

THROUGH THE BIBLE—BOOK BY BOOK

# The Books of the Pentateuch

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus,  
Numbers, Deuteronomy

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THEOLOGICAL

✓ By

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## Preface

**I**T is the purpose of this volume, as of those to follow in the series "Through the Bible Book by Book," to present the contents of the English Bible in a popular and practical as well as an authoritative manner. There has been continual reference made to the original Hebrew in the preparation of the matter composing these books of the Pentateuch, although the reader is not confronted and confused by the appearance of the Hebrew text on the page. For this reason it is hoped that the exposition will appeal to both minister and laymen, it being simple and yet deep, deep and yet simple.

Genesis has received a much fuller treatment than any other of the four books. The reason is obvious. Genesis holds a more important place. It is the seed-plot of the whole Bible. It contains in seed and germ all the great truths developed in all the books that follow it. Genesis is the book of beginnings in a very real sense. Again, certain events are passed over in the exposition if they have been dealt with in a preceding book. If any new features are emphasized in the second account reference is made to this addition.

Much time and care have been devoted to the synopsis preceding each book. It should be carefully studied before taking up the more minute exposition. Time thus spent will be well rewarded by a better understanding of the contents of the book under consideration.

This initial volume of the series is sent out with the

earnest prayer that God will through its pages lead the reader into a deeper and more intelligent understanding of the sacred Scriptures which are able to make wise unto salvation.

W. E.

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# The Book of Genesis



# Synopsis of Genesis

## PART I

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

- I. THE RELATION OF GOD TO THE WORLD (Chap. i.)
- II. THE RELATION OF MAN TO GOD—SINLESS AND SINFUL (Chaps. ii.—iii.)
  1. Man as Sinless and Unfallen (Chap. ii.).
    - (a) Man's Origin and Nature.
    - (b) Man's Environment—Eden.
    - (c) Man's Companion—Eve.
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  2. Man as Sinful and Fallen (Chap. iii.).
- III. THE RELATION OF MAN TO HIS FELLOWMEN (Chaps. iv.—v.)
- IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SIN IN THE RACE—THE PENALTY OF SIN (Chaps. vii.—viii.)

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

- I. ABRAHAM, THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL (Chaps. xii.—xxv.)
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The First Episode—Egypt (Chaps. xii. 10–xiii. 13 ; cf. Chap. xx.).

Lot—A Study in Backsliding—Another Episode (Chap. xiii. 5–13).

3. The Third Manifestation of God to Abraham—Reassurance (Chap. xiii. 14–17).

The Second Episode—The Battle of the Kings (Chap. xiv.).

4. The Fourth Manifestation of God to Abraham—The Promise of a Seed and the Land Reaffirmed (Chap. xv. 1–21).

The Third Episode—Hagar and Ishmael (Chap. xvi. 1–16).

5. The Fifth Manifestation of God to Abraham—Added Assurance (Chap. xvii. 1–27).

6. The Sixth Manifestation of God to Abraham—Intercession (Chaps. xviii.–xix.).

Fourth Episode—Abraham and Abimelech (Chaps. xx. and xxi. 22–33).

7. The Seventh Manifestation of God to Abraham—The Supreme Test of Faith (Chaps. xxii.–xxv.).

Fifth Episode—The Death of Sarah (Chap. xxiii.).

## II. THE HISTORY OF ISAAC (Chaps. xxv. 19–xxviii. 9, Chap. xxxv.)

1. Isaac's Birth and Name (Chaps. xvii. 17–19; xviii. 12–13 ; xxi. 6).

2. The Marriage of Isaac (Chap. xxiv.).

3. Isaac's Career (Chap. xxvi. 1–22, 23–33).

(a) The First Manifestation of God to Isaac (Chap. xxvi. 1–22).

(b) The Second Manifestation of God to Isaac—Beer-sheba (Chap. xxvi. 23–33).

4. Isaac's Death (Chap. xxxv. 28, 29).

## III. THE HISTORY OF JACOB (Chaps. xxviii.–xxxv. ; xlv. 1–7.)

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46-57; xlvii. 13-31).
  - (c) Joseph and his Brethren (Chaps. xlii.  
1-45; l. 15-21; cf. Chap. xxviii.).
  - (d) Joseph and his Father (Chaps. xlvi.  
1-l. 14).
3. The Dissolution of the Chosen Vessel (Chap.  
l. 22-26).

## The Eight Great Words of Genesis

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



## Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

*Notes on this Genealogical Division :*

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

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

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

*General Subject Analysis :*

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

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

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

Genesis may also be divided into two great divisions:

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

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

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

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

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

## PART I

# The History of the Human Race as a Whole *(Chapters i.-xi.)*

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





# I

## The Relation of God to the World

(Chapter i.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

## II

### The Relation of Man to God—Sinless and Sinful (Chapters ii. and iii.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

The whole race of men are in helpless captivity to sin

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

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

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

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

### III

## The Relation of Man to His Fellowmen

( *Chapters iv. and v.* )

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

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

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

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

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

Striking differences are noted in the genealogies of Cain



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



## IV

### The Development of Sin in the Race—The Penalty of Sin

(*Chapters vi.-viii.*)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## THE PROBATION OF THE HUMAN RACE THROUGH FOUR REPRESENTATIVE MEN

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

*Notes on "The Nations":*

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

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

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

2. In society—the two lines (chap. v.).
3. In the race (chaps. v., vi.).

### III. *The Penalty and Punishment of Sin* (chaps. vi.–xi.).

1. The flood (chaps. vi.–ix.).
2. The dispersion (chap. x.).
3. The confusion of tongues—tower of Babel (chap. xi.).



## PART II

# History of the Patriarchs

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





## I

### Abraham, the Father of the Faithful

(*Chapters xii.—xxv.*)

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

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

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

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

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

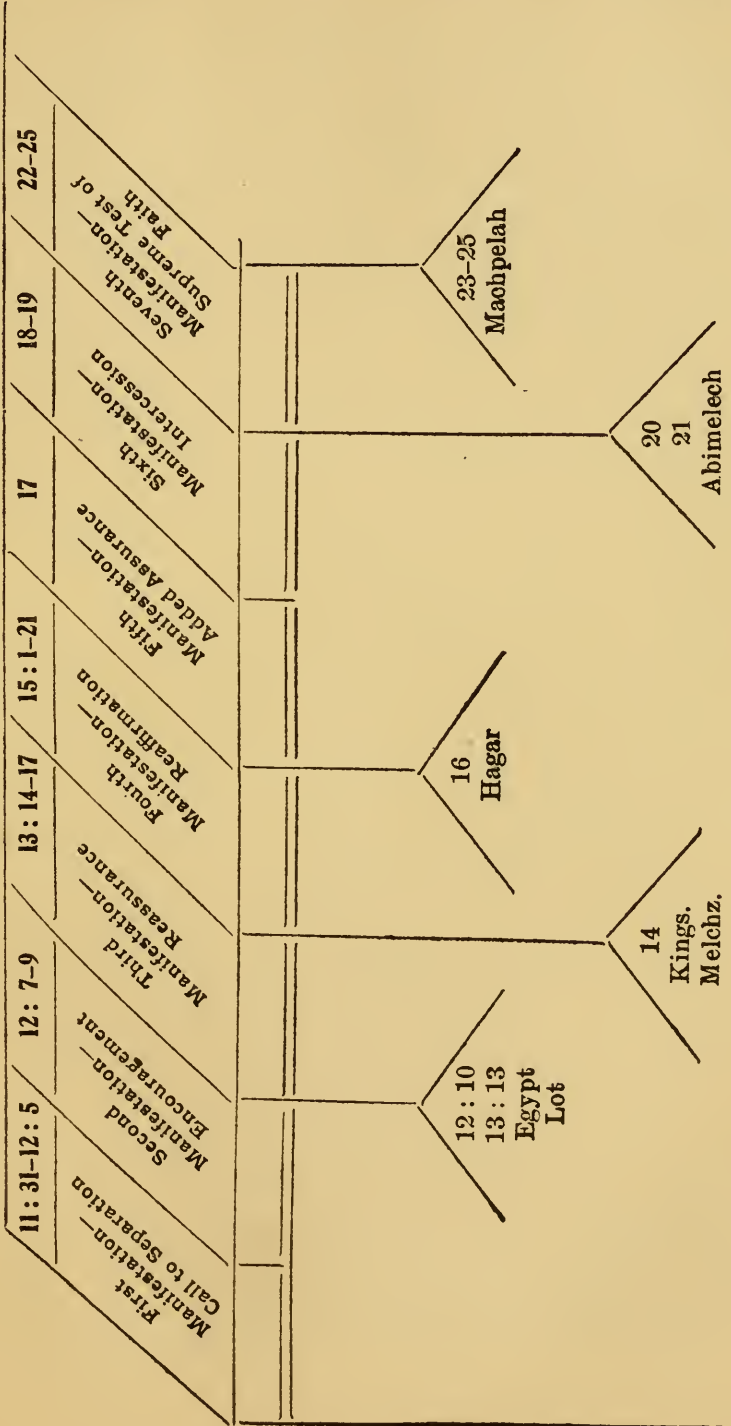
Abraham, apparently, had two calls (xi. 31 ; xii. 1 ; cf. Acts vii. 2-4 ; Isaiah li. 2). The response to the first call seems to have been partial. When God called the second time, Abraham surrendered completely (xii. 4, 5).

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

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

HISTORY OF ABRAHAM

I. II. III. IV. V. VI. VII.



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lot is an interesting study in backsliding.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There are seven things of which God is independent :

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Unanswered yet?

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

“Unanswered yet?

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



“Unanswered yet?

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

“Unanswered yet?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

#### TYPICAL TEACHING

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## II

### The History of Isaac

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—*Tennyson.*

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

(b) *The Second Manifestation of God to Isaac—Beer-sheba* (xxvi. 23–33). This vision of God came to Isaac after he had determined to leave Egypt and remove to Beer-sheba. In that “same night” God appeared unto him and said, “I am the God of Abraham thy father ; fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed, for my servant Abraham’s sake.” “And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there.”

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

God made Isaac’s enemies to be at peace with him (ver. 26). They saw plainly, as Abimelech said : “ We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee : and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee ; That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace ; thou art now the blessed of the Lord ” (vers. 28, 29). Isaac was a timid man, and yet it was possible for him to live so as to influence the lives of the ungodly and make them understand that God was with him.

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

### III

## The History of Jacob

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jacob's wrong in this transaction consisted in the fact



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

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

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

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

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

This manifestation of God, then, was granted to Jacob after the events of chapter twenty-seven—the stolen blessing, and before chapters twenty-nine and thirty—Jacob's ordeal with Laban. Jacob is in flight; he is running away for fear of Esau, his brother. At the close of the first day's flight, tired and weary, Jacob lies down to sleep. He “dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the

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

In this vision God promises five things to Jacob :

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

### VISIONS

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

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



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

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

### Vows

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### DIVINE GUIDANCE

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It seems that Jacob had lived about twenty years in



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This vision is recorded in the following words: "And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifice unto the God of his father Isaac. And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes" (xlvi. 1-4).

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

God commands Jacob to "dwell there." The divine

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

God promises, not only to go down into Egypt with Jacob, but also to bring him up again and to comfort him while there, for the words, "Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes," indicate that his own son, Joseph, would be with him to comfort him at the hour of his death. That God did actually bring the body of Jacob up from Egypt is evident from l. 7, 12, 13—"And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt." "And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them: For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a burying-place of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre."

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

## IV

### The History of Joseph

(Chapters xxxvii.-l.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is the purpose of the history of Joseph in Egypt as distinctly stated in the Word of God itself (xlvi. 5-8; xlvii. 34; Psalm cv. 17-23). How little the brethren of Joseph knew, when they sold their brother, that they were carrying out the purpose of God. They meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. Psalm cv. makes very distinct and clear reference to the purpose of Joseph in the land of Egypt. "He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: Until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom. Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham" (Psalm cv. 17-23).

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

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



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

*The Divisions of Joseph's History.* Joseph is one of the three men who were chosen vessels of God in connection with Israel's history. The other two were Moses and Paul. Joseph's history may be summed up under three main divisions: The chosen vessel in preparation (xxxvii.-xli. 36); the chosen vessel in service (xli. 37-1. 21); the dissolution of the chosen vessel (1. 20-26). Let us now look at these divisions somewhat in detail:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

## 2. The Chosen Vessel in Service (xli. 37-l. 21).

Under this division we consider Joseph and Pharaoh; Joseph and the Egyptians; Joseph and his brethren; Joseph and his father.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Joseph's method of treatment brought about the desired results (xlii. 21-22 ; xliv. 16). The consciences of his brethren began to work. The natural elements of retribution are set forth in the words of verses 21, 22—“And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear ; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spoke I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child ; and ye would not hear ? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.” There is no human accuser here—“They said among themselves [or one to another]” (xlii. 21).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The death of Jacob, which has been mentioned before under the history of Jacob, is referred to in xlix. 28-1. 14.

3. **The Dissolution of the Chosen Vessel** (l. 22-26). This practically closes the patriarchal dispensation. God's chosen people are still one *seed*, but not any longer one person. They have now become a great people, a mighty nation.

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

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

**Points of Similarity Between Joseph and Christ.**

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



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

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

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

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

The following have been looked upon as having typical significance:

1. The "greater light" (i. 16, cf. Malachi iv. 2—"the Sun of righteousness").
2. Adam (ii. 19, cf. Romans v. 14; 1 Corinthians xv. 21, 22, 45-47) a type of Christ.
3. Eve (ii. 23, 24, cf. 2 Corinthians xi. 2; Ephesians v. 25, 32; Revelation xix. 7, 8) a type of the Church.
4. Coats of skins (iii. 21, cf. Revelation xix. 8). Some see in this clothing a picture of the righteousness of Christ, obtained for His saints by His sacrificial death.
5. Abel's lamb (iv. 4) as contrasted with Cain's blood-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



The Book of Exodus





# Synopsis of Exodus

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  6. Concerning sacred seasons and the Sabbath (xxiii. 10-19).
  7. The promise of an inheritance (xxiii. 20-33).
  8. The consummation of the giving of the Lesser Law—The glory of the Lord (Chap. xxiv.).

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III. THE SACERDOTAL SECTION OF THE BOOK—THE TABERNACLE AND MATTERS OF WORSHIP (Chaps. xxv.-xl.).

- I. The Tabernacle—Its structure and teaching.
1. The materials of the Tabernacle (xxv. 1-9).
  2. The Court of the Tabernacle (xxvii. 9-18; Chap. xxxviii.).
  3. The Brazen Altar (xxvii. 1-8; xxxviii. 1-8).
  4. The Laver (xxx. 18-28).
  5. The Tabernacle proper, or the Tent of Meeting (Chap. xxvi. ; xxxviii. 20-31).  
A picture of the Tabernacle and its furnishings arranged in order for the worship of Jehovah (Chaps. xxxix.-xl.).





## Introduction

**T**HE first word "Now" (Hebrew "And") connects Exodus with Genesis as does also the list of names in Exodus i. 1-6 (cf. Genesis, chaps. xlix., l.).

Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers are joined to the book preceding it by the conjunction "And" or "Now" (cf. Exodus i. 1; Leviticus i. 1; Numbers i. 1). This conjunction is missing in Deuteronomy, and naturally so, because Deuteronomy is a recapitulation of the events narrated in the preceding books.

The book of Exodus is considered of the greatest importance by the Jews because the supreme event in all their national and religious history (the Passover and Exodus, cf. xii. 1, 2) is here recorded. Whenever God desires to call attention to the supreme manifestation of His power in the Old Testament He refers always to the Exodus (xx. 2; Joshua ii. 10; Judges ii. 1; 1 Samuel x. 18; Hosea xii. 13), just as in the New Testament the reference is to the resurrection of Christ (Ephesians i. 19-22). The religious year of the Jews begins in this book, as does also the civil year (cf. xii. 1, 2—"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you"). The Exodus was a definite epoch and a marked era in the history of the children of Israel. It would seem as though, practically speaking, their experience beforehand had not counted for much. Redemption was the first step in their new national life. This is also true of any man's life—it does not really begin to count until he has been born again

and has thus entered into saving and counting relations with God.

**Exodus as Related to Genesis.** In Exodus we are no longer dealing with individuals or families or with clans, as in Genesis, but with a nation and nations. Individuals, families, clans are now organized into a nation. The priests of the family are displaced by the Levites. The private family altar, while not supplanted, is supplemented and fortified by the altar of Jehovah in the Tabernacle. Exodus records matters of history rather than of biography as does Genesis. When God met Jacob at Peniel it was to give him a new name for himself (cf. Genesis xxxii.). When God met Moses at the bush (Exodus iii.) it was to give him a revelation for the nation. In Genesis the Canaanites and Egyptians are mentioned only as they affect individual patriarchs, while in Exodus they are mentioned in as far as they affect the nation of Israel. In Exodus even as great a man as Moses is mentioned only because of his connection with Israel. The study of Exodus makes it very clear that we are no longer dealing with the problems of individual life, as in Genesis, but with great national issues. Exodus shows us the development of Israel from a family and tribal, into a national existence.

**The Name.** "Exodus" means "departure" or "outgoing." It is the word used in Hebrews xi. 22—"The departing (or Exodus) of the children of Israel." The name is exceedingly appropriate inasmuch as the book deals very largely with the outgoing, departing, or exit of the children of Israel from their severe bondage in Egypt.

It is also a book of redemption—its types being of a redemptive character. It is suggestive to note in this connection that the conversation between Moses and Elias and Christ on the mount of transfiguration had to do

with the "decease" (literally, the "exodus") which Christ should accomplish at Jerusalem. The "exodus" which Moses began but could not finish, Christ, on Calvary's cross, will "accomplish" (literally, "completely fulfill").

The time covered by the book of Exodus is about one hundred and forty-five years—from the death of Joseph to the erection of the Tabernacle.

The historicity of the book of Exodus is amply and satisfactorily confirmed by the testimony of archæological research and discovery, as well as from the internal evidence of the book itself.

**The Divisions of the Book.** The contents of the book may be said to fall into three main parts: Historical (chaps. i.-xviii.), setting forth the growth, oppression, and deliverance of the nation and people of Israel; Legislative (chaps. xix.-xxiv.), in which we have a record of the promulgation of the moral, civil, and ceremonial laws governing the chosen people; Sacerdotal (chaps. xxv.-xl.), dealing almost exclusively with matters pertaining to the building and erection of the Tabernacle, and also some matters of worship in connection therewith.



## I

### The Historical Section of the Book

(*Chapters i.-xviii.*)

**T**HIS general division may be viewed in several ways. In these chapters we have the divine record of God's preparation of Moses who was, in a sense, a redeemer of the children of Israel, and the redemption of God's chosen people from their captivity in Egypt until their arrival at Sinai, where they entered into relations of worship with God. If the contents are viewed in this light, then chapters i.-vi. present the preparation of Moses, the deliverer of Israel; chapters vii.-xiii., the redemption of the people in process; chapters xiv.-xviii., the redeemed people under the guidance of God.

For our present purpose, however, we shall use a little different arrangement of the contents under the historical section.

**I. The Bondage of the Children of Israel** (chaps. i.-vi.). Under this section there are three minor divisions: the oppression of the children of Israel (chap. i.); the story of Moses' birth and early years (chaps. ii.-iv.); Moses and Pharaoh (chaps. v., vi.).

**i. The Oppression of the Children of Israel** (chap. i.).

(a) *The Names of the Children of Israel (Jacob)* (i. 1-6). What a strange and checkered career they had, all of them! Surely, they came out of Jacob's thigh, every one

of them with a limp. Almost every name is stained with some fault or sin, yet all of them are heirs of the promise, sons of a prince, the twelve foundation stones of a great nation. A crowd of sinners they were, but the dying words of a father had consecrated them. Grace became exceedingly abundant towards them, for in vain do we look in Hebrews xi., God's roll of honour, for the stains that were attached to their names.

There is a lesson in these names for us just as there is a lesson in the names of the genealogies of Christ as recorded in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Even in the genealogies of Christ we find some names that were stained badly by sin. Can it be that Christ came through all kinds of men in order that He might save all kinds of men? Not the beginning, but the end of these men is what we ought to look at. The writer to the Hebrews says, "These all died in faith" (Hebrews xi. 13).

(b) *The Miraculous Increase and Oppression of the Nation* (i. 7-14). In Genesis we saw that apparently God's promise to Abraham, that his seed should be as numberless as the stars of the heavens and the sands of the seashore, was being very slowly fulfilled. After the lapse of many, many years from the time Abraham was first given the promise, we have here but seventy souls descending into Egypt—sixty-eight or seventy males in all, about as many as would fill a good-sized living tent. Had God forgotten His promise to Abraham? By no means. He had sent Joseph beforehand to provide them room enough and the assurance of sufficient safety to grow and multiply in accordance with the promise. Of course, we should remember that, while there were probably but sixty-eight males, the number of persons descending into Egypt was very many more, probably three or more times that number. We know that Abraham's

household alone numbered three hundred and eighteen males (Genesis xiv. 14). On the number of persons going down into Egypt, compare Genesis xlvi. 26, also remember that Jacob, and Joseph and his two sons, already in Egypt, must be reckoned. Remember also the five descendants of Ephraim (Numbers xxvi. 35-37). This would make about seventy-five persons (cf. Acts vii. 11-19).

We must not lose sight of the fact that the increase in the number of the Hebrew people was supernatural and the result of divine interposition. This seems to be the distinct teaching of Psalm cv. 23, 24—"Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. And he (God) increased his people greatly." It was also the fulfillment of the divine promise made to Abraham (Genesis xii. 2; xvii. 4, 5; xviii. 18).

It may be interesting in this connection to draw attention to a note made by a Professor Curtis who refers to a volume of family memoirs which says that five thousand five hundred and sixty-four persons are known to be descended from Lieutenant John Hollister who immigrated to America in 1642. This is probably equal to the ratio of the increase of the children of Israel in Egypt (cf. *The Expositor*, November, 1887, p. 329).

**The Oppression of Israel.** This section narrates in some detail the oppression of the children of Israel (i. 8-14) and shows us the steps that led to their increased suffering. Joseph—the link that bound his people to the past dynasty—had died. All Joseph's brethren, and indeed his generation, had passed away (i. 6). A new king had arisen who knew not Joseph's intimate relations with the past (i. 8). The supernatural increase in the number of Israelites became an alarming factor to the Egyptians who were afraid, if war broke out, that this great foreign people might ally themselves with the



enemy, and thus fight against them. Pharaoh and his people, therefore, determined to put a stop to the rapid increase of the Israelites. Pharaoh, with this end in view, gave specific charge to the Hebrew midwives. Beneath the plot of Pharaoh and the Egyptians we must look for the ingenuity of Satan seeking to blot out the promised seed. This, we shall see, he tries to do throughout all the history of the children of Israel, not only as narrated in inspired history, but also in the history of the Jews among the nations of the day. God has a destiny for the Jew. Satan would seek to destroy the Jew and thus destroy the destiny. How many attempts have been made to destroy God's chosen people in Spain, Russia, Turkey, indeed, the whole world! Man cannot blot out what God determines shall remain.

**God Overrides.** The midwives, from fear of God if not from love of Him, disobeyed the edict of Pharaoh. It may or may not have been true that, as they claimed, the Hebrew wives were shrewd. The midwives doubtless saw the hand of God in the supernatural increase of Jewish births. Furthermore, it may be that they were not willing to be parties to the crime of infanticide which, while a popular custom among the Egyptians, may have in this instance caused fear in the hearts of the midwives because of their recognition of the hand of God.

It is said that "God dealt well with the midwives," not for their lying or falsehood, if such actually took place, but for their obedience to Him. There is no excuse for lying under any circumstances. By the term "built them houses," we are to understand that God made them heads of families (cf. 2 Samuel vii. 11, 27). Barrenness among women in that day was a curse. To be the head of a family was a blessing. One wonders whether the fear of God is as great a preventative of infanticide in this day as in the days of Pharaoh. With



this attempt at destruction of the Hebrew children should be compared Herod's destruction of the first-born in Matthew ii.

2. **The Story of Moses—Birth and Early Years** (chaps. ii.-iv.). Here begins the history and the influence of one man on a nation and, indeed, on the world (cf. Hebrews xi. 3). God turns the scale of events by the vast weight of one man. The history of all great world movements has been the history of one individual. The Exodus was Moses; the Reformation was Luther; Methodism was John Wesley; Presbyterianism was John Calvin; Eddyism was Mrs. Eddy; Mormonism was Brigham Young; and so it has ever been. It still remains to be seen how much power God will manifest through the life of any single individual who is willing to thoroughly and absolutely dedicate himself to the service of God and man.

(a) *Moses' Birth and Early Years* (chap. ii.). Moses was the child of Godly parents (Hebrews xi. 23, 24). They saw and believed in the possibilities of their child. Here was a home in which faith reigned supreme, even in idolatrous Egypt. The faith of the parents was found in the heart of the child, a faith which even the training in the home of Pharaoh's daughter could not eradicate, for when the moment of choice came between the faith of his mother and the life in the royal palace, Moses chose the former. No doubt Moses kept in touch with his home during all the years in which he resided in the palace. He got his faith in God from his parents just as he got his learning in the palace of the Pharaohs.

Undoubtedly God's providence was manifested in the early years of Moses. It certainly was in his deliverance in connection with the finding of Moses in the ark of bulrushes. God intervened and saved Moses out of the jaws

of death, right in the very house of Pharaoh. After all, nothing really "happens." There is no such thing as chance. Hebrews xi. 23 says it was a triumph of faith: "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment."

Thus was Moses trained in two homes for God's great work of the redemption of His people. It was necessary for the leader to come from the midst of a system from which he is to set the people free in order to be fully acquainted with it. This was true in the case of Saul of Tarsus, and Luther of the Reformation—close to the throne he is to shake.

God is the principal worker in this bold scheme of redemption. It may be that for this reason the names in connection with the preservation of Moses are not mentioned. God Himself is the worker. Compare Psalm xviii. 16—"He drew me out of many waters" (literally, He "moses" me out of many waters). Compare also 2 Samuel xxii. 1—"The Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies." These are the only two other places in which this form of the word is used, and they signify a deliverance by God, a manifestation of God's hand.

It was doubtless this divine purpose that the parents saw by faith in their son. It may be that they knew the promise that God had made to the patriarchs that He would visit them in their affliction and bondage. "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterwards shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be

buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again : for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full " (Genesis xv. 13-16 ; cf. l. 24, 25). These godly parents may have seen in their child the one who, under God, was to fulfill this prophecy.

We are delighted to note the mother instinct in the heart of the heathen daughter of Pharaoh. Our great cities swarm with children exposed to a worse fate than that baby among the bulrushes. Legislation and official charity are too cold to reach them. They need the bosom of a home. These children, like Moses, "with no language but a cry," are still in our midst. What are we doing for them ?

" If fate hath given thee no child  
To lean upon thine arm,  
That by its presence undefiled  
Shouldst save thy soul from harm ;  
If thou wert truly mother born,  
Thou wouldst have played the part,  
And found some little one forlorn  
To fold within thine heart."

How wonderfully God cared for the child that those parents committed to Him ! What they gave to God, that God returned to them glorified. God will do the same for us and for our children if we have like faith.

The slaying of the Egyptian by Moses (ii. 11-16) is an attempt at human redemption, to accomplish God's work by means of the flesh rather than by God's Spirit. It is a repetition of the mistake which Abraham and Sarah made when they resorted to Hagar to help fulfill the promise of God.

The flight of Moses (ii. 15-25) was also in the providence of God. It was the divine way of training Moses to be a leader. It was through this wilderness, in which he spent forty years, that he should lead the children of



Israel for another forty years. The knowledge of the wilderness which Moses must have gained during his years of pilgrimage was of untold benefit to him in his leadership of the nation later.

(b) *Moses' Call and Commission* (chaps. iii., iv.). The call came while Moses was about his usual daily occupation. So it came to David, while he was tending his sheep; to Elisha while he was plowing; to the shepherds while they watched their flocks. So it will always come. God calls us from work to work, never from idleness. He who fills well his present position is in line of promotion for a greater.

God's call often comes while in solitude. The mother-country of the strong is solitude. What a change this was—from a busy palace to a quiet desert, but God tests His weapons before He uses them. Solitude—that is the definition of genius.

One might have thought that Moses had flung away bright prospects in forsaking Pharaoh for Jethro. So we sometimes say of many a young man who gives up a worldly prospect for the work of God. It was a deliberate choice on the part of Moses: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (Hebrews xi. 24-27). A wise choice it was, as the centuries that have passed by still bear witness.

God spoke to Moses out of the bush that burned yet did not consume. The bush was doubtless a symbol of God's holiness, the divine fire consuming sin for the purpose of



consecration. Compare Hebrews xii. 29—"For our God is a consuming fire." Jesus drew a lesson from the burning bush in His talk with the Pharisees (Mark xii. 26). Just as the bush burned but did not consume away, so, once born, the soul dies not; 'tis an eternal thing. Those whom we call dead are alive. The soul that is united to God by faith never dies.

The title "Jehovah" lifts God up above men. The title "The God of your fathers" brings God down to men. That is His memorial to all generations.

The program of Moses' commission (iii. 16-20). The end of the mission is known from the beginning. Moses need have no fear of failure. At first sight it might seem as though from this very fact Moses had a greater chance than we have. And yet the fact that we do not always, as Moses did, know the end from the beginning should lead us to cling more closely to God for greater grace, and stimulate us to greater effort.

The assurance to be given to the children of Israel was that they were to be delivered by God Himself and planted again in their own land.

The three-day test (iii. 18) was a picture of God working along the lines of least resistance, and favoured Pharaoh. It was no deceit. If Pharaoh would not allow three days, he would certainly not allow them to go for good. Why did God appeal when He knew that it would be in vain? That is answered by asking, Why does God still appeal to us when He knows ofttimes the appeal will be in vain? God makes the least possible request and with the greatest courtesy. That is why each time that Moses makes a demand upon Pharaoh the terms are more severe. Not even so little as God asked would be granted.

The conflict was to be a religious one. It was a battle between the gods of Egypt and the God of Israel. This

is the lesson that both Pharaoh and Moses should learn. Pharaoh especially would learn who Jehovah was when the plagues came upon him.

The reference to "borrowing jewelry" in verses 21 and 22 is understood when we substitute the word "ask" instead of "borrow." Probably the word "demand" would be better. These people had slaved so long for nothing that they were entitled to something, and we see later (Exodus xii. 35, 36) that the Egyptians forced their jewelry upon the Israelites, so glad were they to get rid of them.

(c) *The Signs Given to Moses* (iv. 1-17). The hesitation of Moses to assume the office of deliverer is quite a contrast to his rashness which resulted in the slaying of the Egyptian in chapter ii. These years of solitude in the wilderness had worked wonders in Moses' character.

Moses was not cowardly but timid. This will be seen by a careful consideration of the five excuses offered (cf. iii. 11, 13; iv. 1, 10, 13). He knew the temptations of Egypt and the temper of the Egyptians. He was well acquainted with the nature of the Israelites. He had come into personal contact with the power of the throne of the Pharaohs. He knew he could not face all this alone, hence his plea for help outside of himself. This is really a glorious phase of Moses' character. What a transformation the years of solitude have wrought in him! Now God can use him, for the divine strength is made perfect in human weakness (cf. 2 Corinthians xii. 10). God assures Moses that He will be with him; that it is God's work He is going to accomplish (cf. the expressions "my people," iii. 10; "God of the Hebrews," iii. 18; "my son" iv. 22—thus does God identify Himself with the nation, cf. also vi. 7).

The three signs given to Moses in this chapter are exceedingly significant. The rod that turned into a

serpent (iv. 2-5) was intended to convince Pharaoh of the fact that Moses' commission was from God. The Egyptians worshipped the serpent. Indeed, a serpent was a part of the crown of the Pharaohs. This showed that the God of Moses was superior to the gods of the Egyptians, for He could raise up enemies, troubles, and avenging forces; they were subject to Him, and He could suppress them. The rod of Moses plays an important part in history. Tradition regards it as the tree of life. Whether this be true or not, it does show how God uses the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. In chapter ii., the cry of a baby; in chapter iv., the rod of a shepherd saves the nation (cf. 1 Corinthians i. 26).

The leprous hand (iv. 6-8) was a sign intended for the people of Israel. Leprosy was to them a sign of the power of death in its most awful form. This would convince them that Moses came to them with divine credentials and as the messenger of the God of Israel.

The turning of the Nile water into blood (iv. 9) was doubtless intended to convince the Egyptians. The Nile was the great god of Egypt. It was the pride and glory of the land. The Nile was the object of greatest worship. To be able, then, to turn this, their favourite river, into blood, showed the power of Moses' God over the god of the Egyptians. It was perfectly natural that Pharaoh, the Egyptians, and the children of Israel should ask Moses for credentials, especially so when we consider the importance of Moses' errand, and the obstacles to be overcome. Three miracles are given, thus laying emphasis upon the cumulative value of evidence. While absolute proof may not lie in any one of these, it does lie in the three combined. We must not despise the "evidence to character." We have the right of challenge. We are told to test the spirits whether they be of God or



not (1 John iv. 1-4). When we consider the importance of the errand, the message, and the issues at stake, we have a right to ask for the proper credentials.

Thus Moses is endowed with sufficient credentials to convince Pharaoh, the Egyptians, and the children of Israel.

Moses' excuse of timidity and lack of speech was wrong. There is a time when timidity is sinful. No man ought to think of himself above what he ought to think, but there are times when we ought to think soberly (Romans xii. 3). Israel is not to be delivered by eloquence, but by power. We must not wait until we are wise or fluent, but until we are assured of the divine presence. God could have given Moses the gift of eloquence if that were necessary, as verse 12 clearly shows. Indeed, God might have given it to him instead of to Aaron, had Moses been believing.

It was sad for Moses when God granted his request (iv. 13), for, as we shall see later, it was the eloquence of Aaron that led the people to worship the golden calf. Moses was wrong in allowing responsibility to fall into weaker hands that day and finally, for those weaker hands led a nation to sin.

Moses' return to Jethro (iv. 18-23) is interesting because it shows us how careful Moses was in giving up his position. There is a right and wrong way for a Christian to surrender his position, even though he has been called of God to another. What a contrast between Jacob stealing off unknown to Laban, and the plain, straightforward way in which Moses dealt with Jethro!

God does not expect us, even in the performance of duty, to rush heedlessly into peril. Note the divine statement "For all the men are dead which sought thy life."



The incident of Zipporah (iv. 24-26) seems to intimate that Moses, the great leader of a race, had been remiss in the performance of a religious rite in his domestic life. He had neglected his full duty to his child. He had failed to recognize it as a child of the covenant and to claim for it its rightful share. He probably knew what he ought to do but had left it for a more convenient season. It was a little thing in the midst of vast national issues, but is any act of disobedience little? It is another illustration of how great men may fail in little things.

3. Moses and Pharaoh (chaps. v., vi.). We should try to form a picture of the return of Moses to Egypt, to the same royal palace where he had spent his childhood, and meeting again the friends and acquaintances of former years. His rugged appearance would doubtless cause comment if not a taunt from his companions, but some men, like Christ before Herod, even though they be clothed in homespun, by their very attitude proclaim that they are royal. Thus it was with Moses.

We have here a wonderful illustration of God's dealings with two different men whom we may consider as typical. The susceptibility of Moses to the will of God, and the hardness of Pharaoh towards that same will, are instructive to us. The Apostle Paul makes much of this incident in his epistle to the Romans (chap. ix.), and shows that the case of Pharaoh is illustrative of God's dealings with men who persistently harden their hearts against Him.

The question may be asked, Who hardened Pharaoh's heart? A careful consideration in the Revised Version, and especially in the Hebrew text, of the following verses will show that Pharaoh hardened his own heart before God hardened it (cf. vii. 14; viii. 15, 32; ix. 7, 35).

These verses, when read as indicated and compared with x. 1, will show that not until Pharaoh had hardened his heart many times did God harden it. Indeed, God did not harden Pharaoh's heart at all, except judicially. The susceptibility of any human heart to the voice of God is due to the presence in that heart of God's Spirit, which presence, in a sense, God has granted to every man. The withdrawal of that Spirit would, of course, ensue in the hardening of that heart and life, but the Holy Spirit does not withdraw until He is forced to do so by the stubborn willfulness of the individual from whose heart He has been driven. Thus hardening of the heart is judicial. In Romans i. 24, 26, 28, referring to the wicked Gentiles, we are told that "God gave them up." It is the deceitfulness of sin that hardens (Hebrews iii. 13; cf. Jeremiah vii. 20; Romans xi. 7, 25; Ephesians iv. 8, 18). The secret of Pharaoh's hardness lay, not in his ignorance, but in his unwillingness even to inquire concerning God and His will (Exodus v. 2; cf. John vii. 17).

**God's Demands and Pharaoh's Replies.** A careful study of God's demands and Pharaoh's replies will throw much light on the problem of God's dealings with Pharaoh.

- (1) v. 1—"Thus saith the Lord."  
v. 2—"Who is the Lord?"
- (2) v. 1—"Let my people go . . . wilderness."  
viii. 25—"Go, sacrifice in the land."
- (3) viii. 27—"Three days' journey into the desert."  
viii. 28—"Go, only not far away."
- (4) x. 3—"Let my people go."  
x. 8—"Who are they that shall go?"
- (5) x. 9—"All must go."  
x. 11—"Let men go, but not children or flocks."

Verse 24—"Go, men and children, but not flocks."

(6) x. 25, 26—"Flocks too must go."

xii. 31-33—"Go, as ye have said."

**The Real Scene Begins.** In chapter vi. we have the first real act in the drama of the redemption of the chosen people from Egyptian bondage. God deals first with His own people, even before dealing with Pharaoh or the Egyptians. Moses had said: "Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?" (vi. 12). The entire sixth chapter is practically taken up with Moses and Aaron dealing with the chosen people.

**II. The Ten Plagues (chaps. vii.-xii.).** The first nine plagues may be divided into three groups. It should be noted that warnings are given of the first two plagues of each group, the third plague in each group being inflicted without any warning. We naturally ask why? The plagues that the Egyptian magicians were able to duplicate were those that had been already fore-announced. Those plagues that were sprung suddenly and unannounced upon the people were not duplicated by the magicians, for they doubtless did not have time to make up the deception which they had previously palmed off on Pharaoh and the people. These plagues were wrought upon a natural basis; they were the credentials of Jehovah's messengers, and were for the punishment of Jehovah's enemies and the overthrow of Jehovah's rivals.

**1. The Purpose of the Plagues :**

- (1) That the Egyptians might know Jehovah (vii. 5).
- (2) Judgment upon the gods of Egypt (xii. 12).
- (3) To honour Israel (viii. 22, 23).

- (4) To reveal the holiness, justice, and power of God (vii. 3, 5 ; ix. 15, 16, 27).  
 (5) A testimony to future generations (x. 1, 2).

It should not be lost sight of in the study of the plagues that they were the manifestation of a conflict between the gods of Egypt and Jehovah, the God of Israel. Each plague was a direct attack upon some Egyptian god.

**An Arrangement of the Plagues.** The plagues may be arranged as follows, giving their location, the god against whom they were hurled, the time of the year when they were inflicted, and whether announced or unannounced :

1. Blood, vii. 14-25—Against the Nile god, Osiris. Announced (June).
2. Frogs, viii. 1-11—Against the frog goddess, Heka. Announced (September).
3. Flies, viii. 16-19—Against the earth god, Leb. Unannounced (October).
4. Beetles, viii. 20-32—Against the beetle god, Khepara. Announced (November).
5. Murrain, ix. 1-7—Against the cattle gods, Apis, etc. Announced (December).
6. Boils, ix. 8-12—Against the goddess Neit. Unannounced (January).
7. Hail, ix. 13-35—Against the air gods, Isis, etc. Announced (February).
8. Locust, x. 1-20—Against the insect gods. Announced (March).
9. Darkness, x. 21-29—Against the sun god, Ra. Unannounced (April).
10. First-born slain, the finishing blow to the whole pantheon of helpless gods, xi. and xii. Compare Pharaoh's destruction of infants (chaps. i., ii.), and that of Herod (Matthew ii.).

Do we ask, How could the magicians duplicate partially



some of these plagues? We say partially, for they could not remove them. Two reasons are suggested :

First. That they were enabled to do so by the agency of Satan (cf. 2 Timothy iii. 8 ; 2 Thessalonians ii. 9-12 ; 1 Samuel xxvi. 8-20).

Secondly. By conjuring—for the plagues which they duplicated were fore-announced, so that the magicians had time to prepare and practice their deception.

2. The Passover (chaps. xi., xii.). Our attention should be drawn to the explicit details given with regard to the death of the first-born as to time (xi. 4), extent (xi. 5), the terrible cry that would follow (xi. 6), the exemption of Israel from the death of the first-born (xi. 7), and the action of Pharaoh and his servants (xi. 8-10).

Chapter xii., the Passover especially, is one of the most important in the entire Old Testament. Again, our attention should be drawn to the explicit details with regard to the preparation for and the commemoration of the Passover supper. We should note :

First. That as an institution the Passover originated with God.

Second. Its nature. It was an *expiation*, that is to say, it was the acceptance of an innocent victim for a guilty soul. It was a *feast*, for the soul of the faithful Israelite was made glad as he looked upon God's provision for redemption. It was a *memorial*, for it was to be kept throughout all the generations to come, an incident to be told and retold by parent and child. It was a *prophecy*, for it looked forward to a greater Passover.

Third. Its typical teaching. It represented Christ, our Passover, who has been sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians v. 7). Is it too much to say that its chief lesson lay in the fact that it looked forward to Christ's sacrifice? We remember the words of Jesus when speaking of His

own death, He said, "Do this in remembrance of me." Did He mean, in other words, Forget the Passover and remember me, for the Passover has received its fulfillment in me?

**III. The Exodus Proper (chaps. xiii.-xviii.).** Chapter xiii. recounts the sanctification of the first-born, whether of man or beast. From the night of the Passover the first-born belonged to God. What is redeemed belongs to God.

Here we have God's claim (xiii. 1, 2); the cleansing of heart as well as life signified by the unleavened bread (xiii. 3-10); God's claim to the first-born repeated and again based on redemption (xiii. 11-16); and, finally, redemption, leading to a walk with God (xiii. 17-20), which is shown by a recognition of our own weakness (xiii. 17-18), by a daily dying to sin (xiii. 19, 20), and by willingness to be guided in the divine way (xiii. 21, 22).

Chapter xiv. shows God's wonderful intervention in the behalf of His chosen people. The weakness of Israel and the strength of God are beautifully set forth (xiv. 1-14).

The miraculous passage of the children of Israel over the Red Sea is what may be called a natural miracle. If God did not supersede the forces of nature in this instance, He certainly manipulated them in a way unknown to man. The waters were a wall on either side of Israel and between Israel and the Egyptians. The Egyptians themselves (xiv. 25), even as Pharaoh (ix. 27), recognized that this was a supernatural manifestation. This is evident too from the fact that man has no part in the song commemorating the crossing of the Red Sea. This last thought is especially emphatic when we remember that in the victory of Jael, Jael receives praise; in

the victory over Goliath, David receives praise ; in the victory over the Philistines, Saul receives praise ; in the victory over the Midianites, Jonathan receives praise ; for in each one of these instances man had played some part. God alone operated, however, in the dividing of the waters of the Red Sea. So we are told the people "believed in Jehovah," which is a remarkable statement because they had believed in Him already. It was by faith they forsook Egypt ; it was by faith they kept the Passover ; it is now by faith in this new manifestation of God that they cross the Red Sea (xiv. 30, 31 ; cf. Hebrews xi. 27-29).

To Pharaoh, as well as to the Israelites, it seemed as though God had blundered in leading His people into such a perilous position. They apparently were entrapped in the wilderness between the sea and the mountains. It was doubtless this thought that led Pharaoh to pursue Israel. He may have imagined that God was not a God of war, just as later the enemies of Israel thought that Jehovah was a God of the hills but not of the valleys (1 Kings xx. 23, 28). Pharaoh learned, as Miriam's song later declared, that Jehovah is a Man of war (xv. 3).

Verses 15-31 show that it is no longer Pharaoh and Israel, but Pharaoh and Jehovah who are the principal actors in the scene. We do not have to fight our own battles. God is responsible for our whole salvation. It is for His own name's sake that we are delivered.

The Lord's reply to Moses, "Wherefore criest thou unto me?" leads to the question, Is there a time when prayer is out of place? The answer would seem to be, Yes, when God's will is revealed as to what we should do ; Yes, when some duty is left undone (cf. Matthew v. 22, 23).

*The Song of Moses* (chap. xv.). The song of Moses (xv. 1-20) is retrospective, dealing with the recent deliv-



erance (xv. 1-12) ; prospective, looking forward to future deliverance by God (xv. 13-18) ; and its sequel is found in verses 19-21.

This song is occupied with God and not with man. It is a song in which man has no part, for all he had to do was to stand still and see God work in his behalf. It was God who brought about the deliverance. The people simply looked on and saw it done.

Nor can we overlook the fact that in connection with the note of past victory there is the assurance of future victory too. Nothing now seems impossible. The greatest tribe of Philistia (xv. 13) is as nothing to them. The holiness of God is exalted in this song. It is a song in which woman has a part.

Verses 22-27 of this chapter show us how God entered into a covenant relationship with His people (xv. 26) and give us the experiences of the children of Israel in the wilderness of Shur. God's people are again entangled in difficulties, but of a different nature. We are not always led in green pastures or by still waters. After three days' travel over dreary wastes their hopes and dreams of ease and plenty were disappointed and they found themselves in want of water. They complained, not necessarily openly, for the recent deliverance was too fresh in their minds. They had just sung His praises ; now they forget His works. God, however, heals the waters and brings blessing out of disappointment.

In chapter xvi. the children of Israel are taught the important lesson of daily dependence upon God. They were not allowed to gather more than one day's supply of manna.

Here is murmuring after singing. How strange ! These people would sooner die amid the gluttony of Egypt than die noble in the wilderness ; they would sooner die enslaved than die free men ; they would sooner



have onions and garlic than angel's food ; they would sooner have food for the body even though it bring leanness of soul ; they would sooner die comfortable because they were unfit to be heroic. Thus fullness of temporal prosperity may be the sign of spiritual poverty and failure.

**Supply of Manna Miraculous** (Deuteronomy viii. 3). It is true that the manna was something like the exudation of a certain plant found in the desert. That it was not this plant, however, but differed very greatly from it is evident from the following facts : the natural product of this plant is a drug and not a food ; it can be gathered only during some weeks in summer, whereas the manna stayed with Israel all through their journey ; it is not liable to quick corruption as was the manna if kept over one day ; there would have been no reason for preserving it in the ark if it could constantly be found in certain plants ; it could not have been sufficient to feed one in a hundred of the Hebrew multitudes, let alone the million or more who were fed daily ; nor could it have ceased on the same day when they ate the first ripe corn of Canaan.

Yet the manna was not given without labour. It was to be gathered early in the morning. No provision was to be made for the morrow except in the case of the Sabbath. There was to be enough for each man, no more, no less. Just as water takes the shape of the vessel into which it is poured, so Christ is the bread of life for the satisfaction of the soul of each individual. The constant daily supply necessitated a constant daily dependence upon God. A pot of manna was kept as a memorial and as a type of that hidden manna of eternal life which Christ gives to those who believe in Him. John vi. should be studied in this connection.

*The Stricken Rock* (chap. xvii.). Here we have the

third murmuring since the people left Egypt. Although they had just witnessed the almighty power of God in supplying them with bread, yet they grumbled because they had no water, grumbled really because they had lost their faith in God.

The smitten rock is a type of Christ (1 Corinthians x. 4); the water, a type of the Spirit (cf. John vii. 37-39); Amalek (xvii. 8) is a type of the flesh (cf. Galatians v. 17); Joshua (xvii. 10-14) is a type of Christ who gives us victory over the flesh (cf. Hebrews iv. 8, R. V.).

Chapter xviii. sets before us the effect of the news of God's dealings with His people Israel upon the nations around about (xviii. 10-12). The distribution of labour among the elders of Israel is instructive in its relation to the distribution of the gifts of the Spirit as set forth in Ephesians iv.

## II

### The Legislative Section of the Book—

#### At Sinai

(*Chapters xix.-xxiv.*)

**T**HIS section deals with two great facts: The giving of the Law, sometimes called The Greater Law, that is the Ten Commandments; and the giving of the Lesser Laws. It is difficult to overestimate the great importance of this event in the history of the children of Israel, the Exodus being the first. The unique relationship of Israel to God practically began at Sinai. It was here that God said: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (Exodus xix. 5, 6).

To all mankind this section has its exceedingly important lessons. The moral code given at Sinai still remains the expression of the moral character of God. Millions of human lives still look to it for wisdom and guidance. Legislation and jurisprudence from Sinai until now have been based upon this revelation of the mind and will of God.

**The Revelation at Sinai.** After three months of travel, the children of Israel have now reached Horeb, the goal of their deliverance (Exodus iii. 1). During Israel's stay here the Law is given (chaps. xix.-xxiv.)

and the Tabernacle erected according to instructions given to Moses by God (chaps. xxv.-xl.).

The outline of this section is as follows : The preparation for the giving of the Law (chap. xix.) ; the moral Law, called also the Greater Law, or the Ten Commandments (chap. xx.) ; the Lesser Law (chaps. xxi.-xxiv.).

**I. The Giving of the Greater Law (chaps. xix., xx.).**

**1. The Preparation for the Giving of the Law (chap. xix.).** In this chapter certain events preliminary to the giving of the Law are recorded. Past blessings are recalled as forming a legitimate basis for future obedience. Indeed, the obedience which God requires of His people is based on His redemption of and guidance granted to His people.

What a contrast we have between Mount Sinai, representing the old, and Mount Zion the new dispensation (cf. Hebrews xii. 18-24). Here we have the beginning of a new dispensation—that of Law. So far we have had the Edenic Dispensation (Genesis i.-v.); the Patriarchal Dispensation (Genesis iii. to Exodus xix.) which included, probably, the Age of Conscience (Genesis iv. 1-viii. 14), of Human Government (Genesis viii. 15-xi. 9), of Promise (Genesis xii. to Exodus xix.). Now begins the third great dispensation—that of Law, which extends from this point to, probably, the book of Acts.

(a) *The Ascent of Moses up Mount Sinai to Receive the Divine Revelation* (xix. 1-9). Here God enters into covenant relations with His people. These relations are in a sense legal, and yet they are of grace, for, as we have seen, they are based on redemption and the goodness of God. Some differences have been made between this covenant and that made to Abraham. In the Abrahamic covenant God bound Himself as an aid to Abraham's faith. In the covenant of Israel God seems to



require of the people that they bind themselves to obedience, so that in the one case we have an oath of allegiance, and in the other one of assurance. God would know whether these people were willing to assume the responsibility involved in this covenant of obedience, and it is probably for this reason that the obedience of the people is challenged ere the nature of the covenant is made known. The people readily assent to the requirements of God. How little they knew of their own hearts!

(b) *The Preparation of the People for the Reception of the Covenant* (xix. 10-14). Moses is commanded to prepare the people for the receiving of the covenant and the manifestation of the divine presence. This is to be accomplished by an outward cleansing of the camp, which, of course, is symbolic of inward cleansing of heart (cf. Amos iv. 12); then the setting of bounds about Mount Sinai. All these preparatory arrangements were for the purpose of teaching Israel the lesson of reverence and awe for the divine and for God. This was the lesson taught Moses at the bush. It is the lesson Israel would learn when observing the distance between the ark and the marching column that followed it. It is the lesson so seriously taught Israel in connection with the slaying of Uzzah who put out his hand to stay the ark (2 Samuel vi. 2-7). The priests are especially warned to be careful and reverent, probably because they may have had the feeling that inasmuch as they were priests they had just as much right as Moses and Aaron to break through the boundaries and ascend the mount. It may be also that they felt that the command for cleansing and purification had reference to the people and not to them.

(c) *The Divine Manifestation* (xix. 16-25). God manifested Himself to these people in a thick cloud. No man could bear the sight of God as He is, for He dwells

in light unapproachable. To see God would be to die (Exodus xxxiii. 20, cf. John i. 18). What awe-inspiring accompaniments of the divine presence—fire, smoke, thunder! What a contrast between this mount, representing the old dispensation, and the mount from which Christ delivered the Beatitudes. Hebrews xii. 18–24 is interesting and worthy of study in this connection.

2. **The Greater Law—The Ten Commandments** (chap. xx.). The Greater Law is also called the Moral Law, the Ten Commandments, and the Decalogue.

By the expression “God spake all these words” we are to understand that the Moral Law is a divine revelation and not a copy of ancient laws such as the code of Hammurabi, nor a summarization of previously existing laws. “God spake all these words”—this sounds like verbal inspiration.

(a) *The Nature of the Moral Law.* We are to understand the Decalogue or Ten Commandments as being an expression of the divine nature and the demands which a righteous God makes upon His creatures. Inasmuch as the nature of God is unchangeable these laws are as much the expression of His nature and demands now as then.

These commandments were primarily given to and for the children of Israel (cf. xxii. 31; xiii. 17; Deuteronomy v. 15). This fact is apparent when we remember that probably certain parts of the Commandments were applicable only to Israel in her own land, such as the Sabbath, for example. There is a sense, therefore, in which they are not for the Church. All Scripture is written *for* but not *to* us. Hence arises the necessity of rightly dividing the Word of Truth; in other words, the value of recognizing the dispensational aspect of the Word of God (cf. 2 Timothy ii. 15; 1 Corinthians x. 32; Hebrews i. 1; Ephesians iii. 2–7).

We are not to look upon the Moral Law as a plan of salvation, for it is clear from the teaching of the New Testament that no man is saved by legal obedience (Galatians ii. 16-21 ; Romans iii. 19, 20). It is important to note that Exodus xx. (the giving of the Law) follows Exodus xii. (the redemption of Israel). Thus even the obedience here required is based on the redemption of God's people (xx. 2).

The oft recurrence of the phrase " shalt not " suggests to us the purpose of the Law, namely, its revealing character. The Law was given to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin (Romans vii. 7-25). The Law is still in effect so far as the unregenerate are concerned as a means of revealing to them the measure of their own responsibility and the exceeding sinfulness of sin (cf. Romans vii. 7-25 ; Galatians iii. 10 ; James ii. 10 ; Matthew xxii. 37, 38). While the Law is not binding on the believer in Christ either as a way or a rule of life, its principles, revealing as they do the nature and will of God, have still an abiding purpose and power. The Christian's relation to the Law is clearly set forth in Romans vii. 7-25 ; Colossians ii. 14, 15 ; Romans x. 4. That the Law is in no sense a means of salvation is clearly apparent by the entire argument of the letter to the Galatians.

(b) *The Divisions of the Moral Law.* There is a great difference of opinion in this matter. All are agreed that they were written on two tables, one representing duties to God ; the other, duties to man (cf. Matthew xxii. 37, 38). There is a difference of opinion, however, as to how many commandments were on each table. Some say five and five ; others, four and six ; others again, three and seven. Certain it is that duties to God come first, for the man who has no respect for God will surely have no respect for man, and there is no true morality that is not based on religion. All polytheistic and pantheistic



religions are immoral (cf. Romans i.). No man can be depended on to consider the rights of his fellowmen if there is no fear of God before his eyes.

The first table—accepting for our present purpose the divisions of three and seven—arranges its teaching with reference to duties to God in the order of *thought*, *word*, and *deed*; whereas the second table, dealing with duties to man, follows the order of *deed* (fifth, sixth, and seventh), *word* (eighth), and *thought* (ninth and tenth).

*The First Table—Our Duties to God.* The first commandment asserts the unity, spirituality, and righteousness of God, and is a warning against polytheism and idolatry. There was great need of such an injunction, for Israel had just left Egypt which contained a pantheon of gods, and the later experience of the chosen people showed that they were not yet delivered from polytheistic conceptions. What great truths are taught in this commandment! Right at the very heart of things, there is not an idol of wood or stone which can neither speak nor walk, but a living, personal, active God. It is only as this conception is clearly apprehended that we can understand the doctrine of monotheism and the personality of God, for the divine claim for the supreme affection of mankind—that God should be loved with all the heart, soul, mind, and body—is based on the great truth of the unity of God (cf. Deuteronomy vi. 4; Matthew xxii. 37, 38). This commandment deals with *thought*.

The second commandment, of course, forbids swearing, but also any flippant use of the divine name as well as vain repetition in prayer. How often the very prayer—our Lord's prayer so-called, but which in reality is the disciple's prayer—which was given by our Lord to counteract vain repetition, is used as a vain repetition. Reverence should characterize our use of the divine name.



This commandment refers to *words*, as the first referred to *thoughts*.

The third commandment deals with the Sabbath which we are to constantly "remember," either by calling to mind what it stood for in the past, or by honouring it as it recurs weekly. The Sabbath is to be remembered as a memorial of God's goodness as seen in providing so wonderful a dwelling place as that recorded in Genesis i. and ii. and that which He is now preparing (John xiv. 1-3) for man. The Sabbath is not to be looked upon as a rest day for God as though He were tired after six days of creative labour; nor is it primarily for man a day of physical rest. It is a memorial day and is to be recognized as such. On this day we would remember all that God has done for us and all that He is doing for us. The expression "Six days shalt thou labour" is not so much a command to labour on those six days as a command regarding cessation of such labour on the seventh day. We are to do all necessary labour in the six days, leaving the seventh free for the worship and service of God. This commandment has to do with our *deeds*, as the first with *thoughts* and the second with *words*.

*The Second Table—Our Duties to Man.* The fourth commandment—"Honour thy father and thy mother." Our parents are next to God in place of importance. Hence crimes against parents are to be considered capital crimes. We are to note also that this commandment has attached to it the promise of long life.

The fifth commandment deals with crimes against the life of mankind, and commands a sacredness for human life (cf. Genesis ix. 5, 6; Matthew v. 21-24; 1 John iii. 11-18).

The sixth commandment deals with crimes against marriage, and prohibits adultery, thus safeguarding the sacredness of woman's honour and the marriage bond (cf. Matthew v. 27-32).

The seventh commandment protects the rights of property. "Thou shalt not steal." Man has rights of property towards his fellowmen even though he has no rights of property, but is simply a steward, towards God.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh commandments have to do with our *deeds*.

The eighth commandment calls our attention to sins of the tongue (cf. James iii. 1-18), and emphasizes the sacredness of the gift of speech and the need of veracity in our conversation. No man must bear false witness against his neighbour. Emphasis is here laid upon our *words*.

The ninth and tenth commandments deal with sins of desire—covetousness—and emphasize the sacredness of thought (cf. 2 Corinthians x. 5). In this connection emphasis is laid upon our *thoughts*.

The relation of the Christian towards the Decalogue is well set forth in the expression: "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew v. 20). The righteousness of the Christian will be deeper and more far-reaching than any legal righteousness of the Pharisee. The believer in Christ will keep the spirit of the law as well as its letter (Matthew v. 17-20). Indeed, all that is said of the relation of the members of the kingdom to the Moral Law (cf. Matthew v. entire) is true of the believer in Christ, only in even a deeper sense.

**II. The Lesser Law** (chaps. xxi.-xxiv.). This is the civil code of Israel and is really a concrete presentation and application of the laws contained in the Decalogue, particularly the second table. It is in a sense a minor decalogue. The contents of this Lesser Law may be summed up in seven divisions.

1. **The Rights of Persons—The Duties of Masters to Servants and Slaves** (xxi. 1–11). With reference to man servants (xxi. 2–6), maid servants (7–11). Compare the fifth commandment, and also Ephesians vi. 1–9. Strange that the slave or servant is treated first in this minor decalogue. Why? Is it because Christ Himself was a slave and a servant (Philippians ii. 5–8, Isaiah xlii. 1)? Shall the last be first and the first last? Is there an intimation here as to how God would abolish slavery? By making the masters like a father and the slave a member of the family? The slave shall be free after six years and have sufficient means to start his free life with. He may, however, choose perpetual service.

2. **With Regard to Personal Injury** (xxi. 12–32). Compare with this the fifth commandment, “Thou shalt not kill.” Capital offenses are dealt with in verses 12–17. In cases of willful murder no redress or mercy is expected or shown. There must be no commutation of sentence. The culprit may be taken even from the altar (cf. Luke xi. 50). For unpremeditated murder or manslaughter cities of refuge were provided. The severe punishment for this crime is doubtless to be accounted for by the fact that man was created in the image of God (cf. Genesis ix. 5, 6). Kidnapping is also a capital offense, as is the cursing or striking of a parent which is equivalent to blaspheming God.

Assault and battery is dealt with in verses 18–27, for which retribution, compensation, and damages must be paid. The expression, “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth,” is not to be taken literally. If it were, what a lot of one-eyed and toothless people we would have going around!

Compensation is to be paid for injuries done to cattle (xxi. 28–32). These verses are important, for they deal with man’s responsibility for negligence and with sins of

omission. They show that every man is his brother's keeper and that no man liveth unto himself. Again the sanctity of human life, even of slaves (xxi. 32), is emphasized.

3. **Regarding Personal Property Rights** (xxi. 33–xxii. 15). This section illustrates the seventh commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." Thefts (xxii. 1–4) call for punishment by fine and the restitution of double, quadruple, and sometimes even five times as much as the amount stolen. In some instances the person could be sold if he could not make payment. If a thief is killed while breaking into a house there is no legal guilt. The law of deposits (xxii. 7–14) shows the sacredness of human trust and trusteeship. How much more sacred is the committal of a soul! We are to care for what we borrow (xxii. 14–15) and see that it suffers as little as possible in the using. What is lost must be replaced. What a lesson for us to-day who borrow books, umbrellas, and either keep or lose them and yet do not even apologize, much less restore.

4. **Sins Against Nature and Humanity** (xxii. 16–31). Probably the entire spiritual character of the Decalogue is involved in this section. First is the sin of seduction and bestiality (xxii. 16–20); then the oppression of the stranger, the widow and orphan (xxii. 21–24); the sin of witchcraft and spiritualism (xxii. 18). Care is to be exercised by God's people in the matter of money lending (xxii. 25–27). Interest seems to be allowed from the rich and strangers but not from the poor. The question here is not of lending money for commercial purposes, but to supply the need of the poor. No man should take advantage of his neighbour's necessity.



5. **Warnings Against Lying and Dishonesty** (xxiii. 1-9). This has to do with the commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." No man shall raise a false report or join with others in raising it against a fellowman. This is a death blow to gossip. The majority is not always the voice of God. The slogan, "They all do it," does not make it right. The minority is oftentimes the voice of God. Our enemies are to be loved. This is a great lesson for Israel to learn (cf. Matthew v. 43-48). Bribery must not be allowed to blind judgment.

6. **Concerning Sacred Seasons and the Sabbath** (xxiii. 10-19). This is in harmony with the commandment, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" and also, "Thou shalt not covet." The basis of Sabbath desecration lies in many instances in the spirit of covetousness. The great truth of this section is that part of our time belongs to God. This is true not only of one day in seven, but also of certain parts of what we call week days. The Jew was obliged to go to Jerusalem three times a year—to attend the feast of the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. These feast days kept alive the religious memories of the Jew. It would be well even for Christians to take certain days off during the year to meet with God's people to meditate on spiritual things.

7. **The Promise of an Inheritance** (xxiii. 20-33). This section is in harmony with the promise of the fourth commandment, "That thy days may be long in the land." It bears testimony to the fact that no man serves God for nothing. Righteousness and obedience have their reward.

Chapter xxiv. presents to us the consummation of the giving of the Lesser Law. The glory of God accompanies

it even as in the beginning at the giving of the Greater Law, so teaching us that God is in the lesser as well as in the greater: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew v. 19).

After all, there is no such thing as a big sinner and a little sinner in the sight of God. To sin at all, even in the minutest point, is to constitute oneself guilty as a sinner before God, for "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James ii. 10). Even so is it with the small deeds of good that we do, the faltering word of helpfulness that we speak, the "widow's mite" that we cast into God's treasury—these, small and insignificant though they may seem in the eyes of man, light though they may appear in the balances of earth, unworthy of notice though they may be in the esteem of man, these are of great value in the estimation of God. The spark of fire is as real fire as the flames that belch from Vesuvius. The dewdrop that trembles on the leaf is as real water as is the mighty torrent of Niagara. The man that brought his offering to the tabernacle was not compelled to bring a bullock; he could bring a turtle-dove; but it had to be "without blemish and without spot."

### III

## The Sacerdotal Section of the Book—The Tabernacle and Matters of Worship (*Chapters xxv.-xl.*)

### The Tabernacle—Its Structure and Teaching.

**T**HE importance of the Tabernacle is seen by recalling that while but two chapters are given to the account of the creation of the world, sixteen are given to the construction of the Tabernacle. Too many people see in the Tabernacle something purely Jewish only, instead of seeing therein a wonderful picture of our redemption. While it is but a shadow of heavenly things and but a figure of the true, it is nevertheless a faithful representation of the realities of our redemption. If "all Scripture is profitable," and if Christ be the theme of the entire Bible, as He is (cf. Luke xxiv. 27, 44), then we should expect to find in this structure in the wilderness many lessons concerning Christ.

**The Purpose of the Tabernacle.** God had walked with Adam and visited Abraham; now He will dwell with His people in the Tabernacle in the wilderness; then in the temple at Jerusalem; then in Christ who tabernacled among men; now in the church; and finally in the glory (Revelation xxi. 3). Up to this time Israel had seen God only at a great distance, as dreadful and awful and far removed from the people (Exodus xix.). But it was difficult to worship God at a distance; He must in some way be brought near. Further, the people felt that there was a moral distance between them and God. How could this distance be bridged? How could

God be brought near to them? The answer is found in the Tabernacle, "Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell with them" (xxv. 8). The Tabernacle was God's house upon the earth—there, within that enclosure, was the presence of the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

**God Was the Architect of the Tabernacle.** Moses was simply the builder. The smallest detail was planned by God. So the whole plan of redemption originated with God (1 Corinthians ii. 6-9). Even the skill to carry out the plans was of God (Exodus xxxv. 30-34, cf. Philippians ii. 12, 13). It is worthy of note that Bezaleel was of Judah, the first of the tribes, while Aholiab was of Dan, the last of the tribes in line. Thus we have an illustration of the first and the last. So was it with Peter, the first, and Paul, last of all (cf. 1 Corinthians xv. 8). Just as God was the architect of the Tabernacle, so was He similarly related to the body of Christ (Psalm xl. 6-8, cf. Hebrews x. 4-9). He is also the creator of the resurrection body of His people (2 Corinthians v. 1). What minute care God showed in the construction of His Tabernacle; even the placing of a pin was not left to man's wisdom. God Himself supplied the necessary genius and skill (Exodus xxxv. 30, 34).

**The Tabernacle a Type of Christ** (Psalm xxix. 9). It was prepared by God (Hebrews x. 5-10) and was God's dwelling place among men (John i. 14, R. V. margin "tabernacled among us"). The epistle to the Hebrews was written for the purpose of showing that Christ is the fulfillment of the entire Levitical economy as represented by the Tabernacle.

**The Tabernacle not Necessarily a Pattern for Christian Church and Worship.** Indeed the epistle to the Hebrews lays special emphasis on the contrast between the two. There seems to be no identity. The one



is carnal and earthly, the other spiritual and heavenly. Of course, there are certain fundamental truths and principles—such as “without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins”—which are true of both covenants. These underlying truths and principles remain; their ceremonial aspects pass away.

**The General Appearance of the Tabernacle.** At first sight and in outward appearance probably crude and homely, certainly not attractive. The commonest covering was on the outside; underneath lay the purple, scarlet, fine linen, gold. These were seen from the inside only. Is not this like Christ and Christianity? Both must be seen from the inside (experienced) in order to be fully appreciated (cf. Isaiah liii. 4, 5). Christianity, like the stained glass windows of a cathedral, must be seen from the inside to be understood and appreciated.

**Method of its Structure.** It is interesting to note that in giving directions God began with the inside of the Tabernacle itself—the Holy of Holies, although in the actual construction Moses began (probably) with the court of the Tabernacle. Religion must begin first within the heart. So was it with Christ of whom the Tabernacle is a type. He came from the bosom of the Father down to man. In our approach to God we have first the brazen altar, and then the ark of the covenant, symbolic of the very presence of God. Christ is not our example, until He is first received into the heart as Saviour—faith comes before works.

1. **The Materials of the Tabernacle (xxv. 1-9).** It is worthy of note that only God's people offered material for the construction of the Tabernacle. Their willing offering was the gift of those in whose hearts burned first love for God (cf. Jeremiah ii. 2). What a contrast be-

tween the liberality of those people in whom the consciousness of God's love was new and fresh, and the stinginess of His people in the times of Malachi (iii. 10) out of whose hearts the first love seems to have died (cf. Revelation ii. 4, 5). Gold, bronze, silver, shittim (or acacia), firwood, cedar, and olive wood; blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen; spices; precious stones; various kinds of skins. Some idea of the costliness of the Tabernacle may be had by recalling that the gold used amounted to about \$750,000—the golden candlestick alone amounting to about \$22,875. The silver used amounted to about \$175,000. Then there are the precious stones, etc. So the Tabernacle was not the crude affair so often pictured.

2. **The Court of the Tabernacle** (xxvii. 9–18; chap. xxxviii.). The basis of measurement is the cubit which, for convenience, we will designate as eighteen inches. The court was one hundred and fifty feet long by seventy-five feet wide. It had twenty pillars on each side, and ten on each end. Its hangings were of white linen. Note particulars regarding the sockets, pins, hooks, fillets, chapiters. The door (John x. 9) was on the east side of the court, and was made of purple, blue, scarlet, and fine-twined linen; it was thirty feet wide, and rested on four pillars.

3. **The Brazen Altar** (xxvii. 1–8; xxxviii. 1–8). It is called also the Altar of Burnt Offering. It was seven and one-half feet square by four and one-half feet high; was built of wood and bronze; had four horns, four rings, and a ledge of brass. It was the first piece of furniture met with in the court.

4. **The Laver** (xxx. 18–28). Not many particulars are given concerning the Laver. It was made of brass

from the mirrors of the women. It was for the use of the priests only. It stood midway between the Brazen Altar and the door of the Tabernacle proper.

5. **The Tabernacle Proper, or the Tent of Meeting** (chap. xxvi. ; xxxviii. 20-31). This structure was forty-five feet long, fifteen feet high, and fifteen feet broad. It was divided into two compartments : the Holy of Holies (15 x 15 x 15) and the Holy Place (15 x 15 x 30).

The Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. Read carefully the particulars regarding the boards, sockets, tenons, coverings, etc., in connection with its construction.

There were two doors : one leading into the Holy Place ; the other, into the Most Holy Place.

The furniture of the Tabernacle—In the Holy Place there were the Table of Shewbread, Golden Candlestick, and Altar of Incense. In the Most Holy Place there was the Ark of the Covenant, containing the tables of the Law, the pot of manna, and Aaron's Rod. By the side of the ark was the book of the law which Moses wrote (cf. Deuteronomy xxxi. 26). The Mercy-seat covered the Ark.

Then there was the Vail, called the Vail of Covering because the ark was wrapped in it, when on the march. The Vail was supported by four pillars, and separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. The Most Holy Place was entered by Aaron, ceremonially, once a year ; by Aaron and his sons to pack up for each march ; by the Kohathites, who bore the sacred articles ; by Moses, when he needed Aaron's rod, and when he consecrated the priests (cf. Leviticus viii. 10).

Chapters xxxix. and xl. present us with the picture of the Tabernacle and its furnishings together with its vessels arranged in order ready for the worship of Jehovah. "So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the

tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle'' (xl. 33-35).





# The Book of Leviticus



# Synopsis of Leviticus

## INTRODUCTION.

### I. THE LAWS OF THE OFFERINGS—DEDICATION—THE WAY TO GOD THROUGH SACRIFICE (Chaps. i.-vii.).

1. The offerings themselves (i. 1-vi. 7).
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    - Sin calls for expiation.
    - The holiness of God.
    - A divinely appointed way for sinful man and a holy God to meet.
    - Figures or types of Christ's redemptive work.
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      - The Peace Offering (iii. 1-17).
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      - The Sin Offering (iv. 1-35).
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      - The Peace Offering (iii. 1-17).
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      - The Sin Offering (iv. 1-35).
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Of the Meal Offering (vi. 14-23).

Of the Sin Offering (vi. 25-30).

Of the Trespass Offering (vii. 1-7).

Of the Peace Offering (vii. 11-34).

- (a) The law of the bloody sacrifices.
- (b) The process of the offerings (cf. chap. i.).
  - Presentation of the offering (i. 2, 3).
  - Laying on of the hands of the offerer (i. 4).
  - The killing of the offering (i. 5, 6).
  - The sprinkling of the blood (i. 5).
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## II. THE LAW OF THE PRIESTHOOD—MEDIATION (Chaps. viii.-x.).

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  - (a) The preparation of Aaron and his sons (viii. 1-9).
  - (b) Their anointing or inauguration (viii. 10-24).
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2. The work of the priests (Chap. ix.).
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3. The punishment of the priests—The sin of Nadab and Abihu (Chap. x.).
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## III. THE LAWS OF CLEAN AND UNCLEAN—THE WALK WITH GOD BY SEPARATION (Chaps. xi.-xvi.).

1. Uncleaness which comes from participating in certain kinds of foods and coming into contact with dead bodies (Chap. xi.).
  - The meaning of these laws to Israel.
  - The meaning of these laws to us to-day.
2. Family uncleaness or uncleaness from natural causes (Chap. xii.).
3. Uncleaness from disease—Leprosy (Chap. xiii.).
  - Leprosy like sin.
4. The day of atonement (Chap. xvi., cf. xxiii. 26-32).
  - (a) The meaning and significance of the day of atonement.
  - (b) The ceremonies of the day of atonement.

#### IV. THE LAWS OF HOLINESS—CONSECRATION (Chaps. xvii.—xxvii.).

1. Personal holiness (Chaps. xvii.—xx.).
  - (a) The people of God are to be a separated people.
  - (b) They must manifest purity in all the various relations of life (xviii. 6–30).
    - The marriage relationship (xviii. 6–18).
    - Personal habits of individual life (xviii. 19–23, 29, 30).
    - Purity must be manifested in the national life (xviii. 24–28).
    - The holiness of the sanctuary is insisted on (xx. 33).
  - (c) The question of social morality is dealt with in chapter xix.
  - (d) The punishments for the sins enumerated in chapters xviii. and xix. are set forth in chapter xx.
2. Priestly purity (Chaps. xxi., xxii.).
  - (a) Its manifestation in the various relations of life (xxi. 1–14).
    - In times of mourning (xxi. 1–6).
    - In the marriage relationship (xxi. 7, 8, 13, 14).
  - (b) Its manifestation in relation to personal deformities (xxi. 16–24).
  - (c) Its manifestation in the details of daily life (xxii. 1–33).
3. Sacred seasons (Chaps. xxiii.—xxv.).
  - (a) The names of the sacred seasons.
  - (b) The order of the sacred seasons.
    - The Sabbath (xxiii. 3).
    - The Passover (xxiii. 5–8).
    - The Feast of the Firstfruits (xxiii. 9–14, 22).
    - The Feast of Pentecost (xxiii. 15–20).
    - The Day of Atonement (xxiii. 26–32).
    - The Feast of Tabernacles (xxiii. 33–36).
    - The Sabbatic Year (xxv. 1–7).
    - The Year of Jubilee (xxv. 8–55).
4. Idolatry, the Sabbath, and matters pertaining to Vows (Chaps. xxvi., xxvii.).
  - (a) The blessings and cursings of chapter xxvi.
  - (b) The matter of special vows is treated in chapter xxvii.



## Introduction

**S**OME people find it difficult to see any profit to be derived from the study of the book of Leviticus, even though they admit its inspiration. "It is for the Jews," they say, "not for us in this day. We cannot see how it finds any application in present day law and practice." We should not forget that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable" (2 Timothy iii. 16), and that "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Romans xv. 4). The book of Leviticus, then, being a part of inspired writing, is profitable for the people of to-day even though it was written aforetime. It is a mistake to look upon Leviticus as being written for the Jews only.

Certain great fundamental truths are written in this book which are applicable to Jew and Gentile, past and present, equally. For example, we have :

First. The revelation of God's character. God is still intolerant to sin, and merciful to the sinner, as in the days when this book was written. God is still a holy God to the Gentile, as well as to the Jew of the past.

Second. Leviticus sets forth the fundamentals of true religion. The position that the doctrine of the atonement holds in this book, being first and primary, is the position it still holds, or should hold, in the religious thinking and teaching of to-day. The tabernacle, altar, priests, and sacrifices are no more, for, as the epistle to the Hebrews declares, Christ, our great High Priest and sacrifice, has made them no longer necessary. It should not be forgotten, however, that the spiritual truths these things



typified and signified yet abide, such truths as atonement, sacrifice, consecration, holiness, stewardship, and worship.

Third. The book is of value from the standpoint of jurisprudence and sanitation. A very careful comparison of Leviticus with modern law and sanitation leads one to see that the fundamental principles which underlie these, even though the details may not be adaptable, are still operative and formative.

Fourth. The problems of Leviticus are still the problems of to-day, as, for example, the relation of civil government to religion; the question of capital and labour; the question of land holding; social questions and the social evil; the question of marriage and divorce. The book of Leviticus throws a flood of light upon all these questions.

Fifth. We have in the book of Leviticus a revelation of Christ as the way of salvation. This is the lesson that the epistle to the Hebrews has to teach us, for Hebrews is a splendid commentary on Leviticus. The epistle to the Hebrews cannot be understood without the light thrown on it from Leviticus, nor can Leviticus be understood except as it receives its explanation in the epistle to the Hebrews.

**The Name.** The third book in the Pentateuch is called *Leviticus* because it has to do largely with the Levites and their duties in connection with the Tabernacle service. It is also called "The Book of Laws" (cf. vi. 9, 14, 25; vii. 1, 11, 37; xi. 46; xiv. 54; xv. 43; xxiii. 37; xxvi. 46; xxvii. 34), presumably because it deals with the Laws of the Offerings (chaps. i.-vii.); the Laws of the Priests (chaps. viii.-x.); the Laws of the Clean and Unclean (chaps. xi.-xxii.); and the Laws of Feasts (chaps. xxiii.-xxvii.). The Jews were accustomed to call Leviticus "The Law of the Priests" also.

**Its Relation to Exodus.** Not only do the opening words of Leviticus, which join it to Exodus, make evident the close connection between the two, but the matter treated also bears witness to the fact. The first word of Leviticus ("And") connects it with Exodus. A careful study of the contents of the two books reveals the reason for this relationship. In Exodus we see God giving Moses instructions for the building of the Tabernacle, and the people, in obedience to the command of God, working until the Tabernacle stood completely erected. In Leviticus instructions are given for the orderly performance of divine service in the Tabernacle already erected. Exodus is the book of redemption; Leviticus, the book of worship. Exodus shows God's plan of redemption; Leviticus, its result in worship.

**The Key-note of Leviticus.** The key-note of the book lies couched in the expression "Holiness unto the Lord." The prominent thought of the whole book is that of holiness. Everything in the book—priests, people, sanctuary, the Tabernacle with all its vessels, implements, and coverings, the priestly garments—is holy and set apart, not so much from a sinful as from a common use. The characteristic phrase is "Be ye holy as I am holy" (xi. 44, 45; xix. 2; xx. 7, 26). If the laws of Leviticus seem harsh, and its penalties severe, it is because they exhibit the divine intolerance towards sin. It is because God is absolutely holy. We should remember the kindness, as well as the holiness of God, as set forth in this book. If it be true, as it is, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, we should not overlook the fact that with the shedding of blood there is remission of sin to the faithful and believing soul.

**The Purpose of the Book.** The contents of this book may be looked at from a fourfold point of view:

First. To show the redeemed nation of Israel how to

live a life of holiness in fellowship with God. This is accomplished by the separation of the life from things that are morally or ceremonially unclean. Hence we have the Laws of the Clean and the Unclean.

Second. To show that the *way to God* is by and through sacrifice and the shedding of blood, and that the *walk with God* is by and through separation from that which is unholy and unclean.

Third. Not only is man's sinful and lost condition manifest in this book, but also the sanctity and holiness of God's nature and dealings with man, as well as the remedy which divine holiness has provided for sinful and erring man.

Fourth. It is unquestionably the plan of this book to furnish the new theocracy of Israel with a new code of laws which might secure their physical, moral, and spiritual well-being.

**The Outline of the Book.** The contents of Leviticus may be summed up in four suggestive words: Dedication (chaps. i.-vii.), dealing with the offerings and the offerer; Mediation (chaps. viii.-x.), dealing with the priests, their consecration, work, and the punishment allotted to misdemeanour in priestly office and work; Separation (chaps. xi.-xvi.), setting forth the great truth that a people who are governed by God, as their acceptance of His laws would indicate, should reveal God in their manner of living; Consecration (chaps. xvii.-xxvii.), setting forth the call to the consecration of time and means to the service of God.

The outline we will follow, however, is as follows. I. The Law of the Offerings (chaps. i.-vii.), dealing with the offerings themselves and the laws governing the offerings. II. The Law of the Priesthood (chaps. viii.-x.), setting forth the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the office of the priesthood, together with a

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description of the work they are to do. III. The Laws of Clean and Unclean (chaps. xi.-xvi.), describing with minute detail the laws that should govern the people with reference to food, clothing, and contact. IV. The Laws of Holiness (chaps. xvii.-xxvii.), emphasizing the necessity of a holy life on the part of both priest and people, such holiness to be manifested in the keeping of the Sabbath, a recognition of sacred seasons, and a life befitting a chosen people.



## I

# The Law of the Offerings—Dedication— The Way to God Through Sacrifice (Chapters i.-vii.)

**T**Hese chapters deal with the offerings themselves (i. 1-vi. 7) which include the Burnt Offering (chap. i.), the Meat or Meal Offering (chap. ii.), the Peace Offering (chap. iii.), the Sin Offering (chap. iv.), and the Trespass Offering (v. 1-vi. 7). The laws governing these offerings are then dealt with in vi. 8-vii. 38.

If the following order of the offerings and their laws is observed, it will materially assist in an understanding of this section. The location of the offerings and their laws is as follows :

- The Burnt Offering (chap. i.) and its laws (vi. 8-13).
- The Meal Offering (chap. ii.) and its laws (vi. 14-23).
- The Peace Offering (chap. iii.) and its laws (vii. 11-34).
- The Sin Offering (chap. iv.) and its laws (vi. 25-30).
- The Trespass Offering (v. 1-vi. 7) and its laws (vii. 1-7).

Note that the directions about offerings are addressed "to the people" (i. 2 ; iv. 2) ; and the directions regarding the laws, "to the priests" (vi. 9, 25).

### 1. The Offerings Themselves (i. 1-vi. 7).

(a) *The Purpose of the Offerings.* The consciousness of sin. There was in that day, as in this, a need that the people should understand the awful reality of sin. Such

a lesson is no less needed to-day when sin is so frequently excused, misconstrued, or denied. We need to keep ever before us the consciousness of sin, as did David when he said, "My sin is ever before me" (Psalm li. 3). In a fit of anger a man once struck his son. So great was the force of the blow that the son was thrown backward and fell down the stairs, injuring his spine, so that ever afterwards he was a hunchback. Every day as the father looked upon his son he was reminded of his own sin. There was a consciousness of sin every day. So was it with the daily offerings; there was a constant remembrance of sin (cf. Hebrews x. 3).

*Sin exposes man to penal consequences.* No man can sin with impunity. Every sin carries with it its own punishment. Even a sin confessed and forgiven carries with it its penalty. A confessed sin is forgiven, but must receive its penalty. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Corinthians xi. 30-32).

*Sin calls for expiation.* Sorrow, confession, anguish, and the shedding of tears over sin are not enough, nor can such manifestations alone remove the guilt of sin. It must be remembered that sin inflicts an injury on the holiness of God which calls for expiation. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews ix. 22).

*The holiness of God.* God is of too pure eyes to behold evil. The sinner cannot draw near to God. Sin separates from God now just as surely as it separates from Him in the future. Man must be taught this lesson. There is always the danger of irreverence in

our approach to God. The construction of the Tabernacle emphasized the truth of the apartness and holiness of God. From the brazen altar at the door of the court of the Tabernacle even to the most holy place where the ark dwelt, as it were, alone and in the dark—everything testified to the fact of God's holiness and the need of reverence in approach to Him.

*A divinely appointed way for sinful man and a holy God to meet.* There can be no communion or fellowship between God and the sinner unless the fact of sin has been dealt with and settled. Reconciliation must take place before there can be communion. The divine way by which man, who is a sinner, can enter into communion and fellowship with God, who is holy, is the way of sacrifice. This is not a priest-made but a God-made way. We should not dwell on what some call the arbitrariness of God's way, or the *must* of approach. We should rather be grateful for the privilege of the way and rejoice that we *may* draw near to God. God's way is a narrow way, but it is effective and the only way.

*Figures or types of Christ's redemptive work.* The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. These sacrifices were valuable particularly in that they looked forward to the coming and complete work of Christ. The Jews in Levitical times were saved by looking forward to a hope—the cross of Christ—just as we, in this day, are saved by looking backward to a fact—the cross of Christ. Everything in connection with the offerings was fulfilled in Christ. The offerings cannot be understood except in the light of the finished work of the Saviour. In the transfiguration story Moses, representing the Law, and Elijah, the Prophets, vanished out of sight; Christ alone remained. Christ is our Passover (1 Corinthians v. 7), and our Sweet Saviour Offering

(Ephesians v. 2). The sacrifices of Leviticus were symbolic, not saving (cf. Hebrews x. 4). They were temporary, pointing to Christ.

(b) *The Number of the Offerings.* There are five. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to say why there are just five offerings and no more. It may be that we have here five pictures of Christ, just as we have four gospel accounts of the life of Christ. Do we ask why there were four gospel accounts? The answer is, because that number evidently was necessary to give a complete picture of the life and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. So it is probable that five offerings were necessary in order to adequately describe the perfect Saviour, the complete deliverance of the sinner from his sin, and the bringing of the separated soul into communion and fellowship with God.

The offerings seem to be divided into two groups of three and two. The first group of three, the Burnt, Meal, and Peace Offering, may be said to set forth the perfect life of Jesus Christ. They are Sweet Savour Offerings, and as such doubtless present to us a picture of the complete and perfect obedience and surrender which characterized the life of our Lord Jesus. The second group, the Sin and Trespass Offering, doubtless typifies and sets forth the offering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ in both the active and passive sense, and as rendering perfect satisfaction to God and to man. In the first group, called the Sweet Savour Offerings, Christ may be considered as giving Himself as an offering to God. It is to be noted in this connection that the offerer came as a worshipper. In the second group, called the Sin Offerings, Christ is represented as giving Himself for the sins of men. Here the offerer came as a sinner having guilt upon him which must be judicially dealt with.



(c) *The Grades of the Offerings.* The offerings ranged, as to their nature, all the way from a handful of flour to a bullock. This arrangement was doubtless to teach the people that no poverty could debar any one from availing himself of presenting an offering to God, just as it is true to-day that no poverty of soul can debar any penitent man from finding pardon and forgiveness. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy i. 15). Some have thought that the different grades of offerings indicated the offerer's appreciation of the value of Christ's redemptive work. Can this be true? Is it my appreciation of Christ and His work that saves me? Or is it the work of Christ itself? Is not a little faith real faith, just as much as great faith? Is not the dewdrop just as much real water as the great torrent of Niagara? Is not a spark just as much real fire as the flames that belch from the volcano? After all, is it not Christ, rather than my faith that saves? Others have suggested that the different grades of offerings indicate the different grades of acceptance of the offerer. Can this be true? Are not all souls equally forgiven if they are forgiven at all? Are not all souls equally accepted in the Beloved if they are accepted at all? Still others intimate that the different grades of offerings indicate different aspects of the value of Christ's offering in the sight of God. Can this be? Was not every aspect of Christ's redemptive work accomplished in the same spirit of joyful and glad surrender?

One thing in connection with the grade of offerings that is constantly insisted on is that, whether great or small, whether offered by rich or poor, they shall be without blemish and without spot. The reason for this is that each offering represented Christ in some phase of His redemptive work. The absolute perfection of Christ in

person and work demanded, therefore, that any offering which typified that work should be perfect and without blemish (cf. 1 Peter i. 18, 19).

(d) *The Order of the Offerings.* There are two ways of viewing the order of the offerings: Christward, and Manward; from the view-point of Revelation, and Presentation. The order in which the offerings were delivered to Moses began with the Burnt Offering first, because the offerings are looked at from the divine side as typifying the work of Christ. The order delivered to the people and the priests is that of the Sin Offering first, because the manward and human aspect of the offerings is prominent.

From the standpoint of Revelation the order of the offerings presents us with the divine arrangement, those which deal with the person of Christ being placed first, those dealing with the redemptive work of Christ, second. This is necessary when we consider that no redemptive work dealing with the problem of sin can be efficacious unless accomplished by One who Himself was divinely sent, absolutely perfect in nature and character, and perfectly well-pleasing to the Father. So the first three offerings, viewed Christward, represent our Lord Jesus Christ who, in the absolute surrender of His perfect life unto the Father—it was such an One who made peace. The offerings of this group are called Sweet Savour Offerings. They were well-pleasing to God. If God were not well pleased with Christ, then there would be no use of the offerings which follow. In the second group of offerings, the Sin and Trespass Offering, Christ is presented as our sin bearer (Sin Offering) and as One who makes full restitution and satisfaction to God and man (Trespass Offering).

Viewed Manward and with the thought of Presentation, the sinner approaches God by means of the Sin and

Trespass Offering and thus through the offering for sin is led to the Sweet Savour Offerings, indicating obedience, surrender, and acceptance with God. The Sin and Trespass Offering make expiation for sin. The Burnt Offering opens the way for full surrender, while the Peace and Thank Offering show that expiation and full surrender are followed by sacrifices of peace and joy. Christ, the fully consecrated One, makes propitiation for the sins of man, while man, through that propitiation, is led to the consecration of his life to God.

### THE FIVE OFFERINGS

#### First Group (i. 1-iii. 17).

First. *The Burnt Offering* (i. 1-17). This is called the Burnt Offering because the entire offering was burned. It is the ascending offering as contrasted with the descending offering (the Sin Offering). It may be viewed in a twofold manner: Christward, and in its relation to the believer.

Viewed Christward, it typifies the personal consecration and the absolute surrender of Christ to the Father. The blood of this offering is said to ascend, just as the odour of a sweet-smelling sacrifice *ascends* to heaven and is in contrast, as we have said, with the Sin Offering, the blood of which *descends*. Every detail of this sacrifice points to Jesus Christ. The offering must be a male and without blemish, on the head of which the priest must lean his hands heavily. So Christ was without blemish and without spot (Ephesians v. 2; 1 Peter i. 18, 19). It was on the sacred head of Christ that the sins of the world leaned hard. "And the Lord hath laid (made to lean or fall heavily) on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah liii. 6 Hebrew). With this offering, as with Christ, God was well pleased (Matthew iii. 16, 17). If God had not been pleased with Christ, there would be no hope for us.



Viewed with relation to the believer, it shows that God accepts him in Christ and that He is well-pleasing in the Beloved ; that God has "his inheritance in the saints" and that He is well pleased with us in Christ (Ephesians i. 6, 18). It should be noted that in every case (in Presentation) the Burnt Offering was offered *after* the Sin Offering ; it was offered daily, reminding us of the need of constant daily surrender (Romans vii. 6, 13-22). It must be a male of the flock, thus typifying the surrender of the best we have. The offering ascends unto God, thus intimating that we are to seek those things that are above where our life is hid with Christ (Colossians iii. 1-3) and that our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians iii. 20).

The Burnt Offering could be an offering from the herd, from the flock, or from among the fowls, probably determined by one's ability and position in life. God is worthy of the best we have (2 Samuel xxiv. 24). This spirit must characterize our offering, which must be presented "before the Lord," indicating an offering made with the consciousness of God's presence.

It is interesting to note the words "He shall lay the wood in order upon the altar" (i. 7, 8). This phrase is emphasized again and again. God is a God of order and not confusion (1 Corinthians xiv. 40). The same thing is true of the attire of the priests when presenting themselves to God. One sometimes wonders if this does not bring home the lesson that we need to be careful, neat, and orderly in our attire, and presentation of ourselves before God.

Second. *The Meal Offering* (ii. 1-16). This offering signifies the consecration of one's life-work to God. It was bloodless because not expiatory. Of course, primarily, it typifies the consecration of Christ in His life and character. It is never separated from the Burnt



Offering (cf. xxiii. 18). It could consist of bruised wheat, scorched ears, blood, or a drink offering. Leaven and honey, signifying impurity of life, were prohibited in this sacrifice. Frankincense, indicating a fragrant life, and salt, standing for faithfulness to the covenant, were to be component parts of the offering. The Meal Offering is called "Corban," that is, a gift, thereby signifying that the offerer recognized that all his life and possessions belonged to God. Such a surrendered life, in all its detail and *minutia*, is set forth by this offering, just as such a surrendered life as a whole is signified by the Burnt Offering. "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John iv. 34). How wondrously the perfect righteousness of Christ is provided for unrighteous man! What a wonderful picture of the believer's fellowship with God in and by a holy life, and what a warning that he should leave out of his life and service all that is impure and corrupt. The believer recognizes the supremacy of God in all his life, and gladly submits to it by the offering of himself and his gifts in loyal service.

Third. *The Peace Offering* (iii. 1-17). This is the most joyful of all the offerings. It speaks of communion with God. It is an offering not *for* peace, but *because of* peace. The female of the flock could be offered as a sacrifice because the effect of the atonement, rather than the act of atonement itself, is set forth. It follows the Burnt Offering because the Burnt Offering is its ground (cf. Romans v. 1). It was a joint feast, a sacrificial meal, in which God, the priests, and the offerer partook. Because of the Burnt Offering God, Christ, and the believer rejoice together in fellowship in the Peace Offering (cf. 1 John i. 3). We have peace *with* God which is the peace of relationship (Romans v. 1). We have the peace *of* God which is the peace of security (Philippians iv. 7 ;

Isaiah xxvi. 3). We have peace *from* God which is the peace of satisfaction flowing into the heart (1 Corinthians i. 3). All this peace is through Christ who Himself is our peace (cf. Ephesians ii. 14). It is to be noted that only those who were clean could participate in this offering (vii. 20, 21). So only those who have been cleansed from sin can have real peace. There can be no communion if one is living in known sin (1 John i. 5-7). Of course, if any Israelite had sinned and thereby become unclean, he could come, and, by confession of his sin, be cleansed, and thus enter into fellowship with God again (xxii. 10-25). Thus such uncleanness did not prove that one was not an Israelite, but only that it hindered fellowship. No foreigner or stranger had this privilege. The Peace Offering looked backward and forward—backward to the Burnt Offering, forward to a communion. Thus it reminds us of the Lord's Supper. It follows the Burnt Offering and Meal Offering, for only on the ground for which these offerings stand could peace really ensue.

**The Second Group—The Sin Sacrifices (iv. 1-vi. 7).** As we have already seen, there were three classes of offerings: Those of Expiation (Sin Offering and Trespass Offering), those of Consecration (Burnt Offering and Peace Offering), and that of Communion (the Meal Offering).

We deal now with the offerings dealing with Expiation and Propitiation—The Sin and Trespass Offering. It is somewhat difficult to distinguish absolutely between the Sin and Trespass Offering. It has been said that the Sin Offering deals with the sinner and not his sin, and for this reason the priest, ruler, and congregation are mentioned; whereas the Trespass Offering deals with sin and not the sinner, and for this reason swearing, uncleanness,

theft, etc., are spoken of in connection with the sacrifice. The Sin Offering shows what we are—forgiven ; the Trespass Offering, what we have done. The Sin Offering deals with willful, known sins, sins of commission ; the Trespass Offering with sins of ignorance and omission. The Sin Offering deals with expiation and has reference to God. The Trespass Offering deals with the satisfaction as regards the sin of man. Both the Sin and Trespass Offerings set forth that expiation takes place by an adequate penalty and satisfaction, by a perfect reparation for the wrong done. So Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, bore the penalty due our sins and made redress for every broken claim of God.

First. *The Sin Offering* (iv. 1–35). The Sin Offering is the last of the order in which God gave the ritual to Moses, although it is the first in the order of presentation on the part of man, for, as we have seen, viewed from Christ's side, the fitness of Christ to perform the redemptive work is the vital thing ; whereas from man's side, sin must be put away before he can be well-pleasing to God.

The Sin Offering stands absolutely for atonement and typifies our Lord Jesus Christ who was made sin for us. "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf ; that we might become the righteousness of God in him " (2 Corinthians v. 21, R. V.). The word used for sin and sin-offering is the same, showing how completely Christ identified Himself with sin. Christ took the sinner's place. That is the prominent thought in this offering which places the emphasis on the sinner more than on his sin. Expiation for sin is brought about by a substituted life only. In Isaiah liii. 10 Christ is set forth as a Sin-Offering. This offering presents us with a wonderful picture of Christ on the cross as the great Sin Bearer.

This offering was made when the conscience of the



priests, the congregation, or the nation began to work and thus aroused these classes to the need of atonement (iv. 14, 23, 28).

There is no eating of this offering either on the part of the priests or people. Certain parts of the offering were burned "without the camp" by which is meant the place of the condemned; so Christ suffered "without the camp" (cf. Hebrews xiii. 13).

The lessons the believer may derive from the Sin-Offering are many. He learns that he must come before God in the person of a substitute. Such a substitute is absolutely imperative, as is also such an offering. Other offerings may be voluntary, but not this one. When conscience convicts one of sin there should be an immediate seeking of the cleansing blood of Christ. This is true not only of willful sins but also of sins of ignorance, sins that surprise us or are the result of inattention or neglect, for ignorance does not excuse the guilt of sin. The sins referred to here are sins done unwittingly as contrasted with sins committed with a high hand, or, as David calls them, "presumptuous sins" (Psalm xix. 12, 13). Sins of ignorance incur guilt and need the cleansing blood of Christ; for this reason there is no such thing as sinless perfection. On the matter of willful sin and the awful guilt incurred thereby see Numbers xv. 30, 31; Psalm xix. 12, 13; Hebrews x. 26-29. Possibly by willful sin in this connection is meant persistent, habitual, unrepentant sin, and describes an attitude, probably, rather than a specific act, for surely no sin, even a sin willfully committed, is beyond the pardoning grace of God (cf. Isaiah i. 18; 1 Timothy i. 15).

Second. *The Trespass Offering* (v. 1-vi. 7). Both the Sin and Trespass Offerings deal with expiation by an adequate penalty, and satisfaction by the perfect reparation for the wrong done. So Jesus Christ, our Redeemer,



bore the penalty due for every sin and made redress for every broken claim of God.

The Trespass Offering, or debt-offering as it is sometimes called, was offered on three particular occasions: First, in behalf of the ignorant trespass in holy things. Sin is sin whether recognized by us as such or not. Second, because of the breaking of the commandments of God, even ignorantly. Ignorance does not excuse guilt. Third, for injury to or defrauding of a neighbour. Sin against a neighbour is looked upon as a sin against God. The idea of compensation or restitution is prominent in this offering. So Christ not only made complete expiation for us, but also complete redress for every sin.

The practical lesson to be derived from this offering is that it is not enough to confess our sins unto God. We must also make restitution for the wrong we have done and make it right so far as it lies in our power. We have then a right to expect that our offering will be accepted (v. 5; Numbers v. 7, 8; Matthew v. 22, 23). Where wrong had been committed against God, sacrifice was first made, then restitution; where the wrong had been committed against man, restitution was first made, then sacrifice (cf. Matthew v. 22, 23).

2. **The Laws of the Offerings** (vi. 8–vii. 38). “The laws of the offerings” are found as follows: The law of the Burnt Offering (vi. 8–13); of the Meal Offering (vi. 14–23); of the Sin Offering (vi. 25–30); of the Trespass Offering (vii. 1–7); of the Peace Offering (vii. 11–34).

The laws of the offerings concern themselves, first, with the sacrifices known as the bloody offerings, namely, the Burnt, Peace, Sin, and Trespass Offering. Our attention is drawn to two main thoughts regarding these offerings: first, the kind; second, the process of the offering.

(a) *The Law of the Bloody Sacrifices.* They may be of the cattle, the flocks, or from among the fowls. All those animals which live by the death of others, the *carnivora*, are excluded from these sacrifices, for they could not in any sense represent and typify our Lord Jesus Christ.

The animals offered must be clean and without blemish. The reason for this also is because they represent Christ (Hebrews ix. 14). Further, we should not offer to God what we cannot use ourselves. It is a fault as serious as this that God finds with the people of Malachi's time (Malachi i. 6-13). Even in the unbloody offering when wheat was presented, it must be the best of the product—of *fine* flour.

Only those animals among the clean animals which were domesticated could be offered, thereby indicating that we should offer to God that which has cost us care and love. So is it in the Meal Offering—not that which grows spontaneously, but that which is of cultivated growth and requires labour is allowed to be offered.

Attention is drawn to the fact that there are different grades of offerings. No one is so poor as not to be able to bring an offering. No poverty can debar anybody from availing himself of God's offer of redemption.

(b) *The Process of the Offerings* (cf. chap. i.). This process consists of five steps :

First. The presentation of the offering. The offerer must bring his own offering and present it himself (i. 2, 3). There were other parts of the ceremony which could be performed by proxy, which the priests could perform in place of the offerer, but the victim must be brought by the one offering it. The presentation must be in faith. It is to be "accepted for him" or in his place. Further, it must be presented at the door of the Tabernacle (cf. xvii. 3, 4, 5, 9), that is to say, it must be

presented publicly. Death was the penalty for presenting the offering elsewhere.

The lesson we learn from the presentation of the offering is that every man must accept Christ personally for himself. He must, by faith, look upon Christ as the One provided as his substitutionary offering. He must not only receive Christ personally, but must also make public confession of that acceptance.

Second. The laying of the hands of the offerer upon the head of the sacrifice (i. 4). No proxy was allowed in this act. It must be the offerer's own hands that are laid upon the offering, thus signifying his identification with the victim, and the transference of his sin and guilt to the innocent victim (cf. xvi. 21; Psalm lxxxviii. 7). Such an actual identification was necessary in order to make atonement, that is, to cover the sinful offerer from the gaze of God who is of too pure eyes to behold evil. The eye of God then rests upon the victim and not upon the offender.

So in Isaiah liii. 6—"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"—we are taught that Christ is the One on whom our sins were laid (cf. Psalm lxxxviii. 7; 2 Corinthians v. 21).

"My faith would lay her hand on that dear head of thine;  
While like a penitent I stand, and there confess my sin."

"I lay my sins on Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God;  
He bears them all and frees me from the accursed load."

Third. The killing of the offering. The offerer must kill it himself (i. 5, 6). On the victim with which he has identified himself must the stroke fall. Shall we ever see Christ as our own personal Saviour until we have realized that it was our personal sin that nailed Him to the

cross? Not so much the sins of the world, nor the sins of others, but my sin nailed Him to the cross. We are crucified with Him.

Fourth. The sprinkling of the blood (i. 5). This was the work of the priest. The work of the offerer was done when the sacrifice was killed. It was necessary, however, that the blood of atonement be sprinkled on the altar, and thus the blood, which represented the life, be brought into the presence of God. This the priest alone could do, for the way into the holiest was not yet made plain for all men. So is it with us. Having become by faith identified with Jesus Christ as our sin-bearer, we must then leave it to our great High Priest to intercede for us in the holy place into which He has entered with His own blood.

Fifth, and finally. The burning of the offering (i. 6-9; xii. 13, 17). The burning indicated the complete consecration of the victim and the life to God, such a consecration as is always absolutely necessary to true worship. The burning was, in a sense, God's acceptance of the offering. In the Burnt Offering the entire sacrifice was burned; there was nothing left for offerer or priest; everything was for God. The burning indicated also that the offering had passed even beyond the recall of the offerer. So God accepted Christ's work for us, the proof of which lay in the resurrection from the grave, the exaltation to His own right hand, together with the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is given to us as a seal of the acceptance of Christ's work with God (Acts ii. 32-34; Romans viii. 14-16; Galatians iv. 6; Ephesians i. 13, 14).



## II

### The Law of the Priesthood—Mediation

(*Chapters viii.-x.*)

**T**HIS section deals with the introduction and inauguration of the office of the priesthood. Up to this point in the divine revelation, it would seem that the head of the family had acted as the priest. Now, the tribe of Levi and the house of Aaron are chosen as mediators between God and the people.

Priesthood is essential to every religion. There is no direct intercourse with God. Mediation is absolutely necessary. The word "priest" is a sacred word and ought always to carry with it the sense of sacredness. It is a name which should signify one who stands between God and the people in a spiritual office. In that sense the office of the priesthood was typical of Christ, for there is now one mediator between God and man, even Christ Jesus (cf. 1 Timothy ii. 5). The Levites were chosen to minister in the priest's office and to separate themselves exclusively to sacred service.

This section (chaps. viii.-x.) contains three leading thoughts: The Consecration of Aaron and his sons (chap. viii.); The Work of the Priests—for themselves and the people (chap. ix.); The Punishment of the Priests (chap. x.).

1. **The Consecration of Aaron and His Sons** (chap. viii.). Verses 1-9 set forth the preparation of Aaron and his sons; verses 10-24, their anointing or inauguration into office; verses 25-36, the nature of the

sacrifice they were to offer. It is interesting to note the particulars regarding the office of the priesthood, especially that of the high priest. He must be wholly without physical defect; harmonious in his domestic relationships; thoroughly set apart unto God, not being allowed to lay aside his vows of dedication even in case of the death of a member of his family (xxi. 11). His body was first washed with clear water. He was then invested with the robes of the priestly office. Blood was taken from the offering and put upon his right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the toe of his right foot. He was then anointed with oil and blood, after which there was a retirement, probably for meditation and prayer, of seven days (viii. 31-36; ix. 1; cf. the ten days waiting at Pentecost, Acts ii. 1). At the close of this retirement the priest was ready to pronounce the priestly blessing upon the people (ix. 23).

2. **The Work of the Priests** (chap. ix.). The work of the priests consisted in an offering for themselves (ix. 1-14) and then an offering for the people (ix. 15-24).

3. **The Punishment of the Priests—The Sin of Nadab and Abihu** (chap. x.). This extreme punishment was doubtless necessary at the beginning of the office of the priesthood in order to teach both priests and people the sacredness of the office. It reminds us of the extreme punishment visited upon Ananias and Sapphira in the early days of the Christian Church when God would impress upon His people the sacredness of that institution (Acts v. 1-11).

The sin of Nadab and Abihu consisted of disobedience to a known command. The censers, which represented, probably, the prayers of the people, were to be lighted from fire taken from the brazen altar on which atonement

had been made for the sins of the people. Prayer is acceptable unto God only on the ground of the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is in His name, and in His name alone, that prayer has any efficacy. The sacrifices and, indeed, every detail of the Levitical system, typified our Lord Jesus Christ and His work for our redemption. Nadab and Abihu, therefore, in lighting the censers with strange fire did violence not only to the commandment of God, but to the typical significance of the proper Levitical procedure in this case. One sometimes wonders, from the injunction in verses 8-11, as to whether Nadab and Abihu had not indulged overmuch in wine drinking.

### III

## The Laws of Clean and Unclean—The Walk with God through Separation

(*Chapters xi.—xvi.*)

**T**HIS section has a very intimate relation to the two main sections preceding it. We have already been taught that the way to God, that is, the way to find pardon and favour with God, is through the offering of divinely-appointed sacrifices (I), which must be offered through a divinely-appointed priesthood (II). The people having by the use of these divinely-appointed means been accepted into favour and fellowship with God, the question now arises, What kind of a life should such chosen people live in order to maintain that fellowship into which they have been introduced? What are the things which separate from God? The answer is found in section III, dealing with the laws of clean and unclean.

Two kinds of uncleanness are dealt with : Ceremonial (chaps. xi.—xvi.), that which arises from the use of certain foods, the coming into contact with dead bodies, the disease of leprosy and various kinds of sickness ; Moral uncleanness (chaps. xvii.—xxvii.), which was occasioned by transgression of God's Moral Law whether written in the heart or on tables of stone.

The moral offenses dealt with in these chapters are of two kinds : First, Willful, known sin. Such disobedience merits punishment. No one can sin with impunity. No willful sin is settled merely by sacrifice ; some punishment must be meted out for it. Second, Sins of ig-



norance, for which atonement was made by offerings and compensation. Very light cases might be atoned for by certain ceremonials of washing; whereas graver cases called for sacrifices.

The section we are now dealing with (III) deals with Ceremonial uncleanness (chaps. xi.-xvi.).

1. **The Uncleanness Which Comes From Participating in Certain Kinds of Food and the Coming Into Contact With Unclean Bodies** (chap. xi.). Unclean beasts (xi. 1-8), fishes (xi. 9-12), birds (xi. 13-19), creeping things (xi. 20-29) that are unfit for food are enumerated. Uncleanness which comes from contact with dead bodies or the handling of utensils which render one unclean is dealt with in verses 41-45.

**The Meaning of these Laws to Israel.** Unquestionably, the regulation regarding prohibited foods is related to the holiness of God. This is clear from verses 43-45—“Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby. For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.” The habits of the unclean animals specified were typical and suggestive of moral vices that were to be avoided by those who would live a holy life.

A vital connection between the soul and body (xi. 44) is intimated by these laws of clean and unclean. The food eaten by an animal determines its nature. We know the nature of animals when we know whether they eat herbs or meat. So there is a relation between the

soul and body of man. Certain kinds of food affect a man's moral nature. That is probably the reason why meat is forbidden in Lenten season by some religious people. There are certain sins which cannot be cast out "except by prayer and fasting," or, in other words, by change of diet, or refraining from certain foods.

The laws of clean and unclean undoubtedly had for their purpose the separation of the nation of Israel from the heathen peoples surrounding them (xx. 24, 25). Hospitality towards their neighbours would be an impossible thing without participation with them in their food, and Israel could not, by virtue of these divine laws, partake of much of the food offered them by the people of the surrounding nations. Consequently free intercourse and hospitality between them was impossible. This was true in the case of Abraham, Joseph, and Daniel (cf. Daniel i. 8-16). So Israel could not partake of heathen feasts on that account.

These laws were doubtless to cultivate self-denial and restraint on the part of God's people. Such discipline and restraint are necessary to the existence of a holy people. That God had certain hygienic and sanitary reasons for the promulgation of these laws is, we think, unquestionable. Animals that are unclean in their method of eating breed disease and death. Those animals, therefore, that live on the flesh of others or that are parasites surely breed disease and militate against longevity. We know that the flesh of certain animals conveys disease and that certain forms of sickness are communicated to man by animals. We know, too, that the Hebrews, who, to some extent, obey these laws, are the healthiest and longest-lived people on earth.

**The Meaning of these Laws to Us To-day.** They unquestionably are not binding upon Christians (cf.

Colossians ii. 16, 20, 23). They do, however, impress upon us the necessary relationship between a man's diet and his morality. We judge of the grade of the civilization of a people very largely by what they eat. The nations that eat the forbidden and creeping things mentioned in this chapter are, we know, in a low state of morality, mentality, and civilization. The higher in the scale of civilization any nation attains, and the more cultured it becomes, the more does it follow the laws of clean foods as here set forth.

These laws impress upon the believer to-day the fact that the religious requirements of God have to do with the body as well as with the soul, with eating and drinking as well as with singing and praying. The body of the believer is redeemed and is the temple of God (Romans xii. 1 ; 1 Corinthians iii. 16, 17 ; vi. 19, 20). The Christian's eating and drinking must be in accordance with God's law (1 Corinthians x. 31 ; chap. viii. ; Romans xiv.). Therefore, the Christian who persists in eating and drinking certain foods which he knows injure his health or defile his body, is not only breaking the law of hygiene but also the law of holiness, and is committing a sin which needs atonement (cf. Romans xiv. 21-23).

Of course, no man can follow out such a régime and it not cost him something to do it. For this reason, in case of defilement, certain vessels were to be broken (xi. 33), stoves to be destroyed (xi. 35), and even seed (xi. 37) demolished when tainted. Nor could an Israelite be clean without much care and trouble, for frequent washings and offerings were called for ; but then these were covenant people just as believers are Christian people, and such people will do many things which the world sees no necessity for doing (cf. Matthew v. 47).

These laws of clean and unclean are, it seems to us,

the best way to deal with such questions as the habit of smoking, liquor, theater-going, and other habits that many claim are defiling in their nature. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Timothy ii. 19-21).

2. **Family Uncleanness or Uncleanness from Natural Causes** (chap. xii.). It is difficult to see wherein the birth of a child is considered among the laws of the unclean unless it be that God would have His people remember, every time a child is born into the world, the connection of that birth with the fall of man and the curse pronounced upon woman because of sin, as set forth in Genesis iii. That sin is transmitted by human generation is evident from Psalm li. 5—"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Even the mother of Jesus brought her offering at the close of her days of purification. If genius can be hereditary, why cannot sin? It would seem as though in the case of every child-birth there was a reëcho in the ears of woman of the sentence pronounced upon Eve, the first woman, for her sin. Is this the reason why seventy days of uncleanness are mentioned for the birth of a female child, while only forty are mentioned for the birth of a male child? We may not be able to see the reason for all this now any more than they did then, but inability to explain does not make void the proposition or make dead the fact. We should not forget, however, that the



Redeemer of the race came into the world in just this way and that the magnificent promise that we are "saved through the child bearing" gives to woman the glorious privilege and assurance that just as she was the instrument of the introduction of sin into the world, so she shall have the privilege of bringing the Saviour from sin into the world (1 Timothy ii. 11-15; cf. Luke i. 48).

3. **Uncleanness from Disease—Leprosy** (chap. xiii.). Leprosy is chosen as a representative disease for hygienic reasons, of course, but primarily for religious reasons. Leprosy is a type of sin: hateful, loathsome, foul, and ending in death. It, more than any other disease, is a picture of death working in life (1 Timothy v. 6). Being most visible and manifest, it is in itself a parable of death, which is the wages of sin.

The law required the same sacrifice for the cleansing of leprosy as for sin, thus showing the close likeness between them. Two birds were to be offered, one to be killed, the other to fly away (xiv. 4-7). So David in confessing his sin and pleading for it to be put away, says, "Purge me with hyssop," words used only of the cleansing of leprosy. So it comes to pass that leprosy, this disease above all other diseases, is chosen by the Holy Spirit as a type of sin as sin appears in the eyes of God. It is for this reason that the leper had to go to the priest, not to the doctor, for cleansing.

**Leprosy Like Sin.** Leprosy is like sin in that in its beginning it is small and insignificant and even unalarming. It also has a bright appearance or starts in a bright place (xiii. 2). So sin oftentimes has small beginnings and appears to be bright and pleasing, but death lurks there.

Then again, leprosy is in the blood. It is a part of the nature. It is not what the leper did, but what he was that separated him from fellowship and communion,

just as it is not so much what a man does as what he is as a sinner that separates him from God. No personal act brought on leprosy ; it was in the blood. So we are sinners by nature. What a great truth to recognize, for there can be no thorough sense or treatment of sin unless we recognize the necessity of treating it at its source and as a nature.

Leprosy is like sin in that it is progressive. It grows ; it does not stand still. No man can remain in the innocence of childhood, nor can he maintain that innocence. It would be easier to find a man who had never sinned than to find one who had sinned but once. It is characteristic of iniquity that it shall wax worse and worse (cf. 2 Timothy iii. 13).

Leprosy separates from home and loved ones as well as from communion and fellowship with the people. So does sin separate from God here and also from God and our loved ones eternally in the future.

Leprosy finally ends in death, just as does sin (cf. John viii. 21, 24 ; 1 John v. 16).

These laws regarding leprosy have much to teach us in a moral way. The bad man is a moral leper. We should separate ourselves from the lusts of the flesh just as we would from the leper (cf. Proverbs iv. 14, 15 ; v. 3-13 ; vii. 25-27).

Leprosy may be intellectual (xiii. 42-44) and thus indicate mental immorality. A pure faith and pure thoughts will keep one pure in life (cf. Philippians iv. 6-8). It has been said that Satan is intellect without God. Leprosy may reside on the person (xiii. 1-46) ; in the clothes (xiii. 47-59) ; in the home (xiv. 35-52) ; and in the community.

One cannot read this chapter carefully without noting certain cautions in connection with the diagnosis of leprosy. There is great danger that surface indications

may be mistaken for deep-seated disease. We should, therefore, be on our guard lest we be too suspicious and take for real evil that which only resembles evil, or designate sin that which appears like sin (xiii. 5, 6). Of course, whatever has the appearance of evil needs suspicious treatment, but we need to be careful even in this (cf. Romans xiv. 22). We should not be overzealous to condemn ourselves when God does not condemn us (xiii. 21-23). Some people make a god of conscience.

4. **The Day of Atonement** (chap. xvi., cf. xxiii. 26-32). This chapter should probably follow chapter x. in order. The day of atonement was the greatest day of all the Levitical system. It was the crown and climax. Even after all the elaborate ceremonies and sacrifices for sins of commission and omission, it was evident that some sins would, in the very nature of the case, be overlooked, so the day of atonement gathered up the sins of the whole year and presented them to God for forgiveness.

(a) *The Meaning and Significance of the Day of Atonement.* It showed the incompleteness of the sacrificial ceremonies. It was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should finally and completely take away sin (cf. Hebrews ix. 8, 9).

The ceremonies of that day took place primarily in the holy of holies. This was an indication that the true end of all spiritual worship is not attained until the worshipper has free access into the very presence of God. Herein lies the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. Christianity affords such access (cf. Romans v. 2; Hebrews iv. 16; ix. 1-24).

(b) *The Ceremonies of the Day of Atonement.* Great simplicity characterized the dress of Aaron and the priests on this day as compared with other days (xvi. 4). Purity, and not display, was characteristic of the priest



as he appeared before God that day. The high priest himself may not have been spotless in his life, but his dress was. That dress typified the perfect righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, the righteousness which He has procured for us. The high priest was kept in seclusion or privacy for seven days before the day of atonement, lest he should defile himself. It is said by some that the high priest sat up the entire night before the day of atonement, praying. If this be true, how much is wrapped up in the saying of our Saviour, the great High Priest, who, in the garden of Gethsemane, before the great atonement, said to His disciples, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?"

The priests had to offer sacrifices for themselves. Even the priests, supposed to be holy, had to offer for themselves and for the sanctuary, which, by their holy ministrations, had been defiled. Is it possible that these ministrations, which had been ostensibly for the purpose of purification and worship, had in fact polluted the Tabernacle? Then what a tremendous lesson in holiness is here taught! Every priest fails in his office, and so bids the worshipper look forward to the great High Priest who needed not to atone for His own sins.

The offering in behalf of the people consisted of two goats for a sin offering, thereby indicating that sin had been pardoned and put away; and a ram for a burnt offering, thus intimating that their sacrifice had found acceptance with God. Two goats were necessary, probably, because one could not fulfill the two parts of the whole truth which set forth the sacrifice for sin and the effect of that sacrifice. There can be no forgiveness unless there has been sacrifice. Confession is not enough; pardon rests on atonement. The whole question as to whether my sins are forgiven or not turns on this question, Has God laid His hand upon Christ and accepted



Him as my substitute? Faith is the attitude and condition which lays hold of this fact. The scapegoat indicates that sin had been carried away and was remembered no more by God forever. The daily sacrifice dealt with daily sins. The day of atonement dealt with sins as a whole and showed the people that God had not only forgiven and pardoned their sin, but had removed it entirely from His remembrance.

The atonement was made within the veil. Christ, our great High Priest, has presented the blood of atonement within the veil, in the very presence of God Himself (Hebrews ix. 24-26).

## IV

### The Laws of Holiness—Consecration

(*Chapters xvii.—xxvii.*)

**T**HIS section emphasizes the necessity of a holy life on the part of both priest and people, and calls for a manifestation of holiness as shall be seen in the keeping of the Sabbath, in a due recognition of the sacredness of time, and, in general, in a life befitting a chosen and holy people.

Some chapters in the Bible are like some chapters in law and history—they do not afford very pleasant reading, but their existence is witness to the truth of the facts narrated. The information may be painful, but is most salutary. These chapters present sin in its ugly aspect. One is likely to ask himself, Is it possible for one in covenant relation with God to commit such sins? He asks, as did the servant in the Old Testament, “Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?” Would these chapters have been written if these things were not possible? What a commentary we have here on the depravity of human nature!

#### 1. Personal Holiness (chaps. xvii.—xx.).

(a) *The People of God, Being a God-Governed and Theocratic Nation, are to be a Separated People.* Their lives are to be characterized by other-worldliness. “After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances.” “Defile not ye your-

selves in any of these things : for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you : And the land is defiled : therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants." "(For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled ;) That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein : I am the Lord your God" (xviii. 3, 24, 25, 27-30). The key-note to their conduct shall be "I the Lord"—a consciousness of the immediate presence of Jehovah—and not the customs of the people around about.

(b) *The People of God Must Manifest Purity in All the Various Relationships of Life* (xviii. 6-30). First. In the marriage relationship (xviii. 6-18). This is put first because it is the most sacred institution among men and is vital to the welfare and moral integrity of society. The marriage relationship is the backbone of all morality. Marriage is not so much a civil as a divine institution. It therefore should not be lightly spoken of, nor treated irreverently. It is also a figure of Christ and His Church (cf. Ephesians v. 24-28).

Second. Purity must be manifest in the personal habits of individual life (xviii. 19-23, 29, 30). The body, as well as the soul, is to be holy, for it is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Nothing that defiles the body should receive recognition in the experience of the man who would be devoted to God (cf. 1 Corinthians iii. 16, 17 ; vi. 18-20).

Third. Purity must be manifested in the national life (xviii. 24-28). A man's sin reaches beyond himself. The solidarity of the race is a fact. The sin of Achan (Joshua vii.) involved a nation in guilt. What a weight of meaning there is in the words of Jesus, "For their sakes I sanctify myself" (John xvii. 19). Eight times is it said of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, that "he made Israel to sin." The sins of the nation referred to in these chapters defiled the land so that it stank. Sin, like leprosy, defiles the individual, the walls of the house, and the nation. It is doubtless for this reason that God punishes nations for their sins, just as He punished the Amorites (Genesis xv., xvi.).

Fourth. The holiness of the sanctuary is insisted upon. No place is so holy but what sin may defile it. Satan took Jesus up into the holy city and into the holiest place in that city, namely, the temple of God, and there presented to Him the temptation recorded in the Gospels. Even heaven itself has been affected in some way by sin. Hence the necessity of Christ cleansing the heavenly things with blood (cf. Hebrews ix. 22-24).

(c) *The Question of Social Morality is Dealt With in Chapter xix.* The important thought of this chapter is that true religion and morality must be manifested among those with whom we come in contact. The Christian should be easy to live with, that is, under ordinary circumstances. His life should be such that it would convict the wicked, yet be one that shall be admired by them. The great lesson of this chapter is that all true morality is based on religion (cf. xix. 2, 4, 8, 10, 11, 14). The second table of the commandments rests on the first. As the root of the flower is necessary to its very life, so is religion to morality.

The chapter is full of sundry exhortations resembling somewhat the Sermon on the Mount. We are to be



obedient to parents because they are in the place of God (xix. 3). We are to keep God's Sabbaths (xix. 3). This is emphasized because the keeping of the Sabbath is so easily interfered with on account of our pleasures (cf. Amos viii. 5). The exhortation concerning idolatry is made necessary because the nations surrounding Israel were permeated with it. Then, there was the tendency in Israel to worship by sight instead of by faith, just as there is the tendency to worship the material to-day (cf. 1 John ii. 15-17). There is, then, the exhortation not to neglect the Peace Offering (xix. 5-8). The Peace Offering was the one most frequently offered, consequently the one most likely to be neglected. The offerer was tempted to use the meat in the Peace Offering, food that remained after three days, for himself instead of burning it, and thus he was likely to fall into the sin of seeking to save at the expense of God. Care for the poor is emphasized (xix. 9, 10). Philanthropy and Christianity go together. Infidelity is not philanthropic. Compassion for the weak is exhibited as a virtue. The survival of the fittest is not a holy doctrine, but a selfish platitude. The child of God must be no tale bearer (xix. 16); must not carry any hatred or grudge towards a fellowman in his heart (xix. 17, 18; cf. 1 John ii. 8-11; iii. 10-18); nor must he mix with the ungodly (xix. 19; cf. 2 Corinthians vi. 14-17). He must avoid false religions, like spiritualism (xix. 26-31; cf. xx. 27), and must also show a respect for the aged (xix. 30-32).

(d) *The Punishments for the Sins Enumerated in Chapters xviii. and xix. are Set Forth in Chapter xx.* What are sins in chapters xviii. and xix. are crimes in chapter xx., and merit punishment as well as call for sacrifice. The great lesson is that no one can sin with impunity; that every sin merits its punishment. Consequently we

have the expressions "cut off," "set his face against," "blood upon him," "death," "fire." The punishment may be individual (xx. 6); social and family (xx. 5); or national (xx. 18-24).

There are practical lessons regarding punishment which one may learn from this chapter.

First. Punishment does not seem to have been meted out with the primary purpose of the reformation of the offender. The punishments were to be considered as penalties for wrong-doing. Surely the execution of the death penalty, so often pronounced in this chapter, could not have been for the moral reformation of the offender. This thought should be of great interest to those who are perplexed with regard to the execution of the death penalty to-day because it precludes the reformation of the offender. It is interesting in this connection to note what the laws of the great King say (Numbers xxxv. 30-33). The probable primary purpose of these punishments was to satisfy an outraged justice. They were a manifest penalty for the open defiance of the laws of a holy God. Again and again the crime is given as the reason for the penalty (cf. "because," xx. 3, etc.).

Second, these penalties were for the protection of morality among men. The laws of this chapter, being the laws of God, are not to be looked upon as cruel. In all the penalties executed, the fatherly eye of God is on the poor, the orphan, the stranger, the afflicted. God is gracious and kind, but He will by no means clear the guilty.

2. **Priestly Purity** (chaps. xxi., xxii.). The purity of the priests is set forth in these chapters in a threefold manner:

First. Its manifestation in the various relations of

life, such as in times of mourning (xxi. 1-6), at which season the priests were not to manifest, by outward signs, their sorrow of heart as did others. One wonders sometimes if their conduct on such occasions did not look forward to the New Testament hope when believers, who have lost loved ones, are told to "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (1 Thessalonians iv. 13-16).

Priestly purity is to be manifested in the marriage relationship (xxi. 7, 8, 13, 14). The circle from which a priest could choose a wife was narrower than that from which the ordinary man might choose one. A priest could not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a woman of unsavory reputation. The woman he should choose for his wife must be a virgin and of his own people. The family of the priest is a holy family (cf. xxi. 9, 15). There shall, therefore, be no mixture of seed.

Second. The purity of priests is set forth in relation to personal deformities (xxi. 16-24). "For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach : a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or anything superfluous, Or a man that is broken-footed or brokenhanded, Or crookbackt, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken ; No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire ; he hath a blemish ; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God. He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy. Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish ; that he profane not my sanctuaries : for I the Lord do sanctify them. And Moses told it unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel" (xxi. 18-24).

Third. The priest must be careful to maintain purity in the details of daily life (xxii. 1-33). He must be clean before serving at the altar or partaking of the holy food. Cleanliness within and without must characterize the heart and life of those who stand between God and the people (cf. 2 Timothy ii. 20, 21).

3. **Sacred Seasons** (chaps. xxiii.-xxv.). Every religion has its feasts and festivals. They are necessary to its existence. They keep alive its memories. We are so prone to forget what we do not see. There is religious enthusiasm in numbers. We are justified alone; we are sanctified together. Judaism and Christianity are no exceptions to this religious tendency. God would have His people know that there is such a thing as the consecration of time. Of course, all time is sacred and belongs to God, and that is the reason why the number "seven" is so often mentioned in these chapters: the seventh day of the week, the seventh week, the seventh month, the seventh year, and seven sevens of years. Time is probably the hardest thing we are called upon to give to God. The sacrifice of time is the crown of all the sacrifices. It is easier to give money and things than to give time. Many who think it wrong to steal money do not have any conscientious scruples about stealing time from God. Will a man rob God? Yet we rob Him of time—time for devotion, for family worship, for service. Do we take vacations for the building up of the Christian life and for prayer? We have national holidays, why not religious holidays? Is Christ less than Washington or Lincoln? Is Calvary less than Bunker Hill? Is Christmas day less than the Fourth of July? Fraternal orders, for example, have their conclaves. Why should not Christians have their conferences? This is the thought contained in that hymn:



“ Take my moments and my days,  
 Let them flow in endless praise ;  
 Take my intellect, and use  
 Every power as Thou shalt choose.”

The setting apart of certain time for God is a prevention of covetousness, and shows that a man really believes that he does not live by bread alone, and that “ a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth ” (Luke xii. 15).

(a) *The Names of the Sacred Seasons.* They are called “ set times,” rather than feasts, for some, like the Day of Atonement, for example, were days of mourning. A “ feast ” was sometimes a “ fast.” Not always are we led by still waters and in green pastures. We have shadows as well as sunshine, but all ends in a perfect day, the Sabbath of God.

These “ set times ” are also called “ feasts.” The dance and joy are connected therewith. Six of these feasts are for joy ; one for mourning, thus indicating the characteristic of all true religion. Christianity was born in a song. The command is “ rejoice evermore,” not “ weep evermore.”

These sacred times were called “ holy convocations.” They were not to be idle days, but busy days—busy with God and the things of God. They are called “ my feasts.” What a contrast is suggested by the words of Jesus, “ The feasts of the *Jews*.” These sacred times are occasions through which God speaks to the soul and by which He arouses and assembles His people. We are usually so busy that God has no time to speak to us. We need to “ give ourselves,” or as we may say, “ take leisure, a vacation, for prayer.”

(b) *The Order of the Sacred Seasons.* First comes the *Sabbath* (xxiii. 3): first, because to this end all things

were tending and because the man who does not observe the Sabbath will not obey any other of God's laws. He will have no appreciation of God's goodness and purpose, for the Sabbath is an emblem of a God satisfied with the magnificent preparation He has made for man. The primary thought of the Sabbath is that of a memorial. Every returning Sabbath is a reminder of God's care and kindness for man, and not His tiredness because of creation. The man who neglects the observance of the Sabbath thereby indicates that he has no interest in the past and no part in the future, for the Sabbath is prophetic and looks forward to the future home which God is preparing, just as it is historic and looks backward to the magnificent home which God did prepare for man (Genesis ii., iii.).

The Sabbath should be kept nationally, and a curse was pronounced upon Israel for not keeping it. Indeed, it was for this reason that the nation was cast out, and the land has lain barren for so many centuries. No nation can long endure that ignores the Sabbath day.

The Sabbath is to be kept individually also. Emphatic are the words "in all thy dwellings," thereby indicating that every home should bear upon it the stamp of Sabbath keeping. God pity the home, the state, the nation that has no recognition of the Sabbath day. The Sabbath is a blessing. It was made for man.

Second, the *Passover* (xxiii. 5-8), celebrating the redemption from Egyptian bondage. This feast was to be kept perpetually. It is remarkable to note that the Jews always celebrated events and not men. The annual celebration of this Passover would give occasion for those participating in it to explain to their children the meaning of this service. The Lord's Supper is a memorial of our redemption, just as the Passover is a memorial of Israel's redemption.

Third, the *Feast of the Firstfruits* (xxiii. 9-14, 22). This was to be observed while they were "in the land" (not while they were in the wilderness) and indicated God's proprietorship of the land. It also typified Christ's resurrection (1 Corinthians xv. 20), and ours. It was held on the first day of the week, "the morrow after the Sabbath." It was on this day, the morrow after the Sabbath, that Christ arose from the dead (cf. Matthew xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 1).

Fourth, the *Feast of Pentecost* (xxiii. 15-21), which was observed fifty days after the Feast of the Firstfruits. This was another first day of the week (cf. xxiii. 15), the eighth day, the morrow after the Sabbath. The offering of the two loaves in which leaven was allowed is emphatic here because it represents, not Christ, nor the Holy Spirit, but the Church. Pentecost was the birthday of the Church.

Fifth, the *Feast of Trumpets* (xxiii. 23-25), which commemorated either the creation, which is supposed to have been finished at this time of the year, or the Law at Sinai. At any rate, it was to remind the people of the seriousness of what was to follow, namely, the Day of Atonement, which came nine days later. It was the herald of an approaching day. So will it be with the rapture of God's people when the trump of God shall sound, the dead in Christ shall rise, the living believers shall be changed, and together the raised dead and the changed living shall meet the Lord in the air (1 Corinthians xv. 51, 52; 1 Thessalonians iv. 14-17). It is said that the Jews filled the time between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement with more good deeds than at any other time of the year. The blowing of the trumpets indicated the beginning of the Jewish New Year which was the beginning of the seventh month. This does not mean that trumpets were not blown on other occasions (for at the



introduction of almost every new event there was a blowing of trumpets), but that this was particularly true of this season of the year.

Sixth, the *Feast of Tabernacles* (xxiii. 33-36). This feast was to commemorate the time when the children of Israel lived in tents during their wilderness journey. It is called the "feast of booths."

Seventh, the *Year of Jubilee* (xxv. 1-55).

#### 4. Idolatry, the Sabbath, and Matters Pertaining to Vows (chaps. xxvi., xxvii.).

(a) *The Blessings and Cursings of Chapter xxvi.* The truth of this chapter is abundantly corroborated by the history of the Jew and his preservation amid persecution, also by the history of Palestine and its desolation, all of which is a standing witness to the absolute inerrancy and fulfillment of prophecy.

The blessings and cursings of this chapter are more particularly national than individual. There is such a thing as national blessing for national obedience, and national curse for national disobedience. History affords abundant proof of the fact that nations that turn from God to idols, and that have desecrated His holy Sabbath, have nationally been led astray. God still rules among the nations.

Of course, there is a sense in which the blessings and cursings of this chapter are applicable to men as individuals. Righteousness is always a blessing; whereas sin is always a curse. It is worthy of note that God appeals to both fear and hope as legitimate incentives to a life of righteousness.

(b) *The Matter of Spécial Vows is Treated in Chapter xxvii.* The vows referred to in this chapter are special vows—those which have been assumed voluntarily, probably as the result of some special blessing or extraordinary



zeal. Such blessings have often led men to dedicate themselves, their children, their houses, their goods, or their money to God.

The offering of oneself is dealt with here (xxvii. 1-8). If there was no room for his personal service because of the plentiful supply of Levites, he could give money to provide for his substitute. What a lesson here for one who is called to certain forms of Christian service, who, nevertheless, is unable, for legitimate reasons, to enter into that service. If he cannot go himself, he can make it possible for some one else to go.

Sometimes a man dedicated his children to God. This he was at liberty to do, probably during the years of their minority, for the children themselves, during their minority, were not allowed to devote themselves or to commit themselves without the consent of their parents.

Women could devote themselves to the service of God by spinning or weaving, or in similar ways helping the priests.

Animals that were devoted were not to be exchanged. After they had passed under the rod, the sacrifice was settled. An unclean animal could be redeemed with a clean one.

No man was allowed to impoverish his family by vowing all that he had. Simply saying "Corban" (it is a gift cf. Mark vii. 11, 12) did not relieve a man from responsibility for the care of his family.

A man could not vow that which was already the Lord's, for example, the firstling of the flock, the first-born, or the tithes (xxvii. 30-34; cf. xxvi. 21). The children of Israel were obliged to support the Levites. This was their bounden duty.

# The Book of Numbers



# Synopsis of Numbers

## INTRODUCTION.

### I. PREPARATION FOR THE MARCH, OR DEPARTURE FROM SINAI (Chaps. i.-x.).

1. The numbering or organization of the chosen nation (Chaps. i.-iv.).
  - (a) The numbering of the people (Chaps. i., ii.).  
Threefold purpose : War, Registration, Pedigree.  
The ordering of the camp (Chap. ii.).
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5. Korah's rebellion—Murmuring against the priesthood (xvi. 1-40).
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  - (a) The successor of Moses appointed (Chap. xxvii.).
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  - (e) The lot of the two and a half tribes (Chap. xxxii.).
  - (f) The record of the line of march (Chap. xxxiii.).
4. Final instructions with regard to the entrance into the promised land (xxxiii. 50—xxxvi. 13).
  - (a) The clearance of the land (xxxiii. 50-56).
  - (b) Its boundaries and partition (Chap. xxxiv.).
  - (c) The appointment of cities for the Levites and the cities of refuge (Chap. xxxv.).
  - (d) Marriage in its relation to inheritance (Chap. xxxvi.).

## Introduction

**W**E have come to the fourth book in the Bible. We are still dealing with God's chosen people—Israel. In Genesis we saw the election (or selection) of the nation; in Exodus, its redemption; in Leviticus, its worship and communion with God. Now, in Numbers, we are to consider the Organization, Walk, and Warfare of that nation.

Israel has been formed into a separate nation under the special government of God as their King; the covenant has been ratified; the laws given, the Tabernacle erected, the priestly functions designated, and God has crowned it all with a visible manifestation of His presence. The nation was now ready to go on to possess the land which God had chosen for it. The possession of the land, however, was not to be a peaceful one—every step would be contested by its inhabitants; warfare must precede possession; the people are to be warriors as well as pilgrims. It is probably for this reason that the first census concerns those who are able to make war, with the idea of organization and numbering.

The expedition of Israel to Palestine was *possessive*, and *punitive*. The chosen people were to be used by God as instruments to punish the inhabitants of the land for their dreadful iniquities. Indeed, it was because of the awful sinfulness of the Canaanites that they were destroyed. In a similar sense, God used Assyria to punish Israel.

**The Name of the Book.** There are two numberings recorded, one at the beginning (chaps. i.-iv.) and the

other at the close of the book (chap. xxvi.). These numberings, showing, as they do, the miraculous growth of the nation, are a wonderful illustration of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that his seed should be very numerous (Genesis xv. 5). Numbers is called the "Book of Wanderings" or the "Book of Journeyings" because it recounts the experiences of the Israelites in the desert. Indeed, the book opens with the words "In the desert." It has also been called the "Book of Murmurings," because it recounts the murmurings of Israel against God and their leaders. This period is described by the Psalmist: "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways" (Psalm xcv. 10; cf. Hebrews iii. 10, 17; Deuteronomy viii. 15; xxxii. 10).

**The Time Covered by the Book.** About thirty-eight years and six months are covered by the events recorded in this book. Genesis covers about twenty-three hundred years; Exodus and Leviticus, about eighteen months. The thirty-eight years and six months of time which the book of Numbers covers may be divided as follows: Chapters i.-x., nineteen days; chapters xx.-xxxiii., thirty-eight years; chapters xxxiv.-xxxvi., five months.

**Relation of Numbers to Exodus and Leviticus.** Numbers is really an appendix to Exodus and Leviticus, for the first chapter of Numbers could be properly read after the nineteenth chapter of Exodus. In Exodus xix. the children of Israel arrive at Sinai; in Numbers i. they are still at Sinai, leaving there in the tenth chapter. The theme of Exodus xix. and Numbers i.-x. is practically the same, and has to do with the separation and sanctification of God's people. This relation can be set forth as follows: Exodus i.-xviii.—Exodus from Egypt

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to Sinai ; Exodus xix. to Numbers x.—at Sinai ; Numbers xi.—xxxvi.—from Sinai to Jordan.

**General Outline of the Book.** The general outline of the book falls into three main divisions : Preparation for the march, or departure from Sinai, chaps. i.—x. ; Journey from Sinai to Moab, chaps. xi.—xxii. ; From Moab to the borders of Canaan, chaps. xxiii.—xxxvi.



## I

### Preparation for the March, or Departure from Sinai (*Chapters i.-x.*)

**1.** Under this general division we have presented to us the numbering and organization of the chosen nation (chaps. i.-iv.).

(a) *There is First the Numbering of the People* (chaps. i., ii.). The threefold purpose of this numbering seems to be for war, registration, and pedigree (chap. i.). Canaan was not to be inherited without a conquest and conflict with the nations already possessing the land. For this approaching conquest and conflict Israel must be organized. The war of extermination upon which they were now entering is to be considered somewhat in the nature of a punitive expedition. The Canaanites who then possessed the land had, by their vile wickedness, forfeited all right to it. Jehovah, therefore, had a perfect right to destroy these people, for the cup of their iniquity was full. For this punitive expedition, God used Israel, just as later He used Assyria to punish Israel.

The registration record in this chapter was doubtless for political and ecclesiastical purposes, so that it would be convenient and comparatively easy at any time to secure statistics for the religious and political welfare of the nation. The numbering of the people also afforded them the opportunity of declaring their pedigree, thus laying the basis for the future genealogical tables so

prominent in the Old Testament, culminating in the birth of Christ. These genealogical tables were kept only so that when Christ came it could be definitely shown that He was of the seed of Abraham and the royal line of David (cf. Matthew i. 1-17, noting especially the words of the seventeenth verse, "So all the generations from Abraham . . . unto Christ"). In the birth of Christ the genealogies had fulfilled their purpose.

The order of the camp (chap. ii.). The members of each family were to array themselves by their own standard. If chapter i. gives the number of God's army, chapter ii. records the discipline of that army, a discipline which would serve the twofold purpose of rendering the army effective, and preventing rivalry between the tribes.

There are many spiritual lessons for us to learn from the numbering and organization of the people. Life is a warfare for the believer in which he needs to be marshalled under the banner of Christ and clad with the armour of the gospel. The Christian's weapons, of course, are spiritual, as are also his armour and his enemies, but the conflict is, nevertheless, as real (Ephesians vi. 10-18).

One sometimes wonders if a denominational lesson is not taught in the fact of each tribe being enrolled under its own banner. The Church of Christ is in the world not only to build, but also to fight (cf. Matthew xvi. 16-19; Luke xiv. 28-33). It would seem as though each man could best serve his Lord by serving that branch of the Christian Church under which he found himself enrolled. This thought does not violate the unity of the Church any more than the different standards violated the unity of the nation of Israel. There may be many regiments, each regiment with its own standard and uniform, but one army; many stars, one differing from another in glory, and yet one blue sky; many accents,

but one great language ; many ways of doing things, but one great motive ; many creeds, but one great faith.

Each Christian ought to be able to declare his pedigree and trace his lineage back to God. In other words, every believer ought to know and be assured of the fact that he is a child of God (cf. Romans viii. 14-16 ; 1 John v. 13). Yet there are many Christians who do not enjoy this assurance. They are like the Israelites spoken of in another place who "sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found" (Ezra ii. 59-62 ; cf. Nehemiah vii. 64). Are we sure that our names are enrolled in the Lamb's Book of Life ? (cf. Luke x. 20 ; Revelation xx. 12-15 ; xxi. 27).

(b) *The Numbering of the Levites* (chaps. iii., iv., cf. i. 47-54). The Levites had to do with the *outside* of the Tabernacle (cf. xviii. 1-6), just as the priests had to do with the service on the *inside*. The service of God was too great for the priests alone to perform, consequently there arose the necessity of the service of the Levites. So to-day in the Christian Church the work of God is too great for the ministry alone to accomplish. Christian laymen have their part to play and should find their places in the work of the Church. This was true also in the case of Moses and the appointing of the seventy elders (Numbers xi. 1-35) and of the apostles and the appointing of deacons (Acts vi. 1-6).

The service of the Levites was, of course, based on redemption. They were substituted for the first-born who had been saved that dark night in Egypt when the destroying angel passed through the land. Their service consisted in looking after the sacred vessels, utensils, and furniture in connection with the Tabernacle (xviii. 1-6). To this service they were to devote their entire time. They seem to have been in apprenticeship until the age of twenty-five, in full service from thirty until fifty, at

which time they were retired from certain forms, but not from all kinds of service (viii. 25, 26). Their maintenance, however, did not cease at the age of fifty. They were warned frequently to exercise great care in the handling of the holy things connected with the Tabernacle. They must not overstep their province, "lest they die" (iv. 16-20).

There are some practical lessons for us to learn from the numbering of the Levites. There is still call for a lay ministry and for men and women to dedicate their lives to exclusive Christian service even outside of the regular ministry. God, of course, must indicate such a call, for He is Sovereign in the bestowal of His gifts and the distribution of offices in connection with the Church (Ephesians iv. 1-10). God has the right to make such a call, for we are His by redemption (1 Corinthians vi. 20). The Church sadly needs such men and women who will give their lives and service to Christ just as the Levites were given to Aaron and the priests for their service.

The fact that such particular attention is given to the matter of age in connection with the service of the Levites would seem to teach us: First, that we "lay hands suddenly on no man" (1 Timothy v. 22) and put "not a novice" into the service of the Church (1 Timothy iii. 6). Secondly, that provision should be made for the support in old age of those who have given their lives to the service of God. The lesson of reverence is constantly needed. We are also warned by the reference to Nadab and Abihu (iii. 4) that we must be careful not to fill our censers with strange fire, that is, not to use wrong methods in the pursuit of God's work.

2. **The Sanctification of the Camp** (chaps. v., vi.). The people are now ready to follow God's leadings, but they must first be sanctified, fitted in heart and life to



follow a holy God. The miscellaneous laws herein set forth all carry with them the idea of maintaining the holiness of the camp.

The law of leprosy has been dealt with in Leviticus (cf. page 210). The great lesson taught is that enunciated by the prophet, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isaiah lii. 11), and corroborated by the New Testament, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Timothy ii. 21).

The law dealing with restitution (v. 5-10) is interesting. It has been dealt with before (cf. Exodus xxii. 1-4), but a new phase of the subject is here presented. In Exodus the culprit has been found out, and consequently must restore double. Here the culprit has not been found out but his own conscience has shown him his sin; the idea of restitution arises from within; consequently he is required to add only one-fifth because it is a matter of conscience and not law. There is also another interesting thought in connection with restitution here. So clear is it that fortunes made by fraud must not be allowed to be a source of gain to the one having done the wrong that he is obliged to use it in the service of man. If those to whom restitution is owed are not living, then restitution must be made to the priests, that is, it must go to the service of God. Has this thought any bearing on the question of "tainted money"? Any atonement without such restitution is of no avail.

The law of jealousy (v. 14-31) emphasizes the fact that the thought of sin in the face of insufficient evidence is to be prohibited. The marriage estate must be protected.

The vow of the Nazarite is then dealt with (vi. 1-21; cf. Romans xii. 1). The vow of the Nazarite was a

voluntary one and therefore was strict in its nature. It was taken either for a lifetime or had a time limit. It was made as the result of some special divine blessing. It indicated that the one making it was not satisfied with simply being separated in heart, but would be separated in life also, and for this reason his outward appearance marked him as a Nazarite. The Nazarite avoided things which were in themselves innocent and in which others may have been allowed to participate. This he did for the sake of his influence. He would live a higher life than others. He did not stop to ask, "What is the harm in this, or that." He would live a life above that of a nominal Israelite. From such men came the prophets (cf. Amos ii. 11, 12).

Now that the cleansing of the camp is complete, we have the blessing of God falling upon it, and so the Aaronic benediction follows (vi. 22-27). Is there an intimation of the Trinity in this benediction? So it is in the Christian life to-day; when there is thorough consecration and sanctification, then comes the full blessing of God upon that life (John vii. 37-39).

### 3. The Necessities for the Journey Met (vii. 1-x. 10).

(a) *Chapter vii. Contains Eighty-nine Verses and is the Longest Chapter in the Bible.* Strange to say, it deals with the subject of giving. It is an inspired list of subscribers with a minute record of each gift.

There is a difference between the giving portrayed here and that which took place in connection with furnishing of material for the Tabernacle (Exodus xxv.). In connection with the Tabernacle every one gave something, although the gifts differed. No gift was counted too small. In this chapter all the gifts are large and the same because the givers are all princes or leaders. There are times and occasions for both kinds of giving. "Ac-

ording as God hath prospered us," is to be the measure of our gifts. The value of our gifts is known to God, and no gift, however small, though it be but a cup of cold water, shall lose its reward (cf. Mark xii. 41-44; Matthew x. 42; Mark ix. 41). One sometimes wonders if the gifts are enumerated here for the purpose of encouraging others to give. There is a sense in which it is true that we ought not to let our right hand know what our left hand doeth, but we should not forget that it is our obligation to let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works (Matthew v. 16; cf. 2 Corinthians ix. 13).

(b) *The Instructions Given in Chapter viii. with Reference to the Position of the Candelabra are Interesting.* The candelabra must be so arranged that the lights will shine upon the center shaft which had been worked with divine skill. The candelabra, doubtless, represents Christ; and the light of the candelabra, the Holy Spirit. So we may understand by this that it is the office of the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ, as it is the privilege and obligation of the Church also to glorify Him. The Church is likened unto lampstands, in the center of which the Lord stands or walks (Revelation i. 12, 13, 20; ii. 1; cf. Philippians ii. 15, 16; Matthew v. 14-16).

In the ninth chapter "the pillar of cloud" is given to guide the children of Israel by day, and "the pillar of fire" by night. It is exceedingly interesting to note the minute and repeated particulars regarding the movements of the pillar and the effect of the movements on Israel. When the pillar of cloud was stationary, the Israelites had to remain where they were; when the cloud moved, they were to take their journey. "And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by



night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed" (ix. 21, 22). One step at a time they were guided. They did not know whether they were to stay a night, a week, a month, or a year in one place. Whensoever the cloud moved, they moved; whithersoever it led, they followed.

The pillar of cloud is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ who Himself said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John viii. 12). The children of Israel had the figure; we have the reality. Such a sign was needed in the wilderness journey. Christ as our guide is none the less needed in the wilderness of this world through which we are travelling. To follow Christ is to succeed; to miss Him is to fail. Once the children of Israel refused to follow the guidance of God and were defeated (xiv. 44, 45). These things happened unto them for our ensamples. The believer has not only the guidance of the personal Christ, but also of the written Word. Christ is his guide; the Word is his chart. Just as the journey of the children of Israel was already known to God but revealed to them step by step as they were obedient, so the plan of the believer's life is known beforehand to the Father (cf. Ephesians ii. 10) and is revealed to His children step by step (cf. Romans viii. 14).

The reference to the silver trumpets in chapter x. is interesting and instructive. The trumpets were sounded for two reasons: to gather the people together for worship, and also for the line of march. These trumpets were made of silver which, typically, symbolizes redemption. Only on the ground of redemption can we worship



God or walk well-pleasing in His sight. Nor can Christ be our example unless He is first our Saviour. The trumpets, as well as the cloud, were a means of guidance to the chosen people. So the believer, in addition to the personal presence of Christ and the written Word of God, will hear within him a still, small voice, saying, "This is the way ; walk ye in it."

## II

### The Journey—From Sinai to Moab

(*Chapters xi.-xxi.*)

**I**F chapters i.-x. show God's dealings with His people as being manifested in unity, harmony and success, then chapters xi.-xxi. set forth man's actions (man as left to himself) manifesting themselves in murmurings, failure and defeat. This has been true from Eden until to-day. Chapter xxxiii. gives a list of all stations which the children of Israel reached until they came back to the starting point—Kadesh-barnea. The lesson is that there is no progress made when we are disobedient.

There are many ways of considering the contents of these chapters (i.-x.). For our present purpose we will consider them from the standpoint of the eight murmurings recorded therein. "And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched. And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the Lord burnt among them" (xi. 1-3). These verses sound the characteristic note of the entire ten chapters of this section—murmurings and forgiveness.

1. **The First Murmuring—Taberah, which Means "The Place of Burning"** (xi. 1-3). No specific ground for the complaint is mentioned. The people probably

murmured because of the hardship of the way (cf. x. 33). They had petitioned for guidance and now they complain about the guidance provided. They had apparently forgotten the hardships of the Egyptian bondage.

The practical lesson from this murmuring is apparent. Some to-day complain that the Christian life is hard, and all the time they forget the difficult and perilous experiences of the days previous to their conversion. It is the way of the transgressor that is hard (Proverbs xiii. 15), the yoke of Christ is easy (Matthew xi. 28-30). Then again there are many people who grumble even though they have nothing specific to grumble about. They growl about the weather and about their luck. It is the spirit of grumbling that is dealt with here rather than any specific thing which caused it, and so it covers everything in life's daily task which would lead us to complain. The habit of grumbling is apt to become tyrannical, and consummate in a nagging disposition. The believer should cultivate a spirit of contentment. "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned : behold, the judge standeth before the door" (James v. 9 ; Hebrews xiii. 5, 6).

2. **The Second Murmuring—Kibroth-hattaavah, which Means "Graves of Lust"** (xi. 4-35). The people complained, first, of the *way* ; now, they complain of the *food* which God had provided. Doubtless the "mixed multitude" (xi. 4 ; cf. Exodus xii. 38 ; Nehemiah xiii. 3 ; Genesis xiii. 5-14 ; 2 Corinthians vi. 14-17) had not really felt the keen pang of the bondage of Egypt nor tasted the joy of the deliverance from bondage. Israel was prone to forget that it is impossible to have the food of Egypt without the bondage and oppression of Egypt.

Moses' prayer and God's forbearance with the great leader, as well as His answer to the petition, are exceed-

ingly instructive. Moses really ought to have had more faith. Had he not seen and should he not have remembered the great wonders that Jehovah had wrought in Egypt ?

God answered Moses' prayer in allowing him to divide up the duties of his office (xi. 16-30). Moses saved himself trouble, but he lost dignity.

The prayer of the people was answered ; God sent them fullness of body but leanness of soul (xi. 31-35). God supplied the need of the people by miraculously sending quail. The flocks of quail probably descended in their flight to about three feet above the ground, and so were easily captured. God satisfied their hunger, but He also smote them with a great plague because of their murmuring (xi. 33-35). One often wonders if it would not have been better had their prayer been left unanswered. Shall we not thank God some day for unanswered as well as answered prayer ?

**3. The Third Murmuring—Against God's Leaders** (xii. 1-16). Miriam and Aaron, sister and brother of Moses, seem to have been the ringleaders in the murmuring against their brother. The cause of the murmuring may have been from envy and jealousy, either on account of the division of honour which had taken place in the appointing of the seventy elders (chap. xi.), or because of Moses' new wife, Miriam herself doubtless wanting to be second to Moses.

It is a great sin to speak against God's ministers or those whom God has put in places of authority, a truth which both Miriam and Aaron found out to their sorrow, Miriam being smitten with leprosy (xii. 10), and Aaron, while not being thus smitten, being nevertheless punished later in life for this sin. God did not smite Aaron with leprosy as He had done Miriam, probably because



of the honour attached to the office of priesthood (cf. xx. 24, 29). The New Testament also is severe in its warning with regard to speaking against those whom God has put in authority (cf. 2 Peter ii. 10-12; Jude 8-10; Hebrews xiii. 7).

The meekness of Moses stands out prominently in this incident. His unselfishness is evident from the expression "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" (xi. 29); from his apparent spirit of satisfaction with all that God sends and does; from his intercession for his sister Miriam (xii. 11-15); and from the emphatic statement of verse 3—"Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth").

We have here a splendid illustration of the virtue and victory of silence, and also of the fact that God takes care of the reputation of those who seek to have their characters blameless before Him. We can afford to trust God with our reputations. Of course, if we are determined to conduct our own defense, God will let us do it, and we will very likely get into deeper trouble. Joseph is another illustration of a man who committed his reputation to God (Genesis xxxix.). Christ did likewise (1 Peter ii. 21-24; cf. Philippians ii. 5-11). So should we (Romans xii. 17-21).

4. **The Fourth Murmuring—Because of the Land** (chaps. xiii., xiv.). So far, the people had complained of the *way*, of the *food*, of their *leader*, now, they complain of the *land*. They wanted to find out the size of Canaan, the number of its people, the nature of its strongholds, and the character of its produce—all of which there was no need for them to send spies to ascertain, for God had already made known these facts to them.

From a comparison of this account with Deuteronomy i. 19-22, which shows the attitude of the people, of Moses, and of God towards the sending out of the spies, it might seem as though the sending of the spies met with God's approval, just as in the case of 1 Samuel viii. 22, where similar circumstances are narrated in connection with the request for a king. In reality, however, it was very much against the will of God. It is a fact that we should not easily overlook that if we are determined to have our own way in things, God will allow us to carry out our plans even though it brings sorrow and disaster as the result.

The report of the twelve spies was true, the report of the ten being just as true as that of the two. There was this difference, however, that while the report of the ten may have been true to facts, the report of the two, Joshua and Caleb, was true not only to facts but also to the Lord. The ten spies saw God through circumstances; the two saw circumstances through God.

The report of the ten spies so discouraged the people that they revolted and suggested the appointing of another leader and the return to Egypt. This state of affairs forced Moses to prayer (xiv. 13-25)—a prayer which is a wonderful model of intercession, and in which the great leader identifies himself with his people in seeking their pardon, and with God in seeking the divine glory. The result of the prayer is that God will pardon, and yet punish the people for their sins. The ten spies are punished, and the people are sent back again into the wilderness to wander for thirty-eight years.

This is probably the most important of all the murmurings recorded. It is called "the provocation," and on it is based the great exhortation in Hebrews iii. 7-iv. 11.

The reward of faithfulness to God is illustrated in the promise made to Joshua and Caleb. They alone, of all

the children of Israel of that generation, were permitted to enter the promised land. The punishment for unbelief is seen in the disaster that met the people in their encounter with the Amalekites and Canaanites (xiv. 40-45). We have also another sad illustration of answered prayer (cf. xiv. 2 with xiv. 28, also xi. 31-35).

The fifteenth chapter is a bit of blue in a dark sky. It contains hope amidst gloom. In it the people are assured that the wilderness experience will not last forever. By the grace of God they shall enter into their inheritance. Note the expression, "When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you" (xv. 2, cf. xv. 18). This chapter contains also certain sundry laws which are to govern the people when in the promised land.

**5. Korah's Rebellion—Murmuring Against the Priesthood (xvi. 1-40).** Korah was a Levite, but was not satisfied with his position, and aspired to the office of the priesthood. "Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the Tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also" (xvi. 9, 10).

This complaint was against Moses and Aaron, and probably exhibited a spirit of discontent from the inferred fact that Moses had given preference to a younger relative of Korah's (cf. iii. 30) in the office of the priesthood. Korah rebelled against Aaron because of the exclusiveness of the priesthood. As punishment for his rebellion he was swallowed up by fire, this punishment being from above, for he had transgressed against the

*divine* order. Dathan and Abiram rebelled against the supremacy of Moses in matters of civil authority, consequently in their punishment, the earth swallowed them up, for they had spoken against the earthly authority appointed by God. Here is disaffection in the high ranks. Quarrelling with the gifts God gives a man is quarrelling with God (cf. Romans ix. 20-23). We cannot all be equally prominent in the service of God, but we should not therefore find fault. No man has all the gifts, but may have all the graces. The body has many members, and not all of the same importance or prominence. So is it with the body of Christ; all members have not the same office (cf. 1 Corinthians xii. 4-31; Ephesians iv. 7-11). "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Timothy ii. 20, 21).

Moses again places the matter of rebellion in the hands of God who disposes of it for the best interest of all concerned and the conservation of the office and dignity of priest and ruler.

**6. The Sixth Murmuring—Because of the Judgment of God (xvi. 41-50).** The people complained because of the death of the rebels. Strange that they should have thus complained when the events of verses 25-30 must have still been fresh in their minds! God's punishment for their murmuring (xvi. 41-50) was visited on the people in the form of a plague, as the result of which 14,700 died. This punishment was stopped through the intercession of Moses.

Chapters xvii.-xix. form a separate section, and deal



with the whole condition, rights, practice, privileges, and responsibilities of the priesthood.

7. **The Seventh Murmuring—On Account of the Lack of Water** (xx. 1-29). This murmuring ought to have been prevented had the people remembered how God had before supplied a similar lack (Exodus xv. 22-25). Here we have recorded the story of the rod and the rock, and the sin of Moses in connection therewith. In what did the sin of Moses consist? In verse 8 Moses was commanded to take *the* rod and *speak* to the rock, and it should give forth water. Verse 9 says that Moses took the rod as God had commanded him. Verse 10 shows that Moses apparently lost his temper, and, contrary to what we know of the meekness of Moses, rather glorified himself than God when he said, "Hear now, ye rebels; must *we* fetch you water out of this rock?" In verse 11 we are told that Moses *smote* the rock *twice*. It is also stated that he took *his* rod; whereas verses 8 and 9 seem to indicate that Aaron's rod was the one God commanded to be used. In the whole matter Moses failed to glorify and sanctify God by precise obedience to His command (xxvii. 14; Deuteronomy i. 37; iii. 26; xxxii. 51). Of course, there is a sense in which the smitten rock was a type of Christ (1 Corinthians x. 4) who was *once* offered for the sins of the world (Hebrews ix. 25-28). To smite the rock twice was out of harmony with that which the rock typified.

The death of Aaron is recorded in this chapter. In harmony with what we have said with reference to the smiting of Miriam with leprosy but with no such visitation upon Aaron (cf. xii. 10, 11), the manner of Aaron's death seems to show the divine respect for the office of the priesthood. The last vision of Aaron, the high priest, that the people gather is that of Aaron fully arrayed in

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his high-priestly robes. Thus God regarded the office, though He punished the sin. Aaron practically, although not literally, died in full priestly regalia. The high-priestly garments were taken off Aaron and placed on his son Eleazar, and so Aaron died there in the mount (xx. 22-29).

8. **The Eighth Murmuring—Because of Lack of Bread and Water** (xxi. 1-35). The complaints of the people in this instance really arose from a loathing and dislike of the manna which God Himself had provided. The punishment for this murmuring was the sending of fiery serpents which bit the people and poisoned them so that many died. Moses again intercedes and is commanded to make a brazen serpent and put it on a pole. Whosoever looked at the serpent was healed of his disease. This brazen serpent was kept, as we know, for a memorial for a long time, and was finally destroyed by Hezekiah because the people began to worship it (2 Kings xviii. 4). The brazen serpent is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ who offered Himself for the world's sin (John iii. 14, 15).

### III

## On the Plains of Moab (*Chapters xxii.-xxxvi.*)

### I. The Opposition of Israel's Enemies (chaps. xxii.-xxv.).

**T**HESE chapters narrate the story of Balak and Balaam. Much light is thrown on these chapters by comparison with the following New Testament passages: "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core" (Jude 11). Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet" (2 Peter ii. 14-16).

Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness and in order to obtain the same sought to be a friend of God's friends and God's enemies at the same time, a thing which is absolutely impossible, for no man can "serve God and mammon" (Matthew vi. 24), and whosoever would "be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James iv. 4).

There is an interesting lesson in connection with Israel's fall in these chapters. Balaam probably led the children of Israel into sinful relations with the Moabites on

the basis that they were a covenant people and could not, therefore, be cast off by God. The great truth taught in these chapters is that there is no covenant relationship which willful sin will not violate. Yet note God's interest in His even unworthy people (cf. Zechariah iii. 1-5). One can hardly pass by the fall of the Israelites without recognizing that the same thing has caused the fall of the Church again and again, namely, worldliness or participation in the festivities of the world (cf. 2 Corinthians vi. 14-17; 1 Corinthians x. 6-12).

**2. The Second Census** (chap. xxvi.). The first census (chaps. i.-iv.) showed 603,550 people, and 22,000 Levites; the second census (chap. xxvi.) showed 601,730 people, and 23,000 Levites. Not a man of the first numbering (except Joshua and Caleb, xxvi. 64, 65) entered the promised land. Miriam, Aaron, and Moses died on the borders of the land. Thus the law could not give the people rest (Hebrews iii., iv.).

The lesson to be derived from all this is to be found by a comparison of the following passages: Psalm xcv. 10; Hebrews iii. 10-17; 1 Corinthians x. 13.

**3. Moses' Successor—Instructions Regarding Sacrifice—Partition of Canaan** (xxvii. 1-xxxiii. 49). The principal events narrated in this section are as follows: The successor of Moses appointed (chap. xxvii.); The order of the yearly sacrifice (chaps. xxviii., xxix.); Vows of women (chap. xxx.); The destruction of the Midianites (chap. xxxi.); The lot of the two and a half tribes (chap. xxxii.); and the record of the line of march (chap. xxxiii.).

**4. Final Instructions With Regard to the Entrance Into the Promised Land** (xxxiii. 50-xxxvi. 13).



The principal subjects covered are : The clearance of the land (xxxiii. 50-56); Its boundaries and partition (chap. xxxiv.); The appointment of cities for the Levites and the cities of refuge (chap. xxxv.); and Marriage in its relation to inheritance (chap. xxxvi.).

# The Book of Deuteronomy



# Synopsis of Deuteronomy

INTRODUCTION—Place, Time, Circumstances, Purpose (i. 1-5).

I. THE FIRST DISCOURSE—HISTORICAL REVIEW (i. 6-iv. 49).

1. Principal incidents of the wilderness journey showing the providential leading of God (i. 6-iii. 29).
  - (a) Review of events preceding the thirty-eight years of wandering (i. 6-46).
  - (b) Review of events during the thirty-eight years of wandering (ii. 1-iii. 29).
2. The call to obedience on the basis of God's wondrous leading of His people (iv. 1-49).

II. THE SECOND DISCOURSE—LEGISLATIVE REVIEW (v. 1-xxviii. 68).

1. The moral law in general is dealt with; *i. e.*, the great theocratic principle which is to govern Israel in the land—God is sole and sovereign Lord (Chaps. v.-xi.).
2. The exposition of special laws (Chaps. xii.-xxviii.; cf. i. 5; iv. 1; v. 1).
  - (a) The religious duties of the people (xii. 1-xvi. 17).
    - Public worship (xii. 11-14).
    - Private worship (xii. 15-28).
    - Idolatry is forbidden (xii. 29-xiii. 18).
      - False teaching and teachers.
      - Three agencies in leading people into idolatry:
        - False prophets (xiii. 1-5).
        - A man's family (xiii. 6-11).
        - A man's neighbours (xiii. 12-18).
      - Holiness of life (xiv. 1-21).
      - The religious uses of money (xiv. 22-xvi. 17; cf. xxiv. 12-15).
      - Argument against covetousness (xv. 1-6).
      - Kindness to the poor (xv. 7-11).
      - Three important things concerning our relation to the poor:



- The poor have a claim on the forbearance of the rich (xv. 1-5).  
 They have a claim on the assistance of the rich (xv. 7-12).  
 Helping those in need tends to our own enrichment (xv. 4-7, 10).  
 Sacred seasons (xvi. 1-17).
- (b) God's appointed officers (xvi. 18-xviii. 22).  
 Judges (xvi. 18-xvii. 13).  
 Characteristics and requirements described (xvi. 18-20).  
 Religious qualifications (xvii. 8-13).  
 Choice of a king (xvii. 14-20).  
 The selection of priests (xviii. 1-8).  
 The selection of prophets (xviii. 9-22).  
 Prophetic reference to the Lord Jesus Christ (xviii. 15-19; Acts iii. 22, 23).
- (c) Specific crimes (xix. 1-21).  
 Murder, unpremeditated—Cities of refuge (xix. 1-10).  
 Murder, premeditated (xix. 11-13; cf. Numbers xxxv. 31).  
 Perjury (xix. 15-21).
- (d) Sundry laws (xx. 1-xxvi. 19).  
 Humane conduct in time of war (xx. 1-20; xxi. 10-14).  
 Four grounds of exemption from service in war (xx. 5-8).  
 The dedication of a new house; The planting of a vineyard; The taking of a wife; The spirit of cowardice.  
 Instructions regarding homicide (xxi. 1-9).  
 Regulation of family matters (xxi. 15-23).  
 Miscellaneous laws (xxii. 1-xxv. 19).  
 The law of brotherhood (xxii. 1-4); Women forbidden to wear that which pertaineth to men (xxii. 5); The protection of bird life (xxii. 6-8); Miscellaneous laws regarding personal purity (xxii. 13-xxiii. 8); Laws regarding divorce (xxiv. 1-4); No man shall take from another his means of support (xxiv. 6-22).

Instructions with reference to the administration of justice (xxv. 1-3).

Compensation for labour (xxv. 4-12); Just weights and measures (xxv. 13-16); Explanation of the real nature of the sin of Amalek (xxv. 17-19); The offering of the firstfruits (Chap. xxvi.).

- (e) The results of obedience or disobedience to these laws (Chaps. xxvii., xxviii.).—Blessings and cursings.

### III. THE THIRD DISCOURSE (xxix. 1-xxx. 20).

1. An invitation to enter into covenant relations with God (xxix. 1-8).
2. Promise of restoration in the event of failure (xxix. 9-xxx. 20).

### IV. CLOSING EVENTS IN MOSES' LIFE (Chaps. xxxi.-xxxiv.).

1. A birthday address delivered by Moses (xxxi. 1-8, 14, 15, 23).
2. Arrangement for public reading and preservation of the law (xxxi. 9-30).
3. The song of Moses (Chap. xxxii.).
  - The perfections of Jehovah (xxxii. 1-6).
  - Jehovah's goodness to Israel (xxxii. 7-14).
  - The return of evil for good on the part of Israel (xxxii. 15-19).
  - The divine provocation because of Israel's conduct (xxxii. 20, 21).
  - Predicted and threatened tribulation (xxxii. 22-25).
  - The scattering of the chosen people foretold (xxxii. 26-33).
  - Jehovah will be moved to pity by all these things (xxxii. 36-38).
  - Jehovah will manifest Himself (xxxii. 39-42).
  - Victory for Israel will come at last (xxxii. 43).
4. The blessing of Moses (Chap. xxxiii.).
  - The structure of this song is as follows:
    - Introduction (xxxiii. 1-5).
    - The blessings upon the tribes (xxxiii. 6-25).
    - Conclusion (xxxiii. 26-29).
5. The death of Moses (Chap. xxxiv.; cf. xxxii. 45-52).



## Introduction

**T**HE chosen nation has now reached the borders of the promised land ; they stand ready to enter. It is necessary, however, before they enter into their inheritance that they understand that prosperity, success, happiness, peace, and conquest are dependent upon obedience to God and His revealed will as set forth in the laws that have been given to them. We have already seen that at Mount Sinai the people had chosen to put themselves under Law. We need hardly be reminded from what we know of the waywardness, willfulness, and stubbornness of the people as manifested in the wilderness experience, how miserably they failed to yield such an obedience. Even Moses, the representative of the Law, was not able to lead the people into rest. He himself had failed to keep the perfect Law of God (Numbers xxvii. 14 ; Deuteronomy i. 37 ; iii. 26 ; xxxii. 51 ; cf. Hebrews iii. 1-iv. 11). Man is a failure under the dispensation of Law. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law : that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight : for by the law is the knowledge of sin " (Romans iii. 19, 20). Both the wilderness and Canaan experiences show the impossibility of life and blessing by law. The reason for this failure lies not in the law itself, but in the weakness of the flesh to keep it (cf. Romans vii. 1-viii. 3).

Dispensations.<sup>1</sup> It may be interesting at this point to

<sup>1</sup> See "Outline Study of the Bible," by the Author.



present an outline view of the various dispensations mentioned in the Scripture.

God has spoken to the human race "at sundry times and in divers manners" (Hebrews i. 1. ; cf. 2 Timothy ii. 15). If we would understand the Scriptures, we must learn to distinguish, discriminate, and rightly divide.

A dispensation is a method of God's dealing with the human race during a given time according to certain specific principles of manifestation or revelation of the will of God peculiar to that time ; a time or period during which any special form of God's administration is carried on.

It is obvious that God's dealings with men have differed according to the different periods of the human race. For example, God's dealings with man before the fall, and after, differed quite materially ; so His dealings with the race under law and under grace varied greatly. In some ages certain truths were hidden which in other ages were revealed, for example, the doctrine of the Church was hidden in the Old Testament but revealed in the New. It is absolutely necessary to recognize these distinctions lest we read into one dispensation what really belongs to another. This is well illustrated in 1 Corinthians x. 32—"Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." Thus we see that God deals only with three classes of persons : "the Jews," "the Gentiles," and "the church of God," and He deals with them in distinct ages and epochs ; so we read of "the times of the Gentiles." All Scripture is written *for us*, but not *to us* (*e. g.*, Exodus xx. was written to Israel, but for us in a spiritual sense ; cf. 1 Corinthians x. 11).

**The Number of Dispensations.** The number of dispensations varies according to different writers, all the way from four to seven. Seven is the most comprehensive as well as the most scriptural number. A seven-

fold dispensational view of the Bible as a whole is here presented.

**I. The Edenic Dispensation** (Genesis i. 25–ii. 25). This is sometimes called the Dispensation of Innocency because it relates to our first parents in their unfallen state. It is characterized by God's immediate presence, instruction, and companionship. Man is dealt with as innocent, and never again is he thus dealt with, until the curse, which fell upon the race through sin, has been removed, which will be in the seventh and last dispensation. This first dispensation alone can be truly described as being of a probationary nature—in it alone was man under probation. Often do we hear the age in which we now live referred to as man's probationary period. But it is not. Man has already been tried and tested, and has proven himself to be an inglorious failure. In this age man is a lost, guilty, and ruined sinner, and God deals with him as such.

**II. The Patriarchal Dispensation** (Genesis iii. to Exodus xix.). This is sometimes subdivided into three divisions: the Age of Conscience (Genesis iv. 1–viii. 14); the Age of Man in Authority over the Earth—Human Government (Genesis viii. 15–xi. 9); and the Age of Promise (Genesis xii. 1 to Exodus xix. 8).

**1. The Age of Conscience** (Genesis iv. 1–viii. 14). By the fall man discerned conscience, he learned to distinguish between good and evil, also that he must refrain from wrong-doing. He also learned the value and place of sacrifice in drawing near to God. In this dispensation God deals with man *collectively*, just as in the first dispensation He dealt with man *individually*. The trial of the race during this dispensation was a failure, and ended in the flood.

2. **The Age of Human Government** (Genesis viii. 15–xi.9). This was introduced by the dealings of God with Noah. Here was the government of man by man, the age of human government, the control of the world committed to man. This also ends in failure—the dispersion of the race at Babel. Here mankind fails as a *race*, just as it had failed *collectively* (II, 1 above) and *individually* (I above).

3. **The Age of Promise** (Genesis xii. 1 to Exodus xix. 8). This period is distinctly Jewish, beginning with Abraham, and ending with Israel at Sinai, at which place Israel exchanged grace for law, and in so doing made a sad mistake.

There are certain general characteristics prominent in this (patriarchal) period which it may be of interest to note. It was “without law” as contrasted with “under law”; the “times of ignorance” are in contrast with “but now” (Acts xvii. 30); God overlooked then what He could not overlook later; what were “sins” then, later, under law, were “transgressions.” These distinctions we should recognize, for they form a, if not the, basis of judgment (Romans ii. 12). We must nevertheless recognize that while man was, during this dispensation, without a written law, he was not without an unwritten law—the law of conscience. This is evident from several things: First, man was taught that the way back to God was by sacrifice—so we have the law of sacrifice as touching Cain and Abel (Genesis iv.). Second, man was taught also the value of an altar and a place of worship. It is not at all improbable that there was a definitely appointed place called “the presence of the Lord” (Genesis iv. 16; compare also the words “at the door,” iv. 7). Third, Melchisedeck was a priest (Genesis xiv. 18), and we have a right to believe that the heads of families acted in this capacity (Job i. 5; Genesis xxii.); indeed, tithes were al-

ready paid (Hebrews vii. 9). Fourth, certain laws, such as that of the Sabbath and circumcision, the clean and unclean, were known and in effect (cf. Genesis vii. 2, 15; Leviticus xi.). Notwithstanding all this we must yet recognize that while men were not altogether left to themselves during this dispensation, God's dealings with the people were quite different from His dealings with those of later days.

**III. The Dispensation of Law** (Exodus xx. to Acts ii.). Here God's people deliberately put themselves under law, and God deals with them accordingly. Here we have the covenant of works, as contrasted with the covenant of grace found in the New Testament. Then it was "he that doeth," now it is "he that believeth" shall live. Israel is here dealt with exclusively. The laws—ceremonial, civil, and moral—were given to Israel, not to the heathen nations round about. Only such of these laws as are universal in their nature and application may be applied to mankind in general.

**IV. The Dispensation of Grace** (Acts ii. to the Rapture of the Church). This is sometimes called the Age of the Church, or the Church Period. The characteristic of this age is that salvation is no longer by legal obedience, but by the personal acceptance of the finished work of Jesus Christ, who, by His meritorious ministry, has procured for us a righteousness of God. Good works have a place in salvation, but they are subsequent and not antecedent to it; they are demonstrative, not meritorious. Both Jews and Gentiles are dealt with as transgressors; both alike are called out of the world and constitute the Church, which is the mystery (Romans xvi. 25, 26). The purpose of this dispensation is not the conversion of the world, but the calling out of the Church,



the building and filling up of the body of Christ. The Kingdom is in mystery now, just as the Church was in mystery in the Old Testament.

**V. The Dispensation of Judgment** (Revelation iv. 19). Israel again becomes the central object, although dealt with here under judgment, and not, as formerly, under law. This period has also to do with the Gentiles, but not with the Church of Christ. Israel may now have a right to rejoice over all her enemies. The imprecatory psalms will probably find their place here.

**VI. The Millennial Dispensation** (Revelation xx.). Now mankind is dealt with as a whole for a period of one thousand years. This period begins with the binding of Satan, includes the great white throne judgment, and closes with the lake of fire for the wicked. The principle of God's dealings during this dispensation is not law, grace, or judgment, but righteousness, power and glory.

**VII. The Eternal Dispensation** (Revelation xxi., xxii.). It begins with the introduction of the new heavens and the new earth, but nothing is said about its end—it shall endure until the ages of the ages, tumbling upon ages.

**Seven Features Characteristic of Each of the First Six Dispensations :<sup>1</sup>**

1. A new revelation of great light.
2. Declension into darkness.
3. Union between believers and the world.
4. Gigantic worldly civilization, grand, but godless.

<sup>1</sup> A. T. Pierson.

5. Parallel development of good and evil—like tares and wheat.
6. Apostasy.
7. Catastrophe of judgment.

### The Crisis, or Judgment, in which Each Dispensation Ends :<sup>1</sup>

1. Expulsion from Eden.
2. Confusion of tongues.
3. Rejection of Israel.
4. Rapture in the Day of the Lord.
5. Destruction of Antichrist.
6. Destruction of Satan—Great White Throne.
7. Will have no end.

### Three Great Dispensations :<sup>2</sup>

The dealings of God with men have, again, by some, been divided into three great dispensations, as follows :

1. **The Dispensation of Conscience.** From the Creation (Adam) to the Flood (or probably to Sinai at which place Israel is supposed to have chosen to be placed under law). Inasmuch, however, as this period represents God's dealings with the whole human race, as distinguished from Israel, or the Church of God, it is just as well to confine it from Adam to the Flood (Genesis i.—xi.).

*God's Law Written in the Heart* (Romans ii. 14, 15).

2. **The Dispensation of Law.** From the call of Abraham to the Book of Acts. In this period God deals with the chosen nation of Israel (Genesis xii. to Acts).

*God's Law Written on Tablets of Stone* (2 Corinthians iii. 7).

<sup>1</sup>E. W. Bullinger.

<sup>2</sup>A. T. Pierson.

3. The Dispensation of Grace. From Acts to Revelation. Here God deals with the Church of God, chosen from among and composed of both Jews and Gentiles who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

*God's Law* : " *The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus*" (Romans viii. 2).

It is more in harmony with the dispensational teaching of the Bible, however, we think, to hold to the seven dispensations.

**The Name of the Book.** The name of this book is derived from the Greek which denotes "*Second Law*" or a "*Repetition of the Law.*" The necessity for this repetition of the Law lay in the fact that the generation of adults that left Egypt had perished in the wilderness. The second generation, who were children when Israel was driven back to wander thirty-eight years in the wilderness, are now about to enter the promised land and need to hear and understand the law of the Lord.

Yet Deuteronomy is more than a mere review or repetition of the laws previously given, for there are also additions to (i. 45 ; iii. 4 ; xxv. 17, 18 ; xxix. 1), and modifications of the Law (xvi. 1-17 ; Leviticus xxiii. ; Numbers xxviii., xxix.). The necessity for such additions and modifications lay in the fact that what would be applicable in the wilderness would not be when the people dwelt in Canaan (Deuteronomy xii. 15 ; Leviticus xvii. 3, 4). The repetitions, additions, and modifications of Deuteronomy are not by any means to be considered contradictions of previously existing laws. They are given to excite study and to develop the spiritual faculties of the student (cf. Hebrews v. 11-vi. 2). Take as an example Deuteronomy xiv. 21—"Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself : thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it ; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien : for thou art an holy

people unto the Lord thy God." Here is an example as to how the Word of God excites deep study and offers opportunity for the development of the spiritual faculties of the student. It might seem, from a mere glance at this verse, as though God made an unfair distinction between the Israelite and the stranger—that food that was unfit for an Israelite, and might be thrown only to dogs, might be sold to a foreigner. The same thing is true in another instance in this book where an Israelite could collect money from a foreigner during the year of jubilee and not from an Israelite. The matter is made very clear and there is no unfair partiality manifested in this declaration when we remember that food that was forbidden to Israel, being a covenant and holy nation, was not forbidden to foreigners, and therefore could be eaten by them. Also that an Israelite was commanded to let his ground lie fallow during the seventh and jubilee year and consequently had no income from it; whereas the foreigner was under no such compulsion. Therefore, the Jew had a right to demand that the foreigner, who had an income that year, meet his obligations.

Deuteronomy is also called "*The Book of Reviews.*" The contents of the book are practically a review of all of God's dealings with His people throughout their existence as a nation. Indeed, what there is in the book by way of practical exhortation to obedience—and there is a great deal of it—is based on the dealings of God, His redemption, and providential care of His people during the time He had known them. It is probably for this reason that the conjunction "And" does not open this book as it does Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, for it is not a continuation, but rather a review of the history of the children of Israel and God's dealings with them.

The review set forth in this book is both divine and



human. Not only does God review the way He has led the people, but He calls upon them to "remember" all the way He has led them. We cannot fail to be impressed with the frequent occurrence of the word "remember" (cf. v. 15; vii. 18; viii. 2, 11; ix. 7; xv. 15; xvi. 3, 12; xxiv. 9, 18, 22; xxv. 17; xxxii. 7). No greater blessing can come to the people of God than that which comes through the review of God's leadings. We should remember, however, what things we are to review, namely, only those things which have to do with our relation to God and the times of spiritual uplift and blessing. This does not mean that we should not remember our failures. This we should do, but by no means to dwell on them to our discouragement. We most certainly should not dwell upon thoughts that are injurious, unholy and that do not relate us to God.

Nor should we overlook the fact that God Himself is the reviewer in Deuteronomy. So some day the life of the Christian will be reviewed at the judgment seat of Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians v. 10; 1 Corinthians iii. 10-15), as will the doings of the ungodly at the great white throne (Revelation xx. 11-15). The consideration of such facts should lead to repentance and godliness on the part of the ungodly, and to a more careful walk and absolute surrender on the part of the believer.

**The Time Covered by the Book.** The time covered by the contents of Deuteronomy is the last month of the wilderness journey, in all about forty days (cf. i. 3 with Joshua iv. 19 and Deuteronomy xxxiv. 8). What a contrast between the time covered by Deuteronomy and Genesis, for example—Genesis covering about twenty-three hundred years. Notwithstanding, how crowded with events is this book covering only forty days! It illustrates the truth well expressed in the verse:

“ We live in deeds, not years ; in thoughts, not breaths ;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart throbs. He most lives  
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best—  
Lives in one hour more than in years do some  
Whose thick blood sleeps as it courses through their  
veins.”

**Relation of Deuteronomy to Preceding Books** (Genesis, Numbers). It is vital to the understanding of the book that we see the relationship existing between Deuteronomy and the four preceding books, because the great exhortations of Deuteronomy are based on the truths taught in Genesis to Numbers. Genesis gives us an account of the selection, or election, of Israel from among the nations of the earth to be the channel through which God would convey the knowledge of Himself and His purposes. Exodus gives us the history of the redemption of God's people from their bondage in Egypt, and also sets before us God's revelation regarding a place of worship. Leviticus has to do with the laws regarding sacrifice, the priesthood, and the religious life of the chosen people who are therefore required to be a holy nation. In Numbers we have seen the nation, which heretofore may have been somewhat of a mob, organized, each tribe under its own standard and leadership, ready at any time to declare its pedigree, to march, or to fight. In all these four books, the underlying, prominent thought is the idea of God's choice of His people Israel and the preparation of that people for the promulgation of the redemptive purpose. In other words, the prominent, underlying thought is that *God has chosen Israel*. In Deuteronomy the paramount thought and predominant note is *Now let Israel choose God*. It is for this reason that the obedience which God expects from His people as set forth in the exhortations of Deuteronomy is based on

the laws of God, and manifested in the redemption and preservation of the chosen people.

**The Outline of the Book.** There are four main divisions in the book : After an Introduction (i. 1-5), we have the first great discourse which may be termed A Historical Review (i. 6-iv. 49). Second, we have another discourse reviewing Legislative matters (v. 1-xxviii. 68). Third, we have another discourse (xxix. 1-xxx. 20). Fourth, we have the closing events in Moses' life (xxxi. 1-xxxiv. 12).

Introduction, i. 1-5—Place, Time, Circumstances.

The first verse of the book declares its Mosaic authorship, and asserts that the words were spoken to Israel at the place mentioned—"On this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red Sea" (i. 1).

Note that verse 2 declares that there were about eleven days' journey from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea, yet we remember it took Israel thirty-eight years. How long we make the time which God would make short ! The time of the authorship as well as the subject and its inspiration are recorded in verse 3—"And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the Lord had given him in commandment unto them."

The purpose of the book is set forth in verse 5—"On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying." The word "declare" in this verse means to dig up again, to dig deeper, to search as a surveyor, or as a prospector. A careful study of the book, noting the full explanation it gives of laws more briefly mentioned in the preceding books, bears witness to its purpose as declared in this verse.

# I

## The First Discourse—Historical Review (*Chapters i. 6-iv. 49*)

**I**N these chapters God reviews His dealings with His chosen people and also their treatment of Him in view of these dealings.

1. **Principal Incidents of the Wilderness Journey Showing the Providential Leading of God** (i. 6-iii. 29). The train of events from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea are reviewed. In these chapters we see the real reason why the people were turned back, a reason which is not clearly given in the book of Numbers.

We also have a clear explanation given to us with reference to the trouble arising because of the appointment of the twelve spies. The whole matter is retrospective and reviews the events preceding the thirty-eight years of wandering (i. 6-46) and the events during the thirty-eight years of wandering (ii. 1-iii. 29).

2. **The Call to Obedience on the Basis of God's Wondrous Leading of His People** (iv. 1-49). The chosen people are reminded that they had been eyewitnesses of Jehovah's mighty works and that they had heard with their own ears the divine injunctions. Prone to forget as these people had shown themselves easily capable of doing, there was need of continual warning lest they should let these wonderful experiences slip from their minds and thus be led to ingratitude and lack of God-consciousness, finally ending up, on the part of both themselves and their children, in idolatry.



## II

### The Second Discourse—Legislative Review (*Chapters v. 1-xxviii. 68*)

**T**HE first discourse demands obedience ; the second discourse details the nature of the laws to be obeyed, and the kind of obedience to be rendered, together with the blessings of obedience, and curses of disobedience. In the first discourse, obedience is based on the providential leadings of God ; in section two, it is based on the facts of redemption and ownership by God : Because the Lord thy God . . . therefore.

1. **The Moral Law in General is Dealt With ; i. e.,** the great theocratic principle which is to govern Israel in the land—God is sole and sovereign Lord (chaps. v.—xi.). God is to be loved loyally (chap. v.), wholly (chap. vi.), separately (chap. vii.), consciously (chap. viii.), humbly (chap. ix.), dependently (chap. x.), and then the future prosperity of Israel is assured.

2. **The Exposition of Special Laws** (chaps. xii.—xxviii. ; cf. i. 5 ; iv. 1 ; v. 1). This exposition sets forth the nature of the obedience required and the consequent punishment devolving upon disobedience. We have here not a mere promulgation of laws, but a promulgation always with a hortatory purpose, and with explanations which are an aid to obedience to these laws. It concerns itself with duties which God commanded and therefore are right, and which are right because commanded by God.

(a) *The Religious Duties of the People* (xii. 1-xvi. 17). First. Emphasis is laid upon the fact that public worship must be observed in one place (xii. 11-14). The fact that public worship must be observed in one place is no argument against private worship in any place (cf. xii. 15-19). For national, religious, and family reasons it was necessary to maintain a definite place for public worship. This fact is again and again insisted on throughout the Scriptures. No private worship is allowed to be substituted for national and public worship.

What was true for Israel is true for mankind to-day. God commands us to assemble ourselves together for public worship: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews x. 25). The communion and fellowship of the saints is necessary to growth in holiness. We are justified alone; we are sanctified together. It is important to note that in the context of Hebrews x. 25 we are warned against the danger of apostasy which comes from the failure to assemble ourselves together (Hebrews x. 26-29). The fellowship of the church service is necessary for the believer's growth. It is true that we can worship God anywhere, whether in the fields, in the streets, or in our own homes; that, as the poet says:

" O, Jesus where'er Thy people meet,  
There they find Thy mercy-seat;  
Where'er they seek Thee, Thou art found,  
And every spot is hallowed ground."

All this is true; nevertheless we are disobedient to God and His revealed will when we forsake attendance at the assembly of God's people. Neglect of churchgoing is surely fraught with the danger of backsliding and apostasy.

Second. Idolatry is forbidden (xii. 29–xiii. 18). In this section the question of false teaching and false teachers is dealt with quite fully as being, together with idolatry, a means of leading God's people away from Himself.

Three agencies in leading people into idolatry and away from God are mentioned here: False prophets (xiii. 1–5); a man's family (xiii. 6–11); a man's neighbours (xiii. 12–18). We are warned not to be deceived by any signs which these deceivers may be able to perform. Wonders and signs are not in themselves divine credentials. Even followers of Satan can perform such wonders (2 Thessalonians ii. 3–12; cf. Matthew vii. 21–29; Revelation xiii. 2, 14).

The treatment to be meted out to those who lead God's people into idolatry is the same as that received by those who had been guilty of taking human life. Capital punishment is the penalty. This seems somewhat severe, but we must remember that the destruction of the soul is involved in false teaching, and this is a far more important matter than the destruction of the body (cf. Luke xii. 4, 5.).

This section reminds us of the New Testament teaching on the same subject (1 John ii. 18–28; iv. 1–6) by which we are exhorted not to listen to false teachers, even though they should be counted among our neighbours or the members of our own family (cf. Matthew x. 34–38). Nor are we to let signs, wonders, and miracles deceive us. These wondrous phenomena do not prove that those performing them are of God unless the true doctrine of God is taught in connection therewith. Signs may be allowed by God to prove His people. False teachers and teaching are to be strongly opposed and contended against. We are not to be hospitable to either the teaching or the teachers. "For many deceivers are entered into this world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This

is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 7-11).

Third. xiv. 1-21 details the great thought of that holiness of life which must be characteristic of God's people. Inasmuch as this chapter deals largely with the laws of clean and unclean which have been explained in Leviticus (pp. 205-214), it will not be necessary to dwell on the subject in this connection.

Fourth. The religious uses of money (xiv. 22-xvi. 17; cf. xxiv. 12-15). A striking argument against covetousness is set forth in xv. 1-6. There must be no oppression of the debtor on the part of the creditor. Release from a debt in this connection does not mean that the debt is removed, for that would lead to abuse, but that the creditor is not to press his collection during this specific time (seventh or seventieth year), because during that time the ground had to lie fallow, and yielded no income. Herein lies the reason for the instructions given with regard to the "stranger" from whom debt could be collected, instructions which seem hard to those who do not understand the setting of this passage. We must remember that the stranger did not have to let his ground lie fallow and thus be deprived of its income. Further, even the Jew himself might borrow of a fellow Jew the year before jubilee year purposely calculating that such a debt could not be collected during the next year, and thus the law of God be brought into ill-repute. The creditor, also, if he were covetous, could abuse this com-



mandment by saying to himself, "If I cannot make any money myself this jubilee year, then I can collect it from others."

Our Lord's teaching against covetousness is very instructive and is set forth, in one instance at least, in the parable of the rich fool (Luke xii. 16-21). Our Saviour shows that covetousness indicates a wrong view of life (verse 15); that it is perilous (verse 20); and that it is foolish in its nature (verses 20, 21).

Kindness to the poor is a virtue very emphatically insisted on by God from His people (xv. 7-11). It is interesting to study this passage with light from the New Testament shining on it: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him" (1 John iii. 16-19). "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians iv. 28).

The fifteenth chapter has three important things to say about our relation to the poor: First, the poor have a claim on the forbearance of the rich (1-5); second, the poor have a claim on the assistance of the rich (7-12); third, that helping those in need tends to our own enrichment (4-7, 10).

The sacredness of time and the necessity of devoting certain seasons of the year to the service of God are dealt with in xvi. 1-17. This also has been discussed in Leviticus (pp. 221-225).

(b) *God's Appointed Officers* (xvi. 18–xviii. 22). First. We have the appointment of *judges* (xvi. 18–xvii. 13). They are to be chosen by the people. Their characteristics and requirements are described in xvi. 18–20. Great emphasis is laid on the fact that the judges shall be the mouthpieces of the righteous and holy will of God. They are in the place of God, indeed are called “gods” (John x. 34, 35). Emphasis is laid on the religious qualifications of the judges (xvii. 8–13), showing that religion is the safeguard of justice.

Second. The matter of the choice of a *king* is dealt with in xvii. 14–20. It was not absolutely necessary that Israel have a king, but if the nation determined to have one, then certain qualifications and characteristics must be looked for and required, and specific duties and obligations are expected from one holding that office. The king is forbidden to multiply horses, wives, or gold, for all these would bring him into contact with the heathen nations and would finally lead to backsliding, apostasy, and ruin. This was absolutely true in Solomon's case, for we are distinctly told in Scripture that he did these three things (1 Kings x. 21; xi. 1–6; 2 Chronicles i. 16, 17; ix. 28). What an illustration we have here of the inspiration, truth, and integrity of the Scriptures. The people were warned if their king did thus and so, certain things would happen. Solomon, their king, did thus and so, and these very things did happen.

It was incumbent upon the king that he pay due respect to the law of God, to see that it was retained by the priests, as well as that it was promulgated among the people; and that it was read and obeyed by his subjects.

Third. The selection of *priests* (xviii. 1–8) and *prophets* (xviii. 9–22) is described. The qualifications and characteristics of priests and prophets are the same as those set forth in Leviticus (pp. 202, 203), so we need not repeat

them here. There is, however, in this connection (xviii. 15-19) a prophetic reference to the Lord Jesus Christ as the consummation of the prophetic word. It is to this passage that Peter refers in his speech in Acts iii. 22, 23. Moses, then, in his prophetic capacity, was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some attention is given to the matter of *spiritualism* (xviii. 9-13). The children of Israel are warned to have absolutely nothing to do with those who profess to have dealings with familiar spirits, wizardry, or necromancy. It was for consulting such that God slew Saul: "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; And enquired not of the Lord: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse" (1 Chronicles x. 13, 14).

(c) *Specific Crimes* (xix. 1-21). First. *Murder*, premeditated and unpremeditated, is dealt with in the following manner: If a man caused the death of another man unintentionally or by accident, the appointed cities of refuge provided a haven of safety for him (xix. 1-10). For deliberate and intentional murder no such provision was made, nor could any redemption price be substituted for the life of the murderer (xix. 11-13; cf. Numbers xxxv. 31). He was slain without mercy.

Second. The guilt of *perjury* is then described (xix. 15-21). If all men spoke the truth always, then *one* witness would be enough. Inasmuch, however, as men are, proverbially, liars, it is necessary to have corroborative testimony. What Jesus meant in Matthew v. 37 when He said, "Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay," was that we should have such a reputation for veracity that our mere word without any oath would be sufficient guaranty of its truth and accuracy. The fact

that oaths have to be administered in our courts of justice is a testimony to the depravity of man. Perjury is a sin against God as well as against man. Persons committing perjury had to suffer retribution; all the wrong that the witness had thought to have done unto his brother should be done to him. We have an illustration of this in the case of Haman and Mordecai (Esther vi.-viii.). By the expression "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" is not meant private retaliation, but the compensations afforded by public justice. False witness includes deliberate invention and circulation of falsehood, false suggestions, the suppression of essential circumstances necessary to a right understanding of the facts in the case, or giving a wrong colouring to the facts.

(d) *Sundry Laws* (xx. 1-xxvi. 19). These sundry laws are both civil and domestic, and deal with the following problems :

First. Humane conduct in time of war (xx. 1-20 ; xxi. 10-14). It is interesting to note in this connection that no authority or sanction is given for wars of aggression and invasion ; no encouragement to increase possessions, plunder, or cruelty. Nothing must be done to promote natural pride or lordly supremacy. The wars of Israel were to be punitive and defensive wars purely. They were to be "holy crusades" and "wars of the Lord" in the real sense.

Four grounds of exemption from service in war are mentioned (xx. 5-8) : The dedication of a new house ; the planting of a vineyard ; the taking of a wife ; and the spirit of cowardice.

Second. xxi. 1-9 gives instructions regarding homicide. The solemnity of the ceremony provided in such cases was such as to seek to prevent such hidden acts of violence.



Third. The regulation of family matters is then presented (xxi. 15-23), especially with regard to the treatment of the children of two marriages. Emphasis is laid upon dealing according to principle and not prejudice. Nothing must be done by partiality. Disobedience to parents is regarded as disobedience to God, for the parents stand in the place of God with regard to the child.

Fourth. xxii. 1-xxv. 19 deals with a number of miscellaneous laws, such as that of brotherhood which emphasizes the necessity of sympathy and helpfulness between man and man (xxii. 1-4). Women are forbidden to wear that which pertaineth to men (xxii. 5). It was customary in connection with the worship of heathen gods, some of which were supposed to be both male and female, for its devotees, especially women, to worship these gods in male attire. This led to licentiousness and looseness of life. Such things God's people are to avoid (cf. 1 Peter iii. 1-6). Even such a matter as the protection of bird life (xxii. 6-8) is not overlooked. Miscellaneous laws regarding matters of personal purity are set forth in xxii. 13-xxiii. 8; regarding divorce (xxiv. 1-5); no man shall take away from another man his means of support (xxiv. 6-22); instructions concerning the administration of justice (xxv. 1-3); compensation for labour (xxv. 4-12); just weights and measures (xxv. 13-16); together with a divine explanation as to the real nature of the sin of Amalek and the reason for the destruction of the Amalekites (xxv. 17-19) completes the contents of the twenty-fifth chapter.

The offering of the first fruits to God as recorded in the twenty-sixth chapter is a recognition of God as the proprietor of the land and the provider of the needs of His people. In verses 5-11 tithing is demanded for the separate maintenance of the priests and also a tithe of what was left to be distributed among the poor and for

the purposes of benevolence. The Israelite had to be careful with regard to his tithe money, and to declare, as it were, under oath, that his tithe money had not been used for selfish ends or personal gain. In xxvi. 16-xxvii. 21 we have a twofold avowal: First, on the part of Jehovah who avows Israel to be His people; second, on the part of the people who avow Jehovah to be their God (cf. Exodus xxiv. 7; Joshua xxiv. 14-25; Psalm xxvii. 8).

(e) *The Results of Obedience or Disobedience to these Laws* (chaps. xxvii., xxviii.). The people were commanded, when they should come into possession of the promised land, to erect two pillars (probably suggesting the permanency and authority of the Law) and an altar, for sacrifice and propitiation in case of failure to keep God's law (xxvii. 1-8).

The blessings and cursings following obedience or disobedience are minutely portrayed. It is to be noted that of the twelve curses, eleven are against some particular sin, while the twelfth is hurled against all breaches of law and against those who refuse to keep the law as a rule of conduct. Most of the sins denounced are secret sins. The blessings pronounced are to characterize every sphere of physical, moral, and spiritual life.

"It may be well to classify the curses here recorded. They cover twelve sins, four of which belong to one class—sins against chastity—so that they may be arranged as follows: eight specific prohibitions: against idolatry or image worship, dishonouring parents, removing landmarks, making the blind to wander, perverting the judgment of the fatherless and friendless, violating sexual purity, secretly assaulting a neighbour, accepting hire to slay the innocent; with a final comprehensive curse against any form of disobedience or nonconformity to God's law."—*A. T. Pierson.*

Provision is made for repentance and restoration to favour and to the land. How truly these chapters have been fulfilled in the history of the Jews. It has been well remarked that history furnishes no parallel to the awful and prolonged retribution visited upon this nation once favoured as no other, now chastised as no other. Nothing at the time could have been more unlikely than such a national destiny; yet in every respect the Lord hath done what He said, and the Jew is to-day the standing miracle and the history of miracle.

The supreme lesson in these chapters of blessing and cursing is this: "that, back of all that we call or count accidental, incidental, due to natural causes or human conflicts, to commerce or war, to national aggression or submission, there is a Divine Hand. In this fearful catalogue of calamities Jehovah appears as a chastiser and avenger. He controls the visitations of disease in the human body and mind; in the realm of animal life and in vegetation; the invasions and reverses of war, the oppression and enslavement of subject races: all that men attribute to the atmosphere, the soil, the schemes of the ambitious and the *matériel* of war, the Word of God ascribes primarily to the permission and commission of a presiding Deity, whose will winds and waves, clouds and tempests, heat and frost, fire and flood, microbes and bacilli, men and demons, alike obey! We must stop banishing the Creator from His creation, the providence of God from the incidents of history, the control of God from the whole course of things, and in this materialistic age restore Jehovah to His throne as the universal Governor over individuals, families, and nations.

"We must learn that one of the principles of His administration is to bless virtue according to its measure, even when it may exist side by side with vice, and to



course vice according to its measure, even when it exists side by side with virtue. We have a singular example in our own land. There is no question of the vice of polygamy and its accompanying sensuality and family degradation; yet the Mormons have been singularly prosperous as a people, in temporal things, because they have been a community of total abstainers, and have been industrious and sagacious in redeeming an alkali desert from sterility by irrigation and cultivation. The Lord does not bless their domestic life, for He cannot while it violates His ideals, nor can He bless their religious life, founded upon what is both error and fraud; but He can and does bless their industry, frugality, temperance, and mutual coöperation. Health, wealth, well-being, are not accidents, nor due to a blind inexorable fate. They have their fixed laws and conditions; and they who obey, other things being equal, will reap what they sow, for God is not mocked by the caprice of man or the chance of history.”—*A. T. Pierson.*

The blessings of the twenty-eighth chapter include almost every sphere of human experience and activity. Israel was an earthly people with an earthly covenant and earthly promises. It was natural, therefore, that the blessings accruing from obedience would be such as are here set forth—such blessings as pertain to earthly things. It is different with believers in the New Testament dispensation. They are a spiritual people with a spiritual covenant and spiritual promises. Temporal prosperity does not always follow piety and godliness in this present dispensation. Nor does godliness always receive its reward so far as temporal things are concerned during our lifetime. “Hope is sown for the righteous.” The full reward of the believer lies in the future.

These chapters of blessing and cursing have something



to say to us with regard to the motives and emotions to which God appeals. Both fear and love are appealed to as a basis for obedience. We are also taught that a man's destiny is in his own hands ; he can choose blessing or cursing, death or life. The blessings and cursings of these chapters may be individual as well as national and corporate (cf. xxix. 18-20). What a great thought that a single individual is noticed in his sin or his goodness !

### III

## The Third Discourse

(*Chapters xxix. 1-xxx. 20*)

### I. An Invitation to Enter into Covenant Relations with God (xxix. 1-8).

**A**FTER setting before the people the awful results of disobedience and the blessed fruits of obedience to God and His revealed will, Moses invites the people to enter into a covenant relationship with God, and sets before them the blessings that will accrue from such a relationship. It will be interesting in this connection to present a view of the various covenants of the Scripture.

#### The Seven Greater Covenants.<sup>1</sup>

The Covenants of God disclose His whole purpose earthward, and are of two kinds :—

(1) Declarative, or unconditional, *e. g.*, Genesis ix. 11, formula, "I will."

(2) Mutual, or conditional, *e. g.*, Exodus xix. 5, formula, "If thou wilt."

Of the following seven greater Covenants, the Mosaic Covenant is conditional, the others are unconditional. All Scripture crystallizes about, and is the development of, these Covenants.

#### 1. The Adamic Covenant.

1. The Covenant formed (Genesis iii. 14-19).

2. Elements of the Covenant : (1) Curse upon the serpent. (2) Abiding enmity between the seed of Satan and

<sup>1</sup>C. I. Scofield.

the seed of the woman. (3) Final victory of the woman's seed through suffering. (4) The sorrows of maternity. (5) The subordination of the woman. (6) Creation enslaved. (7) Physical death. See Galatians iv. 4; 1 John iii. 8; Matthew iv. 1; Matthew xiii. 37-39; Luke viii. 14; John xiii. 2; Hebrews ii. 14; John xiv. 30; Luke xxii. 53.

## 2. The Noahic Covenant.

1. The Covenant formed (Genesis viii. 20-ix. 27).

2. Elements of the Covenant: (1) The race not to be again destroyed. (2) The natural order of the seasons to be preserved. (3) The sons of Noah to be each the head of a distinct division of the race. (a) Shem to have a peculiar relation to Jehovah-Elohim. From Shem spring the Hebrew, Arabian, Armenian, etc., races. (b) Ham's descendants to form the inferior and servile races. (c) Japheth to be "enlarged" and to "dwell in the tents of Shem." They form the Gentile and Indo-European races.

## 3. The Abrahamic Covenant.

1. The Covenant formed (Genesis xii. 1-3; Acts vii. 3). Additional details (Genesis xiii. 14-17; xv. 1-18; xvii. 1-8).

2. Elements of the Covenant: (1) Originates the nation of Israel. (2) Vests the title to the land of Canaan in the "seed" of Abraham, who is Christ (Galatians iii. 16). (3) Contains the Covenant of redemption. (4) Promises the divine protection to the Abrahamic stock. (5) And all this absolutely unconditional. "I will."

## 4. The Mosaic Covenant.

1. The Covenant formed (Exodus xix.-xxx.). It is in

two parts: (1) Law of Duty, or Ten Commandments. (2) Law of Mercy, or Priesthood and Sacrifices (Leviticus iv. 27-31; Hebrews ix. 1-7).

2. When given. 2,500 years after creation,—430 years after the Abrahamic Covenant.

3. To whom given (Exodus xix. 3; Deuteronomy v. 1-3 (but law does its work wherever it goes); Romans ii. 12; iii. 19; 1 Timothy i. 9-11).

4. The purpose of the law. (1) Negatively (Romans iii. 19, 20; Galatians ii. 16-21; Hebrews vii. 18, 19; Galatians iii. 16, 17). (2) Positively (Romans iii. 19; vii. 7-13; Galatians iii. 10; iii. 23, 24).

5. Christ's relation to the Mosaic Covenant. (1) He was under it (Galatians iv. 4; Matthew iii. 13, 15; Luke xvii. 12-14; xxii. 8). (2) He kept it (John viii. 46; xv. 10). (3) He bore the curse of the law vicariously for sinners (Galatians iii. 10-13; 2 Corinthians v. 21; Galatians iv. 4, 5). (4) His sacrifice fulfilled and took the place of the Priesthood and sacrifices (Hebrews ix. 11-15; x. 1-12, 26, 27).

6. The believer in Christ is under the New Covenant and not the Old (Romans viii. 1; Galatians iii. 13-17).

### 5. The Deuteronomic Covenant.

1. The Covenant formed (Deuteronomy xxx. 1-9).

2. Elements of the Covenant: (1) It is established in view of a foreseen world-wide dispersion of Israel (verse 1). (2) It foresees the repentance of Israel in such a dispersion (verse 2). (3) It covenants, in view of such repentance, the return of the Lord (verse 3). (4) The Lord, having returned, will regather dispersed Israel and bring the nation again into its own land (verses 3-5). (5) It covenants the conversion of restored Israel (verse 6). (6) It promises judgment upon Israel's oppressors (see



Genesis xii. 3) (verse 7). (7) It covenants great blessing and prosperity for restored Israel (verses 8, 9).

NOTE.—Israel entered Palestine under the Deuteronomic Covenant, not under the Abrahamio Covenant.

## 6. The Davidic Covenant.

1. The Covenant formed (2 Samuel vii. 5-19).

2. Elements of the Covenant: (1) A "house" or posterity. (2) A "throne"—royal authority. (3) A "kingdom"—sphere of authority. (4) These are everlasting—"forever." (5) A condition: Disobedience to be followed by chastisement, but not by the abrogation of the Covenant.

3. The King human and divine (Isaiah vii. 13, 14; ix. 6, 7).

4. How the kingdom is to be established (Isaiah ix. 10-12; Jeremiah xxiii. 3-8; xxxiii. 14-21; Ezekiel xxxvii. 22-28; Hosea iii. 4, 5; Micah v. 2).

5. Summary of Covenant in Old Testament. (1) The Covenant assures to David an undying posterity, royalty and kingdom in his Seed or Son, who is David's Son and God's Son. (2) That kingdom is to be established on the earth, is first Israelitish and Palestinian, and begins by the restoration of Judah and Israel to Palestine, afterwards becoming universal.

6. The Davidic Covenant in the New Testament. (1) The Covenant confirmed to the Virgin (Luke i. 26-33). (2) The King born in Bethlehem according to Micah v. 2; Matthew ii. 1-6. (3) The kingdom "at hand" (Matthew iii. 1, 2; iv. 17; x. 5-7). (4) The King comes "meek and lowly" according to Zechariah ix. 9; Matthew xxi. 1-5. (5) The rejection of the kingdom evident (Matthew xi. 16-30; xii. 14-21, 41-49). (6) The mystery form of the kingdom revealed (Matthew xiii.). (7) The church announced (Matthew xvi. 13-21). (8) The King

offered according to Micah (Matthew xxi. 1-5). (9) The King rejected, crucified, and risen (John xix. 14, 15; Acts ii. 29-32). (10) The King to return and set up His throne (Acts ii.; xv. 14-17; iv. 24-28, with Psalm ii. 1-12; Revelation xx. 1-6).

7. **Summary of Covenant in the New Testament.** Jesus Christ, as man, is heir of the ancient kingdom of David, His ancestor according to the flesh. That kingdom is Palestinian, Israelitish, visible. It is to be established by divine power. Its chief characteristics are righteousness and peace. Under Jesus Christ it will become universal and will continue 1,000 years.

#### 7. The New Covenant.

1. The Covenant formed (Hebrews viii. 6-13).

2. The New Covenant in prophecy (Jeremiah xxxi. 31-34).

3. The New Covenant is founded on the sacrifice of Christ (Matthew xxvi. 27, 28; 1 Corinthians xi. 25; Hebrews ix. 11, 12; Hebrews viii. 6-13).

4. Though primarily for Israel, Christians are now partakers of the New Covenant (Hebrews x. 11-22; Ephesians ii. 11-20).

5. The Jews are yet to be brought into the New Covenant (Ezekiel xx. 34-37; Jeremiah xxiii. 5, 6; Romans xi. 25-27).

#### All the Covenants Meet in Christ :

1. He is the "seed of the woman" and Satan destroyer of the Adamic Covenant (Genesis iii. 15; 1 John iii. 8; John xii. 31; Revelation xx. 10).

2. As man He came under the conditions of life of the Noahic Covenant.

3. He was the "seed" to whom the promises were made under the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis xxii. 18; Galatians iii. 16).

4. He bore the curse of the Mosaic Covenant (Galatians iii. 10, 13).

5. He lived as a Jew in the land obediently under the Deuteronomic Covenant (John viii. 46 ; xix. 4).

6. He is the "seed" heir and coming King under the Davidic Covenant (Luke i. 31-33).

7. His sacrifice is the foundation of the New Covenant (Matthew xxvi. 27, 28).

**II. Promise of Restoration in the Event of Failure**  
(xxix. 9-xxx. 20).

It would seem as though Moses, speaking by inspiration, was able to look ahead through the centuries of the future and see how the chosen people would, in spite of the goodness of God, wander from the way of His commandment, and so provision is made for their restoration in the event of failure and consequent sorrow and repentance.

## IV

### Closing Events in Moses' Life

(*Chapters xxxi. 1-xxxiv. 12*)

1. **A Birthday Address Delivered by Moses** (**xxxi. 1-8, 14, 15, 23**).

**O**NE sometimes wonders if the ninetieth Psalm, which is called the Psalm of Moses, does not fit in just at this period in Moses' life.

2. **Arrangement for the Public Reading and Preservation of the Law** (**xxxi. 9-30**). Moses is instructed to see that the law is put into permanent form (**xxxi. 14-30**). Two copies are to be made; one is to be placed in the ark; and the other delivered to the priests (cf. **2 Kings xxii. 8**).

3. **The Song of Moses** (chap. **xxxii.**). This song consists of a call to hear, and the reason for it. The perfections of Jehovah are very clearly set forth (**xxxii. 1-6**). The goodness of Jehovah to Israel is portrayed (**xxxii. 7-14**) whereas the return of evil for good on the part of Israel is declared (**xxxii. 15-19**). The divine provocation because of Israel's conduct (**xxxii. 20, 21**), together with predicted and threatened tribulation (**xxxii. 22-25**) and the scattering of the chosen people (**xxxii. 26-33**)—all of which move Jehovah to pity (**xxxii. 36-38**). In the midst of the divine judgment (**xxxii. 39-42**), Jehovah will manifest Himself, and victory for Israel will come at last (**xxxii. 43**).

4. **The Blessing of Moses** (**xxxiii. 1-29**). This chapter gives a detailed account of Moses' blessing upon



the various tribes. It also portrays the characteristics of some of these tribes. The structure of the song is as follows: Introduction (xxxiii. 1-5), connected with the giving of the Law; The individual blessings upon the tribes (xxxiii. 6-25); Conclusion (xxxiii. 26-29). God above guides His people beneath.

God's people are described in a sevenfold way in this chapter. They are: (1) A saved people (xxxiii. 29); (2) A seated people (xxxiii. 3); (3) A sanctified people (xxxiii. 3); (4) A separated people (xxxiii. 16); (5) A satisfied people (xxxiii. 23); (6) A supported people, this support being set forth in a fivefold way: In His hands for security (verse 3), at His feet for learning (verse 3), between His shoulders for strength (verse 12), at His side for fellowship (verse 12), in His arms for rest (verse 27); (7) A sacrificing people (xxxiii. 19). God calls for three kinds of sacrifices from His people: A sacrifice of our persons (Romans xii. 1), of our praises (Hebrews xiii. 15), of our purses (Hebrews xiii. 16).

5. **The Death of Moses** (chap. xxxiv.; cf. xxxii. 45-52). This chapter is more a chapter of vision than of death. There has been some question as to who wrote this chapter. Some claim that Moses could not have written it because it contains the account of his own death; therefore, Joshua or some person living later must have written it and added it to the book. One sometimes wonders, seeing that Moses himself was a prophet, why it was not possible for the manner of his death to be revealed to him just as other things were revealed to him, for him to foretell it just as he foretold other things. However, the inspiration of a book is independent, to a large extent, of its authorship. If Moses did not write it, then who did? So far as we know he was the only man present at the time of his death.

This is a beautiful picture of death. It reminds us of the New Testament teaching concerning death—that the believers are put to sleep by God in Christ (cf. 1 Thessalonians iv. 14–17).

“Moses goes upon the mountain to die. It is well; such a man ought to die upon a mountain. The scene is full of symbolism; it is quick with moral and spiritual suggestiveness. Men may die upon mountains if they will; or men may perish in dark valleys if they like. To die upon the mountain is to die into heaven. The place of our death, as to its significance and honour, will be determined by the life we lead. We die just as we live, and so to say, where we live. Moses lived a mountain life; he was a highlander; he lived on the hills, and on the hills he died. May it not be so with us? By well-done duty, by well-endured affliction, by well-tested patience, by complete self-surrender, by continual imitation and following of Christ, we may die on some lofty hill, cool with dew or bright with sunshine, the point nearest to the skies. To die at such an elevation is to begin to live. Men can die in the valleys if they please; by meanness of life, by self-consideration, by baptized prudence, by bastard piety, by feigned prayer, they can hasten swiftly down into deep places and die in the shadows and gloom of despair. We can so live that none will care where or how we die; the only gospel they ever hear of us will be that we are dead. But who shall live this life? Who can think of it? Who that knows the value of influence, who that regards the love of children and the love of posterity, could live a life so ignoble, so devoid of practical sentiment, so wasteful in all that is most sacred in energy?”—*Joseph Parker.*



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