

# The Pathway of Faith

(STUDIES IN GENESIS 12 to 50)

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## PREFATORY NOTE

I AM glad to testify to my appreciation of the following studies in the life of the patriarchs and to introduce them to what I trust may be a wide circle of readers. It has been said that the Bible is of all books most read and least studied — if this be true we cannot be sufficiently grateful for anything which is likely to be an inducement unto and a help in the reverent study of the sacred Scriptures. It is on this account I heartily commend the results of Mr. Gelesnoff's devotional study, being convinced that they cannot but lead others to seek from the Word itself the sweetness and strength which are there stored for the patient seeker. It is too often assumed today that the earlier Scriptures of the Old Testament are so discredited by the results of modern criticism as to be unworthy of serious attention. Such a work as this one is the best refutation of such unbelieving error, revealing as it does that the lives of those there recorded are illustrations for our instruction, warning, exhortations, and encouragement of those principles upon which God ever deals with His people. Formulæ may change, methods of expression may alter to suit the speech of succeeding generations, clearer light may illumine higher ethical and moral standards, but the fundamental fact of man's relationship to God is unchanged. And it is the varied illustration of this governing relationship in the lives of those who in the earliest ages knew and

served Him which this little volume seeks to accomplish.

Without committing myself to every interpretation which approves itself to the author, I warmly welcome these pages, and trust that they may be of blessing and helpfulness to many.

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## INTRODUCTORY

THE book of Genesis, or "In the Beginning", from the twelfth chapter onward, relates the dealings of God with four patriarchs: Abraham, the rock from which the Hebrew nations was hewn (Isa. 51:1, 2); Isaac, the medium through whom Abraham's blessing passed to the posterity (Gen. 21:12); Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel (Gen. 28:3); and Joseph, the man through whom a remnant is preserved in the earth, and saved alive by a great deliverance (Gen. 45:7).

These records are rich in lessons of permanent value. With exquisite, artless simplicity they demonstrate the frailty of our frame, accentuate the gentle forbearance, and illustrate the exhaustless grace of our heavenly Father. How good of God to give us these glowing records of His changeless love that we might draw lessons of wisdom and faith!

We will first seek to view these records collectively, and then examine each separately at close range.

Before proceeding, will the reader kindly charge his heart to pray for the spirit's illumination? Not for himself alone, but for all the fellow saints, not omitting the writer of these words?

The contents of this section of Genesis may be tabulated thus:

12—25:11.	Abraham
25:12-18.	Interlude: the generations of Ishmael
25:19—28:9.	Isaac
28:10—35.	Jacob
36.	Interlude: the generations of Isaac
37-50.	Joseph

From this simple analysis it will be seen at a glance that the stories of Abraham and Joseph are cut off from those of Isaac and Jacob by the insertion of parentheses devoted to matters foreign to the main theme of the book. This arrangement seems to assign to Abraham and Joseph a peculiar place in the divine economy. Careful study justifies this inference.

The call of Abraham inaugurates a new departure in God's dealings with mankind. A man is called with a view to the formation of a nation destined to fulfil a special mission in the world. In Joseph, we see a man raised to perform a special mission to this chosen nation. Connected with the call of Abraham is the *separation* of an elect nation which occupies a peculiar place in relation to God and the nations of the globe. Bound up with the history of Joseph is the miraculous *preservation* of that nation through a time of world-wide calamity.

The outstanding feature in this story of the divine government of human lives are the theophanies, or appearances of God.

There are *seven* recorded appearances to Abraham; *two* to Isaac; *seven* to Jacob; and *two* to Joseph.

These appearances are unified by a common end; though the means and methods employed in attaining that end are different in each case. The difference is to be accounted for by the differing temperaments exemplified in these men. Variety characterizes God's works in nature. The leaves of a tree are shaped after one pattern; yet no two of them are alike; each exhibits peculiarities of its own. All planets revolve around the sun; yet each moves in its own orbit. Variety, too, characterizes God's ways in grace. The High and Lofty One deals with each child according to the capacity and quality of his faith. He weaves into each thread of life the specific lessons needed.

The appearances to Abraham are for *instruction*. Each communication results in a spiritual metamorpho-

sis. The friend of God receives new impetus, changes his course, enters new spheres of activity, rises to a higher plane. Each vision elevates his position, widens his outlook, expands his usefulness.

“By faith Abraham, being called, obeys coming out into the place which he was about to obtain to enjoy as an allotment” (Heb. 11:8, c. v.), He is a man of *responsive* nature. When the vision comes, he follows it, even though it entail sacrifice.

From the Genesis narrative it would seem as if Abram's departure was instantaneous after, or simultaneous with, the divine command. Stephen's address to the sanhedrin, however, shows that, pursuant to a revelation, Abram left Chaldea and set his face toward the land of promise, but for some reason tarried in Haran, and not till after his father's death did he move on to Canaan.

What was it that induced Abram thus to linger on the way?

The words of Stephen, “and thence, after the death of his father, he exiles him into this land in which *you* are now dwelling” (Acts 7:4), seem to attribute Abram's delay at Haran to Terah's influence. Terah's intention on leaving Ur was to repair to Palestine; but coming to Haran, he remained there; and Abram, yielding to the paternal wish, tarried with him.

Moreover, we learn that, on leaving Haran after Terah's death, Abram “took all the substance which they had gathered, and all the souls which they had gathered in Haran”. There they acquired souls and substance. Was not this responsible for the delay? These men of enterprise saw a chance of acquiring wealth, and decided to take full advantage of the opportunity.

These incidental touches afford insight into the character of the man and throw valuable light upon certain phases of his subsequent career. They inform us also that Abram was a man of strong affection and deep feeling, that he was keen and alert, alive to material advan-

tages and the comforts of wealth. Though naturally responsive, when the claims of God made imperative demands and brought him face to face with sacrifice, the interests to be renounced exerted over him a mighty spell, and induced vacillation. At such conjunctures the Lord intervened and drew him out of predicament by a fresh vision.

In tracing these appearances of Jehovah, we would behold Abraham going from strength to strength, ascending from one altitude to another. On mount Moriah is the zenith reached. He stands on the borderland of glory. Earthly limitations touch the fringe of heavenly actualities. There the curtain drops. The saint goes to his rest. A few touches are only added to link his narrative with Isaac's.

The appearances to Isaac are for *reiteration*. Isaac is a man *retiring*, restful, phlegmatic. Deeply sensitive, he grieves for three years over his mother's death, and goes out in the field to find rest and comfort. A lover of solitude, he well knew the soothing influence of nature over vexed spirits. The moaning of the wind, the murmur of the fountain, the rustling of the grain, possess to him inexpressible charm. A lover of quietude, he avoids din and conflict and devotes himself to peaceful pursuits, the sowing of seed, the digging of wells. He delights to watch the fields of grain undulated by summer winds; and loves to soliloquize beside the well when the cover of darkness falls upon the landscape, and the gurgling waters mingle their music with the rustle of the leaves gently wafted by the evening zephyr. And withal there is in him a touch of epicureanism — he loves a savory meal.

Love of quiet may dispose to compromise. One of Isaac's make-up is in danger of yielding when action is required; he is apt to retreat when he should take a determined stand. The theophanies are designed to neu-

tralize these natural proclivities of Isaac's disposition and avert the dangers toward which they tend. Both appearances occur at critical junctures. When faith was ready to yield in the face of difficulties, the vision vouchsafed acted as a stimulus and preventative. The Lord reiterated the covenant with Abraham, adding to it fresh promises calculated to strengthen faith and nerve it for conflict. Thus the Lord lured His quiet, passive servant out of retirement by an enlargement of vision.

The appearances to Jacob are for *restriction*. Jacob is of a *rushing* disposition, a man of restless activity and indomitable energy. Isaac's tendency was to lag behind, Jacob's inclination is to go ahead of God. The Lord makes known to him His intention beforehand. The condition of affairs seems unfavorable to the realization of that intention; so Jacob imagines that he must help God, and undertakes the task of securing a fulfillment of God's purpose by a clever manipulation of circumstances.

He does not rise to the level of the vision; he lowers it to his own level. Instead of complying with the terms of the promise, he seeks, so to speak, to adjust the promise to his condition. He is evermore active, always on the go; but his activity is not in line with God's movements. Hence, he is in constant need of restraint. The aim of the theophanies is to check his independence and direct his energy into proper channels. Jacob, therefore, is repeatedly pointed back to positions of faith previously held but departed from.

The appearances to Joseph are for *revelation*. The two dreams foreshadow the wonderful mission he was destined to perform.

Joseph is a *perfect* character. The story of his life is in some senses the most wonderful in the Hebrew Scriptures. He possesses in a superlative degree the virtues of his predecessors without their faults. He combines the responsiveness of Abraham with the quietness of Isaac and the astuteness and activity of Jacob.

His *responsiveness* is evidenced by unswerving loyalty to the vision. Abraham wavered at times; thrice he departed from the pathway of the divine will. Joseph neither hesitates nor deviates. He dreams a dream, and tells it to his brethren. They do not like the message and hate Joseph for it. He dreams a second dream, and forthwith tells it to his brethren. He is unmovable. His responsiveness is unshaken by opposition; he yields neither to pressure of circumstances nor paternal influence. Nothing can change his loyalty to the vision. Storms fail to obscure it. He follows its light with steady, unfaltering step, not daunted by adversity nor inflated by prosperity.

His *quietness* is shown by his conduct in the house of Potiphar and in prison. The quietness of Isaac was fearful, restless and resorted to policy. That of Joseph is fearless, patient, and courts no favor. Without murmur or resentment, he attends to his duties, trustfully awaiting the dawn of a better day.

His *astuteness* is seen both from the advice to Pharaoh and the administration of Egypt during the seven years' famine. The shrewdness of Jacob substituted a project for God's purpose. That of Joseph operated on the basis of that purpose.

Joseph can be passive and responsive; he knows how to be active and how to stand still. He does everything in season.

Abraham goes to Egypt and compromises. Joseph is taken to Egypt, yet never compromises. The wealth acquired there by the former is a compensation for dishonor. The glory and honor bestowed upon the latter is the reward of faithfulness and purity.

Isaac's policy provoked quarrels with the Philistines. Joseph's tact and discretion enabled him to live in peace with the Egyptians, though it be an abomination for these to eat with the Hebrews.

Jacob, and especially his sons, easily absorbed the

customs of those surrounding them. Joseph never did so, though his whole career, in both adversity and prosperity, offered peculiar temptations in this respect.

Pure, brave, gracious, uncompromising, Joseph walks through life unscathed by sin, undismayed by opposition, undefiled by seduction. How beautiful the tribute to his character uttered by dying Jacob!

“Joseph is a fruitful bough,  
 A fruitful bough by a fountain;  
 His branches run over the wall.  
 The archers have sorely grieved him,  
 And shot at him, and persecuted him:  
 But his bow abode in strength,  
 And the arms of his hands were made strong,  
 By the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob,  
 By the name of the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel,  
 Even by the God of thy father, who did help thee,  
 With blessings of heaven above,  
 Blessings of the deep that coucheth beneath,  
 Blessings of the breast and of the womb.  
 The blessings of thy father  
 Have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors  
 Unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills:  
 They shall be on the head of Joseph,  
 And on the crown of the head of him  
 That was prince among his brethren” (Gen. 49:22-26).

This is a charming story. Faith is burning, love is radiant, hope is beaming. Their blended light illumines the darkness about him. Would God that the same could be said of all God's people today! But alas! how rare have these spiritual graces become. Faith in our great Master is at its ebb. Love for *all* the saints is rare indeed. Hope is dim. But how great is our thankfulness for the few who offer a mite upon God's glorious altar!

These four characters seem to form a cycle.

The testimony declines after Abraham, but rises in Joseph to its meridian height.

In the divine methods, too, there seems to be a perfect unfolding.

Responsive Abraham is instructed — initiated in the

secrets of the Lord. The dormant faith of passive Isaac is stirred to activity. The fleshly energy of Jacob is checked and subdued. The uprightness of Joseph yields its finer graces under bruising and pressure, and is finally rewarded and crowned.

Our way is now prepared for a more detailed study of these records.



## ABRAHAM

The biographies of the Bible are brief and ungar-  
nished. The Narrator describes the career of the elect  
with superhuman simplicity, calmness and fidelity. His  
purpose is to instruct and edify. Hence the account is  
given in the smallest possible compass. It is devoid of  
comment, moralizing or exhortation. There is no attempt  
at embellishment, no indication anywhere of the human  
propensity to elate the good and extenuate the bad. He  
is not a man, to magnify the attractive and minimize the  
sombre in men's lives.

The narrative of Abraham consists of *seven theo-*  
*phanies* and *three* deflections from the pathway of the  
divine will, which may be shown thus:

I.	12:1-3. 12:4-6.	First Theophany Results
II.	12:7- 12:7-9. 12:10—13:13.	Second Theophany Results First Deflection (Egypt)
III.	13:14-17. 13:18—14.	Third Theophany Results
IV.	15:1-5. 15:6-19. 16.	Fourth Theophany Results Second Deflection (Hagar)
V.	17:1-21. 17:22-27.	Fifth Theophany Results
VI.	18. 19. 21.	Sixth Theophany Results Third Deflection (Gerar)
VII.	22:1-2. 22:3—25:11.	Seventh Theophany Results

The crowning victories of a great career are always more inspiring when they can be viewed in the light of the campaigns of earlier days. The exploits of the cloud of witnesses are more enhancing because the winners of the trophies once lay prostrate in the ashes of defeat. Their histories are written for our learning, that inspired by their faith and warned by their failure we may imitate the former and shun the latter.

### *The First Appearance*

The first communication to Abram was in the nature of a call to separation. "Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out . . . unto . . . and I will." When the Lord spake thus He had in mind a great purpose comprising a hexad of blessings. The accomplishment of that purpose, however, was conditioned on Abram's implicit, unquestioning compliance with the command "Get thee out."

What a disturbing order! The divine voice came: "Get thee out," and in a moment Abram's arrangements are upset, ties that had become entwined around the heart are snapped, the aspirations of the heart are crushed, and he is left stranded in darkness! Until that initial word was obeyed, God had nothing further to say.

Abram submitted to that revolutionary order. "They went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came!" Destination was reached in safety because they kept step with God's movement.

### *The Second Appearance*

Reaching the land of God's appointment, Abram found himself face to face with the Canaanite. The land is really his by divine assignment; actually the Canaanite holds it by right of conquest. Abram received it by promise, and only faith in that promise will support him in the presence of the Canaanite. Therefore, upon his

arrival, Jehovah appears to reiterate the promise, "Unto thy seed will I give this land."

In consequence of the appearance Abram built an altar, pitched a tent, and called upon the name of Jehovah. The altar marked his covenant relationship to God; the tent expressed his surrender to the claims of that relationship; while the calling on Jehovah betokens reliance on divine protection against opponents.

The position of Abram's tent exquisitely expresses the transforming power of faith. He dwells on a mountain, half way between Ai and Bethel. On the east (the place of sunrise) is Ai; on the west (the place of sunset) lies Bethel. Abram is in a strait betwixt a *heap*\* and the house of God. He retires from the former and reaches after the latter, viewing both from an elevation.

Ai was a mighty city. In the days of Joshua Israel underrated its strength and experienced defeat. But Abram "waited for the city having foundations, Whose Artisan and Architect is God." He had seen and greeted it from afar. Its holy light spelled the doom of Hamitic kingdoms. Canaan flourishes before eyes; but beyond present prosperity and military prowess looms Canaan wasted. The fiery strokes of vengeance have not yet engulfed the land; the day of retribution is still far off; but the light of truth made the overthrow of that civilization a present reality, which became a potent factor in Abram's life—a factor that determined his attitude and controlled his relations with the inhabitants of the land. The flame of truth consumed base desires for things below and kindled a holy passion for things above. The city of God is Abram's source of inspiration, object of aspiration, and spring of action.

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\**Ai*, which occurs as a proper name here and in Josh. 7; Ezra 2:28; Neh. 7:32; Jer. 49:3, appears as a common noun in Psa. 79:1; Jer. 27:18; Micah 1:6 and 3:12, and is uniformly translated *heap*.

At this juncture occurs:

*The First Deflection*

Canaan is struck by famine. This new difficulty clouds Abram's vision and unnerves his faith. He journeys to Egypt, the wheat market of the ancient world.

The character and history of ancient Egypt are of absorbing interest. The people and the land were in many respects unique. The fecundity of the soil, unlike other countries, was not contingent on seasonal showers; there was no rain in Egypt. The Nile inundated the country twice a year. When the water receded, they left an alluvial deposit which fertilized the soil and caused it to bring forth. The Egyptians, therefore, regarded the Nile as the source of their phenomenal prosperity and felt themselves quite independent of the rain which God sends on the just and the unjust. Their boast was, "My river is mine own" (Eze. 29:3).

Again: Egypt is bounded by the Nile and the desert. The river brought tides of prosperity: the dry, desert winds blew the scorching sands that blasted the harvest; so that Egypt was the scene of interrupted contest between prosperity and adversity — between life and death.

Furthermore, the ruthless hand of death has left a deep mark upon Egyptian history; its cold breath chills us as we delve into its lore. The monuments which have come down to us are the mummies, the embalmed bodies of rulers, and the pyramids are royal sepulchres. The worship of the dead was a prominent feature in the religion of ancient Egypt. Its great work of literature is the Book of the Dead.

How admirably is the spirit of the world portrayed in Egypt! That great land of art and trade and magic, lived, and moved, and had its being, apart from God: it worshiped nature but ignored the God of nature: its titanic energy was devoted to making their land beautiful and attractive — a place where God would not be

missed. Decay and death—the faithful reminders of man's sin and God's sovereignty—ravaged Egypt; their mossy fingers turned its magnificence to ashes, and yet the Egyptians went on and on, and would not be warned nor turned from the error of their way.

Some places, like some characters, appear to best advantage at a distance. Self-pleasing invests them with a false halo which enhances for a time their superficial attractions and conceals their defects; but which disappears after the first desire has been gratified. Looked at from a distance, Egypt possessed, like these characters, a beauty which faded away on closer acquaintance.

Seeking escape from death, Abram plunged into the slough of spiritual death. The atmosphere of Egypt choked faith. Expediency became Abram's rule of life. He wrought deceit upon Pharaoh, with the consent and connivance of his wife, to be "entreated well". Fear replaces hope; Bethel fades from the horizon; the godlessness of the Egyptians haunts his spirit. How is the gold become dim! How is the most pure gold changed! Prayer, tent, altar,—all vanish, and Abram becomes a servile courtier at the Egyptian palace.

Doubtless Abram embarked on this course to avoid trouble. But his cunning failed utterly; it proved unwholesome to him and mischievous to the Egyptians, for it brought the very evil it was intended to avert. "Jehovah plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues, because of Sarai." So much for compromises. They sap the life of those who condescend to them and harm those for whose supposed benefit they are made.

The visit to Egypt was far-reaching in its effects. Pharaoh gave Abram "sheep, oxen, and he-asses, and camels," in compensation for subserviency. This wealth later on proved a source of vexation. The cattle estranged him from Lot, and one Egyptian maid became subsequently the cause of much distress.

Pharaoh ordered his servants to bring Abram on the way, and he returned to "the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of Jehovah."

The consequences of deviation soon manifested themselves. Quarrels between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot resulted in the separation of the latter from his uncle. With great magnanimity Abram gave Lot the privilege of choice. We do not question his generosity displayed on the occasion, but was it not inspired by Abram's recognition that his own conduct was the prime cause of the division which had taken place?

### *The Third Appearance*

The Lord appeared unto Abram again, after Lot parted company with him, and said "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. . . . Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breath of it; for unto thee will I give it."

"Lift up now thine eyes, and look. . . . Arise, and walk." This announcement sets forth the method of spiritual progress. A vision is given that the life may be transformed. Truth is the foundation and source of practise; while true practise is the outcome of truth received and obeyed.

"Abram moved his tent, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built there an altar unto Jehovah." Here he enters upon a new sphere of service. We have seen a pilgrim with a tent and an altar, now we shall see a soldier fighting the King's battles. This new departure in life is the direct fruit of the sojourn at Hebron. Darting from the presence of Jehovah, Abram defeats the army of the greatest conqueror

of his age, liberates the prisoners of war, recovers all the property, and returns laden with spoils.

But Abram has made progress along other lines as well. Another fruit of communion appears — the grace of giving, and that at a time when we should least expect it, when life and prosperity were risked in war with the confederate kings of the invading army. Contact with the world's sin and sorrow is the best stimulant to liberality. Herein lies the secret of giving. A contrast of the principle here disclosed with much that is in vogue today, in the matter of our finances, is by no means to our advantage. Entertainments may replenish the coffers of a church, but they introduce many worldly ways which asphyxiate life. The best remedy for financial depression is a contemplation of Golgotha. When the heart abides beneath its sacred shadow the love which prompted that great sacrifice will kindle the spirit of renunciation, and the justice that consumed it will purge the spirit of worldliness.

### *The Fourth Appearance*

Every spiritual altitude has its perils. Evil exists only as opposition to good. Behind every force for good lurks a force for evil. Every new conquest in realms spiritual arouses new forces of opposition.

Two dangers menace Abram in the capacity of soldier: fear of death and love of gain. So Jehovah fortifies His servant against these perils of the new way by further grants of grace: "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

The Lord also brought him out of the tent, bade him look on the starry heavens, and said, "So shall thy seed be." This was to be his reward, and he got an anterior glimpse of it. The light afflictions which are for a moment are counterbalanced by a vision of the more abundant weight of glory which they work. "Abram believed in Jehovah; and he counted it to him for righteousness." The apprehension of his relationship deep-

ens; faith lays firmer hold on the unseen; the covenant concerning the land is confirmed, and the former declaration, "Unto thy seed *will I give* this land," is replaced by another, "Unto thy seed *have I given* this land."

### *The Second Deflection*

The promise of a seed called for a fresh exercise of faith on Abram's part. It was contrary to nature and therefore startling in the extreme. Sarai was barren. Both were advanced in age. Extant conditions apparently precluded a performance of the promise. The word of God made the pair feel their impotence. Conscious of inability, Abram and Sarai decided on a plan that seemed to make possible the advent of an heir. Sarai took Hagar, the Egyptian, her bond-maid, and gave her to her husband to be his wife. The child born of that union was as a wild ass among men; his hand was against every man, and every man's hand was against him. He was debarred from the inheritance, and Abram was eventually ordered to cast him out.

The Hagar scheme originated in self-occupation and distrust of God's word. It is hard for the flesh to believe God.

Adam in Eden was tested by the word of God. God had spoken; and the question was, Will man believe God?

This was the one simple test. It was not what tradition degrades to the "eating of an apple"; the crucial test in Eden was, "Hath God said?"

Our first parents failed to believe God's word, and their descendants follow in their steps. Abram here meets the same test with the same sad results.

Amidst the boisterous activity of this age we, like Martha, stand in danger of devoting too much attention to side issues and neglect the one thing needed—the word of God. Some time ago, while holding meetings in



a Canadian town, a minister came to us at the close of a service to express his appreciation of our address. He said: "You have given us solid meat. But, you know, we preachers must use spices." We replied: "My brother, herein is the trouble; we have devoted altogether too much time to the preparation of spices and have neglected the meat." May God give us such a desire for the meat of His truth as will dispense with spices!

It is a matter of God's appointment that sinners should be saved and saints edified and nourished by the teaching of God's Word. Let us then affectionately devote ourselves to this glorious task.

We are naturally self-reliant, apt to trust the arm of flesh rather than His holy spirit, and liable to mistake perfunctory routine for whole-hearted service. The church of today suffers from the effect of over-organization. The alphabet has been almost exhausted to provide initials for the names of auxiliary societies. But our multi-nominal church organization has afforded little relief. Churches are losing ground, while religious apathy gains on us by leaps and bounds.

### *The Fifth Appearance*

Between this appearance and the antecedent lies an interim of fifteen years. "When Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him, I am El Shaddai; walk before Me, and be thou perfect."

With much gentleness and delicacy the Lord lays His finger on the sore spot. "I am El Shaddai," the God that is enough, the One able to perform His promise, the One Whose might is irresistible.

Here is a new self-revelation of God. After a long, monotonous silence Jehovah appears to display His power before His troubled servant. Abram sees God in a new light, and with the new conception of God there comes a new outlook upon life, a new attitude toward

men and circumstances. God makes Himself known by a new name, and Abram, too, receives a new name — Abraham, father of many nations — suggestive of fruitfulness resulting from union with God and springing from a new comprehension of His power.

God's might sweeps the obstacles which impede its advance. Its power in life means the crucifixion of the flesh, "for we who are living," says the apostle, "are ever being given up to death because of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4: 11). The flesh which limited God's power and leaned on its own contrivances is crippled. Abraham is ordered to circumcise himself; his flesh bears the seal and mark of Jehovah's victory.

#### *The Sixth Appearance*

Shortly afterward the Lord appeared unto Abraham under the oaks of Mamre, and renewed the promise of a seed. Before departing the Lord unbosomed Himself with regard to Sodom's awful doom. In consequence of this condescension Abraham's life assumes a different phase. We have seen him as witness and soldier, now he appears before us as intercessor, pleading before the Judge of all the earth on behalf of the guilty cities of the plain.

Abraham knew of Lot's sojourn in Sodom. He knew, too, that Lot's influence for God there could be infinitesimal at the most; so he endeavors to supply by prayer the deficiency of a testimony marred by worldliness and inconsistency.

#### *The Third Deflection*

After these things Abraham went to Gerar and assayed once more the tactics which had proved so disastrous in Egypt, and the ministry of intercession temporarily ceased. The man who not long ago interceded for Sodom imperils the whole land of the Philistines.

He swerved from the service of prayer and was

restored on condition that he pray for Abimelech, who had been endangered by his disloyalty.

Before advancing, let us note how variously the theophanies following the return from Egypt affected Abraham.

The third dealt with the land and influenced his *surroundings*; the fourth, that of the seed, determined his *companionship*; the fifth, the self-revelation of God as El Shaddai, moulded his *character*; lastly the sixth, unraveling God's secret purpose, directed his *service*.

The junctures at which occur the three deflections represent the vulnerable points in the life of faith. The first blow is directed against a separated walk; the second against trust in the Word; the third against prayer. The adversary always concentrates his assaults on these three citadels of sainthood.

Deflection from God's path exposes the saints to Satan's attacks; and he is ever on the alert to take advantage of opportunities and utilize them to the best of his ability. Yet Satan is but an agent in carrying out God's disciplinary plans; and when the saints fall into his hands, and experience the influence of his mighty spells, it is only for the purpose of diverting them from hidden shoals and leads them to a closer walk with God. Satan's malignity, and the magnificent results which the wisdom of God accomplishes through its medium, remind one of the painter, who, actuated by jealousy, flung a sponge at the canvas of his rival, intending to obliterate the scene, but producing by the merest accident the very effect which the artist's utmost efforts had failed to secure. God's purposes are at times born in obscurity, but the very gloom from which they emerge heightens their after effect.

### *The Seventh Appearance*

When the seed was first promised, Abraham questioned God's ability to perform His word. Later, the

Lord appeared to him as the Almighty, and shortly afterward the child of promise was born.

In process of time God tried Abraham again, and said, "Take now thy son, thine only son whom thou lovest, even Isaac; and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Faith is now tested on the spot of antecedent defeat, only the ordeal is now severer because the light possessed is greater. Abraham has seen God's victory over the flesh; he is about to see His triumph over Satan's power — death.

Past failure has strengthened Abraham's hold on things unseen and demonstrated the unthinkable reaches of divine power; so when the order comes to offer Isaac he carries it out unhesitatingly. He has not the remotest idea how God can deliver Isaac; he knows that God is Almighty and therefore equal to the emergency of the occasion.

When the appointed place was reached, Abraham said to his young men, "Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and *come again* to you." His faith shows itself equal to the crisis. But a severer test was ahead. As the two advanced toward the mountain, Isaac said to his father: "Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Could he say to the child of his love, "You are the burnt offering, my son?" His answer was, "God will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." How gloriously his faith soars above impediments!

The summit of the mount is reached; the altar is built; the wood laid in order; Isaac is bound, and laid on the altar, upon the wood; Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. At this juncture the voice of the angel of Jehovah is heard from heaven: "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fear-

est God; seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." Lifting up his eyes, Abraham beheld a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. Then Abraham called the name of the place Jehovah-jireh, returned to his young men, and rose up and went to Beer-sheba.

Jehovah-jireh means, the Lord will see (margin). Jireh is derived from *raah*, to see. But the word admits of another rendering, namely *provide*\*. Hence, the alternative in the text, "the Lord will provide". By combining the thoughts suggested by the two readings we grasp the stupendous truth that the God of *vision* is the God of *provision*. The foresight and omnipotence of God are two wings of an eagle that soar into the empyrean bearing Abraham upon their pinions.

No human eye witnessed the solemn scene on Mount Moriah. The people of Beer-sheba knew of Abraham's journey thither, but were ignorant of its object. When he returned to Beer-sheba a holy light lit his countenance, flashes of glory broke forth through the veil of the mortal body, so the people of the place (though ignorant of what had occurred) concluded that Abraham had seen God, and a proverb went abroad that land, "On the mount of Jehovah shall be seen."

The design of the Lord has been attained. His servant has entered into fellowship with Himself concerning the sufferings of the Holy One; his heart vibrates — in a small measure, of course — with the same feeling which agitated the heart of God when He gave His Son to die for us. Human experience can go no further this side of the grave. The curtain drops upon the scene, and the saint goes to his rest in hope of a better resurrection.

Now, my readers, will you give up conformity to the

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\*See Deut. 33:21; 1 Sam. 16:1, 17; Gen. 22:8.

world? If so, you may, every one of you, be transformed at this moment. Respond to His love! You may make your abiding place in Christ, and have all the power and glory which comes to those who possess Him. You may, like Abraham, advance from the miserable condition of a poor up-and-down, in-and-out, wretched man, on to the glorious vantage ground of a transformed man — a transformed woman — a triumphant saint of God!

## ISAAC

The life of Isaac is dealt with in Genesis 25:19—28:9. Our primary concern is to take in the entire history at one view, in order to see the relation of part to part and understand their setting in the whole narrative.

The story is made up of two domestic pictures at different stages of life separated from one another by an account of the personal experiences of Isaac. First, we learn the circumstances attending the birth of Isaac's two sons, the tendencies displayed by the children in adolescence, and the divine intention respecting them. Next comes the recital of the two theophanies to Isaac. And lastly, the blessing of Jacob and Esau, followed by certain events in their early manhood.

Perhaps the simplest form in which to exhibit this arrangement of contents is the following:

25:10-26.	Birth of Esau and Jacob	Isaac's family
25:27-34.	Esau and Jacob: Childhood	
	26:1-33	Isaac
26:34—27.	Blessing of Jacob and Esau	Isaac's family
28:1-9.	Jacob and Esau: Manhood	

We glean from this analysis that the dealings of God with Isaac are confined to a single chapter.

To trace the story of the divine dealings with a human soul, from the day of its spiritual awakening,

down through the labyrinthine paths of earthly pilgrimage, is a recital of absorbing fascination. It holds us with a spell more powerful than that of any other narrative. Step by step, through the vicissitudes of life, we trace the gradual progress of the spirit in the path of truth, the vision of God becoming clearer and more splendid as the years roll on.

Two movements are discernible in the life of Isaac. The first is a movement of *declension*; failure pervades it all. The testimony is *rejected*; the witness *repudiated*; men are *repulsed* from the light. The torch of truth burns dimly, because Isaac lives in the fear of men.

The second movement is one of *ascension*. The light of truth shines unclouded, because Isaac has reposed his trust in God, walks in communion with Him, and takes a decided, definite attitude toward the inhabitants of Canaan. The testimony is *received*; the witness *respected*; men *respond*.

It is written in the Proverbs:

The fear of man bringeth a snare;  
But whoso putteth his trust in Jehovah shall be safe.

The two periods of Isaac's life furnish a living demonstration — an inspired commentary, I might say — of the practical working of the two antithetic maxims of this saying of the wise king.

The events of Isaac's career range themselves around the two theophanies; thus:

26:1.	The Famine	First Movement
26:2-5.	The First Theophany	<i>Declension</i>
26:6-22.	Results	
26:23.	Journey to Beer-sheba	Second Movement
26:24.	The Second Theophany	<i>Ascension</i>
26:25-33.	Results	

By reading Genesis 26:1 on from chapter 25:11 we shall notice the connection between certain events.



“And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God *blessed* Isaac his son, and Isaac dwelt by Beer-lahai-roi. . . . And there was a *famine* in the land beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham.”

The relation of the famine to the blessing is thus brought to our notice. The adversary is ever ready to contest the blessings which the Lord bestows and to dispute every inch of the road to spiritual progress. As in the case of Abraham, the bestowal of initial blessing on Isaac is met by a counter move of the enemy seeking to intimidate the witness.

The tactics of the evil one present nothing but a weary repetition, monotonous in the last degree. He first attacks those strongholds the surrender of which involves the loss of God-consciousness: then he magnifies and enthrones the material and substitutes sensual pursuits for spiritual aspirations: and at last leads his dupes to thorough concentration upon self.

### *The First Appearance*

The advent of the famine shook the confidence of Isaac. Perturbed by gloomy forebodings, he altered his plans, and went unto Abimelech, king of the Philistines unto Gerar. This step — so it appears from the divine communication — was taken with the evident intention of repairing to Egypt, and the prime object of the theophany was to foil this project. “Go not down to Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and I will bless thee.”

He Who guides His people by the skillfulness of His hands, gives His children meat in due season, and administers each lesson at the proper moment. The message to Isaac is admirably suited to his environments. The famine has cast a shadow across his path and marred the unalloyed blessing hitherto enjoyed: the journey to Philistia has upset the accustomed round of daily routine

and enshrouded the future in disquieting precariousness. With a direction and a pair of promises the Lord meets the situation at every point.

“Dwell in this land.” This guiding word creates a citadel of certainty amidst uncertainty.

“I will be with thee, and I will bless thee.” These two promises shield him from the threatening clouds that have appeared on the horizon. The first promise is intended to fortify Isaac in the presence of the Philistines, while the second is calculated to allay the apprehensions aroused by the famine.

To the saints, the world is a school and life a discipline. The curriculum in the school of life comprises two lessons: the insufficiency of self and the all-sufficiency of God. The impartation of this twofold lesson constituted the grand object of the wilderness training of the Hebrews.

The Israelites suffered from two evils: they *overestimated* their own strength and *underestimated* God’s power.

“Whatsoever Jehovah hath spoken *we will do*,” was their estimate of self, and that in view of the fact that the journey from the Red Sea to Sinai (where these words were spoken) was a long series of murmurings and rebellions against Jehovah’s ways.

“Can He provide a table in the wilderness?” was their estimate of God. Subsequent history fully demonstrated what *they* could do in departing from the living God, and what depths of grace the *Lord* could show in pardoning their transgression.

The self-discovery which accompanies moral failure contains the key to new and larger experiences. Through sorrow He leads us to a new sphere, and bids us look out upon life from a new point. Circumstances are but unexpected examinations which reveal to us the grade attained in the school of faith and accentuate the possibilities that lie beyond the crisis, if we will only renounce

confidence in the flesh and trust Jehovah's love alone.

Isaac, confounded by the famine, weakened in faith and leaned on his ability to handle the situation diplomatically. When the presence of God is not real to faith, human conduct is easily influenced by circumstances and dominated by the opinions of men. The peace-giving promise, "I will be with thee," did not overshadow Isaac; fear took possession of his heart, and his one aim was to win the approval of the "men of the place". He feared to say of Rebekah, she is my wife, "lest the men of the place should kill him." "Lest I die for her" is now the mainspring of all his actions.

In process of time the duplicity of Isaac was discovered. His own conduct betrayed the falsehood of his former affirmation and made it plain to Abimelech that Rebekah was not his sister, but his wife. Startled by a sudden discovery of the futility of his method, Isaac confessed to misconduct, admitting at the same time the cause which prompted it. The Italians have a fine proverb, "Lies are short-legged." The gist of it is, that no matter how much ahead of truth falsehood may get at the start, truth is sure to overtake it. If Isaac had forgotten this adage, he had such a forceful, practical demonstration of its truth that he was not likely to forget it again.

Fear is contagious. On learning that Isaac was afraid of the Philistines, Abimelech becomes in turn afraid of him. He remembered his experience with Abraham. Although he had taken Sarah unto him in consequence of deliberate misrepresentation of facts on the part of Abraham, God said unto him in the visions of the night, "Thou art but a dead man . . . If thou return her not, know that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine." His kingdom had been brought face to face with destruction; and now Abraham's son, following the father's tactics, lays the country open to the same peril. Abimelech grasps the gravity of the situ-

ation, and, to avert a possible catastrophe, issues a decree: "He that toucheth the man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

Isaac, at last, has nothing to fear! Thanks to the successful issue of his diplomacy, he enjoys rest. The king's decree insures him immunity from the men of the place. By a stroke of policy Isaac has brought to his support the secular arm and, protected from interference, devotes himself to agriculture, farms a district, sows seed, and finds a hundred-fold because the Lord blesses him. And the man waxed great, and he grew more and more until he became very great: and had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and a great household. The Lord remained true to His promise of blessing, notwithstanding the unfaithfulness of His servant. He abides faithful, He cannot deny Himself.

The peace thus secured was not durable, however. In the course of life we may outgrow certain outward circumstances and inward conditions which have been instrumental in our temptation, and pass from moral strait and stress to ease; but there is no hopefulness in this, unless the rest achieved is the palm of victory over sin; otherwise the quietude we enjoy is but a moral lethargy presaging the approach of spiritual insensibility. How often the attainment of a long cherished end leads to spiritual stagnation!

But the Lord has a wonderful way of startling His servants from the even tenor of their way. Deep and wonderful is the principle underlying God's disciplinary methods. He punishes His people with the very things for the sake of which they sell His glory. King Asa is a pattern case. At the commencement of his reign Zerah, the Ethiopian, came against him with an army of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots. Asa betook himself to prayer, and said, "Lord, there is none beside thee to help, between the mighty and him that hath no strength: help us, O Lord, our God; for we rely

on Thee, and in Thy name are we come against this multitude." The Lord answered the king's prayer. The Ethiopians were smitten; the land of Judah enjoyed rest for over thirty years, and many Israelites from the Northern kingdom fell to him in abundance, when they saw that the Lord His God was with him (2 Chr. 14:9—15:9).

Toward the close of Asa's reign, the king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, to prevent any further exodus of his subjects. But Asa, instead of resorting to fasting and prayer, as at the first, robbed the treasury of the temple, and sent a present to the king of Syria, with a message: "Go, break thy league with Baasha, king of Israel, that he may depart from me" (2 Chr. 16:3). The king of Syria hearkened unto Asa, and invaded Samaria. The Syrians smote several Israelitish cities, forcing Baasha to withdraw from Judean territory, and abandon the building of fortifications.

Asa wanted to avoid war. When Baasha retired, Asa thought to have accomplished his object, and possibly congratulated himself upon so felicitous an issue of the negotiations. But truly God's thoughts are not our thoughts! When Asa returned to Jerusalem the prophet met him with the following message: "Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim a huge host, with chariots and horsemen, exceeding many? yet, because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. Herein thou hast done foolishly; for from henceforth thou shalt have wars" (2 Chr. 16:8, 9).

"From henceforth *thou shalt have wars*"—the very thing Asa endeavored to avert. He sold the interests of God to obviate war, and God punished him with *war*!

The operation of the same principle is also discern-

ible in the case before us. Isaac employed cunning to escape strife, and God punished him with *strife!* May we lay to heart this solemn principle.

We have already noted the phenomenal wealth acquired by Isaac subsequent to the issuance of a decree by Abimelech. The Philistines, however, could not view with equanimity the greatness of an alien whose prosperity they attributed to the favor shown him by their king. Their animosity is roused to a high pitch, and cries for vengeance. The situation has become intensely acute. Abimelech is alarmed. The ill-feeling of his subjects toward Isaac increases the chance of "guiltiness being brought upon his kingdom." The Philistines have already expressed their resentment in the spiteful act of filling Isaac's wells with sand. Quarrels arose between the servants of Isaac and the herdsmen of Gerar. A casual word might intensify the friction, and precipitate a crisis at any moment. The occasion called for decisive action to prevent disaster. Accordingly, Abimelech says to Isaac: "Go from us: for thou art much mightier than we." It is Isaac's wealth acquired under the king's protectorate that has become a menace to the land.

Isaac is loath to retire, and lingers in the valley of Gerar. There he dug two wells which provided strife between the servants of Isaac and the local herdsmen. Thereupon he removed from thence, and dug another well for which they strove not. Isaac interprets the absence of strife as a divine monition, saying, "Now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land," and on the strength of this intimation moves onward toward Beer-sheba. This move is epochal and inaugurates the dawn of a new era.

Before passing on to the second period of Isaac's life, it may be well to pause and ask ourselves the question, Who were these Philistines which inspired such terror to Isaac? Let me, just rapidly, point out a few of their salient characteristics from the Scriptures.

One of the first things which impresses the student of the biblical records is a strange tendency toward abnormal development. Frequent mention is made of Philistine giants who, beside extraordinary stature, had twelve fingers and twelve toes. No less than four such giants were slain by the servants of David (2 Sam. 21: 15-21).

Their religious tendencies are no less remarkable than the above curious phenomenon. In the days of Saul, at the time of David's encounter with the champion Goliath, the Philistines encamped at Ephes-dammim. Now the etymological derivation of this name is clear — *Ephes* means "without" (Dan. 2: 34, 45); *dam* means "blood"; *dammim* is the plural form — "bloods" (Gen. 4: 10). "Without blood" was the name of their encampment. Their religion was anæmic, bloodless.

Again, in the days of Samson, when the lords of the Philistines were gathered together to offer a great sacrifice unto their god Dagon, they said, "Call for Samson, that he may make us sport" (Judges 16: 25). Amusement formed an essential part of their worship.

Their hostility toward Israel showed itself in two ways: In the days of the Patriarchs the Philistines filled their wells with sand (Gen. 21: 25; 26: 15); during their lordship over Palestine, in the era of the Judges, they removed all the smiths in Israel to prevent the manufacture of arms. Thus it came to pass "in the day of battle there was neither sword nor spear found with any of the people" (1 Sam. 13: 22).

Their aim was to render the people of God resourceless and defenseless by depriving them of water and sword. Both of these are employed as symbols of the Word of God (Eph. 5: 26; 6: 17). The Philistines demolished, in a truly iconoclastic fashion, the old bulwarks of the faith which for centuries had refreshed and comforted the saints. They demolished, but offered no substitute for what they took away. Their religious propen-

sities were destructive. Formalism, amusement, destructiveness, and cultivation of abnormal tastes were the chief features of Philistine religion.

And are not Philistine tendencies much in evidence today? Let none suppose the Philistines to be dead. Their nationality may be extinct; their spirit still lives and militates against the forces of God. Hybrid, bloodless gospels are preached from many pulpits; icy formalism and a crass, destructive criticism ravage the churches and sape their very life, while fun and frolic rule the hour.

Shall we who know the value of the blood of Christ and the grace of God's holy spirit retreat before the noisy advance of the modern Philistine horde? Not an inch! The Philistine warriors, in spite of great stature, athletic training, and huge weapons, were no match for the servants of David. The daring insolence and martial skill of the former succumbed before the devotion of the latter; for the giants were all of Goliath's type: showy in appearance, and witty in ridicule, but nerveless in fight.

Let us then gird our loins with reality and buttress our hearts with devotion, that we may put to flight the enemies of God who harass the church from within.

But we must take leave of the Philistines and return to Isaac at Beer-sheba.

#### *The Second Appearance*

The journey to Beer-sheba was a step in the right direction. By what is termed "the force of circumstances" Isaac is thrown back upon the divine path. On reaching Beer-sheba the Lord appeared unto Isaac the same night, 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 greatly for my servant Abraham's sake."

"Fear not, for I am with thee." This bares the cause of failure and points out the remedy. With what



gentle, unwearied patience the Lord repeats the lessons which we have failed to learn!

In consequence of the theophany Isaac built an altar, called upon the name of Jehovah, and pitched a tent, openly avowing his allegiance to God and dependence on Him for protection. At this place Isaac's servants dug a well.

Here, at this juncture, Abimelech went to Isaac from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his friend, and Phicol the captain of his host. It is significant that Abimelech's visit occurs as a parenthesis, interrupting the narrative of the well. This fact teaches that the digging of this well demonstrated something to Abimelech, and the latter's visit proved something to Isaac.

The Philistines kept close watch over Isaac after his withdrawal from their land. They anxiously awaited developments, wondering what would become of the man whose welfare they thought depended on their favor. With eager eye they followed his movements, and behold, his prosperity increases, the blessing doubles, he waxes very great, and none can stand before him. Abimelech is now convinced — and his coming with a friend and the captain of his host proves that he voiced the consensus of opinion — that Isaac's prosperity depended not on his patronage, but on the God Whose name Isaac invoked, and the fear of God fell on the Philistines. On Isaac's inquiry, "Wherefore are ye come to me?" Abimelech replied, "*We saw plainly* that Jehovah is with thee — thou art now the blessed of Jehovah." This was equally true before, no less so than now; but Isaac's conduct had veiled the movements of God's arm, and befogged His operations. But since Isaac has recanted and eschewed his former manner of procedure and publicly called upon Jehovah, the truth blazes in full radiance on the opponents. The working of God is now seen and acknowledged by all. His enemies confess the power of God, and seek reconciliation with His servant.

Isaac, too, discerns in Abimelech's visit and stupendous affirmation a manifest token of Jehovah's working — a token of His fulfilling the promise confirmed to Abraham with an oath on Mount Moriah; "Thy seed shall possess the gate of their enemies." Hence the naming of the well Beer-sheba — *well of the oath*.

The blessing of Jacob and Esau lies outside the province of this study; we will therefore touch upon it only in so far as it has a personal bearing on Isaac.

Before the children were born, the Lord said to the mother:

Two nations are in thy womb,  
 And two peoples shall be separated from thy bowels:  
 And one people shall be stronger than the other people;  
 And the elder shall serve the younger.

The parents were thus informed of the Lord's intention prior to the children's arrival into the world, and before the proclivities displayed by them could influence the tide of parental affection. When the boys grew, they manifested widely differing temperaments. Esau, who, like his father, was a lover of the field, endeared himself to Isaac. Jacob, a plain man, helped his mother in her domestic duties, and won her favor; for a mother always loves more a son who keeps at home.

Now, when the time to bestow the blessing arrived, the Word of God was found to cross the personal wish of Isaac, while the tide of circumstances went contrary to Rebekah's cherished hopes: and both allowed personal considerations to influence their conduct in matter of truth.

With a plain, unmistakable statement of God's pleasure, Isaac stands ready to act in a manner diametrically opposed to it.

Rebekah finds herself on God's side of the question, only because His purpose happens to coincide with her own pleasure. She is orthodox; yet her orthodoxy is a product not of conviction, but of taste: she fights; yet

not for what is right, but for what she likes: she uses every means at her command to defend her position; not because the cause of truth is bound up with it, but because her predilections are assailed. Her orthodoxy is defective in principle. Is it any wonder then if the means employed in its defense are equally defective? Controversial methods can be no higher than controversial motives.

Too often, also, are sectarian preferences, zeal for traditional tenets, and servile submission to the views of predecessors allowed to parade in the garb of orthodoxy! It is therefore no matter of surprise if vilification, aspersion, cynical ridicule, and remarks reflecting upon the *animus* of those dissenting from such "orthodox" position are called upon to do the service which evidence, and evidence alone, can do.

Rebekah may have induced herself to believe that in fighting for her wish she defended truth; but we who read her acts at this distance of time readily perceive that her clamor was but the resentment of ruffled sensibility. Boasted aversion to "innovation" is frequently nothing else than lack of teachableness and courage to recant a fixed train of thought.

It is self-evident that, until the dawn of perfect day, somebody must be always receiving new light and making new departures, and there has never been an instance in the history of the church in which this has been done, but nearly the whole of that generation has raised a hue and cry against it! There is much talk on every hand about revivals. But do we realize that it is impossible to bring about a revival, a grand aggressive movement of Christianity, without receiving new light and departing from accustomed ruts and grooves to some path in advance of all that has gone before? Are we in a condition to receive fresh light from God? Are we prepared to go on in advance and endure the hardships of a pioneer?

Saul of Tarsus was honest, in the world's acceptation of the term, when he persecuted the Christians, thinking he was doing God service; but all the time he was making a grand mistake, and helped forward the work of the Adversary.

O that believers would only stop and think that the views of truth they seek to stereotype—the views inherited from their forefathers—were once as novel and unconventional and obnoxious to the coadjutors of their forefathers, as any fresh truth which the holy spirit may set before them *now*. Such people forget amid what hurricane of excitement, opposition, contempt, and persecution their forefathers fought for the very truths they are now standing still in, and holding so sacred that they cannot bear to think their needing modification or adjustment. Do you see how unreasonably they are acting? If their forefathers had taken the attitude they are taking, they would have made no progress in the knowledge of God's Word, and some of the truths which are today the common heritage of the saints would never have been unearthed from beneath the rubbish of decayed theology. These people stand in the paths of traditionalism and routinism, just where their fathers left them, occupying all their time in admiring the wisdom and knowledge and devotion of their forefathers, instead of imitating their aggressive faith, and reaching after the delectable pastures of truth that lie just beyond.

There are, notwithstanding the persistent efforts of explorers, regions of the map of the world upon which must still be written "unexplored territory". In the Scriptures of Truth, too, there are, notwithstanding the strenuous labors of successive generations, unexplored regions. And what task could be more inviting than venturing off the beaten track, to search out "fresh fields and pastures new" for the refreshing of God's saints?

Happy is the man who approaches the Word in a spirit of constant expectancy, breathing the Psalmist's prayer:

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold  
Wondrous things out of thy law.  
I am a sojourner in the earth:  
Hide not thy commandments from me.  
My soul breaketh for the longing  
That it hath unto thy judgment at all times.  
(Psa. 119:18-20)

## JACOB

The eventful career of Jacob is contained within the comparatively small compass of Genesis 28:10—35. The closing chapter of his life (46:1-7), though woven into the history of Joseph, is an integral part of the preceding narrative, the vision therein chronicled having no bearing whatever on either Joseph or his brethren.

The life of Jacob is perplexing to many. Looked at in askance at the commencement of the life of faith, it heightens in meaning and beauty, acquiring increasing force and value as experience expands and life's sun nears the horizon. Although, by reason of low standards in morals and practise, his biography may at first seem less entrancing than the others, yet it is second to none as concerns the splendid triumphs achieved through grace.

I have just remarked that the indomitable energy of the flesh displayed in Jacob seems to detract from the attractiveness of the story. Yet this very exhibition of weakness — weakness which was finally conquered — lends the story an endearing charm. Men like Joseph are rare visitors among mortals. As a comet, set like a gem in nocturnal blue, silvers her way in the sky, drawing universal attention and admiration, and then vanishes as suddenly as it came, not to reappear again for hundreds and even thousands of years, men of Joseph's calibre are few and far apart in the history of the race, coming by the will of God, accomplishing His special errands. Extraordinary characters like Abraham, whose faith at

times soars in dazzling empyrean heights, at times wades in miry clay, appear more frequently in the ranks of the redeemed, yet they are rare. Even temperaments like Isaac, moving around the commonplaces, neither scaling heights nor descending depths, marred by weaknesses of self-indulgence, withal breathing a fragrance of quietude and gentleness, with an air of saintliness hanging about them as golden chains about the neck, are more common, but still a desideratum whose absence is keenly felt. But one of Jacob's stamp — following his own inclinations; preferring paltry schemes of his to the flaming splendor of God's glory; prostituting grand and glorious opportunities; involving himself in sorrows and tribulations; and then suddenly mounting up as an eagle to soar consciously and steadily toward the distant orb of perfect light, and from that eminence glance backward upon a succession of wasted years, and feel amid the vibrations of celestial chords the pang of keen remorse — the remorse of what could have been — is akin to the vast mass of believers. Crystallized in his experience are the sorrows and struggles and weaknesses which beset the path of the majority of the saints. Every word of such a story is intinct with life, every sentence is a harbinger of hope, and our hearts throb a tribute of loving gratitude to the God of Love Who has given us such a tale of matchless grace — glorious, exhaustless love.

The life of Jacob naturally divides itself into two periods. The first, embracing four theophanies, extends from the flight to Haran to the sojourn at Succoth, where he built himself a house; the second, embracing three theophanies, extends from the sojourn at Shechem to the close of his career in Egypt.

We may describe the first period of his life as the period of the *restless* activity of faith. Each theophany is followed by an act of Jacob showing his independence of Jehovah's communication.

The second period we characterize as that of the *restful* activity of faith. Jacob has learned by painful experience to act in conjunction with God. There is no independent act, but immediate compliance with the words of the vision.

The subjoined analysis may aid the student as a basis of further study:

I.	28:1-11. 28:12-15. 28:16-22. 29—30.	The Flight to Haran The Vision (Bethel) The Vow At Paddan-aram	1st Period. The <i>restless</i> activity of faith
II.	31:1,2. 31:3. 31:4-16. 31:17-54.	The Report The Vision The Consultation Flight from Laban	
III.	31:55—32:1. 32:2. 32:3-20. 32:21.	Departure from Mispah The Vision (Mahanaim) The Preparation At Jabbok	
IV.	32:22,23. 32:24-29. 32:30—33:16. 33:17.	The Crossing of Jabbok The Vision (Peniel) Meeting with Esau Journey to Succoth	
V.	33:18—34. 35:1. 35:2-7.	At Shechem The Vision Journey to Bethel	2d Period: The <i>restful</i> activity of faith
VI.	35:8. 35:9-13. 35:14-23.	Deborah's Death The Vision Journey to Ephrath	
VII.	46:1. 46:2-4. 46:5-7.	Journey to Beer-sheba The Vision Journey to Egypt	

Before approaching the theophanies, it may be well to note the strange paradox of the co-existence and co-extension of two incompatible principles which meets us in these three biographies. Side by side with progress in truth is the decline of the witnesses.

God promised to Abraham a *blessing*. "I will bless



thee." To Isaac was added the promise of His *presence*. "I will be with thee, and I will bless thee." To Jacob, beside the blessing and the presence, were also promised *preservation* and *restoration*. "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land." The plenary fulfillment of these patriarchal promises awaits the era of Israel's restoration. In that age of physical and spiritual marvels Israel will be a *blessed, God-possessed, preserved* and *restored* people, a wonder in the midst of the earth.

And yet, in spite of clearer light and fuller unfolding of the divine purpose, each succeeding patriarch is inferior to his predecessor. Nor is this principle limited to the Patriarchal era. It runs through the whole Bible. The history of Israel furnishes numerous examples. The days of the Judges, Hezekiah, Josiah, Nehemiah, were as remarkable for great revivals of truth and godliness as for seething corruption.

It is capable of proof that the same principle obtains also in profane history. The "golden age" of more than one great nation synchronizes with the day of its deepest moral corruption. This is not only true of Rome under the emperors, and Athens at the time of Pericles, it is equally true of Russia in the time of Catharine, of France in the reign of Louis XIV, and of England when Queen Elizabeth sat upon the throne.

But we must leave the consideration of this weighty principle with the reader, and resume our subject.

#### *The First Appearance*

The first appearance of God to Jacob occurred at Luz. As he slept in the open field, with his head pillowed on a stone, God was revealed to him in a dream. The wonderful vision of the ladder contains a direct reference to the promise to Abraham and the blessing of Isaac.

The Lord told Abraham, on two different occasions, "I will make thy seed as the dust of the *earth* . . . Tell the *stars* . . . so shall thy seed be" (Gen. 13:16; 15:5). And Isaac, conferring on Jacob the blessing of the firstborn, said: "And God give thee of the dew of *heaven* and of the fatness of the *earth*" (Gen. 27:28).

Solicitude to secure this blessing moved Jacob to deceive his father, and in consequence of that deception he was compelled to flee to a strange country. And now that Jacob lies on the ground a fugitive from home, the Lord, in the vision of the ladder, bridges the chasm of unfavorable surroundings which his cunning has interposed between the attainment of the blessing which Jehovah has willed to give him. As the vision passed before the sleeper, the Lord stood beside him, and said: "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, 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 whithersoever 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."

In this affirmation to give Jacob the land and the blessing of Abraham the Lord points out the manner in which the fulfillment of His promise is to be brought about. He will be *with* Jacob, and *keep* him, and bring him *again*, He will not leave him until the promise is performed.

When Jacob awaked out of his sleep, he made a vow, and therein manifests anxiety for "bread to eat and raiment to put on." Though his condition at the time exemplified the futility of his exertions, and the fatal consequences of disbelieving God's word, yet Jacob

again turns his shoulder upon the open gates of heaven to fall back upon his own resources. He takes out of the Lord's hands a department of his life and undertakes to manage it for himself, and in so doing laid the foundation for twenty long years of vexation.

The stirring subject of God's disciplinary methods is not as clearly understood as it is clearly taught in the Word. Each insubordination of the believer's will sets in motion the forces which will eventually curb it. God has endowed each human action with the reproductive faculty, and the fruits resulting therefrom become the restraints which, like Balaam's ass, impede the advance of self-will and bring the erring one back to his senses. Jacob's anxiety for bread and raiment, combined with ready resources and executive ability, makes it possible for such a man to become satisfied with success in an alien land; so God employs the meanness of Laban to check this inclination of the man, and keep aflame the longing for the land of promise. Jacob relied on wit and natural ability to provide the accessories of life, and the Lord employed the wit of Laban to shatter his ground of self-reliance.

The operation of this solemn principle is lucidly exhibited in king Solomon. He transgressed the law in *three* points, and the Lord raised unto him *three* enemies.

The Mosaic law imposed upon the king three prohibitions: (1) to multiply horses, (2) to multiply wives, and (3) to multiply silver and gold (Deut. 17:16, 17). Solomon flatly violated these injunctions. He acquired forty thousand horses for the royal stables, besides carrying on an extensive horse trade with the adjacent kings, for which purpose was organized a company of royal merchants (1 Ki. 4:26; 10:28, 29). He took one thousand wives (1 Ki. 11:3). He multiplied gold and silver to such an extent that the former became very common, while the latter was thought nothing of in his

days, its value being on a par with the stones on the street pavement (1 Ki. 10:21, 27).

The selection of Egypt as a centre for horse traffic naturally would induce many Israelites to settle there for commercial purposes. To offset this allurements the Lord made Jeroboam, Solomon's opponent, a favorite at Pharaoh's court.

Solomon married an Egyptian wife. This alliance tended to promote cordial relations between the two countries and foster friendship with Israel's ancient foe. To counteract the influence of Egypt the Lord endeared as a son to his father-in-law Solomon's implacable enemy.

To check the unlimited flow of silver and gold which poured into Jerusalem, the Lord raised against Solomon the king of Syria, to harass the foreign traffic of Israel.

Solomon made affinity with Egypt, and the Lord made Egypt the rallying centre for his enemies! O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

### *Second Appearance*

Jacob fared poorly in the house of his uncle. Laban, a rude, unprincipled man, recognizing no standard outside of personal advantage, sought to squeeze out of his nephew all he could, and treated him with little consideration. When Jacob complained of the treatment, Laban said: "Appoint me thy wages, and I will pay it." Jacob answered: "Thou shalt not give me aught," asking for his hire the ringstraked, speckled, and grised, of the flock. Laban cheerfully endorsed the proposal, saying, "I would it might be according to thy word."

Having thus agreed upon a basis of compensation, Jacob forthwith conceived a marvelous scheme of deception to make sure of his wages. "And Jacob took him rods of fresh poplar, and of the almond, and of the

plane tree; and peeled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had peeled over against the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink. And the flock conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth ringstraked, speckled, and spotted.”

Before this scheme was put into operation, the Lord sought to divert him from this deceptive course. The angel of God said unto him in a dream, “Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the he-goats which leap upon the flock are ringstraked, speckled, and grisled; for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel.” Jacob devised a plan to gain possession of the flocks; God made known to him His plan to give him the flocks. Again Jacob is brought face to face with God’s purpose, and again he adhered to his own way.

This second attempt of Jacob to help God out ended as disastrously as the first. It invested God’s interventive act with an air of rank fraud, and provoked the ire of Laban and his sons. Though ignorant of the vision, these were well aware of his actions, and resented them. They complained loudly, “Jacob hath taken away all that was our father’s; and of all that which was our father’s hath he gotten all this glory.” Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him, as heretofore.

Desiring to extricate himself from imposition Jacob involved himself into further difficulties. Human actions are connected like the links of a chain; one false step leads to another. Accordingly, when God told Jacob, “Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred: and I will be with thee,” he is haunted by fears. The unfriendliness of Laban threatens further complications, and to avoid these Jacob decided to leave his uncle by stealth.

Laban pursued his nephew, and overtook him at

Mizpah, where there occurred a heated dispute between the two men. What a sad figure Jacob cuts at Mizpah! His wives are the price of slavery; his children are Laban's by law; his flock is acquired by deception, and only God's intervention saved him out of the hand of Laban. Though God was with Jacob during his sojourn at Padan-aram, He was not with Jacob in his acts. There was nothing in his deportment to mark him in the eyes of men as God's anointed, and Laban probably would have never learned that fact but for God's direct communication of the matter. Had Jacob obeyed the angel of God he would have gained the flocks and won the recognition of Jehovah's favor from his enemies. As it was, he acquired the flocks and sorrow but missed the greatest of blessings — the prerogative of being His light-bearer to men.

### *The Third Appearance*

Jacob now finds himself in a great predicament, standing between the armies of two men wronged by him. The hosts of Laban have gone away, the hosts of Esau are marching on. The patriarch meets the angels of God and calls the name of that place Mahanaim. God opened the eyes of His servant to behold the unseen hosts which encamped round about him, to protect him from Esau. Jacob had also learned from the lips of Laban how God, in a manner unknown to him, had restrained his uncle's wrath. The boundary between the visible and the invisible is drawn aside. The ethereal and the material embrace each other. The invisible world steps into the visible. The impalpable and intangible come within the reach of the senses. Faith for once has made itself visible to sight.

Fear beholds the hosts of outraged Esau looming in the distance, and fills the heart with the gloom of despondency. Faith interposes between the trembling saint and the objects of his fears a vision of what trans-

pires in the court of heaven, allowing the host of Esau to be seen only through the screen of the celestial army. Before Esau can touch Jacob he must destroy the hosts of God. God's purpose is seen and handled.

At this time messengers arrive with the report: "Esau cometh, and four hundred men with him." Jacob is alarmed at the news.

The vision of the celestial army, though seen with the eyes of flesh, produced no soothing effect. The phantoms of past sins float continually before his eyes, and take away rest. The imagination broods over the impending meeting with Esau and inspires feverish activity. Jacob is restless. He first divides his company; then resorts to prayer, but though pleading his having departed from Padan-aram pursuant to God's order, fails to gain the rest which consciousness of being in God's way imparts; he appeals to God's promise of protection, yet fails to appropriate its peace-giving power. He leaves off praying, to resume preparations. Just then an idea flashed across his mind — "Peradventure I will appease him with a present." He takes the sheep and asses and oxen, arranges them into five companies, putting space between drove and drove, and gives detailed instructions to the drivers. Jacob has been apprised of the wonderful way in which the Lord appeased Laban; he has seen the angels come to his defense; but even truth clothed in tangible material form fails to act as a deterrent — he prefers his way.

#### *The Fourth Appearance*

Having arranged the present, Jacob lay down for the night with the servants, who had charge of the flock. He could not sleep, however, and kept revolving the situation in his mind. In the middle of the night he arose and continued to prepare for any possible contingency. He moved his wives and children across the ford of Jabbok, and then lay down again.

When Jacob was left alone, a Mysterious One wrestled with him all night. God now set Himself to conquer Jacob's independence, and, meeting with strong resistance, touched the hollow of his thigh and strained it.

"Let me go," said the Wrestler.

"I will not let thee go, except thou bless me," replied Jacob. But could God bless acts and means inconsistent with His character, and subversive of His purpose? The controversial point must be settled.

"What is thy name?" said the Wrestler then.

"Jacob"—the supplanter—was the answer. God took Jacob by the hand, pressed it over the sore spot, and forced confession.

"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob," said the Wrestler, "but Israel, for thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast been diverted." At Bethel, Padan-aram, and Mahanaim, he had received revelations of God's plan and method, but supplanted them with his own contrivances. He strove to attain the blessing by self-exertion and endeavored to force God into his line of action. He had opposed the word and promise of God. At Mahanaim he met the angels, and went contrary to them. At Peniel he met God face to face, with the result that he is crippled for life. Yet this undoing was his making. God won him over to His line of action, and the new name expresses the result of that night's struggle. The self-willed supplanter, who insisted on having his way, becomes submissive to the divine rule. He who had striven against God is at last conquered and joyfully acknowledges himself vassal of the divine conqueror: "I have seen God face to face, and my life has been diverted."

The meeting with Esau demonstrated the futility of the elaborate preparations at Jabbok. Esau, impulsive and good-natured, had long forgotten the past grievance, and was glad to see his brother once more. While



Jacob approached bowing himself seven times, and the wives, each with her children, marched in procession, Esau, with that contempt for ceremony and millinery characteristic of a hunter, ran to kiss Jacob, and then, glancing at the women, asked: "Who are these with thee?" Esau said also: "What meanest thou by all the company which I met?" "To find favor in the sight of my lord," said Jacob. "I have enough my brother, let that thou hast be thine," retorted Esau. Jacob, however, insisted on Esau's receiving the present, saying to him: "I have seen thy face, as one seeth the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me."

The deep anxiety of Jacob to secure the blessing gave rise to the various contrivances by means of which he attempted to insure its attainment. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, and Jacob instead of patiently awaiting its advent, which is a tree of life, endeavored to accelerate it by a manipulation of circumstances, and so did not fall in with God's plan. Seeking to be exalted at one bound, he shut his eyes to the heavenly communications. He had striven with God to obtain the blessing ahead of time; he had striven with men who apparently stood in the way. At Jabbok his self-will received a death blow, and Jacob received renewed assurance of blessing on recanting the methods hitherto employed to attain it. The period of fleshly activity is over, and a walk marked by princely dignity begins.

#### *The Fifth Appearance*

After the meeting with Esau Jacob journeyed toward Shechem, and there built an altar, calling it El-elohe-Israel (God, the God of Israel), in grateful acknowledgment of the sovereignty of Him Who conquered his self-will and delivered him from following its impulses.

Having come back into the land, immediately he compromised with the environment as he found it, for-

sook tent-life, building himself a house and booths for his cattle. He feared the inhabitants of the land and therefore sought to purchase peace at the expense of truth. A later order to the household, "put away the strange gods, purify yourselves, and change your garments," intimates how far compromising went. This attempt to fraternize with idolaters ended in failure, resulting in the downfall of Dinah, and the slaughter of the men of Shechem by his sons Simeon and Levi.

Again God appeared to him, commanding him to go back to Bethel. "Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, Who appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau." This reference to past deliverance from foes is made to portend deliverance from foes he may encounter in the future.

In consequence of this word Jacob ordered his household to purify themselves, and put away the strange gods. When this was done, the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. Thus the patriarch learned the dangers of latitudinarianism and the blessedness of effectual working of a living trust in God.

### *The Sixth Appearance*

On reaching Bethel Jacob built an altar. With what feelings must his heart have throbbed when he reached the place! With what regret must he have looked back upon the years in Padan-aram, marred by distrust in Jehovah, Who had so wondrously revealed Himself to him at a time of dire need! What consolation, what anchorage for faith he found in beholding God's promise of restoration realized! Here, long ago, he embarked upon a career of obstinacy; here, too, he embarks upon a career of obedient childlike trust.

As in the case of Abraham and Isaac, Jacob's venture upon the path of obedience is opposed by the

enemy. Death enters his household. Again God appears unto him for purposes of consolation, blessing him. "Thy name is Jacob; thy name shall not any more be called Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name; and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him: I am El-Shaddai: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the land which I gave unto Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land." Here Jacob built a pillar, offered a drink offering thereon, and poured oil thereon.

Two great sorrows follow the second appearance of God at Bethel: the death of Rachel, and the sin of Reuben, both of which evidence the lofty flight of the patriarch's faith. When the dying mother named Benjamin "son of my sorrow," Jacob changed his name to "son of my right hand". Emphasizing the event, but diverting his mind from the contemplation of things as they existed round about him here on earth, and fixing it upon the celestial things, he discerns the working out of the divine plan amidst the mystery of the present condition of affairs. The temporary withdrawal of the sun's rays does not cloud his hope as he travels upon his diurnal journey.

At this point the life of Jacob becomes interlaced with that of his sons. Two stories run concurrently: that of Joseph and that of Israel became corrupted, and the removal to Egypt became necessary for their purification.

### *The Seventh Appearance*

Israel now sets out with his whole encampment from Hebron for the land of Egypt. But it was not without misgivings that he was taking this important step. Must he go to Egypt? Was it not there that Abraham had come into collision with its king? Was not Isaac warned

of God not to go thither? It seemed almost as if it would not be safe for him to venture within its borders. Preoccupied with such thoughts as these Jacob found himself, in the course of his journey, at Beer-sheba. What memories clustered around that place! There Abraham met the supreme testing of his life; there God appeared to Isaac, and Abimelech came to acknowledge him as the blessed of Jehovah; thence, too, it was that Jacob went out to begin his wanderings. Here, where naturally his thoughts were with his fathers, he sacrificed to the God of his fathers. Nor did he consult God in vain; for during the night God said to him: "Jacob, Jacob, I am the God of thy fathers; 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." So Jacob went down to Egypt surrounded by the divine presence. The blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh shows how keen and marvelous and steadfast had become his spiritual perception. Even the strong pressure of tenderest ties could not swerve it from its course. His eagle eye pierces the gloom of centuries and lingers on the consummation. In the light of that glory he reads and interprets the history of his sons.

The whole life of Jacob has now been traversed, Grace overcoming the will of the flesh, and faith overcoming the fear of man, are the two outstanding lessons of this remarkable biography.

There is, however, another lesson transcending these in solemnity, if not in importance. We learned at Peniel that intense longing to obtain the blessing prompted Jacob to recourse to cunning. Viewed athwart the lens of that night's struggle, the first period of Jacob's life exhibits the disastrous effects of seeking to obtain a good end by unholy means. This subtle temptation meets the saint at every turn. Too often has the church

yielded to this snare. At one time and another, to a greater and a less degree, she has been unfaithful to God, and sought the sceptre of earthly sovereignty instead of heaven's home and reward. We see this on a great scale and with terrible effects in the apostasy of Rome. The god of this age seduces her into alliance with worldly empire, and gave her a dominion which was great and wide, but unspiritual in its source and character; and the debasement of Roman doctrine and ritual, and practise, prove how disastrous it is to yield to that temptation.

Even where Roman errors have been recanted and eschewed, Christian communities have yielded to the glamour of the glory of the world. They have pandered to riches, and bought wealth by the sacrifice of truth. They have grasped influence by policy instead of principle, and allowed temporal interests to usurp spiritual prerogative. In these ways has the church been tempted and drawn aside from her heavenward course. And wherever she has gained emoluments and aggrandisement from the world, not by faith but by force and by secular arm, she has touched the sceptre of Satan, and fallen from her trust in God.

Let us then learn and remember, that, among men, goodness cannot use evil means without becoming evil. Thus the use of evil means gives away the power of doing good; and, though Satan may bargain to give or accomplish this or that thing which is near our heart, we must not deal with him; for all dealings are evil, that are not dealings with good. And Satan does not hold to his bargain; for, when once evil means are adopted, his end is gained; and we are captives, subject to his lordship, and without appeal. Thus unholy means lead certainly toward unholy ends.

## JOSEPH

Joseph belongs to the elite company of God's witnesses designated by the epithet "chosen vessel". While the term may in a sense apply to all the servants of God whose ministry transcends the ordinary, yet its employment by the Lord Himself in the case of Paul, leaves no room for doubt of its being intended as an appellative of those who by reason of the revelations received, and the extraordinary mission entrusted, tower high above the rank and file of the redeemed phalanx. There are but three such chosen vessels whose splendor eclipses that of others: Joseph, Daniel, Paul.

The career of Joseph in many of its features bears a striking resemblance to that of Daniel and Paul at a later day. The one stands at the commencement, the other in the middle, the third at the end of the Jewish history of relation. All three lived in days of waning faith and deepening apostasy, and were driven from the Land of Promise by the intense antagonism of their faithless kinsmen. All three were chosen to bear God's name before the gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel, all three were the representatives of the true God and His people at heathen courts; all three were recipients of grand visions unfolding the divine counsel respecting the Chosen Nation, and were specially commissioned to the gentiles; finally, all three laid special emphasis on the resurrection.

The unusual character of Joseph's mission is affirmed in Scripture. The central part of the one hundred and

fifth Psalm consists of two sections: the first (verses 13-22), which extols the goodness of God to the Fathers, reaches the climax in the mission of Joseph; the second (verses 23-41), which extols the goodness of God to the Nation, reaches the climax in the mission of Moses.

In turning to the career of Joseph, we shall first seek to embrace it all, and view it as a whole. If we examine this portion of Genesis with care we shall discover a perfection of workmanship, and a beauty of design worthy of the divine Author. The story of Joseph consists of two symmetrical halves, of three sections each, while every section of one half is balanced by a corresponding section in the other.

- |        |   |                    |
|--------|---|--------------------|
| 37.    | <i>Joseph and his Brethren: The counsel of God resisted and rejected.</i>         | Mission of Joseph. |
| 38.    | <i>Interlude. The History of Judah.</i>   | Potential.         |
| 39—41. | <i>Joseph in Egypt: His Abasement.</i>  |                    |
| 42—45. | <i>Joseph and his Brethren: The counsel of God accomplished and acknowledged.</i> | Mission of Joseph. |
| 46.    | <i>Interlude. The Names of the Children of Israel.</i>                            | Consummated.       |
| 47:1.  | <i>Joseph in Egypt: His Exaltation.</i>   |                    |

Our attention is at once attracted to the remarkable series of visions which took the form of dreams. There are three pairs of such dreams, all prognostic. In his own words, they forecast "what God is about to do". The communications to Joseph were *two* in number and, under different symbolism, reflect his own future. The bowing sheaves were a premonition of his being sent to preserve life (45:5). The obeisance made to him by the sun and the moon and the eleven stars pointed to his being chosen to become "prince among his brethren" (49:26).

The two pairs of dreams interpreted by him in Egypt foreshadow his mission to Pharaoh's empire and the world at large. What Joseph said to Pharaoh in inter-

preting his pair of double dreams may be said of this entire series, "the dream is one". Two kindred lines of thought run through the dreams of the courtiers and their monarch — life and sustenance. The former is represented by the three branches of the vine, and the seven kine; the latter by the three baskets of white bread, and the seven ears of grain. Joseph, as is evident from subsequent history, was raised up to save Egypt, that it perish not through the famine (41:36), and to save much people alive (1:20). After Joseph had safely piloted the country through a crisis which might have resulted in general starvation and wildest anarchy, the Egyptians expressed their recognition of his mission of deliverance in the grateful verdict, "Thou hast saved our lives."

Two distinct movements are perceptible in the career of Joseph: The first (chapters 37 to 41) unfolds God's mysterious dealings *with* him; the second (chapters 42 to 50) unfolds God's mysterious dealings *toward* him; or, to state it differently, the former period is devoted to the *preparation* of the vessel, the latter, to his *employment*.

The period of preparation is developed in three phases in which Joseph appears, respectively, as Servant, Prisoner, Prince. The beautiful analysis of this interesting period is as follows:

Servant	39:1.	Joseph in Potiphar's House
	39:2-5.	Jehovah with Joseph
	39:6.	All committed to Joseph
	39:7-19.	Joseph and Potiphar's Wife
Prisoner	39:20.	Joseph in Prison
	39:21.	Jehovah with Joseph
	39:22,23.	All committed to Joseph
	40.	Joseph and Pharaoh's Courtiers
Prince	41:1-14.	Joseph before Pharaoh
	41:15-36.	Jehovah with Joseph
	41:37-45.	All committed to Joseph
	41:46,47.	Joseph and Pharaoh



All through this section we are conscious of a duplex current: God works for Joseph; an unknown and unnamed power, operating through human instruments, works against him. The two movements run side by side, each leading up toward a definite climax.

The hostile movement began with the animosity of his brethren, and culminated in the attempt of the shameless wife of Potiphar to make him partner with herself in a revolting intrigue, which must have had strong elements of attraction to a young man of his age and in his circumstances.

The temptation at the hands of a strange woman — which is presented throughout the Old Testament as the subtlest, keenest, and deadliest — was one of appalling enormity. It caught him by surprise, when he was away from all external support, and assailed two sides of his nature at one and the same time. It appealed to appetite, and offered unstinted gratification thereof in a forbidden way. But this was not its subtlest aspect. The entering into a clandestine relation with his master's wife meant his own elevation in an easy and speedy fashion, to Potiphar's exalted station. The immenseness of this allurements staggers one to contemplate. The dreams of youth were fresh in his mind. His imagination dwelt on God's revelation to himself made long ago through the bowing sheaves and the reverential stars, and he anxiously awaited its materialization — the hope of it upheld him all these years — and behold! here was a pleasant, easy short-cut to it. Joseph was thus simultaneously confronted with two of the very snares which, fifteen centuries later, the tempter presented successively, and in another garb, to Joseph's Lord in the wilderness of Judea. He said to the Son of Man in His prostrate weakness and apparent desertion: "If you are God's Son, say that these stones should be becoming bread," proposing to allay hunger by a resort to illicit means; and again, after a dazzling and stupendous dis-

play of his imperial power: "All these things will I be giving to you, if you should be falling down and be worshipping me," proffering the throne without the cross, and obviating the *via dolorosa* that led up thereto. Joseph had the same experience. Satan's emissary, seeking to bewitch him with her charms, offered to carry him off to the palace of the Pharaohs on the wings of sensuous delights. But Joseph, like the Master, turned a deaf ear to the tempter whispering disloyalty to God. Not that he was insensible to the joys of life, but he had learned to make them subservient to the cause of truth and equity. His heart rested on the lofty post portrayed in the vision, but he was content to wait for its attainment in God's time and way. To the repeated solicitations of the fair temptress, he only reiterated the emphatic refusal: "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

Victory over evil is not always followed by instant release from the straits instrumental in temptation; but it enables the victor to grasp the heart of heaven and draw it to himself: it imparts that certitude of triumph which lifts the heart to the calm of heaven while the feet yet tread the morass of the world's ambitions. When the Master had repulsed Satan He embarked upon a thorny path which took him several years to traverse; but the descent of ministering angels was the token of his having grasped that power which was formally vested in Him in resurrection. When the Lord emerged from the tomb of Joseph and took His seat on high, it seemed a sudden rise, but it was in reality only a visible attestation of the triumph won over the Adversary in the solitary desert.

Scorned by Joseph, Potiphar's wife gave vent to her rage, and, in the circumstances of the occasion, found opportunity for revenge. But though his reputation was blighted, and his sufferings temporarily intensified, yet his faith was steadied, his hope clarified, and his love deepened. Unmindful of his own environments, Joseph

made himself useful and agreeable. Noting the grief of the chief baker and the chief butler, he inquired: "Wherefore look ye so sadly today?" and upon their rejoinder: "We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it," Joseph, with amazing keenness of penetration, at once discerns the opportunity, and answers: "Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me the dream, I pray you," and in offering to become the interpreter of their dreams he takes another step toward the fulfillment of his own.

No one can read the story of Joseph without being impressed with his marvelous capacity for adaptation. Unbounded faith in the truth of God's revelation enabled him to reconcile the well-nigh maddening discrepancy between the benevolent plans of the Almighty and the violent means instrumental in their furtherance, and to grasp the threads of method. He accepted whatever came with resignation and devotion, and made the best of it. Suffering cast him upon God, and in fellowship with Him he acquired that calm, resolute equipoise of spirit which made him master of the situation wherever he went. A palm tree—so I have been told—grows stronger the heavier the weight that is put upon it; Joseph clave to God, and adversity only disciplined him into greatness, and imprisonment only taught him to make the best of his liberty.

The public manifestation of greatness always follows the ascendancy of the will over temptation where right and wrong were guilefully concealed in the manner of their presentation to choice. Israel recognized Solomon's greatness the day he issued the famous verdict in the case of the two women; but in reality his greatness dated from that night at Gibeon when God said to him in the vision: "Ask what I shall give thee," and he replied: "O Jehovah, my God, give thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people." In like manner, Pharaoh's confession of Joseph's greatness before the

court was but a public recognition of that greatness which he had displayed in refusing to acquiesce to the wishes of Potiphar's wife.

It is easy to see, if we care to read between the lines, that, speaking after the manner of men, his adaptability was a potent factor in his success. He did not struggle against a higher might; he bowed to the inevitable, and adjusted himself to it. He had learned that acquiescence in affliction is the first step in the way out of it, and was thus ready to enter the doors which God flung open at the critical turnings of his history. If he had violently withstood his brothers, they would have killed him; but his docile deportment won him the sympathies of Reuben, who dissuaded the others from their murderous intent. If, again, he had not cheerfully and wholeheartedly served the interests of Potiphar, the latter would have executed him on the strength of his wife's accusation. Yet again, if he had been brooding over his miseries in the dungeon, he would have missed the opportunity of interpreting the dream to the chief butler — an event which paved the way for his ultimate elevation to the second place in the kingdom.

But the bitter reverses did immeasurably more than steady and ripen his confidence in the divine purpose: they enabled him to trace the process of its evolution in the affairs of men. Thus, when ushered before Pharaoh, not only could he interpret the dream, and impress the certainty of its fulfillment upon his hearers, he could also apply it to the tasks of life and was able to point out the pursuance of the course that would save the empire from ruin. He evinced spiritual insight that could read the mind of God and translate it in terms of common experience: he evinced likewise spiritual energy that could render it operative. The recognition of this two-fold fact found expression in the new name which Pharaoh gave Joseph. Zaphanath-paneah means, according to some, Revealer of Secrets; according to others,

Savior of the World. Pharaoh recognized in the interpretation the future of Egypt outlined by the Most High, and named Joseph Revealer of Secrets; he discerned in the advice the divine provision for the salvation of the country, and named Joseph Saviour of the World. Convinced that none was better qualified than Joseph to direct the affairs of state, Pharaoh then and there raised him to the second place in the kingdom, and invested him with the insignia appropriate to the office to which he had appointed him. Here, much to our regret, we must leave untouched his public administration, and pass on to the consideration of the dealings of God through him, as seen in his ways with his brethren.

God told Abraham: "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be strangers in a land that is not theirs." As the time for this migration drew nigh, "he sent a man before them" (Psa. 105:17). The sons of Jacob, through Joseph's dreams, were apprized of this, but were not prepared to fall in line with God's plan. The Lord sent them good tidings by a prophet like unto them, but they rejected the message and set themselves to thwart the purpose which Jehovah was carrying out for their good. They said, "Behold! this dreamer cometh: Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say, an evil beast has devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams!" They were to be preserved from stravation; but, above all, they had to be brought back to God and fitted for participation in his course of action. Here was the supreme task confided to Joseph — a task which he accomplished with rare skill, admirable wisdom, and extreme tenderness.

Let me, just rapidly, point out Joseph's method of bringing his erring brethren back to their senses.

They had sold Joseph into slavery on the pretext that he had come as a spy to report their evil deeds; now, as they stood before him, he prefers against them

the same charge, "Ye are spies." Seeking to refute the accusation by a statement of the family status the flagrant transgression is brought back to their memory. "Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and *one is not.*" One is not! Joseph perceived that, in spite of what had come and gone, he still had a place in their hearts; so he leads them a step forward.

They had cast him into a pit; and now he cast them into prison for three days, and awaited the result. They are thus made to face the liability of isolation and loss of liberty to which they had consigned him. Within the prison walls they brood over the ill-treatment of their tender, defenseless brother, saying one to another, "behold, his blood is required," and recognize in the strange proceedings of the Grand Vizier the hand of providence, "What is this that God has done to us?"

When the sons of Jacob went down to Egypt the second time, taking Benjamin along, Joseph continued the testing ordeal, all unknown to them. They are ushered to the dining hall. Joseph occupied one table; the Egyptians another; and the eleven brethren a third. To their astonishment the seats at table are assigned to them according to seniority, but Benjamin receives preference in the serving of portions. They had envied Joseph in former days because the father had shown him preference, and now he wants to ascertain whether they harbor the same feelings toward the one who has succeeded him in the father's affection. They displayed no ill-feeling, however, and the feast was one of unmarred gladness. One point was lacking: were they willing to suffer for the father's favorite? To prove them on this point Joseph's cup was concealed in Benjamin's bag. When they are intercepted by the steward, and the brothers, conscious of innocence, submit themselves to search, the steward, acting under instructions

from Joseph, raises the question, "Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?" That was the malicious spirit which moved them when they taunted him with their mocking words of long ago, "Let us kill him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams!" And they did see, but the sight was different from that which they had planned to make. How unconscious, too, these men were that in prostrating themselves to the ground before the lord of Egypt they were doing anything to verify their brother's dreams! It is impossible to describe the thrill that tingled through his frame as now at length, in this marvelous manner, he saw the fulfillment of his early dreams. How near he must have felt God to be in that supreme moment! The brethren, of course, had no deliberate intention of opposing God, but they allowed themselves to drift. They were without spiritual force and without serious thought. They followed limply their own uncontrolled desires, just as children would. And with all that, though children they were gifted and capable of noble deeds. There is indeed a strange mixture of good and evil, of fine and despicable qualities in Joseph's brethren. The furnace of affliction consumed the dross and brought in evidence the finer qualities. The pleading of Judah is extremely touching:

"Oh, my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word, in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant; for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servant, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, we have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servant, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye

shall see my face no more. And it came to pass when we came unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: and the one went out from me, and I said, surely he is torn in pieces; and I have not seen him since: and if ye take this also from me, and harm befall him, ye will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to sheol. Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad is not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life: it will come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants will bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to sheol. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then shall I bear the blame to my father forever. Now therefore let thy servant, I pray thee, abide instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, if the lad be not with me? Lest I see the veil that shall come on my father."

How different this speech of Judah from the one he made to his brethren years ago! His simple eloquence proved the genuineness of their repentance and their willingness to make reparation. The supreme moment had arrived. Joseph ordered the outsiders out of the room, and made himself known to them, saying, "I am Joseph!" Then he kissed them, and wept with them. How simple, searching and solemn is all this! One who with moist eyes and music in his heart had innocently suffered as a transgressor was able to pilot these guilty men, without bitterness and revenge, to a haven of rest. He could deal with them on the basis of truth, yet show-



ing mercy at every turn. He gently leads them to face their sin, makes them realize its awful guilt, curbs the independent spirit which inspired the sin, renders them willing to bear the punishment they laid on him; and when the gentle stroke of mercy wrung confession, comes the touching declaration, "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life." What a marvelous illustration of God's way with the sinner!

The interests of brevity will not allow us to enlarge. But it seems fitting, before drawing this series to a close, to point out the secret both of Joseph's greatness and goodness.

Let it first be noted that the conflicts which he had to wage, unlike those of his predecessors, were all external. There was little in him of that antagonism between flesh and spirit, that alternation between good and evil, strength and weakness, which preponderates in Jacob. From the very first he heartily embraced the truth, and his struggles were not so much with himself in order to maintain undivided allegiance, as they were with others who impeded its advance. He suffered at the hands both of his brethren and the Egyptians. The former persecuted him for his loyalty to the revelation of God, the latter for his firm adherence to purity and rectitude.

Then, in the second place, let us consider a point which throws valuable light on the whole remarkable career of this wonderful man. In Genesis 37:3 Joseph is called a "son of the old ones". This phrase, according to some, implies that Joseph was particularly wise for his years. While this is unquestionably true, we take it to mean that the lad was the companion of the old ones — his father, and his grandfather who died several years after Joseph was sold into slavery. While his brethren were out tending the flocks he remained at home with Isaac and Jacob. The meditative grandsire would tell him how from the summit of Mount Moriah, through the

arrested sacrifice of his son, Abraham saw down the ages into the mystery of Golgotha; and Jacob would recite the wonderful interpositions of God at Bethel, Mahanaim, and Peniel. This fellowship developed in the boy a receptive frame of mind and powerfully impressed upon him God's intervention for his chosen ones in extremity. Thus he early acquired that unbounded faith in the truth of God's revelation which is the salient characteristic in Joseph's character. When God by means of dreams acquainted him with the career mapped out for him, Joseph immediately fixed his gaze upon it. The intervening chasm of present conditions did not disturb him. He knew God would fulfill His Word, and so regarded circumstances, though apparently irreconcilable with the end in view, as the vehicles of its fulfillment. Unbounded confidence in God's communication resulted in

(1) *Moral courage*. He did not fear to tell his brothers' misdeeds, though they threatened to kill him; he refused point blank to gratify the passion of his mistress, though she could dispose of his life; he did not shirk telling the chief baker the fate awaiting him, though the task was a disagreeable one.

(2) *Absolute trust*. Believing God's Word, he discerned God's hand in adversity, and though his heart was wrung with anguish, he was able to say, "ye meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."

(3) *Self-possession*. He believed that all things work together for good unto them that love God. The Lord permitted the imprisonment, and this kept him from overestimating its hardships; the Lord lifted him to the throne, and this kept him from overestimating its honor. The fetters did not sour his heart, and the royal robe did not turn his head. The sense of God's presence kept him from despondency in affliction and from pride in prosperity.

(4) *Condescension*. It is recorded that when Pharaoh sent for Joseph "he shaved himself and changed his raiment." He was willing, in external matters, to conform to the usages of the society in which he moved, and did not cause friction by laying undue stress on traditional customs.

(5) *Magnanimity of spirit*. The foregoing spirit of Joseph, surpassed only by that of Christ, was the result of his faith in the universality of God's providence. His experience demonstrated that through all the evil that men intended to do him, God wrought out a more exceeding weight of glory. This expanded his capacity for sympathy and compassion.

I conclude with drawing attention to the fact that the superiority of Joseph to his predecessors lies in the fact of his dignified suffering for righteousness. His predecessors were victors of faith. They were noted for their mighty triumphs. They appeal to the heroic in us. They command all active virtues. Their lives are illustrations showing that "nothing is impossible with God."

Joseph was not only a victor but a *victim* of faith, and it takes a deeper phase of faith to suffer for God than to accomplish for God. To be and to suffer are greater than to do. Dying Jacob heaps the choicest blessings upon the head of him whose bow abode in strength when the archers sorely grieved him, and shot at him. His winsome career concluded as it began, with an expression of unbounded faith in the word of God looking forward to the resurrection. "I die, but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence."

## APPENDIX A

### ON THE WORD HEBREW

Man deals out words at random; God deals them out by weight and measure on the principle of intentional selection. When a certain word is employed, it is because no other would have been as suitable to convey aright the desired thought. The meaning of words, as well as the manner of their employment and the place of their occurrence, is of great importance.

The usage of the word "Hebrew" in Genesis furnishes a striking example of the volumes of precious truth which cluster around the words of Scripture.

"Hebrew" (*'ibri*) is a relative noun presupposing the word Eber as the name of the common ancestor, from whom the Israelites are designated. It denotes extraction, and its exact English equivalent would be *Eberite*, viz., a descendant of Eber.

The events related in the tenth chapter of Genesis are, in point of chronology, *posterior* to those related in chapter 11:1-9. In this latter chapter the earth is of "one language" and "one people"; whereas in the tenth chapter the descendants of Noah's three sons are classified according to "tongues and nations" (10:5, 20, 31).

The two chapters, when placed side by side, present a *vivid* contrast.

In the eleventh chapter mankind is a compact, *homogeneous* mass — "one language," "one speech," "one people;" in the tenth chapter it has become *heterogeneous* — "tongues, lands, nations." The tenth chapter registers the divisions of mankind; the eleventh shows how these came into existence.

We proceed to adduce the evidence on which our conclusion rests.

“Of these were isles of the nations *divided*” (Gen. 10:5).

“Of these were nations *divided* in the earth after the flood” (Gen. 10:32).

In both these passages the verb “divide” is *parad*, to be, or become separated, and is rendered “scattered abroad” in Job 4:11 and Psalm 92:9.

In Genesis 10:25 we read: “And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth *divided*.”

Here the verb “divided” is *pelag*, and we will seek to gather its import by reference to other scriptures.

“Destroy, O Lord, and *divide* their tongue” (Psa. 55:9). Here, evidently, it has the sense of *confound*.

“The *dividing* of a time” (Dan 7:25, viz., a *fraction* of a certain period designated as “time”).

“There shall be a *divided* kingdom” (Dan. 2:41), that is, a *composite* one, as is clear from the context, a kingdom whose component parts are as inadhesive as iron and clay.

The idea suggested by these passages is a conglomeration of fragments. In Peleg’s days, then, took place the attempt to build the tower of Babel, in consequence whereof the earth became “composite”, or the direct opposite of what it had been before the Lord confounded their language.

Now Peleg was born 99 years after the Deluge, and lived 239 years. Eber outlived his son Peleg, and so did Noah, Shem, Arphaxad and Shelah. Thus, if the “division” coincided with the child’s birth, and the name given him was suggested by that event, then the dispersion took place in the ninety-ninth year after the Deluge. If, however, Peleg was not the original name of Eber’s son, but an appellative bestowed on him later in com-

memoration of the "division" which occurred in his days, then the Confusion of Tongues must be placed somewhere within the period which elapsed from the ninety-ninth and the three hundred thirty-eighth year after the flood.

In all probability Eber was a prominent figure in the attempted centralization on the plain of Shinar; and since then the descendants of Shem became known as "children of Eber" (Gen. 10:21).

The word "Hebrew" occurs *six* times in Genesis; *once* in the history of Abraham, and *five* times in that of Joseph. It does not appear in the histories of Isaac and Jacob.

The first fact to be noted is that, both in the case of Abraham and Joseph, the word appears in connection with gentiles and kings. This circumstance teaches that "Hebrew" is an official appellation denoting the status of the Chosen Nation.

Its first occurrence is in the narrative of the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and his allies, when Melchizedek priest of God Most High met Abram in the vale of Shaveh, and blessed him, saying, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, who hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand" (Gen. 14:13-20). Here, then, the name is used in connection with *rule* and subjection of enemies, while the name of God is Elyon, "possession of heaven and earth" being the ascription associated with this divine name and title.

In Genesis 41:12, where Joseph appears before Pharaoh as the exponent of Jehovah's mind and will, the word appears in connection with *revelation*, and the Holy spirit is acknowledged as abiding in the man through whom the revelation is given, while the double significance of Joseph's new name — Revealer of Secrets and Saviour of the World — links together revelation and redemption.

The argument that *mach 'elohim* in Gen 41:38 should be rendered "spirit of the gods" does not invalidate our conclusion; for the fact remains unaltered, whether the reference be to the true God or the false gods of Egypt, that Pharaoh attributed the interpretation which came through Joseph to superhuman agency.

We see then that bound up with the name "Hebrew" is the *vocation* and *advantage* of the Israelites. The former consists in their possession of the promise to rule the world, the latter in their being the appointed guardians of God's oracles.

But we have infinitely more than this.

Twice, in Gen. 39:14, 17, it stands in connection with *servitude*.

Again, in chapter 40:15, we hear of the *land* of the Hebrews.

Lastly, Gen. 43:32 brings before us the question of *Antisemitism*. We hear of the inbred aversion and contempt of the Egyptians for the Hebrews, to eat with these being an abomination to the Egyptians.

It is patent that the usage of the word "Hebrew" in Genesis is an index to the various ramification of Old Testament prophecy. As the acorn contains the mighty oak, so the sixfold occurrences of this word in Genesis contains prophecy in a nutshell. Here, at the very forefront of revelation, the Holy Spirit has placed the key which unlocks the treasures of prophetic lore.

## APPENDIX B

### HOSEA 11:12—12:14

This interesting passage, with its twofold reference to the patriarch Jacob, is one of acknowledged difficulty.

In dealing with isolated texts or passages of Scripture it must be borne in mind that, like the small pieces of variously colored glass, stone, or other material in a surface decoration, each several text and passage is integrant part of the design of the book. Viewed by themselves, they lack, like the unit stones of a mosaic, meaning and purpose: viewed as part of a design they are full of meaning and purpose and beauty.

The book of Hosea, when viewed as a whole, will be found to consist of a series of *seven* connected and successive scenes.

It is customary in poetry to indent the lines, placing at equidistance from the left margin the lines that rhyme. The book of Hosea is full of celestial harmonies, and giving the same indention to the sections which deal with kindred subjects, the arrangement of its contents may be set out as follows:

- I. 1:3. Israel departing from Jehovah: A prodigal wife
- II. 4—6:3. Israel's corruption and impenitence
- III. 6:8—8:7. Israel's apostasy: Seed-time
- IV. 8:8-14. Threatened judgments
- V. 9:1-9. Israel's apostasy: Harvest
- VI. 9:10—12. Israel's fall and punishment
- VII. Israel returning to Jehovah: A backsliding son

All these parts are perfect in their truth, perfect also in their place, and perfect in their order. Their interrelation, too, is remarkable.



Scenes I and VII describe Israel's departure from the Lord; the former representing the adulterous nation as a prodigal wife forsaking her husband and following after other lovers; the latter representing repentant Israel as a backsliding son returning to his waiting father.

Scenes II and VI deal, respectively, with the impenitence and punishment of the harlot nation. The one exposes its corruption and laments its impenitence, the other accentuates its deep fall and threatens the sinful kingdom with swift and certain punishment.

Scenes III and V expatiate upon Israel's apostasy which is elaborated under the simile of seed-time in the earlier section, and under the simile of harvest in the later section.

The fourth and central section details the severe judgments with which the Lord will visit His ingrate and disobedient people. It glances backward, and finds fault with Israel for having forsaken her Maker; it glances forward, and looks to the far off day when the Lord will gather her from among the nations.

We learn from the above analysis of Hosea that the passage engaging our attention is found in a part of the book which has for its subject Israel's fall and punishment. This being the case, the lessons drawn from the life of Jacob must, perforce, be in accordance with the theme of the book in general, and of this part thereof in particular.

With this key in our possession, we are in a position to undertake a detailed examination and analysis of our passage.

We discover, in the first place, that Hosea 11:12—12:14 forms a separate section of part V; and, in the second place, that it is made up of two halves, of three members each; the component members of each part being, respectively, an *indictment*, an *illustration*, an *appeal*; thus:

- |           |  |                                   |                                   |
|-----------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 11:12-    | <i>Ephraim</i> : Compasses God with falsehood  | The Vanity of<br>Israel's efforts |                                   |
| -12.      | <i>Judah</i> : Unsteadfast with God  |                                   |                                   |
| 12:1.     | <i>Ephraim</i> : Seeks help from Assyria and Egypt   |                                   |                                   |
| 12:2.     | <i>Judah</i> : Strives against God   |                                   |                                   |
| 12:3-5.   | <i>Illustration</i> : Jacob deceived his brother and strove with God, but was curbed and returned to God.            |                                   |                                   |
| 12:6.     | <i>Appeal</i> : "Therefore turn thou to God"   |                                   |                                   |
| 12:7.     | <i>Judah</i> : Loves to defraud  |                                   | The Retributive<br>Justice of God |
| 12:8-11.  | <i>Ephraim</i> : His self-confidence ("Surely I am become rich," etc.)   |                                   |                                   |
| 12:12-13. | <i>Illustration</i> : Jacob relied on his wits to make sure of his wages; but, like a slave, had to serve for a wife |                                   |                                   |
| 12:14.    | <i>Warning</i> : "His blood shall be left upon him"  |                                   |                                   |

In the first part of his discourse (11:12—12:6) Hosea vehemently denounces Israel and prefers four specific charges: (1) deceitful and fraudulent conduct, (2) unsteadfastness with God, (3) reliance on human help, and (4) striving against God.

Ephraim, aware of his state of national decadence, seeks a remedy in a conduct fraught with falsehood and deceit. He leans on the arm of flesh, and, in his endeavors to prevent disruption, makes a covenant with Assyria and carries oil into Egypt. Every conceivable effort is made to retain independence: national resources are taxed to the utmost; social and religious customs pleasing to the heathen nations whose favors are courted are introduced; while the real remedy, which lies in a return to God, is vigorously opposed, and the prophets who call the nation to repentance are rejected.

In an effort to bring Ephraim to his senses, Hosea institutes a parallel between Jacob and the nation, instancing different episodes in the life of the patriarch as examples of the ruinous career upon which the nation has embarked.

Jacob of yore, as Ephraim and Judah now, practised deceit and falsehood, and strove with God, being bent on having his way; but God crippled him and diverted him from his course. Jacob returned to God with weeping and supplication, found him at Bethel (the reference here being to the second appearance of God at Bethel, Gen. 35:9), and there God spake with him.

The experience of the patriarch demonstrates the failure of falsehood as a means to attain an end; the futility of resisting God; and the effectual and beneficent results of genuine repentance and return to God. Ephraim madly follows after folly. God will confound his fraudulent schemes, and curb his stubbornness.

Jacob's deflection from the pathway of the divine will was grievous, but when he turned to God he found a ready welcome: Ephraim's departure from his God is as deep and grievous, but he will find as ready and welcome a reception on the part of his Lord; so the prophet winds up the first part of his discourse with the tremendous appeal: "Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep kindness and justice, and wait for thy God continually."

In the second part of his address (12:7-14), Hosea charges the nation with deceptive contrivances and confidence in the dishonesty and duplicity which characterize its home and foreign policy.

Again the prophet instances the experience of Jacob to disillusion his contemporaries. The patriarch, too, trusted in his contrivances and relied on his wit to secure his wages, but was outwitted by his uncle, who treated him as a slave and made him serve for a wife. Jacob deceived and was deceived in turn; he sought to outwit others and was outwitted himself; he reaped what he sowed. His life is an illustration of the retributive justice of God as seen in the operation of the law "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."