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ANALYSIS  
OF THE  
BOOK OF GENESIS

*WITH NOTES*  
CRITICAL, HISTORICAL, AND GEOGRAPHICAL;  
ALSO  
*MAPS AND EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.*

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CHIEFLY INTENDED FOR  
CANDIDATES PREPARING FOR THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE LOCAL,  
AND THE COLLEGE OF PRECEPTORS' EXAMINATIONS.

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## P R E F A C E .

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IN studying Scripture History a difficulty is often experienced, especially by young students, in not being able to obtain a simple and connected view of the whole narrative, before entering upon the minute details. Being well aware of the existence of this difficulty, the endeavour has been made in the following work to give such a connected view of the narratives and incidents recorded in the Book of Genesis as will make the study interesting and profitable.

The best plan of study is to read the narrative portion of this Analysis first, and after this is done, to take the Bible and study the book, chapter by chapter, with the aid of the Notes, &c., as contained in the second portion of the Analysis. Clear views of the subject will thus be obtained. If the questions at the end of each chapter be carefully and fully answered in writing, this will be found to be an additional help.

We hope this Analysis, like those which have preceded it, will be reckoned useful, not only by those who are preparing for the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations and by Sunday School Teachers and Scholars, but by all who avail themselves of its aid in studying the earliest records of the Word of God.

T. B. J.

# GENESIS.

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IT is scarcely possible to conceive of an introduction more appropriate and sublime than the opening verse of the Word of God. It speaks calmly to us as a voice out of the depths of eternity, carrying our thoughts back to that time when God came forth in His mighty power and called the universe into existence.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”—Gen. i., 1.

The importance and directness of this declaration are very impressive. It speaks to us of the existence of God, the unity of His being, His eternity, Almighty power, and infinite superiority to all the things He has created. It thus sets aside the many errors of atheism which denies the existence and operations of God, of polytheism which represents a number of deities to have been engaged in the creation and government of the world, and of pantheism which confounds God with the things He has made. And the declaration solves problems which the highest intellects, unenlightened by divine revelation, have in vain endeavoured to solve. It teaches that the system of nature around us is not eternal, it had a ‘beginning,’—that it did not come forth of itself, was not produced by chance, and is not an endless chain of finite existences, but was **created by God**. The record of Scripture, therefore, carries us back to the remotest antiquity, to a time prior to the existence of all

seen objects and of all known events. It goes back to the first step in the march of time, to the first act of God in relation to human history. And the first aspect in which God is presented is as the Creator of the world, the almighty, all-wise, and benevolent Author of all things, the God of the spirits of all flesh. To the Hebrews, surrounded by nations who worshipped sun, moon, and stars, and even the lower animals, this was a grand and necessary revelation. There is one God, Himself the uncreated, sovereign, and unchanging One.

THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION.—There then follows an account of the order in which the different objects appeared. As a historical record of the various steps of creation, it is unparalleled for its simplicity, directness, boldness of conception, and truthfulness. It is thoroughly reliable and consistent, a bright and harmonious system of creation, whose truth the investigations of physical philosophy and geological science are confirming with rapidly accumulating clearness and force. In vastness, in fulness, in exactness of detail, in far-reaching insight, it is such a cosmogony, such a history of the order of creation as God only could have conceived and revealed. It is, indeed, as in the circumstances we should expect, **very concise**. It was not the intention of the writer to gratify curiosity, or to teach science, but to communicate religious truth to men; to furnish, not a revelation of nature, but a revelation of God. The material universe had an important connection with human history, and he evidently felt that he must say something about the formation of the house before he spoke of the tenant who was to inhabit it. He therefore gives a sketch of God's arrangement of **a dwelling place for man**,

but he does so very simply and shortly, only stating those things which he deemed necessary to the moral and spiritual purpose he had in view. He connects God with the world, which is the effect of His creative fiat, and then he assures us that there was a careful preparation of the earth for human habitation. But though the proper purpose of the writer was to unfold the religious history of mankind, and though he only sketches in large and graphic outlines the order of creation, it is astonishing how much light he sheds upon matters of chronology, astronomy, geology, ethnology, and other branches of science. In regard to the order of creation, the antiquity of man, the descent of the human race from a single pair, and other matters, he gives us information which might not otherwise have been obtained, and the tendency of scientific discovery in the various departments of geology, physiology, ethnology, and philology, as also of monumental and other antiquarian researches in Assyria, Egypt, and Palestine, is to vindicate its accuracy.

THE ORDER OF CREATION.—The universe did not assume its present form by a solitary and immediate exercise of divine power. The process of creation was **gradual**. The revelation begins amid the darkness of uncreated night. There was only a huge, shapeless, chaotic, tenantless mass :—

“The earth was without form and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.”—Gen. i., 2.

It gave no promise of that fair world of light, life, and beauty into which it was to be transformed. But “the Spirit of God,” the Eternal Source of all light, life, and joy, brooded, “moved upon the face of the waters,” and through

His quickening and vitalising influences all the manifold existences in close and connected sequence were evolved. At the voice of God the darkness became less dense; light, glimmering through the gloom, issued forth with growing fulness into the perfect day; chaos became order, and the world became gradually filled with plants and animals of every form and name. The Spirit, "dove-like, sat brooding on the vast abyss and made it pregnant."—*Milton*.

The various steps in the process of creation were as follows:—On the **first** day God created **light**, the purest and fairest of the creatures, "holy light! offspring of Heaven firstborn."—*Milton*. "And God said, Let there be light; and there was light." How simple, yet how sublime a statement—"Yehi aor, va-yehi aor," as it is in the original Hebrew! Longinus, a Roman poet, thought this statement as it was given in the Greek version of the Septuagint,—and in the original it is still finer,—incomparably sublime. Light is one of the most astonishing productions of the creative power of God. It is the grand medium by which all His other works are discovered. It is diffusive, free, useful, and welcome.

On the **second** day the **atmosphere** surrounding the earth was created, in order to "**divide the waters**," which seem previously to have occupied a considerable portion of space. Probably the expansive influence of heat caused the lighter parts of the watery vapours which overspread the earth's surface to ascend and become clouds while the heavier portion of the waters remained below. The separation between the waters on the earth and the clouds, which are the bearers of moisture through the sky, was to be a complete and permanent one.



On the **third** day the **waters** which extended far and wide under the whole heavens **were collected** into one vast body of water and restrained within proper limits, and the dry **land was raised** above the ocean's surface. When light and air, earth and water were so prepared and adjusted as to minister to the life of plants, **vegetation commenced**.

When clouds, mists, and vapours were all cleared away, on the **fourth** day there were unveiled in all their glory in the spacious sky, the **heavenly bodies**—the sun, the most glorious of all objects, and the chief source of light and heat to the earth; the moon with its pale and silvery beams, and the stars which gleam forth from the depths of illimitable space. The purpose of these luminaries is to concentrate and distribute the light already created, to afford means for calculating time and for navigation, and to subserve other useful and important ends in the various economy of human life. "He made the stars also." He who created and governs the stars, created and governs the earth. God rules to the utmost bounds of His great universe, and all things proclaim His divine power, wisdom and goodness.

On the **fifth** day of creation, the air and the **waters were filled** with their respective inhabitants, the sea swarmed with fish, and the **feathered tribes** winged their flight through "the open firmament of heaven." And as soon as life appeared provision was made for its continuance. "God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply." There was universal divine government and control, but there was now also the free and unceasing activity of living and sentient creatures.

On the **sixth** day a still further advance was made by the creation of the higher, or **land animals**, such as quadrupeds, insects, and reptiles. The creation of these living

creatures completed the preparation of the earth for the advent of **man**, the climax and consummation of the Creator's earthly works. But God proceeds to the creation of man with special deliberation, with feelings of expectation and delight :—

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness : and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”—Gen. i., 26.

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him ; male and female created he them.”—Gen. i., 27.

Man was not made after the likeness of any inferior creature but after God's own, in intelligence, in moral and spiritual being.

Thus through successive and ever-ascending stages, man, for whom the earth had been prepared as a habitation, was at length reached, and fish and fowl “and every living thing that moveth upon the earth,” were given to him, to own his dominion and to minister to his enjoyment. He received his Creator's benediction, was invested with a title of supremacy over all other creatures, a title of colonization and conquest, and was commanded to propagate and perpetuate his species.

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it ; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over everything that moveth upon the earth.”—Gen. i., 28.

Such is the account of the beginning of our world, of the successive and progressive stages of creation from lower to more highly organized forms of life, and of the creation of man with all his wonderful capacities and powers. At each stage of His work the Creator **expressed his satisfaction.**

He "saw that it was good"—good in itself, and adapted to the purpose for which it was designed. And when He reviewed the whole, and beheld man—the object of especial solicitude, wisdom and power—walking with countenance erect and manifesting resemblance to Himself, there was a feeling of peculiar satisfaction and joy. The finished work came up to the ideal standard, and fulfilled the design of God.

"And God saw everything that He had made, and, beheld, it was very good."—Gen. i., 31.

And elsewhere we read that over the completed work of creation "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job xxxviii., 7). That work culminated in man, the end and aim of all the preparatory courses through which the earth had passed, the model of animal perfection, a being of a new and superior order, who united the physical creation to a moral nature, and began the historic age of the world. Man, indeed, was created on the same "day" as the higher animals, reminding us that he was created with a body in common with them, composed of the same constituents as theirs, though more highly organised; but he possessed special affinity to God, and resembled Him in moral purity, in the possession of thought, reason, and moral sense, in immortality, and in his lordship over the lower creation. The vegetable and animal world seemed to be waiting for that rational and spiritual being who was to recognise, distinguish, and govern its different orders of being. And the truth that man was made **in the image of God** is the only rational basis of revelation, of the incarnation of Jesus Christ the Son of God, of his renewal by the power of God's Spirit, and of all the blessed hopes set before us in the Gospel.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE SABBATH.—After the work of creation was ended, God “rested,” not because he was wearied or fatigued (Isaiah xl, 28), not to intimate that He then ceased from working—for He has ever since been preserving and governing the world, and carrying out His purposes of providence and of grace—but to inform us that God then ceased from the exercise of special creative power, and that, having come forth from the secret of His pavilion to perform the great work of creation, He now retired to enjoy with divine complacency the contemplation of the grandeur, beauty, harmony, and adaptation to its own end, which characterised every part of His work. And, as He knew that the physical and mental powers of man would become exhausted by constant labour—that man would need time to reflect on his relations to God, on his present duty and future destiny—in infinite wisdom and mercy He arranged for this necessity by ordaining that one day in seven is to be kept free from the entanglements of business, and devoted to purposes of holy meditation, worship, and charity. He set the example of resting on the seventh day; “He blessed and sanctified it,” as the memorial of a completed creation, as a season for special fellowship and blessing. The first full day of man’s existence upon earth was a Sabbath day of holy meditation and delight, and the “remembrance” to keep holy the day of sacred rest is binding upon men of all nations and ages (Exodus xx., 11; xxxi., 15-17). The religious interests of individuals and of nations largely depend upon the observance of a seventh-day rest from worldly toil, and the employment of the day in the exercise of divine worship and the cultivation of the higher desires and affections of our nature.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH MAN AT HIS CREATION WAS PLACED.—God made ample provision for the gratification of the **sentient** nature of “the man whom he had formed.”

“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden. . . . And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. . . . And a river went out of Edea to water the garden.”—Gen. ii, 8-10.

We cannot exactly tell where Eden bloomed—though many fair spots have contended for the honour of being the primeval home of the human race—but, undoubtedly, it must have been a scene of wonderful beauty and fertility. It was a place specially selected and prepared by God for the reception of man, where all the parts of his complex nature could obtain full gratification. It was filled with everything that could supply his bodily wants and minister to his enjoyment. There were sights of beauty all around, sweet sounds of harmony and joy, luscious fruits, and crystal streams. It was specially well-watered, and its rivers are referred to with much minuteness. Hiddekel or Tigris, the Euphrates, the Pison—probably what is now called the Kizil-Ermak which flows into the Black Sea,—and the Gihon—probably the Araxes which flows into the Caspian Sea, flowed through it, parting off from one river source. The whole district was rich in gold and precious stones. This description points us to the highlands of Armenia in Asia Minor, and somewhere near the sources of these four rivers, as the site of the Garden of Eden. Here, then, man was placed. And while his sentient desires were gratified his **intellectual and moral** desires were also provided for. There was no disharmony in nature to pain his soul: the birds sang above, and the beasts gambolled playfully around, neither afraid of man nor of each other. His mental powers found ample scope in

studying the works of God in creation, and in close and loving fellowship with the pure and exalted inhabitants of heaven. God himself was accustomed to walk in the garden in the cool of the day, and man would experience unalloyed joy in His favour and fellowship.

Such was the age of innocence, "the golden age" which lingers in the traditions of all nations, and which can only again be enjoyed in the last days of universal reunion and amity.—Isai. xi., 6-9.

**THE WORK ADAM WAS TO PERFORM.**—Amid the fair scenes and delights of Eden man was not to be idle. God had set him an example of persevering and successful work, his powers needed exercise in useful labour, and by giving to all his faculties their proper exercise his happiness would be increased. In congenial **manual labour**, therefore, Adam employed his time and powers, and, in doing so, obtained stimulus and strength.

"And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."—Gen. ii., 15.

The work assigned to Adam involved the knowledge of many operations and of the properties of plants. He must have been specially endowed with skill and understanding, and with the knowledge of the materials necessary for the satisfactory performance of his work.

**THE TEST OF OBEDIENCE GIVEN BY GOD TO ADAM.**—The Garden of Eden, besides being an abode of innocence, of happiness, and of genial employment, was also a **place of probation**. Adam was under obligation to love and obey God, apart from any special enactment. But to the natural law, which was engraven upon his heart and conscience, a

precise and definite law was added. A test of obedience, which was clear, precise, and easy to be observed, was prescribed. He was to abstain from eating of the fruit of a particular tree in the garden. **Two trees** were selected by God, one to be the sign and pledge of the life to be enjoyed so long as the divine law was observed, and the other to be the tree of whose fruit Adam was not to eat. As often as he looked at the former, and ate of its fruit, he would be reminded of his duty and the reward of obedience, he would observe a sacrament which sealed to him spiritual and eternal life. The latter tree was called "**The tree of knowledge of good and evil,**" the not eating of which was the test of obedience, and would secure the knowledge and experience of all blessedness, whilst the eating of it, being an act of disobedience, would be followed by immediate and certain death. Such was the covenant made in Eden between God and Adam, as the head and representative of the human race. Life to himself and to all his posterity would be the reward of his loyalty and obedience, and death, spiritual and eternal, would be the just and certain punishment of disobedience.

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."  
—Gen. ii., 16, 17.

The importance of this command, and the influence it has had upon the fortunes of humanity, cannot be over-estimated. There was much divine wisdom and goodness in the arrangement. Instead of perilling the immortality of Adam and his posterity upon every single act of their lives, that arrangement suspended it upon the observance of one easily observed precept, and that for a limited period; and it

naturally aroused the vigilance of Adam, and concentrated his attention. The clearness, too, with which the consequences of disobedience were made known, the severity of the penalty, and the certainty of its infliction, were, doubtless, inducements to obedience. Thus the allegiance of the human race was brought to a **clear and simple issue**.

**THE NAMING OF THE CATTLE.**—God brought unto Adam every beast of the field and every fowl of the air, “to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.” It is evident that Adam, either by the communication to him of special knowledge, or by the enjoyment of special intuitive perceptions, had become acquainted with the more conspicuous qualities of the various tribes of animals by whom he was surrounded. For him there was no past, with its rich stores of experience, observation, and accumulated facts, and there does not seem to have been time for long and close observation on his own part before the name was given. Evidently, too, there was intimate alliance between man and the lower creatures. He was the lord and not the tyrant of the world. He was the protector and friend of all God’s creatures. For the support of his life God had assigned him “every herb bearing seed, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat”—(Gen. i., 29). As yet the animals were untouched for food.

**THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE.**—God had already recognised that man required “**an help-meet,**” but He delayed to supply that need in order to enhance the value of the gift He designed to bestow. As the animals presented themselves in pairs to be named, Adam would come to feel his



isolated condition, to perceive that the existing races of animated nature could not supply him with the companionship he yearned for. Something was required to consummate his happiness which the beauties of nature, the music of the groves, and the caresses of the irrational tribes could not supply. He had a soul full of affections, but there was no suitable earthly object upon which to place them, no rational being to whom he could express his thoughts and who could reciprocate his feelings. But in a remarkable and significant way God met this necessity of his nature. Man himself had been formed by divine power from the dust of the ground, but in order to impress upon his mind a sense of the intimate relationship subsisting between himself and his divinely appointed partner, woman was formed from "the rib which the Lord God had taken from man." Adam was made to fall into a trance or "deep sleep," and when he awoke he recognised her whom God had designed for his wife and who was wonderfully suited by bodily frame and mental constitution to fill the only want in his happy existence. Thus was formed a union peculiarly solemn and significant.—(Eph. v., 28-31). Thus in a way which manifested the essential oneness of husband and wife was instituted marriage, whose original law is opposed to polygamy, bigamy, and impurity of every form.

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

The two institutions of the **Sabbath** and of **Marriage** remain. They are the two chief sources of earthly comfort and happiness. Religious progress and all true prosperity are bound up in the observance of the one, and the continuance of the race and the well being of families and communities are bound up in the observance of the other. They

form the divinely appointed foundations for the social fabric.

The first man was called Adam either as referring to the ground—**adamah**—from which he was taken, or because he was the first and the founder of the human race. His wife was called woman—**isha**—“because she was taken out of man”—**ish**. And, as showing their innocence and mutual confidence, it is added—

“And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”—  
Gen. ii., 25.

**THE TEMPTATION, ITS RESULT, AND CONSEQUENCES.**—The transition from the second to the third chapter of the Book of Genesis is as sudden as it is painful. We would gladly pause for a time over the finished picture of Paradise, and contemplate the purity and bliss which the first parents of our race enjoyed. But without any pause or reflection, the inspired historian presses on, and the feeling is instinctively awakened in our minds by the opening words that a dark shadow is gathering by which Eden's glory will soon be eclipsed.

It is probable that a considerable time elapsed between the events narrated in this third chapter and those narrated in the chapter preceding. Sufficient time would doubtless be given to our first parents to enable them to become familiar with the conditions of life in Eden, to perform the work for which they had been placed in the pleasant garden, to make progress in their knowledge of God, of His works and will, and fully to appreciate the happiness they enjoyed.

But the sad reverse came all too soon. The age of perfect purity was very brief in view of the 930 years of Adam's own age and of the long milleniums which have followed.

God had sowed good seed in the field of this world, but an enemy came and sowed tares. "The enemy that sowed them is the devil."—Matt. xiii., 39. And this chapter tells us of the **Tempter**, the **Act of Temptation**, its sad **issue**, and its fearful **consequences**. The narrative is very simple and natural. Satan, in the form of a **serpent**, induced our first parents to disobey the commandment of God. He is the leader of those wicked angels who "kept not their first estate" (Jude vi., 2 Peter ii., 4), who, full of hatred to God, resolved to bring ruin upon the fair world He had created, and whose actions ever since have been malignant and mischievous (1 Pet. v., 8). God had made all things good and had created man holy and upright. But Satan resolved to destroy the harmony and happiness of the new creation, involve the human race in his own guilt and ruin, and bring sin and sorrow and death into the world. He carried out his purpose with wonderful malice, cunning, and subtlety. In the guise of a serpent—as being, perhaps, at that time more noble and fascinating, as well as "subtle," "than any beast of the field, which the Lord God had made,"—Satan appeared in the Garden of Eden. From the fact that "the serpent" possessed and abused the powers of reason and speech, and that Satan receives one of his titles from this transaction (Rev. xii., 9; xx., 2), we have no difficulty in recognising his presence and agency. Our first parents were innocent, without experience, habituated only to friendship and fidelity, and not prepared for malevolence and fraud. They knew truth only, and were ignorant of falsehood. Satan, therefore, very artfully whispered to Eve—"Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" It seems probable that Eve at this time was alone in unsuspecting security among the bowers of the

garden, while her husband, on whose stronger judgment and firmer will she might have leaned, was absent from her side. It is probable, too, that she was meditating on the strange prohibition which formed the test of obedience. And it was when such a fitting opportunity was presented that Satan, knowing that the woman was more open to his wiles than her husband, would act more from impulse than cool judgment, and would less easily repress her curiosity, insinuated words which suggested either that they had mistaken the meaning and intention of what God had commanded or that, if the command were rightly understood, God was unkind and jealous when He gave it. The first utterance of the tempter displayed subtlety as deep as that which appears in the choice of the victim, and in the timing of the assault. "Yea,"—as if speaking to the thought at that very moment in the mind of Eve,—“hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? There must be some mistake about the terms; they cannot be so absolute and peremptory as you have supposed; and, if God gave such an order, clearly He is unjust, unkind, and jealous to impose such a restraint on His intelligent creatures.” Note how artfully the prohibition is dwelt on and exaggerated, while the generosity of God in permitting our first parents to eat “of every tree of the garden,” one only excepted, is entirely kept out of view. When Eve heard this, she neither feared nor fled. Her entire simplicity and utter unconsciousness of any evil presence in the garden where perfect harmony and happiness had reigned, probably explains her conduct. Without thinking of the impropriety or strangeness of the suggestion she replied,—

“We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.”—Gen. iii., 2, 3.

Satan, however, boldly denies that such a consequence as death would follow. The punishment cannot be so severe, there must be some way of escape, God has more love to His creatures than to destroy them. Death is only threatened in order to restrain.

“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”—Gen. iii., 5.

Thus the tempter insinuated into the woman’s mind distrust of God, and a suspicion of God’s love, and then bluntly declared that jealousy was the real ground of the divine prohibition. God certainly knew the nature and terrible consequences of sin. Man knew good, had personal experience of it, but he could only know sin by experiment, by venturing on an act of sin, and by enduring the misery which sin entails. Man’s **knowledge of evil**, therefore, would be **fatal** to him. But the enlargement of experience held out to Eve formed a sufficient inducement, and she risked the consequences. To the temptations of Satan were added the sensible attractions of the beauty of the tree and the richness of the fruit. The safeguards of innocence had already been broken down, and when Eve looked on the tree and the tempting fruit, she was overpowered, “**took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.**”

“Her rash hand in evil hour

Forth-reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate!

Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat

Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe

That all was lost.”—*Milton*.

Adam, moved by the example and persuasions of his wife, ate also of the forbidden fruit, and so shared her transgression (1 Tim. ii., 14). Thus sin in principle and in act had been committed. There had been an act of deliberate

disobedience, an act which involved the spirit of distrust, unbelief, and ambition; and the sin was aggravated by the great goodness which God had shown, and by the fact, of which we can hardly suppose our first parents to have been ignorant, that upon their integrity depended the holiness and happiness of their descendants, while their failure involved not themselves alone, but all succeeding generations in the sweep of a terrible penalty. God had given to them the will and the power to obey or to disobey; it was possible for them to sin, but they were strong enough to stand if they had pleased. They had received timely warning of the consequences of disobedience, for God's threat was not a defiance or challenge, but a gracious revelation and warning. They chose to disobey, and the fearful consequences of disobedience speedily followed.

GOD'S EXAMINATION OF THE TRANSGRESSORS.—By listening to the tempter, Adam and Eve became sinful in nature and unhappy in condition. They lost both their goodness and their happiness. Conscience told them that they had done wrong, and “the eyes of them both were **opened**”—opened in a different way from what they had hoped or expected, opened to see “that they were naked.” They felt a sense of **shame**, of degradation, felt that they were unfit to be seen by each other, and they endeavoured to cover their nakedness with fig leaves. But while they felt a sense of shame they also felt a sense of **guilt**, and while they hid their nakedness from each other, they also endeavoured to hide their moral guilt from God. Hearing “the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day,” Adam and his wife tried to **hide** themselves among the trees of the garden! Verily, on the

day of eating they had died. The first act of sin had given birth to conscience, and had produced alienation from God, fear and hatred. It had separated man from God, the source of all true life and blessedness. Adam was wont to welcome God, but now God has to call for Adam. He was wont to meet Him with confidence, erect, trustful, but now he avoids Him and hides. Adam is lost. But God seeks him. He does not at once hurl against him the thunderbolts of righteous wrath, but seeks him. This is merciful, it is hopeful. With the searching, yearning question, "Adam, where art thou?" God would arouse the conscience of Adam, would convince him of his sin, would lead him to confession, would open up the way for the display of His own goodness and love. There is an expression of surprise, of upbraiding, of infinite pity and tenderness in this seeking voice of God. But it is the voice of inflexible justice also, and Adam is obliged to appear. Then follows a strange **judgment scene**, where the criminals are arraigned, questions are asked in order to elicit confession, and sentences of condemnation are passed. Adam has to confess that he felt himself naked, having eaten of the forbidden tree; and he was reluctant to appear on account of his nakedness. He appears to be sulky and evasive. He does not justify but he endeavours to excuse his sin. Each would transfer the burden of guilt to the other, Adam to Eve and Eve to the serpent. There is a display of deceit and guile and selfishness, and Adam seems even so ungenerous and impious as to charge God's best gift—"the woman whom thou gavest to be with me"—as the cause of the fault. But their apologies are after all avowals of guilt. They stand self-condemned, and they doubtless dread the terrible punishment which will now be inflicted.

THE JUDGMENTS PRONOUNCED UPON THE TRANSGRESSORS.—The sentences of condemnation and doom follow the same order as existed in the temptation and in the transgression. The serpent had first sinned in tempting the woman. He had been guilty of a base, unjust, and cruel action against the human race. He had been envious of man, full of resentment against God, and had displayed a spirit of pride, revenge, and malevolence. He first is summoned. The complaint Eve had made against the serpent is first attended to. Flushed with victory, the enemy had probably departed to congratulate the other fallen spirits on the success he had achieved in bringing ruin upon the human family, and introducing disharmony and sin into this fair world. But God calls him to receive his sentence of retribution. That sentence consists of two parts, the one having reference to the literal serpent which had been used as the instrument in the temptation, and the other to **Satan**, the real tempter. Serpents henceforth are to be cursed above all animals, are to creep along the ground and eat dust. Satan himself is to suffer defeat and degradation. There is to be a personal conflict between him and the woman who has been his dupe. The unholy alliance into which Eve had been beguiled is to be broken, and she is to hate, and escape from the power of her seducer. There is also to be a general conflict between the two seeds of Satan and the woman. The seed of Satan refers to wicked men who do his bidding and imitate his example (Matt. xxiii., 33; 1 John iii., 8.), and who are constantly opposing, and, by their example and temptations, endeavouring to effect the ruin of good men. By them Satan endeavours to extend and perpetuate the mischief he began. There is to be an unceasing conflict between the righteous and the wicked. But, and this is still more



important, there is to be a particular and special conflict between Satan himself and one of the woman's descendants, in which his head should be bruised. The destroyer of others is to be himself destroyed, and that by one of the very race he has endeavoured to ruin.

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."—Gen.iii., 15.

God puts enmity, for it is not entertained naturally. There can be no peace, or comfort, or joy, for men until they are brought to hate and forsake sin and Satan. The "putting" of this enmity and the intimation of Satan's defeat are the first words of the gospel of mercy. They form the **Protevangelium**, the first tidings of grace and deliverance. How good and gracious on the part of God to curse the great adversary and foretell his defeat before He pronounced upon the other trembling criminals the sentence which their disobedience had provoked!

**Eve** is next addressed. The original sentence of death is to remain, for the law in that respect is unchangeable, and, to remind her of her guilt and her mortality, she is henceforth to endure the dangers and the sufferings which now accompany child-bearing, and is to live in a state of inferiority and subjection to her husband. Then **Adam** is addressed. The ground is cursed, and he is condemned to hard and painful labour in wringing from it the food he needs for the support of life, and he shall be at all times liable to the corruption of death. "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." God mercifully condescended to clothe Adam and his wife with "coats of skin," but He expelled them from the fair and fertile garden of Eden, placing "at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life."

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ACCOUNT OF THE FALL.—Such is the account of the Fall and its sad results. It is very concise, but very suggestive. It is the record of the darkest and most disastrous event that ever occurred in the history of the world, and which is the primal source of all disaster, sorrow, and death; and much of the information it contains is of transcendent importance and cannot be obtained elsewhere. That this record in its essential features is strictly historical, that the events recorded actually occurred, should not be doubted. The style is historical, the character of the whole book is historical, the events narrated are confirmed by all the other statements of the Bible, are repeatedly alluded to by Jesus and His apostles, and, as regards the present circumstances of the human race, are consistent with the deductions of reason, the records of history, and the facts of everyday experience. How important then that we should have a clear and accurate view of the events narrated.

We know that the world cannot now be as a good and holy God created it—as it was when, bending over a freshly-formed world and concentrating His looks of complacency and joy upon man, the reflection of Himself, God pronounced it all very good. We see that the material world must have undergone a change, for in many ways it seems “cursed;” we see that the body of man must have undergone a change, for it is now the seat of disease and suffering, dies and comes to corruption; we see that the soul of man must have undergone a change, for it does not bear unblurred the image of its Creator, is alienated from God, and is full of unholy dispositions and desires. And when we seek for an explanation of all this, we turn with confidence to the inspired account of the Fall, and find there the solution of the mystery. It is

some satisfaction to know that our earth was once the abode of innocence and purity, that sin entered the world from without, not springing self-evolved from the human heart, but being introduced by Satan, the enemy of God and of mankind; to possess an account of the loss of our original position and character which is consistent with the honour of God and the principles of His moral government, and which sufficiently explains why the history of our race has been very much a history of war, wrong and oppression, why so much suffering and misery abound, and why death is universal. We have ample evidence around that we are now in a **state of sin and degradation**, and we have many memorials and frequent reminders of our guilt.

To our first parents the immediate consequences of their sin must have been specially distressing. They had enjoyed a state of perfect purity and happiness, where everything that could occasion fear and trouble was absent, and everything that could give complete and unalloyed happiness was present. They would always carry with them the consciousness that their own disobedience had produced the terrible change. Angels could no longer own them as friends and fellow-servants. Their labour had formerly been congenial, easy and productive, but now it was unpleasant, toilsome, unproductive, and continuous. In order to become "as gods knowing good and evil," they had disobeyed the divine command, and by so doing had forfeited the divine favour and blessing; and now, lest in the vain hope of reversing the sentence or of avoiding the punishment of guilt, in the vain hope of living for ever, they should endeavour to eat "of the tree of life," the sign and symbol of immortality, they are sternly ejected from the garden "**to till the ground from whence**" the man was taken. And means were taken

effectually to guard the entrance of the garden and prevent return. Such is the beginning of man's tragical career upon earth. And all men now bear the penalties of that first transgression, being doomed to live in a world blighted by a curse, being placed for the most part under severe conditions of toil and discipline, subjected all of them to the law of mortality, and inheriting a corrupt and depraved nature. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v., 12.)

It is very important, however, to notice that the picture is not all dark. Rays of comfort and hope illumine it, and to some extent dispel the gloom. It concerns the honour of God that His adversary do not secure a complete and final triumph over the human race. The divine purposes in creating the world are not to be frustrated. Man is to be spared. There is to be a period of forbearance and long-suffering, and God will more signally take glory to Himself by the punishment of the tempter. Though, therefore, Adam might with justice not only have been driven from Eden, but also hurled into an abyss of woe, banished from all that is holy to all that is hopeless, he is spared. And he is not sent forth to toil without alleviation, or to suffer misery that has no end. He is sent forth cheered with the assurance of divine mercy and compassion, with proofs of the divine favour, and with the promise of a great deliverance. Sin has entered the world, but the reign of grace has also commenced. Adam's wife is now to be **Chavah**—Life. She is to be the mother of living children; the race is to be prolonged, and the promised "**seed**" is to come, the seed that is to bruise the serpent's head.

The **Fall** of man is the **turning point of human history**. The account given of it forms the basis of the system of religion which follows—is the foundation of the whole superstructure. The subsequent history of the world takes its form from the sad catastrophe which occurred at the beginning of that history, and Christianity as a remedial system, a religion of redemption, is based upon the historical character of the Fall.

And though perhaps our first parents may have felt the promise of a **Deliverer** to be obscure in its terms, yet they must have known that Satan's defeat would be their deliverance. To us, looking back upon the curse pronounced upon the great enemy, and turning upon it the light of fuller prophecy, of Mosaic type, of actual fulfilment in the Incarnation, life and death of Jesus Christ, there is disclosed in it the germ of all prophecy, the basis of revealed religion, a clear intimation of the coming and work of Him who "was made of a woman," who with perfect firmness and invincible logic repelled the specious arguments of Satan when he tried his arts upon Him (Matt. iv., 1-10), who upon the cross "having spoiled principalities and powers, made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. ii., 15), and who, as the second Adam, the second head and representative of the human race, has opened the way for the removal of sin and all its consequences (1 Cor. xv., 45-49), and for the restoration of repentant and believing men to a better than earthly paradise. (Rev. xxii.)

We now come to the long period which elapsed between the **Fall** and the **Flood**, a period of at least sixteen centuries,

but which is very briefly described in the next five chapters of Genesis. It is still apparent that the history is very fragmentary, and alas ! much of it is very sad, exhibiting the depravity of man, and the nature of that unceasing conflict between good and evil, which the Fall introduced. Our first parents had been exiled from Eden, but, as we have seen, they entered on their experiences of the labours and sorrows of life, cheered with the assurance of Divine forgiveness and with the promise of a great Deliverer. And we cherish the belief that He who had provided for their defence and comfort by clothing them with coats of skins, still further soothed their grief and imparted peace to their souls. There is good ground for the opinion that they were not driven to a great distance from Eden, but were permitted to worship and to serve God within sight of it, and to await the fulfilment of the divine purposes and promises with steadfast faith and hope. But only one incident in the long space of at least one hundred and twenty years is recorded.

THE BIRTH OF CAIN AND ABEL.—Not long after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden, their sons **Cain** and **Abel** were born. It must have been with feelings of mingled astonishment, gratitude, and joy that the first child born into the world was seen. Eve called him Cain, which means possession or acquisition, and said "I have gotten a man from the Lord," by the Lord's help, through the Lord's blessing. She had now something to wean her mind from her great sorrow, something to care for and love ; and, as she would no doubt be eagerly anticipating the fulfilment of the divine promise, when her seed should triumph over the destroyer of their happiness, something which would be to her a proof and pledge of the appearance of the Deliverer in

due time. Shortly afterwards his brother Abel was born. When Cain and Abel grew up, the former became a farmer, "a tiller of the ground," and the latter a shepherd, "a keeper of sheep." Their parents trained them to habits of active labour, and the one adopted an agricultural, the other a pastoral occupation. Their parents also trained them to worship God, to acknowledge and express their gratitude to Him, and to offer sacrifice. Though men had sinned, God had not entirely cast them off, but permitted them to pray to Him, and taught them how to erect a heap of stones or an altar, to put on the altar some wood and a lamb, and, binding the lamb to the altar, to kill it and burn it with fire. It is evident that God prescribed the way in which He desired sinful men to approach Him, a way fitted to suggest their own sinfulness and the need of an atoning sacrifice. God had been disobeyed, but He had not been disowned. Satan had tempted men to disbelieve His word and to sin against Him, but he had not yet succeeded in making them infidels or idolaters. And it is pleasing to find that Cain and Abel were taught to worship God, and to bring an offering when they appeared before Him. But though they worshipped the same God, expressed their gratitude to God by their offerings, and desired to enjoy his acceptance and favour, there was a great difference in the character, in the principles and dispositions of the two brothers.

**THE OFFERINGS OF CAIN AND ABEL.**—The difference in the principles of the two brothers was manifested in their mode of worship. On a particular occasion, when they came to worship God, Cain "brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord," while "Abel brought of the **firstlings of his flock and of the fat** thereof." The offerings looked

very appropriate, each bringing the offering that seemed to accord with his particular occupation. But Cain's was not accepted. It might be an acknowledgment of God's goodness and of his own gratitude, but it had no reference to his sinful condition and the requirement of God; it did not express a sense of guilt or of trust in God's atoning mercy. But Abel, believing God's word and promise, and in obedience to God's commandment, with humility, contrition, and faith, laid a bleeding lamb on the altar, and connecting it, perhaps, though dimly, with the coming "**seed of the woman,**" who by the sacrifice of His life would open up a way for sinful man's acceptance with God, looked for pardon and salvation. Cain's was only a thank-offering; Abel's was **a sin-offering**, Cain, in the sacrifice of his property, expressed homage and gratitude; Abel, in the sacrifice of life as well as of property, expressed homage and gratitude, and faith too. Cain reasoned when he should have believed; he kept back from God the sacrifice that had been enjoined, imagining that the fruits of the ground would do as well as bleeding victims, and so he manifested pride and self-righteousness, and offered will-worship, a form of worship of his own devising. It might seem cruel and unnatural to shed the blood of innocent creatures, it might be difficult to believe that God would delight in blood or in the fat of slain beasts, or would transfer the sins of the sacrificer to his sacrifice; but it is, and always has been, the principle of God's moral government that "without shedding of blood is no remission" of sin (Heb. ix., 22), and Jesus Christ was "the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world," animal sacrifice having been commanded by God in order to keep in remembrance and to foreshadow His great atoning sacrifice. Cain therefore should have worshipped God in His own appointed way. Not having done so,



"The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect."—Gen. iv., 4, 5.

Abel had **faith** and Cain had not. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." (Heb. xi. 4.) In some visible way, perhaps by fire from heaven consuming the sacrifice on the altar, as afterwards when Aaron offered in the tabernacle, Solomon in the temple, and Elijah on Carmel, God testified his approval of Abel's offering. It is important to notice, too, that Abel's person was accepted and then his offering, that the person of Cain was not accepted, and therefore his offering was not. The acceptance or rejection of an offering depends upon the spirit of the worshipper and the principles by which he is actuated. Cain disregarded the hope as well as the necessity of an atonement, and he was probably of a proud, sullen disposition, and would not be beholden to his brother for one of his flock.

**GOD'S EXPOSTULATION WITH CAIN.**—Instead of being humbled and ashamed on account of God's rejection of himself and of his sacrifice, Cain was "**very wroth**," he conceived hard thoughts of God and vindictive feelings towards his brother. Envy, jealousy, and hatred of Abel took possession of his mind. If the sacrifices were offered, as is probable, at a solemn assembly and in presence of a large company of worshippers,—for during the 120 or 130 years between the births of Cain and Abel and this incident the population of the world must have greatly increased,—Cain would reckon the rejection of his sacrifice a public affront, which wounded his pride and made him discontented and revengeful. But God condescended to reason and remonstrate with him. He pointed out the folly of such conduct, assured him that no

worship would be rejected that was offered in sincerity, and pointed out to him the essential principles according to which acceptable services could be rendered. God was not partial in His judgment, and if the offering of Cain was not as acceptable as that of his brother the fault was his own.

**THE MURDER OF ABEL.**—Cain unfortunately did not take warning by what God had said to him. For a time he may have dissembled his hatred, but the jealousy and dislike at last broke out into a flame, angry thoughts led to angry looks, to angry words, and to murderous blows. The evil temper had been indulged, and the natural result was “debate, deceit, murder.” Having invited his brother to the field (as the Septuagint and other versions inform us) he “talked with” him—perhaps freely and familiarly, in order to allay suspicion, or, it may be, in angry controversy, and then with sure though sudden aim and stroke “he rose up against Abel his brother and **slew him.**” Possibly he did not premeditate or contemplate his death, the death of a man not yet being numbered among human experiences, though the more common opinion prevails that the murder was not the effect of sudden wrath, but of premeditation and design. If the latter, the treachery of Cain increased his guilt as a fratricide. We cannot be wrong in supposing that he was surprised and even grieved when he saw the consequences of his own action. It was an awful crime, an awful proof of the depth of depravity into which the Fall had brought men, and of what evil temper may lead to when indulged. “We should love one another. Not as Cain who was of that wicked one and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother’s righteous” (1 John iii. 12).

GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON CAIN.—Abel had worshipped God in humility and faith, but his righteous character and acceptable sacrifice had brought upon him scorn and hatred, and he had suffered death from his brother's hand. Abel, whom we might expect to be shielded from harm, in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence is slain while the murderer lives. But Abel has his **reward**. He is the first of human kind to enter God's holy kingdom, the first pardoned sinner, who stands in His presence in heaven, the first trophy of redeeming love and the first of the numerous and noble army of martyrs, who have sealed their testimony with their blood. How the angels must have wondered as they beheld this new arrival and listened to his "new song of praise." And Cain was punished. His sin soon found him out. God is just, and sooner or later must punish every sin. He called Cain to account for this foul murder, asking him, "Where is Abel thy brother?" Cain, though he knew that he had left Abel lying crushed on the ground beneath his murderous blow, impiously answered the Omniscient One, "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" He forgot that he was bound as a man to protect his fellow man, and that Abel as his brother had especial claims upon his care and affection. He did not know that God saw the wicked deed he had committed, and that "the voice of his brother's blood was crying unto Him from the ground." Abel's voice had been silenced, but the blood which had been shed cried aloud for vengeance. And now God tells Cain that the very earth which had drunk up the blood of his murdered brother was become the instrument of inflicting the punishment he merited:—

"When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength: a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."—Gen. iv., 12.

Cain felt that he deserved this punishment, but, apparently ignorant of the divine method of forgiveness, he was overwhelmed by its magnitude—"My punishment is greater than I can bear." He felt it a hardship to be banished from the place where God's favour was peculiarly manifested, and from the society of friends, and to be constantly exposed to vengeance from his fellowman. God, however had Himself resolved to revenge the blood of Abel, and therefore whosoever slew Cain would be far more severely punished than Cain had been,—“vengeance shall be taken on him, seven-fold.” And God gave Cain a special sign or token by which the truth of the promise respecting his personal safety was ratified. Thus the murderer was permitted to live, in order to be a living warning to others of the direful effects of giving way to malignant passions. He dragged out a miserable existence, tormented by the fierce stings of a guilty conscience, pursued by bitter recollections of the past and filled with anxious forebodings when he looked forward to the future. He “went out **from the presence of the Lord,**”—left the place where the altar of God was erected and visible tokens of the Divine presence and favour were enjoyed, and where his parents lived and worshipped. It was his desire to get as far as possible from the presence of God. And so, accompanied by his wife who, with a true woman's love which could not be quenched by the fearful crime of which her husband had been guilty, clung to him still, he journeyed eastward from Eden and dwelt in the land of **Nod**,—*i.e.* wandering, from the circumstance of Cain dwelling there. In Nod Cain built a city or fortified settlement and became the progenitor and head of a powerful and skilful, but worldly and godless race.

Before leaving the record of this sad and fearful crime, our thoughts and sympathies naturally turn to the first parents of our race. Many blessings had been showered down upon them, and perhaps they were beginning to think that God was not to punish sin so severely as He had threatened, and as it deserved. But the blow came suddenly and unexpectedly—not on themselves indeed, but on the best and holiest of their children. The two brothers had been seen to worship God together, and yet now one is dead and the other is his murderer. Scripture is silent regarding their perplexity, terror, anguish, and self-reproach, as they bent over the corpse of Abel. Their emotions can be more readily imagined than described. But they had ample experience in this event of the bitter consequences of their sin.

THE DESCENDANTS OF CAIN.—In Nod Cain had a son, whom he called **Enoch**, *i.e.*, dedication, and who became the ancestor of an illustrious family. Finding the ground laden in their case with a double curse, which did not encourage them to prosecute agricultural pursuits, Cain's descendants applied themselves to arts and manufactures, and became distinguished for their diligence and success. The arts of civilization were cultivated and cherished. **Jabal** occupied himself with those labours of husbandry which were adapted to meet the wants of a large population, and, moving about as he required for purposes of pasturage, dwelling in a moveable tent, he initiated migration, commerce, adventure—the system of nomadic life so prevalent in the Eastern countries. **Jubal** excelled in making musical instruments, both string and wind, compelling them to express his ideas and feelings. **Tubal-Cain** was a worker

in metals, "an instructor of every artificer in brass and metals." But if Cain's descendants were distinguished for inventive genius and energy in worldly pursuits, they were no less distinguished for their wickedness. **Lamech's** family was eminent in art, manufacture, poetry, and music; but polygamy, injustice, murder, and impiety, prevailed.

**THE DESCENDANTS OF SETH.**—Probably Adam and Eve had many other children whose names are not preserved. But when the first pair were 130 years old **Seth** was born. He was a like-minded successor to Abel, whom Cain slew; one who walked by faith, felt his guilt in the sight of God, and in his sacrifices expressed his reliance on the promised mercy of God. The descendants of Seth—the **Sethites**, as they may be called, in opposition to the **Cainites**—were less ardent in worldly pursuits, but many of them were eminent for their piety. "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." They were on the side of God and of righteousness. They separated themselves from their ungodly associates in the world, and instituted social and domestic worship.

In the line of Seth was **Enoch**, who walked with God and was translated without dying; **Methuselah**, who lived till he was 969 years of age—the longest life recorded; and **Noah**, who, from amid abounding wickedness, was selected to build the ark and to become the second father of mankind. To the first-mentioned of these attention is now to be turned.

**ENOCH AND HIS TIMES.**—In surveying the page of sacred history we find that a very large proportion of the early race of mankind is passed over in silence, and that of those whose names are recorded almost the only information given

us is that they lived, begat sons and daughters, and died. The history between the Fall and the Flood is exceedingly concise, and we know little of the greatness or of the glory of the antediluvian world. The little that is preserved, however, is very important and suggestive. We have ample evidence that the generations which lived immediately after the Fall were sinful and depraved, and that the corrupt nature which they transmitted developed with startling rapidity into the worst and most malignant forms of crime. And the ever-recurring burden "**and he died**" forcibly reminds us of the consequences of sin, and of the fact that death is now the destiny of our race. At the time of Enoch, men had become depraved in mind and manners, iniquity abounded, and though the cup of iniquity was not yet full, and the forbearance of God not yet exhausted, the torrent of ungodliness was spreading and deepening, and fast rushing to that state of demoralisation which in three generations more, in the days of his grandson Noah, brought in the flood on the world of the ungodly.

It may seem strange that such a condition of wickedness was possible while the world was yet young and the memory of the Fall was fresh and strong; while, too, many generations were contemporaries of Adam, the living witness of primeval bliss and of the sad consequences of disobedience. But it must be remembered that the expulsion of Cain from the family circle involved the separation of his children from good influences, and that they grew up an ungodly race. It must be remembered that the two branches of the original family did not remain strangers to each other, but intermarried, and that the sons of Seth, instead of reclaiming their wives, were corrupted by them. Thus degeneracy

spread; each generation was worse than the preceding; so that when the flood came it swept all away, except Noah and a few of his family, by whom the earth might again be peopled.

As you read the long list of names that have been preserved, you here and there come upon one that is signalised as an object of special interest, a star of the first magnitude in the spiritual firmament, whose lustre challenges admiration. **Enoch** is one of those names. We have only a few expressions regarding him, but these are very felicitous and instructive. He is singled out from the men of his day as an illustrious exception to the prevailing ungodliness by which he was surrounded. "**Enoch walked with God.**" As two cannot walk together except they be agreed, this phrase teaches us that Enoch must have been reconciled to God, and now lived under a realising sense of His presence, and rejoiced in a sense of His favour and protection. It teaches us that in this calm, steady, continuous, and progressive "walk" Enoch lived a life of fellowship with God, meditating on that portion of God's revealed will which he possessed, imperfect though it was, observing His ordinances, and by believing prayer seeking His blessing. Such being the habitual tenour of Enoch's life, we cannot be surprised to learn that he was a marked man, the influences of Cain's family, principles, and practices being now predominant.

But Enoch was distinguished not only by the holiness of his life, but also by the boldness and fidelity with which he lifted up his voice against the ungodliness around him. He was not only a man of piety, but also a faithful preacher of righteousness.



“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude, 14, 15).

Enoch's faithful warnings, however, were neglected. His contemporaries, unrestrained and unchecked by the thought of future reckoning and future vengeance, went on in sin.

It is interesting, too, to note the grand principle of Enoch's life as stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It was his “faith” which animated and sustained him,—his belief in God's existence, presence and power, his belief in a future life, a final judgment, and a glorious recompense to all who love and serve God; his belief in the promised Saviour from sin and death. This faith was not shaken by the wickedness around him, nor by the anxiety he would feel in rearing sons and daughters in such untoward circumstances. It continued firm and unmoved till the close of his earthly life.

Enoch was distinguished for the life he led in the world. He was also distinguished for the manner of his departure out of it. His life and labours were rewarded by a **testimony** and by a **translation**,—by the noble testimony that “he pleased God,” and that he fulfilled the great end of his being by living to God's glory and praise, and by being removed from earth without passing through the dark avenue of the grave.

“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death: and was not found because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”—Hebrews xi., 5.

“He was not; for God took him.” The sentence of death had till now been invariably executed. “By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin.” But the piety of Enoch was rewarded when the ordinary law of mortality was

suspended, when suddenly his body was divested of all corruption to fit him for associating with the heavenly inhabitants and sharing in their joys, when he was borne visibly to glory. He was thus the first from among men to be snatched entirely from Satan's grasp, the first to appear perfect in soul and body before the throne of God, one of two solitary cases (see 2 Kings ii., 11) to escape the fears and pains of dissolution. And it is probable that God interposed to save and reward His servant when the ungovernable fury of the ungodly around him excited them to deeds of violence and bloodshed. Undoubted evidence would thus be furnished regarding a future state and future glory which was well fitted to reprove and convince the wicked, and to remove doubts and harassing suspicions from the minds of the godly. The translation of Enoch was a type of the more glorious ascension of Jesus, and an earnest of the time when in the experience of all believers "mortality shall be swallowed up of life."

NOAH AND HIS TIMES.—The next four chapters of Genesis give us a record of the **Deluge** and of the events which preceded and followed. The ever increasing torrent of ungodliness was not stayed by the faithful rebukes and teachings of Enoch, and three generations afterwards "all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth," "the earth was filled with violence," "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. vi., 5.) The extreme corruption which overspread the world is here referred to in order to account for the conduct of the Almighty in destroying mankind by the Flood. The causes which led to this state of corruption were:—

the natural tendency to sin in human nature which increased and spread, the neglect of the public worship of God, especially by descendants of Cain, and intermarriages betwixt the descendants of Cain and the descendants of Seth, Enos, and the other pious patriarchs who were separated from the posterity of Cain and formed the visible church. Pride, arising from bodily strength and mental endowments, and the extraordinary longevity which prevailed, and which had a tendency to cause men to set aside thoughts of death and judgment, also helped to this state. When men followed their own inclinations, without regard to the religious character of their wives, the worldly connection naturally led to worldly conformity, and the church and the world became intermingled, and almost indistinguishable. And the progress of corruption increased as the tide of population rolled on. The sin and wickedness of the old world therefore brought on the Deluge. God's spirit was grieved and would soon be withdrawn. But as God does not strike without a cause, neither does He strike without giving ample warning. This was given through **Noah**.

In every age God has had a seed to serve Him. He has not left Himself without a witness, and in the midst of this wide spread corruption, Noah, the second son of Lamech, and the grandson of Methuselah, "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Noah was "a just man and perfect in his generations, and," like Enoch, Noah "walked with God." As God never mingles the righteous and the wicked in one indiscriminating punishment, the same moral reasons which moved Him to destroy the rest of mankind moved Him to preserve Noah and his family, and so, against

the dark background, the bright features of His mercy and favour prominently appear in His dealings with Noah.

The events which preceded the Flood are very important. God gave Noah minute instructions for building an ark by which himself and his family might be preserved, and Noah exactly complied with these instructions. But during the long period in which Noah was building the ark he was a "preacher of righteousness," (2 Peter ii., 5), and for 120 years he continued to warn, rebuke, and exhort his fellow-sinners, and to entreat them to repent and make preparation against the day of divine wrath. All this time, too, he went on from day to day building his ark. It was a laborious, costly and tedious work. And Noah's days of trustful toil were embittered by the ridicule and sneers of his neighbours, who doubtless thought him deluded and mad. But he apprehended the truth of the coming Deluge, he believed that earth would soon be no place of safety, but that the fragile ark which God had ordered him to construct would prove amid the raging elements a refuge and a stronghold for himself and his family. In believing this, Noah overcame a natural and deeply-rooted unbelief in menaced evil. Experience had not known such a catastrophe before; unbelief would inquire by what operation of causes such a flood could be produced, and would hint that it was impossible. But, "by faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Heb. xi., 7.) At length every plank in the ark is laid, it is daubed within and without with pitch, ample provision being made for health and comfort, and for the

sustenance of himself and of the animals which are to be with him. Then, in obedience to the divine command, Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives, enter the ark. Doubtless the mockery of their neighbours increased as they did so. The sun was as bright in the heavens as ever, the sea had uttered no angry word, the world had gone on as usual. There were no portentous harbingers to occasion alarm. And, even if such a deluge did come, would the ark, so massive and unwieldy, so heavily laden, with so few to manage it, serve its intended purpose, and ride securely over the waters that were to overwhelm the world? But Noah banished every suggestion of unbelief, every doubt and difficulty from his mind, and went into the ark. He was then 600 years old. God "shut him in," in order to secure his safety, and to shut out all others whose time given for repentance had been only a time of continued ungodliness, whose day of grace was now ended. Seven days afterwards all "the **fountains of the great deep were broken up**, and the windows of heaven were opened; and the rain was upon the earth **forty days and forty nights.**" Noah had looked for the last time upon many well-known faces, and would even now think anxiously of their danger. But the deluge increases; the dwellings become flooded; the temples and palaces sink in ruins; the lofty mountains up which they toil only afford a watery grave. There are no mockers now; the jest and the bravery of unbelief cease; and amid the shrieks and groans of the inhabitants and the dashing fury of the floods, the judgment which God had announced is executed. All the giants united cannot stop the current, and all the refuges to which they fled are destroyed. The next time Noah sees the dry earth it will be a waste and silent solitude. The inhabitants had

neglected his warning voice, and went on "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away." (Matt. xxiv., 38.)

How important is it that we give heed to the divine warnings and instructions, and flee for refuge from the storms of God's righteous wrath to Jesus Christ, the Ark of God's devising and preparing to save us from sin and death !

For 150 days the waters prevailed upon the earth, and then they began to abate. Every living creature save those in the ark had been drowned ; the earth had for a time, at least, been purified from its uncleanness ; the greatness of the divine displeasure against human sin had been signally manifested, and the faith and patience of Noah had been signally exercised. Then God, who had never during these five months ceased to think of His faithful servant Noah, "made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged." (Gen. viii., 1.) And He gently settled the ark, containing now the only representatives of the human race upon earth.

**THE WATERS ASSUAGE.**—The waters prevailed upon the earth about **five months**, and then they began to abate. As all life would be destroyed long before that time, this must have been in order to exercise the faith and patience of Noah, and to manifest the greatness of God's displeasure against sin. The whole earth was to be thoroughly purified. At length "God made a wind to pass over the earth" to drive away the rain and dry the ground, and then the waters began to subside. For about five months more—"150 days"—they continued to abate, and at the end of the seventh month of

the duration of the flood the ark rested "upon the mountains of Ararat." On the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible, but nearly four months more elapsed before Noah received the divine command to leave the ark. At four different times—a week intervening between each time—Noah endeavoured to obtain the much-desired information regarding the state of the earth. A raven which he sent forth did not return to him. Flying high, as it naturally does, it obtained abundance of food upon the surface of the waters. A dove was sent forth, which on the first occasion could find no "rest for the sole of her foot," proving that the lower regions of the earth were not yet clear; on the second occasion returned with an "olive leaf pluckt off," proving that the waters were now very low; and on the third occasion returned no more, proving that the waters were gone. When the ground was thoroughly dry, about six weeks after this, Noah was commanded to leave the ark.

NOAH LEAVES THE ARK.—With mingled joy and awe Noah and his family left the ark. After twelve months of confinement and anxiety they would be pleased to tread again the solid ground, and they would be filled with emotions of deepest gratitude for their preservation. But what a scene of solitude and desolation met their gaze! Whether or no the flood had been universal, in the sense of covering the entire extent of earth's surface, it had clearly been universal so far as the race of man was concerned. When the mountain peaks emerged from beneath the waters they looked out upon a race of perished men, and the four patriarchs with their wives alone survived. In the desolation and ruin which abounded, explicit testimony is borne to the heinousness of sin and the determination of God to punish it.

NOAH'S SACRIFICE AND ITS ACCEPTANCE.—Noah's first work was to **erect an altar** and **offer sacrifices**. He had much to do—a house to provide for himself, folds and food for his cattle, and other important matters to attend to—but if ever occasion existed for the exercise of grateful and adoring sentiments this was one. Noah felt this, and gave fitting expression to his deep penitence, his faith in the propitious character of God, his gratitude and his devotedness. It may seem strange that Noah should slay animals so miraculously preserved and now so much needed, but his gratitude was great, and feeling that he required an expiatory sacrifice, his first employ was an act of worship. Doubtless in the dying victims and flowing blood, he saw prefigured the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.

The ardent faith and devout feelings of Noah which ascended to heaven with the smoke of his sacrifice were highly acceptable to God, were as the odour of incense. “The Lord smelled a sweet savour,” and resolved that so long as the present economy of Providence existed, he would not again arrest the course of nature, nor universally destroy human life. Altars and burnt-offerings were connected with the system of religious worship which prevailed before the flood. God accepted from guilty man an atoning substitute, and the victims offered in sacrifice prefigured Him who “gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.” The remembrance of this truth helps to explain the remarkable reason assigned in the text for the divine resolution referred to. “I will not again curse the ground any more, for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.”



The flood had washed away the wicked inhabitants of the earth, but it could not wash away the wickedness itself. It might drown the sinners, but it could not drown the sin, and the favoured and preserved family of Noah was a family of sinners still. The tree of humanity had been cut down to the root, and only one family preserved, but evil was not uprooted. For purposes of reformation the flood had failed. And now, as perfect conduct is not to be expected, and as clearly the world could not continue if every sin were visited with immediate destruction, God resolves, out of respect to that better Sacrifice yet to be offered, and which the sacrifice of Noah prefigured, to exercise forbearance, and, notwithstanding human sinfulness and provocation, to permit neither a universal flood nor a universal famine to destroy the race during all the remainder of earth's appointed days. A dispensation of forbearance and grace for a distinct purpose, and for a definite period, is now to commence.

The resolution thus formed by the Lord "in his heart" was graciously communicated to Noah. There had been a serious break in the continuity of life and history of the world, and men might naturally ask on what lines and laws the new world was to move. The catastrophe which had overwhelmed the world might again at any time occur. But a new revelation was given to assure men of safety. Noah held the position of a second representative father of the human race; God renewed to him the blessings given to Adam, the first father, and at the same time enacted salutary laws to preserve the world from a recurrence of universal violence and disorder. Definite arrangements were appointed for the preservation of life (Gen. ix., 1-7), and Noah received in the form of a covenant a promise and a pledge that God would not again destroy the world by a

flood (Gen. ix., 8-17). If Noah feared that the ravages of wild beasts or the violence of men towards each other would prevent the increase of population and the enjoyment of a sense of security, he was comforted by an arrangement well fitted to mitigate his fear. There would be protection against both animals and men.

The deliverance of the earth from the dominion of the waters formed a kind of second creation. Noah and his sons, accordingly, were introduced into the possession of their new empire with a similar benediction to that bestowed upon Adam at the beginning—

“And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth” (Gen. ix., 1).

A new charter of privileges was then given which was embodied in a brief but majestic code of fundamental laws. Before the Fall of man the lower animals had been ruled by the law of love and kindness; in Eden universal friendship and harmony reigned. But after the Fall the nature even of the lower animals was altered; they became fierce, ravenous, and intractable. Man, their natural protector, was now their executioner, and slew them for clothing, for sacrifice, and probably for food. It is not improbable that the enmity to man entertained by the savage beasts of the forest and the frequent manifestation of it, led in part to that violence which before the flood filled the earth. Henceforth, however, the normal condition of the irrational creatures should be one of instinctive dread of man. Unless under the rage of hunger, revenge, or despair, they would quail under his eye or shrink at his approach. And the use of the flesh of animals for human food was expressly sanctioned, in order to prevent their too great increase, the only

limitation being that it was not to be eaten alive or in a raw and bloody state. Such an arrangement was intended to prevent brutal ferocity and wanton cruelty, and to lead to animals being treated with a fair measure of kindness. An arrangement was also made for the punishment of the murderer. Capital punishment for murder became an ordinance of God. God resolved to make inquisition for blood, to look more strictly after the commission of such a crime, and see that it was more promptly punished. If even a beast slew a man it was not to be excused. These laws were enacted to prevent such scenes of cruelty and murder as prevailed before the flood. They are intended to teach that all life is sacred; the life of man specially so, "**for in the image of God made he man.**" Whoever wilfully and unwarrantably sheds blood obliterates the image of the great Creator, deserves to die. There is here foreshadowed the introduction of more regular government, the organisation of society, and the establishment of criminal law.

**GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH.** — Having given solemn directions regarding human life, God now condescends to enter into a **covenant with Noah** and his family. A covenant, generally speaking, is a contract or agreement, a promise accompanied by a condition upon whose fulfilment the promise is suspended. The word is applied in Scripture to the promises which God has given. Some of these promises were conditional, others of them had no conditions attached. Men form covenants because they cannot trust each other's word. God here bends to the infirmities of men. He does not ask us to rely solely on His word of promise. He is pleased to enter into voluntary engagements, and expects our trust as a God who is solemnly pledged and

bound to bless. We have here a proof at once of His sovereignty and of His condescension and love. And as the safety and destiny even of the lower creation is intimately connected with that of the human race, every living creature was embraced in the covenant. The promise God made was a promise of security, that there would not again be a universal deluge. There might be partial inundations in particular regions, which might produce very desolating results, but the judgment of a universal deluge is not to be repeated. And it is a matter of devout admiration and unceasing gratitude to know that, though the earth is exposed to destruction, both from fire and water, of which vast stores are gathered in its bowels, the safety of the world is secured. Had God not been thus bound as it were by His covenant, we could not feel secure that the unbelief and wickedness of men would not lead Him again to destroy the world. (Isai. liv., 9.)

THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT.—God was pleased to give a pledge, a visible seal that His promise should not fail. He pointed to the radiant bow spanning the heavens as a memorial of His covenant through all generations. Whenever the **rainbow** shines God is reminded of His covenant, His purpose and promise. As the rainbow is the natural effect of the sun's rays falling upon the drops of rain, the phenomenon had doubtless been frequently witnessed before, and holy men had, with feelings of wonder and delight, traced in its beautiful form and colours a reflection of the glory of the great Creator; but the physical object is now clothed with a moral meaning and becomes a sign of God's holy bond, a token and memorial of His everlasting covenant. Whenever we see a rainbow we should remember this. Men

are apt to forget God's mercies and promises. The bow reminds us of His faithfulness, and should call forth anew our gratitude and our trust. Of all the objects in nature the rainbow was peculiarly suited for the purpose to which it was now destined. It appears on the face of a lowering cloud when danger seems approaching, and is therefore very seasonable. It is a very beautiful and attractive object, and demands the attention and admiration of all men. It encircles the world within its wide embrace. While we trace the stability of nature and of nature's laws to the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God, let us rejoice to know that there is a rainbow also around the throne (Rev. iv., 3) which assures the heavenly inhabitants that the covenant of grace founded upon and sealed with the blood of the Lamb, is a glorious security against the devouring deluge of divine wrath which threatens to destroy a world of sinful men, and that now all who believe in Jesus are saved from every curse, danger, or fear.

**THE SONS OF NOAH.**—Noah had three sons, **Shem, Ham, and Japheth.** "And of them was the whole earth overspread." There were three brothers, and the whole human race is divided into three great families, which are descended from them. Many persons have argued for a plurality of original parents, and plausible reasons have been advanced in support of this opinion. The Bible tells us distinctly that God created man—created a male and a female, and Jesus, the great teacher, reaffirmed this. (Matt. xix., 4.) In the centre of Athens, surrounded by matchless monuments of human skill, and confronting the learning and pride of the world, Paul declared that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of

the earth." And physiology, ethnology, and philology corroborate this statement. Men everywhere possess the same bodily structure, the same moral nature, and the same spiritual requirements. The character and extent of the Gospel scheme of salvation, and the parting command of the ascending Saviour, assume the unity of the human race. It is remarkable that traditions of the creation of man in innocence, of the Garden of Eden, of the Temptation and Fall, and of the Deluge, linger on in the legends of almost every nation, while the offering of sacrifice and the septennial division of days are almost universal. The cumulative argument in favour of the unity of the human race, and the truthfulness of the Scripture record, seems to be complete when it is remembered that all the known languages upon earth have been reduced to three general families—the Aryan, Semitic, and Turanian. It is well to bear all this in mind as we now proceed to contemplate the re-peopling of the world after the flood. The inspired historian not only tells us that there are **three great families**, but also how each of these families received its general characteristics, and **how its history was determined**.

NOAH'S SIN AND DISGRACE.—Noah was a husbandman, and God blessed his labour. The cultivation of the vine seems specially to have occupied his attention, and the delicious and wholesome fruits of the vintage rewarded his toil. But unfortunately Noah, to his cost, became acquainted with the soothing but intoxicating properties of the fermented grape-juice, and the just man, the preacher of righteousness, who had borne reproach and cruel mocking for over a century for his faithful obedience, fell into the sin of intemperance, and was brought low by shameful excess in wine. No

doubt Satan had rejoiced when he saw a wicked world given over to death, and he thought that he should yet be able to defeat God's purposes, ruin mankind beyond recovery, if he could persuade the few who remained to commit some heinous sin. He would try every art to tempt Noah from his obedience, and in this he succeeded. **"Noah drank of the wine and was drunken."** Shamelessness is frequently an accompaniment of drunkenness, and it was so in the case of Noah. His person was improperly exposed, and he was found by Ham, one of his sons, in a condition of nakedness and degradation. Ham, instead of respectfully covering his aged parent and concealing his shame, reported it with wicked pleasure to his brethren. They carefully and reverently covered their father, who, on awaking and learning what had happened, pronounced upon each appropriate sentences of blame and of commendation. **Canaan**, the son of Ham, and all his descendants are **"cursed;"** they are to suffer the penalties of the most abject servitude. **Shem and Japheth** with their descendants are **"blessed."**

"And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."—Gen. ix., 26, 27.

How remarkably were these predictions fulfilled! The Canaanites were characterised by the coarse shamelessness of their ancestor. They fell into a state of deep moral degradation, and they were ultimately expelled from their possessions in the land of Canaan by the Hebrews. They were destroyed as a nation, and the few who survived the exterminating wars of the Hebrews were reduced to bondage. It is to be noticed, too, that the negro races, who are descendants of Ham, have for ages been down trodden and enslaved. The descendants of Shem, on the other hand,

have been blessed with divine revelations and many sacred privileges, the greatest of all being that from them Jesus the Saviour was descended.—(Rom. ix., 4, 5). It was their function in the divine economy to conserve religion and religious truth for the world. The descendants of Japheth have been “enlarged.” Their destiny was to extend, and they have been for over 2,000 years the colonisers and civilisers, the dominant races of the world. Noah lived 350 years after the flood, and died at the age of 950.

**HISTORY OF THE SONS OF NOAH.**—It is very interesting to follow the fortunes of the three great families of earth so far as they can be traced. Few, however, perhaps have read with care and attention the tenth chapter of Genesis, with its many long, hard, and unfamiliar names. Yet in this chapter we have the fountains of history, the germs of every nation; we have an outline of the history of the world for many centuries. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the information conveyed, whether regarded from an ethnological, geographical, historical, or theological point of view. The chapter describes the rise of the great states and empires of antiquity, and when we are assured that the descendants of **Gomer**, seeking for themselves settlements in the confines of Asia and Europe, though disappearing for a time, yet come up long afterwards as the ancestors of the Cimbri and Celts; that the powerful and learned Greeks have sprung from **Javan**; the Thracians, Goths, and Teutons, from **Tiras**; and the Scandinavians and Saxons from **Ashkenaz**,—and ethnologists profess to be able to prove this,—we feel that the breath of the Lord has blown upon these dry statistical bones, that we are reading about men who claim to be our ancestors,



our kindred according to the flesh. Besides, these tables of genealogy proclaim the original unity of the human race, attest its method of division and of the regular and orderly distribution of the globe.

The descendants of **Japheth** are first given. "By them were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands." Then the descendants of **Ham** are given, special reference being made to **Nimrod**, who was "a mighty hunter before the Lord," who by his courage and dexterity cleared fields and forests for the more enlarged habitation of man, who was a powerful leader, and founded the great military empires of Babylon and Assyria; and to the various Canaanitish nations who were descended from Ham. From **Shem** various Arabian tribes sprang, but the writer was specially interested in the fact that he was the great grandfather of **Eber**, the ancestor of the **Hebrew** nation. (Gen. x., 21; xi., 16.)

It was in the time of Nimrod that the important event occurred which is recorded in the beginning of the eleventh chapter.

**THE DISPERSION OF THE RACE.**—The command of God to Adam and to Noah had been—"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." But the orderly partition of the globe was not effected by quiet and natural means. God gave orders for the dispersion of the families of mankind, but men refused to obey the command. They concentrated themselves in the plain of Shinar, a large level tract, lying between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, several hundred miles to the south of Ararat, and here they vehemently opposed the divine order for dispersion. But God carried out his own plan. He compelled them to spread. The

**cause** which led to the forcible dispersion of men by God was their ambition and rebellion, and the **means** which He employed to effect His purpose and to punish men was **the confusion of tongues**.

Men in their journeyings "from the east," or "towards the east," as it may also be rendered, came to this wide plain of Shinar, and there they made bricks and built a city—probably Babylon. In addition to the city they resolved to build a tower "whose top might reach unto heaven." Perhaps they feared a recurrence of a flood and intended this tower to be a place of security. Its chief designs, however, were to serve as a rallying-place or centre to keep the people together and so frustrate the designs of God, and to make a "**name**" for themselves, and so transmit to future generations visible proofs of their wealth and power. They anticipated that the continuous increase of the population would ultimately necessitate their dispersion, and they were resolved to maintain their unity. And they wished to leave enduring trophies of their greatness and glory. We have here therefore the manifestation of a spirit of strong self-will, of deliberate hostility and defiance to the divine purpose and command, and of lust of earthly grandeur and dominion. By the erection of a lofty tower they supposed they would be able to ward off invasion from without and counteract disruption from within. The conception was original, and they set about the execution of it with unanimity, industry, and determination. They were united in language, in purpose, and in enthusiasm. They would not acquiesce in the intention of God; and everything seemed to be in favour of their resistance. And so the lofty tower of hard sun-dried bricks, cemented with bitumen, was erected—a monument of human ambition, power, and impiety.

But the Lord "**came down**" to inspect this wonderful tower. He was well aware of the daring schemes and actions of the impious and aspiring builders, and He resolved to interpose. They would frustrate His designs; He very easily and quickly frustrated theirs. "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought, and maketh the devices of the people of none effect; while His own counsel standeth for ever."—(Ps. xxxiii., 10, 11.) So, in the present instance, it proved. As the result of God's consideration of the state of matters He found that a dangerous beginning had been made, a powerful combination for evil had been entered into, which, if allowed to grow, might pass beyond control. He resolved to terminate this, and He did so most effectually. He confounded the plans of the builders by confounding their tongues. He destroyed at once their unanimity of purpose and their unity of language. Disorder was thus introduced into their ranks; their ambitious and ungodly project was disconcerted; and in spite of their reluctance and utmost resistance, they were compelled to obey the divine decree. The dispersion was thus produced by the judicial interference of God, in consequence of men, bold and vainglorious in the conscious strength of their combined numbers, endeavouring to thwart His plans; and by means of a confusion of tongues, God constrained the families to separate and to start on those lines along which He designed them to accomplish their respective destiny. It is vain for men to contend against the will and purposes of God. And **Babel**, where "the Lord confounded the language of all the earth," became a monument at once of man's ambition, ingenuity, and folly, and of God's overruling providence, resistless power and beneficent purpose.

With the Dispersion of the nations mentioned in the ninth verse of the eleventh chapter, the inspired record of universal history ends. Henceforth the historian confines himself almost entirely to the fortunes of a single person, and of the family and nation descended from him. Having arrived, therefore, at this important point, it may be well to recall the events which have been sketched, and to contemplate the length of time which has been traversed. Speaking generally, the Book of Genesis divides itself into **three** great periods—the **Antediluvian**, the **Postdiluvian**, and the **Patriarchal**. Within ten brief chapters the history of the two first of these periods is compressed. The Antediluvian period embraces what is called the Pre-adamite age, the long age before the creation of Adam, during which God was preparing the earth for human habitation (Gen. i., 1-25); the Adamite age, from the creation of Adam in purity and happiness to his Temptation and Fall (Gen. i., 26—iii., 24); and the period which elapsed between the Fall and the Flood. (Gen. iv.-vii.) The Postdiluvian period embraces the covenant which God made with Noah (Gen. viii.-ix., 17); the settlements of Noah's sons; the register of the different families; and the Dispersion of Babel. (Gen. ix., 18—xi., 9.) The length of time which intervened between the Fall and the Flood, and between the Flood and the Dispersion, cannot be determined with certainty. According to the present text of the Hebrew Bible, 1656 years elapsed between the Fall and the Flood (B.C. 4004-2348), but according to the Greek Septuagint version 2256 years (B.C. 5411-3155) elapsed. According to the former, 353 years elapsed between the Flood and the birth of Abraham (B.C. 2349-1996), but according to the latter, 1002 years (B.C. 3155-2153) elapsed. Of the two chronologies, the Septuagint is probably the

more correct, and according to it no less a space than **3258 years** have already been traversed. From this it will be seen how concise and fragmentary the record must be. Yet how important it is, giving us information which cannot otherwise be obtained regarding the Fall of Man, which is the only rational explanation of sacrifice, of universal suffering and death, of the Incarnation and Death of Jesus Christ; regarding the gracious promise of a Deliverer from the power of Satan; regarding the development of human depravity, the Deluge and the Dispersion.

The various tribes and families have now gone off to fulfil the destiny which awaits them, and to receive the inheritance which the Most High has appointed (Deut. xxxii., 8; Acts xvii., 26). Japheth selects the regions which border on the Euxine, Caspian, and Mediterranean Seas, and by-and-bye from him proceed the Medes and Persians, who erect their empire on the ruins of powerful Hamitic and Shemitic monarchies; the Greeks, who fill the world with their wisdom; the Romans, who subdue it by the force of their invincible arms; the German and Slavonian races, who, mingling with the remnants of the Grecian and Roman empires, give birth to the most powerful nations of modern times. Ham finds a settlement in warmer and more enervating climates, and though at first he seems energetic and ambitious, and founds the great empires of Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt, yet he soon decays and becomes subject to the sway of more vigorous nations. Shem settles chiefly in the valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates. It is by him religious truth is preserved for the world, and, while all others are idolatrous and ungodly, he worships Jehovah, the living and true God. The nations are now separated,

suffered for a time to walk in their own ways. But they are not forsaken. The representatives of the great families of the earth will yet be gathered round the cross of Jesus at Calvary, they will surround Peter on the day of Pentecost, the descendants of Japheth will be admitted to share in the peculiar heritage of Shem (Gen. ix., 27), and before the throne of God in heaven will assemble a multitude which no man can number, redeemed by the blood of Jesus out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Rev. v., 9).

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM—THE BEGINNING OF CONSECUTIVE HISTORY.—When we approach the life of **Abraham**—to use for the sake of convenience the name by which he is generally known—we feel that we are coming to comparatively near and well-authenticated history. In fact, human history may be said to have begun with him. Already indeed the great Chaldean and Assyrian monarchies had been established on the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris; the Egyptians had displayed their energy and wealth in the erection of palaces and temples whose ruins are still the wonder and admiration of the world; 450 years before the time of Abraham Memphis had been founded, and probably the foundations of some of the Pyramids had been laid. But so much uncertainty still surrounds those Chaldean, Assyrian, and Egyptian records which recent research has recovered, that we cannot feel altogether on firm ground until we reach the Call of Abraham from the darkness and idolatry of Chaldea. And, however important and valuable the earlier chapters of Genesis may be, we cannot resist the feeling that they give only glimpses into the far distant past. They relate indeed with some minuteness two great turning points of history—

the Fall and the Flood—but they give no complete biography of any of the great characters who moulded the earlier destinies of the world, and no one in all these misty millenniums stands out with such prominence as does Abraham, “the Friend of God” and the founder of the Jewish nation. Adam after all is little more than a name for a common progenitor who fell; Noah escapes the Flood and becomes a second progenitor of the race; Enoch is a pious man, and Nimrod is a mighty hunter and founder of empires. But a far larger space is devoted to the single life of Abraham than to all previous generations put together. His personal character and domestic circumstances, his wanderings, sins, sorrows, and heavenly revelations, are all detailed with unusual minuteness. His biography is thorough and complete. Besides, **history** now becomes **connected and continuous**. Nations are not now disposed of in a few words, and long centuries passed over with scarcely a reference. The line from Abraham reaches down to the present day.

It is evident that the inspired historian is hastening on to relate the **foundation of the Hebrew nation** and the **origin of the Church**, and that the preceding chapters are merely introductory to the real history. He has given a rapid and concise record of the history of the world from the commencement of time—the order of the creation, the original innocence and fall of man, the establishment of the knowledge and worship of God, the propagation of mankind, the wide-spread corruption which brought about the deluge, the restoration of the world under a new dispensation, and the division and peopling of the earth after the dispersion of Babel. But he now passes from the general to the particular, and concentrates attention on a single individual and the

family and nation descended from him. The nations descending from Shem, Ham, and Japheth were disposed of in a general way in the tenth chapter, and sent forth on their several ways. Henceforth they are only referred to incidentally and as they touch and affect the fortunes of the patriarchs and of the nation of Israel. In the eleventh chapter one of the lines of Shem is very particularly traced, Arphaxad and Heber, the founder of the Hebrew nation, being selected from Shem's descendants, while other branches are struck off. Terah, the eighth in descent from Shem, begins a new set of generations, and then his son Abraham, who now becomes the exclusive subject of the narrative, is reached. A genealogical table had bridged the interval between the Fall and the Flood, and another such table had bridged the interval between the Flood and the next great landmark of history, **the Call of Abraham**. But this genealogical table is more than a family register; it is the **genealogy of Abraham**. It is worthy of note, if the dates given in our present text are correct, that Shem must have been alive when Jacob was born, and that Heber (or Eber) survived Abraham.

**THE TIMES OF ABRAHAM.**—In order clearly to understand the circumstances in which Abraham was placed, it is necessary to bear in mind the character of the times in which he lived. For nearly four centuries the new race of mankind, saved from the Flood, had been left to multiply and spread, and during that period, as far as we certainly know, there was nothing better than tradition to keep alive a pure faith or the memory of God's past dealings with mankind. Considering the natural depravity of the human heart, it need scarcely surprise us to be told that in these



circumstances corruption again prevailed, and that there was an almost universal forgetfulness of God among the nations of the earth. In Babylon and Nineveh and Egypt, art and science flourished, and a highly advanced state of civilization was reached; men knew how to rear pyramids, engrave inscriptions upon rocks, sink mining shafts for the precious metals, and describe the movements of the stars and constellations of Heaven, but they failed to preserve the knowledge and worship of God. They changed the object and the forms of worship from what had been revealed. They preserved, indeed, traditions of earlier and better days, of the chief events of previous history, but even these became obscured and uninfluential. Rams and bulls were daily slain in sacrifice to propitiate the gods, and the seventh day continued to be observed as the day of rest. But the spiritual significance and intention of these institutions were speedily forgotten. Two things distinguished the degeneracy which prevailed—idolatry in worship and despotism in government. Idolatry had commenced with the worship of the heavenly bodies, and it appears to have become more gross as it became more prevalent (Rom. i. 21). Manifestations of God, and not God Himself, received religious worship, and that worship gradually descended from the shining orbs above to brute animals and senseless images. The awful practice of human sacrifice was not unknown. While planets and constellations received divine worship, astrologers drew from their movements and appearances auguries of good and evil to guide men in every detail of life. Magic and divination ruled supreme, and great faith was reposed in the spells and incantations of designing priests.

Abraham grew up amidst such idolatry and superstition.

The simple and primitive nature-worship of the Accadians, the first inhabitants on the banks of the Euphrates, had given place to the idolatrous rites of the Cushites or Ethiopians who disputed their territory, and ultimately overpowered them. By these fierce conquerors an elaborate and powerful system of idolatry had been established over all Mesopotamia. Here and there, beneath the surface of the gross polytheism, some glimpses of truth might be enjoyed regarding the unity of God, human sin and the promise of divine salvation; but the light was too feeble to penetrate and dispel the prevailing darkness. Even the best of men then living were secretly enticed to worship "the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness" (Job xxxi., 26), and their homes were far from pure. As Joshua said long afterwards, "Thus said the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nachor: and they **served other gods**" (Josh. xxiv., 2).

But from this idolatry Abraham was called away.

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.—True religion could not continue to exist in such an atmosphere as that described. But God takes measures to secure its preservation. He will not again destroy the earth for man's sake, for he has promised not to do so. His purposes are not to be thwarted by human guilt, so he graciously takes a step further in advance towards the accomplishment of His great design for the redemption of mankind. He will let the nations walk in their own ways, allow the idolatry which is so dishonouring to Himself, and so degrading and ruinous to men, to ripen its fruits, allow men to use the remedies of their own devising for the removal of the ills of life and the satisfaction of the deep

necessities of the soul. (Acts xiv., 15, 16). But He will choose out a man whose family and nation may become the repository of ancient truths and Messianic hopes, and the receiver and guardian of fuller revelations of His will. The God-forsaking and idolatrous nations do not care for the truth of heaven, so He will take hold of a particular family, seclude it, make it a peculiar people, dwelling alone and not reckoned among the nations, and by careful discipline and teaching fit it for the reception and belief of His truth. Such is God's **plan in history**. And this explains why the Old Testament Scriptures are almost entirely confined to the history of Abraham, whom God chose and called, and to the events which befel his family. There had been an **Adamic** covenant and dispensation; and a **Noachic** covenant and dispensation; there now follows an **Abrahamic** covenant and dispensation.

It must, however, be remembered that though divine communications are now to be made almost exclusively to persons of a single family and nation, it was for very high and gracious purposes towards all men. "God loved the **world**," and the temporary restriction was only made in order that the blessings of salvation might ultimately be secured to all. The great Deliverer who had been promised was to be, as to His human nature, of the seed of Abraham; but propitiation was to be made by Him not for the sins of the Jews only, "but also for the sins of the whole world." The glory of Israel was to be through Israel—"a light to lighten the Gentiles" (and see Rom. viii., 15-32).

**THE COMMAND AND PROMISE TO ABRAHAM.**—While Terah and his three sons, who form a small family of wandering shepherds or nomads, are tending their flocks and herds in

the plains of Mesopotamia, suddenly a divine voice comes to Abraham, the youngest probably of these sons, calling upon him to leave his country and friends, and promising rich blessings should he obey the heavenly call.

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing, and I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."—Gen. xii, 1.

Ur of the Chaldees, where about 1996 B.C. Abraham had been born, is situated about 500 miles to the south of Mount Ararat and near the mouth of the Euphrates, and is an exceedingly pleasant and fertile district. Its overhanging palms, luscious pomegranates, highly cultivated fields and expansive plains, made it such a home as one would not naturally wish to leave. It was specially adapted to the occupation which Abraham and his relatives followed, and their flocks and herds had rapidly increased. And doubtless the ties of association and kindred, and the grave of his brother Haran, who had died prematurely, would combine to bind him with closer attachment to the place of his birth. But at the call of God, and under the direction of his father, Terah, as the head of the little band, Abraham left Ur "to go into the land of Canaan." Among nomadic tribes movements from one place to another are not infrequent. But it was not any natural desire to share the rich pasturage of the lowlands, nor the pressure of tribes advancing from beyond, which led to the emigration of Abraham. It was the call of God, whom by some means he had been brought to know and to worship. (Gal. iii., 8). How that call was given—by dream or vision, or visible manifestation—we are not informed, but Abraham was persuaded it was a divine communication,

a call from God. And we are not unwarranted in believing that the call was accompanied with fuller instructions as to the being, character, and purposes of God. Probably it was the "Angel of the Covenant" who introduced this new dispensation. (John viii., 56). The **beginning of the Hebrew Church and nation was supernatural.**

Inducements were given to Abraham to obey the call. It was accompanied by a gracious promise. Land—fertile land—should be given to him; he should yet become a great nation; God would bless him, make his name great, make him a blessing to his household, to his posterity, to the world at large, and would bless his friends and curse his enemies.

ABRAHAM OBEYS THE CALL OF GOD.—With singular readiness and faith Abraham obeyed the call of God. He probably wondered how he could become a great nation, seeing his half-sister, whom he had married, was childless (Gen. xi., 30), and other doubts as to the fulfilment of the promise might occur to his mind. He had now reached an age when he could not be easily imposed upon by illusion or fancy. He felt the call was from God, was definite and clear, was peremptory, however painful compliance might be; and he responded to it and "went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. xi., 8), leaving God to fulfil His promises in His own time and way.

The company who left Ur consisted of Terah his father, Lot his nephew, his wife Sarai, and himself. His brother Nahor and his family remained behind. Journeying to the north-west and along the banks of the Euphrates, they would be brought in contact with the principal civilisations

of the period, and would pass town after town, with their majestic palaces and temples. But, moving slowly on with their train of loaded camels and their multitude of herds and flocks, they at length reached **Haran**, an important town about 600 miles from Ur, on the banks of the Bilikus, a small tributary of the Euphrates. Haran formed the point whence diverged the principal roads which led to the fords of the Tigris and the Euphrates, and the junction of the caravan routes to the towns of Chaldea and Syria. It was, therefore, a great commercial emporium. When Abraham and his company arrived at Haran they halted for a considerable period. The region possessed admirable grazing land, and they decided to settle there for a while.

Abraham was now removed from the idolatrous customs of Chaldea. It is not improbable that he felt greatly relieved by the absence of careless and wicked neighbours. Perhaps he had distinguished himself by his zeal for the worship of the one living and true God, and had brought upon himself, by his fidelity, the ridicule and persecution of those around him. If so, by turning aside from all that was degrading and false, and by manifesting unswerving obedience to the will of God, he had given a noble example of nobility of character and greatness of soul which naturally fitted him for the lofty position that God in His providence called him to occupy.

How long Abraham remained at Haran we cannot tell. It must have been for some years, for when he left it to continue his journey to the land of Canaan he had gathered much substance, and had increased to a considerable number. His old father Terah died in Haran at the advanced age of 205 years. Abraham "was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran." (Gen. xii, 4).

**THE JOURNEY THROUGH CANAAN.**—The journey from Haran to Canaan was long and toilsome, through an unknown and trackless desert. It would even be a sacrifice for Abraham now to quit Haran, where quiet and pasture in abundance had been enjoyed, and where he had acquired sufficient property to satisfy his wants. His slaves would doubtless reckon his proposal to proceed further nothing short of folly, and perhaps even Sarai, who was of weaker faith than her husband, shrank from the prospect before them. But Abraham was firm and resolute. He was "called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, and by faith he obeyed, and went out not knowing whither he went" (Heb. xi., 8). The decisive step was taken. The caravan came to the brink of the great "flood," crossed the Euphrates, and faced the dreaded inhospitable desert. It was an act of heroic obedience, of sincere submission to the **divine will**. It was one of the great **moments of history**. Abraham and his childless wife had set out upon a peculiar journey. "They sought a land they knew not where; they sought a seed they knew not how; they sought a blessing they knew not what." But "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Gal. iii., 6). He heard the word of sovereign authority and of sovereign grace, and, committing his way unto the Lord, rejoicing in God's promise and power, he unhesitatingly obeyed.

Having left **Haran**, and crossed the upper fords of the Euphrates, Abraham journeyed southwards through the wide **Syrian desert**, which stretches betwixt the Euphrates and Palestine, and at length, with his wife and orphan nephew, his household servants, shepherds and herdsmen, and his flocks of sheep and goats and herds of cattle of various kinds, he reached the frontiers of the promised land. Passing

through the orchards of Damascus he crossed the shoulder of Mount Hermon, from whose heights he beheld the fair and fertile land which God had designed as the inheritance of his descendants—the range of Lebanon on his right hand, the rich pastures of Gilead and the green forests of Bashan on his left; while in front gleamed the blue waters of the Sea of Galilee. Descending the rugged valley of the Jabbok, or passing through the plains of Jezreel, he came to the rapid and impetuous waters of Jordan. These being forded he arrived at **Shechem**, or Sichem, under the shadow of Ebal and Gerizim. “He passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain [or rather, the oak] of Moreh.” His first encampment in the land in search of which he had journeyed so far, was in a lovely and picturesque spot in the very centre of Canaan. After his long weary journey the shades of the oaks of Moreh, the fresh green valleys, the olive trees, fair gardens, and pure springs of water around Shechem would be specially grateful and refreshing. The land was inhabited—the wicked and accursed descendants of Canaan the son of Ham possessed it, but there was ample room for the flocks of Abraham without undue pressure or invasion of the rights of others. A crowd of tribes independent of each other had thronged to take possession of the tempting valleys of Palestine, which to the dwellers in the waste and thirsty regions to the east and south seemed the paradise of the world. Still, though the Horites or cave dwellers held Mount Seir, the Amorites occupied the heights on both sides of Jordan, the strong and warlike Amalekites possessed the south, the Philistines inhabited the rich plains from the foot of the hills of Judea to the sea, and small communities of peaceful and industrious Hivites, Hittites, and Perizzites were scattered



over the land, there was yet sufficient room for Abraham. And he had a special right to be there. The Lord appeared to him and said, "**Unto thy seed will I give this land.**" The land to which he had been divinely led was to be the inheritance of his descendants. He had been called away from all the sanctities and associations of his fatherland in order to vindicate the unity of God amid almost universal polytheism, and to receive and transmit divine revelations of grace. And the land to which Abraham had now come was one in keeping with the great purpose of God towards Israel and towards the world. It was sufficiently isolated from other countries, being hemmed in on the south and east sides by extensive deserts, on the north side by the ranges of Lebanon, and along the west coast by the Mediterranean Sea. And yet it touched very closely Europe, Asia, and Africa; it lay in the very centre of the old world; it formed the link of connection between the two great empires which for centuries contended for supremacy—the Egyptian on the south and the Assyrian or Chaldean on the north. It was therefore well fitted by its seclusion to serve as a preserve where the true religion might be nursed and protected from the idolatries of heathen nations, and the religious services prescribed by God be performed. But it was sufficiently near to other countries to be a convenient centre of light to the world when the time should arrive. Abraham's entrance on this territory, so divinely chosen, and yet to be linked with sacred and imperishable associations, was **sanctified by prayer and sacrifice**. It must have been a strange spectacle when, in presence of Perizzite and Hittite idolaters, the old Mesopotamian sheikh gathered his household and herdsmen around him and, having reared with reverent hands in the open space in front of his tent an altar of

unhewn stones, slew a lamb chosen out of the bleating flocks which browsed around and presented it in sacrifice upon the altar. The heathen might mock at his religion, but Abraham was neither ashamed nor afraid to **“build an altar unto the Lord who appeared unto him.”** It was an expression of gratitude to Him who promised that “this land,” occupied now by a hostile colony of Hamites, should become the permanent possession of his posterity.

Abraham shortly afterwards transferred his caravan to a mountain stronghold **between Bethel and Ai**, about twenty miles further south. And as his first act in Canaan had been to erect an altar and offer sacrifice, he inaugurates his new settlement in a similar way. In his case the tent and the altar were combined. His tent was a moving temple and his household a pilgrim church. His faith was the mainspring of his obedience, and that faith was strengthened and increased by constant believing prayer. Abraham's motto was “The Lord before whom I walk”—(Gen. xxiv., 40) and he had his reward in being pre-eminently **“the Friend of God”**—(Jas. ii., 23)—and in being esteemed alike by Mahomedan, Jewish, and Christian Churches **“The father of the faithful”**—(Rom. iv., 16).

Abraham journeyed to the south of Canaan, to the undulating tract of country which separates Canaan from Egypt. It was chiefly a journey of exploration, and seems to have been rapidly performed.

ABRAHAM IN EGYPT.—Though Abraham was a man of genuine piety and strong faith he was not perfect, and the inspired historian records with impartial hand his defects and falls as well as his virtues and triumphs. The infirmity

of his faith as well as its power is disclosed. "Faithful Abraham" fell through unbelief. But the trial of his faith was a severe one. There was a famine, "**a grievous famine**" in Canaan, due probably to the failure of the needed supply of rain. Daily bread began to fail, and destitution was imminent. The land for whose sake Abraham had forsaken the fertile plains of Mesopotamia was unable to sustain his household or feed his flocks. The only alternative to him in this extremity was to transport the famished remains of his flocks across the desert of Arabia and settle for a time in a strange and distant country. Like his descendants many years afterwards, he "**went down into Egypt to sojourn there,**" Egypt even then being celebrated as the granary of the world; the annual overflow of the Nile, as it carried down from the great reservoirs of Central Africa a sufficient supply of moisture for the whole country, rendering it largely independent of rainfall and exceedingly fertile. It was not unnatural for Abraham, in the circumstances in which he was then placed, to entertain doubts and anxieties, and instead of trusting entirely in the protection and promises of God to follow his own devices. He was afraid he should starve in Canaan, and learning that there was corn and pasturage in Egypt, without apparently asking divine guidance and help, he went down thither. His conduct was perhaps natural, but it was wrong, and it led to unpleasant results. As Abraham approached Egypt, which was at the time the greatest kingdom in the world, increasing signs of civilisation, grandeur, and power met his eye. He knew that a man of his position, with a numerous band of retainers, and with herds of cattle, could not escape attention. As he looked upon **Sarai**, his wife, who, though advanced in life, was yet of fair and fresh

complexion as compared with the dusky faces of the Egyptian women, and as he remembered that the sensual customs of Pharaoh and his courtiers, who were not scrupulous as to the means they employed to add to the number of their wives, were notorious, his faith and fortitude gave way, and he induced his wife to be guilty of an act of equivocation which amounted to falsehood. To preserve his own life, which he feared would be in danger if it were known that Sarai was his wife, he enjoined her to say that she was his sister. This, indeed, was partly true, but the essential fact was suppressed with the design to deceive. Such conduct was inconsistent with Abraham's character as a servant of God; it showed a want of confidence in God as his protector; it showed a reliance on worldly policy more than trust in the divine providence; and while he sinned himself he tempted Sarai to sin also.

In Egypt, Abraham found an organised and flourishing kingdom, and an advanced civilisation already venerable for age. He saw populous towns adorned with pyramids, and temples, and palaces, and all united under one powerful sceptre. He saw that the Nile valley was in a state of high cultivation and filled with a busy commerce, and he gazed with admiration on the means employed to bring the rising Nile under control, to retain its superfluous waters, and pour them through immense rivulets over the otherwise parched and barren fields. But the opinion he had formed of the morals and manners of the country was correct, and his fears were in part at least justified by what occurred. The courtiers, who were zealous in pandering to the tastes and passions of their royal master, were dazzled by the beauty of Sarai, who still, at the age of sixty-five, retained

the bloom and loveliness of youth ; they reported and commended her charms to Pharaoh, and Sarai "**was taken into Pharaoh's house,**" into the royal harem where his wives dwelt. Abraham was loaded with gifts in order to obtain his favour and consent to the marriage, ; but it must have been a time of intense anxiety when he was separated in such a way from the companion of his youth and age, of his journeyings and perils. Perhaps Abraham expected that some method of escape might be devised before the necessary ceremonies preparatory to marriage were gone through. But had it not been for the direct interposition of God, deliverance from the perilous position was very unlikely. The Most High, however, had gracious purposes towards Sarai and her husband : He interposed for her protection, averted the threatened evil, and even made the event turn out for good. "**The Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues,**" the superstitious Egyptians were led somehow to trace these plagues to the presence of this foreign lady, the artifice of Abraham was discovered, and Sarai was released and restored to her husband. Pharaoh justly resented the distrust that had been felt, and the deceit that had been practised, and by which he had been nearly betrayed into the commission of a great crime. But he acted generously and nobly. He did not strip Abraham of the presents he had made to him, or deprive him of the flocks and herds, which, during the sojourn in the fertile grazing lands of Goshen, had greatly multiplied. He did him no violence, though he was entirely in his power, but simply had him and "all that he had" conducted to the frontiers of the kingdom by an Egyptian guard and dismissed. Thus Sarai was delivered from the serious hazard to which she was exposed, Abraham was

rebuked by Pharaoh for his deception and unworthy conduct, and the purposes and promises of God were not frustrated by the sin of his servant (See Ps. cv., 12-14). Twenty years afterwards, however, there was a repetition of the same sin (Gen. xx.).

ABRAHAM SEPARATES FROM LOT.—Abraham went up out of Egypt wealthier than when he entered. He returned to his former encampment in the south of Canaan, between Bethel and Ai. But a new trial awaited him in Canaan. So rapidly and to such an extent had the flocks of Abraham and of his nephew Lot increased, that the pastures around Bethel became too narrow to accommodate them. The cattle got mixed; the wells were scenes of struggle and angry debate between the herdmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle; and the misunderstandings and disputes of the servants were apt to extend and lead to unpleasant feelings between the masters. Abraham felt that such jealousies and quarrels were very unseemly in presence of their idolatrous neighbours, and he acted in a very disinterested and self-denying manner. He proposed an amicable separation; and though the older man, the leader of the expedition, and one who had acted the part of a father to Lot since the death of his own, he **offered Lot the selection of whatever district he preferred.** From their encampment they could obtain an extensive view of the whole country, and Lot at once chose the well-watered plains of the Jordan, near the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham had been condescending and generous towards Lot, but Lot was selfish and covetous. The "circle" of the Jordan towards the east, where the deep cleft of the river opened into a broad valley before its waters finally

lost themselves in the Dead Sea, presented to Lot irresistible attractions. It was as "the garden of the Lord," recalled the traditions of Paradise, whose rich verdure and well-watered plains presented the ideal of earthly fertility, and was as Zoan in Egypt, which they had recently left, where the bountiful Nile, led through the thirsty soil, repaid the care and labour by a luxuriance that was proverbial. And the Jordan cities promised to Lot a rich market for the produce of his herds and flocks, as well as the luxuries and refinements of wealth. From a worldly point of view, it was a wise choice, but the worldly advantage was gained at a terrible price. "**The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly,**" but in the case of Lot, increase of wealth had brought increase of worldliness, and for the sake of gain and worldly comfort, he heeded not the spiritual interests of himself and family. He seems to have left Abraham without regret, and to have approached Sodom without fear. It was a worldly choice he had made, in which he was guided only by a regard to his material interests; an ungenerous choice, in which he took advantage of his uncle's generosity and self-denial; and an irreligious choice, in which the interests of eternity were disregarded. It affected his after life, and determined the fate of his family.

**GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM.**—After the departure of Lot Abraham felt solitary and unhappy. He and Lot had been long together, and they were united by the ties of nature, affection, religion, and suffering. But the blank made by this separation was speedily and abundantly compensated by renewed manifestations of divine favour. Abraham was directed to survey the whole country in every direction, and

it was promised anew to him and to his seed. The Lord said to him—

“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 for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.”—(Gen. xiii., 14-17.)

Thus Abraham's disinterestedness and sacrifices for the sake of peace were richly rewarded. And if in connection with the divine promise we read the inspired commentaries of Stephen (Acts vii., 5), and of Paul (Heb. xi., 8-16), we obtain a clearer view of the principles by which the patriarch was animated and of the hopes he cherished. After all, it was a matter of indifference to him where he sojourned or how he fared, during the few years of his earthly course. He might have no home in Canaan but a tent, and no property in its soil but a tomb, but the whole land was the free gift of God to his descendants, and it was to him “dwelling in tabernacles,” confessing that he was a stranger and pilgrim on the earth, the type and figure of “a better country, that is, a heavenly.” His affections being set on things above, his treasure and his heart being in heaven, God being his portion, Abraham could rise above all that was selfish and sordid, could sit loose to the possessions of the present world, and prove himself superior to those temporal and worldly considerations which frequently create jealousy and envy among brethren.

Abraham after this broke up the encampment at Bethel, and pitched his tent in the plain of **Mamre**, “**which is in Hebron.**” Hebron was one of the oldest cities in the world, “seven years older than Zoan, in Egypt” (Num. xiii., 22), and was probably first occupied by Ham's son



Mizraim, in his migration southwards, till, learning of still richer fields on the banks of the Nile, he directed his course to Egypt, and laid the foundations of Zoan, its earliest capital. At present Hebron was occupied by a Hittite tribe, the sons of Heth. But it offered freer and more abundant pasture and was better suited for his flocks and herds, and Abraham journeyed thither. Bethel was now endeared to Abraham by sacred associations, and "the place of the altar which he had made there at the first" was probably the chief attraction of the district when he returned from Egypt, but Hebron and not Bethel was destined to be his longest earthly residence. Under the oaks of Mamre and amid the rich pastures around Hebron, or at Beersheba, in its neighbourhood, Abraham spent the remainder of his days in peaceful pastoral duties, the religious instructor and priest of his clan as well as the master. At Hebron, Abraham built a third altar to Jehovah.

**THE BATTLE OF THE KINGS AND CAPTURE OF LOT.**—Lot had selected the district which he expected would prove most advantageous to himself and his family. We do not, however, read that like Abraham he built an altar unto the Lord, though he had been used to religious services while in his uncle's family; and the probability is that he was ashamed or afraid to do so before his godless neighbours. He was a just and righteous man (2 Peter ii., 7, 8), but his selfish and worldly choice was the source of much misery and disaster.

A great calamity which befel him is narrated in the fourteenth chapter. Four kings from Mesopotamia and Persia—**Chedorlaomer**, the King of Elam, a district beyond Chaldea on the east side of the Tigris, being the chief of them—made an expedition into Palestine. Desirous

of possessing the important military and commercial route betwixt the Euphrates and the Nile, or at least of gaining supremacy over the tribes in its course, Chedorlaomer fourteen years earlier had invaded Canaan and made its inhabitants tributary. For twelve years his authority had been acknowledged and tribute paid, but, as his power over such a remote province of an extensive empire was precarious, in the thirteenth year there had been a general revolt which had resulted in the recovery of independence. It was in order to conquer this rebellion and regain the power he had lost that he and his three friendly or vassal allies again overran the country. They made a rapid circuit, going southward beyond the Dead Sea, then westward, and, on turning north, fell upon the cities and towns of the Jordan valley. As yet they had carried all before them, and had met with little opposition. But the kings or chiefs of the five walled towns of the plain or "circle" of the Jordan resolved to oppose the invaders, and, having rallied their subjects, ventured to attack them in the rocky fastness of Engedi, where they lay encamped. Being repulsed and driven down into the vale of Siddim, where the ground was full of pits or wells of bitumen, the five kings were utterly overthrown; a few of the inhabitants escaped to the mountains, but very many of them were slain. The capture and sack of the wealthy towns of the kings followed on the defeat of their troops, and the victorious invaders resumed their march homewards laden with booty and in possession of crowds of captives.

It does not appear that Lot took any active part in the quarrel or any side in the war, but as he lived among the enemy he shared their fate. Chedorlaomer made no distinction, and treated him and his without ceremony. Lot and

his goods were included in the victor's spoil. He thus paid dearly for his selfish choice, and the reckless folly which tempted him to associate with the dissolute inhabitants of Sodom.

ABRAHAM PURSUES THE CONQUERORS AND RESCUES LOT.— Abraham, dwelling in the oak grove of Mamre, could not but know the events which were happening. He must have heard that the Elamite King with his vassals had marched through Palestine, passing his home at a few miles' distance, and had reduced the refractory chiefs once more to obedience. He had not stirred. But when tidings reached him of the capture of his nephew with all his household and property, he at once resolved to pursue and attempt their recovery. The ungrateful separation, the selfish choice of the best portion of the land, the distance and estrangement—these might have justified Abraham in leaving him to his fate. But all past unkindness is forgotten in pity for his present plight. Arming the servants of his house who were capable of bearing arms and could endure a forced march—318 in number—and procuring the assistance of his Amorite neighbours with whom he was on terms of friendship, Abraham at once crossed the hills to the Jordan, and pursued the eastern kings up the whole course of its valley. It was a bold thing with his small force to pursue an army flushed with victory and headed by four valiant monarchs. But he cherished ardent affection for his nephew, reckoned him a part of the household of faith, and believed he had the warrant, direction, and help of God in his heroic enterprise. And Abraham was successful. By a sudden night attack he surprised and defeated the allied forces at Dan; giving

them no time to rally, he followed them in quick pursuit as far north as Damascus, and compelled them to deliver up their booty. This ended the war on the part of Abraham. He rescued Lot and all the "goods, and the women and the people," that had been captured. The incident presents Abraham in a novel but admirable aspect, as a man of a forgiving disposition and of great courage, a man of patriotism, as well as of piety.

MELCHISEDEK BLESSES ABRAHAM.—Abraham had gained his object, the recovery of his nephew. He shows that he had no selfish purpose to serve by the war. On his return from the slaughter of the kings, he exhibits a beautiful spirit of magnanimity. Being met on his way back to his tent, laden with the spoils of victory, by one of the petty kings he has aided, who requested only the persons recovered, leaving the goods won by his bravery to be the reward of the conqueror, Abraham pointedly refused all recompense. He would retain no trophy, would appropriate not so much as a thread or a shoe latchet, "lest he should say, I have made Abraham rich." He has done his brave deed—vindicated the calls of justice and equity, and he casts every vestige of plunder away, returning to his tent as lowly and humble as before. He is not ambitious, and he is scrupulous to avoid the suspicion of an interested aim. The three men who had aided him might have their share, but he will have none of it.

But while the King of Sodom is expressing to the triumphant Abraham the gratitude of himself and others who had survived the disaster in the vale of Siddim, another and a still more remarkable person meets Abraham and bestows upon him his blessing. This was **Melchisedek**,

the king or priest of Salem—afterwards Jerusalem. He was one who had still amid surrounding ungodliness and idolatry retained the knowledge and worship of God, and who discharged the duties of priest as well as king among his people. He met Abraham on the basis of a common belief and worship, and provided bread and wine for the refreshment of his victorious troops who had secured peace for the whole country as well as for the cities of the plain. It seems almost as if during the short interview between Melchisedek and Abraham, the Spirit of God descended upon the former and enabled him to unite the office of a prophet to the other offices he filled, and that the same Spirit led Abraham to regard the reverend and mysterious being before him as in some respects his superior, for he selected the best spoils which he had taken in battle and presented them to Melchisedek as “the priest of the Most High God.” Probably Melchisedek had been chosen King of Salem on account of his integrity, and had then adopted his characteristic name, which means “king of righteousness.” As being a priest-king, as having a unique origin and position, as being a priest prior to the Levitical economy, Melchisedek is honoured as a type of Jesus Christ.—(Ps. cx., 4, Heb. vii., 1-4.)

**A SOLEMN COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND ABRAHAM.**—After his victory Abraham again sought the seclusion of Hebron, while Lot and his family, though they had received sufficient warning against abiding in the cities of the plain, returned with the King of Sodom to their former abode.

After the excitement of the successful campaign had passed away, a feeling of solitariness and unhappiness again seems to have stolen over the spirit of Abraham. Perhaps

he was anxious lest the eastern kings whom he had despoiled might return with overwhelming forces to revenge their defeat. But God appeared to him in his time of depression, and said—

“Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.”

Genesis xv., 1.

“I will defend you against every enemy: you have manifested trust and self-denial—in My favour and in fellowship with Me you will find your truest happiness and reward.” During the interview, however, with which Abraham was favoured, he complained of the delay that had taken place in fulfilling the divine promise, and rather querulously asked what blessing he was to enjoy, seeing he had no child of his own, so that since the departure of Lot, who was now rich in a separate establishment, his favourite servant Eliezer had been appointed his heir. God, however, graciously assured his servant that a son should be born of his own body, and that his descendants should yet be as numerous as the stars of heaven. The expression of joy, gratitude, and faith on the face of Abraham at this revelation was specially pleasing to God (Rom. iv., 2-8; Gal. iii., 5-18), who made the promises still more full and specific, and by a visible sign ratified His covenant with Abraham. Abraham “believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.” God unveiled before his eyes the joys and sorrows which his descendants should experience, and their ultimate settlement in Canaan. And when, after patiently watching through the following day the five animals which, by God’s direction, had been prepared for sacrifice, and warding off the beasts of prey whom their odour had attracted, Abraham beheld “a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between” the slaughtered

and divided victims, he had, according to a symbolism which he understood, a visible pledge that God would be faithful to His covenant.

ABRAHAM AND HAGAR.—Though God had promised Abraham a son of his own body and a numerous posterity, still further delay occurred in the fulfilment of that promise. This produced doubt and impatience, which led him to adopt a method recommended by Sarai to secure the fulfilment of God's promise and their hopes. Sarai thought she was too old now to have children herself; she was less firm in faith than her husband, and more impulsive; and she persuaded Abraham—somewhat at the sacrifice of her own natural rights—to take as a secondary wife **Hagar**, her Egyptian slave, who had probably been given to her as a personal attendant during her detention in Pharaoh's palace. This was according to a custom which, though opposed to the dictates of nature and the commands of God, was then prevalent; and if Hagar should have a child, such child would be Sarai's as well as Abraham's—Sarai's by the right of legal ownership. The policy of Sarai did not coincide with the purpose of God, but Abraham "**hearkened to the voice of Sarai.**" When Hagar found she was to be a mother—the mother, as she thought, of the promised heir—she despised her mistress and behaved with insolence. Domestic jealousy and strife ensued. Sarai, in return for Hagar's insolence, became spiteful and severe in her treatment, and at length blamed Abraham for the indignities that had been heaped upon her by her slave. Abraham gave his wife all authority over the girl, who thereupon had to endure many annoyances and hardships which she was ill able to bear. When Hagar could endure such treatment no

longer she ran from the house and fled towards Egypt. On her way to Shur, between Hebron and Egypt, she sat down, athirst and almost in despair, at a refreshing fountain, where "the angel of the Lord found her," bade her return to her mistress, and promised her a numerous posterity. Hagar, brought up to believe in the gods of Egypt, that hid themselves in impenetrable secrecy, and whom it was death for mortal to see, was astonished that she should see God and live. She called the well **Beer-lahai-roi** on this account; *i.e.*, the well of living of seeing. Hagar gave birth to Ishmael, Abraham being then eighty-six years old. In the history of the Ishmaelites as a nomadic Arabian tribe the prophecy of "the angel," regarding the character of Ishmael and his descendants, has been fulfilled.

"He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man; and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me, for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me."—(Gen. xvi, 12, 13.)

**THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM RENEWED.**—Thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael, God again appeared to Abraham. During this period, Abraham had become attached to the son of Hagar, and was doubtless treating him as his heir. But God appeared to him and said, "**I am the Almighty God (El Shaddai); walk before me, and be thou perfect.**" He enjoined upon Abraham sincere worship and godly obedience, renewed the covenant both with its temporal and spiritual promises, and appointed the rite of circumcision to be performed on the eighth day after birth, upon all the male children of himself and his descendants, together with their bond servants, as the sign of the ratification of the covenant on the part of Abraham. It was on this occasion, too, that the name of Abraham was given



instead of Abram, which he had hitherto borne. Abraham means "father of a multitude." Sarai also became Sarah, *i.e.*, princess. God promised a numerous posterity, with many temporal blessings, to Ishmael; but He told Abraham that Sarah, in spite of all natural improbabilities—for she was ninety years old—should yet have a son, who was to be the true heir, and to whom the name **Isaac**, *i.e.*, laughter, was to be given, because Abraham **laughed** when he received such a strange promise.

Abraham obeyed the requirement of God, and by circumcision formally brought himself and his whole household into covenant relations with God.

**ABRAHAM INTERCEDES FOR SODOM.**—Shortly afterwards, there stood before Abraham, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day, three travellers, to whom he furnished hospitable entertainment. Abraham did not at first recognise them, but they were heavenly visitants, one especially being of superior dignity, indeed no other than "the Lord." The promise that Sarah should have a son was repeated in her hearing; she was incredulous, and laughed. On being charged with this, she denied that she had laughed, and her falsehood was sternly exposed and rebuked. Nothing is "**too hard for the Lord.**"

On the way towards Sodom the Lord disclosed to Abraham the purpose of His present visit. It was to **destroy the cities of the plain**, whose wickedness was great and persistent. Abraham received intimation of this on account of being the depository of divine blessing for all nations—of blessing which these wicked cities should never enjoy—on account of his obedience and fidelity, and in order that he

might know the fearful consequences of breaking the divine law.

“And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”—Genesis xviii, 17-20.

The two angels who accompanied the Lord went toward Sodom, and Abraham remained alone with God. In very earnest and pathetic terms he prayed Him to spare Sodom. He was very humble and very importunate. He had “taken upon him to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.” But after God had graciously advanced from fifty to ten—if only ten righteous persons should be found in Sodom, God would not “destroy the city for ten’s sake”—he had to rest content with a belief in the justice of the divine procedure.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM.—The two angels, who had proceeded towards Sodom while Abraham was conversing with the Lord, were on their arrival entertained by **Lot**. Lot had now been about twenty years in Sodom, during which time his mind had been habitually vexed by the profligate conduct and conversation of the ungodly around him. But he clung to the place in spite of its reputation for wickedness (Ezek. xvi. 49), in spite of its deleterious influence upon the religious life of himself and family. His scruples were put aside in view of his material interests and social advancement. The warning to leave when he and his property were carried off by Chedorlaomer had proved ineffectual, and now a heavy stroke falls upon him, which

is more manifestly from the hand of God, and falls with more crushing weight. He has to be forced from the place by God's destroying angel.

The wickedness of Sodom is attested by the rude conduct of the inhabitants towards the visitors whom Lot was entertaining, and by their shamelessness and fury when opposed (Gen. xix., 4-10). Lot himself was very courageous in defence of his guests and in opposing his infuriated townsmen.

When comparative quietness had been obtained, "the men at the door of the house having been smitten with blindness, so that they wearied themselves to find the door," the angels divulged the purpose of their visit—that the Lord had sent them to destroy the place, because the cry of its inhabitants "**was waxen great before the face of the Lord**"—and urged Lot to collect the members of his family and flee from the doomed city. Lot's sons-in-law despised his warning and counsel and refused to flee. They reckoned him a disturber of their peace and pleasure, a gloomy enthusiast, "**as one that mocked.**" Next morning the angels hurried Lot, his wife, and two daughters out of the city. They had delayed to leave the place, to relinquish their relatives and possessions, but the angels took their hands and "set them without the city." They were then enjoined to escape for their lives; not to look behind them, nor to stay in those plains which had proved such an attraction, but to escape to the mountains where alone safety could be found. At the request of Lot, Zoar, a "little" city, is substituted as the place of refuge, and when they had entered Zoar the dreadful catastrophe occurred which in a very short time converted the wealthy, but wicked, cities of the plain into a heap of burning ruins.

"Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew all those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground."—(Gen. xix., 25.)

The brief but suggestive fact is added, that Lot's "wife looked back from behind him, and she became **a pillar of salt.**" She was a woman who had enjoyed distinguished religious privileges and deliverances, who had been induced to obey the divine command to flee from the doomed cities, but who, having committed a great sin, suffered a sudden and fearful punishment. Even in prospect of the overthrow of Sodom, her heart seemed still to cling to its worldly pursuits and pleasures; she was guilty of unbelief and disobedience, and when the fires of wrath burst forth she too was enveloped. She became "a pillar of salt," being covered over and encased probably by the nitro-sulphureous matter which was falling so copiously, and a monument of danger of the sin of worldliness and procrastination to every age. "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke xvii., 32). (And see 2 Pet. ii., 6-9; Jude, 7). All Lot's wealth perished with the men of Sodom, and he left the town poorer than when he entered. When he fled from the fiery deluge which stripped him of the labours of years, and dared not look behind on the ruin of his hopes; when probably he was again indebted to the generosity of his uncle Abraham whom he had treated so unworthily; when he saw how greatly his wife had been infected with the worldliness of Sodom, and experienced how deeply his daughters shared in its immorality (Gen. xix., 30-35), he would see how foolish and sinful his choice of a residence had been.

With sad and anxious heart Abraham watched from afar the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. "The smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." Lot, however, had been spared.

**BIRTH OF ISAAC AND EXPULSION OF ISHMAEL.**—At length **Isaac**, the child of promise, was born. Abraham was one hundred years old, Sarah was ninety, and Ishmael was fourteen. Isaac was circumcised when eight days old. Two or three years afterwards he was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the occasion. At the feast an incident occurred which led to the **expulsion of Ishmael**. The too visible pride of the aged mother, the incongruity of maternal duties with ninety years, and the attention bestowed upon the child, excited not unnaturally his ridicule. Sarah was angry, and demanded that he and his mother should be cast out. Abraham was evidently unwilling to agree to this. The lively talk and adventurous spirit of Ishmael, added to the fact that he was the firstborn, had endeared him to his father. But God had said to Abraham, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," and it was his duty now to concentrate his affection and hopes on the heir of the promises. God therefore commanded him to assent to the demand of Sarah, and so Ishmael and his mother were expelled. In the wilderness they had a narrow escape from death by thirst, and Hagar, in her distress, withdrew some distance from her son, to avoid witnessing sufferings which she could not alleviate. But "the angel of God" appeared and directed her to a well in the neighbourhood, repeating at the same time the promise that from Ishmael a great nation should spring. Ishmael grew up to manhood, and established himself with his descendants in the vast desert track stretching between Beersheba and southern Arabia.

**TREATY BETWEEN ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH.**—**Abimelech** was the **king of Gerar**, a rich fertile district to the south of Gaza, or Philistia. He seems to have been a kind and

generous man, for when Abraham deceived him regarding Sarah (Gen. xx.) as he had deceived Pharaoh, he acted even more generously than Pharaoh had done, offering him any part of his land to dwell in. Abimelech evidently felt it would be a wise and politic thing to enter into alliance with Abraham, whom God had so manifestly prospered. He and Phichol, his chief captain, accordingly visited him, and induced Abraham solemnly to promise that he would not intrude into Abimelech's dominions, but would show kindness to him and his descendants. Abraham availed himself of the opportunity of securing his shepherds from the encroachments of Abimelech's people. A certain well had, unknown to Abimelech, been violently appropriated by his servants. As the person who had succeeded in sinking a new well, obtained a right to it and to the surrounding grazing ground, and as a free supply of water was of supreme importance for flocks, Abraham felt that he had a just cause of complaint. But the matter was amicably arranged. As an indication of his wish to live on terms of friendship with his Philistine neighbours, Abraham selected seven ewe lambs, which were accepted by Abimelech as a witness and pledge that he would protect the claim of Abraham to the well. The place where this covenant was entered into was named **Beersheba**, *i.e.*, **the well of the oath**, "because there they swear both of them." This league was renewed by the next generation. (See Gen. xxvi., 23-33.) After the expiry of 4,000 years, the well still retains its old name, a permanent memorial of these mutual oaths of fidelity and manifestations of goodwill.

After the departure of Abimelech, Abraham planted a grove or tamarisk tree in Beersheba to be a witness of his promises, and there he "**called on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.**"

THE TRIAL OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH.—The next important event in the life of Abraham was the most momentous crisis in his history. Some twenty or twenty-five years had rolled away since Isaac had been born, and during these years things had moved very peacefully and happily in the settlement at Beersheba. Abraham was secure in the friendship of his neighbours, with rights to water and pasture guaranteed by solemn treaty, and he dwelt in peace beside his numerous and ever-increasing flocks in a country famous alike for its beauty and its fertility. No doubt his heart often yearned for Ishmael, and induced him to gaze wistfully in the direction of the wilderness, whither he and his mother had strayed. But as year after year rolled away, and no tidings came to him of his brave and adventurous boy, his affections gradually gathered round Isaac, the son of his lawful wife, the child of miracle, the special gift of a covenant God, the heir of his possessions, and of the divine promises. During these years the worship of God had been continued uninterruptedly beneath the spreading boughs of the feathery tamarisks that constituted the grove, and as the event next to be mentioned testifies, the faith and piety of the patriarch had been confirmed, and his character mellowed and matured as the days of his long pilgrimage approached their close.

But in the very midst of unbroken rest and satisfied desire, when he might reasonably have expected to enjoy the repose and reward of an honoured old age, a trial befel him sharper than any he had yet met, sharper than all the rest together. His trials indeed had been many and severe. Fifty years before, at the call of God, he had abandoned his home and friends in Ur; he had forsaken his kindred in Haran; he had separated from Lot at Ai; twice he had been temporarily deprived—though through his own folly—of

his wife Sarah; he had been exposed to the evils of famine and family discord; his waiting for the promised son had been long and disappointing; he had sent away his son Ishmael, which was "very grievous" to him; and he had been a homeless wanderer in Canaan. But "after these things God did tempt Abraham," put him to the test, and led him to manifest and to exercise the sincerity and strength of his faith and obedience.

"And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."—Gen. xlii., 2.

Here surely was a trial unequalled in magnitude and intensity among the trials of the people of God, a trial calculated in every respect to wound the heart of a parent, and to shake his confidence and trust in God. Abraham must have strained his faculties to catch the exact terms of the command, and it must have taken time to comprehend them. But the voice was familiar and had frequently been welcomed, and every doubt as to the meaning of the peremptory and explicit command was quickly dispelled. "**God said,**"—the trial is to be peculiarly searching and severe; it is intended to reveal to the world the fitness of Abraham for the honour that had been conferred upon him in being chosen to be, in a special sense, "the friend of God," the depository of His will, the receiver of His promises, and to justify the confidence reposed in him by God: God himself therefore undertakes the work of trying His servant. "**Take thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest**"—it is at once definite and pathetic. Perhaps Abraham anticipated that some honour was to be conferred upon his son, who was peculiarly dear and precious—some honour which would cheer his own declining days and



give additional proof of his fidelity. His expectations were soon blighted. "**Offer Him for a Burnt Offering.**" Offer him in whom were gathered up the most sacred memories of the past, and the most brilliant hopes for the future; and for a burnt offering—to be sacrificed, and that by the father himself; to be dismembered when slain, and his mangled body to be consumed in the flames! It was a strange command; a command opposed to reason, feeling, and personal interest, which are the three great principles that actuate human conduct; a command which seemed repugnant to all he knew of the nature and character of God, to the dictates of conscience, and to the tenderest feelings of his heart; a command which seemed inconsistent with the special promises God had made regarding Isaac; a command which, if obeyed, would appear to sanction the wickedness of his heathen neighbours, among whom human sacrifices prevailed, and expose him to the upbraidings of his relatives, who would reckon him a dangerous lunatic or an unfeeling fanatic. It was an awful crisis in Abraham's life; it was a most severe test of submission, of obedience and of faith, which God had imposed. But Abraham knew the voice, and he prepared to obey.

The **obedience of Abraham** was prompt, calm, and determined. All murmuring was suppressed, natural feelings restrained, doubt silenced. There was no manifestation of rebellion, no word of remonstrance. Rising up early in the morning he made the necessary preparations, and with two attendants and Isaac, departed for **the land of Moriah**. During the journey of forty miles from Beersheba to Jerusalem, which he reached on the third day, he had

ample leisure for reflection and opportunity to return. But with steady step and unshaken resolution, though with a sad and heavy heart, he calmly proceeded to perform the painful duty imposed. When he descried afar off "the place of which God had told him," he requested his attendants to remain where they were, while he and Isaac would go forward and worship and come again to them. He prudently concealed the purpose of his journey from every one, and effectually prevented his designs from being frustrated. With Isaac alone he ascended the appointed hill. There must have been a great conflict in the soul of Abraham during this ascent, a conflict made all the keener when his wondering but trustful son artlessly put the question—a question which would pierce more deeply than a sword the parent's heart—"My father, behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering." In the firmness of his faith and hope Abraham had assured his attendants that they should return, and now under the power of the same principles he replied, "My son, **God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.**" (See Hebrews xi., 19.) At length the summit is reached, the altar is reared, the wood which had been cut and brought is laid in order, and then, with trembling lips and affectionate gaze, the old man communicates to his son the tidings that God had selected him for the sacrifice. Isaac, a vigorous young man, could easily have resisted and refused, but, after the first struggles of nature are overcome, he voluntarily submits and allows himself to be bound and "laid on the altar upon the wood." Abraham, controlling his fears and feelings, and resting in the hope that even from the ashes of the pile God can raise up his son and fulfil His promise, unsheaths the knife to slay him. But

just when his hand is about to descend, God interposes. God has no pleasure in human sacrifice; it is vain to give "the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul." He will have mercy and not sacrifice. Abraham is not behind his heathen neighbours in showing his willingness to surrender to the God whom he worships his most valued possession; he has exhibited a trustful spirit of obedience, and afforded for all generations the brightest example of the power of faith. And now that Abraham has been proved and the designs of God accomplished, by a voice from heaven his hand is stayed, and from the very altar his son is restored to him as the trophy and reward of the triumph of that faith which had been so severely tried.

"And He said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me."—(Gen. xxii., 12).

But as there had been submission and surrender there is to be also substitution and sacrifice. He, "whose are the cattle upon a thousand hills," had provided a victim in room of Isaac—"a ram caught in a thicket by his horns." God foresees and provides for every emergency; and when the ram so provided had been "offered up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son," Abraham very gratefully and appropriately called the name of the place **Jehovah jireh**, *i.e.*, Jehovah will see to it. The incident led to the use of the proverb—"In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen," *i.e.*, God will provide for your case as He did for the case of Abraham, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity."

With buoyant, happy spirits Abraham and Isaac descended. The son had, in a sense, been restored to the father "even from the dead."

In so severely trying His servant's faith, God purposed

glory to Himself, honour to Abraham, and an instructive and comforting example of the power of faith for all time. As the reward of Abraham's obedience the promises of God were unalterably confirmed. God confirms His promises by an oath, and makes Abraham happy in a sweet sense of implicit obedience, of divine approval and blessing, and in the prospect of a numerous posterity in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.

**DEATH AND BURIAL OF SARAH.**—At the advanced age of 127, Sarah, the wife of Abraham, died, "in Kirjath-arba, the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan." She was buried in the **cave of Machpelah**, which was before Mamre, in a field which Abraham purchased for 400 shekels of silver "current money with the merchant"—about £50 of our money. She had been the companion of his wanderings, the sharer of his plans and experiences, the mother of Isaac; and "Abraham mourned and wept for Sarah." His faith, and piety, and consecration to the purposes of God had not eradicated, but only intensified, his deep human love. Preparation, however, must be made for the burial of Sarah. The green earth must cover what else would be offensive, and Abraham proceeds to purchase a burying ground in which to "bury his dead out of his sight." The negotiations with the sons of Heth are minutely described. In the transaction we note the calm submission and manly independence of Abraham; we note the reverential sympathy, the solemn dignity, and pathetic gracefulness of the Hittites. The field was purchased with all requisite formalities. It was the only spot in the promised land Abraham could call his own, but it was a pledge of the rest. Though Sarah had not always acted wisely—

though, in despair of the fulfilment of God's promise, she had hastily given Hagar to Abraham; had treated Hagar, who had served her well, who had yielded to her will, and whose son had been carefully nurtured and counted for many years Abraham's heir, very harshly and unjustly; and had, by her incredulous laughter and unblushing denial of it, when the birth of her son was foretold, brought upon herself well-merited condemnation; yet she had been a faithful, obedient, and devoted wife (1 Pet. iii., 1-6). It is remarkable that Sarah is the only woman whose complete age, death, and burial are recorded in Scripture.

THE MARRIAGE OF ISAAC.—Isaac was 37 years of age when his mother died. For three years he mourned her loss. Abraham was now old and well stricken in age, and he began to feel anxious for the future comfort of his son and the continuance of the chosen seed. Some years previously, gratifying tidings had been received of his kindred in Mesopotamia, and Abraham regarded the intelligence as a seasonable hint from God by which to guide his conduct. On no pretext whatever was Isaac to leave Canaan, and on no account was he to marry a daughter of any of the tribes among whom he dwelt. Purity of life and religious worship must be preserved in the family, and the heir of the promises must not be corrupted by the daughters of Canaan. Abraham, therefore, commissioned a faithful servant—probably Eliezer of Damascus—to go to Mesopotamia and endeavour to procure from among his kindred a suitable wife for Isaac. The various steps in this matter are very simply and pathetically described—the solemn charge given by Abraham, the not unnatural difficulties urged by the servant that no young woman would leave her home and accompany a stranger, the firm

faith of Abraham that God would provide a suitable wife for Isaac, the scrupulous conscientiousness with which the servant accepted the oath that had been imposed by his master, the equipment fitted to inspire respect and confidence which the servant took with him. Traversing the route along which Abraham had originally come, the servant at length reached the district of Mesopotamia; and the same minuteness of description is continued. As he approaches the city of Nahor he revolves the delicate nature of his commission, feels his responsibility, and supplicates divine help. He is animated by a faith akin to that of his master, is evidently a man of deep piety, of firm belief in the overruling providence of God, of entire devotedness to his master's interests. The method he proposes for the discovery of the divinely-appointed bride; the delicacy of his introduction to **Rebekah** when she appears, and the way in which he notes her comely appearance, gentle and generous character, and active habits, as, through her kindness of disposition, she performs for him a task of trouble and fatigue; his wonder and expressions of piety and gratitude to "the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and truth;" the production of the presents and credentials; the promptness and cordiality with which the consent of all parties is obtained, as they acknowledge that "**the thing proceedeth from the Lord**;" the ready and enterprising spirit of Rebekah as, with the blessing of her family resting upon her, she leaves her home and accompanies the servant—all this is recorded with singular simplicity and beauty. And the closing scene befits the auspicious beginning. Isaac had been dwelling at the distant sheepfolds, which were at the well **Lahai-roi**. From choice he preferred to live on the verge of the wilderness, where he would

not be so disturbed by the society of men; and the ever-increasing flocks made it desirable to have two separate encampments. But he was naturally eager to learn as soon as possible the issue of the message to Mesopotamia, and was now at his father's encampment. Going out "**to meditate in the field at eventide,**" he chanced to see the expected caravan approach. The girlish vivacity with which Rebekah leapt from her camel when she saw Isaac, her modest demeanour, and the union which was shortly afterwards consummated, are referred to. Thus Isaac "was comforted after his mother's death," and the tent of Sarah in the midst of the encampment, which had remained untenanted since her death, was again worthily occupied. God had provided a wife for Isaac whose lively and ardent disposition made her a helpmeet peculiarly suitable to him, as giving the relief and stimulus which his slow and retiring nature required. His self-restraint and patience had met their fitting reward.

THE CLOSING YEARS OF ABRAHAM'S LIFE.—After the settlement of Isaac Abraham again married. His second wife was **Keturah**. She became the mother of six sons, each of whom ultimately gave name to an Arabian tribe. To these sons Abraham gave a portion of his property during his life time, and sent them away "unto the east country," so that Isaac still remained the recognized heir.

For forty years Abraham survived Sarah, and then, at the age of 175, he too "was gathered to his people," and was buried in the cave of Machpelah. It is pleasing to notice that Ishmael, now a man of great wealth and influence, laid aside the feelings of envy and ill-will which he might naturally have cherished against Isaac, and showed

his respect and affection for his old father by uniting with his brother in the last act of filial love. Thus, in a hoary age, died Abraham, whose character is one of the finest in all history. As a man he was shrewd, brave, self-possessed, generous, and tender, displaying those virtues which secured for him the affection of relations, the esteem of dependents, and the respect of neighbours. To his natural virtues there was added eminent piety, as evinced in his reverence, trustfulness and love to the Most High. God knew the natural fitness of the man whom he had selected for the distinguished privilege and honour of being the "Friend of God," the "Father of the faithful," the founder of the Jewish nation, the Patriarch of the Church of God, the ancestor of the promised Messiah. His character and conduct justified the choice.

**LIFE AND CHARACTER OF ISAAC.**—The life of Abraham had been stirring and eventful; and that of **Isaac** suffers by the comparison. There is little recorded regarding him, but, on the principle that one or two trivial acts frequently give a tolerably accurate index to character, we are able pretty fairly to judge what he was and did. When he was twenty or twenty-five he was taken by his father to Mount Moriah to be offered up for a burnt offering; and, with all his calmness, there must have been a genuine vein of reflective devoutness which led him so submissively to acquiesce in his father's will. He was married to Rebekah when he was forty; he had, like his father, to contend for twenty years with the doubts and murmurings of being childless; Esau and Jacob being at length given to him after earnest and persevering prayer. He was seventy-five when Abraham died, and the duties and honours of the household devolved



upon him. There follows in his career a reproduction of some of the least worthy incidents in the life of his father. He sojourned at Gerar, where he denied his wife. (Gen. xxvi., 1, 11.) God, however, solemnly renewed to him the divine covenant, and blessed him with immense possessions. He seems to have been quiet, patient, and persevering, good rather than great, reflective rather than active and influential. In his old age, when he was blind, incapable of active duty, and in a state apparently of dreamy apathy, he was sadly imposed upon by the clever scheming of his wife, and the deceptions of his son Jacob. Thinking he was dying, he solemnly handed over the blessing which carried with it a right to all the covenant promises, to Esau, as he thought, his elder and favourite son. Jacob, however, represented Esau, and secured it. This caused the old man much agitation and anxiety, and led to the flight of Jacob. Many years afterwards, when Jacob returned from Mesopotamia, he found Isaac still alive and dwelling at Mamre. Isaac lived to the age of 180. (Gen. xxxv., 28).

The histories of **Jacob** and **Joseph** occupy the remaining portion of the Book of Genesis. As the inspired narrative now becomes more simple, minute, and graphic, this descriptive sketch may be appropriately condensed.

The **life of Jacob** naturally divides itself into **four** parts. His abode in the tents of Isaac—probably until he was seventy-seven years of age—(Gen. xxv., 24, and xxvii.); the twenty years spent in the service of Laban, his uncle, at Padanaram (Gen. xxix.-xxxi.); the wanderings in Canaan, about Shechem, Bethel, and Mamre (Gen. xxxii.—xlvi.); and

the seventeen years in Egypt, where his son Joseph provided for the wants of the family. He died at the age of 147. (Gen. xlvii., 28.)

JACOB'S DECEPTION.—Isaac was sixty years of age when Rebekah bore twins—Esau and Jacob. When they grew up, Esau became a bold adventurous and skilful hunter, and Jacob became a peaceful and seemingly unambitious shepherd. The father favoured Esau, and Rebekah favoured Jacob. The two brothers differed in their appearance, in their pursuits, and in their character. Esau was rough and ruddy, bold and active, and found a fitting sphere for the exercise of his tastes and capacities in the excitements of the chase and the wild sports of the field. Jacob was quiet, and addicted to domestic pursuits. Between the two brothers a feeling of rivalry and animosity existed, which was excited and encouraged by the partiality of those whose wisdom and authority should have interposed to suppress it. A competition for precedence and the rights of primogeniture brought this feeling to a crisis. As a rule, the eldest son in Eastern families was entitled to a double portion of his father's property, and a limited authority over the other children. If the rule had been applicable in Isaac's family, Esau not only enjoyed this birthright, but was also entitled to the patriarchal blessing and to the special privileges entailed by God on the seed of Abraham. But God in sovereignty had ordered otherwise, and had made this known to the parents, saying—“**the elder shall serve the younger**” (and see Rom. ix., 10-13). In this arrangement of God Esau should have acquiesced, the parents should have united in giving Jacob the place God had assigned him, and Jacob, heir already by God's decree,

should not have adopted unkind, unbrotherly, and sinful expedients to bring about the fulfilment of the divine purposes. Parental partiality, domestic dissension, fraternal feud and fraud would thus have been avoided.

On one occasion, when Esau returned from the field, tired and hungry, and requested some red pottage from Jacob to relieve his necessity, Jacob refused to comply with his request except at a price which it was as culpable in the one to require as in the other to pay. He proposed to **sell him the pottage in exchange for the birthright**. Esau seems to have esteemed the birthright, with all the spiritual privileges it involved, very lightly; he was afraid he should starve, and so, for an immediate and momentary gratification, he "sold the birthright." Many years afterwards Jacob, with the same object in view of securing the birthright, committed a still more unworthy action. Isaac was about 140 years of age, and imagined himself on his deathbed. In these circumstances he determined to settle his worldly affairs and solemnly to dispose of the patriarchal blessing. He still favoured Esau, notwithstanding the decree of God, and the fact that Esau in the fortieth year of his age had married two idolatrous wives, thus interrupting religious harmony and introducing greater discord into the family. Isaac set himself to oppose the divine sovereignty, and frustrate the divine will. He loved Esau, and he had a special fondness for the venison which Esau procured. He therefore told him to bring some venison and receive his parting blessing. But this happened to be overheard by Rebekah, who resolved to secure the blessing for her favourite son Jacob. She knew the divine will, and both judgment and feeling coincided with it. She now feared the blessing was about to pass to Esau, and she believed that the words of

Isaac with reference to the transfer of the birthright would have the force of an infallible and irrevocable bequest. She aimed at a right object, but she resorted to improper means to gain it. Instead of earnestly reminding her husband of the divine decree, she incited **Jacob to personate Esau**, using her maternal authority to overcome his scruples and to urge him to an act of fraud upon his father and perfidy towards his brother. Long before the uncertainty of hunting and the dexterity of Esau could procure and prepare venison, Rebekah had prepared savoury meat with "two good kids of the goats," and Jacob, arrayed in godly raiment belonging to his elder brother and disguised by art to the sense of touch, had presented himself before Isaac. The confiding simplicity and partiality of the frail blind father, the artifice of the mother, and the shameless effrontery and repeated falsehoods of the son—even the name of God being profanely used to assist the deception and compel belief—made the trick successful. It is a melancholy spectacle. All sinned and all suffered. **Isaac** had no right to oppose the will of God. His object was defeated, for Esau lost the blessing; but in aiming to effect it he brought much sin on his family and much anguish on himself. The defeat of his plan, the treachery of his wife and son, the bitter wail of Esau when he discovered the deception that had been practised, and, above all, the perception of his folly, self-will, and rebellion against God, formed the punishment he endured. **Rebekah** acted wrongly in suggesting the fraud; she should have allowed the Almighty to carry out His purposes in His own way. She lost the son for whom she had plotted and sinned, and had to endure at home the distrust and anger of an injured and deceived husband and of a resentful and unscrupulous son. **Jacob**

too readily complied with his mother's suggestion in carrying out the fraud ; he trifled with his conscience, deceived his father, and betrayed his brother. He obtained the patriarchal blessing, the Most High overruling for the furtherance of His own gracious and all-wise designs the unworthy transaction, but he "brought a curse upon himself" also. He was exiled from home ; he was deceived by his uncle Laban, by his wives and his own children ; blow followed blow till his grey hairs were well-nigh brought down with sorrow to the grave. And if we do not withhold a measure of sympathy from **Esau** as we listen to his "exceeding bitter cry" of disappointment, "Bless me, even me also, O my father," we are not to forget that he had despised the birthright and had shown no appreciation of the spiritual privileges which it conveyed, that he had already for the momentary gratification of appetite sold it to Jacob, and had now no claim to it, and that by his unholy marriages and worldly disposition and conduct he had proved his unfitness to receive special spiritual privileges.

JACOB SENT TO PADAN-ARAM.—Esau not unnaturally was angry with Jacob for having betrayed and overreached him. In his disappointment he bitterly alluded to the meaning of the name which had been given to him—Jacob, the heel-holder or **supplanter** (Gen. xxv, 26). His resentment led to wicked purposes. He only awaited the death of his old father to "**slay his brother Jacob.**" Rebekah, having discovered the intention of Esau, took measures to secure Jacob's safety. She would save him from falling a victim to his brother's anger, and at the same time, by her plan, keep him from committing his brother's sin of contracting an improper marriage. Isaac had come

to see more clearly the wisdom of the divine arrangement and to acquiesce in it; he perceived that his prospects concerning Esau were blighted by his heathenish marriages, and by his selfish and revengeful character. When, therefore, Rebekah referred to the possibility of Jacob contracting a marriage among the Hittites, he cordially fell in with her proposal to send him to **Padan-aram**, to the **house of Laban**, her brother, and very fervently gave him his parting counsel and blessing, thus constituting him his heir, and the representative of Abraham.

To please his parents, and perhaps to induce his father to alter his will and reverse the blessing, Esau married his cousin Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael. She was more closely allied to him by blood, but was probably as hostile in spirit as the wives he already had. It was a miserable and useless expedient to obtain that which he had before despised. (Heb. xii, 16, 17).

**JACOB'S VISION AND VOW.**—Jacob had won his father's blessing, but he lost his father's confidence, his mother's company, and his brother's regard. When he "went out from Beersheba" he was virtually fleeing from the just resentment of his brother, a dishonoured fugitive and exile from home. For seventy years he had been his mother's favourite son, and had experienced neither hunger nor excessive toil. His position now was the reverse of comfortable. He was alone, a little wallet hanging over his shoulder and his shepherd's staff his sole possessions. He had perhaps been more sinned against than sinning, his mother's injudicious partiality and sinful plot being the cause of his exile; but his reflections must have been very melancholy as he recalled his falsehood, fraud, and blasphemy. He was a

timid fugitive, apprehensive of violence from Esau, and his conscience whispered that he was guilty, and deserved his punishment. To anxiety and trouble of mind there is soon added weariness and fatigue of body. He has walked about fifty miles from home, and can no longer obtain a glimpse of the wooded and fertile plains of Beersheba. As he journeys northwards he reaches steep dreary hills, a part of the ridge which forms the backbone of Palestine. The path is very rough, and hill seems piled above hill before him, the jagged peaks standing boldly out against the sky. The town of Luz is near, but the gates are already closed, or else he is afraid to enter. As darkness closes in he finds himself without house or home to shelter his weary head, and so, a stranger in a strange land, under the broad vault of heaven and on the bare hard earth he lays himself down, and, having arranged some stones "for his pillows," is soon asleep. His pillow is comfortless and his slumber is very broken. In his dreams the rocky steps up which he had been climbing seem to be still before him, but they resemble a staircase set upon the earth, whose top reached to heaven, and on which the angels of God were ascending and descending; while on the top of it, supreme over all, overruling and directing all, stood the Lord Himself. It was a sublime vision, and it was vouchsafed to a solitary guilty fugitive, in a time of great necessity; it was accompanied with animating and comforting promises, and it was intended to teach very important truths. Jacob not only beheld a vision, he also heard a voice. God confirmed to him the covenant blessings; recognized him as the successor of Abraham, and the representative of the chosen seed; promised him a numerous offspring, and gave him special assurance of protection during his wanderings, and of a happy restoration to his native land.

“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.”—Gen. xxviii, 15.

Jacob was thus reminded that in that desolate spot he was neither alone nor uncared for; there was given to him a lively impression of the universal presence and ever active providence of God; he was taught the close connection between the seen and the unseen, between earth and heaven, and was cheered by the promise that he himself should be greatly blessed and should be a blessing to mankind. “In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Subsequent history shows how this promise was fulfilled. He became wealthy and influential. The naturally timid, crafty, avaricious man was tried by sorrow, taught by experience, and became Israel, a prince who prevailed with God. And through him measureless blessings have flowed to the world, which has been enriched by the labours and writings of his descendants—the Prophets and Apostles, and especially by the instructions, sufferings and grace of his descendant Jesus Christ, the world’s Saviour, the sinner’s Friend. When Jacob awoke he was filled with fear, arising from a sense of the majesty, nearness, unmerited goodness of God. He said:—

“How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” (Gen. xxviii, 17.)

When he arose, while memory was clearest and emotion at its height, in order to deepen and perpetuate the impression of the significant scene he had witnessed, and help him to remember the promises God had made, he reared the stone that had been his pillow as a monumental pillar, consecrated it by pouring oil upon the top of it, and gave it the name which, during all the centuries that have followed, has been a familiar name for the sanctuary,



—**Bethel**, the House of God. Jacob anticipated that every inhabitant of the district, and every traveller who visited it, would, with the name, recall the glorious vision, and would bear witness to the covenant into which he entered. This was that, seeing God had promised His gracious presence, protection, provision, and a safe return to his father's house, he would take Jehovah to be his God; would observe the ordinances of religion, and would honour the Lord with a tenth part of his possessions as evidence and expression of the power and sincerity of his faith and gratitude. Alas! nearly thirty years elapsed before Jacob fulfilled his vow. But he has now announced his resolution to take the God of Abraham and Isaac as his God also.

JACOB IN HARAN.—At length Jacob reached the land beyond the Euphrates, opportunely met **Rachel**, the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, assisted her to water her flocks, introduced himself to her, was kindly received by her father Laban, narrated to him the position of affairs at Beer-sheba, his journey and dream, and probably the cause of his coming to Padanaram, and was engaged as Laban's servant (Gen. xxix., 1-15). Laban, becoming convinced of the value of Jacob's services, made a contract with him to serve seven years for Rachel—which years “seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her.” But when the seven years had expired, in a very deceitful manner **Leah** the elder sister was **substituted for Rachel**. When Laban attempted to justify this by appealing to the custom of the country, which prohibited the marriage of the younger before the elder daughter, Jacob agreed to give other seven years for Rachel. Thus there was a double marriage. Rachel was naturally more loved than Leah, but the latter had four

sons while the former had none. The twofold marriage produced much jealousy, bitterness, and sin. By it, however, the house of Israel was built up. Ultimately, Jacob had twelve children in Padan-aram—six sons by Leah, two sons by Bilhah, Rachel's maid, two sons by Zilpah, Leah's maid, a daughter by Leah, and a son (Joseph) by Rachel. After the birth of Joseph, and apparently about the time when the fourteen years' service had expired, Jacob desired to leave, but Laban had learned the value of a faithful and skilful servant, "he had learned by experience that the Lord had blessed him for Jacob's sake," so he makes a new arrangement with him and persuades him to remain. Laban expected that the new arrangement would turn out to his advantage, but, by a clever device on the part of Jacob, he was deprived of the best of his cattle. The service of Laban was not attractive. He was a selfish, greedy, and ungrateful master, who only desired to make as much as possible out of Jacob's skill and labour. He was envious of Jacob's wealth and prosperity, and had become reserved and churlish. His sons, too, were making insinuations against Jacob's fidelity, so that the position was far from being comfortable. In these circumstances Jacob appears to have asked the direction and help of that heavenly Guardian who had conducted him to Haran, had greatly prospered him, and had promised to bring him again into Canaan, and God commanded him to return to the land of his fathers and to his kindred. True to his character, however, Jacob did not leave openly and frankly, but, in a hurried and clandestine manner. He laid his position and plans before his wives, and, having secured their consent, while Laban was busy with sheep-shearing he fled towards Canaan with all his household and possessions. But it was difficult for him to

escape with large droves of sheep and cattle, and Laban, who had pursued after him, overtook him in the Mount Gilead. Jacob was entirely in Laban's power, but God had appeared to Laban and warned him against interrupting Jacob in his journey or doing him any injury. Laban upbraided him for having left so stealthily and for having stolen his images—which Rachel, unknown to Jacob, had concealed, and which, after a strict search, she still contrived to conceal from her father. There was a very natural recrimination on the part of Jacob, in which he referred in very forcible terms to the niggardly character and vexatious exactions of his father-in-law, and to the great hardships he had undergone during the twenty years of service in Padan-aram. But after the pent-up feelings of the relatives had found expression a solemn covenant was made, a heap of stones was erected, sacrifice offered, and a feast held to attest the alliance and cement the bond of friendship.

**JACOB MEETS ESAU.**—It was no great trial to Jacob to leave Haran, and indeed he longed to return to Canaan. But he greatly dreaded to meet Esau, whom he had cruelly wronged, and whose just resentment he still had cause to fear. In his hour of perplexity and dejection God encouraged him. "The angels of God met him" at **Mahanaim**, *i. e.*, two hosts, the place receiving that name in allusion to the unseen protection by the heavenly host of angels which Jacob's defenceless host of relatives and dependants enjoyed. Though thus encouraged, Jacob continued very anxious as to the reception which would be given him by his brother, who was now settled in Mount Seir in the land of Edom. But he acted in a very wise and brotherly manner. He sent messengers to tell of his arrival, his so doing being virtually an acknowledgment that he had wronged his brother, desired to be

reconciled to him, and was willing to make whatever reparation was in his power. And the terms of the message, while very deferential, suggested that as Jacob was now wealthy it might be politic and advantageous for Esau to be on a fraternal footing with him. The messengers brought back word that Esau was coming "**to meet him,—and 400 men with him.**" Jacob believed that such a large retinue boded open hostilities, and he was much agitated and alarmed. He did not, however, lose either his presence of mind or his trust in God. He saw the land of Canaan stretched out before him, and he resolved to advance and, if possible, secure it in possession. It was his by divine promise and favour. He adopted measures of precaution for the protection of his family and property by dividing them into two companies, one of which at least might be able to escape. He solemnly commended himself and all he had to the divine protection in a short earnest prayer, which acknowledged the undeserved goodness of God towards him, and pleaded for deliverance and for the fulfilment of the divine promises. And he despatched a valuable present to Esau, 550 head of cattle of various kinds, which were sent forward in detachments, so as to be more imposing and more effectual in conciliating his brother.

During the night he quickly formed the members of his household into the usual line of march, and saw them safely across the rapid waters of the Jabbok. He was then left alone. He was doubtless desirous calmly to consider the critical position in which he was placed. At length, in something like good hope that his clever expedient might succeed in propitiating his brother, he prepares to cross also; but he encounters an unexpected assailant. If he

thought that Esau only had to be reckoned with in entering Canaan and taking possession of it—if he thought that his own talent, or craft, or prowess would secure for him a firm footing in the land, he is soon undeceived. At first, when he felt himself in the firm grasp of an unseen but powerful opponent, he may have imagined that Esau had sent forward one of his soldiers to prevent him from crossing the ford and take summary vengeance upon him. As the struggle proceeds he becomes convinced that this is no human antagonist. It is one against whom he finds he cannot prevail, one whom he cannot throw though he strain every nerve. When dawn breaks and the man with whom he has been wrestling touches the hollow of his thigh—the strongest sinew in his body and the muscle on which he is most depending for victory in the contest—and the thigh becomes dislocated, then Jacob perceives his own utter helplessness, perceives how quickly the stranger might have mastered him. As he is falling, with desperate persistency he clings to the conqueror, and recommences the struggle in order now to retain him. He recognises the glory of the man with whom he has been wrestling as the glory of Jehovah, the Angel of the Lord, and humbly and believingly he entreats His blessing. All Jacob's self-confidence is now gone; he sees the folly of his craft, dexterity, and strength; he sees that the very God to whom he trusted for deliverance from the effects of Esau's resentment had determined by an uncommon exercise of Almighty power to humble him. There is a prolonged and persevering struggle on the part of Jacob for the divine blessing; he is at last allowed to prevail by Him who sought to be conquered, and he is successful in obtaining not only the assurance of God's blessing,

but also a new nature and a new name. He rises **Israel**, a prince of God, mighty to prevail, and, having overcome Jehovah by his prayer, he need not now fear the wrath of his brother. His meeting with Esau is subordinate to the meeting with God, and success in the greater struggle secures success in the less. For many a day Jacob carried about in his shrivelled joint and lameness the effects of this struggle, and his descendants abstained ever afterwards from eating "of the sinew which shrank." Jacob had learned the necessity of entire surrender, and of unwavering trust in the power and faithfulness of God (see Hosea, xii., 4), and he is now permitted to re-enter Canaan. He had learned the inefficacy of physical strength and carnal weapons and the efficacy of humble prayer and supplication, and he is now in a proper frame of mind to encounter Esau. And the spiritual earnestness and holy ardour he had exhibited, and his success in prayer, have made him a worthy example to all who may come after.

When Esau and Jacob met, the warmest tokens of mutual esteem and affection were shown. If Esau set out with hostile intentions, he had been restrained by God from injuring his brother, and had been influenced to manifest the greatest kindness and cordiality towards him and towards his family. With difficulty Jacob prevailed upon Esau to accept the large present which he had prepared, as he already had enough. Jacob declined the invitation of Esau to visit him at Mount Seir, and proceeded, after the departure of his brother, by easy journeys to **Succoth**, still on the east of Jordan, and so called on account of the numerous tents which he pitched there for the accommodation of his cattle. Shortly afterwards he crossed the Jordan and encamped at **Shechem**, where he bought from the

children of Hamor a piece of ground "for an hundred pieces of money." On this ground he built an altar, which he called **El-elohe-Israel**, i.e., God, the God of Israel. He remained in Shechem for several years, probably about nine, when acts of treachery and cruelty perpetrated by his sons Simeon and Levi upon the inhabitants of Shechem, in revenge for the wrong done to their sister Dinah by Shechem, the son of Hamor (Gen. xxxiv.), necessitated removal.

**BETHEL REVISITED.**—Thirty years have now passed since Jacob had solemnly vowed, on his way from Beersheba, that if God should protect him, bless him, and bring him back in peace, he would perform religious services, and dedicate to God a portion of his substance. But he has been somewhat dilatory in revisiting Bethel and fulfilling his vow, although its conditions had been exactly fulfilled. It being now—after the massacre of the Shechemites (Gen. xxxiv.)—unsafe for Jacob and his family to remain longer in Shechem, even though they had bought land there, God reminded Jacob of his unfulfilled obligations, and told him to "**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" (Gen. xxxv, 1). Jacob at once prepared to obey the divine command, but, in order that he might enter upon his new residence with all due care, and consecrate the altar with the utmost ceremony and devotion, he resolved on an immediate and thorough reformation of his household. Rachel still retained the gods of Laban her father, the Mesopotamian servants seem still to have been addicted to idolatrous and superstitious practices, and Jacob appears to have been

negligent of his duty to keep his household free from heathen corruption. Now, however, he calls for all "the strange gods" which were in the encampment, and the earrings which were used for purposes of incantation and idolatry, and he hid them at the root of a tree. He also enjoined all the members of his household to perform those rites which were meant to symbolize a moral and spiritual purification of the mind and heart. Then Bethel, which was thirty miles distant, was revisited, and the sacred vows fulfilled, the Canaanite tribes in the neighbourhood, who might have taken vengeance upon them and disturbed the services, being meanwhile restrained by a supernatural dread, by "the terror of God."

During the time that Jacob and his household remained at Bethel these events occurred:—**Deborah**, the old nurse of Rebekah, died, and was buried under an oak, which received the name of Allon-bachuth, *i.e.*, the oak of weeping; and **God appeared again** to Jacob, and renewed the threefold promise made to Abraham of the land of Canaan, a numerous posterity including the chosen seed, and blessing through them to the world. From Bethel Jacob, with his family, travelled southward, and they had reached **Ephrath**, on the way to Mamre, when **Rachel died** in child-birth, leaving a son. This was a very affecting event, and a great blow to Jacob. The child was named Benjamin, *i.e.*, the son of the right hand.

After having once more halted "beyond the tower of Edar" Jacob came to his father Isaac, who was living at Mamre. He enjoyed the company and fellowship of the venerable patriarch during the next sixteen years. Isaac and Ishmael had met at the funeral of Abraham. It is again pleasing to notice that Esau and Jacob met at Mamre to perform the funeral rites of their common father.



But not long after Jacob had settled at Mamre, and fifteen years before the death of Isaac, an event occurred which plunged him into deep distress, though it was eventually overruled by Divine Providence for the preservation of his family and the discipline of his descendants. This brings us to the history of Joseph.

The last **fourteen** chapters of the Book of Genesis are mainly occupied with the history of **Joseph**, the elder son of Rachel and the favourite son of Jacob. His life naturally divides itself into **three** parts—**seventeen** years in his father's household, in Haran and Canaan; **thirteen** years in the service of Potiphar, in Egypt, the last two of which were spent in prison; and **eighty** years during which he was the governor of Egypt, a man of wealth and power.

JOSEPH ENVIED BY HIS BRETHREN.—When the beautiful and affecting history of Joseph begins he was a lad of seventeen years of age, of superior personal appearance, with open countenance, truthful in character, who had received good impressions from his mother's training and his father's piety. His mother had died two years before this time in giving birth to his younger brother Benjamin, and Jacob could not repress a feeling of favouritism towards the children of his favourite wife. He loved Joseph for his own sake also. Joseph's ten half brothers were rough, cruel men, of bad character, while he was a youth of good principles and gentle manners. But what produced affection and partiality in the father produced envy and hatred in the ten brethren. They hated him on account of his superior moral character, which constrained him to report to their father the wicked actions practised by them at the distant outlying stations. They hated him on account of

their father's partiality towards him, which showed itself in various ways, such as presenting to him a coat or tunic beautifully embroidered, and superior to that which the others wore. And they hated him on account of two dreams which he had, and which suggested that he would be exalted above the rest of the family, who were all to do him reverence. In the one dream, while he and his brethren were binding sheaves in the field, his sheaf stood upright and theirs did obeisance to it; in the other the sun, moon, and eleven stars seemed to make obeisance to himself (Gen. xxxvii., 1-11). Joseph in narrating his dreams displayed the nobleness and frankness of his character, and the fact that his brethren "**hated him yet the more for his dreams**" shows that they recognised an undeniable and appropriate significance in them.

JOSEPH SOLD TO THE ISHMAELITES AND TO POTIPHAR.—Joseph's ten brethren having removed northward to Shechem, some fifty miles from Hebron, to feed their flocks there, Jacob requested Joseph to go north and see how his brethren and the flocks were doing, and bring him back word. He perhaps feared lest the men of Shechem might still remember the deeds of cruelty and robbery which Simeon and Levi, in revenge for their sister's shame, had committed (Gen. xxxiv.), and might rise up against them, slaying his sons and carrying off the cattle. Joseph readily obeyed. He little thought that over twenty years would elapse before he should again see his father—twenty years of hardship and strange vicissitude!

Joseph did not find his brothers at Shechem, but a man whom he met relieved him from disappointment and perplexity, by telling him that they had removed to Dothan, about twelve miles further to the north-west. In the rich valley

of **Dothan**, with its two wells, as the name implies, he found them. But alas! absence from home and lapse of time had not lessened their envy, and when they espied in the distance the master of dreams, as they called him, they conspired against him to kill him. In that distant and lonely place the wicked deed could be committed with impunity, a story could easily be concocted with which to deceive their old father, and they would be rid of a mean tale-bearer and offensive rival. Reuben, to gain time, "to rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again," induced the others to alter their plan, and instead of murdering him, to let him down to the bottom of a pit and leave him there. When Joseph came up they at once seized him, stripped off his long many-coloured tunic, bound him, and cast him into an empty pit. It was a cruel wicked action, but jealousy and hatred had dried up every feeling of pity and compassion. They neither heeded his bitter cries for mercy nor considered the effect which such a terrible blow would have upon their aged and revered father. Undisturbed by Joseph's cries they calmly, but with heartless barbarity, "sat down to eat bread," probably to enjoy the very dainties Joseph had brought from their father's tent.

Again, however, their plans were altered. Happening to look in the direction of the plain of Dothan, they beheld a company of **Ishmaelites**, or **Midianites**—descendants of Ishmael, Hagar's son, and of Midian, Keturah's son, who had mingled together on the east side of the Jordan, and were now an enterprising commercial people—who had come from Gilead and were carrying down spices and balm, and myrrh, the various products of Arabia and India, which were to perfume the living and embalm the dead, to the land of Egypt. The sight of these travelling merchants suggested

the idea to **Judah** that it would be very unprofitable to slay their brother and conceal his blood, that they could dispose of him with equal certainty and with greater advantage if they sold him to these merchants as a slave. Having no wish to commit a greater crime than was necessary to effect the desired end, the others readily approved of this proposal; Joseph was hastily drawn up out of the dark and miry dungeon, and sold to the merchants for the pitiful sum of **twenty pieces of silver**, about £3 of our money. As the merchants knew they would get a ready purchaser in the Egyptian slave-market for a handsome and intelligent youth, and would gain at least thirty shillings by the transaction, (see Exodus xxi., 32, from which it appears that the price of an ordinary slave was thirty shekels, or pieces of silver,) they were doubtless well satisfied with the bargain, but to the brothers it was a poor speculation, the share of each, if Reuben also, who happened at the time to be absent, received a share, being only six shillings. However, the dreamer was now out of the way, and was last seen by his brethren in all probability tied to one of the camels on his way to the Mizraim market. A purchaser for Joseph was soon found, no less a person than one of the leading state functionaries of Pharaoh, into whose large and splendid house he was introduced as a slave, but who soon came to appreciate his worth and to bestow upon him a confidence which few freemen enjoy.

JACOB AND HIS FAMILY.—Before the history shifts from Canaan to Egypt and proceeds to trace the fortunes of Joseph only, it tells us how the conduct of Joseph's brethren was concealed from their father, the effect which the supposed death of Joseph had upon him, and the shameful deeds committed by Judah.

**Reuben** was absent when the bargain for the sale of Joseph was made with the Midianites. It was evidently his intention to return to the pit stealthily, rescue his brother, and deliver him to his father. Great was his anxiety and grief when he returned and found that the pit was empty and his brethren were gone. He was relieved when he learned that Joseph had not been slain, but only sold into slavery. He then seems to have joined with the others in the endeavour to deceive their father by the falsehood that Joseph had been destroyed by a beast of prey, a story for which they obtained ready belief by killing a kid of the goats, tearing the much-hated tunic to pieces, dipping the torn coat in the blood of the kid, and on their return home presenting the tragic memorial before their father. The hypocrisy and cruelty of these men, their affected sympathy and heartless mockery, are astonishing. The bitter grief of Jacob, who refused to be comforted, and who wept, and said "**For I will go down into the grave for my son mourning,**" may well have made them relent and melted them into sincere sympathy and compassion. The cry of Jacob has been thus pathetically paraphrased:—

“Oh yes, 'tis his garment; but where is my child?  
Is he torn, is he torn by the beasts of the wild?  
Alas! 'tis his life's blood that crimson it o'er;  
And these arms will encircle my darling no more.  
Ah! why did I send him unguarded away,  
Where the grim tiger crouches to spring on his prey!  
For help did his voice echo loud through the vale,  
And his cries, all unheard, died away on the gale.  
Ah, me! there was none to receive his last breath,  
Or to close his loved eyes in the slumber of death.  
And now 'tis denied me, at evening's close,  
To repair to the place where his ashes repose,  
And there, all unseen, nurse the feelings of grief,  
Which afford to the desolate soul a relief.

Come, night, with thy shadows encircle me round,  
 And hide every object in darkness profound ;  
 For this world is a waste that I would not behold  
 Since the heart that could cheer me is senseless and cold.  
 So bring me the sackcloth and over my head  
 Let handfuls of ashes in silence be spread ;  
 For my heart is quite broken, my peace ever flown,  
 And my grey hairs with grief to the grave must go down."

Jacob remained for many years ignorant of the heartless cruelty of his ten sons, and of the fate of Joseph. He was not ignorant, however, of their wickedness. **Reuben** (Gen. xxxii., 22), **Simeon**, and **Levi** (Gen. xxxiv. 25-29) had been guilty of heinous sin, and had forfeited the privileges of the birthright. The pre-eminence now of right belonged to **Judah**, but he also made shipwreck of his integrity. Casting off the restraints of religion, he married into a Canaanite family, and was many years afterwards guilty of sin with **Tamar**, his daughter-in-law. The xxxviiiith chapter brings to a sad and dishonourable close for the present the history of Jacob and his family. It is, however, worthy of note that the disreputable conduct of those referred to in this chapter did not prevent Him "who made Himself of no reputation" from coming in the line of **Judah** and **Tamar**, and their illegitimate son **Pharez** (Matt. i., 3).

JOSEPH IN POTIPHAR'S HOUSE.—**Egypt** is now to be for centuries the scene of the inspired history—Egypt, then the capital of civilisation, the home of art and learning, whose sphinxes, pyramids, temples, and tombs, defying the effacing finger of time, remain, after more than thirty centuries, to testify to her wealth and power. As the inscriptions on these monuments represent with fulness and accuracy

various details connected with the court of the Pharaohs and the customs of the people, we are able to form a clear conception of the manners which prevailed and the scenes to be witnessed in the time of Joseph. To a young lad accustomed only to rural scenery and to the duties of pastoral life it must have been a great change to be transported from the quiet valley of Hebron to the busy, active world of Egypt, with all its luxury and refinement, its idolatry and sin, from the fond caresses of an indulgent father to the blows and chains of slavery. **Joseph entered Egypt as a slave.** Amid struggles and tears he had been borne off by strangers to a strange land, but, though a slave, he manifested a truly noble nature. He was scrupulously conscientious and faithful, "the Lord was with Joseph," and evidently, even among idol-worshippers, Joseph did not neglect the worship of the God of his fathers. The observant eye of his master, **Potiphar**, soon discovered his superior qualities, his industry, prudence, and trustworthiness. He "**saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand,**" and he advanced him to the position of chief or confidential servant in his household. The speedy promotion and success of Joseph were due to the blessing of God, who had bestowed upon him special capacities and virtues; but we are not to overlook the self-denial, the devotion to his master's interests, the honesty, and shrewdness which he, by divine help, was enabled to display. He was elevated to a position of influence, but it was also a position of temptation, as his master committed all his property to his care. Joseph, however, was strictly honest, and must have been happy in having secured the respect and confidence of his master, in

the consciousness of doing his duty with fidelity, and in the sense that he enjoyed the loving presence of his heavenly Father. Potiphar found in Joseph adherence to truth, a superiority to the disposition and vices which generally characterised his slaves, and rare mental and moral qualities. He came to admire and respect the religious principles which his servant professed, and to place such unbounded confidence in Joseph as warranted the bestowal upon him of the general superintendence of his establishment and estate, headship over his farm and family. It is evident that the indulged favourite of Jacob possessed beneath his fair exterior the strength of religious principle and of natural endowments. And if now and then he had a sense of isolation and recalled the pleasant memories of bygone years, linked with vague possibilities of the future before him, if he thought of the loneliness of his father bereft of his service and society, and of the crushing sorrow he must have experienced when he learned his fate, if he indulged the vision that his brothers would repent of their unnatural sin, make confession of it, and endeavour to discover him and procure his emancipation—if these memories and thoughts passed before him they did not at least hinder him in the discharge of the duties that devolved upon him. The likelihood is that the lapse of years softened the memory of his sufferings, while the remembrance of parental instructions and example, of stories of Bethel, Mahanaim, and Peniel, now hallowed and enforced by his own experience, would lead to a greater exercise of faith and trust and to the faithful observance of religious duties. It is likely, too, that Joseph availed himself of all the opportunities within his reach of becoming acquainted with the language, literature, and customs of Egypt; and that, being thoughtful, and observant, and



industrious, he rapidly developed the culture of both mind and heart. It is at least clear that he had been preserved from morbid despondency, had thrown off vain regrets and stifled vindictive feelings, and had, by his own manliness and faith in God, risen to a position of responsibility and honour.

JOSEPH TEMPTED BY POTIPHAR'S WIFE.—About ten years had been passed by Joseph in the house of Potiphar when an event occurred which greatly affected his destiny, and the estimate which Potiphar formed of his piety and integrity. Joseph was now twenty-seven years of age, in the prime of life, and good looking—"a goodly person and well favoured." His master's wife, true to the character of the women of ancient Egypt for looseness of morals and unfaithfulness to the nuptial bond, was struck by this picture of manly beauty, threw herself in Joseph's way, became gradually more familiar in manner and warm in speech, and finally, when the hints she threw out were not taken, threw off restraint, and with unblushing effrontery declared her wish, and tried to compel his consent. Joseph, however, manifested much forbearance, self-control, and adherence to principle. He avoided her as much as he could, resisted her importunities, endeavoured to appeal to her better nature, pointed out the ingratitude and baseness of the sin to which she was tempting him,—a sin against himself, against her, against her husband who had entrusted to him the management of his affairs and whose confidence and kindness would be betrayed, and, especially, a sin against the God he worshipped and professed to serve. **"How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"** Thus divine grace, and religious principle, and decision of character enabled Joseph

to resist this temptation, to ward off this attack upon his integrity and virtue. Possibly an intrigue with his master's wife might have helped him to greater advancement, to liberty, and to wealth. Joseph successfully resisted every plea of this kind, as well as those which came from the entreaties and embraces of Potiphar's disloyal wife.

But Joseph's faithful rebukes and persistent refusals at length aroused other feelings in the mind of the tempter—feelings of hatred, a desire for revenge. Fondness is transformed into ferocity, unhallowed passion into bitter resentment. If she cannot corrupt him she is resolved to ruin him, and she becomes as remorseless in her projects of revenge as she had been shameless in her solicitations to wrong. There is another temptation to sin; Joseph, terrified by the suddenness of the onset, and bent only on his personal preservation from guilt and dishonour, rushes from the presence and touch of the tempter, losing his outer garment in the struggle; first to the servants of the house, who doubtless already bear envy and dislike to the Hebrew stranger, and envy him his elevation and success, and then to her husband on his return home, she tells the story that Joseph had insulted her and endeavoured to do her wrong. By falsehood and defamation she tries to destroy the character, blast the prospects, and embitter the life of her master's loyal and faithful servant, while she professes to use the language of insulted virtue, and poses as one who is modest and loyal, and has been badly treated even by her husband who had **"brought in the Hebrew servant unto her to mock her."** She charges Joseph with the very sin to which she had tried to allure him, and the garment which in his flight he had left seems to confirm the truth of her report. Potiphar is at first

staggered by a story which brands one whom he had trusted and esteemed on account of his high moral character as a designing villain and consummate hypocrite, but he is induced to believe it. He was naturally angry, "his wrath was kindled," and without further enquiry, seeing by the laws of Egypt he could not inflict capital punishment, he took Joseph and put him into the prison or round house "where the king's prisoners were bound," the prisoners who had offended the monarch himself, **and he was there in the prison where his "feet were hurt with fetters, and he was laid in iron."** (Ps. cv., 18.) It shows the true nobility of Joseph's character that he was content to lie under the cruel suspicion of having wronged the man whom he had faithfully served, and whose confidence and esteem he most prized, rather than inflict upon him a deeper wound by exposing the infidelity of his wife. He submits to the calumny, falsehood, and injustice, and says nothing to criminate the guilty or justify himself, being fully conscious of his own innocence, and believing that God in His own good time and way would vindicate his character, and deliver him from the dark and loathsome dungeon. Like One still greater, and of whom he is a remarkable type, he "opened not his mouth," "when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously."

**JOSEPH IN PRISON.**—The same qualities which had secured advancement in the house of Potiphar, secured advancement, and even comparative freedom, in the king's prison. Perhaps Potiphar had some misgivings about his wife's character—was not fully convinced of the truth of her story, and wished to avoid public scandal. Perhaps the

keeper of the prison doubted the innocence of Potiphar's wife, and had previous knowledge of the high character and trustworthiness of Joseph. At all events, considering the greatness of the crime with which Joseph was charged, he seems to have been leniently treated, and the keeper certainly reposed unusual confidence in him in placing all the other prisoners under his custody, more strictness and vigilance being expected in a state prison than in an ordinary one. We cannot, however, fail to see that the secret of his position and prosperity lay in his piety, and in the fact that **"the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison,"** and **"made all he did to prosper."** Though degraded from an honourable and important office, though branded as an impostor and imprisoned for a crime of which he was innocent—and to one of his age, prospects, and moral sensibilities this must have been peculiarly overwhelming and oppressive—Joseph was cheered by the presence and favour of God. Though shut out from social intercourse and the light of heaven, he was not deprived of divine communion and celestial consolations. Placed in very untoward and perilous circumstances, he yet rose above gloom and despondency, showed his willingness to be usefully employed, displayed such aptitude and ability as commanded the confidence and esteem of the keeper of the prison; so that he came to be as much trusted in the prison as he had been before in Potiphar's house, and by his power to enforce prison discipline and preserve order, by his knowledge how to conciliate and how to command, he inspired respect and secured obedience.

After Joseph had obtained this position of trust in the prison, it happened that two men of high office were

committed to his care—viz., the chief butler and the chief baker of the king of Egypt. Joseph discharged his painful duty with strictness, yet with tenderness and sympathy. Observing one morning that these men were depressed he kindly inquired into the cause of their sorrow, and encouraged them to give him their confidence, that, if possible, he might alleviate their distress. He found that two dreams which they had dreamed, and which somehow had made a peculiar impression upon their minds, occasioned the sadness. It was just three days till Pharaoh's birthday—a day generally chosen for deciding the fate of political or courtly offenders—and doubtless the associations of the day and the men's natural anxiety contributed to form the character of their dreams. These related to their past employments, and were felt by them to be ominous of what was to happen. They were exceedingly dejected because there was no one who could interpret the dreams and predict the future. Joseph on learning the cause of sadness said, "**Do not interpretations belong to God?**" He reproved them for desiring to resort to the diviners and magicians of Egypt, who claimed a prerogative which belonged to God only. When the dreams were narrated to Joseph, under the guidance of divine inspiration he expounded them. The dream of the chief butler or cup-bearer represented him as gathering grapes and pressing the juice as formerly into the king's cup, while that of the chief baker or cook represented him as carrying on his head three wicker baskets containing baked meats for the royal table, which some birds came and devoured. Joseph interpreted the former dream to mean speedy restoration to office, and the latter to mean death by the hands of the public executioner; and the events corresponded to this interpretation. He no doubt displayed here much sagacity,

candour, and frankness, but we cannot fail to recognise the special guidance of God's Spirit.

How affecting, too, is the appeal which Joseph made to the butler! He had shown him sympathy, granted him relief, and helped to inspire hope. It was only proper and just that the butler should show sympathy and do him a service in return.

"But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon."—Genesis xl., 14, 15.

Joseph, though he complained of injustice, did not criminate his brothers or point invectives against Potiphar and his wife, and we cannot but admire his reticence and his magnanimity. How base and inexcusable the ingratitude of the butler! "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him."

JOSEPH BEFORE PHARAOH.—The next we read of Joseph is his being hurriedly summoned by the servants of the king to appear at court. But this does not occur till two full years after the release of the chief butler, who, in spite of the expression of his acknowledgements to Joseph and resolution not to forget his sympathy and kindness, but to use efforts for his liberation, yet amid the congratulations of friends and the joy of his own restoration quite neglected his former companion and friend. It must have been very tantalizing to Joseph, extremely disappointing and perplexing, after all his fidelity and trust in God, to be confined for such a lengthened period in an Egyptian prison. But it was well for him, for his family, and for the world. As weeks and

months passed and he was forced to the conclusion that the butler had forgotten him, that Pharaoh was indifferent, or that there were secret influences behind the throne which frustrated all efforts in his behalf, Joseph learned to cease from men and to commit himself more entirely to God, who had given him the power to interpret dreams, had mixed him up with matters of life and death, and must surely have some important work for him to do. There was time for reflection, for the discipline of hope and disappointment. Joseph's character was expanding and maturing under difficulties. And when the time for his liberation came, we do not find that the suffering and injustice have left any trace of bitterness against his fellows, but we find a self-possession, a dignity, such power of governing self and commanding others, such faith in God and submission to His will, as eminently fitted him for the high position God had designed him to fill. In the discharge of the ordinary duties of the prison he had found the best cure for a wounded heart, and had given ample proof of his abilities and acquirements. When Joseph's principles had been sufficiently tested, and his character for calmness and power consolidated, the hour of release came.

Pharaoh had some dreams which greatly agitated him. They were a revelation from God, a revelation which concerned the welfare of his people, but he could not interpret them. The whole court was in a state of confusion and anxiety. The magicians and wise men could offer no explanation. At length the chief butler was reminded of Joseph, "a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard" who had interpreted, and interpreted correctly, the dreams of himself and of his companion. The butler

“remembered his faults,” and recalled this incident, not to serve Joseph and secure the liberty he longed for, but to serve the king. Joseph accordingly is hastily brought out of the dungeon, and, after making such arrangements as enable him to appear with decency and due respect, he is ushered into the royal presence. Joseph is calm and humble, disclaims all ability of himself to unfold the secret counsels of heaven, but expresses his belief that **“God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.”** The dreams of Pharaoh had been thoroughly Egyptian. As he was standing on the banks of the Nile, on whose annual rise and overflow the country was dependent for irrigation and richness, seven fat kine which came up out of the river seemed to be devoured by seven lean kine which appeared after them. He also dreamed that seven full ears on one stalk were devoured by seven empty or withered ears which sprang up after them. Joseph interpreted these dreams with an air of truthfulness and divine authority which commended the interpretations to the mind of the king as being unquestionably correct. He explained them as foreshadowing a single course of events, namely, seven years of abundance, to be followed by seven years of extreme scarcity; and he advised the king, in order to lessen as much as possible the miseries of famine, to lay up a store of corn in the cities during the coming years of plenty, under the care of some discreet and able minister.

THE HONOURS CONFERRED UPON JOSEPH.—In proposing to Pharaoh that he should appoint one to collect corn during the years of plenty, we believe Joseph acted with thorough honesty of purpose, and had little thought that he, a Hebrew, a slave, a prisoner, an untried young man, should be



the person so appointed. But Pharaoh at once recognised by the self-possession and shrewdness which Joseph had manifested that he was the very man to whom, in this emergency, the interests of the country might be safely committed, that he was "**a man in whom the Spirit of God is;**" and he thereupon elevated him to be ruler over his house and people, to be the highest in the land, himself only excepted, invested him with the seals of office and the tokens of royal favour, and caused the public crier to call before him as he rode forth in the royal chariot, "Bow the knee." Two additional circumstances attended Joseph's elevation. He received a new name—"Zaphnath-Paaneah," which is generally supposed to mean "the revealer of secrets," and he was married to **Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah**, priest of On. His honours and enjoyments, however, did not prevent him from undertaking the journeys and assuming the anxieties incident to the responsible office which he now filled. "He went out over all the land of Egypt." Joseph was thirty years of age at the time of his elevation.

How strange the links in the chain of circumstances which had brought Joseph to this position—the envy and hatred of his brethren, the wickedness of Potiphar's wife, the false accusation, the unjust imprisonment, the disobedience of Pharaoh's servants, the anger of the king, the dreams of these servants and of Pharaoh—and they all lead up to the elevation of Joseph to the right hand of the monarch of Egypt! God had been laying his plans and preparing his instruments at very different times and in very different places. Might not Joseph now hope for the fulfilment of his own dreams?

JOSEPH'S BRETHREN VISIT EGYPT.—Eight years have passed since Joseph became the ruler over Egypt. These have been busy years for him in gathering and storing corn, and, during the last year, in selling it to the people. He had laid up in store, during the seven years of abundance, so large a quantity of grain that when the years of scarcity arrived he was able to sell not only to the Egyptians—all of whom, except the priests, alienated to the sovereign, in order to obtain corn, first their money, then their cattle, and finally their lands and their persons—but even to the inhabitants of neighbouring countries. In Egypt alone, by means of the foresight and prudent administration of Joseph, was there a sufficient supply.

During these years, too, two sons had been born to Joseph, the first being named **Manasseh**, *i.e.* forgetting, “For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father’s house,” *i.e.*, the keen longings felt for kindred and home are now alleviated, and no painful remembrance of the past remains,—and the second being named **Ephraim**, *i.e.* fruitful, “For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction,” an acknowledgment of the divine goodness, and an expression of his gratitude.

The famine which visited Egypt seems to have been very general. Canaan also felt its effects—and Jacob, the heir of promise, with his numerous household, is represented as ready to perish for lack of food. The report that there was corn in Egypt having reached him, he sent his sons, with the exception of Benjamin, down thither to purchase some. Having arrived in Egypt, the ten brethren appeared before the governor and made obeisance, according to the Oriental custom, by prostrating themselves with their faces

to the earth—thus remarkably fulfilling the dreams of Joseph's youth. Joseph at once knew his brothers, but they failed to recognise him. Desirous of seeing if they were altered in disposition, to humble them and bring them to a due sense of the injustice and cruelty of which they had been guilty against himself, and doubtless also to obtain, without prematurely revealing himself, much desired information regarding his father and Benjamin, he spoke roughly to them and committed them to prison as spies who had come "to see the nakedness of the land." Joseph obtained the information he desired; and his brothers felt that the sudden calamity which had befallen them was a just retribution for the great crime of their life. After three days Joseph released them from the fears and rigours of the Egyptian prison, supplied them with corn, and ordered his steward "to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way." Simeon, however, was detained in chains as a hostage, and they were commanded to bring their youngest brother if they came again. Their astonishment and fear when they discovered the money in the sack's mouth of each, and the bitter wail of Jacob when all that had befallen them was narrated—

"Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." (Gen. xlii., 36.)—  
make the story exceedingly natural and touching.

**JOSEPH REVEALS HIMSELF TO HIS BROTHERS.**—When the supply of corn was exhausted, Jacob's sons had to return to Egypt. It was necessary that Benjamin should this time go with them. At first Jacob refused to comply with this demand, but, under the pressure of necessity, and the urgent entreaty of Judah who undertook to be surety for

Benjamin's safety, he yielded, and sent away the ten charged with a present to the governor, and solemnly commended to the divine protection. Contrary to their expectation, the men received on their return to Egypt a cordial welcome; no apology or defence was allowed regarding the money which they had found in their sacks' mouth, and which they were now prepared to refund; Simeon was restored to them without delay, and they had the high honour of dining with the governor, who made kind inquiries regarding their own welfare and the health of their father. Feelings of fear, surprise, and great astonishment were successively excited by these attentions, by the reply of the steward that "their God, and the God of their father had given them treasure in their sacks," by the strangely affectionate words of the governor to Benjamin, "God be gracious unto thee, my son," and, especially, by the fact that their seats at table were arranged in the order of their ages, and that Benjamin received as a mark of special honour a mess five times as large as any of the others. Gradually all cause of fear was removed, "and they drank and were merry" with the governor. Next day they were all dismissed with a liberal supply of corn. But a terrible trial yet awaited them. They had only got a little way from the city on the way to Canaan, when the governor's steward was seen to follow in hot pursuit. On overtaking them, he charged them with having stolen the governor's silver cup, his divining cup. They were shocked at such an accusation, and, conscious of innocence, readily proposed that the guilty one, if he were found among them, should die, and the rest of them become the governor's slaves. But the steward fixed that he with whom the cup should be found was to be a slave, while the rest were to be blameless. A sense of relief must have been

experienced as brother after brother protested his innocence and opened his sack, but what was their horror and distress when amid the corn in Benjamin's sack the silver cup was found! One and all in deepest grief returned to the city. Joseph, expecting their return, for it was by his instigation the cup had been placed in Benjamin's sack, had not left the house and was prepared to receive them. But when they fell down before him with their faces to the ground, he sternly questioned them: "What deed is this that ye have done?" Judah, speaking for the rest, broke out with the acknowledgment, "**God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants,**" and detailed with affecting simplicity the conversation with their father respecting Benjamin, concluding with a strong representation of the anguish which the loss of Benjamin would inflict on him (Gen. xliv., 14-34). When Joseph heard the touching story and witnessed the sincere grief of his brethren, their love for his father and for Benjamin, he fairly broke down before them. His object in proving his brethren had been accomplished, and he found that they were now very different men from what they were when they heartlessly sold him into slavery; that they were truly humbled on account of past sin, and united into a loving and attached family. We do not need to dwell on the scene that followed, when the doubt and hesitation on the part of Joseph gave way before a resistless tide of long pent up emotion, and, alone with his brethren, he informed them that he, the governor of Egypt, was no other than their long lost brother. He had hitherto constrained himself to assume the appearance of severity in order to awaken within them a due sense of the crime of which they had been guilty, and to test their feelings, but now he puts forth efforts to calm their fears, to comfort and gladden their hearts. He

tells them that God had sent him before them to save their lives by a great deliverance, and that they had only been the instruments employed by God in fulfilling His purposes. He proposes that his father and the whole family should come down into Egypt and settle in Goshen—at least during the five years of famine which have yet to run—and assures them that he will make ample provision for them. By his affectionate embraces he removes their first feelings of surprise and perplexity, and convinces them that he bears no ill-will for their past cruelty, but cherishes towards them feelings of fraternal love. The arrangement which Joseph had proposed for the support of the family in Egypt was heartily confirmed by Pharaoh, who, realising his obligation to Joseph, gladly embraced the opportunity of showing kindness to the kindred of a public benefactor. Pharaoh also sent down waggons to transport the women and children. Joseph sent away his brethren, with many valuable presents, and with the parting advice, "**See that ye fall not out by the way**"—a gentle, but as he well knew a necessary, hint that they should lay aside all feelings of resentment and envy, and avoid causes of quarrel.

It had been a severe trial to Jacob to be left alone in the tent, deprived of all his twelve sons. Doubtless his prayers on their behalf had been frequent and fervent, and often had he gazed in the direction of Egypt in order to descry the returning caravan. At length he is relieved. Benjamin and Simeon, too, are there, and he is satisfied and thankful. But there is cause for greater thankfulness than he imagines. The brethren report that "**Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.**" Jacob is at first quite overcome by this sudden and startling intelligence. His

ten sons had rather avoided mentioning the name of Joseph, and for many years he had been as dead. "Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." But his unbelief is speedily dispelled by the sight of the splendid presents which Joseph had sent, and of the waggons of Egyptian construction sent by Pharaoh for the conveyance of the family to Egypt. The evidence that his long lost and best-beloved son was alive revived his spirit, and he felt that he had nothing more to expect or desire in this world than again to see the face of Joseph.

"And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die."—Gen. xlv., 28.

JACOB GOES DOWN TO EGYPT.—In making the resolution to accept the invitation of Joseph to go down to Egypt, Jacob manifested much vigour and much faith. At the age of 130, and after so many wanderings and hardships, it must have been a trial again to change his residence. Hebron had now been his home for many years, and it had gathered around it hallowed associations. It contained the sepulchre of his father and grandfather, and was sacred in the annals of his family. And to leave Canaan, the land for which he had endured many trials, which he hoped to enjoy in possession, and where at last he expected to be buried, made the change especially trying. He might naturally ask, too, if it were safe to go down to Egypt, for Joseph might die or the heart of the king towards him might alter. Then there was the dark prophecy given to Abraham, "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them 400 years." (Gen. xv., 13.) Is that prophecy now to be fulfilled? Amid the hurried preparations for the journey these thoughts did

not so fully take possession of his mind, but when he came to Beersheba, in the extreme south of Canaan and on the border of the desert which stretched towards Egypt, he felt them in all their force. At Beersheba, he "offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac." God appeared to him and authorized him to leave Canaan and go to Egypt. He promised His presence and protection, renewed the covenant made with Abraham, assured him that his posterity would return to Canaan, and comforted him by the declaration that when he died his son Joseph would close his eyes in peace.

So Jacob, reassured and refreshed by this gracious manifestation, resumed his journey. He had doubtless, according to the order of Pharaoh, left much of his less valuable and more cumbrous possessions behind, but he took with him a great household and large herds of cattle. Jacob had now seventy descendants, a mere handful compared with what they afterwards became, yet sufficiently numerous to make the journey to Egypt slow and anxious. As it was an important era in the history of the world and in the development of the divine purposes, a census of the number of persons and of the tribes into which they were to be distributed was taken. The **descent to Egypt** took place **215 years** after the Call of Abraham. Joseph had no suspicion of the destiny awaiting his family when he desired the presence of his father and brethren in Egypt, and Pharaoh was only desirous of pleasing his faithful viceroy, but God was carrying out His own gracious and all-wise designs for the good of His Church and for the salvation of the world.

**THE MEETING OF JACOB AND JOSEPH.**—In Joseph's reception of his father there was combined the affection of a son and



the policy of a sagacious prince. Jacob was not coming to Egypt as a mere dependent upon the bounty of the king, but as a great patriarchal chief, for whom a suitable residence had been prepared and set apart. When therefore, Judah, who had been sent forward for the purpose, announced to Joseph the arrival of their father, the latter went out to meet him with courtly ceremony. But all state formality and policy were forgotten when father and son met in a long and loving embrace. The reunion was a rich recompense for the anxiety and suffering of the long separation. The old man was still vigorous, and his mind was clear and penetrating; the smooth brow of Joseph was now wrinkled with the cares of state, and the coat of many colours had been exchanged for the royal apparel of Egypt, but he was as humble, as affectionate, and as pious as the young Hebrew lad of seventeen had been.

Joseph very shrewdly, and with the cordial concurrence of Pharaoh, taking advantage of the occupation of his brethren as shepherds to provide them with a separate residence, selected for them the rich pasturage grounds of Goshen. Their safety lay in their isolation. Had they remained in Palestine on the same footing as their fathers, they must have scattered over the country in order to find food for their cattle, and might probably have mingled with the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan. But now, that the Hebrews might continue a separate people and pursue the simple pastoral life to which they had been accustomed, that they might not offend the Egyptians by their religious observances, and might be prevented from learning to worship the idols of Egypt, and that they might be ready in due time to quit Egypt in a body when they were finally

to obtain possession of Canaan, the land of Goshen is, in the providence of God, assigned to them as a residence. And as "every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians," this antipathy prevented absorption and matrimonial alliances, and kept the seed of Jacob separate and distinct.

**JACOB BEFORE PHARAOH.**—Joseph felt it to be right that before his father and brethren settled within Egyptian territory they should be formally presented to his royal master. He, accordingly, selected five of his brethren and presented them to Pharaoh, who kindly made inquiries regarding their occupation, gave them permission to settle in Goshen, and, being desirous of promoting them, offered to make those of them who had special fitness for the position the chief of his herdsmen. Joseph then led in his old father, now bent not more with the weight of unusual years than with the oppression of long-continued sorrow. The interview which took place is most interesting, whether the dignity of the parties or the conversation which took place be considered. It is an interview between the king of the most populous, civilised, and wealthy kingdom in the world, and Jacob, the descendant of Abraham, the prince who had power with God, the progenitor of a long line of kings and prophets, of a nation that was to be as numerous as the sand of the sea shore or as the stars of heaven, the ancestor of the promised Saviour of the world. Jacob does homage to the sovereign of Egypt, and with feelings of earnestness and gratitude supplicates the divine blessing to rest upon him and the country over which he ruled. Pharaoh is specially struck with the venerable appearance of Jacob, as, leaning on his staff, he bends under the weight of years and infirmities, and puts to him the kindly and natural question—"How old

art thou?" Jacob's reply is very impressive and pathetic. It is the reply of a heart not merely burdened with the weight of years, but with the thought of the vanity, the shortness and uncertainty, the solemnity of life; which in its nature is a "pilgrimage," a journey from one country to another, and had in Jacob's own case been one of almost constant change; in its length a life of "few days"—few in comparison with the eternity of God, the length of human existence, or the 175 and 180 years during which his own grandfather and father had lived, and in its character "evil," full of sin and sorrow.

"And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."—Gen. xlvii., 9.

THE LAST INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF JACOB.—During the remaining years of famine, Jacob and his family were sustained by Joseph, and for seventeen years after the descent into Egypt, which were probably the happiest years in the history of the family, Jacob was still spared. At the end of this period, it was found that the family of Jacob had greatly multiplied, and that their possessions had increased. Then "the time drew nigh that Israel must die." Three incidents of importance took place before his death. He had an **interview with his son Joseph** in which he earnestly entreated him to see that he was buried in the sepulchre of his fathers. He required an oath from Joseph to that effect—probably that the father's dying request fortified by an oath might form a powerful argument in procuring Pharaoh's consent—and he blessed God for all the comforts he enjoyed, and for the hopes he was permitted to entertain regarding himself and his

posterity. This charge to Joseph was more than the natural wish to be buried with his kindred. It expressed his faith in the promise that his posterity should possess the land of Canaan. The field of Ephron was more than a family burying place. It was a pledge of Canaan, and Canaan was a type of heaven. The same charge was repeated by Jacob in the hearing of his other sons (Gen. xlix., 29-32). He had full confidence that God would visit his people and restore them to their own land.

The second **interview** was **with Joseph and his two sons** Manasseh and Ephraim, which probably took place shortly after the preceding. Tidings were conveyed to Joseph that his father was apparently dying. His prosperity had in no way impaired his filial regard, and the engagements and honours of his exalted station, were not permitted to prevent the performance of an act of filial piety which might be the last he could show. Taking with him his two sons, that they might receive the parting blessing of their grandfather, and witness a scene which was calculated to make a salutary and lasting impression upon their minds, he hastened to the chamber of death. Jacob aroused himself to receive them. Having referred to the Lord's appearance to him at Luz, and the blessing there promised, he proceeded to show that Joseph's two sons, who were born in Egypt before his arrival, were specially interested in that promised blessing. They were to be adopted into his family, and give names to two tribes of Israel. "As Reuben and Simeon they shall be mine."

In the blessing of Joseph's sons, Jacob gave a most striking illustration of the trial and triumph of his faith. (Heb. xi., 21.) To transfer these lads from the family of

Joseph to his own family, did not appear to confer a privilege upon them, but the contrary. It was to exchange the honours and riches of the world for poverty, reproach, and slavery. Yet Jacob rouses himself from his bed, and solemnly makes them his heirs, and he speaks as if he were leaving them the richest legacy they could inherit. He knew the promises of God, and the peculiar position his posterity should occupy, and he reckons it above the treasure and honour of Egypt to have the inheritance of Jacob's name, and the blessing of Jacob's God, with only the distant hope of Canaan, and the more distant promise of a Saviour. The tenor of the blessing, and the manner in which it was dispensed, inverting the order of the birth-right, were also wonderful demonstrations of faith. The blessing is couched in language of great beauty—

“God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.”—Gen. xlviii., 15-16.

By adopting Joseph's two sons, Jacob gave him a double portion. He also made over to Joseph the strip of land at Shechem which he had bought from the children of Hamor, and which he had retaken from “the Amorite with his sword and with his bow.” The burying place at Hebron belonged to the family, but Jacob was free to dispose of the other land as he pleased. Thus the ground at Shechem afterwards belonged to the descendants of Ephraim (See John iv., 5).

The last interview was with all his sons, whom Jacob summoned into his presence, and whose character and future destiny he delineated under the guidance of the

Divine Spirit. Jacob is here an inspired prophet as well as a dying saint, and he utters before his sons, all of whom, an unbroken family, stand around his bed and listen with intense interest to his words, prophecies which were worthy of being carefully preserved for future generations, and were intended to form a foundation of faith and hope. Jacob's sons had given him much anxiety and trouble. He had watched and studied the character, disposition, and habits of each, and he had endeavoured to picture the future of the tribes of Israel which they represented. And now that the time has come when he must leave them and must transmit the patriarchal blessing, the desire and hope are quickened that some illumination from above may fall upon his spirit to enable him clearly to foresee the things which should "befall them in the last days," and to utter words which may be useful and suggestive. He is not disappointed. He is supernaturally strengthened and enlightened, and his utterances concern not so much the destiny of his sons personally as the destiny of the tribes which should respectively descend from them. He gives forth in the highest style of poetry most important predictions, which come in a series of flitting fragmentary visions, as son after son, and tribe after tribe, is presented. The character of each son is sketched, and the peculiar character of the individual is to reappear in some form in the tribe descended from him, the retrospective thus becoming prospective. These sketches are too specific and truthful to have been invented by Jacob at the moment, or to have occurred to any mere human foresight, and they are too rhythmical and vague to have been deliberately drawn up long after the events happened, and then passed off as Jacob's dying prophecies. These prophecies centred in Canaan, and for

the most part obtained fulfilment in the times of the judges and kings of Israel, but they reached forward to a yet more distant future, and only one whose eyes had been divinely opened could have obtained even a shadowy glimpse of a greater than Israelitish king, unto whom there would be a greater gathering than of all the tribes of Israel. Jacob, like Abraham, saw the day of Christ afar off and was glad, and the renewed thought of Him induces the exclamation, even when he is speaking of the couching asses of Issachar and the biting serpents of Dan, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." The chief interest is naturally in the fortunes of **Judah** and of **Joseph**—especially as represented by **Ephraim**—but it is instructive to notice the remarks which the aged patriarch made on each of his sons.

When Leah had her first child, she had said with feelings of satisfaction, **Reuben**, *i.e.* see a son, and the rightful precedence of Reuben in the family of Jacob is admitted. But he had by sin forfeited the prerogative of birth, and he is now deposed. He was naturally tender-hearted, but was destitute of self control, and became the slave of appetite and passion. He was unstable as water, impatient and impetuous like boiling water or the unruly stream that overflows its banks, and therefore he did not excel, but lost his natural position among the posterity of Jacob. Of the scandalous sin which Reuben had committed forty years before he had perhaps bitterly repented (Gen. xxxv., 22); but the consequences of sin are irreparable, and an indelible stain rests on the person and family of Reuben. True to this prediction, the tribe of Reuben, which settled east of the Jordan, was always small and unimportant.

In the case of **Simeon** and **Levi** the father's blessing is almost turned into a curse. They had been associated in deeds of wickedness and bloodshed, and Jacob on his death-bed shows his unabated horror of the treachery and deliberate cruelty of which they had been guilty. (Genesis xxxiv.) Having kept their wrath in their breast for three days they then vented it forth upon their helpless victims. "Their anger was fierce and their wrath was cruel." Their descendants are, accordingly, to be divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel. In the case of the tribe of Simeon there was no mitigation of the patriarchal curse, but in the case of the tribe of Levi the curse became a blessing. On account of the zeal for the cause of God, manifested by prominent members of that tribe on various important occasions (Exod. xxxii., 28; Numb. xxv., 13; Deut. xxxiii., 8), the tribe, while having no settled inheritance of its own, was honoured in being selected to provide the priests and ministers of the Lord by whom the temple services were performed.

**Judah**, who next appears upon the field of the patriarch's vision, had listened with awe to the stern reproof of the crimes committed by his elder brothers; and as he, too, had sins upon his conscience (Gen. xxxviii.), he must have been expecting condemnation also. But the sentence pronounced is one of real and permanent blessing. The address of Judah to Joseph (Gen. xliv., 14-34) proves him to have been a man of tenderness and genuine affection, and he now inherits the birthright with all its accompanying privileges. Levi obtained the priesthood; Judah obtains the royalty. In his seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed, and the speech of the dying patriarch, foreseeing this, now becomes a song of triumph and joy. Judah, *i.e.*, Praise,



was the name given to him at his birth. His brethren shall praise him, he shall be the terror of his foes, the ancestor of the Messiah, the inheritor of most fertile possessions. He shall be powerful as a lion's whelp, shall devour the prey in the zenith of his strength, and even when couching in old age shall still be formidable ; he shall be a lion in his power and prowess. Upon the family descended from Judah regal and legislative powers shall be conferred, and after a long succession of ages a distinguished person shall come who will gather up in himself and perpetuate the honours and privileges of Judah's line, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah," unto whom the gathering of the people shall be.

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until *Shiloh* come ; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."—(Gen. xlix., 10.)

In Judah's gradual advance to pre-eminence among the tribes ; in the victories of David, and the glory of Solomon ; in the unbroken line of the descendants of Judah, fallen indeed from royal rank yet distinct and distinguished, on to the time of Joseph of Nazareth and Mary, "Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever ;" and especially in the glory, the triumph, the extent, the duration of His Kingdom, in the happiness of His subjects, and in the blessings they enjoy, we see the fulfilment of this glowing prediction. The true Shiloh, the Giver of rest and peace to men and nations, has come ; men of all nations and countries are gathering unto Him, attracted by His person and love ; in lion-like strength and majesty, though terrible to His enemies, He scatters richest blessings among His loyal and obedient friends, and His triumphal progress shall not cease till every knee bows before the sceptre, and every tongue confesses that Judah's king is Lord. (Philip. ii., 11.)

In connection with this prediction it is important to remember that when the tribes of Israel were carried captive by the Assyrians, the tribe of Judah retained its dominion; that when the tribe of Judah was carried captive to Babylon, it had still, as Ezra informs us, its own princes and rulers; that twelve years after the birth of Jesus Christ the tribal region of Judah sank into the humble condition of a Roman province, and thus the authority of its native rulers was greatly abridged; that when He whose name sheds the greatest lustre upon the tribe of Judah was condemned to death it was by the sentence of a Roman governor; and that forty years after the death of Christ the power and polity of the Jews were destroyed by the Romans, and that no legislative or judicial authority has been possessed by them since Shiloh has come, and His spiritual sceptre has taken the place of the temporal sceptre of David. The spiritual influences which have gone forth from Judea constitute the greatest power in history, and the mightiest factor in the progress of the world.

The inheritance of **Zebulon** is to be by the sea—a prophecy which was exactly fulfilled by the lot of Zebulon in Canaan. **Issachar** is to be distinguished, not for commercial pursuits, but for patient devotedness to the culture of the soil. Victories in war shall be obtained by **Dan**, but not so much by open bravery as by subtlety and stratagem. **Gad** shall be frequently annoyed and overcome by enemies, but shall at length prevail. **Asher** shall be happy in the rich products of a fertile land and shall be able to supply from his ample stores the luxuries of kings. **Naphtali** shall be like the hind, timid but nimble, and shall give forth words of melody and grace. **Joseph** has had sad experiences of fraternal jealousy and hatred, of temptation,

falsehood, and ingratitude, but he has been preserved and delivered by the mighty God of Jacob; "his bow abode in strength," his persevering constancy and piety have made him in the providence of God the bountiful provider and powerful protector of his father's house. He shall enjoy the favour of heaven, a fertile inheritance, and a numerous posterity, and be yet more prosperous than in the past. The united blessing of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would rest upon his head.

As Judah had been likened to a lion, Issachar to a strong ass, Dan to a serpent, and Naphtali to a hind let loose, so **Benjamin** is to "ravin as a wolf," to be cruel and rapacious, courageous and successful in war.

Then Jacob having repeated in the hearing of all his sons the directions regarding his burial, exhausted with these concluding efforts, "gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people." To the last his judgment was clear and discerning, his memory good and his affections warm. In early life he had been selfish, avaricious, and deceitful, but by the discipline of Providence during an eventful life, and by the influences of the divine Spirit, he became truthful, affectionate, religious. The early declared preference of heaven in his behalf; the covenant, promise, and presence of the Almighty; the virtues and honours of Joseph; the united, and happy, and prosperous position of all his sons, and the hopes he entertained regarding himself and his family, sustained and cheered him in the hour of death. Composed and resigned, he withdraws from life, leaving the future to be evolved without his guidance, and joins the society of his sainted ancestors, with whom he now lives in the immediate presence of God. (Matt. xxii., 32.)

THE BURIAL OF JACOB.—Joseph gave way to a burst of grief over the lifeless body of his father, whom he had greatly esteemed and loved. Having thus given expression to his sorrow, to his sense of the loss he had sustained, he proceeded to give directions regarding the interment. As a naturalized Egyptian, he deemed it wise and prudent to conform to the practices and yield to the prejudices of the people among whom he dwelt by having the body embalmed, and by conducting the funeral ceremonies on a scale of great magnificence. For many ages the Egyptians had been celebrated for their skill in medicine, and their knowledge of those aromatic drugs and spices which tend to preserve the body from corruption. And as they entertained the idea that the fate of the soul depended to some extent on the preservation of the body, the process of embalming had become an art which was carried out with much skill and expense. Joseph gave orders to the physicians and priests who were in his service to have the usual process carefully executed. Forty days were occupied in this work, and during this period and the thirty days which succeeded there was a deep and general mourning for Jacob. Joseph then sent a messenger to Pharaoh—for, being in mourning dress, it was deemed improper to go personally into the presence of the king—to request permission to bury his father in Canaan, in accordance with his father's last desire and the oath he himself had taken. This permission was readily granted. Jacob had endeared himself to the Egyptians during his seventeen years' sojourn among them; much sympathy was felt for Joseph, who also was held in high estimation. As the journey to be undertaken was long, and through the country of hostile tribes, who might molest and oppose the mourning relatives while

discharging a solemn rite, a very large number of illustrious courtiers and servants of Pharaoh accompanied Joseph and his brethren and friends in their journey to Canaan. The asses and camels of Goshen mingled with the chariots and horses of the capital. Avoiding the direct route by Beersheba, which the patriarchs had frequently traversed, a more circuitous route, by the south of the Dead Sea and through the land of Moab and Ammon, seems to have been adopted. At Atad, by the banks of the Jordan, a halt was made, and for other seven days the air resounded with the loud wailings of the mourners. So great was the pomp and ceremony and lamentation that the rude inhabitants of Canaan were deeply impressed, and called the place **Abel-mizraim**, the mourning of the Egyptians. The remains of Jacob were then deposited in the cave of Machpelah, in Canaan, a token and pledge to his family that in due time they should return thither and possess the land.

**JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS.**—Joseph and his brethren had solemnly promised to Pharaoh that they would return to Egypt as soon as they had performed the duty of burying their father in Canaan. Though, doubtless, they had a desire to remain in Canaan, which was endeared to them by many hallowed associations, they faithfully kept their pledge.

But Joseph's brethren still seem to have been haunted with the suspicion that his forgiveness of their cruelty was not real and lasting. He had repeatedly assured them of forgiveness, and had treated them for years with tender fraternal love; but they cherished dark apprehensions, and they imagined, now that their father was dead, that Joseph

would take advantage of his position and demand a full account of their sin. They therefore sent a messenger to him, saying—

“Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say to Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee, now, the trespass of thy brethren and their sin; for they did the evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father.”—(Gen. l., 16, 17.)

Joseph was grieved that they cherished such suspicions of the reality of his forgiveness; he “wept when they spake unto him;” and with very wise and kind words and promises he endeavoured to remove all cause of fear. He reminded them that God alone was the avenger of sin, recognised the overruling providence of God in all they had been permitted to do to him, and promised to attend to their future comfort and happiness. Joseph had a soul above such feelings of resentment and retaliation as they had imagined him to harbour.

**THE DEATH OF JOSEPH.**—When his father died Joseph’s age was 56. He lived after that event for fifty-four years more, but of these years little is recorded. He saw three generations of Ephraim’s children and two of Manasseh’s. As the benefits he had conferred on Egypt were of the greatest value and importance, there is reason to believe that he was highly esteemed and honoured to the close of life. Joseph had been faithful to God and faithful to Pharaoh, and he died cheered with the divine favour and laden with the honours of the world. When he felt that death was approaching, he called his surviving brethren around him and committed to them as his dying bequest the disposal of his mortal remains. His doing so proceeded not merely

from the natural desire of resting in death with his fathers, but from assured confidence in the truth and faithfulness of God.

“ And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.”—(Gen. l., 25.)

The body of Joseph, like that of his father, was embalmed with great care, and was preserved in Egypt in a coffin, awaiting the time when God should visit his people and conduct them to Canaan. When that time at length arrived it was borne out of Egypt, and, after accompanying the Israelites in all their distresses and wanderings, was safely deposited in the sepulchre of his fathers when possession of the Land of Promise was obtained.—(Exod. xiii., 19 ; Josh. xxiv., 32.)

Thus lived and died Joseph, the son of Jacob, a man whose experiences in every stage of life have exerted a fascinating influence over every reader of the inspired Word; whose inflexible constancy in the hour of temptation and adversity, whose unaffected simplicity, incorruptible integrity, and fervent piety in his season of prosperity and power, have marked him out as one of the greatest examples for admiration and imitation which the Bible contains. As a son, a brother, a servant, a father, or a ruler, he was equally faithful, generous, and affectionate. To the sagacity of the statesman he added the penetration of the prophet, the firmness of the believer, and the purity of the saint.

Thus closes an important period in the history of God's chosen people, and in the accomplishment of God's gracious designs in favour of the Church and the world. Abraham furnished a signal example of faith in his devout obedience, and in self-devotion and sacrifice ; Isaac, of faith leading to

submission and contemplation amid the ordinary duties of a tranquil life ; Jacob, of faith manifesting itself by prayer and patience and firm trust in the divine promises ; and Joseph, of faith that kept him strong and steadfast under the most trying circumstances of prosperity and adversity.

And as we recal the various important statements of the Book of Genesis, we discover the intimation and development of the great plan of redeeming mercy. That plan existed in the Divine mind from the beginning, but it was unfolded little by little in the course of its execution till it culminated in the doctrines, privileges, and hopes of the Christian church. Prophecy and type—the promise, the shadow and outline of a glorious reality—run like a golden thread through the Bible, and even each incident has an important place to fill and adds significance to the harmonious teaching of the whole book. At first, indeed, the light is dim and obscure, like the speck of light which ushers in the dawn of day, and which scarcely dispels the mists and darkness of night, but it expands with ever-increasing brightness to the full glory of the Sun of Righteousness, who rises with healing in His wings, filling earth with peace and joy, and eternity with gratitude and praise.

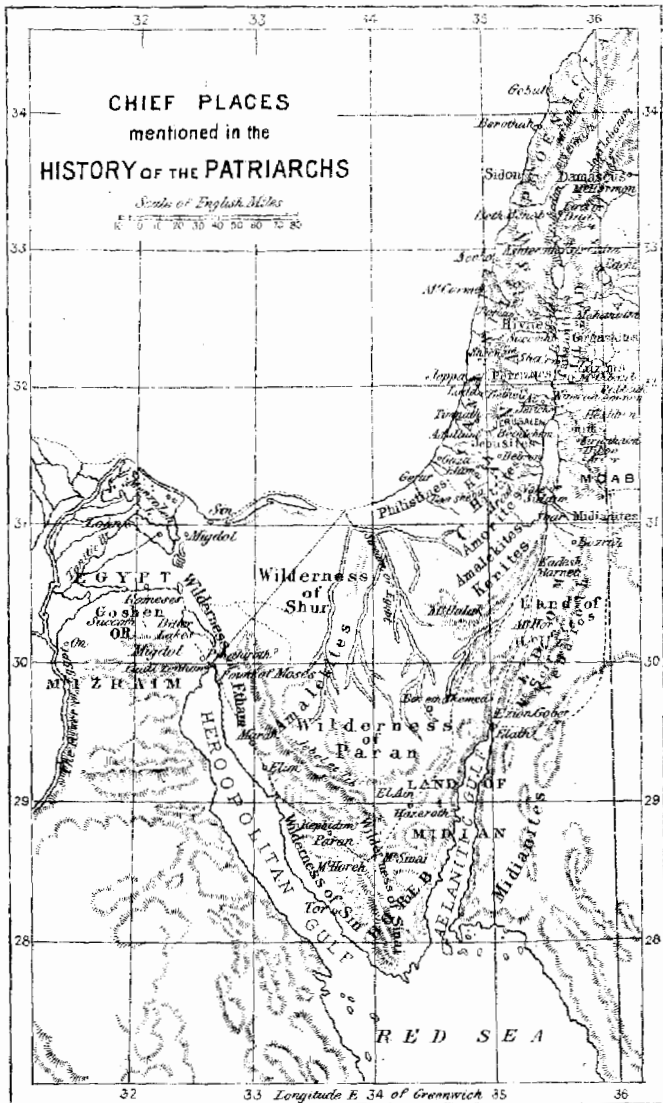
In the Book of Genesis we have the dawning of the heavenly light, the revelation of important and necessary truths, the proclamation of the scheme of divine mercy. We are taught the unity of God, and the duty of trusting and obeying Him. We are taught that man was not made sinful and sorrowful, but holy and happy. We are taught how sin entered our world, and we see the beginning of the long conflict between the children of God and the children of Satan, a conflict which continued to develop



through the ages, and only finds its consummation in the victories which Jesus won in the wilderness of temptation and the cross of shame, and in the complete triumphs and heavenly glory foretold in the book of Revelation. In Adam, our first parent and representative, we behold a "figure of Him that was to come." (Rom. v., 14.) Each sustains a public character, each is constituted a representative of humanity, God enters into a covenant with each, and the condition and destiny of those who come after, are affected for good or ill, by their conduct and obedience. (1 Cor. xv., 22, 45-49.) Paradise is lost by the first Adam, but another Paradise is regained by the second Adam, which also has its tree of life and its rivers of blessing. (Rev. xxii.) The lamb of Abel's sacrifice leads on to the Paschal lamb which Moses slew, and both prefigure the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i., 29; 1 Cor. v., 7.) The faithful warnings and rebukes of Noah, the unbelief of an ungodly world, the sudden and terrible calamity which befel, the ark which Noah by God's command provided, the safety of those within that ark—all forcibly remind us of the personal character and teaching of Jesus Christ, of the Ark which He has provided, and of the consequences of accepting or of rejecting His offered mercy. (Matt. xxiv., 38; Heb. xi., 7; 1 Peter iii., 20.) We see a family and nation selected to preserve and guard the truth of God, receive divine communications, and be a living illustration of God's providential government. Peculiar interest is manifested by God in the race of Shem, in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, descended from Shem; to them a revelation of the Divine will is made and through them to the world; from them One is to come by whom the curse is to be

removed and all nations blessed. (Gal. iii., 8, 16.) In the dying words of Jacob we have a disclosure regarding the manner of the blessing; it is from Judah's stem the great dispenser of that blessing is to come. Over twenty times is the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah referred to in Scripture as a prominent instance of the sin of man, and the just judgment of God.

How exceedingly important and appropriate, then, is the Book of Genesis, as the foreground of the Bible! Already, according to the ordinary computation, if we exclude the long ages at the beginning and the long ages at the close, we are in point of time more than half-way through the Bible. At the lowest computation 2,360 years intervened between Adam in Eden, and Joseph in Egypt; but from the time of Moses, when next the history opens, to John in Patmos, we have probably less than 1,500 years. The deaths of Lamech and of Methusaleh form the events in the middle of Genesis; the death of Noah and the birth of Abraham are almost mid-way between the creation of Adam and the birth of Jesus Christ. Adam and the Fall, Noah and the Flood, Abraham and his Call, and Joseph in Egypt, are the natural and necessary steps leading up to Moses and the Exodus, Joshua and the conquest, Samson and the Judges, David and the monarchy, Jeremiah and the Captivity, Nehemiah and the Restoration, Christ and the Cross, Peter and the descent of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, Paul at Athens and Rome, John in Patmos, and the Revelation of heavenly glory.



## THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

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**WHY SO CALLED?**—The first word of the Book of Genesis in the Hebrew language is **Bereshith**, and the Jews used this word as the title of the whole Book. The word **Genesis** is the Greek equivalent for Bereshith, and was adopted by the translators of the Septuagint, or Greek version of the Scriptures, which was begun in the third century B.C. Genesis signifies **Beginning**. The name is suitably given to the whole Book. The Book gives an account of beginnings. It contains, we may say, the roots of all future history, the germs of all God's revelations to men. It tells us, especially, of nine beginnings; of the beginning of the heaven and the earth, of the human race, of the Sabbath day, of the ordinance of marriage, of sin and its consequences, of sacrificial observances, of the covenant of promise and blessing, of the various nations and tongues, and of the Hebrew race to whom God gave His revelation of mercy.

The Book of Genesis is a very appropriate introduction to the Bible. It has been called "the stately portal to the magnificent edifice of Scripture," the porch of the great temple of revelation which leads gradually to a full disclosure of God's intentions towards a sinful and perishing world. It gives us an account of man in his original innocence, of his fall, of the general corruption which led to the Deluge, of the division and peopling of the earth after its restoration, of the Call of Abraham, and the Divine covenant with him and his family.

FOR WHAT PURPOSE WRITTEN?—(1) To record the history of the world from the commencement of time. (2) To relate the origin of the church. The writer wished to write the **religious history** of mankind, to describe man's original relation to God, how that relation was marred by sin, and what steps God took for man's recovery. He kept his purpose steadily before him, and was not tempted into other fields of historical research and description, however inviting these might be. This explains the brevity of the account given to us of the lives of those men who lived before Abraham. Long centuries are traversed in a few chapters. The writer was hastening on to the Call of Abraham, the father and founder of that nation among whom the true knowledge of God was preserved during ages of ignorance and idolatry, and "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came." (Rom. ix., 5.) He dwells only on those things which bear upon the Kingdom of God upon earth. The first **eleven** chapters of Genesis are prefatory, only an introduction to the history of the Theocracy, the God-guided and God-governed nation of Israel.

HOW MAY IT BE DIVIDED?—Into **four** parts—

I. The origin of the world. (Gen. i. ii.)

II. The Ante-diluvian Age, or the history of the world before the Deluge (Gen. iii.-vii.), embracing the Fall of Man and his expulsion from Paradise, the story of Cain and Abel, the history of Noah and the Deluge.

III. The Post-diluvian Age, or the history of the world from its restoration to the time of Abraham (Gen. viii., xi.), embracing the sin of Noah, the peopling of the world by Noah's descendants, and the dispersion of mankind through the confusion of tongues.

IV. The Patriarchal Age, or the histories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. (Gen. xii.-l.)

BY WHOM WRITTEN?—**Moses** has almost universally been recognised as the author of the Book of Genesis. He no doubt availed himself of documents and traditions of times earlier than his own, and here and there the presence of these can be easily distinguished. In Genesis we have not the free and continuous narrative of one author, but rather the work of a writer who is combining at least two distinct narratives. There are two accounts of the Creation and two narratives of the Flood. There is one account of Esau's wives in Chap. xxvi., and another in Chap. xxxvi. The naming of Bethel and of Beersheba is twice narrated, as also is the altering of Jacob's name to Israel. Even the name by which God is revealed is different in the two documents which Moses availed himself of. In the one there is **Elohim**, a name for the Divine Being simply as such; in the other there is **Jehovah Elohim**, in which in addition to Elohim, we have also a special covenant designation. But substantially the Book of Genesis is the work of Moses, and we feel assured that, whether the writer is communicating truth specially revealed to him by God, or is merely compiling from pre-existing fragments of history, he is so divinely guided as to form, for all time coming, a religious narrative of "the first things" on which our faith may implicitly rely. The narrative is so simple, so truthful, so consistent with itself, so sublime in its conceptions, and so impartial in its biography, so pure in its morality, and so benevolent in its design, that the guidance of the Divine Spirit cannot be denied. This guidance, however, left Moses at liberty to avail himself of

such oral testimony or written documents as might be accessible to him. It is extremely probable that ancestral records were accessible to Moses, which comprised, it may be, an autobiography of Joseph—as may be inferred from the circumstantial minuteness of the account of him—memoirs of the house of Abraham, and authentic memorials in antediluvian records bequeathed by Noah and his sons. As Amram, the father of Moses, lived shortly after the time of Joseph—some even think he was contemporary with him—as Shem conversed both with Noah and Abraham, and Methusaleh lived to see both Adam and Noah—Adam receiving the account of the Creation directly from God—the transmission of the history was not attended with much difficulty.

WHEN AND WHERE WRITTEN?—We have little doubt that the Book of Genesis was written by Moses while he resided with the priest or chieftain of Midian (Exod. iii.), and when, an exile from Egypt, he enjoyed, in that sublime but lonely region, that calm and meditative leisure which was denied him at the court of Pharaoh. There probably lingered in the home of Jethro, and in the district around, traditions of an earlier age, by which Moses was assisted in writing his history, but doubtless the chief facts and incidents had already been learned by him in Egypt, having been carefully instilled into his mind by the frequent instructions of his godly parents. It was faith in the promises which God had made to the ancestors of the enslaved Israelites, a firm faith in their true dignity and future destiny, that kindled the patriotism of Moses and led to the voluntary surrender of all his brilliant prospects at the Egyptian court (Heb. xi., 24-27).

There are, however, others who hold the opinion that Moses wrote the Book on his descent from Mount Sinai, after the forty days spent in communion with God.

WHAT ARE ITS GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS?—Herodotus is generally called the Father of History; but Moses lived and wrote a thousand years before the days of Herodotus. His writings, therefore, are the oldest which we possess, and, as he incorporated in the Book of Genesis ancestral records of the interesting and important revelations which God made to the founders of the human race, it follows that we have in that Book the very earliest literature in the world. We have in that Book, too, much information which cannot be obtained elsewhere. The style is simple, and for the most part anecdotal; the biographies of Abraham and his descendants being especially minute and interesting. The book professes to be strictly historical in all its parts, and, though covering a period of two or three thousand years, it exhibits harmony and completeness, in plan, and execution. The selection of the ancestors of the Hebrew nation to be the depositaries of God's will and worship, and the gradual development of the Divine scheme of grace, are the thoughts which bind together all its incidents and details in one harmonious whole. And it was a very natural and suitable introduction to the subsequent books.

The Book of Genesis then stands unequalled for its antiquity, its comprehensiveness, its completeness, the importance of the facts it narrates, the sublimity of its thoughts, and the simplicity of its style.

CHRONOLOGY OF GENESIS.—According to the common computation of time, the Book of Genesis includes the



history of 2,369 years, from the Creation of the World to the Death of Joseph; according to Dr. Hales who prefers the dates of the Septuagint translation, and the computation of Josephus, 3,619 years.

The following are the dates of the chief events according to Usher, who follows the dates of the Hebrew text, and according to Hales :—

	Usher.	Hales.
	B.C.	B.C.
Creation of Adam .....	4004	5411
Death of Adam .....	3074	4481
Birth of Noah .....	2948	3755
Death of Methuselah .....	2349	3160
The Deluge .....	2348	3159
Confusion of Tongues .....	2234	2614
Call of Abraham from Chaldea.....		2093
Abraham leaves Haran .....	1921	2078
Ishmael born .....	1911	2067
Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed ...	1897	2055
Isaac born .....	1896	2054
Jacob and Esau born .....	1836	1994
Death of Abraham .....	1821	1978
Joseph sold into Egypt .....	1723	1886
Death of Isaac.....	1716	1874
Jacob and family settle in Egypt...	1706	1863
Death of Jacob .....	1689	1846
Death of Joseph.....	1635	1793

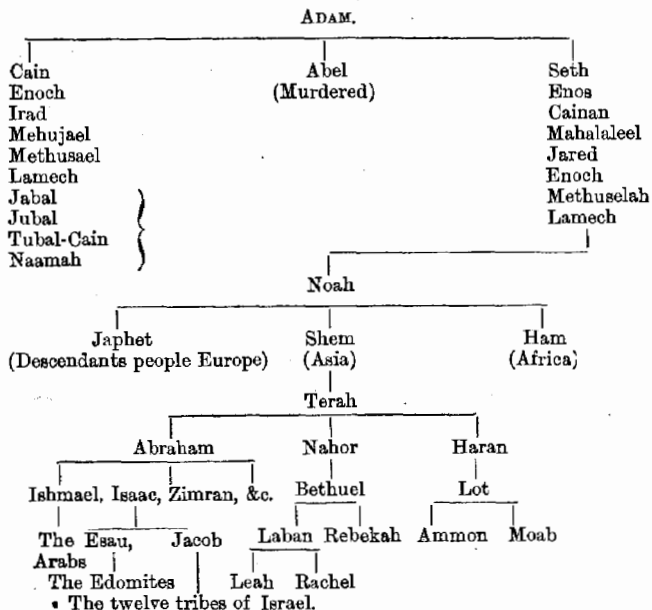
From Creation to Deluge 1656 years or 2252 years.

From Deluge to Call of Abraham 427 years, or 1066 years.

(Usher reckons from the Departure from Haran, Hales from the call from Chaldea, 15 years earlier.)

From Call of Abraham to Death of Joseph 286 years, or 301 years.

## GENERAL GENEALOGICAL TABLE.



## EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Why is the Book of Genesis so called ?
2. For what purpose was the Book written ?
3. Into what parts may the Book be divided ?
4. By whom was it written ?
5. When and where was it written ?
6. What are the chief facts recorded in the Book of Genesis ?
7. What are the general characteristics of the Book ?

## CHAPTER I.

## ANALYSIS.

The Creation of heaven and earth. The separate work of each of the Six days of the Creation. The Creation of man. The blessing pronounced upon man. The satisfaction of the Creator with His work.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1. "God created."**—We have here a plural noun accompanying a singular verb, either to intimate the majesty and power of God, or on account of the plurality of persons in the Godhead who were engaged in the work of creation. (Prov. viii., 27; John i. 3-10; Eph. iii., 9; Heb. i., 2.) This first verse is a general introduction to the Book, the details following.

**V. 2. "Without form and void."**—The original words express confusion and desolation. "Moved"—brooded as a bird hovering over her young.

**V. 3.** The creation of light before the creation of the sun, which is the fountain of light, has been reckoned a difficulty. Recent discoveries endorse in a surprising manner the truthfulness of the inspired record. A huge pre-existing mass of nebulous matter, revolving in space on its own axis with a sufficient velocity, and gradually condensing from a high degree of heat, would naturally develop all the celestial orbs of the planetary system.

**V. 5.** It is unnecessary here to discuss the various opinions entertained regarding the word "day" in this verse and in following verses. Some writers, in order to allow

sufficient time for the periods required by astronomy, geology, and other sciences, would let the first verse of Genesis stand by itself, and then take the statements which follow in their literal acceptation, each day being a day of 24 hours, during which each part of the universe received its finishing touch, as we may say, from the hand of the great Creator. Others reckon each "day" to be an indefinite period of time, for with God one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day (2 Peter iii., 8). Others are of opinion that there was vouchsafed to Adam a panoramic view of the process of creation—the time occupied in this display being six days. Other opinions are also held. Each view has some good arguments in its support. But it seems impossible to give an explanation against which some strong objection cannot be urged. And after all, it is "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Heb. xi., 3.)

**V. 6. "Firmament"**—expanse, a substance extended.

**V. 11.** The word translated "**grass**" means "green vegetation," two kinds being specified, "the herb" and "the fruit tree."

**V. 12. "Whose seed was in itself,"** *i.e.* has the power of multiplying itself by seeds, slips, &c.

**V. 15.** The purpose of "**the lights**" is threefold. 1st. "To divide the day from the night,"—to show the distinction and make it permanent. 2nd. "To be for signs"—of important changes and occurrences, "and for seasons"—for regularly returning periods; and 3rd. "for lights"—to distribute the light already called into existence. (Job ix., 9; Ps. viii.)

**V. 21.** "Great whales," or rather, sea monsters. The same word is used of crocodiles, of serpents, &c.

**V. 26.** "Let us"—This plural pronoun may refer to the heavenly inhabitants who are summoned to witness the creative work; to the fulness and majesty of God himself; or to the three persons in the Godhead who consult together regarding the creation of man. The last is the preferable explanation.

**V. 31.** "Very good" = good exceedingly. It is expressive of admiration and satisfaction. The completed cosmos, with man as its crown and glory, fulfils the Creator's expectation and desire.

It is interesting, as we read the inspired account of the order of creation, to remember that geology attests the truth of the Divine record in asserting that the lower animals preceded man in their appearance on the earth, and that man is of comparatively recent origin. It is interesting also to compare this account of creation with the accounts which have been preserved among other nations, to note the vast superiority of this in simplicity, naturalness, and sublimity to the others, and at the same time the close resemblance which it bears to many of them—especially to that of the recently discovered Assyrian tablets. It is important, too, to remember, that though perhaps the exact age of man on the earth cannot be ascertained, the facts of history, geology, and Scripture, seem to warrant the conclusion that he appeared about 7,000 years ago—not less than 6,000 and not more than 8,000; that the most ancient human remains yet discovered prove men in the earlier ages to have been essentially the same as men living now in structure and development; and

that the account of Scripture regarding the origin, condition, and destiny of man is at once adequate, sublime, and self-consistent, is supported by the clearest evidence, and solves the most difficult problems of science, of history, and of human experience. The statement at the beginning of the Bible, that God created man in His own image, satisfactorily explains all that follows, explains the love that created and the greater love that redeemed.

#### ORDER OF CREATION.

1st day—Light.	4th day—Luminaries.
2nd day—Air and Waters.	5th day—Animals of air and water.
3rd day—Land.	6th day—Land animals and man.

The 7th day—The day of God's "rest," was the first complete day of man's existence—common date before Birth of Christ, 4,004.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What is the first event recorded in sacred history?
2. What is the meaning of the terms Atheism, Polytheism, and Pantheism, and how does the record of Scripture oppose each of these systems of belief?
3. What is the exact rendering of the Hebrew words which are translated "firmament," "grass," "great whales"?
4. Give the order of creation, and state how the truth of this order is confirmed?
5. What are we specially told regarding the creation of man?
6. What provision was made for man's support, what benediction was pronounced, and what privileges conferred?

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

**V. 1.** John i., 1; Acts xiv., 15.

**V. 26.** Col. iii., 10.

**V. 31.** 1 Tim. iv., 4.

## CHAPTER II.

## ANALYSIS.

Institution of the Sabbath. Recapitulation of the six days' work of Creation. The Garden of Eden—its beauty and fertility; the work Adam had to do in it. The Covenant which God made with Adam. The naming of the cattle. Creation of Eve. Institution of Marriage.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. "**Were finished**" = completed, set in order, and filled. "**Host**"—array, all that belongs to.

V. 3. The blessing of the "**seventh day**" implied (a) That it was the special object of the Divine favour. (b) That it would ever afterwards be a day of blessing for the world. (Page 12.)

"**Sanctified it.**"—Declared it holy, set it apart for holy purposes. The septennial division of time is almost universal, as also is the keeping of a seventh day differently from other days.

V. 4. "**The generations**"—their "beginnings" and history since their historical development.

"**The Lord God**"—Jehovah Elohim, and not Elohim only. The difference of name, the repetition of the history of creation, and other obvious characteristics by which the narrative in the second chapter is distinguished from that in the first, are supposed, and probably correctly supposed, to indicate that Moses here availed himself of a different document in forming his history. At the same time it should be noted that Elohim, the mighty one, as distinguished from Jehovah Elohim, the mighty and self-existent

God, who manifests Himself to man and enters into a covenant with him, is more appropriately used in connection with God's creative work, while the other name is more appropriately used in connection with His providential and redemptive works. The historian passes now from the account of material creation to describe the dealings of God with man. God is the Creator of the world, but he is also the covenant-making and covenant-keeping God, the Lord and Redeemer of His people. Hence, "Jehovah Elohim." In the first chapter Nature is the great theme; in the second it is Man, and Nature is treated only as it is related to him.

**V. 7. "Man"**—the man (**ha adamah**), the ground. Man is "of the earth, earthy," "a living soul," an animal of life, or of lives—embracing the animal, intellectual and spiritual. In Hebrew "man" came to be also the proper name of the first man; in the old Babylonian legends, the Adamites were "the white race" of Semitic descent, as contrasted with the black Accadians of primitive Babylonia.

**V. 8. "Eastward in Eden."**—To the east of the country where the history was written. The ordinary view of scholars has been that Eden was in Armenia. However, the cuneiform records from Assyria tell us that Eden was the ancient name of the "field" or plain of Babylonia. Possibly, therefore, the rivers of Eden may be found in the rivers and canals of Babylonia. (Page 13.)

**V. 12. "Bdellium"** was either the ruby or topaz or other gem, or an aromatic gum famous for its medicinal virtues. "Onyx," probably so called from its resemblance to the human nail—the original sense of the Greek word "onyx." It has a white ground, and is variegated with parallel bands of white and brown.



**V. 23. "Woman,"**—The resemblance between this word and "man" in English, answers happily to that of **Ishah** and **Ish** in the original.

That the whole human race is descended from one pair is the teaching of this chapter, and the idea of a plurality of origins for the human family receives from it no countenance. Jesus reaffirmed the teaching of Genesis when He said "But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female," and Paul did so also when, in the centre of Athens, surrounded by matchless monuments of human skill and confronting the learning and pride of the old world, he said, "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Physiology, ethnology, and philology, confirm this teaching. Amid all race distinctions, all men everywhere possess the same bodily structure, the same moral nature, the same spiritual requirements. The gospel is needed by all, all are assumed to be capable of receiving it, and Jesus commanded it to be proclaimed to all.

In almost every land, in the legends of almost every nation, traditions remain regarding the Creation, the origin of the Sabbath, the Garden of Eden, the Temptation, the Fall, and the Flood; time is divided into weeks of seven days; sacrifices are offered to the gods which are worshipped.

In the languages of the most distant and dissimilar races a remarkable similarity has been traced. After a careful analysis of about 1,000 languages, philologists have found that these can be reduced to three great families, the Aryan, Semitic, and Turanian, which again seem to be connected with one original language.

The chapter teaches, too, that man was made perfect in relation to bodily vigour and intellectual capacity, or at least in a state approximate thereto. His Creator must have taught him what to avoid and what to do in order that he might be protected from danger. God must have imparted to him language, a knowledge of the properties of the objects and creatures around him to which he gave names, a knowledge of the properties of plants and the operations required to tend and train them, some acquaintance with the materials necessary for making tools, &c. It is unlikely that Adam had to learn by the slow teaching of observation and experience. The past did not come to him laden with stores of accumulated facts. His Creator, with whom he enjoyed frequent and intimate fellowship, would supply the lack. The primeval state of man was not that of a savage, who by slow and difficult stages attained maturity. Even the mythical traditions of almost every nation place at the beginning of human history a period of happiness and perfection, "a golden age," having no features of savagery and barbarism, but many of civilization and refinement. The Bible depicts man before the Flood as tilling the ground, building cities, smelting metals, and making musical instruments. Ample provision was made by God for the development and gratification of the sentient, the social, and the spiritual faculties of the being whom he had created.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What two ordinances were instituted by God?
2. In what terms does the sacred historian record the appointment of the Sabbath?
3. Describe the probable situation of the Garden of Eden.

4. What names were given to two trees in the midst of the garden, and to what uses did God apply these trees?

5. What solemn injunction was given to Adam when he was placed in Eden?

6. Explain the following phrases—

“The heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them.”

“It was parted and became into four heads.”

“In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.”

7. What lessons and inferences are taught in this 2nd Chapter?

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

**V. 2**, Heb. iv., 4. **V. 7**, 1 Cor. xv., 45. **V. 8-17**, Rev. xxii., 1-14.  
**V. 17**, Rom. vi., 23. **V. 24**, 1 Tim. ii., 13. **V. 18**, Matt. xix., 5.

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## CHAPTER III.

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### ANALYSIS.

**The Serpent deceives Eve. She and Adam transgress the Divine command and sin. The judgment of God upon each. The promise of redemption. Adam and Eve clothed. Adam and Eve expelled from the Garden of Eden.**

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### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** “The serpent was more subtil.”—The Hebrew word for serpent, *Nahash*, literally means one who searches closely, and is very naturally joined with *subtil*, *i.e.*, wise or crafty. The inspired writer probably only relates the conclusion of the conversation which took place between the serpent and Eve, that part of it in which the tempter prevailed upon Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. (Page 19.)

**V. 3.** Eve seems to have added words which were not in the original prohibition.

**V. 5. "As gods"**—*Ke elohim*—like God. Eve could only know one God.

**V. 6.** The temptation was three-fold—an appeal to the sense of taste, to the sense of sight, to the desire to know. "The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." 1 John ii, 16.

**V. 7.** The consequences of the Fall were:—Their eyes were opened to see their folly and impiety and to understand their degradation. There was a sense of guilt and of shame. They **twisted** fig leaves together to make **girdles**—*Heb.* "things to gird about" to hide their nakedness. (Page 25.)

**V. 21.** Animals could only be slain for purposes of food, of sacrifice, and of clothing. It is generally believed that immediately after the Fall Adam was taught by God the necessity of sacrifice as the only means of acceptable worship, and that he used the skins of the animals which were slain for clothing.

**V. 24. "Cherubim,"** probably emblematical representations of God. Ezek. i., 5, x., 20. "**A flaming sword,**" *lit.*, the flame of a sword turning itself, expressive of the glorious and terrible appearance of the cherubim.

The narrative given in the third chapter has been treated by us as strictly historical. The historian claims to recite events which actually occurred. The character of the whole book is historical. Jesus and His apostles showed by their frequent allusions to these events, that they accepted them as literal facts. The Fall lies at the foundation of all God's purposes and plans, in providence, and in grace.

The acknowledged difficulties connected with "the serpent" do not necessarily contradict this view.

From **Eve's** point of view, the narrative is true to what occurred, as the serpent alone was seen and heard and condemned. Had she told the story herself she would have done so in the very terms of the text. From the **writer's** point of view it is true, for the serpent would have a peculiar significance to him. He knew the ancient and almost universal tradition which attributes to the serpent an evil influence, and regards it as the vehicle employed in assailing human innocence. He would use expressions in writing which were in harmony with ideas universally prevalent, and which he knew his readers would correctly interpret. It was well understood that, in speaking of the serpent only, he referred to a supernatural power behind as the author of evil. And from **our own** point of view the narrative is true. The stealthiness and cunning manifested, the consummate craft with which the temptation was conducted, clearly point to the presence of an intelligent and malignant power behind the serpent. And though in the judgment which God pronounced, even the literal serpent as being the medium of temptation was cursed, yet it is not difficult to believe that the curse of God denounced upon the guilty cause of human apostasy was not the mere wreaking of vengeance upon an irrational creature. The presence and manifestation of devilish malignity, skill, and power are self-evident, and the enmity which has always existed between the human race and the literal serpent tribe does not exhaust the meaning of the curse. There was to be a three-fold enmity—enmity between the serpent and Eve personally; between the seed of the serpent, or wicked men, and the seed of Eve as represented by good men;

and, especially, between the serpent and one illustrious descendant of Eve, by whom it would be overcome. A triple conflict was thus foretold. Eve would be brought to hate her tempter and would be delivered from his power; there would be a bitter and prolonged struggle between those who were under the influence of the serpent and those who had been delivered from it; and one belonging to the very race whose first parents had now been deceived and ruined would destroy the serpent's power. (John viii, 44; 2 Cor. xi, 3; Eph. vi, 12; Col. ii, 15; 1 John iii, 8.)

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Relate the circumstances of the Fall of man.
  2. Describe the conduct of Adam and Eve when questioned by God.
  3. What punishment was to be inflicted respectively upon the serpent, upon Eve, and upon Adam?
  4. Prove the presence of Satan in the temptation of our first parents.
  5. Quote and explain the first promise and prophecy recorded in the Bible.
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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

**V. 1**, 2 Cor. xi, 3. **V. 6**, 1 Tim. ii, 14. **V. 15**, Rom. xvi, 20.  
**V. 16**, 1 Tim. ii, 11. **V. 19**, Rom. v, 12, 1 Cor. xv, 47.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## ANALYSIS.

Birth, occupation, and religion of Cain and Abel. Cain murders Abel. God judges and condemns Cain. The promise given to Cain. The wanderings of Cain. The descendants of Cain. The speech of Lamech. The birth of Seth and of Enos.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 2.** Keeping flocks and cultivating the ground were the earliest occupations of man. "Abel" is supposed to mean "vanity."

**V. 3.** "In process of time," *lit.*, at the end of the days, *i.e.*, at the end of the week, on the day of rest from six days' work; or at the end of the year; or, generally, after some time had elapsed.

**V. 6.** In the worship of Abel there was manifested conviction of sin, confession of sin, faith in the promise of a divine Deliverer from sin, obedience to the revealed will of God regarding the necessity for sacrifice as the only means of access to God's presence, and of offering acceptable service. Man's reason would not teach him that the blood of innocent creatures could atone for human sin, that God would transfer the sins of the sacrificer to his sacrifice, and it could not discover the plan of salvation through a Divine Mediator, whom these sacrifices typified, and apart from whose atoning death they had no meaning. God must have revealed this (Heb. xi., 4). There must be satisfaction and reconciliation by sacrifice before there can be pardon and acceptance (Heb. ix., 22). (Page 32.)

**V. 7.** This verse may mean that the services of Cain could not be accepted so long as sin lay at the door of his heart, or it may mean that if Cain did not take care he would be tempted to commit greater sin and bring down upon himself fearful punishment. It may mean that a sin offering is not far to seek, of which he can avail himself, or it may mean that continued criminality will bring with it immediate and just punishment. It is scarcely possible to fix the precise idea the writer intended to convey.

It is equally difficult to decide upon the exact meaning of the last clause; whether to consider it as meaning that if Cain acts properly the birthright will be his, and Abel shall serve him, or as meaning that if Cain continues in his present course of envy and sin, does not resist temptation and conquer sin, sin will conquer and ruin him.

**V. 8.** "Talked with Abel," or according to the Greek version, "said to Abel, Let us go out into the field."—Some take it to mean that Cain had a religious "talk" or dispute with Abel.

**V. 10.** "Brother's blood crieth," *lit.*, "brother's bloods are crying."

**V. 11.** "Cursed from the earth," *i.e.*, cursed as far as the earth is concerned. Even inanimate nature would be against him for his unnatural crime.

**V. 12.** "Not yield," *lit.*, not add to yield.

**V. 14.** We have not a full account of Adam's descendants recorded. By this time the population had increased and scattered.

**V. 15.** Probably Cain received a **sign** from God that he would be preserved. "A mark" upon him would identify him, and prove a source of danger rather than a blessing.



**V. 16.** "The land of Nod," of exile or banishment, though probably at no great distance from Eden.

**V. 17.** "Builded a city," *lit.*, busied himself about building a city, probably to divert his mind from disquieting accusations, and to provide defence against apprehended violence.

**V. 23.** This rhythmical utterance may be rendered, "I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for hurting me. If Cain, who slew his brother without provocation, was to be avenged seven-fold, surely Lamech, who slew another in self-defence, would be infinitely more avenged." His wives therefore had no cause for fear on his account. This is the most ancient fragment of poetry.

**V. 26.** "Call upon the name of the Lord."—Some, referring this to the ungodly, have taken it to mean, "Profane the name of the Lord." Its connection with Seth and Enos would rather make it mean, "Be called by the name of the Lord," or "Call upon the name of the Lord in the public exercises of religion." (Page 38.)

#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What is the meaning of the words "Cain," "Abel," "Enos," "Seth?"
2. Narrate the sin and punishment of Cain.
3. Give the names of Cain's descendants, and tell their inventions.
4. Quote the most ancient fragment of poetry, and explain it.
5. Explain the meaning and allusion of the phrases—  
"The Lord had respect unto Abel's offering."  
"Am I my brother's keeper?"
6. What evidences have we of the early existence of the arts and sciences?
7. What is recorded of the descendants of Seth?

#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

**V. 4,** Heb. xi., 4. **V. 8,** 1 John iii., 10. **V. 10,** Heb. xii., 24.

## CHAPTER V.

## ANALYSIS.

**Recapitulation. Genealogy of the ten Antediluvian Patriarchs. Enoch's piety and translation. Birth of Noah.**

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** The descendants of Adam to the 500th year of the life of Noah are recorded in this chapter.

The descendants of Seth were Enos, Cain, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah. When Enoch was 365 years of age he was translated to heaven without dying, as a reward of his piety. His son Methuselah attained the age of 969 years, the oldest on record.

**V. 29.** Lamech, like his namesake, the descendant of Cain, also gives us a fragment of poetry uttered on the birth of his son. Noah was the tenth of the patriarchs before the flood.

## EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Who was the oldest man, and how long did he live ?
2. Name the ten Antediluvian patriarchs.
3. What was remarkable about Enoch ?
4. Quote the words of Lamech when his son Noah was born.

## NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE.

**V. 24,** Heb. xi., 5.

## CHAPTER VI.

## ANALYSIS.

The union of the posterity of Seth and the posterity of Cain. The wickedness that followed. The destruction of every living creature threatened. God's command to Noah and the covenant with him.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 2.** The distinction between "men" and the "sons of God" refers to the posterity of Cain and the posterity of Seth. The intermarriage of the wicked and the righteous led to almost universal depravity. (Page 43.)

**V. 3.** God graciously warns men of the consequences of sin, and by His Spirit strives with them to induce them to repent.

**V. 8.** "**Grace**" means mercy or favour. He "found grace in the eyes of the Lord" because he was just, gave every man his due; because he was "perfect," consistent in principle and practice; and because he "walked with God," maintained communion with God in the exercises of private and public worship.

**V. 12.** The earth "**was corrupt**," *i.e.*, the inhabitants had left God's service and become idolaters.

**V. 15.** The ark was 547 feet long, 91 feet wide, and 54 feet high. It had three floors or storeys. It took 120 years to prepare. It was made of "gopher," probably "cypress," wood.

**V. 16.** Apertures for air and light were made in the ark.

**V. 18.** "Covenant"—(berith) *lit.*, a purification — a means of forgiveness and atonement.

**V. 21.** "Food that is eaten," *i.e.*, food necessary for each species.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Describe the ark and its dimensions.
2. How long did Noah take to build it, and while building how was he otherwise employed?
3. Explain the following phrases—  
     "The sons of God" and "the daughters of men."  
     "There were giants."

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

**V. 5,** Matt. xv., 19. **V. 9,** Heb. xi, 7.

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## CHAPTER VII.

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#### ANALYSIS.

**Entrance of Noah and his family into the ark. The Flood and its effects.**

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#### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 2.** The distinction between clean and unclean animals, *i.e.*, animals which were suitable for food and for sacrifice and animals which were not, seems to have existed from the beginning. The clean animals comprised those whose hoofs divided into two parts, and the unclean those of one hoof and those whose feet divided into more than two parts.

**V. 11.** As the Israelites before their departure from Egypt began their year about the twenty-second of September, the Flood would begin about the beginning of November. "The fountains of the great abyss were vastly enlarged, and the cataracts or sluices of heaven were opened."

**V. 17.** The waters appear to have been 150 days in attaining their greatest height, and 275 days in diminishing. It was five months before they began to abate. The following table will exhibit the various stages—

Age of Noah.	M.	D.	
600	2	17	Noah enters the ark and the Flood begins.
	3	27	40 days rain—the ark floating.
	7	17	110 days more—ark rests.
	10	1	The mountain tops are seen.
	11	11	Raven sent out.
	11	18	Dove sent out, but returned.
	11	25	Dove again sent out, and returned.
	12	2	Dove sent out, and did not return.
601	1	1	Waters dried from surface.
	2	27	Ground fully dried—Noah leaves the ark.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Why did God threaten to destroy the world, and during how many years were men warned?
2. Who and what were saved with Noah in the ark?
3. During how many days was the earth covered with water?

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

**V. 1.** Peter ii., 5. **V. 21.** Matt. xxiv., 39. **V. 23.** 1 Peter iii., 20.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## ANALYSIS.

The waters begin to subside. The ark rests on Ararat. The raven and dove sent forth. Noah leaves the ark, builds an altar, and offers sacrifice.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 10.** From the frequent mention of seven days, it would appear that the seventh day had been observed as a day of holy rest and worship, and that Noah expected a special blessing and token of the divine remembrance on that day.

**V. 14.** Noah was a year and ten days in the ark. He left it in the year 1657, from the creation of the world, and B.C. 2347.

**V. 20.** The first thing Noah did after he left the ark was to offer a sacrifice of gratitude and faith. It was a "burnt-offering," from **Alah** to ascend, because the offering, as being wholly consumed and no part retained by the offerer, ascended as it were to God in smoke and vapour. (Page 48.)

**V. 21.** God's promise to Noah, literally translated, is "I will not add to curse the ground for men's works, although the fiction of men's hearts should become as evil as before."

**V. 22.** "While the earth remaineth," *lit.* until all the days of the earth.

There are remarkable points of agreement as well as of disagreement, between the Babylonian account of the deluge and that of Genesis. The most striking difference between the two is the polytheism of the Babylonian version, in contrast with the monotheism of the Biblical narrative.

The situation of "**the mountains of Ararat**," on which the ark rested, has not been definitely decided. It was not until a very late period that the name of Ararat was first applied, and then confined, to the lofty mountains in the north east of Babylonia. As the present Mount Ararat rises to a height of 19,000 feet above the sea, and is constantly covered with snow, it is scarcely possible that Noah and those in the ark could have lived so long upon the top of it, if the conditions were the same then as now.

Probably the expression "the mountains of Ararat," refers not to any particular peak, but generally to the lofty range of mountains in or near the modern Armenia.

#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What means did Noah employ to ascertain the subsiding of the waters?
2. What was the first act of Noah upon leaving the ark?
3. Where did the ark rest?
4. What promise did God make to Noah after the Flood?

#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE.

V. 21. Mark vii., 21.

## CHAPTER IX.

### ANALYSIS.

Noah and his sons blessed. Promises made to Noah, and prohibitions imposed upon him. Sign and pledge of the Covenant which God made with Noah. The sons of Noah, and the re-peopling of the earth. Noah's sin. Ham's improper conduct. Noah's prophecies regarding his sons.

### CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 5. "**Your blood will I require**," &c.—This verse is obscure. It should perhaps be rendered "your blood **for** your lives," *i.e.* your blood in return for the life-blood which you have shed.

**V. 6.** "**Whoso sheddeth,**" *lit.* he wilfully shedding. It excludes accidental or judicial shedding of blood.

The new arrangements for the new era included (a.) Provision for the increase of the human family by marriage, and the Divine blessing upon it. (b.) Provision for the protection of the human family against animals by the natural dread which God instilled, and by permission to eat animal flesh; and against men, by the law to inflict capital punishment upon murderers. (c.) Provision for the sustenance of the human family. The permission to eat animal flesh, while preventing the dangerous increase of animals fit for food, also met this requirement.

**V. 13.** "**I do set,**" or "I have placed.

**V. 15.** "**I will remember.**"—This form of language is called an anthropomorphism—thoughts, feelings, or actions applied to God which strictly can only be applied to men.

**V. 16.** "**The everlasting covenant,**" *lit.* the covenant of eternity. The Noachic covenant was the original Adamic covenant in a different form. It reached from eternity to eternity.

**V. 19.** "**Overspread,**" *i.e.* dispersed themselves abroad.

**V. 26.** The exact rendering is "Blessed be Jehovah, the appointed God of Shem," in whose line shall be the knowledge and worship of the true God.

**V. 27.** "Japheth shall make room for the one that spreads abroad."

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What promises did God make to Noah, and what prohibitions did He impose upon him after the Flood?



2. Give the names of Noah's sons, and quote the prophecy which Noah uttered regarding each of them. Show generally how these prophecies were fulfilled.

3. Give the date of Noah's death, and mention his age.

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NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

V. 6. Matt. xxvi., 52. V. 13. Rev. iv., 8.

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## CHAPTER X.

### ANALYSIS.

The generations of the sons of Noah, of Japheth, of Ham, and of Shem.

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Sons of Japheth.	Nations Founded.	Sons of Japheth.	Nations Founded.
1. Gomer	Cimbri.	5. Tubal	Iberians.
2. Magog	Scythians.	6. Meshech	Muscovites or Russians.
3. Madai	Macedonians	7. Tiras	Thracians.
4. Javan	Ionians & Greeks		

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Sons of Ham.	Nations Founded.	Sons of Ham.	Nations Founded.
1. Cush	Ethiopians, &c.	3. Phut	Inhabitants of Lower Egypt.
2. Mizraim	Inhabitants of Upper Egypt.	4. Canaan	Canaanites and Phœnicians.

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Sons of Shem.	Nations Founded.	Sons of Shem.	Nations Founded.
1. Elam	Persians.	4. Lud	Lydians.
2. Ashur	Assyrians.	5. Aram	Mesopotamians.
3. Arphaxad	Media.		

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In the first five verses of the chapter, the territory occupied by the descendants of Japheth, the language spoken, and the nations founded, are referred to, but very shortly, as the Japhetic nations lived at a great distance from the Hebrews and were almost unknown. The immediate descendants of Ham number thirty, of whom four

were sons. Their territory generally embraced the southern portions of the globe. The children of Shem were twenty-six in number, of whom five were sons.

Many of the names in the chapter are in the plural number, and refer to the nations descended from their founders.

**V. 5.** The Hebrews applied the word **Isles** to all those countries that were divided from them by the sea. The inhabitants of Britain are descended from Japheth.

**"After his tongue."**—This dispersion took place after the confusion of tongues, but the division according to languages is here mentioned by anticipation.

**V. 9. "Before the Lord;"** *i.e.* presumptuously and defiantly. Nimrod took an active part in building Babylon and Nineveh.

**V. 10. "Shinar"** or Sumir. This is now established by recent exploration to be the ancient name of the Tigris-Euphrates valley. The word means "the valley," in contradistinction to Akkad, "the high land," which the Accadians inhabited.

**V. 11. "The city of Rehoboth,"** *i.e.* city of streets—so called on account of its size and regularity.

**V. 21. Shem** is introduced in a particular manner as being the great ancestor of the Hebrews—so called from **Eber**.

**V. 25.** It was in the time of **Peleg**, or the fourth generation from Shem, that the division of the earth took place.

#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What part of the earth was assigned to Japheth?
2. What is meant by "the isles of the Gentiles?"
3. What was the character of Nimrod? What cities did he help to build?
4. Name the sons of Shem, and the nations descended from them.
5. Where are Shinar, Assyria, Mizraim, and Babylon?

## CHAPTER XI.

## ANALYSIS.

**Building of Babel. The Dispersion. The lives and families of the Post-diluvian Patriarchs descended from Shem. The Birth of Abraham. Departure from Ur.**

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** The whole earth, *i.e.* the whole population of the earth, was of one tongue and one kind of words. It is generally thought that Hebrew, the language of the Jews, was the primitive language.

**V. 3.** They first resolved to make bricks, there being no stone in that district, and then they resolved to build a lofty tower. They used slime or bitumen for mortar. (Page 59.)

**V. 9.** Some take Babel to mean the House of God. We adopt the usual meaning—confusion. Many endeavours have been made to identify this tower. The ruins are supposed to have been discovered in the Birs Nimrod near Babel.

**V. 26.** Though Abram is here mentioned first as being the most noted, it is believed that he was the youngest son. Terah and his family appear from the Book of Joshua to have been idolaters.

**V. 28.** “**Land of his nativity,**” the country where he was born.

**V. 32.** We have adopted the view that the call came to Abram in Ur, that this call led to the migration towards Canaan, but that Terah died in Haran (Charran—Acts vii., 2, now Harran, a small village in Padan-aram) being 205 years old.

## EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What was the design of building the Tower of Babel ?
2. In what consisted the sin of those who built it ?
3. How was the design of the builders frustrated ?
4. From which of Noah's sons was Abraham descended ? Trace his genealogy.
5. To what extent does philology countenance the statement that originally only one language was spoken by men ?
6. Name the birthplace of Abraham, and describe his wanderings.

## NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

- V. 8. Luke i., 51. V. 31. Acts vii., 4 ; Luke iii., 34-36.

## CHAPTER XII.

## ANALYSIS.

**Abram leaves Haran and journeys to Canaan. God appears to him. He goes down to Egypt, where he denies his wife.**

## CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. This has been considered by many the second call of Abram.

Compare Acts vii., 2. Our authorized version gives us a pluperfect parenthetical reference, but there may have been a repetition of the call. Heb. xi., 8.

V. 4. Lot is generally reckoned Abram's nephew. The question of relationship is, however, a little complicated by Lot being called Abram's brother. And there are some who think that Sarai, Abram's wife, was Lot's sister.

V. 5. "**Substance**" means collected goods.

V. 6. Having crossed the Euphrates, Abram probably passed by Damascus, where he engaged Eliezer to be his servant, then came to Shechem, then proceeded to a place near Bethel. Expelled from Palestine by famine he went down into Egypt. (Page 63.)

**V. 7. "The Lord appeared unto Abram."** This is the first time this expression is used. Divine appearances now become numerous and frequent. It is not difficult to believe that these manifestations were by Jesus Christ, who is the only medium of communication between God and man, who from the beginning "rejoiced in the habitable part of his earth" (Prov. viii, 31), and to whom belonged the administration of the kingdom of God. The "Angel of the Lord," who entered Abram's tent, spake of Isaac's birth and Sodom's doom, and arrested his hand when it was raised to slay his son, who appeared to Hagar in the wilderness, who appeared to Jacob at Bethel, at Padanaram, and at Peniel, "the Angel which redeemed him from all evil," and to whose care he commended the sons of Joseph, is clearly a greater than any created being, for the name of God is ascribed to Him, divine honours are appropriated, and, without protest, sacrifice and homage accepted by him.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Why did Abram go down to Egypt, and what befel him there ?
2. State precisely the moral aspect of the transaction which occurred in Egypt, and give other instances of the same sin.
3. How did Abram signalize the various places at which he took up his abode ?

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

**V. 3,** Gal. iii, 8. **V. 4,** Heb. xi, 8. **V. 6,** Heb. xi, 9.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

## ANALYSIS.

Abram's return to Bethel. The strife between the herdsmen of Abram and of Lot. The separation. The Divine promise to Abram renewed. Abram removes to Hebron.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 3.** They went into the region between the hill country of Judah and the desert "on his journeys," *i.e.*, by stages towards Bethel.

**V. 7.** The Perizzite was a family of the Canaanites. Strife in the circumstances was both unseemly and dangerous. The presence of Perizzites and Canaanites, too, diminished the available room for large encampments.

**V. 10.** "The plain of Jordan," *lit.*, the circle of Jordan, the lower part of the valley watered by the Jordan, which is now called the Ghôr.

**V. 17.** The survey would tend to increase Abram's gratitude and faith. He was to consider the whole land as his own.

**V. 18.** After the separation Abram took up his abode "in the plain of Mamre," *i.e.*, in the oak groves of Mamre. Hebron was originally called Kirjath-Arba (Josh. xiv., 15). It is now called El-Khulil, the friend—after Abram, the friend of God.

## EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What caused the separation of Abram and Lot?
2. What place of abode did Lot select? How would you characterise his choice?

3. Compare the promise made to Abram after the departure of Lot with the previous promises.

4. Where are Bethel, Hebron, and the plain of Jordan?

5. Write a brief history of Hebron.

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NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

V. 15, Acts vii., 5. V. 16, Heb. xi., 12.

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CHAPTER XIV.

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ANALYSIS.

The battle of the Kings. Lot taken captive. Abram rescues him. Melchisedek blesses Abram, and Abram pays him tithes of the spoil.

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CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. "**Shinar.**"—This is the land of Sumir, the Tigro-Euphrates Valley, Shinar or Sumir meaning "the valley," in contradistinction to Akkad, "the high land." In the Sumerians we see the original aboriginal inhabitants of Chaldea before the Accadian emigrants, journeying from the east, brought with them the elements of civilization, and founded the tetrapolis. Akkad, called after the mountain home of the race, is now identified as the modern Aboo Hubba. Amraphel, the Accadian, was now King of Shinar.

Arioch or Eriaku was the King of Ellasar or Larsa, a town on the east side of the Euphrates. These names have been discovered on the cuneiform monuments from Assyria.

Chedorlaomer, *i. e.*, son of the god Lagamar, was the King of Elam, which embraced the rich plains to the east of the lower course of the Tigris, together with the mountains which bound them. Elam at this time dominated the whole country west to the Jordan.

Tidal or Turgal was probably the king of that tract of country which stretches to the north of Babylonia, from Mesopotamia to the mountains of Kurdistan, and within which the kingdom of Assyria afterwards arose.

The Elamite king overran Chaldea in 2280 B.C. This was the beginning of Elamite supremacy in Babylonia.

**V. 2.** Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar were the chief cities of the plain of Jordan. Their kings revolted in the thirteenth year of servitude from Chedorlaomer. These kings being descended from Ham, and Chedorlaomer being descended from Shem, the prediction of Noah (Gen. ix., 26) was already partially fulfilled.

**V. 3.** "The Vale of Siddim," *i.e.*, of cliffs, on the shore of the Dead Sea, was connected with the land of Edom by the Vale of Salt, so called when the valley of Siddim, by the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, became a large lake, whose waters are very bitter.

**V. 5.** In his journey southwards Chedorlaomer punished the tribes to the east of the Jordan—the Rephaim, or giants of Ashteroth—Karnaim, being the first to suffer; the Zuzim or Zamzummims; the Emims, a people numerous and powerful; and the Horites, or cave-dwellers, who inhabited the rocks around Petra until they were driven out by the descendants of Esau, who possessed Mount Seir "in their stead" (Deut. ii., 12).

**V. 6.** "El-paran," which is by the wilderness or oak wood of Paran, in the south west—now called Et-Tih—formed the terminus of the expedition, and, unless Chedorlaomer and his allies intended to go on to Egypt, it would have been useless to proceed further.

**V. 7.** Turning northward, they smote the country of the Amalekites, which lay on the west of the great commercial route from the Elanitic Gulf. (Page 82.)



**V. 10. "Slime-pits."**—Great quantities of bitumen are still thrown up from the lake which now covers this valley. (Gen. xi., 3.) Probably only the troops of the king of Sodom fell there, as he himself afterwards appeared in order to congratulate Abram on his triumph.

**V. 13. "Abram the Hebrew,"** so called, probably, from his ancestor Eber. Hence "the Hebrews," the Israelites or Jews.

**V. 14.** Dan was situated near the springs of Lesser Jordan. (Judges xviii., 7.) If this was Laish, it is evident that a later editor, probably Ezra, must have inserted the modern name.

**V. 18. Melchisedek** was so called, as being a king of righteousness, or righteous king. Jerusalem exactly suits the particulars of the narrative, as it was on the way along which Abram would most likely go from his residence at Mamre, to cross the fords of Jordan, and thus intercept the confederate kings. Melchisedek was probably the last official representative of the primitive religion, being still under the covenant God made with Noah after the Flood, and he comes forth to welcome the new faith in the person of Abram. He combined in his own person the highest civil and the highest sacred offices ; he was a king who loved righteousness and peace ; his appearance and position were singular and mysterious, for his descent is not recorded, and both his predecessor and successor are unknown ; he did not obtain his kingship from Judah, nor his priesthood from Levi ; and he was a priest all "through the dispensation" or course of the priesthood, there being, so far as known, no other priest in the same order at all. How like to Him who has a royal priesthood, is a "priest upon his throne !" (Page 85.)

**V. 20.** The royal hospitality and priestly benediction of Melchisedek are worthy of note. There was on his part, too, a consciousness of superiority, which Abraham acknowledged by paying tithes, as an expression of gratitude to God who had given him the victory, and for the support of His worship. (See Gen. xxviii., 22.) Melchisedek's dignity was a present possession. Abraham might yet have the priestly dignity in Aaron, and the kingly in David, and both would be united in his greatest descendant, Jesus Christ, but in the meantime he had only the promise of this. (Heb. vii., 5-11.)

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Describe the object and the route of the invading army.
2. How was Lot rescued?
3. Who were the leaders of the contending forces, and where did they come from?
4. What do you know of Melchisedek, and in what respect was he a type of Christ?
5. What qualities appear in Abram, in Lot, in the king of Sodom and in Melchisedek in connection with the events narrated in this chapter?

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

**V. 17.** Heb. vii., 1. **V. 18.** Heb. v., 6. **V. 20.** Heb. vii., 4.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### ANALYSIS.

God enters into a covenant with Abram. The sign of the covenant. The migration of his posterity revealed to Abram. The land of promise defined.

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### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 2.** "Of what avail will larger possessions be, so long as a son of administration inheriteth."

**V. 6.** Abraham trusted the words of God, as certain and constant. (Rom. iv.)

**V. 9.** "Take me."—Offer before me; or, Take for me, on my behalf. At three years old, the life of these animals is mature, and yet fresh. The animals were to be cut in two, lengthwise, and the two parts of each animal were laid opposite each other, leaving a passage between, through which the contracting parties walked.

**V. 12.** Abram appears to have spent the whole day in the solemn service; a deep sleep, a trance. "An horror of great darkness," *lit.*, a terror, a great darkness.

**V. 13.** To try Abram's faith, God foretold the affliction of his posterity in Egypt. God will give even the wicked Amorites an opportunity to repent, or to fill up the measure of their iniquity. Long years of sorrow and disappointment were before Abram's posterity before the promise should be fulfilled.

**V. 14.** There is difficulty with regard to the length of time the Israelites were in Egypt. Were they oppressed in Egypt for 400 years? Or did 400 years intervene between the time when this promise was given and the exodus? (See Ex. xii., 40, 41.) If 430 years were actually spent in Egypt, some generations must have been omitted from the genealogical tables.

God judged and punished the Egyptians (Ex. vii.-xii.), and the Israelites "came out with great substance." (Ex. xii., 35, 36.)

**V. 16.** The promise made to Abraham was realized when Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the son of Amram, the son of Kohath, came out of Egypt, and divided the land of Canaan among the Israelites.

**V. 17.** "A smoking furnace" or "oven" and a "burning lamp" or "torch of fire" were the symbols

employed by God to represent the Israelites in their affliction and in their deliverance.

**V. 18.** The boundaries of the country possessed by the Israelites never extended from the Euphrates to the Nile. It is not, however, the purpose of the prophetic promise to furnish data geographically correct. It was enough to intimate that they were to be the only powerful and independent nation between Assyria and Egypt.

**V. 19.** As the names of some of these tribes do not appear in subsequent lists of the conquered nations it is probable that they were merged into the others before the time of the conquest.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What covenant did God make with Abram, and by what sign or token did He condescend to ratify His promise?
2. What do you know regarding Eliezer?
3. What conclusion does Paul gather from verse 6?
4. Name the tribes whose land Abram's seed was to possess and describe the district inhabited by each tribe.

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

**V. 2,** Acts vii., 5.   **V. 6,** Rom. iv., 9; Gal. iii., 5; James ii., 23.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### ANALYSIS.

Sarai's device for procuring an heir and its results. Hagar's flight and return at the request of the Angel of the Lord, who appeared to her. The birth of Ishmael.

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### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** "Handmaid," *i.e.* bondmaid or servant as opposed to free-woman. Abram was now 85 years old. "Hagar" means flight.

**V. 7.** She evidently intended to return to her native country, for the wilderness of Shur bordered upon Egypt. (Page 88.)

**V. 9.** "Submit thyself;" *i.e.* humble thyself.

**V. 14.** This well has been identified as the well which the Arabs now call Moilabi Hagar, on the road from Beersheba to Shur.

**V. 16.** "Ishmael" means "God will hear."

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Where was the wilderness of Shur ?
2. What led to the flight of Hagar and what to her return ?
3. How old was Abram when Ishmael was born ?
4. In what respects are Abram, Sarai, and Hagar respectively blameworthy in the episode mentioned in this chapter ?
5. What is the meaning of the words Beer-lahai-roi, Ishmael and Hagar ?
6. Who are Ishmael's descendants, and what is their manner of life ?

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE.

- V. 15.** Gal. iv., 22.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### ANALYSIS.

The Covenant renewed. Abram's name changed to Abraham. Circumcision is instituted. Sarai's name changed to Sarah. Isaac is promised.

### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** When Abram was 99 years of age God appeared to him to renew His covenant with him.

**V. 5.** "Abram" means exalted father ; "Abraham," "father of a multitude."

**V. 6.** The covenant contained a three-fold promise to Abraham :—

- (a.) That he should have a son by Sarai his wife.
- (b.) That his seed should be numerous and should possess Canaan.
- (c.) That in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Ishmaelites, Israelites, and Edomites are literally descended from Abraham. Spiritually, he is the father of all believers.

**V. 10.** Circumcision is the sign of the covenant into which God entered. It presupposes a belief in the origin of sin, as being propagated in the world by generation, and a desire to have sin eradicated. (Ps. li., 5; Deut. xxx., 6; Gal. v., 3.)

**V. 15.** Abraham's wife was no longer to be Sarai, "she who contends," but Sarah, "a princess."

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Explain in what sense circumcision was a seal of the covenant.
2. Quote the words of God's blessing upon Ishmael?
3. What three promises were included in the covenant which God made with Abraham?

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

**V. 4,** Rom. iv., 17. **V. 10,** Luke i., 59. ii., 21. Gal. v., 3.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

## ANALYSIS.

Abraham entertains Angels. Sarah's incredulity is rebuked. The Divine purposes regarding Sodom disclosed. Abraham intercedes for Sodom.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 4.** This is exactly a picture of the way in which an Arabian Sheik of the present day would receive travellers arriving at his encampment. As Eastern travellers either went barefooted, or only wore sandals, the frequent washing of the feet was as necessary as it was refreshing.

**V. 6.** The process required of Sarah is still common in the East. As soon as the dough is kneaded it is made into thin cakes, which are then baked upon the coals. Abraham's hospitality and civility to his guests presents him in a very pleasing aspect.

**V. 18.** As all nations of the earth were to be blessed in Abraham, he was necessarily interested in all God's dealings with them. He was specially interested in Canaan, and God would not destroy a part of the future inheritance without letting him know. Besides, Abraham was faithful to God and zealous in promoting His honour. God will therefore show him the terrible consequences of disobedience, in order to strengthen him in his course of fidelity. (Page 90.)

## EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What were the conditions of the covenant which God made with Abraham as referred to in the 19th verse?
2. Give a short account of Abraham's intercession for the "cities of the plain."
3. What was the origin of Isaac's name?
4. Give other instances of importunate prayer and of intercession for others.

## NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

- V. 2.** Heb. xiii., 2. **V. 10.** Rom. iv., 19; ix., 9. **V. 12.** 1 Peter iii., 6. **V. 18.** Acts iii., 25. **V. 32.** James v., 16.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## ANALYSIS.

**Lot entertains two angels. The wicked conduct of the men of Sodom. Rescue of Lot and his two daughters. The fate of Lot's wife. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The immorality of Lot's daughters.**

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** In Eastern cities the gate is the usual place of rendezvous, social gatherings, courts of justice, markets, and councils being held there.

**V. 2.** To sleep in the street is a very common practice in warm countries. Lot, however, feared lest the strangers should not be allowed to sleep unmolested, his fellow-citizens being so wicked.

**V. 14.** Whether Lot had other daughters who were married, or those referred to as sons-in-law were only so by anticipation, his two daughters being betrothed to them, cannot be determined.

**V. 20.** The natural selfishness and worldliness of Lot manifest themselves even in the hurried flight from the doomed city. "**Is it not a little one?**" This has been taken to mean, its sins cannot be so crying that it must be destroyed. It would not, therefore, be a great demand on divine mercy to spare it, and, if this were done, Lot would be saved from further exertions for his safety.



**V. 21.** "I have accepted thee," *lit.*, "I have lifted up thy face," a petitioner naturally raising his face when his request is granted.

**V. 22.** "**Zoar**" means "the little." This city has been identified with Ziara at the northern extremity of the Dead Sea.

**V. 23.** "**The sun was risen**," *lit.*, "had gone forth," was now above the horizon.

**V. 24.** "**Rained**" = caused to rain. The five cities of the Jordan "circle," or Pentapolis, were Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, Bela or Zoar. The last only was spared. Whether a volcanic eruption overwhelmed the entire region, or lightning from heaven ignited the bituminous soil—what precise natural means God employed to effect His purposes of judgment, we cannot now determine. Henceforth the land was depressed 1,312 feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea, and became a receptacle for the waters overflowing the Jordan. It now forms a part of the Dead Sea.

**V. 29.** The paragraph beginning with this verse seems to have originally stood in some other connection. Some even have supposed that the story of the disgraceful conduct of Lot's daughters originated in the Jewish hatred of Moab and Ammon.

**V. 37.** "**Moab**" means "from the father," alluding to the incestuous origin. The Moabites inhabited the country north-east of the Dead Sea, but they were afterwards driven farther south.

**V. 38.** "**Benammi**" means "son of my own kindred." The Ammonites were an unsettled people, who occupied the territory between the Jabbok and the Arnon, from which they had ejected the Zamzummims (Deut. ii., 20). They were very idolatrous (1 Kings xi., 7).

## EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What means were used to save Lot? Who were saved with him?
2. Name the cities which were destroyed.
3. What occupies the sites of those cities now?
4. Describe the character of Lot, giving illustrations to support your opinion.
5. What was the sin and fate of Lot's wife?
6. What is the meaning of "Zoar," "Moab," and "Ammon," and where were these towns situated?

## NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

- V. 16. 2 Peter ii., 7. V. 24. Luke xvii., 29; Jude 7. V. 26. Luke xvii., 32.

## CHAPTER XX.

## ANALYSIS.

**Abraham in Gerar.** He denies his wife. Abimelech is reproved in a dream. Abimelech rebukes Abraham and restores Sarah. By Abraham's prayer Abimelech and his family are blessed.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. Abraham journeyed from Mamre to Gerar, a district about 12 miles S.S.E. of Gaza, where there is good pasturage.

V. 2. Abraham committed the same sin at Gerar which he had committed in Egypt twenty years earlier. He said that Sarah was his sister. Abimelech seems to have been a royal name like Pharaoh, in Egypt. Sarah was now 90 years old.

V. 4. The inhabitants of Gerar do not appear to have been so wicked as the other inhabitants of Canaan.

V. 12. Abraham endeavoured to defend his conduct, but it was very unworthy. Abimelech fully compensated for his

offence. Besides, the generous Philistine, instead of hastening his departure from the country as the king of Egypt had done, offered Abraham a settlement within his borders.

**V. 16.** It is impossible to determine whether the idea here is that the 1,000 pieces are a satisfaction, a propitiatory offering for what had been done; or, that Abraham was a protection to his wife, hiding her from the evil desires of other men. The rebuke lay in calling Abraham her brother.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. State what occurred at Gerar.
2. How did Abimelech propitiate Abraham and rebuke Sarah?

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## CHAPTER XXI.

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#### ANALYSIS.

**Birth and Circumcision of Isaac. Expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael. God appears to Hagar. Treaty between Abraham and Abimelech.**

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#### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 9.** Ishmael was deriding or laughing. The Apostle Paul calls it persecution (Gal. iv., 29). (Page 93.)

**V. 20.** "God was with the lad." Literally, "The Word of the Lord was a help to the lad?"

**V. 21.** Ishmael became a "shooter with the bow" in the wilderness of Paran, adjoining the desert of Sinai. It is a very mountainous region.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Where and when was Isaac born? How old were his father, mother, and brother at the time?
2. Give a short history of Ishmael.

3. Explain the references to Hagar and Ishmael in the New Testament.
4. Who were Abimelech and Phichol, and into what treaty did they enter with Abraham?
5. Where are Gerar, Paran, Beersheba? What is the connection in which these places are mentioned?

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NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

V. 2. Acts vii., 8; Heb. xi., 11. V. 9. Gal. iv., 29. V. 12. Rom. ix., 7.

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CHAPTER XXII.

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ANALYSIS.

God commands Abraham to offer Isaac. Abraham proceeds to obey this command. The Angel prevents him from slaying Isaac. A ram offered. God renews His covenant with Abraham. Genealogy of Rebekah.

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CRITICAL NOTES.

- V. 1. "**Tempt.**"—Test or try. (Page 96.)
- V. 2. "**Moriah.**"—The high or conspicuous land. The spot selected by Abraham for the sacrifice of Isaac is generally supposed to have been a high prominent rock now called Es-Sakhrab, the rock.
- V. 14. "**Jehovah-Jireh.**"—The Lord will provide.
- V. 17. "**Possess the gate of his enemies,**" *i.e.*, occupy their cities by force and conquer them.
- V. 20. This genealogical table is here introduced on account of Rebekah, who is soon to become Isaac's wife.
- V. 21. See Job xxxii., 2. Elihu was a descendant of Buz.

## EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Write an account of the great trial of Abraham's faith and obedience.
2. Where was Mount Moriah? What important events have occurred there?
3. How old was Isaac at this time, what part did he take in this trial, and what conversation passed between him and his father on the way?
4. What is the meaning of Jehovah-Jireh? What place received that name, and why?
5. Point out special points in the event here recorded typical of the sacrifice of Christ.
6. Quote and explain Hebrews xi., 19.
7. Give the descent of Rebekah from Nahor.

## NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

- V. 1. Heb. xi., 17. V. 9. James ii., 21. V. 16. Heb. vi., 13, 14.  
V. 18. Gal. iii., 8.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## ANALYSIS.

**Death of Sarah. Purchase of Machpelah. Burial of Sarah.**

## CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 3. The Hethites, Chethites or Hittites, were descended from Cheth, the son of Canaan. Hebron, Josh. xxi., 11.

V. 8. The burial of Sarah was only the first of many burials in Canaan, and Abraham desired a safe title to the property. (Page 100.)

V. 9. "**Machpelah**" means the double cave. It lies near Hebron. An ancient Christian church was built over it, which is now a mosque, and is sacredly guarded by the Turks

against any intrusion. The remains of the patriarchs and their wives, Rachel alone excepted, were buried beneath, and, it is believed, still lie safely in their venerable and venerated tombs.

**V. 16.** "Shekel" means weight; the first form of money being probably rings of gold or silver, whose value was determined by weight. If the shekel was 2s. 3d., Abraham paid £45 for the property.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Tell the age of Sarah at her death, mention the leading incidents in her life, and give an estimate of her character.
2. Give an account of Abraham's purchase of Machpelah.
3. Explain in this connection Heb. xi., 13, 39.

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

- V. 4.** Heb. xi., 13. **V. 17.** Acts vii., 16.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

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#### ANALYSIS.

Abraham commissions his servant to procure a wife for Isaac. The journey of the servant. The sign employed for the discovery of the bride. The conversation between the servant and Rebekah. Laban entertains the servant. The proposed marriage approved of. The departure of Rebekah. The meeting of Isaac and Rebekah.

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#### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** Abraham was now 140 years of age, and Isaac was 40.

**V. 10.** "Mesopotamia."—Literally, Aram of the two rivers, between the Euphrates and Tigris.

**V. 21.** "To wit," *i.e.*, to know. The word is now obsolete. It occurs also in Mark ix., 6, and 2 Cor. viii., 1.

**V. 22.** "A golden ear-ring" may have been a ring for the forehead or nose, an ornament common in Eastern countries.

**V. 50.** Bethuel, the father of Rebekah, is in the background throughout. Laban, her brother, makes the arrangements.

**V. 59.** The nurse of Rebekah was Deborah (Gen. xxxv., 8).

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What admirable qualities did Abraham's servant manifest in this transaction?
2. Quote the words of the prayers which he offered, as recorded in this chapter.
3. Describe the meeting of Isaac and Rebekah.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

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#### ANALYSIS.

**Abraham's sons by Keturah. The division of his property. His age, death, and burial. The generations of Ishmael. The birth of Esau and Jacob. Esau sells his birthright.**

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#### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** Keturah appears to have been only one of the concubines mentioned in verse 6 (1 Chron. i., 32). The sons of Keturah were perhaps born at an earlier period. (Rom. iv., 19).

**V. 2.** Zimran is thought to be represented by the Zamereni, a tribe in the interior of Arabia. It was the

descendants of Midian who sold Joseph to Potiphar (Gen. xxxvii., 36). To the tribe of Shuah, Bildad, the friend of Job, belonged.

**V. 8.** "Gave up the ghost," is an old phrase for "expired," ceased to breathe.

**V. 9.** Seventy years had passed since the expulsion of Ishmael, but friendship with the family must still have been maintained. Isaac was now 75 years of age. Jacob and Esau 15. (Page 104.)

**V. 11.** "Blessed," *i.e.*, enriched with material and temporal prosperity. **Lahai-roi.** See Gen. xvi., 14; xxiv., 62.

**V. 12.** Before proceeding with the main history in the line of Isaac the fortunes of Abraham's eldest son are briefly traced. (Gen. xvi., 15.)

**V. 13.** Nebajoth, "heights," was the ancestor of the Nabathæans, in Northern Arabia. The descendants of the others are in and around Arabia Petraea, on to Babylon. It is, however, difficult to distinguish the different tribes. Ishmael died at the age of 137.

**V. 18.** A fulfilment of the promise made in Gen. xvi., 12.

**V. 20.** Padanaram, the low lands of Aram, by the Euphrates. Bethuel and Laban are called Syrians. So is Jacob (Deut. xxvi., 5) because he dwelt many years with Laban.

**V. 30.** "**Edom**" means red. (Page 107.) "**Esau**" means rough; "**Jacob**" a supplanter.

**V. 34.** Lentiles are a kind of pulse, in shape like peas. They are very nutritious, but are chiefly used to feed cattle.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. From whom are the Midianites descended?
2. Name all Abraham's sons.
3. Give the date of Abraham's death, his age when he died, and an estimate of his character, with examples from his life.



4. Explain the meaning of the words Keturah, Midian, Rebekah, Edom, Esau, and Jacob.

5. For what did Esau sell his birthright? What reference is made to the incident by the Apostle Paul?

6. Explain Rom. ix., 10, 13, and Heb. xii., 16, 17.

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NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

V. 23. Rom. ix., 10-12. V. 27. Heb. xi., 9. V. 33. Heb. xii., 16, 17.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

ANALYSIS.

Isaac, driven by famine, goes to Gerar. God blesses him. He denies his wife, for which he is reproved by Abimelech. He grows rich. He digs wells. He enters into a covenant with Abimelech. Esau's wives.

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CRITICAL NOTES.

V 1. Isaac practised in Gerar the same deception towards Abimelech with respect to Rebekah as Abraham, his father, had done with regard to Sarah 80 years before. (Gen. xx., 2.) It is not probable that this is the same Abimelech.

V. 2. Isaac was evidently on his way to Egypt, the usual refuge in time of famine, when God appeared to him and told him to remain in Gerar, renewing to him the promises already made to his father.

V. 12. Rebekah being sufficiently protected by the prohibition of the king, Isaac prepared to settle for a period in Gerar. Feeling the precariousness of depending only on cattle, he sowed seed in the land and he reaped "**an hundred fold**;" *i.e.*, for each measure he sowed he received an hundred measures.

**V. 17.** The Philistines envied Isaac's prosperity, stopped the wells his father had dug in order to annoy him and force him to remove, and then the king formally requested him to leave the country.

**V. 18.** Gen. xxi, 31, gives the account of an identical incident.

**V. 20.** "**Esek**," "**Sitnah**," and "**Rehoboth**," mean respectively strife, hate, room, significant of the opposition of the Philistines and the conquest of that opposition.

**V. 21.** Isaac settled in Beersheba, a former residence of Abraham (Gen. xxi, 33), between the Mediterranean and the Salt Sea. There God appeared to him and renewed his covenant. And there Abimelech requested him to form an alliance with him, as their predecessors had done. (Page 94.)

**V. 33.** "**Shebah**" means the oath; "**Beer-sheba**," the well of the oath.

**V. 34.** Esau married women of Canaan. This proves how little he regarded the peculiar blessings promised to his family. These women could have little sympathy with the family hopes. And see Gen. xxxvi.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Compare the conduct of Abraham in Gerar with that of Isaac.
  2. What is the character of Isaac as shown in this chapter?
  3. Give the names of the wells which Isaac dug.
  4. Describe Esau's conduct and character.
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## CHAPTER XXVII.

## ANALYSIS.

Isaac desires Esau to bring venison. Jacob personates Esau and obtains the blessing. The fear of Isaac and the grief of Esau when the deception is discovered. Esau threatens Jacob. Rebekah sends him to Padan-aram.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** Isaac was now about 140. His failing sight warned him of approaching death, but he reached the age of 180. (Page 107.)

**V. 4.** Jacob desired to have his natural energy stimulated, and to have his affection for Esau intensified by this venison.

**V. 6.** Rebekah was probably impelled to this as much by the word which God had spoken to her before the birth of her sons as by her own partiality for Jacob. Both the purpose of God and his own oath deprived Esau of all claim to it.

**V. 11.** Jacob's sole objection to practise the deception upon his father arose from fear of discovery.

**V. 27-29.** In the patriarchal blessing were included plenty, dominion, and pre-eminence.

**V. 35.** "**Subtlety,**" guile or wisdom.

**V. 39.** "**Thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth.**" Some take this to mean "thy dwelling shall be apart from the fruitful land of Palestine and among the bare and barren rocks of Mount Seir;" so that, pressed by the unfruitfulness of his own country, Esau would be driven to war and plunder for his support.

**V. 40.** The sword would not enable Esau to maintain his independence. He should be subject to his brother, but not

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## ANALYSIS.

Jacob, on arriving at Haran, meets Rachel. Laban entertains him. He serves for Rachel, but is deceived by the substitution of Leah. Laban's justification and Rachel's marriage to Jacob on condition that he serve other seven years. Four sons born.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** "Went on his journey," *lit.*, lifted up his feet, refreshed and happy, being comforted and strengthened by the vision.

**V. 8.** The wells were generally covered with large slabs of stone, having a round hole in the centre through which the leather bucket or earthen jar could pass. But when not required, a heavy stone was thrust into this hole to prevent unnecessary consumption of the water, and to protect it from the drifting sand. The shepherds had an understanding that none should help himself before the rest were present, so that no undue advantage might be taken.

**V. 12.** Jacob accosted Rachel as a cousin, according to Eastern custom, and when introduced to her father, was at once received as a blood relation. After Jacob had stayed a month with Laban he agreed to serve seven years for Rachel. (Page 113.)

**V. 23.** The darkness, the bridal veil, and possibly the foregoing festivities, prevented Jacob from at once detecting the deception.

**V. 35.** "Rachel" means ewe-lamb; "Leah," wearied; "Reuben," see a son; "Simeon," hearing; "Levi," attachment; and "Judah," praise.

## EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Describe Jacob's introduction to Laban, and analyse the character of Laban.
2. What contract did Jacob make with Laban, and how was it fulfilled?
3. Name the four eldest sons of Leah, and give the meaning of their names.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## ANALYSIS.

The children of Bilhah and Zilpah. Leah, for mandrakes, secures Jacob. Leah has other three children. Rachel bears Joseph. The covenant Laban made with Jacob to induce him to stay. Jacob's plan to become rich.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 3.** It is to be noted that Rachel's device to procure an heir is the same as Sarah's. (Gen. xvi., 2.) Bilhah's first son was called **Dan**, *i.e.*, vindicator, because in his birth God vindicated Rachel's position as Jacob's wife; the next was **Naphtali**, my wrestling. Zilpah's children were **Gad**, good fortune; and **Asher**, happy.

**V. 14.** "**Mandrakes**"—Dudain, *lit.*, love-apples, it being believed that this fruit excited love and aided conception.

**V. 18.** "**Issachar**," hired, because Leah had hired Jacob with the mandrakes; "**Zebulon**," endowed; "**Dinah**," judgment.

**V. 24.** At length a son was given to Rachel—**Joseph** *i.e.*, adding. This seemed to have been about the time when Jacob's fourteen years' service expired.

**V. 32.** The condition on which Jacob consented to continue in Laban's service, was that he should have the

speckled and spotted cattle, &c. As the sheep in the East are generally white, seldom brown, and the goats generally black, seldom speckled, the bargain promised to be greatly to Laban's advantage. But by the strange device of laying peeled wands before the sheep at breeding time, Jacob contrived to make the number which fell to his share greater than it would naturally have been. And then, after the first lambing season, he tried to produce, by the sight of the spotted lambs, the same effect on the ewes as he had produced by the peeled wands. He also took care to allow no infusion of pure white among the flock. Jacob thus became exceedingly rich.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Name the twelve children of Jacob already referred to, also the one who was born after this period, and their respective mothers.
2. How many years did Jacob serve his uncle, and how were his services repaid?
3. On what conditions did Jacob agree to serve Laban during the last part of his sojourn with him?
4. In what did the wealth of Jacob consist, and what means did he adopt to increase it?

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

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#### ANALYSIS.

Jacob leaves Laban. Laban pursues after him, but ultimately enters into a friendly and solemn covenant with him.

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#### CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. Laban's sons envied Jacob's prosperity, and accused him of dishonesty, and with the Divine permission he departed from Padanaram. (Page 114.)

**V. 4.** "Unto his flock," into the place where he kept his flock, and there told them of his intended departure, in which they cheerfully acquiesced.

**V. 19.** The family of Laban, though possessed of some knowledge of the true God, was yet in a measure tinctured with remains of the idolatry and superstition of the surrounding countries. Laban had in his house "Teraphin," upon which he evidently set a high value. These were images which had a certain religious significance, and which probably Laban consulted in cases of perplexity. Rachel coveted these images and stole them.

**V. 20.** "Laban the Syrian." As the Hebrew word for Syrian means crafty, it has been suggested that the name is here applied to Laban not only to tell the country to which he belonged but also the character he bore. But Jacob, the supplanter, outwitted his cunning and scheming kinsman.

**V. 21.** "The river," the Euphrates, which was between Chaldea and Canaan.

**V. 26.** Laban was forbidden to injure Jacob, but he could not resist the opportunity of making him know his power and accusing him of theft.

**V. 34.** "The camel's furniture," the cloths which generally covered the camels, and where Laban would not think of seeking for his images.

**V. 47.** "Jegar-sahadatha," *i.e.*, in the Syrian language, heap of witness. Jacob employed the Hebrew equivalent—*Galeed*. It was also called Mizpah, a beacon, or watch-tower. (Judges xii., 29.)

**V. 51.** "Cast," Yarithi, placed or set up.

**V. 53.** "Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac," *i.e.*, by the object of Isaac's reverential awe, the only living and true God.

## EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Why did Jacob leave his uncle's service and return to Canaan ?
2. Contrast his position twenty years before with his position now.
3. Where did Laban overtake him, and why did he not compel him to return ?
4. Give an account of the covenant entered into by Jacob and Laban.
5. Give the meaning of the words, "The Syrian," "Mizpah," "Jegarsahadatha."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## ANALYSIS.

Jacob's vision at Mahanaim. His message to Esau. His prayer for deliverance from Esau. His present to Esau. He wrestles at Peniel.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 9.** Jacob's prayer consists of three parts—a believing invocation, a humble confession and thanksgiving, and an importunate supplication. He urges four pleas—the divine covenant, the divine command, the former mercies received, and the divine promise.

**V. 13-20.** These verses relate what Jacob did on the following day. (Page 116.)

**V. 22.** The Jabbok is now called the Wady-Zerka. "Jabbok" means wrestling, and it received this name either from the turbulent impetuous course by which it works its way to the Jordan, or from the incident here narrated.

**V. 28.** "Israel" means a prince with God; "Peniel," i.e., face of God. (Page 118.)

## EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Where did Esau dwell ?
2. Write out the prayer of Jacob.
3. What is the meaning of "Mahanaim," "Jabbok," "Peniel," and what occurred at those places as here recorded ?
4. What special importance is to be attached to the scene at Peniel ?



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## ANALYSIS.

The meeting of Jacob and Esau. Jacob at Succoth and at Shalem, where he buys a field, and erects an altar.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 3. "Bowed seven times;" this prostration expressing great inferiority, and supplicating the favour of Esau.

V. 10. "Pleased with me" = hast favourably received me.

V. 11. "My blessing" = my bounteous gift.

V. 17. "Succoth" means booths or sheds.

V. 18. "Shalem" probably means in health or in safety — "Jacob came in health to Shechem."

V. 19. "An hundred pieces of money," *i.e.*, an 100 lambs, or an 100 pieces of money stamped with the figure of lambs.

## EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Describe the meeting of Jacob and Esau.
2. What business transaction is here recorded? Where did it occur?
3. What is the meaning of El-elohe-Israel? Mention other compounds of El?

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## ANALYSIS.

Dinah's defilement. Circumcision imposed upon the Shechemites. The revenge of Simeon and Levi.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. Dinah would be from twelve to fifteen years of age at this time, Simeon and Levi being about ten years older.

The incident is introduced in order to explain why Jacob left Shechem so hastily.

**V. 25.** Simeon and Levi being children of the same mother as Dinah felt themselves called upon to revenge her humiliation. They prevailed upon the Shechemites to be circumcised, in order the more easily and effectually to accomplish their revenge. They then fell upon them, slew every male, and spoiled the city.

**V. 30.** Jacob cursed them now, and he remembered this cruel action against them on his deathbed. (Gen. xlix., 5-7).

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What occurred at Shechem?
  2. How were Simeon and Levi eventually punished for their cruelty?
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## CHAPTER XXXV.

#### ANALYSIS.

Jacob purifies his house and builds an altar at Bethel. Death of Deborah. God appears to Jacob at Bethel. Birth of Benjamin and death of Rachel. Sin of Reuben. The children of Jacob. The death of Isaac.

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#### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 4.** The "earrings" were probably idolatrous jewels, charms for protection against evil spirits and disease, worn often as earrings. (Page 120.)

**V. 15.** The re-erection of a memorial stone at Bethel after the lapse of between twenty and twenty-five years was necessary. (Gen. xxviii., 18).

**V. 21.** "The tower of Edar," *i.e.*, of the flock, seems to have been a place built for the protection of exposed pastures. Here a register was taken of the children whom Jacob had brought with him from Padan-aram.

**V. 29.** Isaac's death is related by anticipation in order to clear the way for the history of Joseph. Joseph had been some twelve years in Egypt before Isaac's death took place. Jacob was born in Isaac's sixtieth year, and was 120 when his father died. Joseph was born in Jacob's ninety-first year, and must have been twenty-nine at the death of his grandfather.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What preparation did Jacob make before revisiting Bethel?
2. In this chapter we have the account of the death and burial of three persons. What are their names, when and where did they die?

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

#### ANALYSIS.

**Esau's wives and descendants. The Horites. The kings and dukes of Edom.**

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#### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** Esau had three wives—Adah, Abolibamah, and Bashemath. In Gen. xxvi., 34, the two first are named Judith and Bashemath, and in Gen. xxviii., 9, the third is named Mahalath. It is impossible to say how these and other discrepancies in this chapter have arisen.

**V. 6.** Esau left Canaan, taking with him all his possessions and settled in Edom, in Mount Seir, a rough and rugged district between the Dead Sea and the Elanitic Gulf. He had five sons at this time.

**V. 12.** Amalek, the father of the Amalekites, is the best known of these descendants. There were three elements in the Edomite race—Canaanite, Horite, and Ishmaelite. The divisions are kept prominent in the chapter. Their descendants were inveterate enemies of the Israelites. The latter, however, were forbidden to hate the Edomites. (Deut. xxiii., 7.) (See Ex. xvii., 8; Numb. xxiv., 20; 1 Sam. xv., 2.)

**V. 15.** “**Duke**” means Sheik or chieftain. (Ex. xv., 15.)

**V. 20.** We have the names given of those who possessed the land prior to the immigration of Esau’s sons.

**V. 31.** The note of time here clearly betrays a date subsequent to the introduction of monarchy in Israel. It may have been added by Ezra or other reviser.

**V. 35.** “**The river,**” *i.e.*, the Euphrates.

#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Briefly sketch the history of the Edomites, and define the boundaries of their country.
2. Mention any incidents regarding the Edomites and the Israelites subsequent to this period.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### ANALYSIS.

Joseph is hated of his brethren. He has two dreams. He is sent to visit his brethren, who conspire against him. He is sold to the Ishmaelites, by whom he is sold to Potiphar in Egypt. Jacob, deceived by the bloody coat, believes in his death, and mourns for him.

### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 2.** The sons of the inferior wives were naturally jealous of Rachel’s son. (Page 122.)

**V. 28.** Midian and Medan were sons of Keturah. They were cousins of Ishmael and of Isaac, and therefore related to Joseph.

**V. 35.** "Into the grave," *lit.* into Sheol, the underworld. The wearing of sackcloth was a token of grief. This is the first time it is mentioned in Scripture.

**V. 36.** "Captain of the guard," *lit.* chief of the executioners. He was probably charged with the defence of the person and palace of the king.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Narrate Joseph's dreams. What was their special significance?
2. Under what circumstances was Joseph taken to Egypt?
3. What parts respectively did Reuben and Judah take in the transaction described?
4. How was Jacob affected by the report of Joseph's death?

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE.

**V. 41.** Acts vii., 9.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

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### ANALYSIS.

**The sins of Judah and his sons. Judah and Shuah. Tamar and Judah's sons, Tamar and Judah. Births of Pharez and Zarah.**

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### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** "At that time," *i.e.*, in the interval between Jacob's return from Mesopotamia and the events recorded in the preceding chapter. This narrative is introduced chiefly in order to complete the genealogy of our Lord.

**V. 2.** The tribe of Judah was afterwards composed of three great families—the Shelanites, Pharazites, and Zarhites.

(Num. xxvi., 20.) Judah seems to have entered into a kind of partnership with Hirah of Adullam, a city in Canaan which afterwards became the possession of the descendants of Judah. He married the daughter of Shuah, and had three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah. Shelah alone survived, the others having been cut off by special strokes of divine judgment on account of their sin.

**V. 18.** Tamar obtained such pledges as easily identified the person who had been with her.

**V. 24.** Tamar was the legal wife of Shelah, and therefore her sin was specially heinous. But when Judah was convicted of being a party to the sin he was forced to acknowledge that Tamar had only used legitimate means to vindicate and enforce her claims.

**V. 29.** "**Pharez**" means breach; "**Zarah**," sun-rise.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Where are Adullam and Timnath?
2. For what purpose chiefly are the disgraceful incidents in the chapter recorded?

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE.

**V. 29.** Matt. i., 3; Luke iii., 33.

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## CHAPTER XXXIX.

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#### ANALYSIS.

Joseph is promoted, is tempted by Potiphar's wife, is imprisoned, but is blessed in the prison.

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#### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** It is now generally believed that the Hyksos, or shepherd kings were ruling in Egypt at this time. (Page 128.)

**V. 20.** "The prison," *lit.* the round house.

**V. 22.** "He was the doer of it." Everything was done by Joseph's appointment, and he only was responsible. (Page 132.)

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. How was Joseph treated by Potiphar?
2. Why was he imprisoned?
3. What was the source of Joseph's prosperity and peace of mind in Potiphar's house and in prison?

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE.

**V. 2.** Acts vii., 9.

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## CHAPTER XL.

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#### ANALYSIS.

Joseph in prison has the charge of Pharaoh's officers who have dreams, which Joseph interprets. These interpretations fulfilled.

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#### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** The **butler** was the cup-bearer (Neh. i., 11.), an office of honour and influence. The **baker** was the chief cook or confectioner.

**V. 3.** If the captain of the guard was Potiphar, he must have been convinced of the innocence of Joseph. He evidently reposed great confidence in him.

"**In ward,**" *i.e.*, in prison. Joseph's intercourse with these court officials would be of great advantage to him, enabling him to learn the customs of the court and the character of the king.

**V. 5.** The Egyptians were accustomed to attach special significance to dreams. The dreams of the butler and baker were not idle and vain, but from God, and were significant of future events. (Page 133.)

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Relate the dreams of the butler and baker, and Joseph's interpretation.
2. In what words did Joseph show his piety towards God and his sympathy for his fellow-prisoners?
3. Quote Joseph's petition to the chief butler, and tell how it was answered.

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## CHAPTER XLI.

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#### ANALYSIS.

Pharaoh's two dreams. Joseph interprets them, and advises him how to act. Joseph is exalted. He has two sons. The famine begins.

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#### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 2.** "In a Meadow," *lit.*, in the grass at the water's edge.

**V. 8.** "The magicians," *lit.*, sacred scribes. They dealt in magic, necromancy, and astrology.

**V. 14.** The Egyptians only allow the hair to grow on occasions of mourning. Joseph, though "brought hastily," *lit.*, made to run, took time to shave.

**V. 37.** Pharaoh must have been assured of the truthfulness of Joseph's interpretation, and that it was from God. The clever guessing of a professed dream-interpreter would have been a poor foundation for a fourteen years' policy, and



the outlay of the money expended in purchasing so much corn. (Page 136.) It was remarkable that Joseph, without any premeditation, should have been able at once to suggest a policy complete and suited to the emergency. A fifth part of the produce of the whole land was to be taken up during each of the seven years of plenty.

**V. 42.** The signet ring was the symbol of authority. The vestures of costly fine white linen cloth were worn only by the nobles of Egypt. The gold chain was a mark of dignity and wealth.

**V. 43.** "Bow the knee," *abrech*, *i.e.*, hail or adore.

**V. 45.** "Poti-pherah," *i.e.*, consecrated to the sun-god. The priests of On were the highest of the Egyptian priests.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Describe the course of Joseph's thoughts and the growth of his character during the years spent in prison.
2. Give a short account of Egypt, its history and customs.
3. Quote Joseph's first words to Pharaoh.
4. Narrate Pharaoh's dreams and Joseph's interpretation of them.
5. Trace the providences in Joseph's career up to this point.
6. Give the meaning of the words "Zaphnath-Paaneah," "Poti-pherah," "Manasseh" and "Ephraim," and tell who these persons were.

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

- V. 37.** Acts vii., 10. **V. 56.** Acts vii., 11.

## CHAPTER XLII.

## ANALYSIS.

Jacob's ten sons come to buy corn in Egypt. Their reception by Joseph. Their remorse and return, Simeon being retained. Their report to Jacob, who refuses to send Benjamin.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 1. Jacob still retained the vigour and promptitude and resource which had characterised him during his long life. His sons were evidently in a condition of helplessness and despair.

V. 7. It seems strange that for over twenty years, eight of which were spent in freedom, honour and opulence, Joseph should never have made known his safety to his father and relatives, or taken means privately to satisfy himself that his father still lived. We believe Joseph was divinely restrained and guided in this. Earlier communications with his father would have interfered with the divine plans, and prevented the literal fulfilment of his dreams. He must have felt that God had preserved him and raised him up for some important purpose, and that reunion with his father would come in good time. When Joseph saw his brethren bowing before him as an act of homage, and thought of their dependence upon him for the necessaries of life, his dreams must have been vividly recalled. Though his natural feelings would prompt him at once to disclose himself, he felt that he ought first to test the character and sentiments of his brethren. He made himself strange, *lit.*, he was alienated from them.

V. 9. As the Egyptians were notoriously jealous of foreign intrusion, Joseph's charge was very natural and telling.

**V. 11.** No man would risk so many sons on a dangerous enterprise. Had they been spies they would have been selected from various families.

**V. 15.** "By the life of Pharaoh." The use of this Egyptian oath helped Joseph to preserve his disguise.

**V. 28.** Joseph's brethren felt that they were suffering the just punishment of sin, and with their sense of guilt they were ready to ascribe the immediate agency of God to every event.

**V. 35.** They feared that they would be followed and convicted as thieves.

**V. 38.** Jacob would rather lose Simeon than risk Benjamin. His partiality was natural, but it had been already the cause of much wrongdoing and suffering.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Why did Joseph talk to his brethren roughly and through an interpreter?
2. How were his dreams fulfilled?
3. State the experiences of Joseph's brethren on their first visit to Egypt.
4. Quote the words of Jacob when he heard the report of his sons.

---

## CHAPTER XLIII.

#### ANALYSIS.

Joseph's brethren return to Egypt accompanied by Benjamin. They are entertained and feasted.

#### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 7.** Judah seems to be giving a more detailed account than was given in the previous chapter. It was in order to prove their ingenuousness and sincerity.

**V. 16.** In hot countries the real business of the day is over by noon. The men, far from being encouraged by the hospitality provided, "were afraid."

**V. 32.** "They set on, &c." Joseph sat apart, owing to his rank. But no native of Egypt would eat with one of another nation. The Hebrews ate the flesh of those animals which the Egyptians held sacred. This probably originated the feeling of disgust.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. What was the objection of Jacob's sons to return to Egypt?
2. State the position occupied respectively by Reuben, Judah, and Benjamin, in these transactions.
3. How were Joseph's brethren received on the occasion of their second visit?

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## CHAPTER XLIV.

#### ANALYSIS.

**Joseph's policy to stay his brethren. The humble address of Judah.**

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#### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 5.** Though Joseph had a divining cup, it does not follow that he practised divination. This may have been merely a part of the disguise he had assumed. Joseph had already referred all his wisdom to the inspiration of God.

**V. 18.** The speech of Judah is probably the most tender and affecting speech recorded in Scripture. He could not bear to return and see his father's distress, if Benjamin were retained.

**V. 30.** "The lad's life."—Benjamin was the child of his father's old age, but he was scarcely a lad at this time. He was about thirty years of age, and the father of ten children. (Page 141.)

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EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. How were Joseph's brethren hindered on the return journey?
2. Give an outline of the speech of Judah to Joseph.

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CHAPTER XLV.

ANALYSIS.

Joseph reveals himself to his brethren. They are comforted and encouraged, requested to return with their father and families to settle in Egypt, and abundantly furnished with all they require for the journey. Jacob is revived with the tidings.

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CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 2.** Joseph "wept aloud," tears of excitement and joy, not of sorrow. (Page 142.)

**V. 6.** "Neither be earing nor harvest," *lit.* neither ploughing nor harvest.

**V. 16.** It is an astonishing proof of Joseph's popularity that the Egyptians, though their country was little able to support any additional population, were willing to welcome the family of Joseph. Pharaoh's orders (vers. 17-20) were very generous.

**V. 20.** "Your stuff," your heavy furniture.

**V. 22.** "Changes of raiment," *i.e.* dress suits. Such a present is still common in Eastern countries.

**V. 26.** "Fainted," *i.e.* was agitated.

## EXAMINATION QUESTIONS. \*

1. Why were Joseph's brethren troubled when he revealed himself to them? By what words did he encourage them.
2. What was the effect of the tidings upon Jacob, and what did he say?

## NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE.

V. 4, &c. Acts vii., 13.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

## ANALYSIS.

Jacob leaves for Egypt. God comforts him at Beer-sheba. The number of the family. The meeting of Jacob and Joseph. Instructions given how to answer Pharaoh.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

V. 7. The list of Jacob's descendants requires careful consideration. We are told (v. 27) that the number was 70, but in Acts vii., 14, it is said to have been 75. There were 64 sons and grandsons, Dinah, and a grand-daughter Serah, making 66. Adding to this, Joseph, his wife, and two sons, we have 70. Stephen probably added, on the authority of 1 Chron. vii., 14-20, the five sons of Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born in Egypt. For 250 years after the promise of a numerous seed was made to Abraham, only Isaac and Jacob appeared as its fruits; but now the promised seed began to increase rapidly in number. Reuben had four children, Simeon six, Levi three, Judah seven (from which number, however, Er and Onan, who had died, are subtracted), Issachar four, Zebulon three, Gad seven, Asher seven, Joseph two, Benjamin ten, Dan one, Naphtali four. (Page 144.)

**V. 15.** Only in the persons of their fathers can it be said that they were all born in Padan-Aram.

**V. 34.** "Every shepherd is an abomination, &c."—The Hyksos, or shepherd kings, a nomadic and pastoral race from North-East Central Asia, had over-run and conquered Egypt. They are said to have held possession for 900 years, when they were finally expelled. The invasion of these shepherd kings probably explained the feeling referred to.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. How many persons accompanied Jacob into Egypt?
2. Explain any discrepancies which occur in the numbers?
3. Where were the Israelites located, and why was that place chosen?
4. Describe the meeting of Jacob and Joseph. For how long had they been parted?

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## CHAPTER XLVII.

#### ANALYSIS.

Joseph presents five of his brethren and his father to Pharaoh. His Egyptian policy. Jacob's age and preparations for death.

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#### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** The land of Goshen was extensive and fertile. It lay probably towards the North-East of Egypt, on the side nearest to Canaan. (Page 145.)

**V. 13-26.** This paragraph gives us an account of Joseph's administration. He had purchased, or obtained as a special tax, during the years of plenty, a large quantity of corn, which he sold during the years of famine, at high prices, to the Egyptians and inhabitants of surrounding countries.

Having obtained all the money of the people, he next obtained for corn all their cattle and horses (v. 17). The second year he bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, except the land of the priests, and secured the people themselves as servants unto Pharaoh; he removed the people to different parts of the country, probably in order to break up some antiquated usages and dangerous associations, or in order that they might be nearer the cities where the corn had been stored, and he made them tenants of the soil, instead of proprietors at an easy rental— a fifth part of the produce.

Thus the people, their money, possessions, and lands, all belonged to the crown. It was a simple but effective plan for increasing the power and stability of the throne, for evoking the gratitude and confidence of the people, and for reforming long established abuses.

Joseph is in many respects in his character, humiliation, exaltation, and in the work he performed, a signal type of Jesus Christ. He was the beloved son of his father, but he was hated and envied by his brethren; he carried to his brethren a kind message from their father, but, in their intention at least, he was murdered and buried in a pit; he was sold for twenty pieces of silver to the Midianites, and he was reduced to the position of a servant; he was tempted, but successfully resisted; he was falsely accused and condemned; he was associated in prison with two evil-doers, of whom one was received back to favour, while the other was hanged; he was afterwards raised to a position of power and honour, and received by the king's command universal homage; he was invested with a new name, and married to an Egyptian bride; he became the instrument of saving many a life, men of all countries in their sore strait



being sent to him for the supply of necessary food ; he possessed the key of the national storehouses to open and to shut at his pleasure ; he was the means of preserving his brethren who had hated him, and of presenting them to the king. In all this we see a significant resemblance to the position, experiences, and work of our Mediator, Saviour, and Elder Brother, and it is easy to spiritualise the points referred to.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. In what respect was Joseph a type of Christ ?
2. Give an account of Joseph's administration, its plan and results.
3. Quote the conversation which took place between Jacob and Pharaoh.

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

**V. 2.** Acts vii., 13. **V. 31.** Heb. xi., 21.

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## CHAPTER XLVIII.

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#### ANALYSIS.

**Joseph, accompanied by his sons, visits his sick father. The sons are blessed and adopted by Jacob. Jacob prophesies the return of his descendants to Canaan.**

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#### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** The two sons of Joseph were now over twenty years of age (Gen. xlvii., 28). Jacob only saw them very dimly, saw that there were persons present.

**V. 3.** Jacob's design in this address was to establish Joseph's faith in the divine promises, and to guard him

against the temptations of Egypt. The remarkable manifestation of God's favour to him at Luz, when he set out for Padan-aram, a solitary fugitive from home, and the promises God then made to him, come forcibly to his recollection. In the rapid multiplication of his family he had seen their partial fulfilment, and he had now no doubt that the Israelites would yet form a numerous and powerful nation. It is in this belief he adopts the sons of Joseph, who, with such hopes, might well sit loose to the honours of Egypt.

**V. 7.** The old man's mind wanders from the grandchildren to the loved mother of their father.

**V. 22.** Joseph obtained Shechem from his father, and was ultimately buried there. (Josh. xxiv., 32).

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Quote Jacob's request of Joseph regarding the place of burial, and give an account of his interview with Joseph and his sons.

2. Quote the words of blessing pronounced upon Ephraim and Manasseh.

3. To whom does the expression "The Angel" refer? Give other passages in which it occurs.

4. What events recorded in Scripture are connected with "the portion of ground" which Jacob gave to Joseph?

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

**V. 20.** Heb. xi., 21. **V. 22.** John iv., 5.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

## ANALYSIS.

Jacob blesses each of his sons and charges them about his burial. His death.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 1.** "In the last days," *lit.*, in the sequel of days, at a remote future period.

**V. 3.** Reuben had been impulsive and unprincipled; Simeon and Levi, treacherous and cruel.

**V. 5.** "Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations." This might be rendered, "their swords are instruments of violence."

**V. 6.** "Secret," or "council;" "dugged down a wall," or "houghed oxen." There are various renderings of many of the phrases in this chapter.

**V. 10.** The sceptre was the emblem of dominion. The sovereign was generally the legislator or lawgiver. Judah was to have kingly dignity and power till the great "peace-bringer" came.

**V. 16.** This was probably the private ejaculation of the exhausted dying man—a pause in his address.

**V. 19.** "Gad, a troop shall overcome him, &c.," *lit.*, troops shall troop against him, but he shall troop on their retreat (Judges x.; 1 Chron. xii., 8).

**V. 21.** The Septuagint version translates this "Naphtali is a graceful terebinth which putteth forth goodly boughs."

**V. 22-26.** Jacob dwells with special fulness on the blessing of Joseph, which is expressed in forcible and tender language.

His brothers in their cruelty, and Potiphar's wife in her temptations, may be reckoned the archers. His hands were made strong "by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, by the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel." Others translate this clause, "from thence is the provider, supporter, guide and defence of Israel."

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Quote the blessings pronounced by Jacob upon Levi, Judah, and Joseph, and state how the patriarch's predictions in these cases were fulfilled.

2. Explain the meaning of "Shiloh," and the usual Messianic interpretation of the verse in which it occurs.

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

**V. 9.** Rev. v., 5. **V. 10.** John xix., 15; Acts xiii., 47.

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## CHAPTER L.

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### ANALYSIS.

**The mourning for Jacob. The funeral. Joseph forgives and comforts his brethren. Joseph's age, prophecy, and death.**

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### CRITICAL NOTES.

**V. 10.** Pompous ceremonies and imposing processions were greatly relished by the Egyptians. On this occasion the dignity of Joseph seemed to require special display, and the respect which the Egyptians felt for Joseph and for Jacob secured it.

**V. 22.** At the advanced age of 110, which the Egyptians reckoned the ideal length of life, Joseph died. He was not

ambitious of a pyramid or sculptured tomb to record his deeds, as other great kings and governors of Egypt had been. His parting request to his friends was to bury him in Canaan when, in the providence of God, the nation of Israel should return thither.

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#### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Describe the route taken by the funeral procession of Jacob.
  2. What proofs were given of profound sorrow for the death of Jacob?
  3. What does Abel-Mizraim mean?
  4. Who was Machir?
  5. Quote Joseph's dying prophecy.
  6. When and where was Joseph buried?
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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

**V. 13.** Acts vii., 16. **V. 24.** Heb. xi., 22.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

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- ABEL, iv., "vanity,"—the second son of Adam. (Pages 30-35, 182.)
- ABIMELECH, xx., 2; xxi., 22; xxvi., 1, King of Gerar, in the land of the Philistines. (Page 94.)
- ABRAHAM, xi., 27; xxv., 10, called from Ur of the Chaldeans to be the inheritor of Canaan, the founder of the Hebrew nation, and the ancestor of the Messiah. (Pages 58-104.)
- ADAH, iv., 23, one of the wives of Lamech. (Pages 38, 184.) Also, xxxvi., 2, one of the wives of Esau.
- ADAM, ii., 7; v., 5. The first man God created. (Pages 10-28, 175.)
- AHOLIBAMAH, xxxvi., 2, 41, one of the wives of Esau, and the name of one of his descendants.
- AMALECK, xxxvi., 12, grandson of Esau and father of the Amalekites.
- AMMON, xix., 38, the descendant of Lot's younger daughter.
- AMORITE, xv., 16; xlviii., 22, an inhabitant of Canaan; one of the most powerful of the nations of Canaan.
- ANAH, xxxvi., 24, one of the descendants of Seir, the Horite.
- ANER, xiv., 24, one of Abraham's friends and allies.
- ARAM, x., 22, one of the sons of Shem.
- AMRAPHEL, xiv., 1, King of Shinar, who fought in the first battle.
- ABIOCH, xiv., King of Ellasar. (Page 81.)
- ARPHAXAD, x., 22; xi., 10, the third son of Shem, and the ancestor of Abraham.
- ASENATH, xli., 45, the daughter of Potipherah, and wife of Joseph. (Page 137.)
- ASSHUR, x., 11, the founder of Nineveh and the Assyrian Empire.
- ASHER, "happy," xxx., 13, son of Jacob, by Zilpah.
- BASHEMATH, xxvi., 34; xxxvi., 3, one of the wives of Esau.
- BERA, AND BIRSHA, xiv., 2. King of Sodom, and King of Gomorrah. (Page 82.)
- BENJAMIN, xxxv., 18, youngest son of Jacob, by Rachel.

- BETHUEL, xxviii., 2, Abraham's nephew and Rebekah's father.
- BUZ, xxii., 21, Nahor's son.
- CAIN, iv., eldest son of Adam, and murderer of Abel. (Pages 30-35, 182.)
- CANAAN, ix., 18, son of Ham, from whom the Canaanites and Phœnicians were descended.
- CHEDORLAOMER, xiv., 1, King of Elam. (Page 81.)
- CUSH, x., 6, son of Ham, and father of many nations in Africa and Asia.
- DAN, xxx., 6, fifth son of Jacob, by Bilhah.
- DEBORAH, xxxv., 8, Rebekah's nurse.
- DINAH, xxx., 21 ; xxxiv., 1, daughter of Jacob and Leah.
- ELIEZER, xv., 2, Abraham's steward. He was from Damascus.
- ELAH, xxxvi., 41, one of Esau's descendants.
- ENOCH, v., 22-24, father of Methusaleh. He was translated to heaven without dying. (Pages 40-42.)
- ENOS, iv., 26, the son of Seth.
- EPHAI, EPHER, AND ELDAAH, xxv., 4, grandsons of Abraham, by Keturah.
- EPHRAIM, xli., 52 ; xlvi., 14, Joseph's second son. (Pages 138, 149.)
- EPHRON, xxiii., 8, the Hittite from whom Abraham purchased a burying-place.
- ESHCOL, xiv., 13, Abraham's friend and ally.
- ER, xxxviii., 3, Judah's son by Shuah.
- EVE, iii., 20, the mother of all living. (Pages 10-28, 180.)
- GAD, xxx., 11, seventh son of Jacob, by Zilpah.
- GERSHOM, xlvi., 11, one of Levi's sons.
- GOMER, x., 2, son of Japheth ; the father of the Cymbri.
- GIRGASHITES, x., 16, descendants of Ham in Canaan.
- HAGAR, xvi., 1 ; xxi., 9, Sarah's Egyptian servant ; the mother of Ishmael. (Pages 87, 93.)
- HAM, "black," v., 32, the youngest son of Noah. His descendants peopled Africa and some parts of Asia.
- HEBER OR EBER, x., 21 ; xi., 14., the descendant of Shem, and ancestor of the Hebrews. Hence "Abraham the Hebrew." (xiv., 13.)

- ISAAC, "laughter," xvii., 19, &c., the son of Abraham and Sarah. (Pages 95-105.)
- ISHMAEL, xvi., 11 ; xxi., 1. Abraham's son by Hagar. The Arabians or Ishmaelites were descended from him. (Pages 87, 93.)
- ISRAEL, xxxii., 28, the name given by God to Jacob.
- ISSACHAR, xxx., 18, Jacob's fifth son by Leah.
- JABAL, iv., 20, the first of those who live a nomadic life. (Page 37.)
- JACOB, xxv., 26, &c. son of Isaac, and inheritor of the blessing. (Pages 121, 144, 156.)
- JAPHETH, v., 32, son of Noah. His descendants peopled Europe, the north of Asia, Asia Minor, and America. (Pages 56, 192.)
- JOSEPH, xxx., 24 ; xxxvii., 2, &c., the favourite son of Jacob, by Rachel. (Pages 121, 159.)
- JUBAL, iv., 21, the inventor of musical instruments. (Page 37.)
- JUDAH, xxix., 35 ; xlix., 10, Jacob's son by Leah, and the ancestor of the promised Messiah. (Pages 124, 126, and 152.)
- JUDITH, xxvi., 34, one of the wives of Esau.
- KEDAR, xxv., 13, one of the sons of Ishmael.
- KETURAH, xxv., 1, wife of Abraham. (Page 103.)
- KOHATH, xlvi., 11, one of Levi's sons.
- LABAN, xxiv., 29 ; xxx., 36, brother of Rebekah, and father of Jacob's wives. (Pages 110, 113.)
- LAMECH, iv., 18 ; v., 28, descendant of Cain. Also a son of Methuselah.
- LEAH, xxix., 16, daughter of Laban, and wife of Jacob.
- LEVI, xxix., 34, son of Jacob, by Leah. (Page 152.)
- LOT, xi., 27 ; xix., 1, the nephew of Abraham. (Pages 83, 90.)
- LUD, x., 22, one of the sons of Shem.
- MANASSEH, xli., 51, eldest son of Joseph. (Pages 138, 149.)
- MELCHISEDEK, xiv., 18, the king and priest of Salem, who met Abraham and blessed him. (Pages 85, 200.)
- MERARI, xlvi., 11, a son of Levi.
- METHUSELAH, v., 27, the oldest man. He lived 969 years.
- MESHECH, x., 2, a son of Japheth.
- MILCAH, xi., 29, wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother.



- MIZRAIM, x., 6, one of the sons of Ham. The Egyptians are descended from him.
- NAAMAH, iv., 22, daughter of Lamech, Cain's descendant.
- NAHOR, xi., 22, brother of Abraham, and grandfather of Rebekah.
- NAPHTALI, xxx., 8, sixth son of Jacob.
- NEBAJOTH, xxv., 13, the firstborn of Ishmael.
- NIMROD, x., 8, the founder of the kingdom of Babel.
- NOAH, v., 29 ; vii., 23, &c., the builder of the Ark and second head of the human family. (Pages 42, 55.)
- PELEG, x., 25, a descendant of Shem at the time of the dispersion.
- PHAREZ, xxxviii., 29, son of Judah, from David and Jesus were descended.
- PERIZZITES, xiii., 7, inhabitants of Canaan.
- PHARAOH, xii., 17 ; xl., 2, names of the kings of Egypt.
- PHICHOLO, xxvi., 26, the chief captain of Abimelech's army.
- PHILISTIM, x., 14, a descendant of Mizraim.
- POTIPHAR, xxxvii., 36, the Egyptian officer who bought Joseph from the Midianites.
- POTIPHERAH, xli., 45, priest of On, whose daughter Joseph married.
- RACHEL, xxix., 12, daughter of Laban, and favourite wife of Jacob.
- REBEKAH, xxii., 23 ; xxiv., 15, daughter of Bethuel and wife of Isaac. (Page 102.)
- REUBEN, xxix., 32, Jacob's firstborn son.
- SARAH, xvii., 15, wife of Abraham and mother of Isaac. (Page 100.)
- SETH, v., 3, third son of Adam.
- SHEM, v., 32, son of Noah, and ancestor of Abraham. (Pages 56, 192.)
- SHELAH, xxxviii., 5, son of Judah by the daughter of Shuah.
- SIMFON, xxix., 33, Jacob's second son by Leah.
- TERAH, xi., 24, father of Abraham and Nahor.
- TIDAL, xiv., 1, one of the kings who fought in Siddim.
- ZARAH, xxxviii., 30, son of Judah by Tamar.
- ZEBULUN, xxx., 20, son of Jacob by Leah.
- ZILLAH, iv., 19, one of the wives of Lamech, Cain's descendant.
- ZILPAH, xxx., 9, Leah's maid, by whom Jacob had sons.

## GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

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- ABEL-MIZRAIM, l., 11, the place where the Egyptians mourned for Jacob.
- ADMAH, xiv., 2, one of the five cities of the plain destroyed by fire.
- ARARAT, viii., 4, a mountain in Armenia between the Black and Caspian Seas. On it the Ark rested. (Pages 47, 190.)
- ASSYRIA, ii., 14; xxv., 18., the kingdom founded by Nimrod.
- BABEL, x., 10, the name of the tower that was built.
- BEER-LAHAL-ROI, xvi., 14, "the well of Him that lives and sees" where the Lord appeared to Hagar. (Page 88.)
- BEERSHEBA, xxi., 14; xxviii., 10, "the well of an oath." A city in the extreme south of Canaan. (Page 94.)
- BETHEL, xxviii., 29; xxxv., 1, "House of God," where God appeared to Jacob. (Page 112.)
- CANAAN, xii., 5, the country promised to Abraham. It was so named from the son of Ham, by whom it was first peopled.
- CALAH, x., 11, a city built by Asshur.
- CALNEH, x., 10, part of Nimrod's kingdom.
- DAMASCUS, xv., 2, the ancient city from which Eliezer came.
- DAN, xiv., 14, a town in the extreme north of Canaan.
- DOTHAN, xxxvii., 17, town 12 miles north of Samaria. (Page 123.)
- EDEN, ii., 15, the garden in which Adam was placed. (Page 13.)
- EDOM, xxxvi., 1, the country upon the southern borders of Moab peopled by the descendants of Esau. It was afterwards called Idumea.
- EGYPT, xv., 18, &c., the country in the North of Africa originally peopled by the descendants of Mizraim. (Page 126.)
- ELAM, xiv., 1, the district beyond Chaldea over which Chedorlaomer ruled. (Page 81.)
- EPHRATH, OR BETHLEHEM, xxiv., 16, 19, the place where Rachel died.
- ETHIOPIA, ii., 13, the country to the east of the Gihon.

- EUPHRATES, ii., 14; xv., 18, one of the rivers flowing through the Garden of Eden. It rises in the mountains of Armenia, and flows nearly 2,000 miles.
- GERAR, xx., 1, the district between Kadesh and Shur over which Abimelech ruled.
- GALEED, xxxi., 47, the place where Jacob and Laban made a covenant.
- GOMORRAH, xiii., 10; xix., 28, one of the cities of the plain destroyed by fire. (Page 92.)
- GOSHEN, xlv., 10, the district in Egypt allotted to the Israelites.
- HARAN, xi., 31, in Mesopotamia, where Terah died.
- HEBRON, xxiii., 2, or Kirjath-Arba, a town a few miles south of Bethlehem, where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived, and where they were buried.
- HIDDEKEL, ii., 14, one of the rivers of Eden.
- KADESH, xiv., 7, a town in the south of Palestine.
- MAHANAIM, xxxii., 2, on the northern bank of the brook of Jabbok.
- MAMRE, xiii., 18. Hebron, "in the plain of Mamre," where Abraham dwelt.
- MESOPOTAMIA, xxiv., 10, the extensive country "between the rivers" Euphrates and Tigris.
- MIZPAH, xxxi., 49, the place where Jacob and Laban made a covenant.
- MORIAH, xxii., 2, the mountain on which Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac, and where afterwards Solomon's temple was built. (Page 97.)
- MOUNT SEIR, xxxvi., 8, south-east of the Dead Sea, where Esau dwelt.
- NINEVEH, x., 11, the chief town of Assyria, founded by Nimrod.
- ON, xli., 45, Heliopolis, a city east of the Nile, to which Potipherah belonged.
- PLAIN OF JORDAN, xiii., 11; xxxii., 10, the country watered by the river which formed the eastern boundary of Palestine.
- PADANARAM, xxv., 20, &c., the country between the Tigris and the Euphrates.
- PARAN, xxi., 21, the wilderness where Ishmael dwelt.
- REHOBOTH, x., 11, one of the cities built by Aashur.
- SALEM, xiv., 18, the ancient name of Jerusalem.

**SHECHEM**, xxxiii., 18 ; xxxvii., 12, a town in Central Palestine, between the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim, where Abraham built his first altar in Canaan.

**SHINAR**, x., 10 ; xiv., 1, the plain in Babylon in which the followers of Nimrod settled.

**SUCCOTH**, xxxiii., 17, booths, a city east of the Jordan.

**SODOM**, xiii., 10, the city in which Lot dwelt. It was destroyed by fire from heaven. (Page 208.)

**UR**, xi., 28, the town of Armenia in which Abraham was born.

**VALE OF SIDDIM**, xiv., 3, the space now occupied by the Dead Sea.

**ZIDON**, xlix., 13, an important town on the west coast of Palestine.

**ZEBOIM**, xiv., 2, one of the cities destroyed by fire from heaven.

**ZOAR**, xiv., 2, another name for Bela. Also, xix., 22, the name of the town to which Lot fled after his escape from Sodom.

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## GENERAL QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

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1. Why is this book called Genesis? Who is generally believed to be the author, and for what purpose was it written?

2. Give a general outline of the Book of Genesis, and state the period of time over which its history extends.

3. Give the "received" dates of the Creation of Adam, the Deluge, the call of Abraham, and the death of Joseph.

4. Specify in order the works performed on each of the six days of Creation, as described in Genesis.

5. Quote the words in which the seventh day is first spoken of.

6. Write down the names of the antediluvian patriarchs from Adam to Noah, and of the postdiluvian patriarchs from Noah to Jacob.

7. What illustrious person was born, according to the usually received chronology, about midway between the Creation and the birth of Jesus Christ?

8. Show by the ages of the antediluvian and postdiluvian patriarchs through how few persons the account of the Creation had to be transmitted from Adam to Joseph, and from Joseph to Moses.

9. What evidences have we of the existence of art and science before the Deluge?

10. Give a brief outline of the histories of Noah, Abraham, and Joseph, with dates.

11. What is a type? Give illustrations. In what respects are Adam, Noah, Melchisedek, and Joseph types of Jesus Christ?

12. Illustrate, by events narrated in Genesis, God's willingness to hear and answer prayer.

13. Quote the prophecies and divine promises mentioned in this book, and tell how they were fulfilled.

14. What do you know of Enoch, Methusaleh, Nimrod, Ishmael, Esau, Deborah, Potiphar, and Ephraim?

15. Name the sons of Jacob in the order of their birth, and quote the blessings which Jacob, in dying, pronounced upon each.

16. Where are Mount Seir, Mount Moriah, the Cave of Machpelah, Salem, Beersheba, Hebron, Shechem, Dothan, Peniel, and Zoar, and in what connection is each of them referred to in Genesis?

17. Explain the meaning of the words Abraham, Sarai, Noah, Cain, Seth, Babel, Bethel, Mizpah, and Galeed.

18. Explain, with reference to the context, these passages:—  
 "I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt."  
 "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"  
 "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"  
 "My spirit shall not always strive with man."

19. Give all the instances you can remember in Genesis of change in the names of persons or places, with the reasons in each case.

20. What can be gathered from the Book of Genesis regarding the Sabbath Day, sacrifice, prayer and vows, circumcision, the customs of marriage and burial, and the faith of the patriarchs?

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