustration of which is given in chapter nineteen, had put an end to the forbearance of God. We should not forget that there is a time when the patience of God ceases, and when no intercession can avail (Ezekiel xiv. 3, 14, 20; 1 John v. 16).

There are certain lessons we may learn from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah :

First. That God is not too good to punish sin (2 Peter ii. 6; Jude 7).

Second. It is a warning for future generations and is a picture of the end of the age. There will be mockers of this truth just as there were in those days (xix. 14; Luke xvii. 28-32; 2 Peter iii. 3-10).

Third. It is a picture of conditions as they will exist at the end of the age. The world will not grow better, but worse (Luke xvii. 28-32).

Fourth. Lot was saved as by fire. His trust in God saved him, but his life and influence have not counted much in his favour. So will it be with many Christians (1 Corinthians iii. 12-15).

Fifth. It is our duty to warn and save our loved ones if we can. Note the words in xix. 12—"Hast thou here any besides? . . . bring them out."

Sixth. One may be, like Lot's wife, "almost a Christian," and yet lost. A man may be aroused and moved by the example of others, or by a mightier power even—an angel hand—and yet, looking back, may be lost. "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke xvii. 32).

Fourth Episode—Abraham and Abimelech (chaps. xx., xxi. 22-33). This is the story of a great sin after a great victory. Ofttimes our greatest temptations come after our greatest blessings. It was after Jesus was baptized that He was rushed into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

Here is the repetition of a former sin and an illustra-

tion of the truth that what I have written I shall write again. Sin is a repeater. Each sin we commit makes the next sin easier, more necessary, and certain. It would be easier to find a perfectly innocent and sinless man than to find one that had sinned but once.

One would have thought that the similar experience in chapter thirteen would have taught Abraham a lesson. Twenty years had passed since the experience in Egypt, and probably the impression of the sinfulness of the act had become deadened. How could Abraham repeat such a sin? The question may be answered by asking ourselves how we can do again the things which we know are wrong.

God's restraint of sin is emphasized in this narrative in withholding Abimelech from doing wrong. God restrains sin in the wicked when their actions would interfere with His redemptive purposes. It would not do for Sarah's child to be the offspring of Abimelech. He must be Abraham's seed. God makes the wrath of men to praise Him; the remainder He restrains. Romans i. 21-32 is an illustration of what happens when God withdraws His grace. Pharaoh, also, is a case in point (Romans ix. 17-23). God restrains sin in the Christian by His preventing and restraining grace. In the denial of Peter, with his cursing and swearing, we see an illustration of a life from which the hand of God has been temporarily withdrawn.

Abraham's example was exceedingly bad in its effect. A child of God was chided by a heathen for his disloyalty and lack of trust in God. "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you" (Romans ii. 24). Think of a professing Christian leading a man of the world into temptation and sin!

One wonders whether this incident of Abraham and Abimelech is not another attempt of Satan to neutralize

the promise with regard to the coming Messianic seed as set forth in Genesis iii. 15 (cf. Exodus i. 16-22; Matthew ii. 16-18).

The Fulfillment of the Promise of a Son (xxi. 1-21). At last, after years of waiting, the promise of God to Abraham and Sarah is fulfilled. Isaac, the child of promise, is born. This chapter narrates the story of his early years and also the conflict and jealousy which seems to have arisen between Sarah and Hagar, resulting in Hagar's flight, taking her son Ishmael with her. Here we have the beginning of two great nations and two religions, both emanating from Abraham—Mohammedanism, and Judaism, which found its fulfillment in Christianity. Mohammed and Christ. These are in perpetual conflict one with the other.

One cannot but be impressed with the absolute reliability of the word and promise of God. Jehovah will keep His word, even though years elapse between the announcement and fulfillment of the promise. If the vision tarry, wait for it.

“Unanswered yet?

The prayer your lips have pleaded
In agony of heart these many years?
Does faith begin to fail, is hope departing,
And think you all in vain those falling tears?
Say not the Father hath not heard your prayer;
You shall have your desire, some time, somewhere.

“Unanswered yet?

Though when you first presented
This one petition at the Father's throne,
It seemed you could not wait the time of asking,
So urgent was your heart to make it known.
Though years have passed since then, do not despair;
The Lord will answer you some time, somewhere.

“Unanswered yet?

Nay, do not say ungranted ;
Perhaps your part is not yet wholly done ;
The work began when first your prayer was uttered,
And God will finish what He has begun ;
If you will keep the incense burning there,
His glory you shall see some time, somewhere.

“Unanswered yet?

Faith cannot be unanswered ;
Her feet were firmly planted on the Rock ;
Amid the wildest storm, prayer stands undaunted,
Nor quails before the loudest thunder shock.
She knows Omnipotence has heard her prayer,
And cries, ‘It shall be done,’ some time, somewhere.”

7. The Seventh Manifestation of God to Abraham (chaps. xxii.—xxv.). Three great facts are set before us in these chapters :

First. The supreme test of Abraham’s faith—the offering up of Isaac, the son in whom all the promises were to be fulfilled (xxii. 1–18).

This was the supreme test of Abraham’s faith. At all other times he had been given a promise to step out on, but no promise is connected with this incident. Abraham is told to take his son, his only son, the son in whom all the promises were to be fulfilled, and offer him for a sacrifice on Mount Moriah. This was really the last of the four great surrenders in Abraham’s life, which he had been called upon to make. These surrenders were : The sacrifice of home and kindred (chap. xii.) ; the separation from Lot (chap. xiii.) ; the giving up of his own plan of life (chap. xix.) ; and now the sacrifice of his only and well-beloved son Isaac.

It was good for Abraham that this supreme test did not come at the beginning of his pilgrim life, but after years of communion and fellowship with God. This is a

mark of God's goodness and kindly consideration. "The valley of the shadow of death" is not at the beginning, but in the middle, of the Twenty-third Psalm. Not until we have been well fed in green pastures, and satisfied to the full our thirst in still waters; not until we have had soul refreshment and the blessed experience of walking in the paths of righteousness with God as our Companion, are we called upon to pass through the valley of the shadow. How good God is! There will no temptation take you but such as man can bear, and "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians x. 13). "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deuteronomy xxxiii. 25).

Abraham got his greatest blessing through this the greatest of all surrenders. His servants observed the glory that shone on his face as he returned, and for this reason the proverb originated, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen" (xxii. 14).

There are some things in this narrative that need a word of explanation :

First. There is the word "tempt"—"Now the Lord did tempt Abraham." This word is used in the Scriptures in at least two senses. When used of Satan in his relations with mankind, it expresses an evil intent, and means to seduce or cause man to fall (Matthew iv. 1; 1 Corinthians xi. 3). In this sense, temptation cannot be attributed to God, for God never thus tempts any man (James i. 13-17). The word "tempt" used of God is to be understood in the sense of testing or proving the good that is in man, separating the wheat from the chaff, the gold from the dross; but always in order that the wheat and the gold may be the prominent thing (Genesis xxii. 1; Matthew vi. 13).

Second. The command to offer up Isaac is to be understood literally. Abraham did not misunderstand the command of God, when, with uplifted hand, he was ready and willing to offer his son. Nor was Abraham feigning or misrepresenting when he said to his servants, "Abide ye here . . . and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you" (xxii. 5). When he used the pronoun "we," he was not using the language of dissimulation, but of victorious faith. This we are given to understand in Hebrews xi. 17-19. Could Abraham believe in God *now* without his son, as he had believed before *without* him? Was he persuaded that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead if that was necessary in order for the fulfillment of His promise (Romans iv. 16, 17, 21; Hebrews xi. 17, 19; Romans iv. 24, 25)?

Third. It is apparent that Abraham did not think it wrong to thus sacrifice his son. A knowledge of the customs of the time leads us to believe that such a sacrifice was regarded as the highest virtue and the supreme test of religion. Had Abraham considered it to be wrong, he would not have done it, nor would he have considered such a voice to have been the voice of God. One sometimes wonders if this sacrifice was necessary because of the probable condition of Abraham's religious experience. Is it likely that he had entertained hard thoughts of God for sending Ishmael away, and that this led him to make compensation by the glad sacrifice of Isaac? However the command came to him, it became his conviction that God wanted him to offer up his only son.

Fourth. It does seem, however, that although Abraham did not think the sacrifice of Isaac to be wrong, the actual slaying of Isaac would have been wrong in the sight of God. How, then, can this be reconciled with the direct command of God? May it not be sufficient to reply that God meant Abraham to offer Isaac in so

far as he himself was concerned ; that God intended that Abraham should offer Isaac in spirit only, and not in outward act, even though Abraham himself understood God to desire the literal sacrifice of Isaac ; that what God desired of Abraham was an offering of the spirit, and not of blood ? Does not the narrative bear out this view, inasmuch as Abraham is allowed to proceed as though God actually wanted him to offer up his son literally ?

In any event, it is clear that God would teach Abraham some important lessons. He would teach him the true meaning of sacrifice ; that it lay in spirit more than in act ; that the consecration of a living soul is far more important than the offering of a dead body (Romans xii. 1). Beyond all question, God intended that Abraham should know that human sacrifice was now to receive a final blow. It is not going too far to say that God gave to the patriarch that day a lesson in substitution and vicarious sacrifice. May it not be that in the substitution of the ram for Isaac that the expression of the New Testament is fulfilled, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day ; and he saw it, and was glad" (John viii. 56), and "Preached before the gospel unto Abraham" (Galatians iii. 8).

In man's extremity, God's opportunity was manifest. Not until the hand of Abraham was uplifted, and, so far as father and son were concerned, the whole sacrifice complete, was the substitution provided. It must have seemed to Abraham as though to offer his son, to make that sacrifice, meant the end of all his hopes ; that nothing more was left. But when Abraham had gone all the way with God, then we are told that the Lord provided. It was "seen in the mount" that God doth provide Himself a sacrifice. Then came the greatest of all blessings to Abraham (xxii. 15-18).

Is not this the way God deals with men to-day ? Not until we have come to the end of ourselves and laid abso-

lutely all we have on the altar of God ; not until we come to the end of trust in all that is earthly, do we get the fullness of the blessing of God.

Abraham's faith, so gloriously portrayed by Paul (Romans iv. 9-25), was corroborated and witnessed to by his works, upon which James lays so much emphasis (James ii. 14-24).

“Laid on Thine altar, O my Lord divine,
 Accept my gift this day, for Jesus' sake.
 I have no jewels to adorn Thy shrine,
 Nor any world-famed sacrifice to make,
 But here I bring, within my trembling hand,
 This heart of mine, a thing that seemeth small ;
 And yet, Thou dost know, dear Lord,
 That when I yield Thee this, I yield my all ;
 Hidden therein, Thy searching eye can see
 Struggles of passion, visions of delight,
 All that I am and fain would be.
 Now from Thy footstool, where it vanquished lies,
 The cry ascendeth, ‘ May Thy will be done,’
 Take it, Lord, ere my courage fail,
 And merge it so in Thine own will
 That if, in some future day, my plea prevail,
 And Thou give back my will, it may so fair have
 grown,
 So changed, that I shall know it no longer as mine,
 but as Thine.”

TYPICAL TEACHING

In this chapter (xxii.) many see in Abraham a type of the Father sparing not His own Son, but freely delivering Him up for us all (Romans viii. 32 ; John iii. 16) ; in Isaac, a type of Christ, who was obedient even unto death (Philippians ii. 5-8) ; in the ram caught in the thicket, a type of Christ being offered as a substitute for the sinner (Hebrews x. 5-10) ; in the preservation of Isaac from death by sacrifice, which to Abraham was as a resurrec-

tion from the dead, a type of Christ's resurrection (cf. Hebrews xi. 17-19; Romans iv. 20-25).

Fifth Episode—The Death of Sarah (chap. xxiii.). This chapter contains the first detailed account of a funeral, just as chapter twenty-four contains the first detailed account of a wedding.

The faith of Abraham is again shown in purchasing a burial place in Canaan rather than in Ur of the Chaldees. This was the first real pledge that the patriarch had abandoned the old life and land, never to return to it. The piece of land Abraham bought was not a pasture that could be sold again, nor a building lot that could be disposed of, but a grave, something that he could not well abandon.

The detailed description of the ground and the minute accuracy and publicity of the transaction (vers. 3, 11, 17-20) emphasize the fact that this purchase was looked upon by Abraham as an earnest of the future possession of the whole land. The death of Sarah, his wife, surely offered a legitimate opportunity for him to go back to Ur of the Chaldees if he had wanted to. The purchase of a grave for his dead bound him to that land, just as the graves of our dead do to ours. That grave was an earnest, a first fruits; the rest would follow.

Abraham came to the grave to weep and to mourn. Surely it is not wrong for us to weep over our dead or to mourn over their loss. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus. Tears of sorrow and bereavement wet a holier eye and stained a more sacred cheek than ours. We should not, of course, "sorrow as those which have no hope," for faith in Christ has inspired the Christian with a living hope that sustains the soul in the hour of bereavement (1 Thessalonians iv. 13-18).

Abraham speaks of the dead as "my dead." Those who die in faith are not lost to us. Once our own, they

are our own forever. God gave Job twice as much property and cattle as he had before his affliction, but not twice as many children. Why? Because he had lost his land and cattle, but he had not lost his children who had died. They had simply gone on before.

The expression "buried with his fathers" is significant. How desirous the Old Testament saints were of being buried as families. Even to-day in oriental lands the family burying ground is sacredly maintained. It is their belief that they shall rise as families. Will family life be recognized in heaven? What does Paul mean by the expression, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Ephesians iii. 14, 15)? Is not the thought of family reunion a very sacred one?

" Beyond the silent river,
In the glory summer land,
In the beautiful forever,
Where the jeweled city stands,
Where ever-blooming flowers
Send forth their sweet perfume,
My heart's most loved and cherished,
In heaven's beauty bloom.

" And when I cross that river,
The first I will adore,
The first to bid me welcome,
Upon that golden shore,
Will be my loving Saviour,
The One who died for me,
That in the long forever,
From sin I might be free.

" The next one who will greet me,
In the mansions fair and bright,
Will be my sainted mother,
Arrayed in garments white,

And then that gray-haired father,
Close pressing by her side,
Will clasp my hand with fervour,
Just o'er the swelling tide.

“ Then curly-headed brother,
And little sister dear,
And bright-eyed little baby,
With merry laugh and cheer,
Will all then cluster around me
To bid me welcome home,
And watch with me the gathering
Of loved ones yet to come.

“ Oh, the joy that there awaits me
When I reach that golden shore,
And clasp the hands of loved ones,
To part with them no more.”

Death of Abraham (xxv. 7-11). Abraham lived to be one hundred and seventy-five years old. He “died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.” Here again we come across the comforting expression “gathered to his people.” Just what is meant by this expression we have seen under the description of Sarah’s death. Abraham was buried in the same sepulchre with his wife, Sarah, in the cave of Machpelah, in the parcel of ground which Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite.

II

The History of Isaac

(*xxv. 19-xxviii. 9; xxxv.*)

SO far, we have observed that the history of the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—have crystallized around a number of visions, or manifestations of God: Seven to Abraham; two to Isaac; and seven to Jacob. The nature of these visions is determined by the character of the men to whom they are given. Those to Abraham were for *revelation*—all that Abraham needed to lead him to do the will of God was a knowledge of that will; those to Isaac were for *corroboration*—being a timid, quiet man, he was in danger of losing heart, and compromising; those to Jacob were for the purpose of *restraint*—being willful, impulsive, and full of selfish initiative, he was constantly running ahead of God and continually substituting his own plans for those of God.

Not much is said in the Scriptures about Isaac, although he lived to be the oldest of the patriarchs. His value in history seems to lie in the fact that he was the connecting link in the patriarchal history. He led a quiet, uneventful life. He was, characteristically, a man of peace. When Abimelech required him to leave Gerar, he left; when the Philistines filled his wells, he dug others; when herdmen wrangled over a well, he gave it up; when this well, too, was disputed, he gave it up also, retired and set to work on a third. Yet all the time his flocks and herds increased, and he was prospered. Like his father, he went down into Egypt and

fell into sin. His death closed a comparatively uneventful life.

Isaac's history is not as orderly arranged as that of Abraham, his father. The broken character, therefore, of this history necessitates that we look at it from a different view-point. There are five prominent things to remember in Isaac's life: his name; birth; marriage; career, which crystallizes around two visions of God; and his death.

1. Isaac's Birth and Name (xvii. 17-19; xviii. 12-13; xxi. 6). Like Christ's, Isaac's birth was miraculous, and his name foretold. His birth occurred in the divine line in which barrenness seemed to be prominent, and consequently miraculous and supernatural intervention was necessary. We should not fail to notice this fact in connection with the promised seed up to and including Christ.

Isaac's name means "laughter," and was, in all probability, a daily reminder, not only of Sarah's sin, but also of the faith of Sarah and Abraham. It was also a daily reminder of the power of God. Sarah could say, "Now you may laugh with me, but you cannot laugh at me." No doubt the birth of Isaac brought joy and gladness to Abraham and Sarah, just as did the birth of Jesus Christ to His mother and the world (cf. Luke i. 46-56; ii. 10).

2. The Marriage of Isaac (chap. xxiv.). This is the first detailed account of a wedding in the Bible, and sixty-seven verses are devoted to it. While there are many spiritual lessons and typical significations in this chapter great care should be exercised lest one fall into the difficulty of over-spiritualizing, and looking for types where in reality they are not found.

It might be well in this connection to lay down a safe rule for the study of typology in the Word of God. It is unquestionably a safe rule to follow in the study of the types of Scripture, not to make anything in the Old Testament a type which the New Testament does not sanction or declare to be such. For illustration, we know that the Passover was a type, for 1 Corinthians v. 7 distinctly teaches this truth. Melchizedek (Genesis xiv.) is typical of Christ, for the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews clearly says so (Hebrews v. 10 ; vii. 1-22). There may be many points of similarity between Old Testament characters and Christ that should not be called types of our Lord Jesus. We would not be understood as saying that there is absolutely nothing typical in the Old Testament but what the New Testament distinctly and clearly states to be such. We would be understood, however, as distinctly stating that the rule just given is a safe one to follow, and keeps one from falling into the error, so prevalent in many quarters, of overdoing the typical teaching of the Word of God.

Some expositors see in this chapter a picture of Christ choosing a Gentile bride for Himself, set forth under the figure—historical, of course—of the call of Rebekah to be the bride of Isaac. Abraham's steward, Eleazar, is likened to the Holy Spirit. At all events, there are five lessons in connection with marriage in this chapter :

First. There is the responsibility of parents to see that their children are married within the circle of religion and in accordance with the will of God. Many parents seem to think that their children are "well married" and have made a "good match" if auspicious circumstances have characterized the marriage. It does not seem to have occurred to them to inquire as to whether the one seeking the hand of their child is a Christian or not. Think of it, parents ; pause, and ponder ere you

allow your consent to be given to an unchristian marriage! Think of a Christian parent giving his daughter to be the life companion of an unbeliever! Parents, are you giving your children in marriage to a child of God, or a child of the devil, which? Before God you must answer this question. Do you say you do not know? It is your business to find out. God holds you responsible for this thing. The religious question in marriage is the prime question.

Second. That there must be no intermingling of seeds; that is to say, there must be no marriage of the Christian to the worldling (xxiv. 3, 4). Light cannot have fellowship with darkness, nor he that believeth with an infidel. The ethics of Christian marriages are set forth clearly in 2 Corinthians vi. 14-17, and 1 Corinthians vii. 39:

14. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

15. And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16. And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

39. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

From these words it is evident that the matter of the choice of a partner in marriage is one that should be of

great concern to the Christian. "Only in the Lord"—these words should be graven with the pen of iron upon every Christian heart. This is no arbitrary law—that a Christian must marry a Christian; it is absolutely necessary to the Christian's happiness: "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" Marriage must be based upon affinity, not only physical, mental, and moral, but spiritual also. For the Christian any other marriage but a Christian marriage is forbidden. Some one has said that for a young man or young woman to be wholesomely married is the next thing to being regenerated.

Young Christian, be you man or woman, listen to these words—"At liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." Too many regard wealth, position, or title as the main qualifications to a good marriage. They seem satisfied with these things.

Christian young woman, think and ponder what these scriptures mean before you marry a man who is not a believer on Jesus Christ. When you ask the consent of your earthly father, do not forget to consult your heavenly Father. Too often the heavenly Father is overlooked. Think of it, Christian young woman, what it means to marry an unconverted man; no family altar in your home, no voice of prayer, no reading of the Bible. When you or your children are sick or, perchance, dying, and you want some one to pray for you and for them, and you ask your husband to pray, he will reply, "I can't pray." If you ask him to read you some comforting portion of the Bible for which your soul is pining, he will answer, "I cannot read the Bible for you; I don't know where to turn to find the comfort you need." And when the angel of death shall hover over the cradle, or you yourself are passing through the valley of the shadow, and you need some one to beseech God for you,

to help and comfort you, for you yourself are not able to pray—think of it, Christian young woman, to be married to a man who cannot minister to you in the most sacred things of your soul in the most desperate hours of life! Think and ponder before you leap.

Do not be deluded by the false philosophy that you may marry an unconverted man in order that you may lead him to Christ. The odds are a thousand to one that you will be led away from the Lord. Any pastor who would think it wise to give you a leaf out of his note-book will tell you that some of the saddest incidents which have come under his notice and dealing have been those of broken-hearted wives, who once were sweet, Christian young women, but who married unconverted men, thinking that they would reform them after they were married to them. There can be no agreement between a Christian and an unbeliever. If an agreement is reached, it is an agreement, almost always, to give up prayer, asking the blessing at the table, and going to church.

“ Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
 What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with clay,
 As the husband is, the wife is; thou art mated with a clown;
 And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down,
 He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
 Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.”

—*Tennyson.*

Third. The responsibility attached to the choice of a residence (xxiv. 4-9, 37-41). We have already, in the case of Lot (Genesis xiii., xviii., xix.), seen the dan-

gers that come from a Christian man locating himself and family in the midst of ungodly surroundings. Abraham is very careful to insist that his servant, Eleazar, shall bring Isaac's bride back with him to his country. Isaac must not, under any circumstances, go into that heathen country to take up his residence there (Genesis xxiv. 2-6).

Fourth. There must be harmony of religious faith. How can two walk together in peace and unity except they be agreed ?

Fifth. The important part that prayer has to play in the choice of a life partner. This chapter is honeycombed with the thought of prayer in connection with the choice of a bride (cf. vers. 2, 3, 7, 12-14, 40-43, 48, 52). One cannot fail to be impressed with the quick answers to prayer related in this chapter (cf. vers. 15, 45): "And it came to pass, before he had done speaking;" "And before I had done speaking in my heart"—these are the expressions that indicate quick answers to prayer. This marriage was surely made in heaven. It was prayer, and not chance, which gave Isaac his wife. Why should young men and women to-day neglect to pray with reference to the matter of marriage and the choice of a life partner, which, next to their soul's salvation, is the most important event in their lives.

3. Isaac's Career (xxvi. 1-22, 23-33). The career of Isaac crystallizes around two manifestations of God to him, the first being in connection with Abimelech (xxvi. 1-22), and indicating that retrogression had taken place in the religious life of the patriarch. The second was in connection with the Beer-sheba incident (xxvi. 23-33), and resulted in progress being made by Isaac in his religious life.

(a) *The First Manifestation of God to Isaac* (xxvi. 1-22).

The first vision of God in the life of Isaac is connected with Gerar in Egypt. It would seem, from the narrative of the chapter, that a threatened famine caused Isaac to take a trip down to Egypt, just as his father before him had done. We do not know whether Isaac knew, or did not know, that his father had made a similar journey with disastrous results. If he did know, he should have been warned by his father's example. No physical condition should be able to drive the people of God into forbidden territory.

While Isaac was on his way down to Egypt, God met him and stopped him half-way. He fell into the same sin that his father had fallen into. This fact need not cause us amazement, for "as father, so son," is too often illustrated under our own eyes.

This incident is not a second account of that narrated in connection with the life of Abraham (xii. 10-20), although the same name, Abimelech, is used. Without question, "Abimelech," like "Pharaoh," was an official name for the ruling head of the people.

Both Abraham's and Isaac's wives were handsome, and their good looks were made a curse to them. Beauty is of God and is cause for gratitude, but how often has it been the means of destruction to those possessing it.

One wonders why God publicly blessed Isaac, even while he was in this state of disobedience to God. We cannot tell. God sometimes does that. He sometimes honours His people in the sight of men, but punishes them in private for wrong-doing. God does not always allow His servants to be dishonoured before the world, but they will be disciplined, nevertheless. Sometimes, however, as in the case of David, God rebukes His servants openly for sins committed privately (2 Samuel xii. 12). We must not forget, however, that the very prosperity of Isaac aroused the envy manifested in verse fourteen.

(b) *The Second Manifestation of God to Isaac—Beer-sheba* (xxvi. 23–33). This vision of God came to Isaac after he had determined to leave Egypt and remove to Beer-sheba. In that “same night” God appeared unto him 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.” “And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there.”

A similar vision had come to Abraham when he left Egypt and went back to Bethel, back to the place of the altar and the tent.

God made Isaac’s enemies to be at peace with him (ver. 26). They saw plainly, as Abimelech said: “We saw certainly that the Lord 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 the Lord” (vers. 28, 29). Isaac was a timid man, and yet it was possible for him to live so as to influence the lives of the ungodly and make them understand that God was with him.

4. *Isaac’s Death* (xxxv. 28, 29). Isaac died at the age of one hundred and eighty years. His death was as uneventful as his life. He did not die, however, as soon as he thought he would (xxvii. 1, 2), but lived forty years longer, at least until Joseph was about thirty years old. The story of Isaac’s life closes with the words: “And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years. And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him” (xxxv. 28, 29).

III

The History of Jacob

(*xxviii. 35; xli. 1-7*)

THE history of Jacob contains two clearly marked divisions: in the first, we see the restless, wilful, self-assertive man, Jacob; in the second, we see the restful, trusting, submissive, obedient man, Israel.

The Bible has often been likened to a portrait gallery, adorned with the faces of remarkable historic men, in which every variety of feature and type of character may be found. None of the characters which the pen of inspiration has rescued from oblivion is more interesting to read, and instructive to contemplate, than that of Jacob, the tricky, deceitful, supplanting man, who, by the power and grace of God, was transformed into the faithful, trusting patriarch.

The history of Jacob revolves around seven visions, four of which may be placed under the first division spoken of above; the other three, under the second division.

i. The First Manifestation of God to Jacob—Bethel—Flight (chap. xxviii.). This vision is connected with the past (chap. xxvii.—the stolen blessing) and the future (chaps. xxix., xxx.—Jacob's flight and residence with Laban).

Chapter twenty-seven narrates the incident of Jacob's theft of Esau's blessing. A careful study of the chapter will reveal that the four parties engaged in the trans-

action were all of them in the wrong in some point or other:

Isaac, the father, should have remembered that at the time of the birth of the children the blessing was promised to Jacob. He should not, therefore, have made preparation to give it to Esau. Isaac was evidently also wrong in assuming that the time of his death had come, which, in point of fact, did not come until forty years afterwards.

Rebekah, the mother, was in the wrong in the deceitful and hypocritical means she resorted to in order to bring about the result which she desired; namely, the bestowal of the birthright blessing upon her favourite son. Partiality towards children in a family, whether by father or mother, always brings trouble. This is evident in the life of Isaac's family, and also of Jacob's. Indeed, it was Jacob's manifest favouritism towards Joseph that aroused the ire and jealousy of his brethren, and caused him to be sold into Egypt.

Esau was grievously wrong in this transaction in that he had despised this birthright, and hence had forfeited the right to the birthright blessing. It was not until he saw the unhappy results that came from the light estimate he had put upon divine blessing that he was sorry for what he had done. The New Testament (Hebrews xii. 16, 17) makes use of this incident to warn us against treating lightly the blessings of God. The "repentance" spoken of in Hebrews xii. is not gospel repentance, and no argument that a man may some time in life desire to repent but will not be able to do so should be based on this incident. What Esau failed to do was not to find true repentance, but to find any way by which he might change his father's mind and get him to transfer the blessing, which he had already given to Jacob, to him.

Jacob's wrong in this transaction consisted in the fact

that he took advantage of his brother's weakness, and used wrong means to bring about a right end. Further, he should have waited God's time for the bringing about of the fulfillment of the promise of the birthright blessing.

The facts of this chapter are emphasized because they are closely related to this first vision or manifestation of God to Jacob. The whole transaction recorded in chapter twenty-seven showed that the persons involved sought wrong ways to obtain the rightful blessing of God. Apparently these wrong ways had succeeded. Jacob's mind must have been filled with these thoughts as he pursued his way towards the home of Laban. It must not be, however, that this man, who is to play so large a part in the history of Israel, shall think that trickery, rather than trust in God and righteousness, is the way to success. To teach Jacob this lesson, God grants him this manifestation of Himself.

There are some practical lessons here for us. We, too, are often tempted to be impatient, and are not always willing to await the time of God's activity. Like Abraham and Sarah, we would interpose Hagar; like Isaac and Rebekah, we would practice deceit in order to bring about the thing which has been promised to us. This is of Satan. Just as the devil tempted Christ in the wilderness (Matthew iv.) to accomplish right ends by wrong means, so he tempts us.

Jacob's experience in exile with Laban must also be considered in connection with this first manifestation of God to Jacob. Trickery can be met with trickery. Others, too, are shrewd in matters of deceit. Jacob is to find this out in his dealings with Laban (chaps. xxix., xxx.). How like his own dealings with his brother and father were Laban's dealings with him! How Laban deceived Jacob in the matter of his wives (xxix. 15-30), his flocks and possessions (xxx. 1, 2)! Had Jacob not

met with a man like Laban, had he not had a vision of God such as is recorded here, he would have attributed all his success to his own shrewdness, cunning, and trickery. That must not be. God's interposition during the time of Jacob's sojourn with Laban led Jacob to feel that the favour of God, and not his own shrewdness, had brought his prosperity (cf. xxxi. 3-12, 16, 24, 38-42). Jacob must know that whatever blessing had or should in the future come into his life was from God, and through grace.

This manifestation of God, then, was granted to Jacob after the events of chapter twenty-seven—the stolen blessing, and before chapters twenty-nine and thirty—Jacob's ordeal with Laban. ^vJacob is in flight; he is running away for fear of Esau, his brother. At the close of the first day's flight, tired and weary, Jacob lies down to sleep. 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. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord 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; 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. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither 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. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the

stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel : but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace ; then shall the Lord be my God : And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house : and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (xxviii. 12-22).

In this vision God promises five things to Jacob :

First, divine companionship. How comforting this must have been to Jacob in his loneliness and with the prospect of an alien country before him.

Second, protection. Jacob would feel the need of this, knowing the vengeance of Esau, and apprehending the dangers that lay before him in Syria.

Third, sustenance. With nothing but his staff in his hand, Jacob must have felt greatly encouraged that God had promised to care for his physical needs throughout all the days of his life.

Fourth, favour. How much he would need it, being a stranger in a strange country.

Fifth, salvation. Greatest of all blessings is this one, which deals with the soul's relation to God. Jacob did not deserve such a vision, but God's revelations of Himself are always of pure grace (Ephesians ii. 8-10).

At the top of this ladder—or perhaps better, stairway—stood God, while all along its steps were the angels. In John i. 51 Christ is presented to us as the ladder that leads to God, as the medium between God and man, and man and God. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life ; no man cometh unto the Father but by Him (John xiv. 6).

How near God is to His people ! " Closer is He than

breathing, and nearer than hands or feet." Jacob doubtless learned the truth that Whittier so beautifully portrays:

" I know not where His islands lift
Their froned palms in air ;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

Jacob will learn that "earth is crammed with heaven, and every common bush aflame with God."

VISIONS

Jacob awoke and found that the vision had gone, but the purpose that had been born in the vision was still in his heart, just as in the case of Peter and the vision he received and the purpose formed in his heart because of it, on the housetop of Simon, the tanner, at Joppa (Acts x. 11). The real purpose of any true vision is not for what it is in itself alone, but for the results it will accomplish and the influence it will exert in one's after life. This was doubtless the thought in Christ's mind when He told the disciples who had witnessed the transfiguration scene "to tell no man" of the vision. There would be no need to tell it, for the world would take knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus and learned of Him. Such visions as this save life from its monotony and skepticism. They are a secret of godly living, too, for there is a constant remembrance that "Thou God seest me." Jesus said, in speaking to the Father of His disciples, "While I was with them, I kept them." The disciples found it hard to sin in His presence. Such a vision as Jacob received ministers also to one's comfort and peace, for God had said, "I will not leave thee until I have performed that which I have promised."

Jacob raised a pillar in commemoration of the vision (xxviii. 18). We shall see later that he came back to

this very pillar. He did this, doubtless, to keep fresh in his mind the vision that God had given him. Would it not be a good thing for us to raise some pillar to remind us of some vision of God or some blessing or other we have received from His hand. Sight helps faith. Probably that is why the Lord Jesus gave us the "Lord's Supper." We are so apt to forget what we do not see. Religion may be an outward as well as an inward thing. What pillar have you raised because of some special blessing from God? Is it the gift of the tithe, the promise of stated hours of prayer and Bible reading, the assuming of some definite Christian work, the offering of yourself to missions, or the ministry? This is what visions are for—advancement in the Christian life.

Jacob vows a vow, saying: "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God" (xxviii. 20, 21). The "if" here does not indicate a mercenary bargain that Jacob would make with God. It may be understood in the sense of "Seeing that Thou wilt be all these things (the five things mentioned above) to me, I do make this vow." Jacob forgot this vow, and God recalled it on two occasions (xxx. 13; xxxv. 1); finally he kept it.

VOWS

Much is made of "vows" in the Old Testament, and especially in connection with and as a recognition of some particular blessing from God. Only two vows are mentioned in the New Testament, and both are made by Paul (Acts xviii. 18; xxi. 22-24). Outside of these references, the vow does not seem to have taken its place or to have been practiced as a Christian institution. Christians are not under obligation to make a vow; but when one is

voluntarily made, to break it is fraught with the most awful consequences (Ecclesiastes v. 1-6 ; Numbers xxx. 2). Can you look back in your own life and see where you made a vow to God and committed yourself to a definite line of Christian action or service? Have you kept that vow? "God will surely require it of thee."

This is the second mention of tithing. The first was in connection with Abraham and Melchizedek (chap. xiv.). Note that they are both in vogue before the giving of the Law, so that it is not right to say that tithing is a Jewish ordinance.

Jacob calls the place of vision "Bethel," which means "the house of God" (xxviii. 17, 19, 22). Doubtless Jacob realized God's actual presence more here than anywhere else. Of course, God is everywhere, not in the pantheistic, but in the spiritual sense.

"Lord, where e'er Thy people meet,
There they find the mercy seat ;
And where e'er they seek Thee, Thou art found,
And every spot is hallowed ground."

Bethel, undoubtedly, marked the place of what may be termed Jacob's conversion. To this place and this vision Jacob comes back again and again. Here it was he vowed his vow and erected his pillar (xxx. 13). God is to him the God of Bethel—"I am the God that appeared to thee at Bethel." Up to this time he had known God only through his father and mother and their teaching. Now he knows God for himself through a heart experience. No wonder he desires to erect a memorial on this spot. All these things show that, deep down in Jacob's heart, there was something fine and splendid.

2. The Second Manifestation of God to Jacob—Padan-aram—Return (chap. xxxi.). This vision of God

was granted to Jacob while still in the employ of Laban, and amid circumstances of great discontent on Jacob's part. Things were not going smoothly between Laban and Jacob. This servant of God had been long enough in a heathen country, and must now separate himself from its environment if he would make progress in his religious life. There can be no progress as long as he remains with Laban, the worldling. God would now separate Jacob for his destined work. It is not too much to say that the Lord permitted Laban to act thus in order that Jacob might be discontented with his stay in Syria.

We are not to understand that this discontent had arisen on account of Jacob's scheming. Indeed, it is a question whether he had been a schemer through and through, as some would have us believe, during the time he was in Laban's employ. Indeed, a careful study of the chapter reveals the fact that Laban, not Jacob, was the schemer (cf. xxxi. 5-8, 15, 42), whereas Jacob had been faithful in the service he had rendered (xxxi. 38-42), and had depended upon God (even though in a limited way) for his success (xxxi. 9-13, 42). The success that had attended Laban was due to Jacob's thrift (xxx. 27; xxxi. 38-41).

A second purpose of this manifestation of God to Jacob was to demonstrate the faithfulness of God in keeping His promises and in protecting His children. In this vision God declares Himself to be "The God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." God had promised Jacob at Bethel that He would bring him back again to this place. He had watched over His child for these twenty years (xxxi. 38). He had observed his suffering, discontent, and unjust treatment by Laban

(ver. 42), just as He had seen the affliction of His people in the bondage of Egypt. As He came down to deliver them from the oppression of Pharaoh, so He will now deliver Jacob from the deceit of Laban.

In this chapter God is seen protecting His children, not only from sin, but from personal, bodily harm (vers. 24, 29). "The Lord is mindful of His own." This truth we have seen illustrated before in the case of Abraham and Abimelech, and Isaac and Abimelech (chaps. xii., xx.). This is the lesson that Saul of Tarsus had to learn, when, on his way to Damascus to persecute the saints of God, he was stopped in his mad career by the Head of the Church, the Picket Guard of His people, who was keeping watch over His own.

God protects His children, not only from the harm that may be done to them by their fellowmen, but also from the great enemy of their souls, even Satan. Even the devil can go only as far as he is permitted to go by God (cf. Job i. 6-12; ii. 1-7; Luke xxii. 31, 32).

DIVINE GUIDANCE

There is a wonderful lesson in divine guidance in this chapter in connection with Jacob's leaving Laban to return to his own country. First, Jacob had the word and promise of God that He would bring him back. Second, he had the inward impression, corroborating that word of God that it was time to turn his face towards home. Third, he had the opportunity in that circumstances were in his favour. All his family were with him in his resolution. These three things ought to be harmonious in every life that is truly led of God. A man may feel that he has a promise of God on which to step out, and an inward conviction, corroborating it, and yet there may be no favourable circumstances or no open

door in His service. Or he may have an inward impression as to a certain thing to be done, but have no clear word of God. Or, again, he may have both a word of God and an open door of opportunity but no inward conviction. It is not yet time for him to move. Of course, we should remember in this connection that there are times when even our own loved ones would seek to hinder us from carrying out the will of God. Under such circumstances, we are to choose the will of God in spite of their objections (Matthew viii. 21, 22 ; x. 34-37), unless there be filial relationships which demand that we care for those who are our own and of our own household (cf. Mark vii. 10-13 ; 1 Timothy v. 8).

A lesson is to be learned from Rachel and her love of idols (xix. 30-35). Sometimes those whom we most love prove the greatest hindrance to us in our Christian journey. The idols that Rachel, Jacob's most beloved wife, brought with her, got Jacob into trouble. Instead of burying her idols, Rachel should have burned them, as Moses did the golden calf. Buried idols may be dug up, burned idols cannot.

What a misuse has been made of the word "Mizpah" (vers. 43-52). It is used nowadays as a benediction ; whereas it is the language of jealousy, suspicion, and distrust. Has not the time come for us to cease using a word to indicate blessing which clearly indicates the opposite ?

3. The Third Manifestation of God to Jacob—Mahainaim (chap. xxxii.). This divine manifestation assumes the form of two hosts of angels, and is doubtless connected with the departure of Laban on the one hand, and the approach of Esau on the other. Both these men took a hostile attitude towards Jacob, which led the patriarch to fear them both. It may be that the vision of angels

which Jacob saw—one band between himself and the departing Laban, and the other between himself and the approaching Esau—was God's encouragement to him to fear neither Laban nor Esau, but rest securely and safely in the divine protection and promise. Undoubtedly these "two bands," which is the meaning of "Mahanaim," had also some reference to the two bands (Mahanoth) which he himself had prepared (cf. vers. 2, 7). How weak and needless was his preparation to meet Esau, compared with that which God had made! Some would say that this vision of the angelic bands was connected more with the approach of Esau than with the departure of Laban, and yet both truths are here. Not a "pillar" (xxx. 52), but the angels of God, would protect Jacob from the anger of Laban. Not by fawning and scheming and patronizing (xxxii. 4-9), but an angel band could deliver him from the oncoming wrath of Esau. God's battles are not fought by erecting pillars, scheming, fawning, or patronizing, but by reliance upon the divine promise and power.

How much is made of angels in these visions! Going out from his home, Jacob met angels (xxviii. 12); while in exile, he was visited by them (xxx. 11); now, returning home, he meets them (vers. 31, 32). Here are two bands of angels. Do we believe in angels? We used to. Ephesians vi. and 2 Kings vi. teach that we are surrounded by the angelic forces of the invisible world. They were with Christ in the temptation (Matthew iv. 11) and in Gethsemane (Luke xxii. 43). They were with Elisha on the mount (2 Kings vi. 17). They are with God's people all the time. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psalm xxxiv. 7).

Jacob should have slept in peace with such an angelic environment and protection, just as David did at this

same place. David, when pursued by Absalom, came to this very spot and doubtless recalled what had happened to Jacob there and how the bands of angels had visited him. It was on this spot, doubtless, and certainly in this connection that David wrote the words of the psalm, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, maketh me to dwell in safety, solitary though I am." So died General Gordon, the hero of Khartoum, saying with his last breath, "The hosts of God are with me—Mahainaim." Let us heed God's promises, and not only commit our way unto Him, but *trust* also in Him.

The fact of a "memorial" is again referred to here. So far we have had three references to it:

First, a memorial for God's house—suggesting the divine presence (xxviii. 17).

Second, for "God's host"—suggesting the divine power (xxxii. 2).

Third, for "God's face"—suggesting the divine fellowship (xxxii. 30).

4. **The Fourth Manifestation of God to Jacob—Peniel (xxxii. 24–32).** Even after the vision of God's hosts, which ought to have been a source of comfort and assurance to Jacob that God was able to deliver him out of all difficulty, we find, according to verses 3–23, that Jacob set to work to plan and scheme how he might best overcome the anger and enmity of his brother, Esau. To Jacob, Esau is the main barrier between himself and his place in the promised land. God would teach Jacob, by means of this manifestation, that Jehovah Himself, and not Esau, was the real adversary; that before Jacob can conquer men, he must conquer God. Jehovah, not Esau, is the proprietor of the land, the possession of which is to be obtained by promise, and not by carnal policy. No such schemer as Jacob can inherit God's land. Not as

“Jacob,” which means “supplanter,” but as “Israel,” “the prince with God,” can he enter the home land. If the previous vision was for Jacob’s encouragement, this one is for his instruction. He must be taught that “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal,” but spiritual; that God’s battles are fought, not by human power or might, but by God’s Spirit (Zechariah iv. 6).

Jacob Wrestling. So Jacob, after having divided his party into two bands and making preparation for meeting his brother, is left alone. It would hardly seem, from a careful reading of the narrative, that Jacob stayed behind to pray or to plead with God. It is a real question whether Jacob wanted this interview with the divine Adversary, nor is it apparent that Jacob was either looking for or expecting such an experience. This is hardly the picture, so often presented to us, of a man agonizing in prayer with God. It is rather a picture of God really thrashing Jacob. Jehovah had tried before to take all the shrewdness and trickery out of this man. He had tried by disappointment (chap. xxix.), trouble (chap. xxx.), opposition (chap xxxi.), but to no effect, for Jacob in this chapter (xxxii.) is back again at his old tricks, scheming, planning. All this must be thrashed out of him. God must bend and also break Jacob. It is worthy of note in this connection that not until Jacob stopped wrestling and fighting, and actually clung to God, did he get the desired blessing.

Jacob had contended with Esau for the birthright, and succeeded. He had contended with Esau for the blessing, and succeeded. He had contended with Laban for his flocks and herds, and succeeded. He now contends with God, and fails, that is to say, he fails by wrestling. “Jacob” fails, but “Israel” wins. Jacob’s name is changed; now God rules and orders this man’s life. The land of promise is to be by grace and gift, and not by works and human

shrewdness. God Himself must give him the land (cf. "Except *thou* bless me"). Jacob had learned his lesson—that not shrewdness, cleverness, or smartness, but a trust and confidence in God wins God's battles, and overcomes difficulties in the line of duty. "The Lord preserveth the simple" (Psalm cxvi. 6). The clever take care of themselves, and this is the reason why they so often get into such serious trouble.

Jacob is left lame, limping, clinging. "The lame take the prey." We enter into life halt and maimed. "The men of the past demanded the flight of the eagle; none but Christ would receive the bird with a broken wing. They wrote upon the portals of their heavens, 'The halt and the maimed enter not here.' Greece demanded the beautiful; Rome called for the strong; Judea summoned the good; only Jesus Christ called for the weary, heavy laden, and broken of heart and life. The Greek could only come in the car of Venus; the Jew could only ascend in the chariot of Elijah; the Christian alone can limp and totter into the kingdom." The break of the day came to Jacob, and the sun rose upon him, as well as within him, in the shrinking of the sinew. From this point on, Jacob is a changed man, he is "the man with the shrunken sinew."

This change in Jacob is particularly noticeable in the prayer recorded in xxxii. 9-12, which is really the first personal prayer in the Bible. All other prayers up to this point are in the nature of intercession. Note how Jacob pleads the promises of God. What faith, humility, and simplicity are manifest in this prayer!

God answers this prayer in changing the mind, heart, and attitude of Esau towards Jacob, his brother. The sudden change of front shown by Esau can be accounted for only on the basis that God heard and answered the prayer of Jacob. Esau certainly could not have been afraid of

the small, weak companies which Jacob had provided ; he could not have been impressed by the "limping" form of his brother.

Jacob asks the name of the mysterious Person who wrestles with him. Jacob would fathom the mystery surrounding this unknown supernatural Being. Probably he felt as we often do, that if we know the name of a person or thing, we then know the nature of it. Yet would not the giving of a name tend to discourage inquiry ? The craving we all have, in common with Jacob, is to have the mystery between God and us wiped away, so that we may know Him as we know friends. This cannot be ; we cannot yet know God as He is. There is a good deal of mystery in our religion ; in the very nature of the case it must be so. We must not forget, however, that however much mystery there is in religion, there would be very much more mystery without it.

There is no doubt but what it was a difficult thing for Jacob to fix up the old quarrel with Esau, but it had to be done before he could possess his part in the promised land. So must it be with us ; we must seek reconciliation with those with whom we have been estranged, before we can have the blessing of God upon us (Matthew v. 22, 23 ; Ephesians iv. 26).

5. **The Fifth Manifestation of God to Jacob—The Forgotten Vow (xxxv. 1-8).** It appears from the context surrounding this manifestation that Jacob had practically settled himself as a citizen in Shechem. He seems to have abandoned the "tent" life which indicated his pilgrim character, and built for himself a house. The controversy between Jacob, the members of his family, and the families of Shechem, as narrated in chapter thirty-four, would seem to indicate that Jacob had already become pretty well settled in Shechem. It would hardly

seem possible for the patriarch and his family to have made such progress and become so settled in this godless country without having compromised, in some respect at least, their religious convictions and practices.

The fearful results of Jacob's sojourn in this godless country are graphically portrayed in chapter thirty-four. His family was practically ruined morally, and had not God manifested His own hand in the delivery of the patriarchal family, the probabilities are that the chosen seed would have been obliterated because of the slaughter that followed (xxxv. 5). Is this another attempt of Satan to destroy the promised seed ?

In the midst of these troublous circumstances, God appeared to Jacob and said, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there ; and make there an altar unto God that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau, thy brother." Jacob's response to this command of God is set forth in the following words : "Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments : And let us arise, and go up to Bethel ; 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. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears ; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem." These verses give us an intimation, at least, of the awful irreligious condition into which Jacob's family had fallen.

Jacob evidently cannot build an acceptable altar to God in Shechem, nor can God bless the life of His servant as He would like to do, as long as he remains in the midst of such idolatrous surroundings. Jacob must go back to Bethel, the house of God.

It seems that Jacob had lived about twenty years in

Shechem which was but thirty miles from Bethel—so near and yet so far from the place of blessing. Thirty years had passed by since Jacob made his vow to return to Bethel. All the conditions of the vow had long ago been fulfilled. Jacob had promised to go back to the place where God blessed him, to erect a pillar there, to give a tithe of all that God had given him, to consecrate himself to the service of God. The patriarch apparently had forgotten his vow, but God had not (Ecclesiastes v. 1-6).

The sorrow and trouble that came into the home of the patriarch while residing in Shechem is used to bring to his remembrance the vow he had made. God would have this man know that there is something more for His chosen ones to do than to raise sheep or build houses. Trouble leads us back to God oftentimes when nothing else will (Psalm cxix. 67).

The mention of Bethel again would, in itself, be a spiritual uplift and revival in the religious experience of Jacob which had been decaying.

At last Jacob is awakened, and there is moral and religious house cleaning among his own family. Even from his beloved Rachel he takes her idols. He is determined now to go back again to his first love. He will go back again to Bethel.

The effect of Jacob's determination to do the whole will of God is felt by the nations around about (xxxv. 5). No man can be thoroughly given up to God, and those around about him not feel the effect of his life (Psalm li. 12-13; Luke xxii. 32).

“So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he, and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar, and called the place El-Bethel; because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother” (vers. 6, 7). Verse six

tells us that Jacob came to Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. Doubtless he found this altar in a dilapidated condition. The revival of his spiritual life demanded the rebuilding of the altar unto God. How the experiences of the patriarch resemble the experiences of many of God's people to-day, who, by reason of their laxity and backsliding, have allowed the family altar to be forgotten and to fall into decay! The first sign of revival in the spiritual life will be manifested by the re-establishing of the family altar in the home.

6. The Sixth Manifestation of God to Jacob—Bethel again (xxxv. 9-15). This new vision of God was given to Jacob doubtless to assure him that God was well pleased with the advance step he had taken in his religious life.

Here again emphasis is laid on the change in Jacob's name. This indicates a very definite dealing of God with Jacob. In xxxii. 27, 28 it is said that Jacob's name *shall be no more* Jacob, but Israel. In the particular vision we are studying, the statement is made, "Thy name *is* Jacob: thy name shalt not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel." Jacob had probably sufficiently awakened to the fact that the old "Jacob" nature must forever be mortified, and that nature which is indicated by "Israel" must reign in his life. It is interesting to note that Peter, the apostle, passed through a similar experience. In John i. 42 Christ said to the apostle, "Thou shalt be called Peter;" whereas in Matthew xvi. 18 Jesus said unto him, "Thou art Peter." Thou shalt be called, thou art, Israel. Thou shalt be called, thou art, Peter.

It is also interesting to note in connection with the change of Jacob's name that Bethel, which before had been called "Luz" as well as Bethel, is known as

“Bethel” alone ever after this event. Its name is never again changed.

Jehovah again reaffirms the promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (xxxv. 11, 12).

The result of this vision was that Jacob set up a pillar in the place where God talked with him, “even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him Bethel” (vers. 14, 15). Probably the old pillar which he had set up before (xxviii. 18) had fallen down. What memories of his previous dealing with God must have come to the patriarch as he recalled the dealings of God with him. In all, Jacob raised four pillars: one at Bethel (chap. xxviii.); one at Galeed (xxxi. 45); a second at Bethel (xxxv. 14); and one at Rachel’s grave (xxxv. 20).

It is interesting to note in connection with visions four and five that three deaths are recorded—that of Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse (xxxv. 8); that of Rachel, Jacob’s wife (xxxv. 16–20); and that of Isaac, Jacob’s father (xxxv. 27–29). The word “but” in xxxv. 8 would seem to indicate that visions of God and consecration of life do not exempt us from the ordinary trials of life to which men are subject. These visions, however, do give grace to bear the trials of life when they come, so that we do not sorrow as others which have no hope. That Jacob received strength from this vision to bear the trials of life is evident from the fact that he calls Benjamin, at whose birth Rachel gave up her life, “son of my strength” and not “Benoni,” “son of my sorrow.” No consecration of life can deliver us from hours of trial and sorrow, which come to all the sons of men. Just as we cannot see the rainbow except as we see it through falling raindrops, so there are visions of God which we can never have except we see them through our falling tears.

7. **The Seventh Manifestation of God to Jacob—Beer-sheba** (xlv. 1-7). Note here that it is said that God spake unto *Israel* (cf. xxxv. 10). This vision is given to the patriarch in connection with an intended visit to Egypt. It seemed necessary on account of the famine that had come upon the land for Jacob to send down to Egypt for food. The patriarch recalled, however, the experience of Abraham, and Isaac, his father and grandfather; he was aware of the spiritual loss they had sustained by leaving the land of God's choice. Jacob doubtless recalled his own experience in Shechem and the trouble it had brought to him, with the result that he was afraid any longer to deviate from the chosen path of God. He is evidently seeking guidance, and this vision is granted probably in answer to a prayer of Jacob. He has learned the lesson, which it is well for us to learn, also, that it is not always safe to follow the example of others, even of good men like Abraham and Isaac. Follow God's leading.

This vision is recorded in the following words: "And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifice unto the God of his father Isaac. And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. 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: 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" (xlv. 1-4).

Jacob is told "to fear not to go down into Egypt." There was ground for apprehension; where so great a man as Abraham had failed, there was room for fear (cf. Hebrews iv. 1; 1 Corinthians x. 11-13).

God commands Jacob to "dwell there." The divine

presence is promised even in Egypt. It is right for us to go down into Egypt when we have a distinct divine command to do so, for then God will give His angels charge to keep us. We must not go into Egypt, however, on our own account or because we lose faith in divine provision, for then we will surely fall.

God promises, not only to go down into Egypt with Jacob, but also to bring him up again and to comfort him while there, for the words, "Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes," indicate that his own son, Joseph, would be with him to comfort him at the hour of his death. That God did actually bring the body of Jacob up from Egypt is evident from l. 7, 12, 13—"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." "And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them: 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."

The promise of God to Jacob, which is here reaffirmed, is fourfold and deals:

First, with Enlargement—"I will there make of thee a great nation."

Second, with Protection—"I will go down with thee into Egypt."

Third, with Consolation—"And Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes."

Fourth, with Restoration—"I will also surely bring thee up again."

So Jacob, the patriarch, after all the varying vicissitudes of his religious life, died in the faith (xlvi. 21, 22; xlix. 1, 2), and was buried with his fathers (xlix. 28-30; l. 13).

Jacob's desire as expressed in the words, "Bury me with my fathers" is pathetically beautiful and strikingly full of faith. The patriarch died in the firm expectation of awaking some day in the image of God and in the midst of his own people.

" He will keep me till the river
Rolls its waters at my feet :
Then He will bear me safely over,
Where the loved ones I shall meet."

IV

The History of Joseph

(*Chapters xxxvii.-l.*)

WE have already seen that the visions of God granted to Abraham were for *Revelation*; those to Isaac for *Corroboration*; those to Jacob for *Restraint*. The visions accorded Joseph were for the purpose of *Preservation* (xlv. 5-8; Psalm cv. 17-23). The dream of the wheat sheaves indicates Joseph's relation to the preservation of his race.

The Purpose of Joseph's History. A close reading of the section of Genesis devoted to the history of Joseph reveals a threefold purpose in God's dealings with this wonderful character; that is to say, we have set before us in these chapters in a threefold way the purpose for which Joseph's history is introduced: To show how God fulfilled His promises to Abraham; for the preservation of the chosen race; and for the training of the chosen race.

1. *To show how God fulfilled His promises to Abraham.*

First. The promise of an innumerable seed (13-16). Almost two hundred years had elapsed since this promise was made to Abraham, and yet, so far, all the male population of the chosen race could be put in one dwelling tent. During all the years of the sojourn of the patriarchs, the chosen race had been kept but few in number, probably in order that the inhabitants of the land might permit them to dwell there unmolested. So long as they were few they were looked upon as harmless.

Had the chosen people increased in number, the inhabitants of the land would have feared war, and probably their own destruction, just as Pharaoh and the Egyptians did (Exodus i.).

Second. To set before us the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham regarding a period of bondage for his seed (xv. 13). God would train these patriarchs, and the record of His training He would have them pass down in valuable tradition to provide lessons in divine guidance, which, in all the centuries thereafter, would serve as object lessons (1 Corinthians x. 11).

This bitter and hard experience was a part of God's training of His chosen people. The deliverance from this condition of bondage is set forth as a standard by which the power of Israel's God is to be measured. Consequently, we observe again and again, in the Old Testament, the expression, "According to the power with which I delivered you out of Egypt." It is interesting to note that while the deliverance from Egypt is the standard by which we are to measure God's power in Old Testament times, the New Testament standard of God's power is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead: Ephesians i. 19, 20—"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places."

Third. To give His people the possession of a large land in which there would be room to grow (xiii. 14-17). So far, the only land that the patriarchs possessed was a burial lot. They were hardly strong enough to hold any more, nor would it have been safe for them to do so. In order, therefore, that they may have room enough to grow, God gives them a place in Goshen, a place separated from the Egyptians, in order that they may have un-

molested growth (xlvi. 34; xlvii. 6). The divine purpose in this was that when they did go back to possess the promised land, they would be strong enough numerically to possess and hold it.

2. *For the preservation of the chosen race.*

This is the purpose of the history of Joseph in Egypt as distinctly stated in the Word of God itself (xlv. 5-8; xlvii. 34; Psalm cv. 17-23). How little the brethren of Joseph knew, when they sold their brother, that they were carrying out the purpose of God. They meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. Psalm cv. makes very distinct and clear reference to the purpose of Joseph in the land of Egypt. "He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: Until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, 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" (Psalm cv. 17-23).

3. *For the training of the chosen people.*

God's purpose in the selection of the chosen race was that they might be the channels through which the knowledge of the true God might flow to the race. It was necessary, therefore, to train these chosen people in arts, science, and literature, such as would fit them for this great and divine work. Such a training they could not receive had they remained in Canaan. Egypt was the center of culture and civilization at that time. Zoar, the leading city of Egypt, was particularly noted for its wisdom; it possessed a university of learning (cf. Isaiah xix. 11-13). The discovery of the code of Hammurabi shows us to what an advanced state of culture and civiliza-

tion these people had attained. The stay in Egypt fitted Moses, who was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, for his future work as lawgiver and leader of God's chosen people.

The Divisions of Joseph's History. Joseph is one of the three men who were chosen vessels of God in connection with Israel's history. The other two were Moses and Paul. Joseph's history may be summed up under three main divisions: The chosen vessel in preparation (xxxvii.-xli. 36); the chosen vessel in service (xli. 37-l. 21); the dissolution of the chosen vessel (l. 20-26). Let us now look at these divisions somewhat in detail:

1. **The Chosen Vessel in Preparation** (xxxvii.-xli. 36). Under this main division we have three general thoughts: Joseph as a son (xxxvii.); as a slave (xxxix. 1-20); as a prisoner (xxxix. 21-xli. 36).

First. Joseph as a son (chap. xxxvii.). Joseph was the favourite son of Jacob. The partiality of the old man for the child of his old age is shown by providing him with a coat of many colours. It was this partiality that aroused the envy and hatred of his brethren. Isaac and Rebekah had fallen into the same mistake of showing partiality between their children, Jacob and Esau.

Emphasis is laid on the fact that Joseph was a dreamer. It may have been God's method in *those days*, in which there was no Bible, to make His will known through the medium of dreams (cf. Job xxxiii. 14, 15). To-day, however, the Word of God is that to which we must refer to know the will of God (Isaiah viii. 19, 20; Jeremiah xxiii. 28). God's ideal for Joseph's life was revealed in a dream; God's ideal for our lives is revealed in the Bible.

Joseph has been called a visionary and a dreamer. His dreaming has been ridiculed. But after all, it is a

great thing to have high ideals. The man who never built a castle in the air never built one on the ground. Joseph had a divine ideal which he never doubted throughout all his experiences. So had Paul (cf. Acts xxvi. ; Philippians iii. 12). So should we (Ephesians i. 17-22).

Joseph was hated of his brethren. They did not believe in any revelation that differed from their own experience, so Joseph was looked upon as a mad enthusiast. His brothers would not speak to him, or if they did speak, they grew red in the face with anger and jealousy (ver. 11). They would not exchange friendly greetings with Joseph. There are people to-day who refuse to acknowledge as genuine any experience that is different from theirs, and grow angry when you speak to them about it (cf. Job iv. 12-16).

Joseph is sold into Egypt, as Christ was sold by Judas, for a price. Jacob was deceived by the blood of the goat, just as he himself had deceived Isaac, his father, by the skin of a goat (chap. xxvii.).

Second. Joseph as a slave (xxxix. 1-20). Even as a slave, Joseph was faithful to the purposes of God as he knew them, and for this reason, "God was with him." There seems to be no implied contradiction between the dignity of a chosen vessel of God and the most menial service. So was it in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, who took upon Him the form of a servant (John xiii. 1-16 ; Philippians ii. 5-8).

Our attention is drawn in this chapter to Joseph's great temptation. Although it was the result of the wickedness of an evil woman, God used it to the blessing of Joseph. "The word of the Lord tried him" (Psalm cv. 19). It is not easy to be the hero of a story. There can be no sunshine without shadow. No man is exempt from temptation. Satan is always on God's ground ready to

tempt the finest of God's people. Indeed, the more saintly one is, the more keenly he will be tempted.

Undoubtedly Joseph would have gained much temporal advantage had he yielded to this temptation. He was a slave. Here was a chance to be raised up to the throne. We must remember, too, in this connection that Joseph had dreamed of such exaltation, and that he believed in dreams. Was this the way in which his dream would be fulfilled? Was this a short cut to the throne? Was it right to do evil that good might come from it? This was his temptation. Compare Matthew iv. 8-10; 1 John ii. 15, 17—our Lord's temptation to gain His kingdom by short and easy methods, and our own temptation along similar lines.

The secret of Joseph's victory lay in his implicit faith in God (Psalm li. 4), his respect for his master (xxxix. 8), and for the marriage tie (xxxix. 9). Joseph did not play or dally with temptation; he fled from it (vers. 12, 13). So should we avoid temptation, pass it by, flee from it. No moral or spiritual good can come from these tours of investigation into the "redlight districts" of our cities. Dinah, we are told, went out to see the daughters of the land; that is to say, to make a tour of investigation; and we know the results—how deplorably she fell into immorality (Genesis xxxiv. 1 ff.).

The result of Joseph's victory over this severe temptation was that he was falsely accused. This false accusation Joseph did not reply to. To have done so would have been to incriminate others. This Joseph was not willing to do. He committed his case unto God, being assured that God would care for him. "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when

ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently ? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called : because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps : Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth : Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not ; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously ” (1 Peter ii. 18-23).

Joseph took care of his character, and committed his reputation to God. Some men lose their character in seeking to care for their reputation. We recall in this connection the story of a leading Christian worker who was wrongly accused, but nevertheless maintained silence, because any defense from him would incriminate others. He preferred to suffer innocently and in silence, trusting that God would undertake his defense, inasmuch as in the very nature of the case his own defense would incriminate others. In a very few years all his accusers were brought to shame. The leading conspirator confessed on his dying bed ; the second fled the country ; a third, fourth, and fifth wrote asking forgiveness ; and the very papers that had published his shame now published his vindication.

Third. Joseph as a prisoner (xxxix. 21-xli. 36). Joseph is now suffering for righteousness' sake, and yet there is no complaint, defense, or incrimination on his part. He knows he is in the path of God, and that whatever comes to him in that path will work for his good. He can safely leave the issue with God. This is true meekness. Meekness is the consciousness that one's life is surrounded by God as an environment, and that nothing can come into that life until it has first pierced that environment, and by so doing has become the will of God for that life. Whatever experience, then, such a life is called

upon to pass through is recognized as of God, and the trusting soul says, "Be it unto me even as thou wilt." This is true meekness.

Joseph had confidence in God's providential leadings and dealings; he could wait God's time. No doubt Joseph was tempted to think that the ideal of his dreams was thwarted. There was no sign to indicate God's favour. Nevertheless, Joseph believed in God and in the purpose of his life (xl. 14). Indeed, Joseph is dreaming again, even though in jail. He is not making light of the visions and dreams of youth. He is standing by the faith of his early days. If the vision tarries, he has determined to wait for it. We are living in days when we are tempted to forsake the traditions of our youth and the faith once for all delivered unto the saints. Let us be careful lest we fall from our true standard of faith in God.

Joseph was rewarded for his victory over this temptation. The reward of Joseph is seen in the fact that, instead of Reuben or Judah, who were probably entitled to the place of honour, he occupies a place in the book of Genesis with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Reuben (Genesis xxxv. 22; xlix. 4) and Judah (xxxviii. 15-26) had failed to resist a similar sin to this with which Joseph had been tempted, and which he so nobly overcame. Consequently, Joseph, the younger, is given the place of the elder. "Now the sons of Reuben, the first-born of Israel (for he was the first-born; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel; and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's)" (1 Chronicles v. 1-2). It may have seemed to us, as we read of the sin of Reuben and Judah and noted the absence of the

divine disapproval or punishment for such sins, that God had overlooked them. Here, however, in the choice of Joseph, we see that no sin is overlooked by God, and that every act of obedience and faithfulness is rewarded.

2. **The Chosen Vessel in Service** (xli. 37-l. 21). Under this division we consider Joseph and Pharaoh; Joseph and the Egyptians; Joseph and his brethren; Joseph and his father.

First. Joseph and Pharaoh (xli. 37-57). The time for God to exalt Joseph has now come. The fulfillment of Joseph's vision had been delayed, but not forgotten. It had tarried, but he had waited for it (Habakkuk ii. 3). One hour Joseph is a slave; the next, a prince. Instead of chains, he is given a scepter. From the dungeon, he is raised to the throne. No obstacle can stand in the way of God's promises to hinder their fulfillment when God determines to move. The change was instant. There is no tedious progression when God begins to work; "None can stay His hand" (Daniel iv. 35). God can cast a king down from a throne to be a beast of the field in one moment (Daniel iv. 28-37); or He can lift the poor from the dung-hill and set him among princes (1 Samuel ii. 8).

Before honour is humility. Joseph did not think of himself as in line for the position which he suggested to Pharaoh should be filled. Apparently he did not think that a man like himself, a slave and a Jew, was eligible for so responsible and dignified a place. His suggestion to "set a man" (vers. 33, 34) over these matters was no hint that he wanted the position. In his humility he never thought of himself. Even in connection with the interpretation of the dream he said, "The root of the matter is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace" (xli. 16). So is it always that influence belongs, in the long run, to those who rid their minds of all private

aims, and come close to the great center in which all the race meets. Men feel themselves safe with the unselfish, with persons in whom they meet principle, justice, truth, love, God.

Before honour is humility (xli. 16 ; John xii. 26 ; Philippians ii. 5-11). God is the source of promotion (xli. 38 ; Psalm lxxv. 6 ; Daniel iv. 25).

In this connection Joseph's marriage is narrated. Did he do right in marrying into this society (cf. Exodus ii. 10, 21 ; Genesis xxvi. 1-5 with xlvi. 5)? If wrong, was it overruled for good?

Second. Joseph and the Egyptians (xli. 46-57 ; xlvii. 13-31). The famine which came upon Egypt at this time and as foretold by Joseph in the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream was by no means accidental. It was raised up by God (Psalm cv. 16), and, seemingly, that Joseph might be known as the saviour of Egypt (xlvii. 25). God not only raised up the man for the hour, but also the hour for the man.

Note that God prepared the man first, then the occasion. This is God's method of working. This is what He has done in all the great revivals of religion in the past. We hear people say that such revivals are not possible nowadays, for conditions are not such as they were in Moody's, Finney's, or Whitefield's day ; that times have changed. No, the times have not changed, but there is a lack of men for the hour. The history of every great religious movement is the history of one man fully given up to God : Lutheranism, Luther ; Methodism, Wesley ; Presbyterianism, Calvin ; Dowieism, Dowie ; Christian Science, Mrs. Eddy ; Millennial Dawnism, Russell.

"Through faith" we understand how the ages (or dispensations) were framed (Hebrews xi. 3). The age in which Noah lived was of the nature it was, religiously,

because of the relation which Noah sustained to God: "By faith Noah" framed the age in which he lived. "By faith Abraham" moulded the age in which he lived. Thus it has ever been from that day to this.

Joseph's name is changed in this connection, the Egyptian name signifying abundance of life (cf. John x. 9). In Joseph seemed to rest the salvation of the world. The food of life was in his hands. In these respects there is a striking likeness between Joseph and Christ (cf. Acts iv. 12; John vi. 48-58).

The wisdom of Pharaoh's choice is seen in the skill of Joseph. When God appoints a man for a certain office, that appointment is a guarantee of divine fitness. If to-day God puts His hand upon a man and sets him apart for the ministry of the gospel, to be a preacher or an evangelist, He will convey, with that call, the gift to preach. If a man has no gift to preach, he has no call to preach. Of course, it will be necessary for him to prepare himself and thus stir up the gift that is in him.

Joseph was a twofold blessing: first to the chosen race, and consequently to the world. This is the blessing of Jacob, the blessing which reaches out beyond itself, and blesses others.

Third. Joseph and His Brethren (xlii. 1-45, 28; l. 15-21; cf. also chap. xxviii.). Here we have another phase of the vision of Joseph's youth fulfilled. In this picture of his brethren doing obeisance to him, we have the fulfillment of his vision of the sheaves bowing down to his sheaf.

We shall not understand Joseph's treatment of his brethren unless we clearly see the purpose of the method pursued by him. The end Joseph had in view was to produce conviction of sin in the hearts of his brethren. He would have them realize the awfulness of the sin which they had committed. Four steps may be men-

tioned in his treatment of his brethren: first, he spake roughly to them (xlii. 7, cf. xxxvii. 4); second, he put them in prison (xlii. 17, cf. xxxvii. 24); third, he put their money into their sacks (xlii. 25, cf. xxxvii. 28); fourth, he put the cup in the sack of the youngest, probably to see if they cared still for youth, or would treat him as they had Joseph (xliv. 2).

Joseph's method of treatment brought about the desired results (xlii. 21-22; xliv. 16). The consciences of his brethren began to work. The natural elements of retribution are set forth in the words of verses 21, 22—"And they said one to another, 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, Spoke I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required." There is no human accuser here—"They said among themselves [or one to another]" (xlii. 21).

In this connection let us notice the factors within us that make up natural retribution as set forth in xlii. 21, 22; first, memory—"We saw the anguish" (this happened twenty years before); second, imagination—"When he besought us, and we would not hear"; third, conscience—"We are verily guilty concerning our brother"; fourth, reason—"Therefore is this distress come upon us"; fifth, remorse—which means a biting back like a serpent stinging its own tail, the soul is recoiling on itself. Every sinner carries within himself enough material to build a hell if there were none in God's plan. Some one has well said that "every man carries his own brimstone." With a memory—to recall the past; with an imagination—to portray the scene of sin; with a conscience—to accuse of the guilt; with

a reason—to justify the penalty; hell were impossible to escape by any sinner who goes into eternity unforgiven, unreconciled, and uncleansed.

We have here a wonderful lesson in forgiveness (xlvi. 1-16). Study it carefully. It is a lesson we need to learn to-day. How full, free, and gracious was Joseph's forgiveness! If he had not forgotten the wrong that had been done him, he remembered it only to forgive it. Compare Ephesians iv. 26, 27; Matthew v. 23, 24; vi. 13, 14; xviii. 21-35.

How keenly Joseph's brethren felt the wrong they had done their brother, and how deeply they wept over it! So shall the Jewish people weep when they see the Christ whom they have rejected and crucified (Zechariah xii. 10; Revelation i. 8).

Fourth. Joseph and His Father (xlvi. 1-1. 14). Jacob, after diligently inquiring of God, and being assured of God's will in the matter, takes his journey down to Egypt. As we have already seen in the study of Jacob's history, the patriarch was afraid to go down into Egypt unless assured by God that it was the right thing to do, for Abraham and Isaac had suffered because of their departure into Egypt. He doubtless recalled the sad experiences his fathers had here and also that God had forbidden them to go down into that country (xlvi. 2). Being assured now of the divine will (James iv. 12-17), he departs for Egypt. There is a difference between going to a place of our own will and choosing, and that of God's ordaining. We should not put ourselves into forbidden paths, and then expect God to deliver us. If, however, we are called to go into the enemy's country, God will protect us there.

Joseph's reception of (xlvi. 28-34) and care for his father (xlvi. 25-28), and his kindly introduction of the patriarch to Pharaoh (xlvi. 31-xlvii. 12), showed that

Joseph was not ashamed of his aged father. Some children are ashamed to take their parents into company or to introduce them to people. Joseph's provision for his father is beautifully set forth in xlv. 31-xlvii. 12. One can hardly read these verses without being reminded of what the apostle tells us in 1 Timothy v. 8—"But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

In this connection we have prominence given to the blessing of Jacob, which was pronounced, first, upon Joseph's children (chap. xlviii.). We should note that Ephraim and Manasseh not only changed places in the blessing, but took Joseph's place in the reception of the blessing. Jacob crossed his hands in the bestowal of the benediction, thus showing that the blessing was by grace and not by nature. One wonders if Jacob meant to teach the generations of men that should follow that natural disadvantage may be overcome by grace.

Second, the blessing is pronounced upon the twelve sons of Jacob (chap. xlix.). There are many and wonderful lessons in this chapter, which we do not have time to dwell on, except to note that a man's sin enters into his future career; that past sin may be forgiven, and even forgotten, yet it has its blighting influence upon the future. This is especially brought out in verses three to nine. Another lesson we learn from this chapter is that each man's sphere, as well as each man's place on the earth, is adapted to his or its peculiar character. Still further we are taught that, although foreappointed and foreknown, the destinies of men and nations are fully wrought out by themselves.

The death of Jacob, which has been mentioned before under the history of Jacob, is referred to in xlix. 28-l. 14.

3. The Dissolution of the Chosen Vessel (l. 22-26).

This practically closes the patriarchal dispensation. God's chosen people are still one *seed*, but not any longer one person. They have now become a great people, a mighty nation.

The prophetic and hopeful note is very prominent in the account of Joseph's death. There is apparently no fear and no terror in his departing to be "gathered to his fathers." "The righteous hath hope in his death" (Proverbs xiv. 32). We are reminded of the description of Christ's death in connection with the departure of Joseph: "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest (or pitch her tabernacle) in hope" (Psalm xvi. 9).

Likeness Between Joseph and Christ. Some claim Joseph to be a type of Christ. A safe rule to follow in typography is as follows: Make no character, institution, or event of the Old Testament a type which the New Testament does not affirm to be such. As illustrations, compare Melchizedek (chap. xiv.) with Hebrews v.; Adam (1 Corinthians xv. 22); Jacob's ladder (Genesis xxviii.; cf. John i. 51). Search for other types in Genesis and corroborate them by the New Testament teaching.

Points of Similarity Between Joseph and Christ.

- (1) Beloved of his father (xxxvii. 3, cf. Matthew iii. 17).
- (2) Hated by his brethren (xxxvii. 4-11, cf. John vii. 1-7 and Mark xv. 10).
- (3) Interpreter of the will of God (xxxvii. 5-11, cf. John i. 18 and Matthew xi. 25-27).
- (4) Sent to minister to his brethren (xxxvii. 13, cf. Matthew xx. 28 and John i. 11).
- (5) Plan to kill Joseph (xxxvii. 19, 20, cf. Matthew xxi. 38).
- (6) Sold (xxxvii. 28, cf. Matthew xxvi. 14, 15).
- (7) In-

nocently condemned, imprisoned with two malefactors (chap. xl., cf. Luke xxiii.). (8) Exalted by the hand of God (chap. xli., cf. Acts ii. 32-36).

Prophecies of Christ in Genesis with New Testament Fulfillment. How many? Look them up and mark them in your Bible. Illustrations: The promised Saviour is to be (1) Of the seed of the woman (iii. 15, cf. Romans xvi. 20; Galatians iv. 4). (2) Of the seed of Abraham (xii. 3; xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14, cf. Matthew i. 1; Luke i. 54, 55; Acts iii. 25; Romans iv. 13; Galatians iii. 8). (3) Of the seed of Isaac (xvii. 19; xxvi. 2-5, cf. Romans ix. 6-8; Hebrews xi. 18). (4) Of the tribe of Judah (xlix. 10, cf. Matthew i. 2).

The Types of Genesis. "A type is a divinely purposed illustration of some truth. It may be: (1) a person (Romans v. 14); (2) an event (1 Corinthians x. 11); (3) a thing (Hebrews x. 20); (4) an institution (Hebrews ix. 11); (5) a ceremonial (1 Corinthians v. 7)."—*Schofield*.

There is need of great care in the study of the types of the Bible (see note).

The following have been looked upon as having typical significance:

1. The "greater light" (i. 16, cf. Malachi iv. 2—"the Sun of righteousness").

2. Adam (ii. 19, cf. Romans v. 14; 1 Corinthians xv. 21, 22, 45-47) a type of Christ.

3. Eve (ii. 23, 24, cf. 2 Corinthians xi. 2; Ephesians v. 25, 32; Revelation xix. 7, 8) a type of the Church.

4. Coats of skins (iii. 21, cf. Revelation xix. 8). Some see in this clothing a picture of the righteousness of Christ, obtained for His saints by His sacrificial death.

5. Abel's lamb (iv. 4) as contrasted with Cain's blood-

less offering has been thought to resemble or point to Jesus' death as the Lamb of God (John i. 29, cf. Hebrews ix. 22 ; xi. 4).

6. Enoch (v. 24) translated a type of those who shall be translated at the coming of the Lord (cf. Hebrews xi. 5 ; 1 Thessalonians iv. 14-17 ; Revelation iii. 10).

7. The flood (chap. vii.) a type of the end of the age (cf. 2 Peter v. 4-12 ; Matthew xxiv. 37-39).

8. Melchizedek (xiv. 18) a type of Christ as the Great High Priest (Hebrews vi. 20 ; vii. 2, 23, 24).

9. Hagar (chap. xvi.) a type of bondage to law (Galatians iv. 24, 25).

10. Sarah (chap. xxi.) a type of grace, the "free-woman" and the heavenly Jerusalem (Galatians iv. 22-31).

11. Isaac (chaps. xxi.-xxv.), of the spiritual children of Abraham (Galatians iv. 28) ; of Christ as offering Himself freely to death (Genesis xxii. 1-10, cf. Philipians ii. 5-8) ; in his marriage, as being united with a Gentile bride (Genesis xxiv., cf. Ephesians iii.) ; as the promised seed in whom resided the blessings of the nations (Genesis xii. 3, cf. Galatians iii. 16).

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