

# Genesis

W. Kelly.

Lectures on the Pentateuch.

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### Genesis 1-11.

There is one characteristic of divine revelation to which attention may be profitably called as a starting point. We have to do with facts. The Bible alone is a revelation of facts, and, we can add (not from the Old Testament, but from the New), of a person. This is of immense importance. In all pretended revelations it is not so. They give you notions — ideas; they can furnish nothing better, and very often nothing worse. But they cannot produce facts, for they have none. They may indulge in speculations of the mind, or visions of the imagination — a substitute for what is real, and a cheat of the enemy. God, and God alone, can communicate the truth. Thus it is that whether it be the Old Testament or New, one half (speaking now in a general way) consists of history. Undoubtedly there is teaching of the Spirit of God founded on the facts of revelation. In the New Testament these unfoldings have the profoundest character, but everywhere they are divine; for there is no difference, whether it be the Old or the New, in the absolutely divine character of the written word. But still it is well to take note that we have thus a grand basis of things as they really are — a divine communication to us of facts of the utmost moment, and, at the same time, of the deepest interest to the children of God. In this too God's own glory is brought before us, and so much the more because there is not the smallest effort. The simple statement of the facts is that which is worthy of God.

Take, for instance, the way in which the book of Genesis opens. If man had been writing it, if he had attempted to give that which pretended to be a revelation, we could understand a flourish of trumpets, pompous prolegomena, some elaborate means or other of setting forth who and what God is, — an attempt by fancy to project His image out of man's mind, or by subtle *à priori* reasoning to justify all that might follow. The highest, the holiest, the only suitable way, once it is laid before us, evidently is what God Himself has employed in His word. — "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Not only is the method the most worthy, but the truth with which the book opens is one that nobody ever did really discover before it was revealed. You cannot, as a rule, anticipate facts; you cannot discern the truth beforehand. You may form opinions; but for the truth, and even for such facts as the world's history before man had an existence in it — facts as to which there can be no testimony from the creature on the earth, we find the need of His word who knew and wrought all from the beginning. But God does communicate in such a way as at once meets the heart, and mind, and conscience. Man feels that this is exactly what is appropriate to God.

So here God states the great truth of creation; for what is more important, short of redemption,

always excepting the manifestation of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Creation and redemption bear witness to His glory, instead of communicating aught of His own dignity. But short of Christ's person and work, there is nothing more characteristic of God than creation. And in the manner in which creation is here presented what unspeakable grandeur! all the more because of the chaste simplicity of the style and words. How suited to the true God, who perfectly knew the truth and would make it known to man!

"In the beginning God created." In the beginning matter did not co-exist with God. I warn every person solemnly against a notion found in both ancient and modern times, that there was in the beginning a quantity of what may be called crude matter for God to work on. Another notion still more general, and only less gross, though certainly not so serious in what it involves, is that God created matter in the beginning according to verse 2, in a state of confusion or "chaos," as men say. But this is not the meaning of verses 1 and 2. I have no hesitation in saying that it is a mistaken interpretation, however prevalent. Nor indeed is such dealing according to the revealed nature of God. Where is anything like it in all the known ways of God? That either matter existed crude or God created it in disorder has not, I believe, the smallest foundation in the word of God. What scripture gives here or elsewhere seems to me altogether at variance with such a thought. The introductory declarations of Genesis are altogether in unison with the glory of God Himself, and with His character; more than that, they are in perfect harmony with itself. There is no statement, from beginning to end of scripture, as far as I am aware, which in the smallest degree modifies or takes away from the force of the words with which the Bible opens — "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

Some have found a difficulty (which I simply touch on in passing) from the conjunction with which verse 2 commences. They have conceived that, coupling the second verse with the first, it suggests the notion that when God created the earth it was in the state described in the second verse. Now not only is it not too strong to deny that there is the least ground for such an inference, but one may go farther and affirm that the simplest and surest means of guarding against it, according to the style of the writer, and indeed propriety of language, was afforded by here inserting the word "and." In short, if the word had *not* been here, it might have been supposed that the writer meant us to conclude that the original condition of the earth was the shapeless mass of confusion which verse 2 describes with such terse and graphic brevity. But, as it is, scripture means nothing of the sort. We have first the great announcement that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. There is next the associated fact of an utter desolation which befell not the heavens, but the earth. The insertion of the substantive verb, as has been remarked, expresses no doubt a condition past as compared with what follows, but pointedly not said to be contemporaneous with what preceded, as would have been implied in its omission; but what interval lay between, or why such a desolation ensued, is not stated. For God passes rapidly over the early account and history of the globe — I might almost say, hastening to that condition of the earth in which it was to be made the habitation of mankind; whereon also God was to display His moral dealings, and finally His own Son, with the fruitful consequences of that stupendous event, whether in rejection or in redemption.

Had the copulative not been here, the first verse might have been regarded as a kind of summary of the chapter. Its insertion forbids the thought, and to speak plainly, convicts those who so understand it either of ignorance, or at the least of inattention. Not only the Hebrew idiom forbids it, but our own, and no doubt every other language. The first verse is not a summary. When a compendious statement of what follows is intended, the "and" is never put. This you can, if you will, verify in various occasions where scripture furnishes examples of the summary; as, for instance, in the beginning of

Gen. 5, "This is the book of the generations of Adam." There it is plain that the writer gives a summary. But there is no word coupling the introductory statement of verse 1 with what follows. "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man." It is not "And in the day." The copulative would render it improper, and impossible to bear the character of a general introduction. For a summary gives in a few words that which is opened out afterwards; whereas the conjunction "and" introduced in the second verse excludes necessarily all notion of a summary here. It is another statement added to what had just preceded, and by the Hebrew idiom not connected with it in time.

First of all there was the creation by God — both of the heavens and of the earth. Then we have the further fact stated of the state into which the earth was plunged — to which it was reduced. Why this was, how it was, God has not here explained. It was not necessary nor wise to reveal it by Moses. If man can discover such facts by other means, be it so. They have no small interest; but men are apt to be hasty and short-sighted. I advise none to embark too confidently in the pursuit of such studies. Those who enter on them had better be cautious, and well weigh alleged facts, and above all their own conclusions, or those of other men. But the perfectness of scripture is, I am bold to say, unimpeachable. The truth affirmed by Moses remains in all its majesty and simplicity withal.

In the beginning God created everything — the heavens and the earth. Then the earth is described as void and waste, and (not as succeeding, but accompanying it) darkness upon the face of the deep, contemporaneously with which the Spirit of God broods upon the face of the waters. All this is an added account. The real and only force of the "and" is another fact; not at all as if it implied that the first and second verses spoke of the same time, any more than they decide the question of the length of the interval. The phraseology employed perfectly agrees with and confirms the analogy of revelation, that the first verse speaks of an original condition which God was pleased to bring into being; the second, of a desolation afterwards brought in; but how long the first lasted what changes may have intervened, when or by what means the ruin came to pass, is not the subject-matter of the inspired record, but open to the ways and means of human research, if indeed man has sufficient facts on which to ground a sure conclusion. It is false that scripture does not leave room for his investigation.

We saw at the close of verse 2 the introduction of the Spirit of God on the scene. "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." *He* appears most consistently and in season, when *man's* earth is about to be brought before us. In the previous description, which had not to do with man, there was silence about the Spirit of God; but, as the divine wisdom is shown in Proverbs 8 to rejoice in the habitable parts of the earth, so the Spirit of God is always brought before us as the immediate agent in the Deity whenever man is to be introduced. Hence, therefore, as closing all the previous state of things, where man was not spoken of, preparing the way for the Adamic earth, the Spirit of God is seen brooding upon the face of the waters.

Now comes the first mention of evening and morning, and of days. Let me particularly ask those who have not duly considered the matter to weigh God's word. The first and second verses make allusion to these well-known measures of time. They leave room consequently for a state or states of the earth long before either man or time, as man measures it. The days that follow I see no ground for interpreting save in their simple and natural import. Undoubtedly "day" may be used, as it often is, in a figurative sense. No solid reason whatever appears why it should be so used here. There is not the slightest necessity for it. The strict import of the term is that which to my mind is most suitable to the context; the week in which God made the heaven and earth for man seems alone appropriate in introducing the revelation of God. I can understand, when all is clear, a word used figuratively; but

nothing would be so likely to let elements of difficulty into the subject, as at once giving us in tropical language what elsewhere is put in the simplest possible forms.

Hence we may see how fitting it is that, as man is about to be introduced on the earth for the first time, as the previous state had nothing whatever to do with his being here below, and indeed was altogether unfit for his dwelling on it, besides the fact that he was not yet created, days should appear only when it was a question of making the heavens and the earth as they are. It will be found, if scripture be searched, that there is the most careful guard on this subject. If the Holy Spirit, as in Ex. 20: 11, refers to heaven and earth made in six days, it always avoids the expression "creation." God *made* heaven and earth in six days: it is never said He created heaven and earth in six days. When it is no question of these, creating, making, and forming may be freely used, as in Isa. 45: 18. The reason is plain when we look at Genesis 1. He created the heaven and earth at the beginning. Then another state of things is mentioned in verse 2, not for the heaven, but for the earth. "The earth was without form and void." The heavens were in no such state of chaos: the earth was. As to how, when, and why it was, there is silence. Others have spoken — spoken rashly and wrongly. The wisdom of the inspired writer's silence will be evident to a spiritual mind, and the more, the more it is reflected on. On the six days which follow I shall not dwell: the subject was before many of us not long ago.

But we have on the first day light, and a most remarkable fact it is (I may in passing just say) that the inspired historian should have named it. No one would have done so naturally. It is plain, had Moses merely formed a probable opinion as men do, that no one would have introduced the mention of light, apart from, and before all distinct notice of, the heavenly orbs. The sun, moon, and stars, would certainly have been first introduced, had man simply pursued the workings of his own mind, or those of observation and experience. The Spirit of God has acted quite otherwise. He, knowing the truth, could afford to state the truth as it is, leaving men to find out at another day the certainty of all He has said, and leaving them, alas! to their unbelief if they choose to despise or resist the word of God meanwhile. We might with interest pass through the account of the various days, and mark the wisdom of God in each; but I forbear to dwell on such details now, saying a word here and there on the goodness of God apparent throughout.

First of all (verse 3) light is caused to be or act. Next the day is reckoned from "the evening and the morning" — a statement of great importance for other parts of scripture, never forgotten by the Spirit of God, but almost invariably let slip by moderns; which forgetfulness has been a great source of the difficulties that have encumbered harmonies of the Gospels. It may be well to glance at it just to show the importance of heeding the word of God, and all His word. The reason why persons have found such perplexities, for instance) in relation to our Lord's, as compared with the Jews taking the passover and with the crucifixion, is owing to their forgetting that the evening and the morning were the first day, the second day, or any other. Even scholars bring in their western notions from the familiar habit of counting the day from the morning to the evening. It is the same thing with the account of the resurrection. The difficulty could never arise had they seen and remembered what is stated in the very first chapter of Genesis, and the indelible habit graven thereby on the Jew.

We find then light caused to be — a remarkable expression, and, be assured, profoundly true. But what man would have thought it, or said it, if he had not been inspired? For it is much more exactly true than any expression that has been invented by the most scientific of men; yet there is no science in it. It is the beauty and the blessedness of scripture that it is as much above man's science as above his ignorance. It is the truth, and in such a form and depth as man himself could not have discerned. Being the truth, whatever man discovers that is true will never clash with it.

On the first day light is. Next a firmament is separated in the midst of the waters to divide the waters from the waters. Thirdly the dry land appears, and the earth bringing forth grass, and herb, and fruit-tree. There is the provision of God, not merely for the need of man, but for His own glory; and this in the smallest things as in the greatest. On the fourth day we hear of lights in the firmament. The utmost possible care appears in the statement. They are not said to be created then; but God made two great lights (it is no question of their mass, but of their capacity as light bearers,) for the Adamic earth — the stars also. Then we find the waters caused to bring forth abundantly "the moving creature that hath life." Vegetable life was before, animal life now — a very weighty truth, and of the greatest moment too. Life is not the matter out of which animals were formed; nor is it true that matter produces life. God produces life, whether it be for the fish that people the sea, for the birds of the air, or for the beasts, cattle, or reptiles, on the dry land. It is God that does all, whether it be for the earth, the air, or the waters. And here in a secondary sense of the word is the propriety of the phrase "created" in verse 21; and we shall see it also when a new action comes before us in imparting not animal life but a rational soul. (Verse 27.) For as we have on the sixth day the lower creation for the earth, so finally man himself the crown of all.

But here comes a striking difference. God speaks with the peculiar appropriateness which suits the new occasion, in contradistinction from what we have seen elsewhere. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." It is man as the head of creation. It is not man placed in his moral relationships, but man the head of this kingdom of creation, as they say; but still even so with remarkable dignity. "Let us make man in our image." He was to represent God here below; besides this he was to be like God. There was to be a mind in him, a spirit capable of the knowledge of God with the absence of all evil. Such was the condition in which man was formed. "And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon earth." God created man in His own image: in the image of God created He him. In conclusion, the Sabbath day, which God\* sanctified, closes the great week of God's forming the earth for man, the lord of it. (Gen. 2: 1-3)

\*Jehovah here, rather than Elohim, would have spoiled the beauty of the divine account. No doubt afterwards God did as the Jehovah of Israel impose the remembrance of the Sabbath every seventh day of the week on His people. But it was important to show its ground in the facts of creation, apart from special relationship, and that made Elohim alone appropriate in this place.

Then, from Genesis 2: 4, we have the subject from another point of view, — not a repetition of the account of creation, but what was even more necessary to be brought here before us, — the place of relationship in which God set the creation He had formed, not mutually alone, but above all, in reference to Himself. Hence it is here that Eden is first spoken of. We should not have known anything of paradise from the first chapter. The reason is evident. Eden was to be the scene of the moral trial of man.

From the fourth verse of Genesis 2, therefore, we first meet with a new title of God. To the end of the third verse of that chapter it was always God (Elohim) as such. It was the name of the divine nature, as such, in contrast with man or the creature; not the special manner in which God may reveal Himself at a particular time, or deal in exceptional ways, but the general and what you may call historical name of God, — "God" as such.

For this, as for other reasons, it is manifest that Genesis 2 ought to begin with the verse which stands fourth in the common English Bible. God is here styled Jehovah-Elohim; and so uniformly to the end of the chapter.

I must be permitted here to say a word on a subject which, if it has called out enormous discussion, betrays in its course, I am sorry to say, no small amount of evident infidelity. It has been gathered from the varying names of God, etc., by speculative minds that there must have been different documents joined together in this book. Now there is not really the very least ground for such an assumption. On the contrary, supposing there was but one writer of the book of Genesis, as I am persuaded is the truth of the case, it would not have borne the stamp of a divine communication if he had used either the name of Jehovah-Elohim in 1-2: 3, or the name of "Elohim" only in 2: 4-25. The change of designation springs from distinct truths, not from different fabulists and a sorry compiler who could not even assimilate them. Accepting the whole as an inspired writing, I maintain that the same writer *must have used* this distinctive way of speaking of God in Genesis 1 and 2, and that the notion of there being two or three writers is merely a want of real intelligence in scripture. If it were the same writer, and he an inspired one, it was proper in the highest degree to use the simple term "Elohim" in chapters 1, 2: 3, then the compound "Jehovah-Elohim" from verse 4 and onward through Genesis 2. A mere historian, like Josephus of old — a mere commentator, like Ewald now — might have used either the one or the other without sensible loss to his readers through both chapters. An inspired author could not have expressed himself differently from Moses without impairing the perfect beauty and accuracy of the truth.\* If the book were in each of these different subjects written according to that most perfect keeping which pervades scripture, and which only God is capable of producing by His chosen instruments, I am convinced that, as Elohim simply in Genesis 2, so "Jehovah-Elohim" in Genesis 1, would have been wholly out of place with their respective positions in 1 and 2. As they stand, they are in exact harmony. The first chapter does not speak of special relationships, — does not treat of any peculiar dealings of God with the creature. It is the Creator originating what is around us; consequently it is God, Elohim, who alone could be spoken of as such in ch. 2: 1-3, taking the Sabbath as the necessary complement of the week, and therefore going on with the preceding six days, not with what follows. But in Genesis 2, beginning with verse 4, where we have special position and moral responsibility coming to view for the first time, the compound term which expresses the Supreme putting Himself in relation with man, and morally dealing with him here below, is first used, and with the most striking appropriateness.

\*We may judge how little the LXX. can claim credit for accuracy from their inattention to this difference in the Greek version. Holmes and Parsons show, however, the omission of κύριος supplied in not a few MSS., whether by the translators or by their copyists may be a question.

So far is the book of Genesis, therefore, from indicating a mere clumsy compiler, who strung together documents which had neither cohesion nor distinctive propriety, instead of there being merely two or three sets of traditions edited by another party, there is really the perfect statement of the truth of God, the expression of one mind, as is found in no writings outside the Bible. The difference in the divine titles is due to a distinctness of object, not of authorship; and it runs through the Psalms and the Prophets as well as the Law, so as to convict of ignorance and temerity the learned men who vaunt so loudly of the document hypothesis as applied to the Pentateuch.

Here accordingly we find in Genesis 2, with a fulness and precision given nowhere else, God's entering into relationship with man, and man's relation to Eden, to the animal realm, and to woman specially. Hence, when notice is here taken of man's formation, it is described (as all else is) in a manner quite distinct from that of Genesis 1; but that distinctiveness self-evidently is because of the moral relationship which the Spirit of God is here bringing before the reader. Every subject that comes before us is dealt with in a new point of view suitably to the new name given to God — the name of God as a moral governor, no longer simply as a creator. Could any person have conceived such

wisdom beforehand? On the contrary, we have all read these chapters in the Bible, and we may have read them as believers too, without seeing their immense scope and profound accuracy all at once. But when God's word is humbly and prayerfully studied, the evidence will not be long withheld by the Spirit of God, that there is a divine depth in that word which no mere man put into it. Then what confirmation of one's faith! What joy and delight in the Scriptures! If men, and men too of ability and learning, have tortured the signs of its very perfection into proofs of defective and clashing documents, ridiculously combined by a man who did not perceive that he was editing not fables only but inconsistent fables, what can believers do but wonder at human blindness, and adore divine grace! For themselves, with glowing gratitude they receive it as the precious word of God, where His love and goodness and truth shine in a way beyond all comparison, and yet meeting the mind and heart in the least, no less than in the most serious, wants that each day brings here below. In every way it proves itself the word not of men, but as it is in truth of God, which effectually works in them that believe.

In this new section accordingly it is written, "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created [going up to the first], in the day\* [here the writer comes down] that Jehovah-Elohim *made* the earth and the heavens." It is not in this connection "created," it will be observed, but "made" them. The language is invariably used in the most perfect manner. "And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew; for Jehovah-Elohim had not caused it to rain upon the earth; and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.\*\* And Jehovah-Elohim formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

\*Is it not the more captiousness of criticism to set the general phrase "the day," etc., against the precision of the six days in the previous section? It is unfounded to say that in the second narrative the present world is supposed to be brought forth at once. The history is in Gen. 1: 2: 3: from verse 4 to the end of Gen. 2 is not so much a history of creation as a statement of the relations of creation, and especially of man, its centre and head. Gen. 2. assumes Gen. 1, but adds moral elements of the utmost importance and interest.

\*It seems almost too trivial to notice what Dr. Davidson and Bishop Colenso (or their German sources) say of Gen. 2: 5, 6, as if inconsistent with Gen. 1: 9, 10. If divine power separated the earth from the waters, why should it remain saturated? In Gen. 1 it is said that "the dry land" was called earth; in the others, that though no rain yet fell, a mist went up. What can be more consistent?

Here we learn that man did not become a living soul in the way that every other animal did. The others were caused to live by the simple fact that God organized them according to His own will; but in man's case there was this essential difference, that he alone became a living soul by the inbreathing of Jehovah-Elohim. Man alone therefore has what is commonly called an immortal soul. His body only is ever said to be mortal. Man alone, as deriving that which gave him the breath of life not from his body but from the breath of Jehovah-Elohim, gives an account to God. Man will rise and live again. Not merely with the elements of his body will he reappear, which is quite true, but besides he will reappear bodily in connection with a soul that never died. It is the soul which gives the unity, and which accounts for the personal identity. All other ways of explaining it are feeble, if not mere trash. But this divine statement, in connection with man's moral relationship with God, here calmly and clearly stated, is the true key. When men reason instead of receiving the revealed light of the Bible, I care not who or what they may be, they only mistake God and even man. They speculate; they give you ideas — and very foolish ideas they often are. The word of God presents to the simplest Christian

the perfect account of the matter.

This elementary truth is of immense importance at the present moment. For it is a day when all things are in question, even the surest. It is not as if it were a new thing for man to deny the immortality of his own soul. At first it sounds strange that a day of human self-exaltation should be equally characterised by as strong a desire to deny the special breath of God for his soul, and degrade him to the pedigree of an ape! But it is an old story in this world, though a new thing for professing members and ministers of Christ, to take pride in putting scorn on divine revelation. Infidelity takes increasingly an apostate form, and those that used to revere both Old Testament and New are abandoning the truth of God for the dreamy but mischievous romances of so-called modern science. Never was there a moment when man was verging more evidently towards apostacy from the truth, and that not merely as to redemption, but even as to creation, as to himself, and above all as to his relationship with God. Give up the immortality of the soul, and you deny the ground of that relationship, man's special moral responsibility to God.

But there is more than this, though this be of exceeding interest; because we see with equal certainty and clearness why Jehovah-Elohim is introduced not before but here, and why man's becoming a living soul by the inbreathing of God was said here and not in the first chapter. Neither would have suited the chapter; both are perfectly in season in Genesis 2. Further, we now hear of the garden that was planted by Jehovah-Elohim eastward in Eden, where He put the man whom He had formed. And here we find the solemn truth, that not only did Jehovah-Elohim cause to grow every tree that is pleasant and good for food, but "the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

I call your attention for a moment to this. It is often a difficulty with souls that God should have made the moral history of the world to turn on touching that tree or eating of that fruit. The mere mind of man thinks it a mighty difficulty that what appears to be so small a matter should be pregnant with such awful results. Do you not understand that this was the very essence of the trial? It was the essential feature that the trial should be simply a question of God's authority in prohibition, not one of grave moral evil. There was the whole matter. When God made man, when Jehovah-Elohim breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, man had no knowledge of things as right or wrong in themselves. This was acquired (have you never known, or have you forgotten, the solemn fact?) by the fall. An innocent man could not have had the knowledge of good and evil; it pertains necessarily to a fallen one. He who is innocent — a man absolutely without any evil either in himself or in that which was around him, where all was from God — (and this is the revealed account of things), how could he have a knowledge of evil? How possibly have that discrimination which decides morally between what is good and what is evil? How perfect therefore is the intimation of scripture! Yet none did or could anticipate it.

The condition of man was altogether different then from what it became immediately after. All is consistent in revelation, and nowhere else. Men, the wisest — those of whom the world has most boasted, never had even the least adequate thought of such a state of things; yet enough of tradition remained even among heathens to witness to the truth. Nay, more, now that it is clearly revealed, they have no competency to appreciate it — never take in its force; and for this simple reason, that man invariably judges from himself and from his own experience, instead of submitting to God and His word. It is only faith that really accepts what comes from God; and faith alone gives the clue to what is around us now, but then it guides us through all present entanglements by believing God whether as to what He once made or what He will yet do. Philosophy believes neither, in a vain effort to account for all by what is, or rather appears; for it knows nothing, not even the present, as it ought to know.

Consequently the attempt of man's mind by what is now to judge of what was then always ends in the merest confusion and total failure. In truth only God is competent to pronounce; and this He has done.

Hence the believer finds not the slightest difficulty. He may not be able perhaps to meet objections. That is another matter, and by no means of such consequence as many suppose. The great point, my brethren, is to hold fast the truth. It is all well, and a desirable service of love, if a Christian can happily and with God-given wisdom meet the difficulties of others; but hold you the truth yourselves. Such is the power and simplicity of faith. Adversaries may no doubt try to embarrass you: if they will, let them do so. Do not be troubled if you cannot answer their questions and dispose of their cavils; you may regret it in charity for injured or misled souls. But, after all, it is the positive truth of God which it is the all-important business to hold, and this God has put in the heart of the simplest child who believes in Jesus.

I affirm then that, when God thus made man, when He put him in Eden, the actual test was the interdiction not of a thing which was in itself evil, but simply and prescriptively wrong for man because God had forbidden it. Such is the very essence of a test for an innocent man. In fact any other thought (such as the law) is not only contrary to scripture, but when you closely and seriously think of it as a believer, it will be seen to be an impossible state of things then. Consequently a moral test such as the wise and prudent would introduce here, and count a worthier reason why there should be so vast a ruin for the world ensuing, is out of the question. No, it was the simple question whether God was really Jehovah-Elohim, whether He was a moral governor or not, whether man was to be independent of God or not. This was decided not by some grave and mighty matter, of which man could reason and see the consequences, but simply by doing or not doing the will of God. Thus we see how the simple truth is after all the deepest wisdom.

It is of great interest and importance to observe that God distinguished from the first between responsibility on the one hand, and life-giving on the other, in the two trees (verse 9). Even for Adam, innocent as he was, life did not depend on abstinence from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Death followed if he disobeyed God in eating of this tree (verse 17); but, walking in obedience, he was free to eat of the tree of life. He fell in partaking of the forbidden fruit; and God took care that he should not eat of the tree of life. But the two trees, representing the two principles, which man is ever confounding or obliterating one for the other, are in the scripture as in truth wholly distinct.

Observe another thing too. We have the description of the garden of Eden. I do not consider that its locality is so very difficult to ascertain in a general way as has been often imagined. Scripture describes it, and mentions two rivers which unquestionably exist at the present day. There can be no doubt that the Euphrates and the Tigris or Hiddekel, here named, are the same two rivers similarly called to this moment. It appears to me beyond reasonable doubt that the other two rivers are by no means impossible to trace; and it is remarkable, as showing that the Spirit of God takes an interest, and furnishes a thread to help us in the fact, that the two less notorious rivers are described more fully than the rivers which are so commonly known.\* We are therefore warranted in supposing that they are described just because they might have been less easily discerned. It is said that the name of the first river is the Pison, and of the other the Gihon. Now without wishing to press my individual judgment of such a matter, I may state the conviction that the Pison and the Gihon, here described, are two rivers on the north of the site of Eden, one running into the Black Sea, the other into the Caspian. I believe that they are what are called, or used to be called in ancient times at any rate, the Phasis and the Aras or Araxes.

\* This, not to speak of other reasons, appears conclusive against the claim of the Pison to be the Ganges! set up by Josephus and a crowd of Greek and Latin fathers, the Nile according to Jarchi and other Rabbis, the Indus of late reasserted by Ewald, more than one of the fathers considering it to be the Danube! Caesarius and Epiphanius held it to be the Danube, the Ganges, and the Indus, and that after an extraordinary course in the south it joined the ocean near Cadiz! Those who made the Pison to be the Ganges regarded the Gihon as the Nile. Those who embrace the theory that Eden lay on the *Shat-el-Arab* consider the Pison and the Gihon as mere branches of the stream formed by the blending of the Euphrates and the Tigris (or Hiddekel). But this seems to me indefensible, though there may be difficulty in reconciling what I regard as the truth with an unusual force of one or two words.

However this is merely by the way, for it is evidently a matter of no great importance in itself, save that we should hold the entire account of Paradise to be historical in the strictest and fullest sense. And, more than that, the position of these rivers seems to me to explain — what has often been a difficulty to many — the account that is given us here, that "a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from thence it was parted and became into four heads;" because if the garden of Eden lay in that quarter (that is to say in Armenia), in the part of it where are found the springs or watershed of these rivers, they would be all within a certain circumscribed quarter, as surrounding this garden. It is however possible that God may have allowed a certain change as to the distribution of these waters around the garden. I do not venture on any opinion as to this. Scripture does not say more, and we must hold to scripture. But these remarks are merely thrown out to show that there seems to be no insuperable difficulty in the way of arriving at a satisfactory solution of this vexed question. As for the transfer of the site of the garden lower down in the plain of Shinar, it appears to me altogether untenable. It is impossible thus to connect Eden with the fountainhead or sources of these rivers. It is not hard to conceive both that they had a common source before they parted, and that the garden of Eden may have been of considerable extent. Let this suffice: I do not wish to speculate about the matter.

The grand question to be tried we have afterwards. "Jehovah-Elohim took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." Not a word of this is in the first chapter. "And Jehovah-Elohim 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," etc. Not a word of this again occurs in the previous chapter. Why? Because moral responsibility in relationship to Jehovah-Elohim comes in exactly where it should. Had it been spoken of in the first chapter, there might have been grave exception taken whether such an account could have been inspired; but, coming in as it does, it is exactly as it ought to be.

Then the various species of land animals and birds are brought forward to see what Adam would call them; not when Eve was formed, but before. The beautiful type of creation belonging to Christ is thus admirably preserved.\* Creation does not in the first instance belong to the church at all, whose place is purely one of grace. The Heir of all things is the Second man, and not the bride. If she possesses all along with Him, it is because of her union with Him, not intrinsically. This, it is observable, is kept up strikingly here, for Adam has these creatures brought before him by Jehovah-Elohim, and gives names to them all, showing clearly not alone his title as lord, but the power of appropriate language imparted by God from the first. The notion that intelligible speech is a mere growth from the gradual putting together of elements is a dream of ingenious speculation, which may exercise men's wits, but has no foundation whatever. Adam on the very first day of his life, even before Eve was formed, gave the animals their names, and God Himself sanctioned what their head uttered. Such was his relation to the creature; he was put in that place by God.

\*This moral and typical bearing is the true key to the record in Gen. 2: 4-25, and truly accounts for the differences from 1 - 2: 3, which ignorance and unbelief pervert into the discrepancies of two separate and inconsistent writers. It is not the fact that Gen. 2: 7, 19, represents man as created first of all living creatures before the birds and beasts; any more than that man *created* in God's image (Gen. 1: 27) contradicts the statement of Genesis 2: 7, that he was formed of the dust of the ground. It is not said in Genesis 1: 27 that man and woman were created together; or that the woman was created directly, and not formed out of one of the man's ribs.

But this made the want so much the more evident, of which Jehovah-Elohim takes notice, of a partner for Adam's affections and life, one that might be before him, as it is said: "And Jehovah-Elohim caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam." The creation of the woman apart from the man (as no doubt every other male and female were made separately) would have been a sterile and unimpressive fact. As it is, God reserves the striking detail for the scene of moral relationship. And may I not put it to the conscience of every soul whether such an event is not exactly where it should be, according to the internal and distinctive features of Genesis 1 and 2? We all know how apt man has been to forget the truth — how often might takes advantage of right! God at least was pleased to form woman, as well as to reveal her formation in a way that ought to make ashamed him who recognises her as his own flesh and bone, yet slights or misuses a relationship so intimate. "And he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which Jehovah-Elohim had taken from man made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh."

The primitive condition is described too. "They were both naked — the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." It was a state altogether different from that of man fallen; however suitable then, it was such as man as he is could never have conceived of with propriety. Yet we cannot but feel how suitable it was for innocence, in which condition God made man and woman. Could He have made them otherwise consistently with His own character? Could they so made have carried themselves otherwise than is here described? Man's present experience would have suggested neither; yet his heart and conscience, unless rebellious, feel how right and becoming all is in such a state of things — none other so good.

The next chapter (Genesis 3) shows us the result of the test which we have seen laid down by Jehovah-Elohim. It was soon brought to issue. And here is another fact that I desire to bring before you. We see introduced, without more delay upon the scene, one too well and yet too little known, the active, audacious, most subtle adversary of God and man, the serpent — from whom sin and misery result, as the Bible witnesses from the beginning to the end — who is here first brought in a few quiet words before us. Who would have done this but God? In any other book, in a book written by mere man, (need one hesitate to say?) we should have had a long introduction, and a full history of his origin and his designs and his doings. God could introduce him, and could leave the heart to feel the rightness of saying no more about him than was necessary. The fact declares itself. If in the first chapter the true God shows Himself in creative power and glory, and in the perfect beneficence which marks too that which He had made; if in the second special relations display yet more His moral way and will, so the serpent does not fail to manifest his actual condition and aim — not of course the condition in which he was made, but that to which sin had reduced him. "The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah-Elohim had made."

The third chapter is indeed a continuation of the second — properly enough made into a separate chapter, but still its sequel simply. It is the issue of that probationary trial which was proposed there.

And here the effort of the enemy was first to breathe suspicion on the goodness of God as well as on His truth, in short, on God Himself. Human lusts and passions were not yet in question, but they soon followed — the desire of having what God had forbidden. First, however, it was an insinuation infused and allowed against the true God. All evil is due to this as its spring; it begins with God as the object attacked or undermined. "And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God\* said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, 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. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 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" So it was that the serpent envenomed morally the heart of the woman first, and then of the man. I need not dwell on the sad history which we all know more or less. She listened, she looked, she took of the fruit; she ate, and was fallen. And man eat too, not deceived, but with open eyes, and therefore so much the more guilty — swayed, no doubt, by his affections; bold, however, in yielding to them, for he ought rather to have been her guard and guide, certainly not to have followed her, even if he had failed to keep her safely in the path of good. Alas! he followed her, as he has often since, into the broad way of evil. Adam did not preserve the place in which God had set him.

\*Some have wondered why the serpent and Eve should be represented as saying Elohim ("God") in the temptation, seeing that everywhere else in the section the name employed is Jehovah-Elohim. Now, not only may it be the simple fact that Elohim alone was used, but, further, on account of it, the historian would not introduce here the name of special relationship which the enemy was above all anxious to have if possible forgotten, and which the woman in fact did soon forget when she allowed one to work on her mind whose first aim was to sow distrust of God. To me it appears that all is in perfect keeping; and that the omission of Jehovah here is equally natural on the part of the serpent and Eve, as it is appropriate to the inspired history of the transaction.

Both fallen, they were both ashamed. "They knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." And they heard the voice of Jehovah-Elohim walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves. The victims of sin knew shame, now fear. Departed from God, they hid themselves, and He had but to utter those solemn and searching words to Adam, "Where art thou?" He was gone from God. Forced to discover himself, Adam tells the humiliating tale: — "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." The evil is traced home at last to its source, and the serpent is brought fully out. Each severally — the man, the woman, the serpent — stand evidently convicted by the presence of Jehovah-Elohim. Yet, wonderful to say, in the very announcement of judgment on the serpent, God, who had by the light of His presence compelled the guilty pair to come forth out of the darkness in which they had hid, or rather sought to hide — God held out the first bright light of mercy, but mercy in the judgment of him who was the root of the evil. May one not say again who beforehand would have thought of ways so truly and self-evidently divine? But it is the word of God, and nothing can be more suitable to God, gracious to man, or just to the enemy.

Believers have constantly called it a "promise;" but it is not uninstrusive to see that scripture never does. There was a revelation of an infinite blessing for man unquestionably, but hardly what is called a promise. It was addressed to the serpent. If a promise to any, it was to the woman's Seed, the last Adam, not to the first, who was just sentenced with Eve. Abraham, not Adam, is the depository of promise: so speaks scripture, as far as I know, invariably. We see why that ought to be. Was it a time for a promise? Was it a state for a promise? Was it a person for a promise? — one that had ruined the

glory of God, as far as it rested upon him. No, but in judging the serpent there comes out the revealed purpose of God, not a promise to Adam in sin, but the revelation of One who would crush the serpent's head the first sinner and too successful tempter to sin. The Second man, not the first, is the object of promise. This indeed is the invariable truth of scripture, and runs through it to the last.

Observe, in the beginning of the word of God, the sources of all things. As we saw God Himself the Creator and the moral Governor, so further we find the enemy of God and of man in exact accordance with the latest word that God speaks. Again, let us note the confronting of the serpent, not with man, who always falls under Satan's power, but with Christ, who always conquers. Such is the way in which God puts His truth, and this in the earliest part of His word. No later revelation in the smallest degree corrects the very first. Scripture is divine from first to last. But along with this we find no haste to reveal: all is in season. Not a word is heard about eternal life yet — that must wait for His appearing who was such with the Father; not a word yet about the exhaustless riches of grace which were afterwards to abound. A person is held out — the Seed of the woman; for the manner most expressly bespeaks the tender mercy of God. If the woman was the one first of all to yield, she is the destined mother of Him that would defeat the devil and deliver man. But what came in immediately, and what is traced throughout the Bible, it may be noted, is the present consequence in the government of God.\* Consequently we find that as man had hearkened to the voice of the siren, and had eaten of the tree of which he was commanded not to eat, the ground was cursed for him. It is the present result. So again the woman has her portion, of which we need not say more than to point out what a clue it is to her lot in the history of the race. Both unite in this, that, as they were made of dust, to the dust they must return.

\*How this agrees with the dispensational dealings of God with Israel needs no argument. They were chosen to be the public vessel of divine government on the earth. We have had their failure under law; we look for their stability under Messiah and the new covenant. But it is and will be of the deepest interest to trace these ways of God in earthly government from the first.

Notwithstanding in the midst of the scene of desolation we hear Adam calling his wife's name "Eve" (ver. 20). To me it is perfectly clear how speedy was the fall after the creation of man. He had not before given his wife this her full and proper name. He had described *what* she was rather than *who*; it was only when sin had come in, and when others, had there been any, would have called her naturally the parent of death, that Adam (by what seems to be the guidance of God in faith) calls her rather the mother of the living. His soul, I cannot doubt, laid hold of the word that God had pronounced in judging the devil. And God here too beautifully marks His feeling. For (ver. 21) we are told, that "to Adam also and to his wife did Jehovah-Elohim make coats of skins and clothed them." The insufficiency of their resources had been proved. Now comes in the shadow of what God would do fully another day.

Nevertheless present consequences take their course, and in a certain sense mercy too is mingled with them, as is the case habitually, I think, in the government of God; for man as he is is just so much the less happy as he knows not what it is to labour in such a world as this. It is not only what he is doomed to, but the wisely ordered place for fallen man here below. There is no one more miserable than the man who has no object before him. I grant that in an unfallen condition there was another state of things. Where all was bright and good around man in innocency the scope for labour would not have its place. I only speak of what is good for man out of Paradise, and how God meets with and ministers to his state in His infinite grace. On this however we need not say more than that He "drove out the man," lest he should perpetuate the condition of ruin into which he had passed.\*

\*It is deplorable but wholesome to see how superstition and rationalism agree in the grossest ignorance of man's condition before the fall and through it. The doctrine in systematic theology is that God's image within became corrupted and defiled; yet that even then he was not altogether forsaken; and that the course of his history declares by what means it has pleased God to renew, in some measure, His lost image, etc. Another divine, but an infidel, regards the knowledge of good and evil as the image of God by creation. This last is often misunderstood. Scripture is plain and profoundly true: "And Jehovah-Elohim said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore Jehovah-Elohim sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed 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."

In his original estate man was created in God's image, but he had not the knowledge of good and evil. This he acquired by the fall. After this he could estimate and know things himself as good or evil; whilst innocent this could not be. A holy being might and does so know, i.e., a being who, while knowing, has an intrinsic nature that repels the evil and cleaves to the good. But this was not Adam's state, but simply made upright, with absence and ignorance of evil. When fallen he acquired the internal capacity of knowing right from wrong, apart from a law to inform or forbid; and in this respect became like God at the very time when he lost God and intercourse with Him as an innocent creature. We thus learn the compatibility of these two things, which in fact were true of man — a fall from the relationship of innocence, in which he was originally set with God, and a rise in moral capacity, which, without faith, entails immense misery, but which is of the utmost value when one is brought to God by our Lord Jesus.

Then (Gen. 4) we have a new scene, which opens with a change in the name of God. It is no longer the test of creation, as God made it, and this accordingly is marked here. He is called "Jehovah;" He is not designated by the former mingled or compound term "Jehovah-Elohim," but by "Jehovah" simply; and this is found afterwards, either "Elohim" alone or "Jehovah in the other names of special character, as we shall see," until the call of Israel, when we have an appropriate modification in the expression of His name. But Adam now becomes a father, not innocent, but fallen before he became the head of the race. Cain was born, and the fallen mother gave the name: but, oh, what a mistake! I am sure, not that she was exactly entitled to give the name, but that it can be proved that she gave a singularly inappropriate one. She thought her first-born a great gain, for such is the meaning of the name "Cain." Alas! what disappointment and grief, both of the most poignant kind, followed ere long For Abel too was born; and in process of time it came to pass that they brought their offerings unto "Jehovah" — a term, I may observe, that is here in admirable keeping. It was not barely as He who had created all, but the God that was in special relationship with man — Jehovah. This is the force of it. Cain looked at Him in the place merely of a Creator, and there was his wrong. Sin needed more. Cain brought what might have sufficed in an unfallen world — what might have suited an innocent worshipper of One who was simply known as Elohim. It was impossible that such a ground could be rightly taken longer; but so Cain did not feel. He makes a religion from his own mind, and brings of the fruit of the ground now under the curse; whilst Abel by faith offers the firstlings of the flock, and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel, and to his offering. It is the great truth of sacrifice, of which Abel's faith laid hold, realising and confessing in his slain lamb that there was no other way in a ruined world for a holy relationship, and for the confession of the truth too, as between God and man. He offers of the firstlings of his flock — that which passed under death — to Jehovah.

"And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." And Jehovah speaks to him thus — "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" The principles of God's nature are immutable. Whether people are believers or not, whether they receive the truth or not, God holds to that which belongs to His own moral being. That any one is capable of meeting the character of God in an unfallen state is another matter. It is the same principle in Genesis 4, which we find more explicitly stated in Romans 2, where God shows His sure judgment of evil on the one hand, and His approval of that which is good, holy, and true on the other. So with Cain here — "and if thou doest not well;" and such was the fact. His condition was that of a sinner, and he looked not out of himself to God. But what characterises this scene is not the state in which man as such was — this we had in Genesis 3 — but what man did in that fallen state, and more especially what he did in presence of God and faith. Certainly he did not well. "And if thou doest not well," it is said, "sin lieth at the door." Evil conduct is that which makes manifest an evil state, and flows from it.

I do not think that the expression means a sin-offering, as is sometimes supposed; for it does not appear that there is ground for inferring that the truth of a sin-offering was understood in the slightest degree till long afterwards. "By the law is the knowledge of sin," and until the law was brought in there was, as far as scripture tells us, no such discrimination, if any, between the offerings. They were all merged in one; and hence it is that we find that Job's friends, though guilty in the Lord's sight, yet alike with him offer burnt-offerings. When Noah brings his sacrifice, it is evidently of that nature also. Would there not have been a sin-offering on these occasions had the law been then in force? Most wisely all such details awaited the unfolding of another day. I merely use these scriptural facts to shew what seems to me the truth that "sin" here does not refer to the specific offering for it, but rather to that which was proved by evil conduct.

Notwithstanding God maintained the place that belonged to the elder brother. But nothing softened the roused and irritated spirit of Cain. There is nothing which more maddens man than mortified religious pride; and so it is here proved, for he rose up against his brother and slew him. And Jehovah speaks to him once more. It was sin not as such against God in leaving Him, like Adam's, but against man, his brother accepted of God. "Where is Abel thy brother?" To God's appeal he answers with no less hardness and audacity than falsehood, "I know not." There is no real courage with a bad conscience, and guile will soon be apparent where God brings His own light and makes guilt manifest. Let us not forget the deceitfulness of sin. "What hast thou done?" said Jehovah. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Justly now we have him self-cursed from the face of the earth, pronounced a fugitive and vagabond. But the will of man pits itself invariably against the known will of God, and the very man who was doomed to be a fugitive sets to work that he may settle himself here below. Cain, as it is said, went out from His presence, and dwelt in the land of Nod; a son is born in due time who builds a city called after his name. Such is the birth of civil life in the family of Cain, where we find the discovery and advance of the delights of man; but, along with the progress of art and science, the introduction of polygamy. The rebellious spirit of the forefather shows itself in the descendant Lamech.

But the chapter does not close until we find Seth, whom God\* substituted (for this is the meaning of the name), or "appointed," as it is said, "instead of Abel, whom Cain slew." And so Seth, to him also there was born a son, and he called his name Enos. Then began men to call upon the name of Jehovah.

\*As Eve at the birth of Cain seems to have been unduly excited, and expecting I think a deliverer in the child whom she named as gotten from *Jehovah*, so she seems to me to express a

sobered if not desponding sentiment in saying at Seth's birth, "*Elohim* hath appointed me another seed," etc. In the latter she only saw a child given of God naturally. Both appear to me natural and purposed.

In Genesis 5 we have the generations of Adam. Upon this I would not now dwell farther than to draw attention to the commencing words, "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam in the day when they were created." But "Adam," it is said, "begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." It was no longer in the likeness of God, but in the image of God always. For man, now as ever, fallen or not, is in the image of God; but the likeness of God was lost through sin. Seth therefore was begotten in Adam's own likeness, not in God's. He was like Adam fallen, not his representative only. And this is what is referred to in James 3, where he speaks of our having been made in the likeness of God. But it is the more important because, when it is a question of the guilt of taking man's life, the ground is that he was made in God's image. This, it is plain, was never lost; it abides, whatever man's state. Had the crime depended on man's retaining the likeness of God, murder might have been denied or justified, because if a man were not like God the unlikeness might be urged in extenuation of killing him. But it is a crime against man made in the image of God, and as this abides, whether he be fallen or not, the guilt of murder is unimpeachable and evident. This accordingly is the ground taken, to which I refer as an instance of the perfectness of scripture, but at the same time of the profound and practical power of the truth of God.

In the remarkable list, which is pursued down to Noah, we have another great truth set forth in the most simple and beautiful way — the power of life which exempts from the reign of death, and not only that, but the witness to heaven as a place for man. Enoch brings both these lessons before us. I have no doubt that, besides this, Enoch is the type of the portion of those who look to be with the Lord above, just as Noah shows us (as is too well known to call for a delay upon it) those who pass through the judicial dealings of God, and nevertheless are preserved. In short Enoch is the witness of the heavenly family, as Noah is of the earthly people of God.

But in Gen. 6 we have a very solemn statement — the apostacy of the ancient world. The sons of God chose the daughters of men. The true key to this account is supplied in the Epistle of Jude. It is hardly so common-place and ordinary a matter as many suppose. When understood, it is really awful in itself and its results. But the Holy Spirit has veiled such a fact in the only manner that became God and was proper for man. Here indeed the principle of reserve does apply, not in withholding from man's soul the deepest blessing of grace for his deepest wants, but in furnishing no more than that which was suitable for man to learn about the matter. He has said enough; but any one who will take the trouble to refer to Jude in connection with this chapter will gather more than appears on the surface. It is not needful to say more now. God Himself has touched it but curtly. This only may be remarked in addition, that "the sons of God," in my judgment, mean the same beings in Genesis as they do in Job. This point will suffice to indicate their chief guilt in thus traversing the boundaries which God had appointed for His creatures. No wonder that total ruin speedily ensues. It is really the basis of fact for not a few tales of mythology which men have made up. Any one who is acquainted with the chief writings of the old idolatrous world, of the Greeks and Romans especially, will see that what God has veiled in this brief statement, which passes calmly over that of which more had better not be spoken, is what they have amplified into the Titans and the giants and their greater deities. I do not of course enter into details, but here is the inspired account, which shines in the midst of the horrors of that dark scene which fabulists portrayed. But there is enough in man's amplification to point to what is stated here in a few simple words of truth.

The flood ensues. In the statement given by Moses every minute point beautifully exemplifies the propriety of the word of God. Men have fancied contradictions; they have fallen back on the old resource of opposed documents put together. There is not the slightest reason for suspicion. It is the same inspired historian who presents the subject in more than one point of view, but always consistently, and with a divine purpose which governs all. Every great writer, as far as he can go, illustrates this plan — indeed everybody, we may say. If you are speaking in the intimacies of the family, you do not adopt the same language towards your parents, wife, child, or servant, still less towards a stranger outside. Is there then any contradiction to be surmised? Both may be perfectly right, and both absolutely true; but there is a difference of manner and phraseology, because of a difference of object before you. It is no otherwise with God's word, save that all illustrations fail to measure the depth of the differences in it.

Thus in Genesis 6 it is said that "the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." It is not "Jehovah" now but "God." "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." What does He do then? He directs the ark to be made. For what end? The preservation of the creatures which required the ark. Hence He orders that two of every kind should be taken into the ark. We can easily see the propriety of this. It is very simply a measure for perpetuating the creature by God the Creator, in spite of imminent judgment. It has nothing to do with moral relationships. God the Creator would preserve such of the creatures as required the shelter of the ark. Here then we only hear of pairs which enter.

In Genesis 7 we have another order of facts. It opens thus: "And Jehovah said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark." Is this merely the conserving of the creature? Not so. It is the language of One who has special relationships with Noah and with his family. "Come thou into the ark," says He; "for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." "Righteous" — is this a question of creation as such? It is not, but rather of moral relationship. "For thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth." Certainly this is not mere creation in view, but special dealings of a moral sort. Almost every word gives evidence of it. "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens .... and of beasts that are not clean by two." It is God providing not for the perpetuation of the creature merely, but with marked completeness for sacrifice. Consequently we have this perfect care over the maintenance of His rights and place as One that governed morally. "And Noah did according unto all that Jehovah commanded."

Thus in relation to His place as creator God preserved two of every sort; in relation to His own moral government He would have seven taken into the ark — seven animals of each clean sort; of the unclean just enough would be there to preserve what He had made. It is evident therefore that in the one case we have that which was generally necessary, in the other case that which was special and due to the relationship in which man was placed with Jehovah. Thus it is seen at once that, instead of these wonderful communications being merely earlier and later legends put together by a still more modern editor, who tried to make something complete by stringing together what did not aptly fit, on the contrary, it is the Spirit of God who gives us various sides of the truth, each falling under the title and style suitable to God, according to that which was in hand. Put them out of their order, and all becomes confused; receive them as God has written them, and there is perfection in the measure in which you understand them.

So we find what shows the folly of this yet more in what follows: "And they that went in went in male and female of all flesh, as God commanded him; and Jehovah shut him in." The two terms occur

in the very same verse; yet is there not an evident propriety in each case? Unquestionably. They went in male and female. What is the idea? Moral relationship? Not at all. "Male and female" has to do in itself with the constitution of the creature, nothing whatever necessarily with moral relationship. In male and female God acts according to His rights and wisdom in creation; and consequently there it is said, "as Elohim commanded him." But when all this is done with, who was it that shut Noah in? "Jehovah." There we have delight in the man who had found grace in His eyes. No doubt the mere act could have been effected in other ways. Noah might have been enabled to shut himself in; but how much more blessed that *Jehovah* should do it! There was no fear then. Had it been merely said that Elohim shut him in, it would have simply suggested the Creator's care of every creature; but Jehovah's shutting him in points to special relationship, and the interest taken in that righteous man. What can be more beautiful in its season?

Thus a peculiarity in scripture, when understood, is pregnant with truth, having its source in God's wisdom, not in human infirmity. If we did not see it at once, this was merely because of our dullness. When we begin to enter into its real meaning, and hold fast that which is clearly the intended truth, the theory of Elohistic and Jehovistic annalists, with their redaction, vanishes into its own nothingness. I confess human — my own — ignorance; but not that there is a single instance where God has not employed the terms in all respects the best. No language could express so well the truth as that which God has employed as a matter of fact.

The next chapter (Genesis 8) shows God's remembrance of Noah and every living thing. Here it would not have served His purpose to say, "Jehovah remembered every living thing," because every living thing was not in moral relationship with God. Noah was undoubtedly; but it is not always, nor here, the aim to draw attention to what was special.

In due time the ark rests upon Ararat, and then follows the strikingly beautiful incident of the raven and the dove, which has been often before us, and from which therefore we may pass on. Afterwards God tells Noah to come forth — he and all the other creatures.

"And Noah," it is written in verse 20, "buildded an altar." Unto whom? Unto God? Most appropriately it is to Jehovah now. Without loss, these two things could not be transposed. He took then, it is said, "of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl." Yes, Jehovah is in question. It is the relationship of Noah which appears here. It is the special place in which he stood that was witnessed by the sacrifice thereon offered. And there Jehovah, accepting the sweet savour, declares that He "will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake. For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."

Here again how observable is the transparent and self-consistent truth of scripture. The Statement before us may look at first unaccountable; but when carefully weighed and reflected on, the propriety of it becomes manifest. That man's being evil was a ground for sending the flood we can all see; but what depth of grace in the declaration that God knew perfectly the ruined condition of man at the very time when He pledges His word that there shall come no more flood on the earth! This is brought before us here.

Here then we enter on an entirely new state of things, and a truth of capital importance for everybody to consider who has not already made it his own. What was the ground of God's delays in the previous time? Absence of evil in earth; innocence in man; it was a sinless, unfallen world. What is the ground of God's dealings now? Man is fallen, and the creature made subject to vanity. All the delays of God now proceed on the fact that the first man is in sin. Leave out the fall; fail to keep it before you and test all with that in mind, and you will be wrong about every result. Next to Christ

Himself, and what we have by and in Him, there is nothing of greater importance than the confession of the truth, both that God created, and that His creation is in ruins. Your judgment alike of God and man will be falsified; your estimate of the past and your expectations of the future will all be vain, unless you steadily remember that God now in all His dealings with man acts on the solemn fact of sin — original and universal sin. Will it be so always? By no means. There is a day coming when the ground of God's action will be neither innocence nor sin, but righteousness. But for that day we must wait, the day of eternity — of "the new heavens and the new earth." It is a real joy to know that it is coming; but until that day God always has before Him, as the theatre and material where He acts, a world ruined — ruined by sinful man.

Thanks be to God, One has come who is before Him in unfailing sweet savour, so that if sin be in the background, there cannot but be also what He introduces of His own free grace. If His servant bids others behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, how much more does God Himself behold Christ and His sacrifice! Need it be said that as far as its efficacy is concerned, and God's delight in it, He does not wait for the new heavens and the new earth, either to enjoy it Himself or make known its value to us? In short, Christ has intervened, and this most weighty consequence is connected with it — that, although everything manifests evil and ruin increasingly, God has triumphed in grace and in faith after the fall and before "the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." God, having introduced His own Son, has won the victory, the fruits of which He gives to us by faith before our possession is displayed by and-by.

Let it suffice to refer to the great principle, remembering that the theatre of the ages or dispensations of God is the world since the flood. It is a mistake to include the world before that event in the time of dispensations. There was no dispensation, properly so called, before it. What dispensation could there be? What does it mean? When man in Paradise was forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he broke the command immediately — as far as appears, the first day. Not that one could say positively that so it was; but certainly it is to be supposed that little time could have passed after receiving the woman, his wife. And the patent fact lies before us, that to join his wife in the sad sin is his first recorded act. What dispensation or age was there here? And what followed after it? There was no longer trial in Paradise, because man was turned out. By what formal test was he proved outside? By none whatever. Man, the race, became simply outcasts morally — nothing else — from that day till after the flood. Not but that God wrought in His grace with individuals. Abel, Enoch, Noah, we have already seen. There was also a wonderful type of deliverance through Christ in the ark — happily so familiar to most. But it is evident that dispensation, in the true sense of the word, there was none. There was a trial of man in Eden, and he fell immediately: after that there was none whatever in the antediluvian world. The history supposes man thenceforward allowed to act without external law or government to control though God did not fail to work in His merciful goodness — in His own sovereignty.

But after the flood we find a covenant is made with the earth (Gen. 9): the principle of government is set up. Then we enter on the theatre and times of dispensations. One sees the reason why man before this had not been punished by the judge; whereas after the flood there was government and judicial proceeding. In the post-diluvian earth God establishes principles which hold their course throughout the whole scene till Jesus came, or rather till He not only come and affirm by His own power and personal reign all the ways in which God has been testing and trying man, but deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all, when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power.

This then may suffice. As a notice of God's covenant with the earth, I may just refer, in passing,

to the establishment of the bow in the cloud as the sign of the mercy of Elohim (verses 12-17).

The end of this chapter shows that the man in whose person the principle of human government was set up could not govern himself. It is the old familiar story, — man tried and found wanting as always. This gives occasion to the manifestation of a great difference among Noah's sons, and to the solemn words which the father uttered in the spirit of prophecy. "Cursed be Canaan" was of deep interest, especially to an Israelite, but in truth to anyone who values the revelation of God. We can see afterwards how verified the curse was, as it will be yet more. The sin began with utter disrespect to a father. Not to speak of the destroyed cities of the plain, they had in Joshua's day sunk into the most shameless of sinners that ever disgraced God and defiled the earth. The believer can readily understand how Noah was divinely led to pronounce a just malediction on Canaan.\* "Cursed [be] Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be." So always it is. A man who despises him whom he is bound to honour, not to speak of the special distinction which God had shown him, must come to shame and degradation, must be not merely a servant but "a servant of servants." The most vaulting pride always has the deepest fall. On the other hand, "Blessed be Jehovah the God" — for God does not dwell upon the curse, but soon turns to the blessing — "Blessed be Jehovah the God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." And Elohim, it is said, "shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." How remarkably this has been made good in the providential history of the world I need not stay to prove, — how Jehovah God connected His name with Shem, to the humiliation of Canaan, and how Elohim enlarged Japhet, who would spread himself not merely in his own destined lot, but even dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan humbled there too. How true of the energetic Japhetic race that pushed westward, and not content with the east, pushes round again to the west — anywhere and everywhere. Thus God declares Himself in every word He utters. A little key to the world's history is contained in those few words of Noah.

\* *If* Canaan drew his father into the shameful exposure of Noah, all can see how just the sentence was. In any case it was mercy to confine the curse certainly earned by Ham within the narrowest limits, instead of extending it to all his posterity. In judgment as in grace God is always wise.

Then we find the generations of the sons of Shem. Without pretending to enter into particulars, this I may remark — that in the Bible there is not a more important chapter than Genesis 10 as regards the providential arrangement of tongues, families, and nations. Here alone is given the rise of different races, with their sources. Who else could have told us how and when the earth was thus divided? For this was a new state of things, not only not at all in the world before the flood, but not for some considerable time after it, and their distribution in their lands. This is the divine ethnology. Here man is at sea; but where he does arrive at conclusions, this at least is the common consent, as far as I know, of all who have given their minds to the study, that there are three, and only three, divisions into which nations properly diverge. So it is here. The word of God is before them. More than that: it is the conviction of all men, and men worthy to be listened to, that not more surely are they divided into three grand lines than that these three lines had a common origin. That there was only one such root is the statement of the scriptures. The word of God is always right. The details are of the highest interest, more especially when compared with the predicted results in the latter day, where we see the same countries and nations re-appear for judgment in the day of Jehovah. But into the proof of this we cannot now pause to enter.

Genesis 11 opens with the sin of man, which led to the division described in the preceding chapter, the moral reason of that fact, new then, but still in its substance going on, whatever the superficial changes among men in their lands, and tongues, and political distribution. Hitherto they

had been of one lip; but combining to make a name to themselves, lest they should be scattered, not to exalt God nor confide in Him, they had their language confounded, and themselves dispersed. "So Jehovah scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because Jehovah did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth" (verses 8, 9).

The genealogy of Shem, with gradually decreasing age among his seed, follows down to Abram, the remainder of the chapter being thus the link of transition from the history of the world as it then was, and in its principle still is. We come at length to him in whom God brings in wholly new principles in His own grace to meet a new and monstrous evil — idolatry. This daring evil against God, we know from Joshua 24 was then spread far and wide, even among the Shemitic race, although never heard of in scripture, whatever man's lawlessness in other ways, before the deluge. But here I stop for the present.

May we confide not only in scripture, but in Him who gave it! May we seek to be taught more and more His truth, leaning on His grace! He will withhold no good from those who walk uprightly; and there is no other way than Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **GENESIS.**

### **Gen. 12 - 25.**

We have had hitherto God's account of that which He had made; then the trial and utter ruin of the creature, with the revelation of divine mercy in Christ the Lord. We have had in fine the judgment of the world before the flood, and the universal history, we may say, of the sources of nations, compared with which there is nothing safe or sure, even to this day, spite of all pretensions of men. Their true history, and, scanty though it seems, the fullest and most comprehensive, is in that one short chapter — Genesis 10 — which was before us last night; the following chapter (Genesis 11) disclosing the moral ground of that dispersion which was merely given as a fact before. Then the Spirit of God takes up not merely the source of that nation that He was about to form for His own praise and glory in the earth, but a regular line successional given of the chosen family from Shem till we come to Abram.

This introduces Genesis 12 on wholly new ground. It is evident that here we are entering a sensibly different atmosphere. It is no longer man as such, but a man separated of God to Himself, and this by a promise given to one chosen and called — a new root and stock. These are principles which God never has abandoned since, and never will. Let me repeat that it is no longer mankind as hitherto, nor nations only, but we have the call of God to Himself — the only saving means where ruin has entered before judgment vindicates God's nature and will by His power. For we know from elsewhere that idolatry was now prevalent among men even among the descendants of Shem, when a man was called out by and to the true God on a principle which did not change nor judge (save morally) the newly-formed associations of the world, but separated him who obeyed to divine promises with better hopes. Abram, it need hardly be said, was the object of His choice. I am not denying that God had chosen before; but now it became a publicly affirmed principle. It was not only a call known secretly to him who was its object, but there was one separated to God by His calling him out as the depository of His promise, the witness of it being before the eyes of all, and in consequence blessed, and a channel of blessing. For what might seem to man's narrow mind an austere severing from his fellows was in point of fact for the express purpose of securing divine and eternal blessing, and not to himself

and his seed alone, but an ever-flowing stream of blessing which would not fail to all the families of the earth. God will yet shew this. For the present it has come to nought, as everything else does in the hands of man; but God will yet prove in the face of this world how truly and divinely, and in the interests of man himself, as well as of His own glory, He wrought in His call of Abram.

Abram comes forth therefore at God's bidding; he departs from his country; but first of all we find a measure of infirmity which hindered. There was one who hung upon the called out man, whose presence was ever a clog: the company of one not in the calling always must be so. Terah was not the object of the call; and yet it was difficult to refuse his company; but the effect was grave, for as long as Terah was there, Abram, in point of fact, did not reach Canaan. Terah dies (for the Lord graciously controls things in favour of those whose hearts are simple, even in the midst of weakness); and now "Abram set forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan he came." The Canaanite, it is added, was then in the land.\* "And Jehovah appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto Jehovah, who appeared unto him."

\*It is wholly unfounded to infer that these words, or Gen. 13: 7, imply that, when the writer lived, the Canaanites and Perizzites had been expelled from the land. They show that the first if not the second were in the land when Abram entered it; and that both were settled there when he returned from Egypt. That this was a trial to the patriarch we can readily understand; but he had not to wait till Moses' time, still less Joshua's, to know that they and all the other intruders were doomed. See Gen. 15: 16, 18-21. No doubt their expulsion was yet future; but the writer like Abram believed in Jehovah, who knows and reveals the end from the beginning. I am aware of Aben Ezra's insinuation that the clause was interpolated, and of Dean Prideaux yielding to it, though the latter saves the credit of scripture by attributing it to Ezra, an inspired editor. But there is no need of such a supposition here, however true elsewhere and in itself legitimate.

Here we find for the first time the principle so dear to our hearts — the worship of God founded on a distinct appearing of Himself (it always must be so). Man cannot reason out that which is a ground of worship. It flows from, and is presented to us as flowing from, the appearing of Jehovah. It is not merely the call now, but Jehovah "appeared" unto him. True worship must spring from the Lord, known in that which at any rate is a figure of personal knowledge of Himself. It is not only thus a blessing conferred, but in Himself known. Of course no one means to deny the fact that until He was known in the revelation of His own Son by the power of the Holy Ghost, there could not be that which we understand now as "worship in spirit and in truth ;" but at least this sets forth the principle.

There is another thing also to be observed here: it was only in Canaan that this was or could be. There was no worship in Mesopotamia; no altar, which was the symbol of it, was seen there. Neither was there an altar in Haran. It is in Canaan we see one first. Canaan is the clear type of that heavenly ground where we know Christ now is. Thus we see first Jehovah personally revealing Himself; and this next in connection with the type of the heavenly places. These are clearly the two roots of worship, as brought before us in this instructive passage.

Further, Abram moves about in the land; he pitches his tent elsewhere. This was of great importance. He was a pilgrim, not a settler in the land. He was as much a pilgrim in the land as before he came there. It was evident that he was a pilgrim when he left all dear to him, whether country, or kindred, or father's house; but when in the land he did not settle down. He still pitches his tent, but he also builds his altar. Who could hesitate to say that in the land Abram acquired a more truly heavenly intelligence? The promise of the land from God brought him out of his own land — out of that which is the figure of the earth; but when in Canaan God raised his eyes to heaven, instead of permitting

them to rest on the world. And this is precisely what the epistle to the Hebrews shows us, — not alone the faith which brought him into the land, but the faith which kept him a stranger when there. This is precious indeed, and exactly the faith of Abram.

His worship then we have in connection with his sustained pilgrim character in the land of promise.

Then we have another thing, — not mere infirmity but alas! failure — open and serious failure. He who had come out to God's call, the stranger in the land that was given him of God, fearing the pressure of circumstances, goes down into the granary of the earth the land which boasts of exhaustless resources. Abram went there of his own motion, without God or His word. Not only is no altar there, but he is without the guidance and guard of divine power morally. Abram fails miserably. Say not that this is to disparage the blessed man of God; it is rather to feel and to confess what we are, which is as much a part (however low) of our Christian duty as to adore what God is in His own excellency to our own souls. Flesh is no better in an Abram than in any other. It is the same ruinous quagmire wherever trusted, in every person and in any circumstances. And there it is that Abram (who had already failed in the unbelief which induced him to seek Egypt, away from the land into which God had called him) denies his wife, exposing her to the most imminent danger of defilement, and bringing not a blessing on the families of the earth, but a plague from Jehovah on Pharaoh and his house. Thus Abram proves the utter hopelessness either of blessing to others or preservation even for ourselves when straying from the place into which God calls us.

But God was faithful, and in Genesis 13 Abram is seen returning to the place where his tent was at the beginning. He is restored, and so resumes his place of pilgrim, and along with it of a worshipper. Such is the restoring goodness of God. But here we find another encumbrance in Lot, if we may so say, although personally a man of God. The Spirit bears witness that he was righteous, but he had no such faith as Abram, nor was he included in that character of call which we must carefully discriminate from the inward working of divine grace. Let us bear in mind that Abram had the public line of testimony for God, and the place of special promise. It is mere ignorance to suppose that there were not saints of God outside that call, which has nothing to do with the question of being saints, for Lot clearly was one; and we shall find from the very next chapter that he is not the only one. But Lot's hanging upon Abram, though it had not the same neutralizing effect as his father Terah, nevertheless did bring in difficulties. And here again Abram, restored in his soul, shines according to the simplicity of faith. It was not for him to contend. Alas! Lot was not ashamed to choose. He used his eyes for himself. Fully owning him to be a believer, it is plain that he lacked faith for his present walk. He preferred to choose for himself rather than ask God to give. Abram left all calmly with God. It was well.

After Lot had thus taken the best for himself, disgraceful as it was that the nephew should have ventured so to act in a land which God had promised to Abram only, another thereon decides the matter. "Jehovah said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him." So the Spirit notes now that all was according to the simple will of God, who was no heedless spectator, and does not fail to clear off the elements that hinder. Now that it was so, Jehovah said, "Lift up thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward," — He had never said so before — "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, etc., then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land," — Abram was to take possession by faith — "in the length of it and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto Jehovah." Well he might! Thus we learn that

there is a fresh manifestation of worship, and under the happiest possible circumstances to the close of the chapter.

This part is concluded by Genesis 14. For all these chapters may be viewed as forming one main section of the life of Abram. It is more particularly what pertains to him publicly; consequently we have as the public character of Abram the separating call, the promise secured, himself constituted manifestly a pilgrim as well as a worshipper in the land. It is all vain to talk about being a pilgrim in heart. God looks for it thoroughly; but He does not constitute us necessarily the judges, though no doubt those who are most simple will not mind the judgment of their fellows. At the same time it is well to judge in grace where we have to do with others. If there is reality, it will commend itself to the conscience of others; but I do say that to be manifestly, indisputably a pilgrim is the only right thing for one who is thus called out of God, as well as a worshipper, no less truly separate from the world than knowing and enjoying the God who called him out. Then we have seen the fatal absence of truth when the faithful are in the type of this world, Egypt; and the sustaining grace which restores and gives back the place of one who was manifestly a worshipper to the last. These were the great points of his public separated career.

The work is closed, as remarked, by Genesis 14 where we see a raid made by certain more distant kings of the earth against those who ruled in the valley of the Jordan or the neighbourhood, four against five. In the affray between them, he who had chosen the world suffers from the world. Lot with all that he had was swept away by the conquering kings who came from the north-east, and thereon Abram (guided of God I cannot doubt) with his armed servants, goes forth in the manifest power of God; for the conquerors as thoroughly fall before Abram as the others had been conquered by them. Thereon the priest of the Most High God comes forth (mysteriously, no doubt) king of Salem as well as in his own name, king of righteousness. On this the apostle Paul enlarges in the epistle to the Hebrews, where he shows us the close of the public career of pilgrimage and worship for the man of faith. For the Lord Jesus Himself is the anti-typical Melchisedec who will bring forth refreshment when the last victory has been won at the end of this age. Then the assembled kings will have come to nought after fearful convulsions among the other potsherd of the earth; and the Most High will bring in that magnificent scene of blessing which was represented by Melchisedec. For God in Christ will take the place of the possessor of heaven and earth, delighting in the joy of man, as man will be made to delight in the blessing of God; when it will not be as now simply sacrifice and intercession grounded upon it, but when, besides this which finds its place elsewhere and which is now the only comfort for our souls, there will be a new scene and God will take another character, the Most High God, and then all false gods shall fall before Him. It is clearly therefore the concluding scene of this series and the type of the millennial age. The Lord Jesus will be the uniting bond, so to speak, between heaven and earth, when He will bless God in the name of Abram, and He will bless Abram in the name of God. This then, in my judgment, winds up the series which began with Genesis 12.

It is worthy of remark on this occasion that Abram builds no altar here. And as there was no altar, so the course of pilgrimage is run. Separateness from the world and heavenly worship are no longer found. A tent and altar would be as unsuitable, reared by Abram at this juncture, as before they were exactly to the purpose. It is the millennial scene when God alone is exalted, His enemies confounded, His people saved and blessed.

Genesis 15 introduces a new character of communications from God. It will be observed therefore that the language indicates a break or change. The phrase "after these things" separates what is to follow from what had gone before, which had come to its natural conclusion. I think I may appeal to the Christian as to these things, without in the least pretending to do more than give a judgment

upon it. Nevertheless, when you find a number of scriptures which all march on simply and without violence, clothed with a certain character, and all in the same direction, we may fairly gather that as we know it was not mere man who wrote, so also the confidence is to be cherished that it is God who deigns to give us the meaning of His own word. I grant you that truth must carry its own evidence along with it — the stamp and consistency of that which reveals what our God is to our souls. Undoubtedly it becomes us to be humble, distrusting ourselves, and ever ready to accept the corrections of others. I believe, however, that so far as we have spoken, such is the general meaning of these three chapters. From this point you will observe a striking change. It is not only said "After these things," as marking a break, but also a new phrase occurs. "The word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision." We had nothing at all like this before. "Jehovah called," "Jehovah appeared," "Jehovah said," but not as here "the word of Jehovah."

It is a new beginning. And that this is the case may be made still more manifest when we bear in mind what the character of this recommencement is "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Adonai-Jehovah, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold to me thou hast given no seed, and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And behold the word of Jehovah."\* Observe it here again. Clearly therefore it is a characteristic that cannot be neglected without loss. "The word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in Jehovah." Is not this a fresh commencement? Is it not the evident and known scripture which the New Testament uses to great effect, and refers to repeatedly as the great note and standing witness of the justification of Abram? If we do not go back again with the type, but take it as following the scene of his worship and pilgrimage, and indeed the millennial shadow, it has no force, or would mislead. What! man justified after being not called out only, but a worshipper entering into such wonders as Abram had done! Take it as a recommencement, and all is plain. Justification is certainly not after the Lord had been leading on the soul in the profound way in which Abram had been taught. I grant you the order of facts is as we read; but what we are concerned with now is not the bare history, but the form in which God has presented His mind to us in His word. He has so ordered the circumstances of Abram's history, and presented them with the stamp of eternal truth on them, not only as an account of Abram, but looking on to the times of redemption, in order to form our souls according to His own mind.

\*Dr. Davidson (Introd. O. T. i pp. 21, 22) construes this into an inconsistency with Ex. 6: 3. "In Genesis 15 it is recorded that God was manifested to Abraham, who *believed in Jehovah*, and therefore his *'faith* was counted for righteousness.' There the Lord promises him a heir; declares to him that his seed shall be numberless as the stars of heaven, shall be afflicted in a strange land 400 years, but come forth from it with great substance. Jehovah too *made a covenant* with Abraham, and assured him that he had given the land of Canaan from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates to his posterity. Here is Jehovah the Covenant-God revealing himself to Abraham in a peculiar manner, encouraging him by a fulness of promise, and confirming his word by a sign, entering into covenant with his servant, and condescending to inform him of the future of his race. That Abraham apprehended aright the character of the Being who thus revealed himself is evident from the words of the sixth verse, as well as from the language he addresses to Him in the eighth, *Lord God*. Hence on the hypothesis of one and the same writer of the Pentateuch, and the correctness of the alleged explanation, we argue that the contrast between the acquaintance of Abraham with the name Jehovah, and the full knowledge of that name first made known to Moses, is groundless . . . . If our view of Exodus 6: 3 be correct, it is

all but certain that one writer could not have composed the book of Genesis, else he would have violated a principle expressly enunciated by himself in the passage." The mistake throughout is due to the want of seeing that God only in Moses' day gave His personal name Jehovah as the formal characteristic ground of relationship to the sons of Israel. *They* were to walk before Him as Jehovah, as the fathers had walked before Him as El-Shaddai. But it is in no way meant that the words Jehovah and El-Shaddai were only used, or their import only understood, by Moses and the patriarchs respectively. The words existed and were employed freely before; but as God never gave the right to any before Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to walk; before Him counting on His Almighty protection, so He first gave Israel nationally the title of His eternal unchangeableness as Jehovah as that on which they might count. The use of each name has nothing to do with different authors or documents' but depends on moral motives. It is a question neither of antiquity nor of piety: not of antiquity, for from the beginning Jehovah was freely employed. not of piety, for the Psalms (e.g. Ps. 42, Ps. 63 etc.) show that there may be as genuine and fervent piety in exercise where Elohim is the staple as where Jehovah is. The absence or presence of the display of His covenant character of relationship, especially with Israel, is the true and invariable key.

I consider therefore that, as the former series gave us the public life of Abram, so this is rather that which belongs to him individually considered, and the dealings of God with him in what may be called a private rather than a public way. Hence therefore we shall find that there is this further series, which going on from Genesis 15 closes with Genesis 21, where again it is observable that there follows a similar introduction to a new series after that. For the beginning of Genesis 22 runs thus: "And after these things." Is it not plain then that the clause, "After these things," introduces us to a new place? I am not aware that the same phrase occurs anywhere between. Consequently there is an evident design of God regarding it. We shall now look at the current of this new section, and see what is brought before us in these chapters.

First of all there is founded on the wants which Abram expresses to God the desire that it should not be merely an adopted child, but one really of his own blood. It was a desire to which God hearkened, but as it was a feeling which emanated from no higher source than Abram, so it had a contracted character stamped on it. It is always better to be dependent on the Lord for everything. It is not a question of merely avoiding the painful way in which Lot exercised his choice, but Abram himself is not at the height of communion in this chapter whatever God's mercy to him; It is better to wait on the Lord than run before Him; and we are never the worse that He should take the first step. Our happy place is always confidence in His love. Had the Lord pressed it upon His servant to speak to Him with open heart, it would have been another matter. Abram however presented his desire, and the Lord meets it graciously. It is very evident that He binds Himself also remarkably. There was given to Abram a kind of seal and formal deed that He would secure the hoped-for heir to him. Who could gather from this that Abram is here found in the brightest mood in which the Spirit of God ever presents him? He is asking, and Jehovah answers, no doubt; he wants a sign whereby he may know that he shall inherit thus: "Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" This does not seem to rise to that admirable trust in Jehovah which characterized him at other times. This is not presuming to find fault with one where one would gladly learn much; it is ours to search, as far as grace enables us, into that which God has written for our instruction.

Jehovah accordingly directs him to take a heifer and a she-goat and a ram of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon; and then "when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon him, and lo an horror of great darkness fell upon him." It appears to me most evident that the circumstances here detailed were suitable to the condition of Abram; that there were questions, and it

may be doubts, connected with that prospect which Jehovah had put before his soul; and that consequently we may safely discover, if it were only by the manner in which the communication was made to him, his state of experience then. Hence too the nature of the communication: "Be sure," said he, "that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and afterwards shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace: thou shalt be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."

This is not all. "And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp." The mingled character of all is plain. There is a smoking furnace, the emblem of the trial on the one hand, not without darkness; there is the burning lamp, the sure promise and pledge on God's part, the prophetic and sure intimation therefore of God's deliverance. Nevertheless it is not a bright vision, it is a horror of darkness which is seen in the sleep which had fallen upon him. Sifting and tribulation must come, but salvation in due time. But there is more than this. The very limits of the land are given and the races with which Abram's seed should have to do.

In short we see that the whole scene, clothed in a measure with a Jewish character, has naturally the elements of sacrifice which in various forms were put forward afterwards in the Levitical economy, and that it is also stamped with prophecy which never brings one into the depths of God's nature, but displays fully His judgment of man. Prophecy, admirable as it is, is always short of the fulness of grace and truth which is in Christ. Prophecy has to do with the earth, with the Jew and the nations, with the times and the seasons. So it is here: we have dates and generations; we have the land and its limits; we have Egypt and the Canaanitish races. It is not heaven, nor the God and Father of our Lord known where He is — very far from it. It is God knowing what He means to do on earth and giving a doubting friend the certainty of it, securing and binding Himself to comfort the faith that wanted extraordinary support, — nevertheless not without affliction for his seed, not without their serving a strange nation, but Jehovah bringing them out triumphantly in the end. Admirable as the vision is, it neither looks up at the heights of God's glory; nor again does it in any way go down into the depths of His grace.

It is no small confirmation of the condition of Abram at this time, if we read aright what follows in the very next chapter. (Genesis 16) Undoubtedly Sarah was more to blame than Abram: there was haste through manifest want of faith in short; and consequently Hagar was given to her husband, and the fruits of the connection soon appeared. As always, she who was most to blame suffered the most. It was not so much Abram as Sarah who smarted through her folly about her maid. But we have again in this chapter the faithfulness of God even in the case of Hagar, who is told to return to her mistress and humble herself before her. Jehovah here still carries on the prophetic testimony through His angel, and draws out the remarkable prefiguration of the Bedouins, who remain to this day a minor witness, but none the less a true one, of the truth of God's word.

In the next chapter (Genesis 17) we have another and higher scene. "When Abram was ninety years old and nine, Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." Now here it is no longer Hagar, the type, as we know, of the Sinai covenant; it is not a prediction that man's way only brings the child of flesh into the house, a trouble to all concerned. But here Jehovah, unasked and of His own grace, appears once more to His beloved servant. "I am," says he, "El-Shaddai: walk before me, and be thou perfect: and I will make my covenant between me

and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." God, not man, takes the foremost place now. It is not Abram who asks, but God who speaks. Abram accordingly, instead of bringing forward his desires and difficulties, fell on his face — the right place — "and God talked with him." There was greater freedom than he had ever enjoyed before; but it in no way diminished the reverence of his spirit. Never was he more prostrate before God than when He thus opened His heart to him about the seed of promise, and was about to make further communications even as to the world.

Elohim then "talked with him, saying, As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations." It is not now about his seed a stranger in a land not theirs. Now we have the wide extent of the earthly purposes of God beginning to unfold before us, even as far as the whole earth, and Abram was concerned in all. "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee." Not a word of this had been breathed before. That he should have a line to succeed him, one that should inherit the land and have it for ever: such was the utmost already vouchsafed. And when the doubting mind sought and would have security from God Himself, God deigned to enter as it were into a bond with him, but along with it gave him to know that many a sorrow and affliction must precede the hour of His judgment in favour of the chosen seed. But here all is of another order and measure — beneficence according to the grace and purposes of God. "I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee the land wherein thou art a stranger — all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised."

Let none suppose that circumcision is necessarily a legal thing. In the connection in which it is put here it is the concomitant of grace — the sign of flesh's mortification. Undoubtedly it was incorporated into the law when that system was afterwards imposed; but in itself, as our Lord Himself shows, it was not of Moses, but of the fathers; and as being of the fathers — of Abraham — it was, as we see here, an emblem significant of the putting flesh to death. God would have it dealt with as an unclean thing; and certainly this is not law. It may be turned to legalism as anything else; but in this case it is rather in contrast with law. It means flesh judged, which is the true spiritual meaning of that which God then instituted.

The chapter then exhibits grace that gives according to God's own bountifulness: at the same time flesh is judged before him. Such is the meaning of this remarkable seal. Accordingly we have the promise brought out when Sarah's name was changed from being "my princess" (Sarai) to be "princess" (Sarah) absolutely. So she was to be called thenceforth. "As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai; but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations: kings of people shall be of her." Then goes out the heart of Abraham even for Ishmael, with the historical notice that circumcision was instituted from that day.

The next chapter (Genesis 18) shows us that grace gives not only communion with Jehovah in what concerns ourselves, but that to His servant is granted to enjoy the communications of His mind even as to what is wholly outside. God had begun to speak with an intimacy such as Abraham had never before known: He would certainly not repent of His love. It is not God who recedes from us —

we from Him rather, never He from us. "And Jehovah appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre, and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. And he lift up his eyes and looked, and lo! three men stood by him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground." See the character of Abraham: it is very lovely — genuine lowliness, but remarkable dignity. He "said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant. Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts. After that, ye shall pass on; for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do as thou hast said." At this time there seems no reason to suppose that Abraham had any knowledge or suspicion even who it was. We shall find how soon he does infer it, and has the consciousness of it. But he behaves with perfect propriety. He would not speak out openly; he does not break what we may call the incognito that Jehovah was pleased to assume. He understood it: his eye was single, his body full of light.

Outwardly it was simple patriarchal preparation for passing strangers. Some, you know, not forgetful to entertain strangers, have unawares entertained angels. It was Abraham's honour to entertain Jehovah. In due time he hears the question put to him, which I think is the point where he enters into the spirit of the divine action: "Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son." Could Abraham be ignorant any longer whose voice this was? Nevertheless there is no speaking before the due time. If Jehovah was pleased to appear with two of His servants there, if He put them in the common guise of mankind, certainly it was not for the faithful to break the silence which Jehovah preserved. And this was just a part of the admirable manner in which his heart answered to Jehovah's confidence in him. But Sarah shows her unbelief once more, whilst Jehovah reproving it, spite of Sarah's denial, remains with Abraham. When the men rose up to go towards Sodom, Abraham instinctively accompanies, but Jehovah remains with him, and says, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?"

As Genesis 17 had furnished Jehovah's communication of what so intimately concerned Abraham and Abraham's line for ever, this chapter reveals to him what concerns the world. Thus we see, although it be not the intimate relationship of the children of God, it is exactly the way in which the understanding of the future is not only profitable but becomes a means of sustaining and even of deepening communion. Let me call your attention to this. Be not deceived beloved brethren. Entering upon the future in the first instance, and making it pre-eminently our study, never does really deepen our souls in the ways of God, but rather leads them on in lower lines and earthly principles from which it is difficult to escape at another day. Nevertheless it is very evident that God has given it all, and that God means that what He has given should be used and enjoyed by our souls.

What then is the preserving power? Grace; when it is not a question about what is coming, when it is not above all questions arising from ourselves. Such it was in Genesis 15; but now Abraham has been set perfectly free by Jehovah. He is at large as to what pertained to himself and to his seed after him. His heart is clear. Jehovah has abounded beyond his largest thought. There are infinitely greater prospects before Abraham than he had ever dared to ask of God; for He speaks out of His own thoughts, His own counsels, which must necessarily always be above the largest expectations of man; and then it is that the unveiling of the future, instead of dragging us down to the earth, on the contrary becomes a means only of drawing us into the presence of the Lord with longing after His own grace. Such was the case with Abraham. All depends on this, that we should not first yield to the bias of our minds before we enter into the perfect liberty and the enjoyment of our own proper place with Jesus Christ in the presence of our God. After that we can listen, and then all becomes profitable and blessed to us.

Such is the case with Abraham now. It is Jehovah again who takes the first step. It is Jehovah who says, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" What a difference for the man who wanted to know whether he should for certain have the line that God said he should have! Here Jehovah meets him and predicts to him the imminent ruin of the cities of the plain. Jehovah gives light to him here, and everything is made plain. But it is not a doubting heart or an inquisitive mind; it is one who bows down in heartfelt homage, withal confiding in God, who was pleased to confide in him. In truth God was going to act upon the world; He was going to judge this guilty scene; He was going to blot out that sink of iniquity — Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities of the plain that was as the garden of Jehovah, but alas! now rose up with pestilential breath against God Himself, so that He must as it were mow down this iniquity, or else the whole world would be polluted by it.

So it is then that God speaks to His servant. He loved to make known His ways. Abraham was now in a condition to enjoy without in any way sinking into earthly-mindedness. Abraham could hear anything that Jehovah would tell him. Then, instead of in any way dragging him down, Jehovah was rather lifting him up into an enjoyment of the secrets of Himself, into confidential intercourse with Him, for indeed he was the friend of God. Abraham profits by all here; and we shall see the moral effect on his spirit soon. "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" — Oh, what a word is this! — "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him" — what confidence in him the Lord expresses! "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Jehovah to do justice and judgment; that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. And Jehovah said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah. And Abraham drew near" — such was the effect — "Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city."

It may not be now the fitting time to say much upon such a scene, but I will make at least this observation, that there is no anxiety about himself, and for that very reason his whole heart can go out, not only towards the God who loved him, and whom he loved, but also for his nephew, righteous Lot, who had played so poor a part, suffered for his folly, and once more had profited little by the discipline, and was about to be humbled yet more, as Abraham could not have anticipated. Not merely did the man of faith go forth to pursue the victorious kings of the earth for the rescue of Lot, but he now dares in the confidence of Jehovah's goodness to draw near and plead for him whose righteous soul was vexed in Sodom, and loved the Lord spite of his earthly-mindedness and his evil position. And was it not of Jehovah that Abraham interceded? Did He not strengthen His servant's heart to go on, until he was ashamed? As everywhere, so here, it was man who left off pleading with Jehovah, not Jehovah who refused to encourage and hear the voice of further intercession.

Here was the effect of prophecy taken into the heart *after* it was freed by the grace of God, and rendered practically heavenly. Instead of exercising a damaging character by indulging idle curiosity about others, or causing mere occupation with self — the wanting to know what the Lord will give me — we see the believer's heart going out after another. This is as God would have it. It is the spirit of intercession for others which we find to be the result of listening to the Lord, and delighting in the communications of what was still unfulfilled, not because they were about himself, but because they were the Lord's secrets about others (even the world itself) entrusted to him, and drawing out his affections after a divine sort. Is it so with us in our use of the prophetic word? Ought it to be

otherwise? May we gather such fruit of our Old Testament study!

In the next chapter (Genesis 19) the blow of judgment is seen to fall. The angels arrive at Sodom, and Lot shows himself a scholar in the same school of courteous grace as Abraham; but the men of the guilty city justify Jehovah in that unexampled dealing when the sun next went forth on the earth. Lot meanwhile was brought out, and his daughters without their unbelieving husbands; but his wife! — "Remember Lot's wife" — his wife remains for ever the most solemn instance on record of one who was personally outside, but in heart attached to the scene of evil.

Yet Lot delivered is nevertheless but half delivered; and here again we learn how the blessed written word sets forth in great facts the moral judgment of God before the time came to speak with unmistakeable plainness. We had seen sorrowful enough results in the case of Noah, who, drinking of the fruit of the vine to the dishonour of himself, pronounced a curse on a branch of his posterity, though not without a blessing on the rest. It was a curse not causeless but just: nevertheless what a sorrowful thing for a parent's heart to utter! So here with Lot, delivered of angels from the worst of associations, even after his deliverance by Abraham, brought out again, but as it were maimed and wounded, to be yet more dishonoured. It would be painful if it were needful to say a word of that which follows. Yet was it not without moral profit for Israel to remember the source of a perpetual thorn in their side — the shameful origin of the Moabite and the Ammonite, two nations, neighbours and akin, notorious for continual envy and enmity against the people of God. The only God marks all in His wisdom. Sin then as now produced a harvest, large and long-continued, if sovereign grace in some cases forbids that it should be a perpetual harvest of misery to those who indulged in it. "He that soweth to the flesh," no matter who or where or when, "shall of the flesh reap corruption."

Then follows a new scene, where Abraham alas I fails once more. (Gen. 20) There is no power in forms to sustain the rich triumphs of faith. As on the one hand after failure God can bring into depths of grace which never were proved before, so on the other from the most real blessing there is no means of strength or continuance, but only in God Himself. No matter what the joy for one's own soul, or the blessing to others, power in every sense belongs to God, and is only ours in dependence upon Him. And now it was even more painful than before, because Sarah was the known appointed mother of the heir that was coming. There was no question as to her any more than about Abraham. He had been long the designated father, as she was later the designated mother. In spite of all Abraham, for reasons of his own, is guilty once more of denying the relationship. What is man? Beloved brethren, we know One, who at all cost formed the nearest relationship with us that deserved nothing less, and who will never deny it. May He have our unswerving confidence!

But Abimelech was evidently conscientious, and God took care of him, although the seriousness of the case was not weakened to his mind. God made known in a dream how matters really stood, that he must not touch the man's wife. "He is a prophet and he shall pray for thee" — a most instructive instance of the way in which God holds to His principles. He will even honour Abraham before Abimelech, however he may act in discipline with Abraham. Perhaps Abimelech would be ready to say, "How can Abraham be a prophet, — a man that tells lies in denying his own wife?" Nevertheless, said God, "he is a prophet;" but we may be assured of this, that the Lord in no way restrained the mouth of Abimelech from a severe reproof, when he said to Sarah, "Behold I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reprov'd."\* What a veil Abraham had been to his poor wife! He had better buy a veil for her with the thousand pieces of silver. It was a keenly cutting condemnation — a rebuke no doubt addressed to Sarah, but how it must have touched Abraham to the quick! The Bible has recorded the sin of the father of the faithful for the good of all the children. Where was the faithfulness

of Abraham now? God first took care that his faith should not fail. May the sin be a warning to us, and the grace strengthen our faith too!

\*There is some difficulty here as evinced by the differences of translators Thus Benisch translates the last clause, "and thou mayest face every one," *i.e.* she was made right by the fine as an eye-covering. De Sola, Lindenthal and Raphall, in their version, go even further, "and unto all others as a vindication."

The next chapter presents the closing scene in this series. The child and heir of promise is given; the child of flesh is dismissed. All now is settled according to God. Whatever inconsistent with His grace had been allowed before must disappear. Hagar the slave must depart, and the child that was not of promise must be gone. Jehovah can no longer tolerate that the child of flesh shall be with Isaac and Sarah in the house of Abraham.

Remarkable to say, while the goodness of God fails not to care for Hagar, Ishmael too in His providence is seen winding up the whole scene. Abimelech comes in, seeking a covenant with the very man whose failure must have surprised and stumbled him not so long before. Abimelech, with Phichol the chief captain of his host, owns God to be with Abraham in all that he did, adjures him to shew favour to his race, and stands now reprov'd for the wrong of his servants. The Gentile king in short craves the countenance and protection of Abraham, "who planted a grove," as we are told here, "in Beersheba, and called there on the name of Jehovah the everlasting God." It is clear therefore that here we behold the heir of the world in figure brought in. It is not a question yet of introducing deeper relations; nevertheless it is the heir not merely of the land of Palestine but of the world that comes before us here. Consequently Jehovah is presented to us in the character not before named of the everlasting God (El-olam). This fitly terminates the series) and brings us down to another type of the millennial day. It is then that the Gentiles seek the protection of the faithful; it is then that Jehovah will show Himself the God of ages, the guardian and blesser of the true Heir; it is then that pretensions of flesh and law will be for ever put aside, and the promises will have their full course to His glory who gave them. This again concludes, as it would appear, in a way similar to the former section. We are carried forward to the millennial day.

After this a still deeper order of things begins, where the distinct light of God is seen shining, one might almost say, on every step. Here we survey a type before which almost every other even in this precious book may be considered comparatively a little thing. It shadows such love as God Himself can find nothing to surpass, if even to compare with it. It is the chosen figure of His own love, and this not only in the gift but in the death of His Son, who deigned to be for us also the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. A scene at once so simple yet so deep demands few and will not indeed bear many words of ours on what is happily the most familiar of all types to all Christians, as, morally viewed, it is an unequalled call to our hearts. For we must not overlook it as a most real trial of Abraham's faith, besides being such a precious manifestation of God's own love. For if Isaac was spared the blow to which Abraham fully devoted him in the confidence of God's raising him again to make good the line of promise, the type of death as a sacrifice was fully carried out by the substitution of the ram caught in the thicket and slain by the father. Then follows the oath of Jehovah founded on it, of which the apostle Paul makes so striking a use in the Epistle to the Galatians, where he draws the remarkable contrast between the one seed and the many. With the seed being Christ, where number is *not* expressed, we have the blessing of the Gentiles; whereas, when we hear of the seed numerous as the stars and the sand, the connection beyond all controversy is with the supremacy of the Jews over their enemies. If we closely examine the passage, it may be readily seen in all its force. "By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast

not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore." Here it is expressly the numerous seed; and what follows? Is there any promise of blessing to the Gentiles here? On the contrary it is a properly Jewish hope — "Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." Is this the special place of Christ? Is it His relation to us now from among the Gentiles? The very reverse. It remains to be verified when He reigns as the Head of Israel, and He will give them power and rule over their enemies. In its day this will be all right

But what is it that the apostle quotes, and for what purpose? Not this but the next verse, which is of a wholly different nature: — "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." The force of the apostle's argument is that, where the scripture referred to says nothing of number, only naming "thy seed" as such, there the blessing of the Gentiles is assured. On the other hand, where He speaks of the seed multiplied according to the most striking images of countless number, Jehovah pledges here the earthly exaltation and the power of the Jew over their enemies — a blessing in contrast with that of the gospel and the argument in Galatians. It is this distinction which the apostle applies to the subject with such depth of insight. The inference is obvious. The Galatians had no need to become Jews to get blessing. Why then should they be circumcised? What God gives them in the gospel and what they have received by faith is Christ, dead and risen, as was Isaac in the figure. (Compare Heb. 11: 17-19.) Of this seed He speaks not as of many but as of one: this seed secures the blessing of the Gentiles as Gentiles. Hence, where God speaks of Abraham's seed apart from numbers (ver. 18), there is the blessing of the Gentiles. This is what we really need; but it is what we have in Christ. By and by there will be the numerous seed spoken of in verse 17. This will be the Jew; and then the chosen nation will possess the gate of their enemies. I can conceive nothing more admirable in itself, or more complete as a refutation of the Judaisers who would fain have compromised the gospel, and sunk the Galatians into mere Gentiles looking up to their Jewish superiors by seeking circumcision after they had a risen Christ. But the truth is that both are divine, the Old Testament fact, and the New Testament comment. And as the fact itself was most striking, so the application by the apostle is no less profound.

In Genesis 23 another instructive event opens on us. It is not the death of Hagar, who sets forth the Sinaitic or legal covenant: we might have expected some such typical matter, and could all understand that. But the marvel is that, after the figure of the son led as a sacrifice to Mount Moriah but raised from it (the death and resurrection of Christ, as the Apostle Paul himself explains it in the Epistle to the Hebrews), we have the death of Sarah, of her who represents the new covenant, not of the law but of grace. And what is the meaning of that type, and where does it find its answer in the dealings of God when we think of the antitype? It is certain and also plain. In the Acts of the Apostles, not to speak of any other scripture, the true key is placed in our hands. When the Apostle Peter stood before the men of Israel, and bore witness of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the true Isaac, what did he tell them? This — that if they were willing by grace to repent and be converted, God would assuredly bring in those times of refreshing of which He had spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. He added that they were the children not only of the prophets but of the covenant which God made with the fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

There we have the required solution. For Peter presented after this the readiness of God to bring in the blessedness of the new covenant, if they by grace bowed their stiff neck to the Lord Jesus. But they would not hearken: they rejected the testimony, and finally put to death one of the brightest witnesses. In point of fact, the unbelief was complete to the testimony of the Holy Ghost founded on

the death and resurrection of Christ; and, in consequence, that presentation of the covenant to Israel completely disappears. It was the antitype of Sarah's death — the passing away for the time of all such overtures of the covenant to Israel. Nowhere do we hear of it renewed after that. No doubt Sarah will rise again, and so the new covenant will appear when God works in the latter day in the Jewish people. But meanwhile the presentation of the covenant to Israel, as that which God was willing there and then to bring in, which was the offer then made by grace, completely passes from view, and a new thing takes its place.

So it is here. Immediately after the death and burial of Sarah a new person comes before us — another object distinct from what we have seen; and what is it? The introduction of a wholly unheard of personage, called to be the bride of Isaac, the figuratively dead and risen son of promise. It is no more a question of covenant dealings. The call of Rebecca was not thought of before — altogether a fresh element in the history. Then again we have the type, so familiar to us, of Eliezer, the trusty servant of all that the father had, now the executor of the new purposes of his heart, who goes to fetch the bride home from Mesopotamia. For as no maid of Canaan could be wedded to Abraham's son; so he, Isaac, was not to quit Canaan for Mesopotamia: Eliezer was to bring the bride, if willing, but Isaac must not go there. Nothing is more strongly insisted on than this, and to its typical meaning I must call your attention. The servant proposes a difficulty: Suppose she is not willing to come: Is Isaac to go for her? "And Abraham said unto him, Beware that thou bring not my son thither again." When the church is being called as a bride for Christ, He remains exclusively in heavenly places. He has nothing to do with the world while the church is in process of being gathered from among Jews and Gentiles. He leaves not heaven, nor comes to the world to have associations with the earth, while it is a question of forming the bride, the Lamb's wife. In relation to the call of the church, Christ is exclusively heavenly. It is the very same Isaac who had been under the sentence of death sacrificially. As Isaac is raised again in figure and must on no account go from Canaan to Mesopotamia for Rebecca, so Christ is to have only heavenly associations, and none with the world, while the church-calling is in progress. Ignorance of this, and, yet more, indifference to it where it seems to be known, must make the Christian worldly, as communion with Christ where He is makes one heavenly-minded. It shows how irretrievably false any position is which necessarily connects us with the world. The only sure way for the Christian to decide any question aright is to ascertain from God's word how it bears upon Christ and His glory. When Christ has His associations with the world, we may have our place there too; if Christ is entirely outside it, as He is manifestly apart from it now in heaven, so should we be. To judge and walk according to Him is what we do well to cultivate.

Never call it worldliness to discharge aright your duty here below. It is worldly-mindedness wherever the world or its things may occupy us as an object, instead of pleasing and doing the will of the Lord here below. It is not what you are doing which is so important as fellowship with His mind; it may be in appearance the most holy work, but if it links Christ and His name with the world, it is only deceiving ourselves and playing so much the more into the hands of the enemy. But, on the other hand, supposing it is connected with the world, there may be the most ordinary act, yet as far as possible from worldliness, even though it were only blacking a shoe. It is hardly needful to say that the power of Christianity may be enjoyed in the heart and ways of a shoe-black just as truly as anywhere else. Anything that is outside Christ will not preserve, and must have the stamp of the world on it; whereas, on the other hand, so great is the efficacy of Christ that if my heart is set upon Him, and seeking after what is suitable to Him at the right hand of God, we become truly witnesses of Him; and, supposing there is real occupation with Him there, this will assuredly give to what we do a heavenly stamp, and impart the truest and highest dignity, no matter what we may be about.

The details of this chapter of course it is not for me to enter into now. I have said enough to shew the general principle — first, the novelty and unprecedentedness of what concerns Isaac and Rebecca It was not mere continuance of what had been known already, but a new thing following up not only the typical sacrifice on Moriah, but the death of Sarah. It is happy when the truth of Christ illuminates consecutive chapters of the Old Testament. We know alas! what it is to be uncertain and dissatisfied in presence of the written word, which is really simple to the simple. Again, there is the passing away of all covenant dealings. How long we have known confusion ourselves in all this! Sarah is dead and gone for the time. Then the bride is sought and called, and comes; for it is a question of a bride, not a mother. Again, we have Eliezer, the type of the Spirit of God, marked by this — the heart going out towards the Lord both in entire dependence and in simple-hearted praise as he receives the speedy and unequivocal answer of His grace. Eliezer had his mission from Abraham: so is the Spirit sent from the Father on an errand of love in the church. Prayer and worship accordingly become the members of Christ's body, and should go forth intelligently with the purpose of God, just as Eliezer's prayer was entirely founded on the object that he who sent him had in view. He asked much and boldly about the bride, and nothing else swerved him from this as nearest to his heart.

It is all well for men in an evil world to be filled with enterprises for doing good; but here was one who with the utmost simplicity knew he was doing the best, and this we too ought to be doing. The best of all service, serving the Father's glory in the Son who is to have the church as His bride — this is worth living for and dying too — if it be the will of God that we should meanwhile fall asleep, instead of waiting for the coming of the Lord. It is not merely seeking the salvation of sinners, but doing His will with a direct view to Christ and His love, and accordingly not with prayer only, but the character of it naturally marking this. There is more about prayer in this chapter than in any other in Genesis; but besides there is more distinctly than elsewhere the heart turning to Jehovah in worship of Him. These two things ought to characterize the Christian and the church, now that Christ the Son of God is dead and risen, and we enjoy the immense results by faith — prayer and worship, but prayer and worship in unison with the purpose of God in the calling of the bride, the church; not mere isolated action, although that may have its place and be most true for special need. Still the great characteristic trait should be this — that God has let our hearts into His own secret in what He is doing for Christ. He has given us to know where Christ is and what He, who deigns to be the executive here below (the Spirit), is doing for His name in this world. Consequently our hearts may well go forth in prayer and praise in connection with it, turning to our God and Father with the sense of His goodness and faithfulness now as evermore. The New Testament shows us what the church was and should be; and there is not a chapter in Genesis which sets them forth as a type in anything like so prominent a form as this. Is it casual, or the distinct design of God that here only in these incidents should be the picture of bridal expectancy and confidence in the love of one not yet seen, and of going forth to meet the bridegroom?

Finally we have Genesis 25 closing Abraham's history, with his relation as father to certain tribes of Arabs, who as being of his stock, mingled with the Ishmaelites. These sons, unlike Isaac, received presents and were sent away. Isaac must be left the undisputed heir of all, and abides ever as son in the father's house. The purposes of love centre in him; as the inheritance was his in its widest extent.

But no more tonight. Though perfectly persuaded that a cursory sketch has its disadvantages, I am equally assured that it is not without advantages of its own; for it is well for us to have a broad and comprehensive view, as it is well also, when we possess this, to fill up the details. But we shall never approach to a clear or a full intelligence of Scripture if we neglect the one or do not seek the other.

Grace only by the written word used in faith can give and keep both for our hearts to the praise of the Lord's name.

## GENESIS.

### Gen. 25: 19 to end.

Having already shown the position of Isaac, I resume briefly with the remark that he stands before us clearly as the representative of the Son, and this too as dead, risen, and in heaven. All will understand it who remember that we have had His death and resurrection parabolically in Genesis 22; and then, after the passing away of her who was the figure of the new covenant, come the entirely novel dealings of God in the call of the bride for the Son here carefully and exclusively connected with the type of heaven. The bearing of this on the great mystery of the heavenly Christ and the church, His body and bride, does not need to be further insisted on now.

We have here, before pursuing the history of Isaac to the end, an episode which brings before us the birth of the two sons of Isaac and Rebecca. God had already affirmed the principle of His choice in the son of the free woman Sarah, when the child of the flesh was set aside. But there was this difference. It only in a preparatory way set out the great principle of God's sovereignty. There was a difference in the mother, if not in the father. There was a need, in the wisdom of God, that the sovereignty should be affirmed still more expressly. And so it was now; for Esau was the son of the same father and of the same mother as Jacob, and in fact they were twins. It was therefore impossible to find a closer parity between any than in these two sons of Isaac and Rebecca. Nevertheless, from the first, entirely apart from any grounds such as to determine a preference, God shows that He will be sovereign. He can show mercy to the uttermost, and He does; but He is God, and as such He reserves to Himself His right of choice. Why even a man does so; and God would be inferior to man if He did not. But He claims His choice and makes it, setting it forth in the most distinct manner, which is reasoned on, as we know, in the power of the Spirit of God, in the Epistle to the Romans, and alluded to elsewhere in the Bible. I only refer to it passingly to show how clearly it is brought out in the circumstances.

At the same time there is another thing to be weighed. The after history illustrates the two men and their posterity; for whatever may be said of the failure of Jacob, it is perfectly clear that not Jacob but Esau was profane, despising God and consequently his birthright. This is brought out in the same chapter. But the choice of God was before anything of the sort, and God made it unambiguous. I would only add one other word, that although scripture is abundantly plain that He chose him apart from anything to fix that choice, it is never said nor insinuated in any part of the word of God, that the prophet's solemn expression "Esau have I hated" was applicable from the first. The choice was true, but not the hatred. In fact, so far is it from the truth that we see the plainest facts in opposition to such a thought. In the first book of the Bible the choice of Jacob, and not Esau, is made plain; in the last book of the Bible, the prophecy of Malachi, the hatred of Esau is for the first time clearly affirmed. How admirable the word of God is in this! Let us delight first that God should have His choice; secondly, that God, far from pronouncing His hatred then, waited till there was that which manifestly deserved it — waited, as we see, to the very last. To confound two things so distinguished, to mix up the choice at the beginning with the hatred at the end, seems nothing but the narrow folly of man's mind. The truth is that all the good is on God's part, all the evil on man's. He is sovereign; but every condemned soul will himself own the absolute justice of it.

In Genesis 26, which follows, Isaac's history is resumed. Let us bear in mind that it is the account of the risen Son. Hence mark the difference when Jehovah appears to Isaac. I call your attention to it as an interesting fact, as well as an instance of the profoundly typical character of the Scriptures. He appears as Almighty God (El-Shaddai) to Abraham: so He is also revealed as the Almighty to Jacob; but I am not aware that He is ever represented as formally proclaiming Himself in this way to Isaac. The reason is manifest. While surely included *in fact* like his father and son in such a revelation of El-Shaddai, Isaac has an altogether peculiar place *in the record*, not connected in the same way with the dispensations of God as either Abraham on the one hand, or Jacob on the other. Here we have God either in His own abstract majesty as Elohim, or in special relationship as Jehovah — the two forms in which God is spoken of. These are used, but not "the Almighty." Isaac indeed speaks of Him as the Almighty when he blesses Jacob; but when God appears, Scripture describes Him simply as Elohim or as Jehovah. The reason is clear: we are upon the ground where God meant us to appreciate the very peculiar dealings with him who sets forth the Bridegroom of the church. Consequently what was merely of an earthly, passing, or dispensational nature is not brought forward.

Again, when God does appear to Isaac, He says, "Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of." Isaac is always a dweller in the heavenly land. How admirably this suits the position of Christ as the risen Bridegroom will be too plain to call for further proof. "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee and will bless thee; for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father. And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven." Not a word about the sand of the sea. He is as ever exclusively connected with what is heavenly as far as the figure goes. In the case of Abraham appears the double figure: the children were to be as the stars of the sky, but also as the sands of the sea. Isaac has the peculiar place. Abraham takes in both; as we know, he is connected with that which is heavenly, but also with what is earthly. For Isaac we find the heavenly places, a relationship past resurrection as far as this could be set forth in type. But it was only the shadow, not the very image; and so alas! we find that he who was but the type denies his relationship, which Christ never does. Isaac failed like Abraham before. Unswerving fidelity is true of One only.

At the same time we have the never-failing faithfulness of God. Immediately afterwards he is blessed and blessed a hundred-fold. What is not the goodness of God? And Abimelech seeks his favour too; but Isaac remains always in the emblematic heavenly land, the type of Christ's present position.

The next chapter (Genesis 27) lets us into the sight of circumstances which searched the heart of all concerned. We see the nature which left room for the mingled character which so evidently belonged to Jacob. He was a believer; but a believer in whom flesh was little judged, and not in him only, but in Rebecca also. Between them there is much to pain; and although Isaac might not be without feebleness and fault, there was deceit in both the mother and the son. As to Esau, there was nothing of God, and consequently no ground of complaint on that score. At the same time there was positive unrighteousness, of which God never makes light in any soul. Hence we find that though the blessing was wrested fraudulently from Isaac, he is astonished to find where he had been drifting through yielding to nature; for indeed flesh wrought in Isaac, but for the time it ruled, I may say, in Rebecca and in Jacob. Shocked at himself, but restored in soul, he finds himself through his affections in danger of fighting against the purpose of God. Spite of all the faults of Rebecca and of Jacob, they at least did hold fast the word of God. On the whole it is a humiliating spectacle: God alone shines throughout it all as ever. Isaac therefore, awakened to feel whence he was fallen, affirms the certainty of the purpose of God, and pronounces in the most emphatic terms that, spite of the manner in which

Jacob had possessed himself of his blessing, he shall be blessed of God.

In Genesis 28 we have Jacob called by Isaac, and sent to Padan-Aram for a wife, with El-Shaddai's blessing on him. Now the governmental dealings of God begin to appear, and Jacob is the standing type of the people of God not walking in communion with God like Abraham, and consequently the first type of a pilgrim and of a worshipper too; not as the son, risen from the dead and in the heavenly land, but an outcast; forced to be, if a pilgrim, a pilgrim against his will in the government of God, and consequently the most apt possible type of Israel, for unfaithfulness expelled from their own land, passing under corrective discipline, but blessed at last with rest and joy here below. This is what Jacob represents — none more suitable to be such a type, as we shall find by the very name which God gives him. So "Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban, thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee."

Jacob accordingly goes out on his lonely way, and went to Padan-aram, and there it is that he dreams; and he beheld standing above the ladder Jehovah, who proclaims Himself to Jacob as the God of his fathers. "I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth." Mark again the consistency of the word of God. Not a word here about the stars of the sky. Abraham had both; Isaac had the heavenly part alone, and Jacob the earthly alone. And He says, "Behold I am with thee, I 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." Jacob awakes; but, as is always the case when a person is simply under the government of God without being founded in His grace, there is alarm. The presence of God is more or less an object of dread to the soul, as indeed he expressed it. "He was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Many of us may be astonished to think of such a conjunction, that the house of God should be associated with terror. But so it must always be where the heart is not established in grace; and Jacob's heart was far from it. He was the object of grace, but in no way established in grace. Nevertheless there is no doubt of God's grace towards him, little as he might as yet appreciate its fulness. Jacob then rises up early, and takes the stone that he had put for his pillow, and sets it up, calling the name of the place Bethel, and vowing a vow; for all here is of a Jewish savour: — "If God\* will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on" — his demands were by no means large, legalism is of necessity contracted — "so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall Jehovah be my God; and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." He was in no way a man delivered from self or from the earth. It is as nearly as possible the picture of a man under law. How appropriate, therefore, for the type of the Jew driven out through his own fault, but under the mighty hand of God for government, but for good in His mercy at the end! This is precisely what Jacob himself has to prove, as we may see.

\*There is no real difficulty in understanding the propriety of the various divine names in these chapters according to the motive which governs. Thus El-Shaddai is the peculiar patriarchal name of guaranteed protector; Jehovah of special relationship for covenant blessings of Israel according to promise; but then Jehovah is Elohim in His own majesty, or He would be a merely national deity, Compare Gen. 17, where it is expressly Jehovah that appears and calls Himself El-Shaddai, yet immediately after talks as *Elohim* with Abram. See also Gen. 22: 1, 8, 9, 12, and 11, 14, 15, 16, where the various document-system is manifestly disproved. Esau in Gen. 27, has neither covenant nor

divine name of any sort.

Thus he goes on his journey; and among the children of the east ensues a characteristic scene, which need not be entered into in a detailed manner — the providential introduction to his experiences with Laban and his family. (Genesis 29)

Now experiences are admirable in their own way as a school for the heart in the soul's finding its way to God; but experiences completely melt away in the presence of God. This and the grace known there in Him who died and rose again alone can give fully either the end of self or communion with God. Experiences may be needed and wholesome; but they are chiefly wholesome as a part of the road while on our way to Him. Before what God is to us in Christ they disappear — I do not mean the results, but the processes. So we shall find it was with Jacob. He is a man evidently cared for by God. He shows us much that was exceeding sweet and lovely. No doubt he had often to suffer from Laban's deceit; but was there not a memorial here of the deceit in which he had acted himself? He is deceived about his wife, deceived about his wages, deceived about everything; but how had he dealt with his father, not to speak of his brother? Deceit must meet with deceit under the retributive hands of God. Wonder not overmuch at the tale of Jacob; but bless with all your heart the God who shows Himself caring for His servant, and, after he had suffered awhile, giving him although slowly yet surely to prosper. At his setting out he was by no means a young man, being somewhere about eighty years of age when he reached Laban. There he receives, not willingly, two wives instead of one. Leah he did not want, Rachel he did. But in his chequered course, as we know, their maids were given as concubines, with many a child and many a sorrow.\* And spite of Laban abundance was his in herds and flocks. (Gen. 30)

\*Can it be doubted that this part of Genesis is typical like what goes before and after? Surely Jacob's love for Rachel first, for whom nevertheless he must wait and fulfil the week afresh after Leah had been given him, is not without evident bearing on the Lord's relation to Israel first loved, for whom meanwhile the slighted Gentile has been substituted with rich results in His grace. Rachel is at length remembered by God, who takes away her reproach by adding to her a son (Joseph) — type of One glorified among the Gentiles and delivering His Jewish brethren after suffering among both Jews and Gentiles. So her history closes in the death of her Benoni and Jacob's Benjamin son of the mother's sorrow and of the father's right hand, as the people of God will prove in the end. I take this opportunity of noticing the beauty of Scripture in the use of the divine names in these chapters, the best answer to the superficial folly which attributes them to different writers and documents. In the case of Leah (Gen. 29), who was hated compared with Rachel, Jehovah as such interposed with His special regard to her sorrow, and this was expressed in the name of her first-born son, Reuben; and His hearing in her second, Simeon. At Levi's birth she does not go farther than the hope of her husband's being joined to her; but Jehovah has praise when she bore Judah. In Rachel's case (Gen. 30) there is no such expression at first of confidence in Jehovah's compassionate interest; but in disappointment of heart she gives Jacob her maid; and, when Dan was born, she accepts it as the judgment of Elohim, and at Naphtali's birth speaks of His wrestlings. Leah, following her example, gains through Zilpah Gad and Asher, but makes no acknowledgment of the divine name in either form. After this comes the incident of using mandrakes for hire, when Elohim acts for Leah in sovereign power and she owns Him as such when Issachar was born, and in Zebulun on the pledge of her husband's dwelling with her. In the same power did Elohim remember Rachel, who not only confesses that the God of creation had taken away her reproach, but calls her son Joseph saying, Jehovah shall add to me another son. This is the more striking because it is an instance of the combined use of these names admirably illustrating both sides of the truth, and irreconcilable with the

double-document hypothesis. Rachel rose from the thought of His power to the recognition of His ways with His own. And even Laban (verse 39) is obliged to confess that Jacob enjoyed the blessing of One who was in special relationship with him — of Jehovah.

At length, when Laban's sons murmur and their father's countenance was not toward Jacob as before, Jehovah bids him return to the land of his fathers. (Genesis 31: 3) His mind is at once made up. He gives a touching explanation to Rachel and Leah, and sets out secretly; for there was no such confidence in God with a pure conscience as divested himself of fear. There was the unseen hand of God; but the power and the honour of God could not be righteously found in such a course. Grace would give these another day: they could not rightly be as yet. He steals away therefore timidly, pursued as if he were a thief by his father-in-law, whom however God takes gravely in hand, coming to him in a dream by night. The Syrian (Laban) is warned to beware what he says or does to Jacob, and even obliged to confess it himself. While Jacob lays his remonstrance before him, Laban after all cannot but seek his aid, and enters into a special covenant with the very man he had overtaken in his flight.

After this we find the angels of God meeting Jacob. (Genesis 32) "And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host." They were the witnesses of the full providential care of God; but no such intervention can ever set the heats or conscience right with God. This was proved immediately afterwards. The messengers whom Jacob sent to propitiate Esau returned, saying, that the dreaded chief of Seir was coming to meet him with four hundred men. God's host then gave no comfort to Jacob against the host of Esau. He is alarmed more than ever. He sets to work in his own way. He makes his plan—and then he makes his prayer; but after all he is not at ease. He devised with considerable skill; feeble was his faith, and where even generous self-sacrificing love for the family? All bears the stamp of anxiety as well as address, if not craft. This was his natural character; for though eminently a man of God, still it is not God who is prominent to his eyes, and leant on, but his own human resources. Ill at ease, he sends over — I am sorry to say — himself last of all! That which he valued most came latest. Jacob was not among the first! His flocks, herds and camels set first, wives and children next, Jacob last. The various bands in order were meant to serve as a breakwater between the offended brother Esau and trembling Jacob. But at length, when all were taken or sent over the ford Jabbok, comes another whom Jacob did not expect when left alone. A man struggled with him that night till break of day.

But it is well to remark, though it has been often noticed, that it is not set forth to the honour of Jacob that he wrestled with the man, for it was rather the man, or God Himself, who wrestled with him. There was still not a little in him with which God had a controversy for Jacob's good, not without his humiliation. In short God was dealing with and putting down His servant's dependence on his own strength, devices, and resources in any and every way. Hence, as the symbol of this, what was touched and shrank was the known sign of man's strength. The sinew of: the thigh was caused to wither away. But the very hand which touched the seat of natural strength imparted a strength from above; and Jacob on this occasion has a new name given to him. "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." He asked the name of God, but this could not, consistently with His character, be revealed yet. God keeps His name in secret now. Jacob struggles all night that he might be blessed. It was no question of peaceful fellowship, still less of earnest intercession for others. It was indeed most significant of divine mercy; but of God's mercy in the dark, where there could not yet be communion. Thus nothing could more truly answer to the state of Jacob. He was no doubt strengthened of God, but it was compassionate mercy strengthening him to profit by a needful and permanent putting down of all his own strength —

love that must wither it up, but would nevertheless sustain himself.

In the next chapter (Genesis 33) the meeting takes place. Esau receives him with every appearance of generous affection, refusing but at length receiving his gifts. At the same time Jacob proves that his confidence was far from being restored. He is uneasy at the presence of Esau: his conscience was not good. Esau proffers his protection. There was nothing farther from the desire of Jacob. Is it too much to say that the excuse was not thoroughly truthful? Can one believe that Jacob meant to visit him at mount Seir? Certain it is that, directly Esau's back is turned, he goes another way. "He journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth And Jacob came to Shalem,\* a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram; and pitched his tent before the city. And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent.... And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel." Thus, it seems to me evident, that although there was unquestionably progress in Jacob's soul, he was far from being brought to that which we find in Abraham from the very beginning. He is still wandering — still under corrective government. All that which hindered the enjoyment of grace was not yet removed. There was earthliness of mind enough to quit the pilgrim's tent and build a house, as well as to buy a piece of ground. What did he want it for? He erected no doubt an altar. There is progress unquestionably; but he does not in this go beyond the thought of God as connected with himself. It was in no way the homage of one who regarded God according to His own being and majesty. Now there never can be the spirit of worship till we delight in God for what He is Himself, not merely for what He has been to you or me. I grant you that it is all right to feel what He has done for us; but it is rather the preparation for worship, or at most worship in its most elementary form. It is more thanksgiving than the proper adoration of God, and in fact a circumscribing of God to our own circumstances. I admit fully that the grace of God does minister to our wants; but then it is to raise us above them and the sense of them, in order that we may freely and fully enjoy what God is, and not merely feel what He has done for us. Jacob had not reached that yet; for him God the God of Israel is all he can say. Shechem is not Bethel.

\*Probably, instead of "to Shalem," etc., we should translate it "in peace to," etc. Compare Gen. 28: 21, Gen. 34: 21.

This conclusion, as to the then state of Jacob, seems to be confirmed by the chapter which follows. The settling down in the city ere long became a sorrowful story for Jacob, who proved it in one that was near and dear to him. It was the occasion of his daughter Dinah's shame, as well as of her brother's cruel and deceitful vengeance, that brought trouble on Jacob, and caused him to stink among the inhabitants of the land, as Jacob so sorely confessed. (Gen. 34)

Once more God said to Jacob, Arise; but now it is to "go 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." Here he is not met by a host of angels, nor does the mysterious stranger wrestle in the darkness of the night, crippling him in the might of nature, and making the weak to be strong. It is a more open call in Genesis 35.

Now it is singular to hear, that Jacob says to his household and all that are with him, "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments." "Strange gods"? Yes, there they were, and he knew it all along, but he never before felt the seriousness of it till summoned to go to Bethel. His conscience is now awake to what previously made no impression on his mind. We easily forget what our bears does not judge as it is before God; but as He knows how to rouse the conscience adequately, so it is a sorrowful thing on the other hand when a saint forgets what ought to

be the permanent object of his soul, still more solemn when his conscience is not sensitive to that which utterly sullies the glory of God. Manifestly it was the case with Jacob; but now the presence of God, not providential power, not disciplinary dealings with him, but the call to Bethel, brings light into his soul, and the false gods must be put away. Jacob will have the household in unison with an altar at Bethel. "Be clean, and change your garments, and go to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." What in his ways can be conceived more blessed than the patient faithfulness of God? Now at length Jacob is alive to his responsibility toward God. "And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. And they journeyed."

But was it a flight now? "And the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob." All was changed from this point. "So Jacob came to Luz which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel. And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el (the God of Bethel)." There Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried. There God appeared again; and while He repeats the name of Israel instead of Jacob, He reveals Himself as God Almighty, El-Shaddai. "And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and He called his name Israel,"\* — blotting out in one sense all the history from the day when that name was first conferred on him. It is a sorrowful reflection for the heart when time past is, so to speak, time lost. It is not that God cannot turn it to purpose when grace is at work, but there must be merited self-reproach as we may too well know.

\*Dr. Davidson (Introd. O. T. pp. 65, 66), in his arguments against unity of authorship on the score of diversities, confusedness, and contradictions, alleges this: "In like manner Jacob's name was changed to *Israel*, when he wrestled with a supernatural being in human form all night before he met his brother Esau, on his return from Mesopotamia (Gen. 32: 28); whereas according to Gen. 35: 10 he received the name on another occasion at Bethel, not Penuel, as the first passage states. It is a mere subterfuge to assert that, because no reason is assigned for the change of name in 35: 10, it relates no more than a solemn confirmation of what had been done already. A *reason* for the change does not necessarily accompany its *record*. The words are explicit: 'And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob; thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name.' If his name were Israel before, the words plainly assert the contrary. The passages are junior Elohist, and Elohist respectively. An analogous example is *Bethel*, formerly Luz, which was so named by Jacob on his journey to Mesopotamia (Gen. 28: 19, Gen. 30: 13), but according to Gen. 35: 15, on his return. Identical names of places are not imposed twice." It is evident that the rationalist approaches Scripture, not as a believer and learner, but as a judge, and that his criticism is captious, to say nothing of irreverence. There is nothing to hinder a repetition in giving names either to persons or places. Let those who are affected by such petty cavils weigh our Lord's giving Simon the name of Peter twice (John 1: 42, Matt. 16: 18), and the second time with yet more emphasis than the first. It is the more absurd in the case of Jacob changed to Israel and then confirmed, because the usual plea of Jehovah and Elohim does not apply here. In both cases it is Elohim. Hence the need of inventing a junior Elohist in order to maintain their illusion. Again, the first verse of Gen. 35. furnishes the most direct and conclusive proof that identical names of places may be imposed twice, for God is represented on this second occasion as bidding Jacob go up to *Bethel* (*not* Luz) before he calls the place for the second time Bethel. What is the value of Dr. D.'s denial of what Scripture positively affirms?

Not only then does Jacob receive afresh his new name, but God shrouds His name no longer in secrecy. Now he has not to ask, "What is thy name?" any more than He who wrestled once had to ask

him wherefore he asked it. He was not then in the condition to profit by that name; nor was it consistent with God's own honour that He should make it known. Now God can reveal Himself to His servant, saying, "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins. And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land." And not unlike what was said of Abraham, so on an occasion of singular nearness it is said of Jacob, — great honour for one after such an experience, — that "God went up from him in the place where he talked with him." If it was a glorious moment in Abraham's history, it was especially gracious in God's ways with Jacob. "And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone, and he poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon, and called the name of the place where God spake with him Beth-el." Afterwards comes the passing away of Rachel at a moment of deep interest already noticed, — the birth of her second son, and her burial near Bethlehem. And on the journey there the aged father has a fresh sorrow and shame in the foul sin of his first-born.

Then follows the genealogy of Jacob's sons; and the long-delayed last sight of Isaac at Hebron, where he dies at the age of 180 years, and was buried by his sons Esau and Jacob.

But there is another genealogy (Gen. 36), and strikingly introduced in this place. The Edomite interrupts the course of the line of God's dealings. We discern at once what remarkable maturity there was here. It is always so — first that which is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual. Even then we find a rapid development of power in the family of Esau. They were all great people, to be sure — duke this and duke that, to the end of the chapter — even kings, as we are told, reigned before there were any such in Israel. I have no doubt that this is given us as an important element to mark how rapidly what is not of God shoots up. Growth according to God is slower, but then it is more permanent.

Genesis 37 introduces to us a new and altogether different range of events — the very attractive account of Joseph. It is not now a fugitive from the land under the righteous hand of God, but a sufferer who is going to be exalted in due time. These are the two main outlines of Joseph's history — a more than usually meet type of Christ, in that he shone above all his fellows for unsullied integrity of heart under the several trials. There is no patriarch on whom the Spirit of God dwells with greater delight; and among those who preceded Christ our Lord it may be questioned where one can find such a sufferer. And his suffering too was not merely outside: he suffered quite as keenly from his brethren. Wherever he lived, in Palestine or in Egypt, he was a sufferer, and this in astonishing grace, never higher morally than when lying under the basest reproach. He was one who had true understanding; and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. Such was Joseph's great distinctive trait. Thus we find it brings him, first of all, into collision with his father's house. Jacob indeed felt very differently. It was impossible for one that valued holiness to bring a good report of his brethren. But his father loved him, and when his brethren saw their father's estimate of him, they could so much the less endure Joseph. "They hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him." The wisdom that follows fidelity — and I believe it is always so as a rule — is furnished and exercised in the communications of God; for if He forms a heart for what is of Himself, He gives the supply of what it craves. He ministers to Joseph dreams that shew the gracious purposes that were before Himself. For first the sheaves pay obeisance, and he with the utmost simplicity of heart tells all to his brethren; for he never thought of himself, and therefore could speak with candour. But they with instinctive dislike and jealousy of what gave glory to their brother did not fail to make the detested application of his dreams. Even the father finds it trying, much as he loved him; for Joseph has another dream, in which the sun and moon, as well as eleven stars, made obeisance to him; and Jacob felt but observed the saying.

The story proceeds: Joseph is sent to see the peace of his brethren, follows them to Dothan, and there the last errand of love brings out their deepest hatred. They determine to get rid of him. They will have this dreamer no more. Reuben sets himself against their murderous intention; but the result is that at Judah's proposal he is cast into the pit, given up for death, yet taken out of it and sold to the Midianites — a wonderful type of a greater than Joseph. It was bad to sell him for twenty pieces of silver, but this was not the full extent of the wrong; for the same cruel hearts which thus disposed of a holy and loving brother did not scruple to inflict the deadliest wound on their aged father. Sin against the brother, and sin against the father — such is the sorrowful conclusion of this chapter of Joseph's story.

Here again, we have another interruption; but never allow for a moment that anything is not perfect in the word of God. It is right that we should see what the leader in this wickedness was; it is well that we should know what the character and conduct of Judah was, whom we afterwards see the object of wondrous counsels on God's part. The answer lies in the shameful account of Judah, his sons, and his daughter-in-law, and himself. (Gen. 38) Yet of that very line was He born, with her name specified too, which points to the most painfully humiliating tale that we find perhaps anywhere in the book of Genesis. But what humiliation was He not willing to undergo who had love as well as glory incomparably greater than Joseph's!

In Genesis 39 Joseph is seen in the land of Egypt, for there the Midianites sold him. He is in slavery, first of all in the house of Potiphar, captain of the guard; but "Jehovah was with Joseph; and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian." Here again he comes into suffering; here again most unworthily is he misrepresented and maligned, and hastily cast into the dungeon. But Jehovah was with Joseph in the prison, just as much as in Potiphar's house. In verse 2, it is written, He was with Joseph; in verse 21, He was with Joseph, "and showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand." It mattered little where he was, since Jehovah was with him. What a difference it makes when God is with us — God too in His special known relationship, which is implied in the use of "Jehovah" here as everywhere. "He looked not to anything that was under his hand, because Jehovah was with him; and that which he did Jehovah made it to prosper."

But God works for Joseph, and in the prison puts him in contact with the chief butler and the chief baker of the king of Egypt. (Gen. 40) They too have their dreams to tell. Joseph willingly listens, and interprets according to the wisdom of God that was given him. His interpretation was soon verified. With the remarkable prudence which marks his character, he had begged not to be forgotten. But "his soul came into iron" a little longer. The word of Jehovah tried him. God would work in His own way. If the chief butler forgot Joseph in his prosperity, God did not.

Pharaoh now had a dream; but there was none to interpret. (Gen. 41) It was two years after — a long while to wait, especially in a dungeon; but the chief butler, remembering his faults, and confessing them, tells his master of the young Hebrew in the prison, servant to the captain of the guard, who had interpreted so truly.

"Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon," and presented him duly before the king. His interpretation carried its own light and evidence along with it; and Pharaoh recognized the wisdom of God not only in this but also in the counsel that Joseph gave. And what wiser man than Joseph could take in hand the critical case of Egypt, to husband its resources during the seven years of plenty, and to administer the stores during the seven years of famine that would surely follow? So the king felt at once, and his servants too in spite of the usual jealousy of a

court. Joseph was the man to carry out what he had seen beforehand from God; and Joseph accordingly becomes ruler next to Pharaoh over all the land of Egypt.

"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth handfuls. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number. And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction. And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands."

Then comes another wonderful working of God. The sheaves had not yet stood and bowed; the sun, moon, and stars had not paid obeisance yet; but all was to follow not long after. The famine pressed upon the land where Jacob sojourned, while Joseph was in Egypt with a new family, children of the bride that was given him by the king, evidently corresponding with the place of Christ cast out by Israel, sold by the Gentiles, but exalted in a new place and glory altogether, where He too can say during His rejection and separation from Israel, "Behold I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me." Nothing can be more transparent than the application of the type.

But there is more in the type than that we have just seen. The brethren that remained with Israel have yet to be accounted for; and the pressure of the famine is upon them. It is so with Israel now, — a famine indeed, and in the deepest sense. But, ten of the brethren come down to buy corn in Egypt; and there it is that God works marvellously by Joseph. He recognizes his brethren. His heart is towards them when they are altogether ignorant who he was that enjoyed the glory of Egypt. The result is that Joseph puts in execution a most solemn searching of the heart and conscience of his brethren. It is exactly what the Lord from a better glory will do ere long with His Jewish brethren. He is now outside in a new position quite unlooked for by them: they know Him not. But He too will cause the pinch of famine to press upon them. He too will work in their hearts in consequence, that He may be made righteously known to them in due time. (Gen. 42)

We find, accordingly, that first of all one of the brethren is taken, Simeon; and the charge is given that, above all, Benjamin should be brought down. There can be no restoration, no

reconciliation, relief it is true, but no deliverance for Israel till Joseph and Benjamin are united. He that was separated from his brethren, but now in glory, must have the son of his father's right hand. It is Christ rejected but exalted on high, and taking the character also of the man of power for dealing with the earth. Such is the meaning of the combined types of Jacob's sons, Joseph and Benjamin. Christ has nothing to do with the latter yet; He admirably answers to the type of Joseph, but not yet of Benjamin. As long as He is simply filling up the type of Joseph, there is no knowledge of Himself on the part of his brethren. Hence, therefore, this became the great question how to bring down Benjamin — how to put him into connection with Joseph. But the truth is, there was another moral necessity which must be met — how to get their hearts and their consciences set right all round. This part of the beautiful tale is typical of the dealings of the Lord Jesus, long severed and exalted in another sphere, — first with the remnant, and then with the whole house of Israel. There are various portions. We have Reuben and Simeon; and then others come forward, — Judah more particularly at the close, and Benjamin.

The famine still pressing (Genesis 43), Jacob sorely against his will is obliged to part with Benjamin; and here it is that we find affections altogether unheard of before in the brethren of Joseph. We might have thought them incapable of anything that was good; and it is very evident that their hearts were now strewn to be under a most mighty power which forced them anew, as far as, of course, the type was concerned. More particularly we see how the very ones who had so shamefully failed are now distinctly brought into communion with God's mind about their ways. Reuben is quick to feel, recalls the truth as far as he knew it about Joseph, and shows right feelings towards his father. Yet we know what he had been. Judah is even more prominent, and clearly knew yet deeper searchings of the heart, and particularly too in the way of right affections about both their father and their brother. These, as is plain, were just the points in which they had broken down before. On these they must be divinely corrected now; and so they were.

The issue of all is this, — that at last Judah and his brethren return to Joseph's house. (Genesis 44) Judah speaks. Here indeed we have a most earnest pleading, and full of touching affection. "O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?" There we have evidently a heart that has been brought right, exactly where the sin lay. "We said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man." Ah, there was no lacerating of his heart now! "And a child of his old age, a little one." How little they thought of that once! "And his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him." Do we not feel how far the hearts of all his brethren were from hating Joseph now because of Jacob's love to him! "And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down. If our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons, and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces, and I saw him not since; and if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us, seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life, it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die; and thy servants shall bring down the grey hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave; for thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto

thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father." The moral restoration was complete.

In the following chapter follows the unveiling of the typical stranger, the glorified man, to his brethren, who up to this were wholly ignorant of him. "Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me; and there stood no man with him while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud; and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard; and Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph. Doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you; and they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years in the which there shall be neither earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father." (Gen. 45: 1-9) And so they do. Benjamin then is embraced by Joseph; and now there is no let to the accomplishment of the purpose of God for the restoration of Israel — for this complete blessing where the reality comes under Christ and the new covenant.

Jacob comes down at length, and on his way God speaks to Israel "in the visions of the night; and said, Jacob, Jacob; and he said, Here am I. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes." (Gen. 46: 2-4)

Then after the genealogies of the chapter,\* we have the meeting between Jacob and Joseph. Not this only; for some of Joseph's brethren are presented to Pharaoh; and Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. (Genesis 47) It was a fine sight spiritually (the more so, because unconsciously, without a definite thought, I presume, on his own part) that "the less is blessed of the greater." But so it is. A poor pilgrim blesses the monarch of the mightiest realm of that day; but the greatest of earth is little in comparison with the blessed of God. Jacob now is not merely blessed, but a blesser. He knows God well enough to be assured that nothing Pharaoh teas could really enrich him, and that there is very much which God could give, on which Jacob could count from God even for Pharaoh.

\*It may be worth while to observe in this and other genealogies not often the object of infidel attack, that the differences between Genesis, Numbers' and Chronicles in their form are due to the motive for their introduction in each particular connection ; that the difficulties clearly spring from the design, in no way from error in the writer, but in fact because of ignorance in ouch readers as misapprehend them; and that both the difference and the difficulties are the strongest evidence of their truth and inspired character, for nothing would have been easier than to have assimilated their various forms and to have eliminated that which sounds strange to western ears.

This table enumerates 32 of Leah, 16 of Zilpah, 11 of Rachel, 7 of Bilhah=66. But the head also goes with his house; and so with the larger list of Leah's children we see Jacob counted (verse 8), which is confirmed by the fact of 33 attributed to Leah, whereas no more than 32 literally are named,

reckoning Dinah, and excluding Er and Onan who died in Canaan as we are expressly told. Objectors have failed to take into account the peculiarity in the mention of Hezron and Hamul in verse 12. It is merely said (and said only in their case) that the sons of Pharez "were" Hezron and Hamul, not that they were born in Canaan, where those had died for whom they were substitutes; next, that the Hebrew of verse 26 does not go so far as to say with the Authorised Version, "came *with Jacob* into Egypt," but *of, i.e.* belonging to, Jacob. It should be borne in mind that there is no reason, but rather the contrary from scriptural usage for construing "at that time," of an isolated point of time, but rather of a general period, consisting as here of a number of events, the last and not the first of which might synchronize with the event recorded just before. It seems clear that Stephen (Acts 7: 14) cites the LXX. where 76 are given, as the Greek version (Gen. 46: 20) adds five sons and grandsons of Manasseh and Ephraim. Is it not monstrous for a man professing Christianity and ostensibly in the position of bishop, to neglect elements so necessary to a judgment of the question, and to pronounce the Biblical account "certainly incredible," mainly on the assumption that Pharez's sons were born in Canaan, which is nowhere said but rather room left for the inference that it was not so in the exceptional form of Gen. 46: 12? Yet after citing this verse we are told, "It appears to me certain (!) that the writer here means to say that Hezron and Hamul were *born in the land of Canaan.*" Is scepticism only certain that its own dreams are true, and that scripture is false? There was a natural and weighty motive for selecting two grandsons of Judah, though no other of Jacob's great-grandsons are mentioned in the list. For they only were substitutional, as the very verse in which they occur implies. And it was of the deeper interest too, as one of them (Hezron) stands in the direct line of the Messiah, which was, as it appears to me, one chief reason for introducing the details of Judah's history and its shame in Gen 38.. It is vain to quote Num. 3: 17 to set aside the peculiar force of the allusion to the sons of Pharez in Gen. 46: 12, with which there is no real analogy.

In Genesis 48 tidings of Jacob's sickness brings Joseph and his two sons to the bed of the patriarch. The closing scene of Jacob approaches, and I scarcely know a more affecting thing in the Bible. It is a thorough moral restoration. Not merely is there that which typifies it for Israel by and by, but Jacob's own soul is as it never was before. There is no such bright moment in his past life as in the circumstances of his death-bed. I grant that so it ought to be in a believer; and that it is really so in fact where the soul rests simply on the Lord. But whatever we may see in some instances and fear in others, in Jacob's case the light of God's presence was evident. It is striking that here was the only occasion on which the brightness of Joseph's vision was not so apparent. All flesh is grass. The believer is exposed to any evil when he ceases to be dependent, or yields to his own thoughts which are not of faith. Jesus is the only "Faithful Witness." Failure is found in the most blessed servant of God. So fact, so scripture teaches. Joseph, ignorant of the purpose of God about his sons, allows his natural desires to govern him, and arranges the elder before the right hand of his dying father, the younger before his left. So Joseph would have had it; but not so Jacob. His eyes were dim with age, but he was in this clearer-sighted than Joseph after all. There never was a man who saw more brightly than Joseph; but Jacob, dying, sees the future with steadier and fuller gaze than the most famous interpreter of dreams and visions since the world began.

And what thoughts and feelings must have rushed through the old man's heart as he looked back on his own early days! Did he fail to discern then how easily God could have crossed the hands of his father Isaac against his own will? Certainly God would have infallibly maintained His own truth; and as He had promised the better blessing to Jacob, not to Esau, so, spite of Esau and the fruits of his success in hunting, he would have proved that it was not to him that willed like Isaac, nor to him that ran like Esau. All turns on God, who shows mercy and keeps His word.

On this occasion, then, Jacob pronounces the blessing — the superior blessing — on the younger of the two boys; and this too in terms which one may safely say, were equal to so extraordinary a conjuncture, — in terms which none but the Spirit of God could have enabled any mouth to utter.

In Genesis 49 we find the general prophetic blessing of Jacob's sons. Here one may convey the scope without ceasing to be brief. As the blessings allude to the history of the twelve heads of the nation, so naturally we have the future that awaits the tribes of Israel. But as this is a matter of tolerably wide-spread knowledge amongst Christians, there is no need for much to be said about it.

Reuben is the starting-point, and alas! it is, like man always, corruption. It was the first mark of evil in the creature. The second is no better, — rather worse it may be in some respects, — violence. Simeon and Levi were as remarkable for the latter, as Reuben for the former — a sorrowful vision for Jacob's heart — to feel that this not only had been but was going to be; for undoubtedly he knew, as he says, that what he then uttered would sweep onward and befall the people "in the last days." This did not hinder his beginning with the history of Israel from his own days. Corruption and violence, as they had been the two fatal characteristics of his three eldest sons, so would stamp the people in their early history. Israel under law broke the law, and was ever leaving Jehovah for Baalim; yet the sons would be no better, rather worse, than the father; but the grace of God would interfere for the generations to come as it had for their father Jacob, and the last day would be bright for them as in truth for him.

Then Judah comes before us. It might be thought, that surely there will be full blessing now. "Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? 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.\* Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon."

\*The real difficulty in Gen. 49: 10 is neither so much the unusual application of the word Shiloh, nor doctrinal zeal, as the desire to get rid of a prophecy. Unbelief sets out with the foregone conclusion that there is and can be no such thing. Hence the effort to destroy its only just and worthy sense. "The Deity (says Dr. D., *Introd. O. T. i.* 198) did not see fit, as far as we can judge, to impart to any man like Jacob the foreknowledge of future and distant events. Had He done so, He would not have left him in darkness respecting the immortality of the soul (!) and a future state of rewards and punishments (!) He would not have left him to speak on his deathbed, like an Arab chief, of no higher blessings to his sons than rapine and murder, without the least reference to another and better state of existence on which he believed he should enter, and in relation to which he might counsel his sons to act continually. The true way of dealing with the prophecy is simply to ascertain by internal evidence the time in which it was written, on the only tenable and philosophical ground of its having been put into the mouth of the dying patriarch by a succeeding writer. It has the form of a prediction; but it is a *vaticinium post eventum*. We believe that the time of the prophetic lyric falls under the kings. The tribes are referred to as dwelling in the localities which they obtained in Joshua's time. The announcement respecting Judah's pre-eminence brings down the composition much later than Joshua, since he is represented as taking the leadership of the tribes in subduing the neighbouring nations. We explain the tenth verse in such a manner as to imply that David was king over the tribes, and had humbled their enemies." The proper translation according to this sceptic is:

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,  
Nor the staff of power from between his feet,  
Until he come to Shiloh,  
And to him the obedience of the peoples be"

But, first, the ruling position of Judah was not *till* but *after* he came to Shiloh. That any one, therefore, during the kings would falsify the events in a pretended prophecy put into dying Jacob's lips is too much for the credulity of any one but a rationalist. Secondly, one who speaks of others so scornfully as this writer ought not to have exposed himself to the charge of such ignorance as confounding "the peoples" or nations with the people or tribes of Israel. I believe, therefore, with the amplest authority in Hebrew, that as the language admits of our taking Shiloh as the subject, not object, so the sense in the context demands that we render it "until Shiloh (i.e. Peace, or the Man of Peace' the Messiah) come."

Yes, Jacob speaks of Shiloh. But Shiloh was presented to the responsibility of the Jew first; and consequently all seemed to break down, and in one sense all really did. "To him shall the gathering of the peoples be;" and so certainly it will be, but not yet. Shiloh came; but Israel were not ready, and refused Him. Consequently the gathering (or the obedience) of the peoples, however sure, is yet in the future. The counsel of God seemed to be abortive, but was really established in the blood of the cross, which unbelief deems its ruin. It is postponed, not lost.

Zebulun gives us the next picture of the history of Israel. Now that they have had Shiloh presented but have refused Him, the Jews find their comforts in intercourse with the Gentiles. This is what they do now — seeking to make themselves happy, when, if they weigh their own prophets, they must suspect fatal error somewhere in their history. They have lost their Messiah, and they court the world. "Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for a haven of ships, and his border shall be unto Zidon."

The consequence is that the Jews sink under the burden, falling completely under the influence of the nations. This is shown by Issachar — "a strong ass crouching down between two burdens."

Then we come to the crisis of sorrows for the Jew. In Dan we hear of that which is far more dreadful than burdens inflicted by the Gentiles, and their own subjection, instead of cleaving to their proper and distinctive hopes. In the case of Dan there is set forth the power of Satan (ver. 17). "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." We see here the enemy in the serpent that bites, and the consequent disaster to the horseman. It is the moment of total ruin among the Jews, but exactly the point of change for blessing. It is then accordingly we hear the cry coming forth, — "I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah." It is the sudden change from the energy of Satan to the heart looking up and out to Jehovah Himself.

From that point all is changed. "Gad, a troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome at the last." Now we have victory on the side of Israel.

This is not all. There is abundance too. "Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties."

Again, there will be liberty unknown under law, — impossible when merely dealt with under the governing hand of God because of their faults. "Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words." What a difference from him who was bearing like an ass two burdens!

But, more than that, we have Joseph. Now we have the glory in connection with Israel; and finally power in the earth: Joseph and Benjamin are now as it were found together. What was realised in the facts of the history at last terminates in the blessedness — the predicted blessedness — of Israel.

The last chapter (Genesis 50) gives us the conclusion of the book, the burial of Jacob, the reappearance of his sons left with Joseph, and at last Joseph's own death, as lovely as had been his life. He who stood on the highest pinnacle in the land next to the throne, type of Him who will hold the kingdom unto the glory of God the Father, — that single-eyed saint now breathes forth his soul to God. "By faith Joseph when he died made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones." His heart is out of the scene where it enjoyed but a transient and at best typical glory. In hope he goes onward to that which would be lasting and true unto God's glory, when Israel should be in Emmanuel's land, and he himself be in a yet better condition — even resurrection. He had been exalted in Egypt, but he solemnly took an oath of the sons of Israel, that when God visits them, as He surely will, they will carry up his bones hence. He had served God in Egypt, but to him it was ever the strange land. Though he dwelt there, ruled there, there had a family, and there died fuller of honours than of years, an hundred and ten years old, he feels that Egypt is not the land of God, and knows that He will redeem His people from it, and bring them into Canaan. It was beautiful fruit in its season: no change of circumstances interfered with the promises of God to the fathers. Joseph waited as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Earthly honours did not settle him down in Egypt.

On another day we may see how this oath was kept when God brought about the accomplishment of Israel's deliverance, the type of its ultimate fulfilment.