

Typical Foreshadowings in Genesis

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Preface

The World to Come, and the Divine Preparations for it.

“Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.”—Acts 15:18.

pavnta oJrivzetai tw'/ tevlei.

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Preface

The endeavour, in the following pages, is mainly to draw out the teaching of this book viewed as a whole. No doubt each of its many chapters abounds in instruction; and inasmuch as it narrates the history of the early patriarchs, one cannot but linger over the lessons suggested by each inspired sketch successively presented to us, and even by the various incidents of each several life selected by the Spirit for our study. And this, as it is the usual method of reading this book, so it is a very profitable one. Nevertheless, since each book of God's Word is one only of God's own divisions or chapters, so it is surely well for us clearly to ascertain what He would have us learn, from one such division or book of His, regarded in its entirety.

For instance, there may be a parallel designed by Him, and therefore to be reverently instituted by us between the account of God's work in the Creation and the Lord's ways with the seven representative men of this book. Thus as in Chapter I., so, too, in the body of the book, the marked twofoldedness of the realms of God—to wit, in heaven and in earth—is seen in the different call of

Enoch on the one hand, from that of Noah on the other. So likewise, also in Chapter 1, the call of God produces Light on the very first day. Yet the distinction is evident of this light from the Sun itself, whose beams of glory shone out unhindered not until the fourth day. 2 Cor. 3:18 with 4:6. For as the Spirit was, in a certain sense, in the world even before the man Christ Jesus was raised up and seated upon God's throne, yet is that Spirit fully now poured out from the Son glorified; so in the narrative, after the picture of Abraham the believer, we are instructed as to His way with Isaac the son. For it is because we are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. Or, once more, there is alike at the close of this book, as well as at the end of the account of the Creation, the Rule over all in the hands of a man. These are fainter specimens in the first chapter, of what we find to be much more distinctly foreshadowed in the course of the entire panorama of the other forty-nine chapters. They serve to premonish us that the book of Genesis should be primarily regarded as connected in its lessons from end to end.

It would seem as if the main lessons of the book are two: one is, how the Rule erst entrusted to man, but lost through sin, shall yet again, in an enlarged and universal form, be seen in Human hands. For contrast the type of Joseph with that of Adam. And secondly, we learn how God's own people shall be blessed in that coming Lord, some in the heavenlies, and some in the earthlies, and in divers concentric circles of glory, as displayed in His ways of grace with Enoch and Noah; and in his disciplinary dealings and training of Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob.

Introductory Remarks

It had been well if the first verse, and beginning of the second, had been separated from the after verses, and entitled chapter 1 and thus seen to be distinct from the narrative of God's constituting the earth as a suitable abode for His creature man. The second verse says that the earth, ere God began again to work upon it, was "tohu," rendered "without form." But Isa. 45:18, asserts that God did not create it "tohu." And in Isa. 34:11, the same two words occur precisely as we have here, "tohu" "bohu" —"confusion and emptiness" as they are translated there. Compare also Jer. 4:23, and Rev. 16:18. From these four passages we are, perhaps, led to infer that judgment had swept over this planet ere man had aught to do with it. Curiosity would here invite us to enter the realms of conjecture, encouraged by the wise and foolish guesses of geology.

But let us from this singular opening of the book learn one most valuable lesson, that the silence of Scripture is itself instructive. Let us therefore refuse to be wise beyond what is written. If it had pleased God that at present we should know more certainly of the early stages through which the earth has passed, He would have told us more. But since He has not, let us bow our heads and confess our ignorance.

It has been said that the Bible is the history of man. Were this the fact, then it would inevitably follow that the proper study of mankind is man. But this is an atheistic sentiment. Better far to say that this Book traces the pathway of God through the narrow isthmus

of time, and that it reveals His ways and His doings towards His frail, and sinful, and erring subject, man.

Now in the course of the fifty chapters of which this book is composed, seven men, each one of them a representative man, specially pass before our eyes. The account of The Lord's dealings with these seven men constitutes the substance of this book. These seven of course are, as is well known, Adam, Enoch, and Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Many other personages here appear. Still in relation to one or another of these all may be grouped. Therefore we may divide our remarks on this book by ranging what we are told under one or another of these seven, and of God's action towards each of them.

Upon this most instructive Book of Genesis—the Book of the germs or seeds of everything—writers have been wont to direct their attention principally to the first half thereof. This surely is a mistake and a defect. For the main subject of this book is progressively and regularly developed, even as the work in creation is gradually unfolded in Chapter 1. And accordingly, in the following addresses, care has been taken to trace this development, evidently designed, as well and as much from Chapter 25 to the end, as from Chapter 1 to Chapter 25.

The Lord's Way With Adam, the Type of Him That is to Come.

Genesis 1-3

At the outset it is advisable that we should state that the variation in the Name divine found in these chapters is perfectly intentional. Fools may laugh and cite this admitted variation as a proof that Moses was a mere compiler, putting his narrative together from various shreds of tradition extant in his day. We know better. We know that this is the Word of God. True, that in chapter 1 this name is Elohim, or God; that in chapters 21 and 3 it is Jehovah-Elohim; whilst in chapter 4 it is Jehovah. This change of term to an intelligent reader of Scripture ought to be at once some clue to the history itself. For Elohim is His name as Creator; Jehovah-Elohim is the revelation of that Creator in relationship with His creature; whilst His name Jehovah reveals Him still, indeed, in relationship, but no longer on the ground of mere creation. Surely we may exclaim, "How beautifully exact is all this!"

Chapter 1 shows us God preparing a home, replete with every comfort and blessing for His creature; and then, secondly, His formation of that creature, and His placing him in the home prepared for him. Even for the very cattle the earth was suitably adapted, ere those cattle were called into existence. It would be quite foreign to the subject assigned me, and to the limits within which it must be contained, to enlarge upon every verse. All that is proposed is to present a general survey of the entire book of Genesis as a whole. Let it therefore be perfectly understood that I refrain myself from

remarking upon many expressions on which one might easily dilate. Suffice it to say that the six days' work is subdivided into two threes, in which the light, the waters, and the earth, are severally addressed twice.

At length, since it is ever His wont to keep the best till the last, and to reveal His deepest purposes at the close, He forms man. There is here to be observed a consultation held about the making of man, such as there had not been of any other creature. And if it is asked, "With whom took He counsel?" a full answer is furnished us in Prov. 8 about Wisdom, who is the Word ere He had come forth; or, again, in John 1, about the Word, who is Wisdom after He had come forth from God. Also compare Gen. 1:2 and Job 33:4. And this very distinction, great and important as it evidently is, proves the difference to be vast indeed between man on the one hand, and all other animals on the other. To this add, that man was made in the image and likeness of God, and that, in chap. 2, we are told that the breath of Jehovah-Elohim was breathed into him. Then we can see the folly of those who would degrade man to the level of a brute, or maintain that his existence did not differ fundamentally from the existence of the brute. Were there no such difference, what would have become of the breath of God?

I only add here, that in verse 28 Eve is seen to be blessed in Adam ere she actually existed. This is a most exquisite picture when viewed typically. Again, even after his creation, and his being placed in Paradise, Adam was not entitled to anything that he beheld. Nothing was his until God had said to him, "Behold, I have given you," etc. Once more, remark that the first three verses of chapter 2 may be conjoined here.² Then

you hear of God at rest as to His creation work, until the sin of His creature disturbed that rest, and led Him to commence to work again, that He might rest in redemption-rest, which rest none shall ever be able to disturb, because it does not depend on any goodness of the creature, as did that former rest (chap. 1:31). It depends altogether on the finished work of the Son of God upon the cross. Here, for the first time, we encounter that precious word “finished,” a word which ever and anon crops up as the great work of God’s Son looms more and more into view. So of His Tabernacle in Exod. 40, and of His Temple in 2 Chron. 7:11, this language is used, as well as by Christ in His address to His Father in John 17; as also when about to deliver His Spirit up to His Father (John 19). And presently, when all is fulfilled of that which He has spoken to us in His Word, He will once more sound this triumphant note (Rev. 21).

Chapter 2 brings before us three things—(1) Man’s relationship to God, with the duty incumbent on him of obeying implicitly that God in everything; (2) Also woman’s relationship to man; and (3) the other creatures’ relationship to man and woman. Thus throughout God’s work there is seen to be due subordination of one above another; also of God being over all, and of man in authority, His representative on earth. But man failing to recognize God as his superior, the sceptre fell from his hands, and chaos and sin, both in the world without and within, is the consequence. Instead of the spirit ruling the soul, and the soul the body, the flesh sways the soul; and the spirit of man, whereby he may commune with God, is set aside, is dead. But Christ, the Second Man, the Lord from

Heaven, will yet in His time show on earth what beautiful rule is (1 Tim. 6:13). Only Christ's authority as Man shall extend throughout the entire universe. For study how Psalm 8 is expanded in a manner far beyond what the Psalmist ever dreamt of in its application to Him by the Holy Ghost, in Heb. 2:8, 1 Cor. 15:25, and Eph. 1:22. Then shall be seen the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending as well as descending unto the Son of Man. This is that reign of the Man of whom we read in Dan. 7. And in all this glory Christ will still act as the willing servant of God His Father.

The action of God, in bringing the animals to be named by Adam, was designed to signify the delegated ownership and authority over them entrusted to Adam (compare Isa. 43:1). But there was also another and profounder object effected likewise thereby; for thus was Adam made to feel his loneliness. So after Adam, created early on the sixth day, had been occupied in naming the animals brought to him throughout the day, then God caused a deep sleep to fall upon him. And during that night a rib was taken from his side, and "builded" (so Hebrew) into a woman. And thus was a helpmeet found for him. Likewise, whilst as to this world Christ appears to sleep, God is intent on building the Church, taken from Christ's, body. A rib is taken from his side, as if a cedar-plank had been taken from the Temple, and formed into a splendid vessel for its service. For we are members of His body—out of His flesh, and out of His bones.

The falling asleep of Adam, and then awaking, and finding his Eve, resemble the two Advents of the Lord, and prove that only from a slain and (as faith knows) a risen Christ can the Church be formed. And though she

was “buiilded “in the silence of the night, yet in the morning did she appear in maturity, and in resurrection beauty. And Adam gladly recognized her. His words, “This is now,” etc., are equivalent to “She will do.” He saw the glad results of his sleep, and he was satisfied. He was not ashamed of her, nor Christ of us. But in all this the leading thought is evidently not of Eve, but of Adam. She was necessary to him, as we in resurrection (1 Cor. 15) are the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. “The woman is for the man “(1 Cor. 11:9). God is preparing “a marriage for His Son” (Matt. 22). God’s consent to this marriage was seen in bringing Eve, and Eve’s in coming to Adam. But in the divine reality His bride is not only taken out of Him, but is presented by Himself to Himself. That is to say, Christ is not only the One from Whom she is taken, and by Whom, as she comes into existence, she is nourished and cherished, but also He is the God Who makes the presentation, as well as the Man to Whom the presentation is made.

I am aware that some deny much of this. I am also assured how futile their objection is. But, alas! more and more of truth is assailed every year. Am I told that there is only one Scripture which seems to prove that the Church is Christ’s heavenly Bride, and that even it, when examined does not assert this? My reply is, it has ever been the custom, in all the centuries of this dispensation, of those inclined to fritter away and to surrender the truth of God, to attempt to weaken the force of any part of this truth, by maintaining that only such and such. Scriptures appear to support it. The more vehement those men are against any truth, the fewer Scriptures will they admit to bear upon it. Thus, for instance, acts the Unitarian with regard to the

divinity of Christ. Such will tell you that only John 1 and Phil. 2 contain any semblance of proof thereof. How many more could simple Christians quote than these! And I am clear that several other Scriptures, besides Eph. 5, teach the bridal relationship of the Church to Christ, and that other Scriptures again assume it as a fact. But even if there was only the one in Eph. 5, this ought to be ample; and would be, to one who had no pretty novelty to support. Though the term Bride is not found in that passage, yet the sentiment is, very abundantly. It is possible to be caught by a word, so as to overlook the whole train of thought. Here the train of thought is denied, for the lack of that single word. Dare any one deny that the allusion throughout Eph. 5:23-32 is to the taking of Eve out of Adam's body, in order to the building of a suitable bride for Adam thereupon? Will you maintain that the sentiment designed to be conveyed is of the Church being the Body, and not of the Church being the Bride of the Lamb? As well might any one dream of a man formally presenting his own body to himself! But the explanation at the close, by the inspired writer himself, ought to set aside all such notions. For he says, "I speak concerning Christ and the Church." Now, were the leading thought in this Scripture, of the Bride as Christ's Body, what would be the force of the word "and?" It is utterly superfluous; in fact, in another Scripture, where the same writer does speak of Christ with His Church, as one Body, his language is remarkably varied. Then his words are, "So also is the Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). Here, you observe, there is no "and" "added. For the two are assumed as one. But in Ephesians there is this "and," for the one is assumed to be two. I mean, in the one Scripture (1 Cor. 12), it is taught that the twain are one; and in the other (Eph. 5),

that the one is twain. The fact is, these two connected truths were designed to be counter truths. For the one reveals rather the grandeur of the Church's position; the other, her subordination and His affection. The one places her on the throne with Christ; the other witnesses her as the leading, and yet the humblest, worshipper at His feet. Take away either truth, and you mar much the effect of the whole. How can you gladly bend before Him, if you only see your oneness with Him? How can you appreciate your calling, your position, if only at His feet you are prostrate? Revelation 5 pictures to us the Church in both her proper attitudes. Never there is she seen standing; at one time she is sitting by Him, at another worshipping before Him. As some old writer has quaintly said, "Eve was taken not from the head of Adam, that she might demean herself as lord; nor yet from his feet, as if she was to be trampled under foot; but from his side, that she might be his fit companion, and that his affection might be set upon her."

But now the perfect way of the heavenly Bridegroom towards the Bride is set forth succinctly and yet most fully in that said Scripture, where the scene here receives its inspired parallel and antitypical interpretation. Also, with great propriety this is traced out for us in the epistle to the Ephesians. For that is the one epistle which definitely treats of the corporate standing of the Church as in the heavenlies. And the notable passage there in Ephesians 5: appears to be a designed climax of the entire teaching of that grand epistle. It is found here, indeed, in the midst of an exhortation to husbands to love their wives. But this apparently incidental way of its introduction is quite in the style of new testament Scripture as regards very

many most important truths. And here we note seven things predicated of the Lord as to His behaviour towards His Bride. First, He loved her. Thus all His subsequent action is traced up to and interpreted in the light of its blessed source. For next to His love of the Father, comes His love of the Church as His motive-power in doing and suffering all for her that He has done. He beheld that Church in the glass of God's decree, and His soul was enraptured with that sight. Hence, secondly, He gave Himself for her. And love beyond this is clearly impossible even for Him. Who ever heard of a love like this? And His love is still the same! He is risen, He is glorified. But unchanged, persisting in His love He is engaged in its display though now in other aspects. Having purchased her for Himself, He is intent on rendering her such an one as He desires her to be, as His eternal companion and the object of His love. No other bridegroom can render the bride of his choice what he would like. But this is precisely how the Lord is at present occupied with the Church. And this is enlarged upon in the next four particulars. For, thirdly, He sanctifies her unto the light and purity to which she has been called. Fourthly, He cleanses her from all iniquity, by the continually repeated application through the Spirit, of the water of the word of God. And these two—the sanctification and the cleansing—must ever be combined. A heavenly mind without simple, hearty obedience is of little value. Hence as water acts on the body, so the word is to act on the motives, thoughts, life, and walk by the energy of the Holy Ghost. But if these two involve sorrow whilst the work is only in process; so, fifthly and sixthly, the other corresponding two, to wit, the “nourishing” and the “cherishing” furnish heavenly support and comfort. In the Lord's untiring attention to

her sustentation and growth is the cause traced of every atom of spiritual strength she receives from the doctrines, the premises, and the truths of Scripture. And in His “cherishing” of her, and administration of warmth to her, is indicated from Whom comes all increasing spiritual apprehension and joy in God and in His love. And thus in process of time does she corporately, and the several members thereof individually, as they come into being during the night of this dispensation, grow in grace and in the distinct perception of whose hand is at work upon her, and of what He is doing with her. And, as morning neared, Eve would become quite conscious of her own actual existence; so the Church, after ages of slumber, is at last awaking up to the grandeur and the bliss of her calling, and to the imminence of her presentation in person to her divine Bridegroom.

This, of course, is the ultimate issue of this amazing and long-continued process in His work upon us now. And accordingly the words in verse 27 should be thus rendered:—“that He Himself might present her to Himself, the Church, glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Compare Jude 24. And when the Bridegroom and Bride at length meet, each we know, will be mutually “satisfied “with the other. Isaiah 53:11; Psalm 17:15. And the first to gaze at ease and in full upon the unveiled glory and beauty of incarnate Deity will be the Church of God. “We shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3.)

And thus as the temple of God, this Church will have God dwelling in her; and as His Body, will have God above her; so as His Bride she will have Him with her. For as the Temple, God, even the Father, will fill it and every living stone thereof with Himself; and as the

Bride, she is Christ's; so as the Body she is filled with the Holy Ghost from her divine Head. And whilst these three combined, perfectly set forth her eternal relationship towards the three-one God; her name as the City, the New Jerusalem, sets forth her relationship to the universe below her.

In my Lectures on the book of Revelation I have already remarked on the two Trees of the knowledge and of the life, now combined in Christ, and on the River representing the Holy Ghost. For life from Him is undivided in the garden whilst man is unfallen; but outside thereof to man fallen it has four forms, as in the four Gospels, or as in the four cherubim.

Chapter 3. Obedience that may not be tested is no obedience at all. Here the question is simply one of God's authority, and of man's ready subjection to Him. The test was a perfect one. Had God made it to be in some question of moral evil, such would not have so distinctly asserted the authority of God. But here the partaking of the fruit was only evil, because God had forbidden it. There was no reason why the fruit should not be eaten, other than the plain command of God. Many now likewise judge of obedience after the flesh likewise. They can see some reason why they should live honestly; but such commands as relate to Baptism or to the Supper of the Lord, for instance, are stigmatized as unnecessary. There is no real perception of God, and of His will being supreme, in such cases.

Then Adam, having disobeyed God, the Lord begins to unfold the resources of grace. Satan is here termed "the serpent;" for the way of God is first to overcome him, and then to expose him. And mention having been made

by God of the two seeds, and of their antagonism, and of the results to each of that antagonism, Adam so drinks in the truth conveyed in God's announcement, that he calls his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. He apprehended that he was to live, as well as to die; but he also saw that this new life was to come through the woman and her seed, and not from himself. It is a truth to which all nature now bears witness, that "in the midst of life we are in death;" but it is a truth which only God can reveal, and faith can grasp, that in the midst of death we are in life. His very raiment (for innocence was lost for ever) would, in type, suffice to signify as well how his sin could be covered, as how life and holiness could be obtained. Meanwhile, better that the old Adam should die, than that it should be perpetuated. It would appear to be suggested as if access to the tree of life was even then, as it is now, by means of the tree of knowledge. For this is life eternal, to know God and Jesus Christ.

1 The word translated "generations," in chap. 2:4, is ever prospective, and never retrospective, as see chaps. 6:9 and 11:17.

2 The word "thus," in chap. 2:1, is more exactly rendered "and."

The Lord's Way With Enoch, the Saint for Heaven

Genesis 4 and 5.

Chapter 4. Here at once we see the amazing difference between the two seeds—the holy one hated and murdered, and the wicked his murderer. We are all aware that the fullest display of this hostility of the wicked towards the righteous and the holy is beheld in the Cross of the Son of God, and again in the rejection of the Holy Ghost by the world now. For through that blessed Spirit Christ is formed in us; and as the new life is developed in us, so it is opposed still and rejected (Rom. 8:36).

Of the seed of Cain there are many on the list whose names are identical with or similar to the sons of God (professing) in the next chapter. Compare chap. 4:17, 18, with those whose names we find in chap. 5. It is the same still. The greatest haters of God in the world have, many of them, been those who once promised fair. But especially, as in chap. 5, there seems a sort of climax reached in what is recorded of Enoch, and of his holy walk; so, conversely, here we have a hellish climax reached in what is recorded of the lust, and murder, and scornful infidelity of Lamech, the descendant of Cain. For the patience of God ripens the saint and the sinner both.

Chapter 5. Here we have traced for us the line of the other seed. But whilst in chap. 4 Cain's seed are beheld busy, making this world their home, and as comfortable and as refined as, with skill in all arts, and the

production of all sweet sounds, they can render it; albeit the blood of Abel, being left unavenged, was itself a witness of the curse resting on it: here, on the contrary, in chap. 5, we have, indeed, the other seed mentioned, though without any record of their doings.

Notwithstanding that their lifetime extended over several centuries, little is told us of them beyond that they lived, begat a family, and died. Surely this very silence is most telling. Nowadays, with the world's heroes, three volumes are required for the narrative of one who lived till seventy years; here three verses suffice for the account of one who lived seven or nine hundred! As if Cain's descendants made up all the world's history! But as to this other seed, it is implied that earth was not their home. The patriarchal funeral bell, "And he died," "And he died," tolls eight times in this brief chapter. None of them reach quite up to a thousand years. For this we find is reserved for man on earth in millennial times. And hence we see that, even from the beginning, God had the end in view. Moreover, as we read that Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, whilst the flood was upon the earth in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, therefore Lamech lived within five years of that flood. Further, since we read that Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, whilst Lamech begat Noah when he was a hundred eighty and two years old, and therefore when Lamech had six hundred years more to live, it follows that Methuselah died in the very year that the flood took place. How very nigh Scripture goes towards contradicting itself, and yet without its actually doing this! Surely nothing but the truth, revealed by the Spirit

of God, preserved the inspired writer here from inaccuracy of statement.

Above I have remarked that the patriarchal funeral bell is heard to toll eight times in this chapter, and that all of these, from Adam to Lamech, eventually passed away hence. But there is one bright exception made in the mode in which this was done. Enoch is taken to heaven ere the deluge came; although whilst he prophesied of the Lord's advent, he may have eyed the deluge impending as the precursor of a still more awful judgment now so near (Jude 14 and 15). On the other hand, Noah passes quite through the deluge. Thus these two men, of each of whom it is recorded that he walked with God—as if it were one on each arm—these become a designed type of God's two callings: of the one now being made, which is the heavenly calling, and to be closed by the rapture of the entire Church into the immediate presence of her Lord; the other, God's earthly call in the future of a remnant of Israel, and of a multitude that no man can number out of all nations,³ who will be kept for the appearing of Christ safely through the great tribulation presently to set in. Now this walking with God, of which here we read recorded of Enoch, denotes on God's part, complacency, and on Enoch's part, ease and peace. Likewise in Ephesians, clear directions are afforded to us as to the heavenly character of our present walk, in view of the sure prospect of soon being called up on high.

Here, then, is our Hope set before us in figure. Like Enoch, we are to disappear from this world's scene. We may be somewhat missed, but should be less desired. Like our Master, for all our service in it we reap only its hate and its contempt. It will be known that we have

gone, and where, for the Beast will, when, he has risen to power, turn into scorn the whole thing (Rev. 13:6); also many professors will, when it is too late, implore the Lord to open unto them (Luke 13:25). The living saints, those here at any period ere He returns, are they who are constantly represented in Scripture as those who may be caught away. For the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout of triumph and of joy. The Holy Ghost, who is only down here for a season, and in consequence of Christ's supreme exaltation there, in order that He may whisper to those with listening ears of all that hidden glory of the Lord, will at once lift the entire Church into the divine presence. His own know His voice now, and will recognize His signal then. They are drawn close together by His wondrous story of the love of the uncreated Son of God, and in their gathering themselves together closely around Himself, are being thus formed into a Body and a Bride, and are at last gathered home unto Himself present still in their midst, as when down yonder in the world. Then they believed in His presence, and tasted somewhat of its sweetness; now He is visible before their very eyes—He Who for them hung in agony on the Cross. He has thus come on the road to meet us because He loves us so much, and because on us His heart is set. His prayer had proved the reality of His love; His Cross had gauged its depth. He did not come for Enoch; nor does He come when a believer dies. Then that saint departed to be with Him. But He comes for the Church—for us altogether, those whose bodies were held in the tomb, and for those who were like caged doves in those bodies of humiliation when He came. It is the will of God that all of us shall be glorified together; and until that time has arrived, we are sealed as God's own, and have the earnest of the

Spirit in our hearts. We are not of the world any more than, nay, not so much as, were those patriarchs mentioned in this chapter; for not only are we called with a heavenly calling, but more, we are the Church of the living God. We have perfect peace now through His finished work; we see Him representing us before our God, and we have this Holy Spirit already with us. In all these things our blessing very far exceeds that of these early saints.

As to times and seasons, we know nothing, nor indeed do we wish to know. It is designed as a proof of His confiding love to us, that He has not made us acquainted with the time of His arrival. No loving wife would like the implication that she could not be trusted to be ready, with the hand on the latch, for her husband at any time. Besides which, this keeps us on the look-out from day to day, which pleases Him very much. This He tells us over and over again, as in Luke 12:37. But though the time be hidden, still surely we must be conscious that the end of the Church's course here has been nearly reached. And what a view this opens to us! At any moment, the very next for aught we know, and we may be gone, at once and right up into His immediate presence; God Himself, the very next moment, engaged in the act of presenting us faultless before Him with exceeding joy. Here we may be at one moment in our daily avocations, and, or ever we are aware all this work of God's fully accomplished.

True, much has to be done down here before the Lord can appear to the world. So the world ripened further for judgment after Enoch was taken home, until the two parties of religious and irreligious, both unsaved, became amalgamated. The very word "I will destroy," was not heard, nor a single timber of the ark placed with

one other, until a long period subsequent to Enoch's translation. But this is not so material to us. Our home is a heavenly one. We are not looking for the day, nor yet for the appearance of the Sun of Righteousness, but for the Morning Star, which shines for a while anterior to the day, and which those who are up betimes and watching, only see. Whilst the Old Testament is closed with a reference to the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, conversely the Lord Jesus, in the New, speaks of Himself as the Morning Star. This distinction of itself reveals the difference of our calling from Israel's. Yea more, whilst Malachi speaks of Israel treading the wicked under the soles of their feet, the Church, whose home is above the stars, is destined under its divine Archangel Michael to hurl Satan and his host from heaven (Rev. 12.) All this goes to show how in quite another sphere is our place and portion than on this earth. No, here we are pilgrims and strangers. And until we have left it, earth's ripening in wickedness, and next its judgment and blessing, are delayed. The Holy Ghost Himself, who is our heavenly guide and companion, hinders the development of the man of sin and the full display of man's apostacy (2 Thess. 2.) Satan needs not twenty centuries to produce this coming man. But he has to wait till God's purposes concerning us, and our calling, and our training, and our chastening here below are all completed.

It is not said here that Enoch ascended into Heaven, nor do we find anywhere else that our rapture is so termed. This is only fully true of Christ's own path to His pristine home, denoting as it does majesty and stateliness in the mode of His departure. Enoch was "taken." "We are to be caught up," or rapt away by the Spirit as Philip was,

only in our case to our home and to our God and Father and to the Lord Jesus. Some object to the word “rapture,” but it is the very word used in the Greek to describe this thing. For rapture is properly a Latin word formed by metathesis from this word here. Thus we only keep close to Scripture in so speaking.

3 In my Lecture on Rev. 7 I have proved the amazing difference of the two classes of Jew and Gentile there from the Church of God.

The Lord's Way with Noah, the Saint for the Earth.

Section 1. Noah, previous to the Deluge.

Genesis 6-8:19.

Chapter 6, to Ver. 13. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. It does not follow because one is a saint that his children are also and all of them saints. Too well, alas! we know the contrary. These patriarchs, mentioned by name in chap. 5, may have been, and probably were, all truly acquainted with God themselves; but each of them begat children, and there is no proof that their children all followed in their parents' faith.

It should be understood that at the beginning of the world's course, these two seeds, to wit, those of the openly wicked (in chap. 4), and those of the sons of God, were not only separated as to the latter professing godliness, and as to the former scorning it; but there appears to have been a local distance maintained, for a while, between the two parties. The one hovered still on the outskirts of Eden, where were the Cherubim and the Shechinah; the other, even in Cain's own time, "went out," as the Scripture itself informs us, from the presence of the Lord. But in process of time, as the two parties multiplied, and the seed of Cain and the seed of Seth were each much increased, the advanced habitations of the one would approximate to the nearest dwellings of the other. For it is not likely that Cain's seed went much further away than out of the view of Eden. And then the one line, the sons of God professing, beheld the daughters⁴ of men that they were fair.

Messengers,⁵ or angels, would soon pass from the one party to the other, and enticed by the beauty of their women, abandon their own local nearness to Eden and to the Shechinah, and fix their dwelling-place among their new friends. The result is not left in doubt.

Marriages of these who had formerly been in separation the one from the other prevailed at length, and to that extent, that amalgamation of the two seeds, the Sethite and the Cainite, followed. The one line thus proved that, however lineally descended from Seth, they were not spiritually his true seed.

But separation, as witness for God, abandoned, then came the deluge. After that, corruption and violence⁶ had broken down all the barriers dividing between the two parties; then God, in exact retributive judgment, removed the barriers that restrained the flood of waters from the earth. In the 12th and 13th verses of chap. 6, this sin of men, and this consequent judgment of God, are linked together. The emphasis is lost in the authorized Version through the one Hebrew word being rendered in ver. 12 "corrupt," and in ver. 13, "destroy." There is a striking allusion to this very passage, and to this use of one and the same word for the sin of men and for the judgment of God, in 1 Cor. 3:17, where again, most unfortunately, the idea suggested by the Holy Ghost is lost sight of by two different renderings in English of one and the same Greek word: "If any one mar the temple of God (i.e., by blending the two seeds together, or by upsetting God's own order in His house), "God will mar him." The one word in the two clauses shows that the particular judgment is for that particular sin. So here, "all flesh had marred its way on the

earth" (ver. 12), and God said, "I will mar them with the earth" (ver. 13).

But some will have it that these sons of God were celestial angels. Now, in proof that the true idea suggested in the passage is the abandonment of separation unto God of the Sethite seed, the whole of the descendants of Adam becoming all united together; and note that wherever a union based on compromises, and then of amalgamation, is affected, this can only be by the avowed witnesses for God forsaking their high standing, for the other side have nothing to surrender—in proof, I pay, that these sons of God here spoken of were human, I submit the following considerations. Let them all be viewed as a whole, and surely conviction ought to follow.

1. Turn to the last two verses of Luke 3. There you have the Sethite line traced backwards, "Methuselah was the son of Enoch, who was the son of Jared, who was the son of Maleleel, who was the son of Cainan, who was the son of Enos, who was the son of Seth, who was the son of Adam, who was the son of Gad." Thus the Sethite line is headed up by Adam as son of God. In other words, here we have the line of the sons of God. Cain's line was the line of the children of men.

2. Matthew (22:30) informs us that God's angels are incapable of marriage, as also the children of the resurrection will be.

8. Angels are spirits (Heb. 1:7). But spirits have not flesh nor bones either, as Christ explains in Luke 24:39. Now combine these Scriptures with proof No. 2 above. For, putting these two passages together, we learn that angels have not flesh; and in Matt. 22:30, that they have

no sexes. Now, in proof that the term "angel" is frequently used in the Greek Testament, where men are certainly meant, I have quoted two instances in a note at page 22. But because this point is important, as conducive to a right understanding of the subject, I cite here two more. In James 2:25, the messengers that Rahab received are called "angels." So again in the Greek of Matt. 11:10, John the Baptist is termed an "angel." Putting side by side all this Scripture evidence, it seems to me to sweep quite away the argument, such as it is, drawn from the word "other," or "strange flesh," in Jude 6; and the obvious meaning is, that the professing sons of God left their own Sethite side and place, allured by the daughters of the Cainite or serpent race.

4. Matthew (24:38), speaking of the days before the flood, states that they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. Here there seems a glance back to the account in Genesis, and to the various modes of fleshly self-indulgence in which men spent their days.

5. On a comparison of the last-cited Scripture with Luke 17:27, contrasted with verse 28, the probability ripens into certainty. Of those living in Noah's days, it is there said: "They did eat, they drank; they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark," etc. But in the next verse, the language is varied, certainly not without design. For there, speaking of the days of Lot, the Lord omits all reference to the Sodomites' marriages and of their being given in marriage. Now this very variation as to how the men of Sodom were occupied, as contradistinguished from the manner of life of those in Noah's time, proves that the

Lord calls distinct attention to the crowning sin of those antediluvians. But surely in neither Matt. 24:38, or in Luke 17:27, is there the remotest thought of angelic sin.

6. And what heavenly angels can here be alluded to? Had they been the holy angels, they would not thus have acted; if the confederates of Satan, how could they be called “sons of God”? Moreover, these “angels,” Jude witnesses, are in prison for their sin; but the fallen angels are still at large, and will not finally be cast out of heaven until the rapture of the Church into heaven (Rev. 12).

7. Already I have shown above the connection between the sin committed and the judgment inflicted by the Holy Ghost, using one single word for these two in the Hebrew of Gen.6:12, 13; and again, by a single word for the parallel sin and punishment of Christendom, in 1 Cor. 3:17. But if the guilty party were indeed heavenly angels, either good or bad, then the wrong party was punished. For unquestionably it was the race of men, as well the Sethites as the Cainites—Noah and his family only excepted—that was swept away by the deluge. But how likely, how righteous the judgment, if by these professing “sons of God” be signified the Sethites, who had become savourless salt.

8. I think it very probable, as Bunyan⁷ suggests, that Balaam hence got his idea as to how he would ruin Israel, by inducing them to abandon their separation through intermarriage with the Midianites. In his prophecies to Balak he had testified of Israel’s grandeur in testimony for God, by “dwelling alone, and not being numbered among the nations.” This silent witness for their God he would set aside, and thus devote them to

destruction, which he had failed to accomplish by cursing them. Traditionary relics of the deluge would still be rife in his day, as even now among the heathen such are found.

9. All this is often met by the scornful question, how such marriages as of Sethite with Cainite would produce “giants.” It does not seem very wonderful that the children of the holy and the chaste should have healthier bodies than the impure should have. But I might return the question, and ask how it can be proved that the seed of angels and of men should necessarily be a race of giants. There is no Scripture in proof of this. On the contrary, Matt. 24:38, and Luke 17:27, are quite opposed, as we have seen, to such a view. In the antitype, now fulfilling before our eyes, the answer is very clear; and the answer carries with it the proof that, in our days, both parties are certainly human. For who are the giants nowadays? Those who pretend to be of a more heavenly and holy line than the world to which they are joined. Those who use a form of godliness to help themselves on in this world. Those in whom much of the hero-worship of the day is centred. Those who, however great they are in the religious world now, their names as “men of renown” had never been heard of, but for their fleshly piety. Lastly, if these giants had been really half-castes, partly angelic as to their origin and partly human, how would they stand towards Him, the Saviour of the world, who lays not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham (Heb. 2)?

I have tarried somewhat on this passage, because of its extreme importance, and have sought to remove from the reader’s mind any bias in favour of an interpretation which blunts its point, at a time, too, when its solemn

warning demands special attention. For Laodiceanism, as we are expressly informed in Rev. 3, is the very last guise that the nominal church assumes ere it is spued out of Christ's mouth. The commingling of hot water and cold, the form of godliness without the power—nay, more, the denial of the power thereof, self-content and self-complacency with one's own state, albeit Christ is shut out, as here in Genesis, God was esteemed a stranger, and all witness for Him abandoned; these, surely, are the marks of the religion of the day. And thus the opening verses of Genesis 6, which trace the real and proximate cause of the deluge, resemble the inspired portraits of the present time, as in Rev. 3:15, or 2 Tim. 3, and all contribute to prove how near its end the age has come. As the Lord predicted, so has it come to pass: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man." May we be looking for Enoch's God to take us to Himself, and heed this warning, and be ready for His signal. So shall we have disappeared hence, and have at last reached our home yonder, and be shut in eternally with God, ere the world's sin has fully ripened, and the vials of His wrath be at last poured out upon it!

Chapter 6:14, to 8:19. But Noah, who represents the saints to be preserved for the earth, finds grace in the eyes of the Lord. God had looked out upon the earth; and He who had once seen all good, now sees all to be evil. He is grieved at His heart. Let this affecting remark penetrate us through and through. However plenteous He is in goodness and mercy towards them that fear Him, sin is eternally abhorrent to His nature. But what had been said of Enoch is here repeated of Noah. Never does He confound the righteous, however few they may

be, with the wicked. Only Noah, as the type of the saints for the earth, is not removed from the scene of judgment and taken up to God. He is to pass through all that is impending, safely sheltered in the ark.

As for this ark, clearly it was God's own thought alone. He likewise gave minute directions as to all its details. Nothing was left for Noah's ingenuity. It was not we who found Christ as One who could save us. If God had not told us, never should we have known that He had a co-equal Son at all. He laid help on One mighty; and whatever Christ is now to us, is owing to God's provision and appointment. For instance: Was the ark to be made of gopher or cypress wood? In this very selection there is, I think, some reference to the shelter to be found in Christ. I am more confirmed in this by the fact that the word here twice rendered "pitch," is called in the Hebrew "copher!"⁸ And then the passage reads, "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; and thou shalt copher it within and without with copher." For these Hebrew words are allied to our English one "cover." And thus we are reminded of that precious and frequent phrase in the New Testament—"in Christ." In Him only can we be sheltered from the wrath to come. In Him only can we be carried through the region of death and judgment into resurrection life (John 5:24).

So when all was ready, after the exhibition of divine patience and forbearance with the ungodly for a hundred and twenty years, during which the preaching of Noah, at least, in pictured action, as the ark was slowly fashioned according as God had directed, then the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark. Likewise, the Lord has called us who

believe in Christ and has safely sheltered us in Christ, though as yet the door is not closed.

In 1 Peter 3:18-21 is a most remarkable passage, drawing lessons from the scene before us, for our instruction. There three things are ascribed to God, as working by His Spirit. (1) He spake by His Spirit in Noah to the antediluvians, who, however some may have been impressed with the sight of the huge vessel slowly approaching completion, or others who mocked and said, "to-morrow shall be as this day," all ultimately persisted in disregarding the warning message, and are now for their obstinacy consigned to prison, there awaiting their final and terrible doom. (2) Again, by that same Spirit, He quickened Christ who had been put to death. And now again, (3) a similar message is sent to the world through us who believe, as was sent of old through Noah, and some by grace having been drawn by the Spirit are saved in Christ and identified with Him, even as those who in a ship go both down and up in it. Only in our case, as we well know, the waves of wrath were poured out upon Him alone. The waters of baptism into which we descend testify of our death, burial, and resurrection in Him. True, the corn of heavenly Wheat was alone till It had died (John 13:24). But there in death, though not before, It had reached us, particles as it were of earthly mould. So It gathers us to Itself. Then in Him we all rise together (see also Rom. 6; and Col. 2, 3.) And He who has called us to Himself, will perfect that which concerneth us. His call of us is not by any means a call for once and then over. We are to abide in Him and to walk in Him. That is to say, His call is continuous and daily. As He once said "Light become, and light became," that call perpetuating light unto this

day; so that call of His to us is extending to our affections, our hearts, even to our very eyes and hands. And for our comfort let us remember that whilst the ark rested on the bleak and craggy mountains of Ararat; we have been already in spirit and shall be soon in body brought home unto our Father and our God.

Hence, one window only was there to the ark, namely at the top thereof. For now our eye is to be directed upward unto God. Worship, praise, and thanksgiving, with habitual living in His presence; these are what become us who are saved in Christ. For the deluge imminent then and now are God's own work. "Behold, I, even I, do bring a flood." He that provided the ark is the same as He who brought the deluge. He that has found for us Christ, will presently pour out His unmitigated fury on all unbelievers. Mercy and judgment are each among His treasures. Most men now, as of old, scorn God's perfect way of salvation by death, burial, and resurrection in Christ, and so by the passage out of a doomed world into another, where there is no condemnation, the judgment having been all expended, exhausted for those in Christ, by Him. Nay, sad to say, some of those who do believe, unwisely scorn the instructive figure—to wit, the baptism itself.

There is a singular coincidence here, but one on which I may not tarry. I just mention it and pass on. Like as God waited seven days after the door of the ark was shut ere He let loose the waters of the deluge upon men; and again, as there was a like pause of seven days between the warning to Pharaoh concerning the slaughter of the first-born and that slaughter itself (compare Exod. 11 with 12:15); so there will certainly elapse seven years, between the rapture of the Church to be with Christ,

and His subsequent appearing to execute judgment on the world. This is that notable period of which we read so much in the Revelation of twice twelve hundred and sixty days. In fact, this said period is identical, as others have shown, with the last week of Daniel's seventy weeks of years.

Regarding the completeness of the judgment, when at last God arose to execute vengeance, surely such texts as 7:19, and 8:5, are adequate testimony to those who bow to the authority of Scripture. The waters reached a height fifteen hundred feet higher than Mont Blanc. Otherwise, had there been some parts of the earth uncovered by the waters, thither could the birds have retreated. Another proof of the universality of the deluge we have in the designed inversion in the list of all flesh slain in 7:21, with 23. In the former verse, the order followed in the account of the animals that perished is thus given, "fowl, cattle, beast, every creeping thing, and every man;" but in the latter verse the order traced is, "man, cattle, the creeping things and fowl." Here, surely, is a warning to every one great or small, that there is only one shelter from the day of the Lord's anger. (Read here Rev. 20:11-15.)

There seems no reason to doubt that the day of the ark resting on the mountain of Ararat is identical with the day on which the Lord rose from the dead. It rested "on the seventeenth day of the seventh month." But by the commandment of the Lord, given at the time of the institution of the feast of the Passover, the seventh month was changed into the first month. Then three days after the Passover, which was on the fourteenth day of the month, the Lord, having passed quite through the waters of judgment, stood in resurrection in the midst of

His disciples, saying, "Peace be unto you." They, as well as Himself, had reached the haven of everlasting rest. But though we now who believe are not in the flesh, yet is the flesh in us, and will be so until we are changed, even as to our bodies to be altogether like Him. Hence, sure as the unclean raven and the pure dove both issued forth from this ark, so do the motions of the flesh and those of the spirit proceed forth from us. The two natures co-exist in every Christian. But the dove returns With an olive branch. Oh, joy! the Earnest of the heavenly glory we do obtain, and enjoy even now. When we live after the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, we constantly find that heaven is far from being wholly a future thing. The Spirit of God brings us even now foretastes of that new and better world, into which by grace we have already been introduced (see 1 Cor. 2:9-12). Then at last God says to Noah, "Go forth of the ark." This word it is most important we should observe. For much oftener do we hear of being shut in and so sheltered from the wrath to come, than of having been brought forth, according to the will of God, into this new, this heavenly region by the Lord Jesus. And even still He is sitting, according as the Lord bade Him sit at His own right hand, and will do so till God shall bid Him rise. I mean that in His continuous session at the right hand of God, His is continuous persistent obedience. But when God's time has come, Christ will come forth and take us at last and for ever to dwell yonder with our God and with His blessed Son!

Section 2. Noah, subsequent to the Deluge

Genesis 8:20, 9.

Chapter 8:20, to end of 9. There can be no question in the mind of a careful reader of this section of Scripture, that these verses as thus specified ought be kept together. For chap. 9, beginning where it does in the authorized translation, interferes greatly with the full appreciation of the teaching herein conveyed. That is to say, when Noah had builded the altar, and had offered burnt-offerings, so that the Lord smelled a sweet savour, then two verses at most suffice to set forth what the Lord will not repeat in the way of judgment; whilst all the first seventeen verses of the next chapter are occupied with the declaration of what God now can and will do in the way of blessing. And all this is shown to be in consequence of the offering of sweet-smelling savour! Here, too, it should not escape notice that the voice of God alone is heard. For through Christ's offering, God has all His own way in grace and mercy. Himself fills the entire scene. Hence He assigns the identical reason why He will not destroy the earth again by the waters of a flood, as before He had given why He must curse the earth (8:21, with 6:5). So, likewise, when presently the earth has been purged by fire, God is heard soliloquizing complacently with Himself in Rev. 21:5-7. And the fact that this close connection of chap. 9 with the close of chap. 8, and the burnt-offering of sweet-smelling savour is so continually missed, as it has evidently been by those who inserted chap. 9 in the middle of God's utterance in response to that odour which He smelled, affords another illustration how Christians themselves often see little more, and are contented to see no more, than the negative value of the blood of Christ in lifting us from hell, than the negative side of all God's action in grace towards us.

Three points in these first seventeen verses of chap. 9 demand each a word of remark. Here at the outset of the post-diluvian world's course, God establishes for the "good "of His saints, the principle of government (Rom. 13:4). And this, His own institution, He has in mercy continued down to the present day. Viewed in this light, it is a coincidence that quickly after the rapture of the church into heaven, the Lord begins to open the seals, causing the overthrow of the thrones of the Roman empire, whereby fierce democracy and anarchy prevail, and from which come forth the terrible beast and his ten kings of the book of Revelation. For it is well that the Jews and the world, having rejected the true King, should know a little of the sort of rule which they have preferred, and of the good time coming, of which their infidel poets have sung. And thus this present dispensation of rule as far as respects the world dates from Noah. Never since that patriarch's day has God once interfered with the course of this age (Luke 17:28). And right in between these two interferences of God—on the one hand by the deluge of water, and on the other by the Lord's appearing in flaming fire—stands the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, a witness to all men, that however patient God may show Himself to be, sin. cannot eventually go unpunished.

Secondly, we read here of His covenant which He made with Noah, and which, in so far as there is aught of grace in it, is taken from that far larger and better covenant made with Christ, and which, through the blood of His cross, has become to us a testament⁹ of fullest, richest grace.

And then, thirdly, we read of the token of that covenant, "the faithful witness in heaven," as God's bow in the

cloud is termed in Ps. 89:37. And now in this symbol of that covenant, there is a hint of grace. For the bow is directed towards heaven, and arrow to it there is none, as if it had been discharged heavenwards. Compare Gen. 49:23, referring to the rejection of Joseph, the type of Christ, as king. And surely we who are gathered to the Lord and to His name every Lord's-day, to break bread and to drink of the cup which He enjoined us to do, cannot but recall to mind that that cup is itself a token, and a precious one, of the blood of the new testament shed for us.

The remaining verses of this ninth chapter afford us ample evidence that fallen man is a total wreck—that judgments, however awful and sweeping in their character, may awe him, but do not change him, and that his only resource and salvation is God Himself. He ever fails in that which he has aught to do with. So Judges 2; 1 Kings 11; Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Tim.; Rev. 2 and 3, all confirm the sad truth first found out in Eden, that whenever God has set up aught for man's blessing, sure as its charge is committed to man, he ever spoils it. But God blesses Shem, and, through Shem's seed, Japheth also. "Blessed of the Lord God is Shem ... God shall enlarge Japheth, but He shall dwell in the tents of Shem." So Hebrew of verses 26, 27. He will give deliverance, or redemption, to Japheth; but He will pitch His tabernacle with Shem. Compare Exod. 25:8; Ps. 102:13-16; John 1:14.

Chapters 10 and 11. In casting our eye over chap. 10 we at once observe that the Holy Ghost tells us of the descendants of Japheth and of Ham, ere He traces those of Shem. This is His ordinary way, to keep the best till the last. Precisely the same order will be found in the

opening chapters of the first book of Chronicles, where the lists of divers genealogies are given us in full. But we shall have a very vivid evidence of this way of the Lord, when we come to consider chap. 36 preceding chap. 37. For the present, therefore, let us pass from this subject.

The main lesson of this entire section is, that as God proceeds to develop His plan for the blessing of man, man, intent on present aggrandisement and power, ever opposes Him. The key to what we read here is to be found in Deut. 32:8, where Moses states what was the design of God when He separated the sons of Adam, according as we find unfolded here. See Gen. 10:verses 5, 20, 25, 31. The passage cited from Deuteronomy tells us that “when the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the peoples (Hebrew) according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.” For when Israel went into Egypt, the number of souls was seventy (Gen. 46:27). So in Gen. 10 there is mention of seventy nations, to wit: from Japheth, fourteen; from Ham, thirty; and from Shem, twenty-six. The seventy disciples sent out by the Lord Jesus may have an eye to this arrangement of His, which shall yet obtain when His kingdom is set up in power, in the millennium. For man may be allowed, apparently, to retard the execution of His purpose, as he does here, but never ultimately to defeat it. Now that this statement in Deut. 32 is millennial, is evident from the name God there takes of Most High, equivalent to the new testament language of King of kings, and Lord of lords (Rev. 19). Hence, in Ps. 83, Messiah, after subduing the nations, and quelling all

opposition reigns as “Most High over all the earth.” See, too, Ps. 91, and what is said of Melchizedek, as in Gen. 14:18, 19. Therefore, as we ponder this explanation of a part of His ways, as revealed to us in these verses of Deut. 32, we perceive that the will of God, in establishing the earth’s blessing, was to group the various nations round Israel as a centre; only Israel, as the medium of this blessing, and so the best, the favoured nation, kept in reserve till the last, till all was ready. And hence the line of the true Seed is traced on, at the end of chap. 11, from Shem to Abram, from whom Israel, and Israel’s king, Messiah, was to come. Hence, also, special attention is called to the fact that Eber’s son was called Peleg, because “in his days was the earth divided.” And so, too, at the close of the list of the sons of Japheth, and of the list of the sons of Canaan, son of Ham, and of the list of the sons of Shem, e.g., in verses 5, 18, and 32, this said division of the lands, and the borders thereof, are respectively marked out as appertaining to the several families of Noah’s sons. How beautiful and perfect this way of God! How thoughtful for Israel, even ere it nationally existed, with the divine smile resting finally on Israel’s future King! Yet these chapters (10 and 11) also witness how rebel man was allowed to interfere, and to delay, the revelation of God’s purpose.

For, now, observe how verses 8 to 12 of chap. 10:are inserted; as if what they narrated formed a block as to the development of this counsel: so much so, indeed, that if these verses are not read as a parenthesis, the reader may fail to see the scope of these chapters. Then, in the first nine verses of chap. 11, a continuation of this parenthetical account of man’s wickedness is found. So

the two parentheses, to wit, chap. 10:8-12, with chap. 11:1-9, we had better combine. Outside these said parentheses the chapters form a long-continued line of the descendants of Noah down to the time of Abram.

As to the former passage in chap. 10:8-12, revealing the guilty way of ambitious man in obstructing earth's blessing from God, the ringleader is appropriately termed Nimrod, or a rebel. This name seems evidently assigned to him as the clue to his entire career. And here compare a scripture or two which speak of the great rebel at the close of this dispensation, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming." He is called "the lawless one" in 2 Thess. 2:8, Greek; and "the wilful king" in Dan. 11:36. It is suggested that there is something peculiar in his rise. "He began to be mighty." So 1 Chron. 1:10. He struggled for preeminence, and, by dint of indomitable will, he attained it. In the passage in 1 Chronicles, and thrice here, he is called "mighty," a word of evil omen when spoken of men in opposition to Christ, the most Mighty (see Gen.6:4). So of Goliath in 1 Sam. 17:51, Hebrew. He shoots up above all his fellows, and spreads himself like a green bay-tree in all directions, save only that Babylon is the innermost circle of his power. In verse 10 mention is made of four of his cities, all in the land of Shinar, with Babel by name put first. It reminds one of the four Babylonish kingdoms in Dan. 2 and 7, with which there is, no doubt, some designed prophetic connection. Compare my remarks further on as to the four kings whom Abram, the Hebrew, overcame and slew in Gen. 14. These last we shall quickly perceive to be clearly representative of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. Then from Shinar

he, Nimrod, goes forth unto Assyria, and builds Nineveh (see margin), and other great cities.

“He was a mighty hunter before the Lord.” Possibly beginning with hunting the savage beast, his skill and his renown here assist and incite him to subjugate his fellows. The special opposition to the Lord’s will throughout this dispensation, and fully developing as it nears its close, is rendered easier in its winning over of many souls by the plausible and specious pretexts of necessity, or of advantage, by which it is defended. For obedience certainly brings us into difficulties which wilfulness at once cuts through. Something singular and bold in his defiance is certainly noted by the expression “before the Lord.” And the little Antichrists in the church of God all through this age, who, wittingly or unwittingly, constitute themselves the centre, and even, to some extent, the object of the worship of their admirers, and that, too, where the name of the Lord alone should be all—all the wickedness of these will reach its apex in the worship of the beast of Rev. 13. Beginning with Babylonish apostasy, it culminates in open opposition, and is only destroyed by the Lord’s appearing. In verse 9 we find he made to himself a name famous for many generations following, even as the giants whom we have considered in Gen.6:became “men of renown.” Likewise Dathan and Abiram were “famous in the congregation” in their day (Num. 26:9); as also the two hundred and fifty princes in the assembly were “famous “too, and “men of renown “(Num. 16:2). Ah! it is this terrible love of fame, it is this unwillingness to be content with the Lord’s smile here, and with the crown of glory when He comes, which have led to so much striving and restless ambition even in the professing

church itself, that has wrought mischief irreparable. Hence, Babel is the present result. See Micah 5:6, where Babylon is called! “the land of Niinrod.”

Then, in the second parenthesis in Gen. 11:1-9, we are instructed as to the mode by which Babel was built, which Babel was the centre of those dynasties mentioned in chap. 9:10-12, set up, be it remembered, in opposition to the government which God had designed through Israel and Israel’s future King. So in like manner now there is a Babylon still, who has daughters or religious confederacies many, more or less infected by the ecclesiastical virus that has come from Rome, and all of whom must perish ere the true church of God, with Christ at its head, can be displayed before creation.

The builders of Babel, as again here most solemnly we read, were actuated by the desire for a name, and to avoid the being scattered, as to their carnal minds appeared would be the case, unless they themselves and their city became men’s centre. But every way that is not God’s must end in utter confusion. He that gathers not with Christ, making Christ alone the attraction whereby souls shall be drawn together, however ingenious the method, and however the device may seem to prosper for a while, in the end every such worker does but scatter. Look at the church; behold it, alas! all divided and broken up. The cause is easily traceable. Under favourite leaders, men of renown, professing Christians will range themselves. Then Clerisy—whether avowed or unavowed is immaterial—Clerisy begets Prelacy, Prelacy leads to Popery, and Popery will end in Antichristianism.

It is said that in every known tongue some Hebrew can be found. This is not improbable. But certainly in every sect there is some truth that is contended for; but these particles of truth all radiate from Christ. The only divine mode of union is therefore by clinging alone to Christ, the Truth. The builders of Babel, we learn, journeyed from the East; that is to say, from whence the Dayspring from on high doth visit men. Babel's builders cannot but err, whatever truth they hold; for in their building, in their ecclesiastical organizations, the name of the Lord is not esteemed as amply sufficient. Hence, in their cleverness, they resort to brick for stone, which is man's work, instead of God's; and, again, for mortar they have slime, which in Hebrew denotes a compound formed of the corruption of animal and vegetable substances. In Babylon there is the semblance of the church, and of the divine ordinances; but the whole is corrupt, the whole must perish, however it may for the present afford men tranquillity and security (chap. 11:2). Better now suffer with Christ, that when His kingdom is established in joy and peace, we may, through grace, be found worthy to reign with Him. It is to Him that this very chapter goes on in the after verses to point. God cannot be baulked, nor Christ ultimately set aside. All creative good can only come through Him. Nothing but loss can ensue where Christ, who is God's one Centre in heaven and on earth, is unacknowledged. Put what you may instead of Him, and you become a rebel, and your work Babylonish in its aim and end.

4 The term "men," here is used in a bad sense, as the word "world" is now. Cain's seed were the "men"; they made up all the world's history. Their "daughters" are

specially mentioned for the part they played in the sin that followed.

5 Thus simply may be interpreted that somewhat obscure passage in Jude 6. Then the “angels “here are identical with “the sons of God” in Gen.6:2 Peter 2:4 seems to confirm this interpretation of the word “angel,” since he goes on, in the very next verse, to speak of the deluge. Now that these “sons of God” were human, overwhelming evidence will be afforded a little further on above. And as to the word “angel,” the English reader should be informed that this term is often used in Greek where men are undoubtedly signified. Thus the messengers that John sent to Christ are so named, in Luke 7:24. So the disciples that the Lord sent to a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him, are such (see Luke 9:52)

6 Corruption and violence are the two forms that sin takes. In Prov. 1 wisdom warns of violence; chap. 2, of corruption.

7 See a long quotation from Bunyan on this point in the “Javelin of Phinehas,” pp. 474, 475.

8 The word copher, in Exod. 21:30, 30:12, and Isa. 43:3, is rendered ransom. It is found in the plural in Exod. 29:36, 30:10, 16; Lev. 23:27, 25:9, and is translated atonement. In Exod. 25:17, 30:6, and 31:7, the same word radically is rendered mercy-seat.

9 See my Leaflet on this subject of Covenant and Testament, First Series, No.

The Lord's Way with Abraham, the Believer.

Section 1. Abraham's call to Canaan. His blessing by Melchisedek, after the slaughter of the kings.

Genesis 12-14.

Chapters 12 to 14. At the opening of my remarks I stated that the entire history in Genesis clusters round what is recorded of the Lord's dealings with seven representative men—Adam, figure of Christ; Enoch and Noah, who set forth the two distinctive calls of God, now of some to heaven, and presently of others to earth; Abraham, the believer, the father of believers; Isaac, the son; Jacob, the servant; Joseph, the ruler. These seven men appear subdivided into three and four. We have briefly touched upon the way of God with each of the first three. We come now to look at His varying action with the first of the last four—varying according as Abraham is trustful and obedient, or whether he gets away from God, and falls into sin. And surely to study how the Lord gradually led on Abraham step by step from one degree of faith to another, culminating in his ready obedience to offer up his only-begotten son, the child of promise, at the call of God, seeing that we too are exhorted to grow in the knowledge of God, that we too are believers, who should be learning to trust Him more implicitly and more obediently every year and month of our lives, surely in this growth of faith we cannot but be much helped by carefully observing the Lord's way with Abraham.

The Lord's call of Abram was "alone." It was a personal call, as He Himself says in Isa. 51:2. Abram endeavoured to bring Terah, his father, with him, and succeeded in inducing Lot, his nephew, to be his companion-It is quite in the style of Scripture to say that Terah took Abram, rendering honour, of course, to the senior (chap. 11:31). But Terah seems to have been a weight upon him, a hindrance to his own full obedience. For Terah died in Haran; and though probably years were spent in that half-way place between Ur and Canaan to which he had been called out, he does not appear to have heard any further word from God until that call of His had been fully and quite obeyed.

This call of Abram was made by God's revelation of Himself as the God of glory. In Ur, where Abram heard that call, he had been an idolater, worshipping probably the sun, moon, and host of heaven (Joshua 24:2). And notwithstanding that there were only ten generations from Shem to Abram, and that Shem lived four hundred years after he begat Arphaxad, and therefore at least seventy years after Abram was born, still this family, from which, too, the Messiah was to come, had become sunk into pagan darkness. But the light of the glory of God beams on Abram, whereby he at once discerns the vanity of idols, and the greatness of the living God. That sight of God, and that electing grace and call of God, start him. Thus too with us is faith produced, even by a sight of God in Christ. There is, there can be, no other way for faith.

In the call of God to Abram there was the gospel; for in Gal. 3:8 this third verse of Gen. 12 is quoted, and it is affirmed that the gospel is comprised in it. For when all the families of the earth were to be blessed in Abram,

the Holy Ghost witnesses in Galatians that the blessing is absolute and unconditional, apart from circumcision, or aught else of man's merit.

Presently he arrives in Canaan. His foot is on the land which is to be his "for a possession" (Acts 7.) True, the Canaanite is still there, even as wicked spirits are yet in those heavenly places to which we have been called in Christ (Eph. 6.) But we wait God's time for the return of His Son, when we shall be put into everlasting and complete enjoyment of our blessing. Evens now already there in heaven only can we worship (Heb. 10:19), even as for the first time do we also now read of Abram building an altar—that is to say, in Canaan. He moves to and fro in this the land of promise; for, as was said to Joshua at a later period, "Every spot "that the sole of his foot rested on there, was his. If where Christ now is—in the presence of God, in heaven—is our place of blessing, there should we live and move, and there, in spirit and affection, should we be daily—despite of the foe, who will be turned out by Christ as Michael with His heavenly saints, whose battle-cry, as they hurl Satan down thence for ever, will be "the blood of the Lamb!"

The order carefully mentioned as to the "altar," "tent," and "altar," in verses 7 and 8, deserves more attention than it has generally received. Howard, the philanthropist, was wont to say, "Wherever I have a tent, there God shall have an altar." This was pious, but it was not up to God's mark. Christians now, who know somewhat of the peremptory will of God as to being gathered to the name of the Lord alone, will often, for earthly considerations, remove their dwelling beyond the reach of their worshipping with the assembly of God. First selecting some situation more advantageous, as

regards ease and comfort, they will then inquire whether the assembly is gathered there to the One Name. But here we have the way of faith: first the altar, next the tent. Then soon in joy will the love of God so fill the soul, as to constrain it to rear another altar. On the other hand, those who walk in the path of fleshly advantage, may obtain their desire, and get as a consequence the leanness sent in their souls.

Whilst Abram adheres to the call of God, more and more of joy, and more and more discoveries of the Lord's gracious will concerning him, does he find. On the other hand, going down to Egypt—type of this world—for a season, he has no altar there; no voice of the Lord comes to him there. After he is once off the line, he gets more deeply involved in sin, one false step leading to another. Hence he not only lies himself, but even acts the tempter to another, and she his wife. God, in His providence, rescues him. For if we will not be guided by His eye in love, we may have the bit and the bridle put upon us.

At length Abram retraces his steps, returns to where his tent had been at the beginning, and to the place of the altar which he had made at the first. Then at once can he happily worship again. God cannot lower His standard nor abate His call. And it is a great mercy for us, that He cannot. We are called to the fellowship of His Son, and to walk in His light. In heeding His blessed will, we shall have His presence, and not otherwise. Restored, Abram is stronger than ever. Whenever we overcome temptation, the trial proves a blessing to us, we perceive the snare from which we have been saved, and the grace that kept us. On the other hand, if we fall, we are unhappy till we are restored. Confession and

judgment of the sin lift us above that from which we have been delivered, and lead us more stedfastly than before, to depend on God, following Him in the path of faith. Circumstances are sure quickly to arise which, strengthened by God in trial, find us prepared to meet.

So with Abram. He takes revenge on himself. Lot and he have to part. It had been better for Lot to have abandoned all his flocks than to have given up the company of Abram. However, the elder makes the offer to Lot of the choice of the land, notwithstanding all was his own. But he leaves his concerns in the hands of the Lord. Lot, unable or unwilling to respond righteously to Abram's noble offer, by leaving the choice to his uncle—induced by the lust of the eye, chooses the plain of Sodom, even although as the history here significantly informs us, “the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.” He with a bad conscience, by dwelling among them, can only have his righteous soul vexed daily by their wicked deeds. Their company he has chosen in preference to Abram's, in consideration of increased earthly prosperity. And thus, outwardly at least, is commenced that declension of Lot, which, as the narrative proceeds, is seen to become increasingly grave and awful, until at chap. 19:30-38, the Spirit draws the curtain over the close of Lot's downward career. Likewise, in 2 Peter, whilst of some believers we read of their adding in their faith, manliness, knowledge, etc., and of their obtaining an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; of others, we read that they are blind, shutting their eyes, forgetting that they have been purged, or profess they have, once from their old sins. Such, mingled among the Christianized heathen, learn their works, and lose much

of the little portion of light which once they enjoyed. For them the world, at least in its religious side, which is by far the worst, has yet much power, not obeying the clear word of God, “from such also turn away” (2 Tim. 3:5, Greek). It will be well for such who do not at last prove to have been quite hypocrites, by turning from the holy commandment, to wit, the commandment to holiness delivered unto them. For without holiness no man shall see the Lord. But the Lord is no uninterested spectator of Abram’s faith in Him. Hardly has Lot left him, ere the welcome voice of the Lord greets his ear. Surely this of itself was ample compensation to Abram for giving Lot the choice of the land. Thus did the Lord cause Abram to perceive that if he was now alone as to Lot, he was not alone as to Him. The language of the Lord at this time alludes, undoubtedly, to the choice of Lot. Lot had “lifted up his eyes” (ver. 10). Hence the Lord bids Abram to “lift up his eyes” (ver. 14). Lot had chosen to pitch his tent eastward; but the Lord assures Abram that the north and the south, the east and the west, were all his own. And He directs him, as the possessor of the soil by the gift of God, to arise and walk throughout its length and breadth. Surely as we ponder the account of this scene, we must be constrained to acknowledge that the manifestations of God’s favour proceed still on the same principle as in Abram’s day; that God delights to respond to faith in Himself, that those who trust in Him shall enjoy the power of His word and promise, and shall have their faith increased. Compare John 14:21-23. Now, likewise, Abram first hears of the less comparison of his seed to the dust of the earth. Presently, as he goes on with God, he will hear of his seed exceeding the stars of heaven in number (15:5). For Abram is the father of the two seeds, of the peoples of the two calls—the earthly

and the heavenly. They that be of faith are the children of Abraham, and “are blessed with him.” True, we get not only the best of what was promised to Abraham, but infinitely more besides, even union with the Son of God. Still, also, “the blessing of Abraham has come on us Gentiles through Jesus Christ.” See Gal. 3:7, 9, 14. And the new nation of Israel will be his true earthly seed. Then, in Gen. 22, after the offering up of his son Isaac, the Lord conjoins these two promises of his seed being multiplied as the stars of heaven and as the sand upon the seashore. Thus God goes on in grace with His people. Thus does faith, acting in obedience, hear more and more of His blessed will, and receive more and more from Him. One of these promises has been in the type and shadow already fulfilled (1 Kings 4:20). The latter promise of the heavenly seed is being actually fulfilled now. And when the children of God are removed to their final home yonder, then will God remember His promises to Israel.

Hence, in chap. 14, we have a scene representing millennial glory, and of the great, the true Melchisedek, coming with blessing to “Abram the Hebrew” (ver. 13), and so representing the remnant of Israel who shall be saved at the appearing of the Lord. But let us look at the chapter carefully, which may be profitably viewed, both in its prophetic and in its didactic, or rather experimental aspect. Just a word on each of these two. Then, at your leisure, you can ponder its teaching more at length.

As to the prophetic picture here, the king of Sodom, with his confederates, are overcome by Amraphel, king of Shinar, or Babylon; Chedorlaomer, king of Elam—which term Elam is the Hebrew for Persia; Arioch, 4

king of Ellasar, i.e., Hellas, as in the Septuagint, Greece; and Tidal, king of nations, who here evidently stands for the fourth kingdom of Dan. 2 and 7, namely, Rome. For the Roman empire will yet again be headed up under ten kings, with one imperial ruler over them all (Rev. 13 and 17.) These last will, as we are distinctly warned in Rev. 17, sweep away quite from off the face of the earth the corrupt, the unclean Christianity that is left after the removal of the church to heaven.¹⁰ But the Hebrew Abram proves too much even for such potentates. So, in the antitype, first, a remnant in weakness refuse to accept the worship of the beast, and to bow down before his image, the abomination of desolation that he will set up; and then subsequently, when the Lord appears, the Jews will be delivered from all their enemies, as prophetic Scriptures unitedly concur in declaring. On these points I have the less need to tarry, having fully gone into them in my published "Lectures on the Revelation." Then, after the slaughter of the kings, and of their armies, on the plain of Armageddon, the great priest-king, Melchisedek, will bless and strengthen Israel. He was priest of the most high God, which name of God has been already expounded in chap. 10. So Christ brings down the blessing to Israel; for Israel is to be blessed on the earth. The same Lord Jesus is also our high Priest, but in this capacity His gracious work is to lift us up to Himself where He is. But since God is possessor of both "heaven and earth," as Melchisedek pointedly reminds Abram of, so God has not only one blessing, though much the higher, for us, but also another on earth for Israel. Therefore must He appear, to bring down with Him that blessing from God. For where this high Priest is at any given period, there is then the place of God's call, and of man's blessing. In

fact, strictly, the Lord Jesus is not acting in this character as Melchisedek at all at present (see Psalm ex.); rather now He is as the antitypical Aaron, within the holiest of all—this one day of grace and salvation. For a reign implies the employment of force, and of the sword, to subdue opposition; but in those supreme heavens, where the Lord Jesus at present is “hid ”(Col. 3), enemies cannot approach. There only His wondrous merits are the delight of God; there His precious blood and His all-prevailing intercession are alone heard. On the other hand, Israel and the world can only be blessed through judgment.

This chapter has been strangely appealed to by some, in proof of the lawfulness of Christians becoming soldiers, and of their engaging in war. Such forget the total change of dispensation since Abram’s call to inherit the land. For this church-period has been inaugurated by One, who, when He had enemies, conquered by suffering them to kill Him. Besides which, if any plead this chapter as an excuse for their fighting, such, if Christians, should remember that they fight unfairly. These, killing their opponents, send them, if unsaved, to hell; but if the opponents kill themselves who are Christians, these depart to be with Christ.

Now it is time that we look at this chapter from another point of view. It tells of three battles. The first is preliminary to the second, in which the man of faith, relying solely on God, goes forth to attack the confederated hosts, and to deliver his nephew Lot. For Lot’s sin had already found him out; he has lost all his goods, for the sake of which he parted company with Abram, to whom now he owes, if not his life, at least his liberty. Well would it have been for him to have at last

heeded the painful lesson which this was designed to teach him when his nest was stirred up. For the Lord could only by His providence address him as one out of communion, and not like He did Abram, holding converse with him as a friend. But so persistent is Lot in his sin, that he actually returns to Sodom for sixteen years, and then he is scarcely saved from sharing its destruction, partly through the intercession of Abram (see Gen. 19:29).

But, further, this second battle, important as it is, is still a preliminary to the third one, and in Abram's case the most important of all. How severe, to say the least, it would have been in the soul of Abram we may infer by the timely and signal interposition of Melchisedek. He strengthened him after the former battle with bread and wine, and proceeds to remind him that his God is the possessor of heaven and earth. And, remarkably, of this title of God Abram makes prompt use in his reply to the king of Sodom, when he made him his dazzling, tempting offer of all the goods that he had brought back for his own acceptance. Thus we perceive that this confirmation of Abram's faith in God was vouchsafed in the nick of time, just when it was required; for surely that strength is not supplied needlessly. And then he refuses to touch aught of what was the king of Sodom's. Only, with a fine sense of perfect righteousness, he disdains speaking on behalf of Aner, Eschol, and Mamre. For himself, his concern is the glory of God; for others, he states what is their due who had helped him.

Section 2. The training of the believer for the inheritance.

Genesis 15-21.

Chapters 15 to 21. These chapters might be summarized thus:—Chap. 15: Justification by faith, and history of that nation which, stumbling at God's stumbling-stone, is set aside for a while for the heavenly seed; chap. 16. Flesh active, and Hagar, or law, resorted to; chap. 17. Grace judging the flesh; chap. 18. Communion; chap. 19 Judgment; chap. 20. Man to the last unconfiding; yet, chap. 21, the Lord faithful—the true Seed born, and the Millennium. Obviously, it will be impossible in our rapid survey to do more than touch on the salient points in this summary.

In chap. 15 there are five scenes, together extending over an entire night and day. It would likewise seem as if only in the night-time did the Lord throughout this chapter accost Abram. This probably may be accounted for by the prophecies found here, all referring to Abram's seed during the night of their history. In scene one, extending down the first six verses, the time may be about midnight. The word of the Lord comes to Abram in a vision, and, in reference to his self-denial in refusing the goods of the king of Sodom, says, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." For God never lets His people lose in the long run for their trust in Him. If Abram refused the spoil of Sodom, he gained in increased joy in God. So it is ever. If one, for Christ's sake, abandons what God calls him from, he not only has eternal life in the world to come, but a hundred-fold more in the enjoyment of God's presence than anything he has surrendered. But God continues with the assurance that Abram's seed, old as he is, shall be numerous as the stars of heaven. And that this latter part of the promise is widely different from that found in chap. 13:16, see the remarks already made on that

Scripture. Compare Jer. 33:22, where, as further on in Gen. 22, the two seeds, the heavenly and the earthly, are each distinctly specified. And well may the heavenly seed be glanced at here, seeing that the precious truth of justification follows in the next verse, and on which passage read the inspired comment in Rom. 4:3, 17-24.

Then, in scene two, occurring near the morning light, from verse 7 to verse 10, Abram hears somewhat as to the earthly seed which is to possess "this land," asking for a sign, not in unbelief, but in the boldness of faith; for communion with God increases faith, and renders it bold. God gives him his desire. He is instructed to take three animals, for the three kinds of offerings; for Israel can only be blessed through Christ's sacrifice. Each of the animals slain is to be three years old, signifying that his earthly seed should be a sacrifice for three centuries, but in the fourth should come safely out, as the birds.

Next, in scene three, Abram seems to pass the day in standing by his sacrifice of animals cleft in twain. Thus, too, did Balak by his; and thus, too, the Christian should by his identification with the Christ who died, is risen and glorified—the sacrifice is the plea of him who stands by it. The sole occupation of Abram during the day is to drive away the birds of prey. We, when we appear before God, should have our eye on Christ, and thus be filled with joy, delighting in Him, and in His finished work. But, alas, wandering thoughts, and anxious cares, and unbelief, will, unless they are watched against, obstruct all this peace and joy in Christ. In the type to Abram, these fowls that come down on the sacrifices rent in twain, signify of course the Egyptians, who would fain have made Israel a prey for themselves.

Accordingly, in the fourth place, when the sun declines, the Lord again speaks to Abram, first interpreting to him, inverses 13-16, the sign that He had given to him; and next, when the sun has set, that sign is confirmed by the vision of the smoking furnace; and then with the passing between the pieces of a burning Lamp, symbol of the Shechinah; the lamp is Christ, who is salvation for Israel and for us (see in proof Ps. 132:17; Ezek. 1:13; and Isa. 62:1).

This term “Lamp” is not unfrequently found in the book of Kings, and is there used to denote a son and successor to David (see 1 Kings 11:30, marg.; 15:4; and 2 Kings 8:19). The passing between the pieces of the sacrifice is explained in Jer. 34:18, to represent the entrance into a covenant of the parties so passing. Wherefore the passing of the lamp here signifies the Lord pledging Himself in that striking way, to succour and to deliver Israel, bringing them forth from the furnace in triumph, and in plenty. And thus the issue of their bondage was seen to by Him from the beginning. And then, as the time for their deliverance drew nigh, He enlarges at once on the minuter details of that deliverance, providing from the outset for their coming forth, not as beggars, but rather as princes, with silver and with gold in plenty (Ps. 105:37). They were to “ask” (Exod. 3:22), (Hebrew, not “borrow”) of the Egyptians. For these wages for their hard work were of long date, and had never been paid. But here God’s pledge of His succour is unconditional, as seen by the fact that the lamp alone and not Abram passed between the pieces. But the morning cometh, according as we see is suggested, in the fifth and concluding scene in this chapter (verse 18). And there all that God had

promised Israel, that people shall yet possess. Never of old did their territorial possessions actually extend to the great river Euphrates, as is here promised should be the case, because the real and full inheritance of the land can only be obtained and enjoyed, when sovereign, grace shall have all its own way with them. By a covenant of plaster, which the winds and storms could destroy, they have as yet possessed only a part (Deut. 27:4). At the most a shadow of the truth passed for a moment before their eyes in Solomon's time (1 Kings 4:21). But God will yet remember every engagement which He has made, and fulfil to the letter every part of His word. Likewise will He act towards ourselves. Even now we who believe are under grace. And ere Israel obtains possession in full of the land promised to Abram we shall have been brought safe home to our inheritance reserved in heaven. The Earnest of that inheritance is ours to be enjoyed now. Still, however, we await Him who to us is the morning Star. Till then our path is a chequered one, being alternated on the one hand in the furnace of affliction, and on the other by the shining of the light from above upon our souls.

Chapter 16 On this chapter, the third and fourth chapters of Galatians should be carefully pondered. We find here an illustration of what we are painfully conscious to be the case with ourselves, that unbelief can be present and at work even in a believing heart. In chap. 18 we have further evidence of this. Abram and Sarai were each of them believers, yet neither at this time appears to have been in a condition of soul to wait patiently on God. The Holy Ghost often in the Word 5 combines patience with faith. See, for instance, Rev.; 2:19; 1 Thess. 1:3; Titus 2:2; Heb.6:12. Nothing tests

faith like delay on the part of God; for the flesh will struggle to make itself heard, and will resort to efforts that, at another time, the believer can see the unbelief displayed thereby. For that text is still true, "He that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. 28:16). No surer evidence of simple faith and obedience can be named than patient continuance in well-doing. Talking of faith is all very well; walking by faith is far better. Observe the descending climax in Isa. 40:31. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles;" that is, comparatively easy; "they shall run, and not be weary;" more difficult this, but the last named is the hardest of all—"they shall walk, and not faint." Excitement will carry one through much, but ordinary plodding along in the path of duty, with little to encourage us beyond the consciousness that such is the will of God, and the daily exercise of confidence in Him, that in due season we shall reap if we faint not, no wonder that flesh resists, and chafes, and works counter to all this. Therefore in Abram and Sarai here we may see something of what is in ourselves. Here the resort is seen to be to nature and to law. Sarai is too prominent in this picture; and, out of our place, the readier are we to commit sin. Nay, she not only sins herself, but invites her husband likewise, and then turns round and blames him. It is a sure mark of a wrong state of soul when one is ready to blame everybody except oneself. God was not hurried, could not be hurried, by the restlessness of unbelief. Possibly the blessing was delayed. At all events, for fourteen years longer, Abram had to wait ere the Lord fulfilled His promise. It is a pithy saying of some one, "Saints who will carvel for themselves are sure to cut their fingers." Let us believe God, that it shall be exactly and

unreservedly as He hath told us—in His time. The great promise to us is found in John 14:3. Then let us recall to mind the exhortation in view of this in Heb. 10:36, “Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” Now that this promise here spoken of refers to that in John 14 is evident by the next verse: “For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

In the first part of this chapter man is seen, as often elsewhere, in failure and unbelief and in abortive attempts, to help himself. Indeed, all three here, Abram, Sarai, and Hagar, are to be blamed. Of the three surely the least part of the blame falls on Hagar. She ought to have been helped, and not stumbled as she was by those who knew the Lord better than she. But the “angel of the Lord,” as He is called in verse 7, or “Jehovah,” and “God,” as His name is (verse 13), finds her in her distress and soul-sorrow, and sets her right again. She was only, in man’s account, an insignificant servant maid. Yet she was, as we behold, cared for and watched over by Him that has ever proved Himself to be a friend in need. He was not engrossed with the care of such saints as Abram and Sarai. He knows everyone that trusts in Him. Though she was in lowly life He knew all about her. And that fountain of water, near which He finds her, must have been a memorial place to her in all after life. It was the fountain, as afterwards it came to be called, “of Him Who lives and sees me.” Jehovah, who had appeared to her, she called, “Thou, God, seest me.” Thus had He fixed her eye on Him Whose eye was fixed on her. Their eyes had met; and in His look there was forgiveness and restoration of her anguished soul. Now, as He had bidden her, she could return happily to

Abram's tent and to Sarai's rule. This had He bidden her to do. Yea, by addressing her as Sarai's maid He implied that she was defrauding her mistress in leaving her home. Thus did He cleanse her from all unrighteousness, whilst He forgave her sin. Christians have no right to leave the place where God has called them, unless there is something necessarily sinful connected with their continuance there. A Christian walking after the flesh is sometimes tempted to think of himself as suffering for righteousness when he is suffering through sheer wilfulness, and through haste to deliver himself out of an unpleasant or irksome position. Thus this chapter is a very instructive and useful chapter to us all. Such verses also as verses 13 and 14 show us what is true godliness. Finally we note that in His word to Hagar, a prophecy as to how her offspring should fare, was uttered by this uncreated Angel of the Lord, which has been fulfilling from that day even down to the present. Still is it true of the Ishmaelites, their hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against them. Yet they live, though the word concerning them was pronounced three thousand years ago. And if this be so, if God thus affords proof even in this age, that His word cannot pass away; so may we be sure that, as respects the woe of the wicked and the joy of the righteous alike, every jot of what is written shall be fulfilled and fulfilling in its integrity, its entirety, and for ever and ever (Matt. 25:46).

Chapter 17. Thirteen years have elapsed since man's impatience led to the picture as displayed in the last chapter. During this long interval, Abram would have ample leisure to be ashamed of his own folly. And he and we might at length understand why the Lord appeared

to delay the fulfilment of His promise. Romans 4 is the divine clue to this chapter, as appears by the reference there to the rite of circumcision instituted at this time. God waited till “Abram’s body” and “Sarah’s womb” were virtually “dead.” Not till then could He so act as to fill the scene entirely with His own glory. There is a reason for all that God does or delays to do, even though we may not understand it. The same chapter (Rom. 4) informs us that at this period Abram was strong in faith, he staggered not, his being kept waiting long had wrought its due effect on him, he had seen his own folly in his incredulity and the wisdom of trusting in God. Hence his “falling on his face,” as we read in verse 3, was not in confusion, for the identical expression is used again in undefined undefined undefined verse 17, where most certainly it was not so. Nay, rather at the contemplation of the sovereign grace in the Lord again appearing to him, notwithstanding his unbelief, he is overpowered and he worships. And the Lord in a glance back at his unbelief teaches him and us that the one all-potent remedy for this sin is found in keeping the eye fixed on God.

This seventeenth chapter we may divide into two parts — (1) God’s revelation of Himself; and (2) the response which He demands in view thereof. Here, for the first time in the Bible, we encounter the name El Shaddai—God, the all-sufficient One. The word “Almighty” scarcely conveys the thought of the original here. The Hebrew word comprehends this power too. For nothing can occur in God’s creation which shall surprise Him, or place Him in a difficulty. If sinners boldly and persistently defy Him, He is quite competent to cope with their rebellion or their obstinacy. His little finger

will be more than a match, in power, against all their attempts to thwart His purpose. But the term El Shaddai may be used, as in fact it is here, in a gracious sense. No strait, no trial, no trouble of His people is such that He cannot triumphantly deliver them from, or, if it please Him, carry them through. Now this fresh and ampler discovery of His name, that is to say of Himself to Abram, was beautiful in its season, when he must have abandoned all hope of an heir, had he "considered his own body." Then in the next verses the Lord proceeds to open out the import of this unfolding of His name, in uttering seven "I wills;" wherein he evidently adverts to His promise, on which Abram had yet failed to lean. See verses 6, 7, 8, 19, 21. In like manner, again, in Exod. 6, God makes another and further discovery of His name as Jehovah, to Moses, and explains to him its import, also, in seven other "I wills," in Exod. 6:6-8. And once more the Lord Jesus has declared unto us God's name in full as, the God and Father of Him, and therefore the God and Father of us in Him. And, in my opinion, the epistles of Paul to the seven Gentile churches of Home, Corinth, etc., are designed to be the seven unfoldings of this name. Well would it be if Christians in general apprehended this truth; and were not, alas! often heard to address Him as the Almighty, which is the term by which the world is wont to speak of Him, thereby exposing its ignorance, and yet terror, of God. True, in the book of Revelation, this name of God does occur frequently, because therein is displayed the execution of judgment and wrath on all unbelievers; otherwise, only in 2 Cor. 6, is this word to be found, and there, indeed, only for a special and most precious reason.

Now to this opening of His name to Abram, as the All-sufficient One, God expects a hearty and entire response. Hence the admonition, "walk before Me, and be thou perfect,"¹¹ by which it is signified that his heart should correspondingly open and expand to receive these overtures of sovereign grace. Hence, also, the change of his name to Abraham, by which he would be reminded constantly of the largeness of the blessing bestowed upon him. And, once more, hence chiefly the institution of the rite of circumcision with which, at this period there was no connection as to law. The law was only introduced at another epoch, through Moses, when this rite concurrently received a legal tinge. See John 7:22. But its obvious design here was that it might be to him a seal of the righteousness of his faith (Rom iv.), and thus serve as a mark, in the flesh, of separation unto God, which he and his descendants might ever carry. The flesh then not having shown out its enmity to God in the murder of His Son, was cut or maimed, and not adjudged as yet to be altogether bad. But now the ordinance instituted by the Lord requires that the flesh be buried, as that which is utterly corrupt. Therefore, likewise, in the one case was the rite for the children of Abraham and his race after the flesh; whilst in the other, it is for those who have a nature other than the flesh; in other words, for the true children of God. Only as then circumcision involved separation to God alone, and was of no eternal value without it, so baptism now is not mainly outward, but is only true when the Holy Ghost appropriates us for God, as those who are risen with Christ. See Col. 2:11, 12; 3:1-5. In short, the further the discoveries of Himself in grace to the souls which God is pleased to make, the simpler should be the surrender of that soul to such a God, taking sides with Him against

nature, flesh and unbelief. God wants us for Himself alone.

Chapter 18. Here, happily, follows a picture of the Lord communing with Abraham, and of Abraham, in that high and blessed communion, interceding for others. But before Abraham is fit to enjoy this communion, his heart must be set at ease before God. For still his desire of an heir and God's promise to him are unfulfilled; and, naturally, the older he became, the more solicitous would he be for the speedy accomplishment of the promise. And the fact that God removed his solicitude ere He took him into His secret counsel argues that, otherwise, he would scarcely have been able to attend upon the Lord without distraction. Accordingly, we read here first of a feast provided by Abraham, and partaken of by his heavenly Visitants; and, next, of His assurance to Abraham that His promise to him was about to be fulfilled. Sarah laughs, hearing of this joyful news, as her husband, in chap. 17:17, had laughed likewise. Here it is clear from the context that there was incredulity in her laugh. Yet in Heb. 11 we read that, through faith, she received strength to conceive seed. But this apparent contradiction as to the state of soul of Sarah contains nothing that needs to perplex any Christian; for who of us is not conscious of the presence of these two, of faith and unbelief, in his own heart, and, consequently, of the struggle that there takes place?

Now Abraham, having heard the period definitely named for that blessing which his heart had for so long a while craved, would doubtless have been satisfied; but the Lord had, as we see, much more to say to him. He delights to go on with us in the discoveries of His grace when He has strengthened our hearts to be able to bear

them. Many now are content to know that they have eternal life, and care not to inquire for what purpose God had set His heart upon conferring on us this great gift. Neither are such moved by the evident reply that, by communicating to us of His own nature, and of His own Spirit, we may be compelled in some measure to understand Him, and able intelligently to worship Him and hold communion with Him. Never can angels, however exalted, adequately enter into His thoughts, nor into His love. Still less was aught of this possible for them, ere the twofold sight of Christ on the cross for sinners, and of Christ on the throne for believers, had been opened to creature view. Yet these are the two great modes whereby alone God can be known. Let us follow on to know the Lord; so we please Him.

The two angels that accompanied the Lord, being now about to depart towards Sodom, near to which Lot describes them presently approaching (chap. 19:1), the Lord determines to inform Abraham of what He is about to do, and thus to assure him of His friendship. He also remarkably assigns His reasons for this, which show that His secret is only with those who fear Him, and not with the Lots who disobey Him. And blessed it is to remember that all we who truly believe in Christ are lifted up into this place of intimacy, as the Lord testifies in John 15. And as we abide in Him, so do the eternal realities of the future become distincter unto us, that we may live in the power of them. Who would have thought that to Abraham, rather than to Lot, whom it more immediately concerned, the impending doom of Sodom should be thus at once revealed? Likewise, the godly are they who know not only their own portion in Christ, but also the things that are coming on the earth; yea, and

wherefore such judgments are so coming. Such souls should particularly bear in mind what, of all things in the character of Abraham, the Lord singled out as that which specially met His approval. "I know him that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (verse 19). Strange that, in the families of so many of His own people nowadays, His instituted rule is exactly inverted, and, first, the children lead the mother, and the wife rules the husband. Nothing but evil can accrue from such a state of things.

Then when Abraham on the mount of communion with the Lord learns His mind, at once he commences to intercede for Sodom's inhabitants. "When freed by grace from all care as to harm happening to ourselves, and when in the enjoyment of His smile, it is beautiful to think of the welfare of others. Even in heaven the Church has not only harps to praise Him therewith for themselves, but golden vials full of odours containing the prayers of the Jewish remnant. And these prayers the great Archangel Himself then offers up to God. (Compare Rev. 5:8, with 8:3-5.) A certain timidity and irresolution characterize the intercession even of an Abraham here, as weakness marked that of Moses against Amalek in Exod. 17:12; and as that terrible clause "if not" was heard in his entreaties of mercy for Israel, who had sinned, in Exod. 32:32. So too Ananias speaks against Paul to the Lord in Acts 9:13. Few readers will need to be reminded of how all this blessedly contrasts with the Lord's intercession for us as in John 17, "Father, I will;" or in Luke 22:32; Heb. 4:15, 6:25; 1 John 2:1, etc. Here, likewise, we see that Abraham ceased pleading ere God ceased giving. We

dare not guess what other issue there might have been for Sodom, had Abraham continued in supplication, not only pleading for mercy for Sodom, if fifty, forty, thirty righteous were found in it, but further if twenty, ten, five, yea, one such soul were there. No doubt we may infer from the Lord's words: "I will go down now and see," as also from His action in taking Abraham into His confidence as to Sodom's condition, that "judgment is His strange work." If therefore unto us He has shown Himself gracious in constituting us as intercessors for our unsaved friends and relatives, let us catch His mind, and not allow our uplifted hands to flag in their behalf, until we have the answer of peace for them. Study here, the connexion between verses 12 and 13 of John 14. In the former verse we are said almost ourselves to work the miracle of grace; in the latter, the same is ascribed to the Lord, in answer to our prayer.

Chapter 19. Here we see the last of Lot. And to the end there appears something strangely unsatisfactory about him. The Holy Ghost expressly states that he was a righteous man, else we might almost have concluded otherwise. By a sort of second-hand fear of God, and influenced by Abraham, he had set out in his company from his native land to the land of promise. And very remarkably from the commencement of Lot's history, even up to this chapter, where that history is closed, we read not once of the Lord appearing to Lot, or of His having a word to say to him. And even here, if the angels do come into his house, it is only on his pressing invitation. In the eighteenth chapter, they needed no pressing on the part of Abraham. And there, too, the Lord Himself was with them; here the executioners of his vengeance are alone. And how had he got to Sodom?

First, when Abraham had made him that noble offer in chap. 13, he had meanly and greedily taken advantage of it; and then the inspired language as to his course is traced in minute and painful distinctness. First, he deliberately chooses Sodom, urged too by the lust of the eye, 13:10, 11; next he pitches his tent towards Sodom. After that he is found among the captives of Sodom, indebted for his deliverance to Abraham's energy of faith. Unwarned, he returns to the place of his choice and is now a dweller in Sodom, yea, from being found sitting in the gate of Sodom, it would appear as if he had risen to position and to prominence therein, that is to say, to position and even to prominence in that which was evil. "Well might his righteous soul be vexed in such company, which yet he had no inclination to forsake. Here he calls the men of Sodom his brethren, and his children and himself are married to Sodomites, whilst not a single hint is there of any intercourse with Abraham during the many years that have elapsed since they parted company in chap. 13. And even now at the last, if he is to be saved, he has to be almost dragged out. The salvation itself is by the Scripture said to have been partly attributable to Abraham; I suppose to his intercessory prayer. And that prayer could only be heard in bringing him out: for out he must come, if he is to be saved at all. Lot's wife, who accompanied him on his departure, quickly proved that though bodily she was separated, still in heart she continued there. Therefore, as the Lord Jesus, speaking of her, warns those who may happen providentially to be unconnected with some wickedness, but who would gladly be in it if they could get or return thither, if their step out was not taken in faith deliberately, therefore are such warned, that her punishment was sure, swift, condign, and terrible. When

once the Lord speaks out in judgment, there is no mistake as if feebleness were in His arm, or as if hesitation were in His purpose. Men may have thought there was whilst He delayed His blow. They misunderstand His long-suffering, even as they will to the end (2 Peter 3). He keeps silent, and they think wickedly that the “I Am” is such an one as themselves. Let not readers now forget the warning, for there is an antitype, as many Scriptures testify, to the scene here. But on this antitype I have already remarked, when considering chap. 13.

I only add here, therefore, that in 2 Peter we have four classes of souls—two classes of saved in chap. 1, to wit, those increasing in the knowledge of God, and so waxing stronger and stronger in their separation unto Him; next, some others, converted indeed, but “shutting their eyes” (see Greek) as to the evil with which they are connected; and again, in chap. 2, we see another class, false teachers, denying the Lord, and making merchandise of souls; and in chap. 3 their religiousness is seen to be tending towards infidelity. The several parties of 2 Peter are easily to be discerned, each of them, at this very day. Then in Jude we read of some who need to be pulled out of the fire. Here the allusion to this (chap. 19) is obvious. And as the connection of Jude with 2 Peter is admitted by all, so by conjoining the warnings, and interpreting them in the light of this our chapter in Genesis, they become most vivid. Then, in Revelation, all the several stages of the apostasy which we behold all around us are traced in their order by the Son of God. His own people, heeding His call, are seen in obedience in Philadelphia, “holding fast His name, and keeping the word of His patience.” On the other

hand, some in Laodicea are urged to be zealous, and repent. But our subject is Genesis, and not Revelation; therefore I refrain myself from pursuing further this solemn subject now.

Chapter 20. At the beginning of Heb. 12, the path of the Lord through this world is set in contrast by the writer of the Epistle with the flickering faith of the saints enumerated in chap. 11. There the special seasons when they displayed faith are pointed out to us. But Christ was always ready for any trial. Hence, in contradistinction with all those, He is termed, "the Beginner and Completer of the faith." Wherever the true path of obedience and of unswerving confidence in God led Him, there He was sure to be. However arduous the circumstances into which this steadfastness might lead Him, thither and forwards He went, He ran. This divine course could only terminate at the cross. There He died. Then God raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory, that our faith and hope might, similarly, be in God. For this cause we are enjoined to "look off to Jesus." His garments were as the pattern Servant of God, seen to be so white in the light of Tabor's Mount, as that no fuller on earth could whiten them. As for the holiest saints of old, their faith was weak, and their exercise of it only, as it were, by fits and starts. In rare cases, as of Abraham's, where the faith was more continuous, still there was failure over and over again. Christ's was one single "work," one perfect whole from end to end. Others' was mere patchwork, of larger or smaller pieces.

Here we see Abraham again overcome, and by precisely the same sin through which he had diverged before (chap. 13.) Then he failed when in Egypt; now when at

Gerar, half-way between Egypt and Canaan. In full communion and in full obedience only is there security. Oat and apart from these, even though by compromise we are off the straight line, and further wrong we shall quickly get. We might have imagined that, where once he had got wrong, he had been made more strong, did we not know ourselves. Besides which, there was that amount of truth as to Sarah's relationship, that might render him more liable to convey an impression to Abimelech which was foreign to the fact. Alas! Abraham desired to deceive Abimelech, and did deceive him. He was guilty of a *suggestio falsi*, and an unfair *suppressio veri*. And thus by a combination of error and truth are we oft led astray. Only in God's light can we see light, and walk according to the will of God. As a worldly man, Abimelech is here seen to be exhibiting more integrity than a believer; and this, sad to say, is not a rare sight. Abimelech seems to have had some natural fear of God, and to deprecate like vengeance on his nation as that which had alighted on Sodom. Nor is there here any account of Abraham communing with God, nor of God talking with Abraham. Surely the believer in his experience is conscious of some parallel to all this. Five hundred years after all this came to pass, Moses was inspired to narrate it. And thus it is evident that the Lord notes our conflicts, wounds, depression, and subsequent victories.

For still, blessed be God, the broad fact after all remains true, we are His people. Nor will He abandon us to our foes. He will separate the sins which He hates from the souls that He loves. "No change Jehovah knows." Fickle we may be and are; He sees us in Christ. Hence beautiful it is to observe that at the very time when

Abraham was so thoroughly down, then the Lord speaks of him as a prophet, and declares that at Abraham's prayer, Abimelech shall live. The allusion here, doubtless, is to the grace by which Abraham had been taken into the confidence of the Lord as to Sodom's doom, and to his intercession in its behalf. By a prophet, I understand one who stands usually in God's light, and who therefore can shed light on the difficulties of others which beset their path through not equally dwelling in that light: and also one who, through abiding with God and in Christ, prevails in prayer with God (John 15:16). This interpretation of this oft-used term will, I believe, be found to be a clue to every passage wherein it occurs. In the case of the inspired prophet, his light, of course, is so distinct and so purely obtained from God, as to be the very judgment of God Himself. In a secondary sense only, some nowadays more continue in God's light and know His will better than others, and therefore are competent oftentimes to give godly counsel to a "carnal" Christian (1 Cor. 3:1). But in this subordinate sense of the use of the word "prophet," the light which such an one gives must be brought to the searching test of the Word of God.

Abraham here speaks of himself to Abimelech as a wanderer. The original Hebrew here is peculiar. "And it came to pass when God,... they caused me to wander from my father's house," etc. There may be some allusion here to the truth of God being three-one. At all events, he confesses himself a pilgrim and a stranger. Conjoin with this what we have already heard as to his being a prophet; then we have the double truth—one brought out so much more vividly in the New Testament, viz., of separation—perfect both unto God and from the

world; or, as we are wont to say, "inside the vail and outside the camp." There was surely the germ of this twofold aspect of life in Abraham's day. For then, too, the world was a fallen world, and God was the one Resort of His people. Only the depth of its fall and the measure of its hostility had not been gauged; it was the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ that showed all this. And Christ came to give us this life, in either aspect "more abundantly." For through Him we obtain power to become sons of God, and by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost given unto us, we are made joint heirs with Himself; but at the same time we, in this day of His rejection, suffer with Him also.

Chapter 21 This chapter, the last one in the second part of Abraham's life, has for its chief feature the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promise. It reminds one of that passage in Habakkuk quoted in Heb. 10: "Though it (or 'He') tarry, wait for it (or 'Him'). He will surely come; He will not delay." The coming of Christ has ever been God's grand promise, and at the same time the believer's hope ever since the scene in Gen. 3, even up to this day. Only in the case of these patriarchs of old, they were looking for a Christ who had not yet come; but we look for One who has already come and put away our sins, and now in human form and in resurrection appears in God's presence on our behalf. There, by faith, we behold Him. Hence that word of Him, *oJ ercomeno*"—the coming One. Of old, in Adam, or in Abraham's time, He was coming. And now, though He has been and gone, He is still nearer to us, even than when on earth He stood among His little apostolic band. For now we are already one with Himself in spirit, so as they certainly were not until He had died and risen (John

12:24). Now His promise is, "I am coming again" (John 14:3, Greek).

Of this coming One, the Heir, the Son, Isaac became at once, at his birth, the type. Whilst yet a child in his parents' house in this chap. 21; and, again, when at a later period, Abraham had died, he may in some respects more resemble the Christ that is formed in us—in other words, the sons in their state of childhood as here; or in the life of training and discipline as in chaps. 25-27. On the other hand, in the intermediate chapters, to wit, chaps. 22-24, when Isaac is fully grown, whilst yet his father is still alive, he appears rather to resemble the eternal Son, the second Man who is the Lord from heaven.

At all events, the Lord did keep His promise to Abraham. He kept it at the set time too. The emphatic style of the language in it may probably be designed as a glance at Abraham's and Sarah's former incredulity. What a fine mode of rebuke of this is the keeping His promise exactly and in all respects. In this way, too, does He oft convince us where we had failed, and manifest to us that we might have trusted in Him. And this the more readily, seeing that this present period is characterized by many "haths" "of what God has already done for us, perhaps even more so than by promises awaiting fulfilment. In fact, we have little to look for now but His return, which is termed "The promise" in Heb. 10:36, 37. And as to this there is certainly a "set time," though it has not been so set as for us to know. And if this be true of His great promise, let us rest assured that His time for the fulfilment of any minor promise is the right time. Shall not the promises which He has already fulfilled shame

us out of our unbelief, and strengthen us implicitly to believe Him for the future?

Legalism is natural to fallen men. Ishmael could only be a bondman from his birth, for *partus sequitur ventrem*—as is the mother, so is the child. Then Isaac born draws out Ishmael's latent hostility to what is of God. Here we see again, as in the respective cases of Cain and Abel, the antagonism of the two seeds (Gen. 3.) These must be diverse, as flesh and spirit are opposed to each other. It has been inferred from the names of his children that Ishmael was a religious man. Three of these, Mishma, Dumah. Massa, may be rendered, "hearing," "silence," and "patiently bearing;" equivalent to the words in James 1:19, "Swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." This only deepens the lesson. No hostility is there to grace comparable with fleshly piety and religiousness. All this was abundantly evident in Christ's own time here, and is still everywhere observable even now. Ishmael "mocked" Isaac, or "laughed" at him (Hebrew). Strange that this curl of the lip is regarded as "persecution" in Gal. 4:29. Yet not strange when we call to mind how much of malignity there may be in a suppressed sneer, and of pain to him at whom it is directed. The Lord knows all the wickedness in the heart of man, and forgets nothing of what His people suffer for His sake. No sorrow of theirs is beneath His notice. But as Hagar's seed represents not only all those "born after the flesh," but specially those "under law," as the old nation of Israel was; therefore it, as well as flesh in general, is set aside when grace reigns. Hence, as it is true that the flesh profiteth nothing, so, likewise, has the sentence gone forth on that nation, "Lo Ammi" (see Rom. 9:6-8). To this day Israel is a wanderer among the

nations of the earth, though preserved distinct from all. For there are deep counsels of love to be fulfilled towards the remnant of Israel—the nation bringing forth fruit, as Christ terms it in Matt, 21:43. But then these people, like all others, can only come into blessing on the ground of sovereign grace, and as if they were Gentiles (Acts 15:11). This is the special line of teaching in the book of Ruth. And Sarah was so far conversant in the ways of grace as to be able to interpret the will of God, and that, too, to Abraham. Thus, by the fulfilment of God's promise to her, her soul also had grown in divine knowledge, and was established. For her words to Abraham at this time are called Scripture in Gal. 4:30, and shown in chap. 5 to be applicable in all directions.

This was the second time that Hagar found herself alone, yet not alone, in the wilderness. It is worthy of notice that, on each occasion, her eyes beheld a well of water. Surely the frequency of this reference to a well where grace is acting—as, when law has done its work, grace loves to display its resources—all this suggests a designed symbol. It was at a well that the wife for Isaac, the typical son, and again a wife for Jacob, the typical servant, were found (Gen. 24:13 and 29:2). Likewise it was at a well that Moses, the typical prophet, found a bride, and a home, and a flock (Exod. 2.) Passing over such hints as we find in Joshua 15:19, with Judges 1:15, there is the case of that wretched woman who was found by the Lord whilst on His way from Jewish rejection to Gentile mercy in John 4. To her He speaks not of the kingdom, but about the worship of the Father, and of the water of life. For it is His wont, when rejected in a lower glory, to retire into a higher (John 6.);¹² wherefore does she much resemble in type the Church of God. But she,

too, was found at a well. Hagar, like the rest of us, by nature unprepared for sovereign grace, eventually triumphing over flesh, works, sin, and law, is in despair for her seed, counting only on death; then she describes a well, when God opens her eyes. Yet we only read of her filling a bottle. It is true that God is here in the wilderness, and the Holy Ghost is so present as He has never been before. Through Him there is even a well of water in the believer, so that rivers of living water flow out from him (John 4 and 7.) Alas! how little contents us when God would have us reckon on Him; not according to our need, as we often hear Christians in prayer request to be supplied, but according to His own riches in glory by Christ Jesus. He eyes our need, truly, but in supplying it He deals with us according to what He is, not according to the narrowness of our hearts. But how little are we prepared for this abundance! Do “rivers of living water” flow out from us? Alas! no. “Where is our faith? For the promise is to him that “believeth.” The word is in the present tense in John 7:38, to signify that faith should be in daily, present operation. A bottleful of this water suffices us; yet what a blessing we might be in a land barren and dry, if our faith were simpler. The chapter, and the entire section,¹³ closes with a glance at the Gentile seeking Abraham. And why? Because the son is born. A similar scene is found in John 12, where, first, you see the Church represented by the family at Bethany; next, the Jew, in verse 12; and, next, the Gentile, in verse 20. In like manner, the same concentric circles are beheld here. For here we have Christ and the Church—the Man-child of Rev. 12, represented by Isaac, born after the Spirit; next we see Israel after the flesh, as symbolized by Hagar and Ishmael, the bondwoman and her offspring—for we are the true circumcision, and

not they; and, lastly, in Abimelech and Phichol we see the Gentile world seeking the friendship of Abraham the Hebrew, yet reprov'd by him, who in proper season claims his rights, which had been for a while allowed to remain in abeyance. For yet God will gather together and head up all things in heaven and on earth under Christ His Son.

Section 3. The Lord's Way with Believing Abraham as a Father.

Genesis 22-25:10.

Chapters 22-25:10. Inasmuch as the design of these remarks is to present only a summary of the teaching of Genesis viewed as a whole, so on such a chapter as the twenty-second, where one might be inclined to linger longer, an outline must still suffice, even though its filling up might render the same much more vivid. However, happily there is the less need for much enlargement here, inasmuch as most of us are familiar with the contents of the chapter, whether regarded as a narrative or as a type.

As for the former aspect the chapter is superscribed, God's temptation of Abraham. God and Satan each tempt us. The difficulty is solved by the remembrance of the diversity of object in view of God from Satan. God never tempts us to evil, but to strengthen us in what we know of Him, and in order that we may know Him better. Our wilderness lessons, though they may have been most painful to us, have yet been withal exceedingly profitable. Who of us would like to have been without them? There is not a circumstance of every-day life that does not contribute to test our confidence in God. And if when the trial comes we

continue steadfast, we avouch that we esteem His favour beyond everything. Thus do we daily win battles over our sin, and over our unbelief. Then at the end of the life-long struggle there is the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them who, when tried, are found to love Him (James 1:12). All of us have been broken down at times. Still some are more on their guard than others. Some are not so easily betrayed as others. That trial which proves too much for one walking negligently and not in the Spirit, or which might be overwhelming to the same at another time, might only strengthen his faith when abiding in Christ. Abraham had now grown much through God's patient leading and discipline. Then at last came the great trial to display the reality and moral grandeur of God's own work of grace (James 2:21, 22). Nor was he found unprepared for this. By the God that loved him the temptation was most lovingly timed, when he had become much versed in experience of the Lord's tender mercy. Surely all of us could recall to mind periods in our wilderness experience when we have found Him a very present help in trouble. And though from all of us His children He demands the surrender of everything by faith at His call, yet to some a crucial test such as this sore one may not be presented. For why? They give way at once and readily to a much easier test. Thus life is developing our character which God, if we will let Him have His own way with us, is intent on forming. And the pleasure which the Lord takes in our efforts to please Him, as He evidently did in the case of Abraham here, should rouse us to the fixed determination to yield ourselves unto Him with full purpose of heart. This is to be done by taking up the Cross and following the Lord Jesus every day of our life.

God speaks to Abraham, calling him by his name, as his Friend and Lord. He, in peace and communion, promptly replies, "Behold, here am I." It would seem as if throughout this long and sore trial the soul of Abraham was preserved in perfect peace. Thus in this chapter we have this brief and ready answer to the call, in ver. 1, of God; in ver. 7, of his son; and in ver. 11, of the angel. In each place the reply is the same in Hebrew. A fiery trial like this would surely itself tend in God's hands to produce tranquillity of heart. It would be felt to be a time of the special visitation of God.

In the divine command now given to Abraham are seven particulars, one after another leading towards a purposed climax, in order that the full force of the trial might be felt, and thus the faith, by obedience, be found genuine. Now the obedience rendered was unquestioning; uncomplaining; exactly according to the Word; it was prompt; it was deliberate; it involved the surrender, at God's call, of all possessed; it was to slay his son, and it was to be done by himself. As for the son, as the truth of the Lord's will dawns on his mind gradually, he appears to have bowed his head in hearty acquiescence to the will of God. At this time he must have been old enough to have opposed himself with resolution, had he been so minded. He was not less than twenty-four years of age. Trained, as God had declared that Abraham would train his family, in His fear, he is conscious that for true worship there must be a Lamb for a burnt-offering, which is far more than many of our religious wiseacres of this day are aware of. And when to his question, "Where is the lamb?" he has received the suggestive reply, "My son, God will provide for Himself a lamb," silence followed on either side, which

appears to have remained unbroken by either till they reach the place. As if each knew more about the intended victim than they liked to tell the one to the other. And each had leisure for reflection and for drawing back, had either been so disposed. But each remained steadfast in heart. It is well to notice this, that we may learn, *mutatis mutandis*, to copy it. Doubtless, Abraham knew that God would, somehow or other, give him back his son. His language in verse 5 implies as much: "I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and we will come again to you" (so Hebrew). But in what manner this would come to pass he knew not; he left it to God.

So, when at last the crisis came, each continued firm. No hesitation was there in the one, and no resistance by the other. "He took the knife to slay his son." Here I admire, not so much the unfaltering obedience of Abraham, nor yet the perfect concurrence of Isaac in that obedience to the divine will, as I wonder at the grace of God that could take up a wretched idolater, so as Abraham had been, and teach him His love, and train him to this entire self-abnegation and self-consecration unto God. A descendant of rebellious Adam, as each of these was by nature, had been so won over by sovereign grace, that to do or to suffer the will of God was preferred by them before everything. Now such obedience we ought to be prepared gladly to render. Yea, even from this example, bright as it surely is, we are commanded to "look off," in order to contemplate One whose path was infinitely more arduous and painful still. And He it is who is our Exemplar. He has given to us of His Spirit; and as many as are led by the Spirit of God, so as He was led, they, and they only, are the sons

of God. Fail in detail and in practice we may, and often do; yet our calling to association with Himself and to tread in His footsteps is unchanged.

But it remains for us to inquire, in the presence of a type of far higher things, as we all feel sure we have here, what is the great truth itself foreshadowed under all this? Was the offering up by Abraham of his son designed to be a picture, and a lesson to us as to what it cost Him who spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him for us all? Or, on the other hand, are we here taught that the sinner deserved death and must have met it, had not a ram—a substitute—been found instead? It appears to me there is no need for these two views to be regarded as antagonistic. Surely here, as in many other Scriptures, we behold a double type of Christ. For instance: we have elsewhere the burnt and sin offerings: the two goats; the two birds, or sparrows; —Moses with Aaron; David with Solomon; Elijah with Elisha, and divers others.

Now, as to the former aspect, Isaac is termed Abraham's only-begotten, and is said to have been actually "offered up" (James 2:21). "In a figure," too, Abraham received him from the dead; and, what is very remarkable, after that he must have been accounted by him as good as dead for three days—I mean, from the moment when he heard God's command, till the time when he came down from the mount. The place, too, was "the land of Moriah," wherein David at a subsequent period built an altar, and where Solomon reared the Temple, and in which Calvary itself was situated. Again, if we look at Isaac, we see depicted, in his carrying the wood on which, himself was to be slain, the voluntariness of the sacrifice of Christ. He delighted to do the will of God.

That the world might know that He loved the Father, and as the Father gave Him commandment, so He went onward up to the cross. Was the wood laid on Isaac, and presently Isaac placed on the wood? Thus on the cross was sin laid on Christ, and He Himself was made sin for us who knew no sin. In fact, not a single feature of importance in the history is there, but it finds its counterpart in some precious feature of God's and of Christ's love. The shadow may, in many respects, be faint, compared with the great sacrifice itself. For instance, on the cross of Christ the divine eye had been riveted ere the world began. All through His human life, too, the cross at the end of His path must have weighed on Christ's soul. When He read Isa. 53, He would have no occasion to ask, as did the Ethiopian eunuch, "Of whom speaketh the prophet thus, of himself or of some other?" "And of all that chapter, the verse that might appear to have most keenly touched Him was the clause, "He was numbered with the transgressors." For this sentence He specially singled out for observation as the time of the cross drew nigh; whilst Abraham's knowledge of what sacrifice was required of him extended, as we have seen, only over three days, and Isaac's acquaintance therewith for probably a less period still.

On the other hand, the ram was caught, and Christ was held fast by the horns of His strength and love. It was not left to Abraham to find the ram, nor to the sinner to procure a substitute. Neither Abraham in the one case, nor we in the other, had any idea of such a mercy. Nay, more; unless we had been distinctly certified thereof by God, never should we have known that God had a Son, and that that Son could be, only could be and would be,

the Victim. God found us Christ, and gave Him up expressly that He might die the Just for the unjust. Then the soul, acquiescing in God's way of grace by the substitution of this Saviour for itself, sees death to be its own desert, and bows to the sentence, and at once obtains resurrection in Christ risen.

As Isaac descended from the mount, not one scratch, we may be sure, was to be found upon him. He stood, "in a figure," in resurrection, even as we in Christ are beyond judgment, beyond the cross and the grave. We are in Christ, but Christ is not dead. Christ is risen, glorified. There, then, likewise, is our standing. The cross is not between the believer and his God, but between the believer and the world. The cross is behind him, and by it he is crucified to the world, and it to him. And now he belongs only to God and his Father, and to the Lord Jesus Christ his Saviour. Henceforth such a one is a saint, a separated man, a pilgrim and a stranger in this world. He is only here at all through having been first taken out of it by Christ his Lord, and then sent back as a risen man to "bear much fruit" (see Rom. 7:4). For this cause this wonderful chapter closes with a list of children related to Abraham. And likewise, in the promise of God to him here, we now find conjoined the mention of the heavenly and of the earthly seeds. Previously, the Lord had first assured Abraham that his seed should be as the sand of the seashore (chap. 13:16). Later on, the Lord had said that his seed should resemble the stars of heaven in multitude. But here the word is as to both of these families; to wit, of the earthly and of the heavenly. And, lastly, we are instructed in that notable parenthesis of Gal. 3:15 to 4:7, that the term "seed," which itself may, of course, be either singular or

plural, points mainly to Isaac coming down from the mount as the type of Christ in resurrection. He is the true Seed, the true Son, the only Head. Of Him "every family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3:15, Greek).

Chapter 23. "The God of glory gave to Abraham no inheritance" in Canaan; "no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet He promised that He would give if, to him for a possession." Thus was he taught to trust and to wait. He was "a stranger in the land of promise" (verse 4). The Hittites claimed the soil on which he stood; yet was he "the friend of God." No sign, then, is it of a lack of His friendship to have little or no portion here. Even if Abraham required a place for sepulture, he must purchase it. Of all places in Canaan, Hebron, where Sarah died, seems to have been the best known to the Israelites, previous to their entering on its possession in Joshua's time. It is particularly singled out in Num. 13:22, when the Spirit would show that the whole land belonged by gift to Israel ere that nation went down to Egypt. Hebron was built ready for them, "seven years," a complete period, ere Zoan, in Egypt, was. Yet it was here, of all places, that Abraham had to buy land in which to bury his dead. Truly the ways of God are wonderful. We may here well be reminded of Another, who, when He came to His own property, His own people on it received Him not. They said, "This is the Heir," and they killed Him. All that He had here was, as we say, a cross and a borrowed grave. And now His own are surely taught to hold "lands and houses," at most, with a light grasp (Acts 4:34). Our place of blessing is in the heavenlies, where all spiritual blessings are by us to be enjoyed. On earth, having food and raiment, let us, as blessed with believing Abraham, be content. God will

put all in their respective places round His Son in His good time. If His Son has been cast out and slain, and is Himself waiting for His prayer to be answered (John 17:24), and expecting till His foes are made His footstool, we cannot do better than wait and suffer with Him. Faith knows, on the warrant of God's Word, that He is risen. The Holy Ghost has come down to testify of His glory in the highest heavens; but here below Satan reigns on sufferance, and by usurpation. The Lord accepts for a while His rejection, whilst a heavenly people are being drawn to Him yonder.

Meanwhile, Israel is a widow. She has had a hand, yea, and the chief hand, in the murder of her Husband. Never in Scripture is the Church of God compared to a widow. That one in Luke 18:5 cries for vengeance, which assuredly is not the Church's prayer, but Israel's, as in the Psalms. As yet, the Church has never been married to the Lord; she is only betrothed; and this present period is the interval between the betrothal and the marriage, during which love-messages are sent by the Bridegroom to the bride. The bearer of these to us is the Holy Ghost (John 16); and the Lord and we are each waiting for the nuptial day (John 17:24).

Israel as a nation is dead. It was consigned to the grave by the Lord when He pronounced upon it the sign of Jonas the prophet.¹⁴ God can breathe upon the slain, and cause them to live. The vision of a valley full of dry bones that the prophet beheld, though it may, perhaps, properly be used to illustrate the resurrection of the body, or the divine quickening of the unregenerate, was primarily given to set forth the revival of "the whole house of Israel" (Ezek. 37:11); and still do these "children of thy people," as Daniel was told, "sleep in

the dust of the earth" (chap. 12:2). But "thy dead men shall live." The earth shall "cast out" these dead. They shall "awake and sing," though now they "dwell in dust," as Isaiah predicts (chap. 26:19). Thus, as the Church, in the heavenlies, so Israel in the earthlies, obtains the promise only in resurrection. Hence it is that this sign of Jonas was uttered by the Lord Jesus on two several occasions. When first He spoke of this sign of death and resurrection, He next proceeded to speak of the kingdom of heaven and its mysteries, thereby signifying that His reign on earth, and concurrently Israel's time of blessing, were, through, that nation's unbelief, delayed. Now Israel can only become a witness for God, and a preacher to the world, as Jonas in resurrection was. (Matt. 12:40, with Matt, 13) Then, shortly after, the Lord repeated this same sign, when at once you hear of the Church, and of the Rock on which that Church is built (compare Matt, 16:4 with verse 18). Thus, whilst Israel, for not recognizing her Messiah, is temporarily set aside, the Church is called out and constituted during the Lord's absence, to be the heavenly witness for God in the world. Even this very earth itself must pass through a sort of regeneration, or resurrection (Matt. 19:28). And thus, whether it be of the Lord Himself, or of His Church, or of Israel, or of the earth, God's way is one, even by that one, that no eagle's eye has seen, namely by death and resurrection.

But, in regard to all of this, each part in its own due season. Here in the type Israel dies—"For your iniquities is your mother put away" (Isa. 1.) On Sarah personally is bestowed this honour, that she only, of all women in the Bible, has the number of her years recorded. But,

typically, the Lord has deeper counsels of love to unfold, while Israel acknowledges Him not.

Chapter 24. Though Israel for a time remains in ignorance and in death as to her Messiah, yet Christ's resurrection is the secure guarantee that all promised to that nation shall ultimately be fulfilled, and the nation revived and restored (Acts 13:32, 33). Meanwhile, that same resurrection is the occasion of the outflow of grace to the world at large (Acts 13:34, with Isa. 55:1-3). But Israel having rejected Him on earth, and again in resurrection, the Lord has retired into deeper glory, and has sat down at the right hand of God. When the Jews murdered Stephen, and thereby consummated their rejection of Christ a second time, then He raises up Paul to unfold the doctrine of the Church. And in the Church there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but Christ is all and in all.

Now, whilst the Church for the heavenlies is being gathered out, the Lord has nothing to do with the earth as such, save in a providential manner. He remains hidden in the Father's house. She is brought thither to Him by Another. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are equally God; but officially, as Christ has been pleased to act as the divine Servant of the Father, so the Holy Ghost is engaged in acting as the divine Servant of Christ. Hence, mark what emphasis is thrown again and again in the type here, that the son Isaac, as if risen from the dead since chap. 22 is to remain in the father's house, whilst the servant comes forth to woo and to win a bride for him (chap. 24:6-8). No one type of Christ in any character can be a complete representation of the One so gloriously full. Hence, in the case of Jacob the servant, he goes forth and serves for a bride, and fairly

earns her. For Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it (Hosea 12:12, with Eph. 5:25). And the way of the Spirit of God in sketching the types of Christ is sometimes, as here, to put the higher aspect first; so similarly the account of the burnt-offering precedes that of the sin-offering in Leviticus.

So as we here see our calling is quite a heavenly one, as is evidenced by where Christ continues during that call of the Holy Ghost sent forth in person to tell of the hidden glories of the Son, and of the priceless value of His work and blood-shedding, as seen, and seen only, in the uncreated light of God's immediate presence. It is impossible that anywhere else but there, for the full worth of His blood, and of His finished work, to be seen. And there He is at present; and down here the Holy Ghost is on purpose to tell us of these heavenly glories. See especially John 16:13-15; 2 Cor. 3:18; and Eph. 1:17. In the tabernacle of old, some vessels were of brass or copper, and others of gold. Those which were uncovered were of copper; at which sin was dealt with and judged according to the divine perfections. But those perfections are not fully revealed by the somewhat negative way of coping with our sin. Beyond all this, what God is in Himself, what are the riches of His grace, of His love as in making us His born sons and daughters, and in rendering us competent for the inheritance of the saints in light and much more to the same effect, on a like grand and infinite scale, all this was borne witness to by some of the furniture in the tabernacle being covered with pure gold. Now it was on and before the mercy-seat, made of pure gold, that the blood was sprinkled upon the day of atonement. Therefore, during this age, antitypical of that day, God is telling out the

value of Christ's blood, according to His own estimate thereof, by His supreme kindness to us who are the pretrusters in Christ, whilst that Christ is in there. On the mercy-seat of old, there was blood—symbol of death—only; but now, Christ, as the mercy-seat, is “placed forth” outside, for any sinner at once to approach (Rom. 3:25); whilst, also, the living Christ, His Son, is seated upon the throne within. Being a man, he requires a throne, which the mercy-seat is never once called. Being the Son of the living God, as seen in there, the Church is in continuance of being built upon Him (Matt. 16.) Being our Life He is “hid” in there (Col. 3.); and we, by the Holy Ghost, are being drawn to Him, whom we have never yet seen. Our affections are set, or should be, on things above, where He is. Moved by the wondrous story as to who He is and what is His love, and of the Father's counsels concerning Him and in Him, about us, we have been spoiled for all here that once our hearts had been set upon. Those things have been set before us, of which once we never had an idea; they had never entered our hearts. But now we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope suited to such a righteousness as ours is!

Like Rebecca, we have believed the word that the servant of the risen Son has told us. It has sunk into our hearts; it has detached us in spirit from the empty scene all around us. We have set out on our pilgrimage. The Holy Ghost Himself is our companion throughout our journey. Thoughts, and vistas, and tastes of heaven He the Earnest gives to us whilst yet on the road. The fall certainty that we shall reach home at last, and see Him that has loved us, and be with Him and like Him for ever, animates us in our daily plodding along, which is not without its difficulties. Though nothing is more crooked

or uneasy to ride upon than the camel, little leisure would Rebecca have to be annoyed thereat, through her companion's solicitude, and her prospect at the end. God, in His Word, oft points us to the end. He contrasts, too, the "end of the wicked," and the "end of the Lord," which He accords to His own.

So when her journey neared its termination, we may note how on the alert Rebecca was. She felt that he who was advancing was Isaac, the risen one, the son of the father himself. Thus daily do we wait; aye, and watch for Him. And he did come forth to meet and to welcome her who had come out to meet him. She covered herself with a veil as he approached, and we shall be self-hidden and abased adoring in His presence. In the case of Isaac, he took the bride that the father had chosen for him. On the other side of the double type, to wit, Jacob, he got the wife of his heart's choice. The two together fully and blessedly set forth how that the Father has given us as the Bride to His Son; and how that Bride is likewise she on whom His own heart had been set. We are the eternal choice of both the Father and the Son; "And all mine are thine, and thine are mine," said Christ to that Father.

Lastly, we read that Isaac "loved" Rebecca, and was comforted after his mother's death. Christ loved us ere the world began; He loves us now, He loves us to the end. He will love us home; and when at last at home with Him, He will still love us. Surely this finishing touch in the type is delightful! For a while He has lost Israel, but He will provoke that people to jealousy. But when these, His brethren after the flesh, do at length come and bow themselves down to Him, as they will do when as the antitypical Joseph He rules over the world, such will discover that during their rejection of Him, there is

a Bride nearer to Him than; they, and she an Egyptian. But here I am anticipating what we shall look at presently.

Thus have I briefly touched upon this most instructive and thrilling type. It is one which I trust we have all often enjoyed and profited by. Hence if there had been time for me to enlarge more fully, there is the less need for this. Here we have a pilgrim's progress, indeed, far more glowing with the light of heaven and with the glory of the risen Son than Bunyan dreamt of; and this account is traced with an inspired pen.

In the history there is little necessitating remark; to only one point do I advert. As the Holy Ghost has been pleased to act as the great servant of the Lord Jesus, so does He condescend to employ under-servants many. These, whether in wooing the hearts of sinners to Christ, or in urging the saints to come forth to meet the heavenly Bridegroom, would do well to copy from this Eliezer here. His whole work was carried on in prayer. There is more about prayer in this chapter than is to be found in the entire book. And when, in view of the responsible character of our work, we pour out our souls unto God, the Spirit Himself within us helps our infirmities. Let us never forget this.

This last section of the life of our patriarch concludes with a word as to his marriage with Keturah, of his offspring by her, and then of his own death. Now as Hagar and Ishmael, as we have seen from Romans and Galatians, represent Israel according to the flesh, so likewise here may be a glance at that Gentile world, which with the Jew is to be blessed presently on earth; for the blessing of the nations in due time depends on

their connection with the Hebrew, and their subordination to Israel under its rightful King. Sebah and Dedan, two of Keturah's descendants, are especially mentioned as opponents of Gog, in his disastrous march into Canaan against Israel (Ezek. 38:13). And those nations or Gentiles siding with Christ's earthly brethren during their great coming period of sorrow, are singled out for favour by Him in Matt. 25:40. Viewed in this light, it would appear that each of the women who pass before us in this section is a representative character; Sarah, as the mother of the true seed; and Hagar, Keturah, and Rebecca, Israel after the flesh, the Gentile and the Church of God. Here compare a parallel type in 1 Kings. After Solomon has built the temple, as Christ is now engaged in building the Church, there is, His own house,¹⁵ Israel, and next "the house of the forest of Lebanon," the last of these, an earnest of the blessing of the nations in the millennium (1 Kings 7:1, 2; Rev. 21:24).

Lastly, we read that Abraham died in a good old age, and was "gathered to his people." Not so bright an outlook for these saints of old, as is now the portion of every Christian (see 2 Cor. 5:8, and Phil. 1:23). Luke 16 speaks of a pious Jew carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. And this, too, was ere Christ's own death and resurrection had wrought such mighty changes. But now John 21:7, and 2 Cor. 12:1-4, set before us the former in symbol and the latter in plain statement, the prospect of a believer on his death-bed.

10 See my Lecture on chap. 17 of the Revelation.

11 See explanation of this word "perfect," in Remarks on the Epistles of John, p. 127.

12 See some instances of this His way cited in my Lectures on Revelation, vol. 2, p. 107, note 2.

13 See the remarks at the beginning of chap. 15.

14 Jonas, like Israel, refused to witness for God; and, like to ourselves, he was disobedient, and sought to flee away from God. Then Christ, taking the sinner's true place, not under mere water, but under the waves of God's wrath, sinks into death. Then, coming forth as the Resurrection and the Life, first He gives life to us, and presently, as Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, quoted above, show, He will revive Israel after two prophetic days (Hosea 6:2).

15 With the number of years (thirteen) during which Solomon was building his own house, compare the number of bullocks offered for Israel at the feast of tabernacles (Num. 29). And see a suggestion thereon in my Lectures on Revelation, vol. 2 p. 182.

The Lord's Way with Isaac, the Typical Son

Genesis 25:11 to end of 27.

Chapter 25:11. Now the fifth of the seven representative men of Genesis is fully before us. Here, it is submitted, we have the divine teaching in the type of Isaac, as to a Christian's standing and sonship. For, on account of the reason already assigned in chap. 21, Isaac here seems rather to represent the sons, than the Son. Only as an adult, and during his father's life, is he the type of the Son. And first, at the very outset, and in a most marked and definite manner, the proper status and dwelling-place of Isaac are set before us. "With designed prominence is the statement in the text given, "Isaac dwelt by the well of the living and seeing One" (25:11). When just now we come to chap. 26, we shall have to revert to this important passage, as the clue to that entire chapter. But I take occasion hence at once to call attention to the place where a believer, as a risen son of God, is ultimately to be brought, and where by faith he should constantly abide, even now. I mean, of course, the presence of God, and under the very eye of God. There is no perfect, enduring rest anywhere else. Eph. 5:27; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24; and especially for now, 2 Cor. 3:18.

Next, according to the usual style¹⁶ of the Holy Ghost in the Word, ere aught more is said of the one blessed of God, the account is furnished us of Ishmael's offspring, and of his death. He begat twelve princes, according to the promise made by God to Abraham in chap. 17:20. Since Hagar and Ishmael represent Israel after the

flesh, there may possibly be a shadow here of the twelve tribes of Israel; “princes” and “thousands” being used interchangeably of that nation (Micah 5:2, with Matt. 2:6). Already reference has been made to three of his sons, Mishma, Dumab, and Massa, in chap. 21. I may add that three others of these sons are alluded to in Isa. 60, Kedar, Nebajoth, and Adbeel, “a cloud of God.” Then we are told that Ishmael died in the presence of all his brethren.

Now we can, without distraction, attend to the type of the sons risen in and with the Son. Here four points of instruction demand our consideration. First, the birth of the twins, Esau and Jacob, and the despising of the birthright by Esau; secondly, Isaac’s departure to and tarriance in Gerar; thirdly, his return to Canaan, and the prompt action of God towards him on that return of his; and fourthly, the blessing, despised on the part of Esau, sought for, though with tears yet in vain, when too late.

Now, inasmuch as the subject of the chapters which we are considering is in type sonship, it has pleased God first to place before us that sonship with Him ever rests on His own free choice, and that He is a sovereign God. This He had already affirmed in His attitude towards Ishmael and Isaac. But now in these other cases of Esau and Jacob, this affirmation is repeated more distinctly and peremptorily. For whilst in the case of the former two, Isaac was the child of promise, and not Ishmael; yet the force of this Scripture ruling might seem to be weakened by the fact that though their father was one, their mothers were two, and one a bondmaid but the other a free woman. But here, on the other hand, no scope for such an objection is possible. Their father is one and their mother is one; themselves are living, and

ere they are born, or have done good or evil, the divine choice is announced to Rebecca. And then, in Rom. 9, the Scripture here is quoted and dogmatically applied to ourselves. Only, be it ever remembered that whilst the choice was of God, ere the children had come to the birth, yet the word as to the “hatred” of which we read in the next verse, in Romans, is a quotation, not from this passage in Genesis, but from Malachi. That is to say, we hear first of the “hatred” after the children have lived, and after the natural wickedness in the heart of the one, unchecked by divine grace as in the other, had developed itself into a sinful course of life. The same way of God obtains even now. If we be indeed His children, this is owing to His own predestination and election (see Eph. 1). On the other hand, we read of God’s hardening men’s hearts. But when—at what period of their life is He said to do this? After they have disdained to receive the truth in the love of it, that they might be saved (2 Thess. 2:10—12). So in Romans 9, of the vessels of mercy we read that He prepared them beforehand for glory. But of the vessels of wrath, they are only said to be fitted for destruction. It is not said that He fitted them. It is implied that sin did this, as a barrel of gunpowder is fitted to produce an explosion. In other words, the preparation of some for glory is spoken of in the active voice, God being the agent. But the fitting for destruction is in the Greek in the passive voice, and is not attributed, as is the other, to God. So Matt. 25:34 with 41. I might add, if more evidence on this important distinction were needed, that hatred itself is often spoken of in Scripture, when a less love only is meant. Compare verses 30 and 31 of Gen. 29; and again, Matt. 10:37, with Luke 14:26.

Accordingly, when the boys Esau and Jacob reach maturity, an occasion offers itself for the display of the heart's scorning of God, when uncontrolled by grace, in the sale by Esau of his birthright to Jacob. I do not assert positively that, at this early period, Jacob possessed the grace of God; still, attention is called in the narrative to the pilgrimage style of life of Jacob, as "dwelling in tents," with which marked feature of his every-day life compare the emphatic comment on this practice of the patriarchs in Heb, 11. Also, instead of the clause, "Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents," the Hebrew has it, "Jacob was a perfect man"—the same word as is afterwards used of Job. Nor let any of us forget that, of this very sin we ourselves are admonished to see that none of us are found guilty as Esau—"who for a meal sold his birthright." This, in effect, we should be if we set anything in preference before our hearts to His favour, whether it be a trifle, or aught or all that the world has to offer. The time came when Esau rued his bargain, as we shall see. So will sinners in eternity; but he and they rue it too late.

Chapter 26. Secondly, chap. 26 tells of Isaac departing from the well of the living and seeing One in Canaan, and presently settling down in Gerar. But now, since some have denied the sin of Isaac in this matter, and because here certainly is represented in type the standing of a son of God, and his failure often to maintain that standing in the divine presence, and his enjoyment of divine communion, to which in sovereign grace, and by the blood of Jesus, he is ever entitled, therefore it will be well here to call careful attention to the exact words used by the Spirit of God. The English translation of certain terms in this passage by no means

comes up to the vividness and emphasis in the Hebrew. All will note the injunction, "Go not down to Egypt," and ponder the preposition. "down," which often has a moral force in it, e.g., in Luke 10:30. But, further, verses 2, 6, and 17 should be rendered thus "Shechinah in the land," etc. (verse 2); "wander in this land" (verse 3); "and Isaac settled in Gerar" (verse 6); and again, "Isaac settled there" (verse 17). The word for "settle" denotes properly to sit down at ease. So in Luke 21:35 we read that "that day shall come as a snare upon all them that are settled on the face of all the earth." Thus this settling down of Isaac is spoken of by the Spirit as if it were wrong, and it is so spoken, of twice. Moreover, this settling down was in a border land, never a right thing for a saint to do (see Song of Sol. 4:8). In fact, Lebanon, spoken of in the Song, is in the Holy Land, though at its outskirts. But Gerar was not at all so situated. It is midway between Canaan and Egypt. And all of us will have noticed that never once did the Lord Jesus, when on earth, pass the limits of the Holy Land.

Further, Isaac was to "Shechinah in" Canaan. This suggestive word finds its interpretation, as we have seen, in chap. 25:11. His proper abode was by "the well of the living and seeing One." In the antitype the matter is quite simple. We are called to abide in Christ, and to walk in the light of God. There only can we have fellowship with Him. All darkness, even the least, is abhorrent to His nature; there He cannot hold communion with us. He can come down into our darkness; He has done so. The Lord Jesus thus came into our place on the cross; but He did this to lift us up out of it, and to lift us into association with Himself perpetually and for ever. There by His blood we are ever entitled to

remain. It is by His blood-shedding it hath pleased Him that He Himself should go in there; and this on purpose to show us where the blood entitles one so entering into God's presence to be. Hence, whilst in Heb. 9:12 we read of Christ's entering and continuance there on the ground of His blood-shedding, so in Heb. 10 we also read of our boldness to enter there on that same ground. And therefore the Lord Jesus Himself and the believer are before God on precisely the same ground. If that ground can be weakened for me, so likewise it can for Him. If on that footing He remains there, so may I too. There, in that holy of holies, the uncreated light of God shines on Him and on us also. That Shechinah, bright as it is, only displays the richness of the blood of Jesus, and so the security of my standing. Shame on me that I ever get away in experience, and so, as far as I can, disparage the blood of the Lamb. Let us daily dwell in the presence of the living, seeing God. So far from Isaac in type doing this, he not only got away from that well, but he settled down in Gerar.

The consequence of this heart-sin, we who know ourselves might easily infer. Once get away from God, and who can tell where we shall stop, unless grace keep and restore us? So Isaac in Gerar fails in the flesh in the very way that Abraham his father had failed before him—he tells a lie to secure his quiet; as if this were an equivalent to the furnace with the presence of God. We too, or any of us, may prosper as to this world, whilst our conscience is ill at ease, or was at the commencement of our departure from the truth, and from Scripture principles. Of course, all this wealth which he acquired whilst out of Canaan is attributed to God, for God is good to all. But if we have to choose

between the presence of God as distinguished from earthly blessing, all of us, I trust, would prefer the former. And particularly in this dispensation of the Church, and of the heavenly call, it is a common thing to see men with very many earthly blessings, whilst yet they are in total ignorance of Himself who gives them. Such will thank God for a meal who never thanked Him for the gift of His Son. Yea, more, even Christians in a declining state may exhibit an ardour in their business transactions such as they but little eventually display in the things of God. The world is winding round their hearts; "grey hairs are here and there upon them, and they know it not."

Then, as with Isaac as we see him here, such at these times exhibit themselves as very wilful. Providences may have a voice which yet they will not hear. The Abimelechs of the day may say to them, "Go from us," and they still reply in act, as Isaac did, by continuing "settled" where they ought not to be (verse 17). Scarcely will the bit and the bridle avail, where, if they were in the right path, the guidance of God's eye would be ample. So, again, we read here of contention taking place as to whose were certain wells that Isaac's servants had dug. With some readiness he surrendered them one after another, after some show of contention; because, as we shall see directly, he is not at ease in conscience. It is impossible for a saint to pursue this world with the same alacrity and constancy that the unregenerate man exhibits. When off the divine ground of communion, he may strive in measure with a worldly man, but with the less inward ease as he is conscious of his false position. A bread-living is all that God allows his saints to seek for here. And this, with His own favour

and smile, He will give them. But if they covet more of the former, more than proportionately they lose of the latter.

Hence, thirdly, we read in verse 23 that Isaac went up to Beersheba. This statement is in singular conjunction with the verse before, where, as if at perfect ease, he said, whilst yet in Gerar, "The Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." Then if so, wherefore this sudden change of purpose, involving the loss of all these wells? Because what he, talking piously, had said with his lips, as if to quiet his uneasy spirit, his next action contradicted. He knew he was where he ought not to be. His resolve to depart appears to have been taken just at the time that everything appeared to invite him to remain. Many Christians, in their Martha-like bustle, and in their Demas-like declension, could easily give passages from their past experience which would form an apt commentary on all this. The verses do not require any explanation; we all know, probably, the evil of departure from communion in the desire of "other things," and our wretched state of soul, until we returned to our God.

And this interpretation of verse 23 is confirmed by the Lord's instant action in verse 24. On the very night of Isaac's return to Canaan, the Lord appears to him. No longer does He hide Himself, and address Isaac providentially through Abimelech; but He Himself says, "I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed, for my servant Abraham's sake." This is a very different blessing indeed from what we had read in verse 12. And oh! the loving-kindness of God, not to delay this restoring word; no, not for one day, probably not for an

hour! And this is our God, who forgives us, and restores our souls.

Then we read of the altar and the tent, and each in their due order; whilst of the former we read not a word during Isaac's being settled down in Gerar. Now, too, we hear of a well, enjoyed as had not been the others with the presence of God. And, finally, no longer does?"

Abimelech urge his departure from himself, but on the contrary, now he seeks after Isaac. Thus all readily falls into place, when we begin rightly with communion with God, and obedience to His revealed will. One blot we may notice in Isaac at this time, even as there are spots in the sun and slips in every Christian. He did not command his household, at least, Esau, in the matter of his marriage, as he ought to have done. And thereby he procures grief for himself and for his wife. For sin or negligence ever brings sorrow.

Chapter 27. Fourthly, in this chapter 27, we are taught that those who despise the grace and love of God will bitterly rue their scorn when their loss is irretrievable. God is not mocked; what a man soweth, that will he reap. If he sows to the flesh he will reap corruption. So we see here. In chap. 25:33, we have the commencement of such sowing; here we behold the speedy, the initial reaping; for some men's sins go beforehand to judgment. Even in this life they may feel some of the effects of their sin. At the same time there is forgiveness with God, that He may be feared. Well therefore is it for him whose consequent sorrow leads to repentance of the sin that entailed it. True, Esau, though he wept, found no place for repentance and no forgiveness. But a little reflection will remove this difficulty. For what was the cause of his tears? Not the

sin which he had committed in despising God's mercy, but the loss of the blessing which he had incurred.¹⁷ Who does not eventually grieve at loss sustained? But is such grief, sorrow after a godly sort? No such thing. His was like that of Judas—remorse, not repentance (Matt, 27:3, Greek). And though in this scene Esau acted more uprightly than any other who figures in it, still he had sown the wind, and he was reaping the whirlwind.

Then after Esau's vain efforts we can notice Isaac's. He was determined, if possible, to secure the blessing for his favourite. This is seen in his haste to bless him, as if he were already on his dying bed, whereas he lived over forty years after this time.¹⁸ But all was without avail. God had purposed, and who could set aside that purpose? Rebecca's pet was Jacob. But neither her design nor Jacob's craft could hurry God. Truly Jacob got a blessing here at this time, but not the one—not such, an one as, when wholly cast on grace, we find in chap. 28:3, 4; as when the Lord appeared to him a homeless stranger for his guilt, and gave him that long string of promises and blessings, of which we find mention there in verses 13-15. All that Rebecca and he got through their not waiting patiently for God to interfere was that they were separated the one from the other, and never saw each other's face again. From Heb. 11:20, where we read that "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau," it would appear that he was led to pause in his endeavour to intercept the blessing for his favourite Esau, and heartily to ratify the bestowal of the greater blessing upon Jacob, which unintentionally, and against his own wish, he had pronounced upon him. Then the allusion in the passage in Hebrews will be of course to the moment when he discovered his mistake, and yet recognizing at

length what was the will of God, instead of further attempts to oppose it, exclaimed, "Yea, and he shall be blessed." Setting aside his own inclinations, and shrinking from the brink of the precipice of wilfulness, which in his blind infatuation for Esau he had approached, he, triumphing over himself, acquiesces in the will of God. What a mercy it is, if at any time we have been determined to proceed to almost any lengths in carrying out that on which we have set our hearts, though yet against His will, God arrests us in our folly.

Grace does thus check erring saints when sometimes they have appeared madly bent upon going further and further in a wrong course. "The Lord turned and looked upon Peter." What would that Peter have done next and next, had it not been for that look of divine compassion?

It falls not within the design of these addresses to attempt an exposition of all that is contained in this chapter. My object the rather is to gather up the main lines of thought in each section, and to place each distinctly in view. These being well apprehended by any one, the various incidents and details of the narrative will be seen to more advantage as grouped all round the leading idea, and filling up perfectly the spaces in the inspired picture.

16 See further on, at chap. 36

17 Flevit quod perdidit, non quod vendidit.— Augustine.

18 This blessing of Isaac's sons was in the year b c. 1760. But Isaac lived until the year b.c. 1716 (see Gen. xxv:28). Even there the account of his death seems inserted anticipatively. For Isaac was only 150 years old when Joseph was born. But he lived 180 years.