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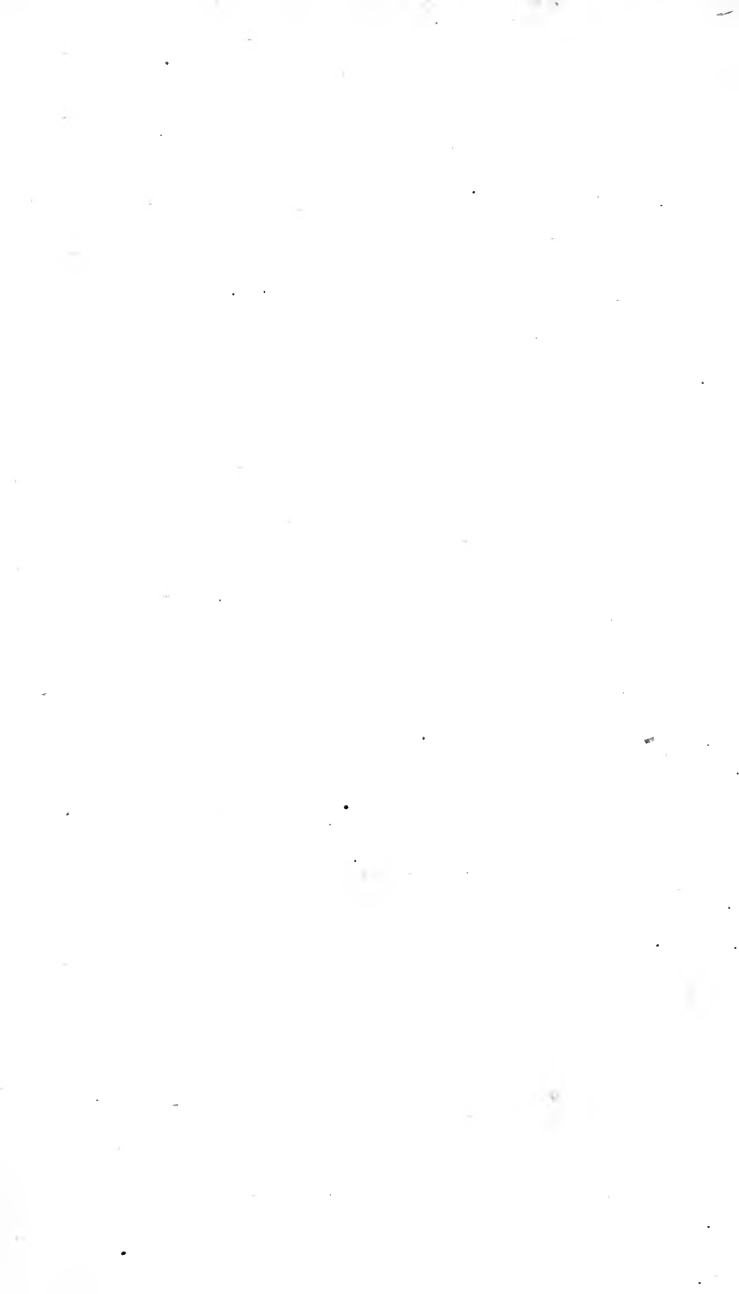
















THE GREAT OAK

# DAILY BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS:

BEING

## ORIGINAL READINGS FOR A YEAR,

ON SUBJECTS FROM

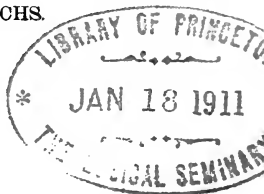
SACRED HISTORY, BIOGRAPHY, GEOGRAPHY,  
ANTIQUITIES, AND THEOLOGY.

ESPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

✓  
BY JOHN KITTO, D.D., F.S.A.

EDITOR OF 'THE PICTORIAL BIBLE,' 'CYCLOPÆDIA OF BIBLICAL  
LITERATURE, ETC. ETO.

v. 1  
ANTEDILUVIANS AND PATRIARCHS.



NEW YORK:  
ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,  
No. 285 BROADWAY.

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# PROSPECTUS.

NEW WORK ESPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR THE FAMILY CIRCLE,

NOW PUBLISHING BY

ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,

285 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

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THERE are various works which recognize in their plan the advantage of presenting to certain classes of readers a daily portion of knowledge, a daily reading in a particular line of subjects, or a daily theme for devout reflection. Most of these have been received with favor; and there appears much reason to conclude that a suitable selection of Scripture subjects, taken chiefly from the historical books of the Old and New Testaments, will be very acceptable to many, and may be rendered highly useful in promoting the knowledge of God's Word, and in providing a pleasant and nutritive daily refreshment for the families in which that Word is prized.

In accomplishing this purpose, we shall take the Sacred History in regular course, and follow the alternation of subjects which that course presents. We shall take up our parable for the day, wherever we rest upon a theme that appears suitable to the mode of treatment we have chosen. Each reading will usually present a separate and distinct subject: yet a visible coherence will be given to all the parts, not only by the historical order adopted, but by the attention given to the leading historical events, between which the lesser subjects will naturally arrange themselves, and by which they will be connected.

The primary object of the undertaking is to present a Daily Course

of Scriptural Reading and Reflection for one year. The matters chosen as the subjects of this course are, in the highest degree, interesting in themselves; and, in the mode of setting them forth before the reader an earnest endeavor will be made to introduce into the family circle a large amount of Biblical Knowledge, not usually accessible but to persons possessed of large and curious libraries; and to present, in an easy and unpretending shape, the real fruits of much learned discussion and painstaking research. The long and careful thought which the Author is known to have given to such subjects, and his intimate acquaintance with the manners, customs, and ideas of the Eastern nations which most nearly resemble the ancient Hebrews, will often, it is hoped, be found to throw much light upon Scripture incidents and characters, as well as upon the material facts which the Bible offers to our notice.

The sanctity of the Christian Sabbath will be duly respected by the appropriation of the Readings, for the first day of every week, to solemn matters—involving, for the most part, the practical and devout consideration of some topic which the actual course of the Readings may present.

The Work will form Four Handsome Volumes, and will be published Quarterly, in February, May, August, and November of the present year.

Vol. I. embraces Subjects from the Antediluvian and Patriarchal History.

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## P R E F A C E .

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ALTHOUGH the contents of this work are sufficiently indicated by its title, and a glance at the open page will clearly enough disclose its objects, it may be proper to afford the prefatory explanations which the reader usually expects, and which, to prevent possible misapprehensions, it is always the interest of the writer to supply.

Various works have at different times been offered to the public, which recognize in their plan the advantage of presenting to certain classes of readers a daily portion of knowledge, a daily reading in a particular line of subjects, or a daily theme for devout reflection. Most of these works have been received with favor; and there appeared much reason to conclude that a suitable selection of Scripture subjects, taken from the historical books of the Old and New Testaments, would be very acceptable to many; and might, with the Divine blessing, be rendered highly useful in promoting the knowledge of God's Word, and in providing a pleasant and nutritive daily refreshment for the families in which that Word is properly valued.

In accomplishing this purpose, we have taken the Sacred History in regular course, and have followed the alternation of subjects which that course presents. We have taken up our parable for the day, wherever our attention has rested upon a theme that appeared suitable to the mode of treatment we have chosen. Each reading usually presents a separate and distinct subject; yet it will be found that a visible coherence has been given to all the parts, not only by the historical order adopted, but by the attention given to the leading historical events, between which the lesser

subjects naturally arrange themselves, and by which they are connected.

It has been an object of much solicitude to the Author to render this work really interesting, as a reading book, to the family circle, for which it is primarily designed. The means taken to ensure this result have been varied with the nature of the case; and it may be possible that the diversity of treatment which he has thus been led to adopt, may have brought him all the nearer to the mark at which he has aimed. Sometimes a single fact, usage, custom, or sentiment, has been found a sufficient subject for one paper, under the various lights which we have been enabled to cast upon it. On other occasions, an entire chapter, or incident, has been taken, for the purpose of gathering up the indications of character, of the customs, or of the conditions of men, which may be found in it, and which might not, singly, furnish a sufficient subject for an entire paper. In both cases, the nakedness of detail has been avoided, by describing briefly the historical or biographical incidents in which these facts are enshrined. Indeed, many papers have been, as it will seem at the first view, wholly devoted to such incidents; but it will be found on examination that the *mode of statement* embodies the result of much expository research, and of much careful thought, on the incident recorded, and on the facts and characters presented to view.

It will be found that throughout these papers, there is much *allusion* to Scriptural facts and texts which are not fully produced. Such allusions will be sufficient—without full production or distinct quotation—to those readers who have *already* a proper knowledge of the Bible, and for whom this work is intended. It has seemed to us that much valuable space has been consumed in works of this class in the statement of what is already well known, or easy of access to every reader. The practice of writing for those who have been familiar with the Bible from childhood, as one might write for such as are almost, if not altogether, ignorant of its sacred contents, perhaps needs amendment.

It will thus appear that the primary object of this undertaking is to present a daily course of Scriptural reading and reflection

for one year. The matters chosen as the subjects of this course are, in the highest degree, interesting in themselves; and, in the mode of setting them forth before the reader, an earnest endeavor is made to introduce into the family circle a large amount of biblical knowledge, not usually accessible but to persons possessed of large and curious libraries; and to present, in an easy and unpretending shape, the real fruits of much learned discussion and painstaking research. The long and careful thought which the Author is known to have given to such subjects, and his intimate acquaintance with the manners, customs, and ideas of the Eastern nations which most nearly resemble the ancient Hebrews, as well as with the geography and the physical condition of the Bible lands, will often, it is hoped, be found to throw much light upon Scripture incidents and characters, as well as upon the material facts which the Sacred Volume offers to our notice.

The sanctity of the Lord's Day has been duly respected, by the appropriation of the Readings for the first day of every week, to solemn matters—involving, for the most part, the practical and devout consideration of some topic which the actual course of the Illustrations may present. In this part of his work, the writer has taken an especial interest; and if the reader obtains the same refreshment from these recurring periods for inner thought, which the writer has himself experienced, there will be no reason to complain of the result.

If, by the pains which have been taken to engage the attention without wearying it, the Author has succeeded in awakening the interest of the reader in matters which have been scarcely yet, so much as they might, brought into the reading of the family circle, he will have much cause to thank God, and to take the courage needful for his perseverance in this interesting field of labor.

LONDON, *December 27, 1849.*



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# DAILY BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.

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## First Week—Sunday.

GOD THE CREATOR.—GENESIS I. 1.

WHEN we open the Sacred Volume, the first aspect in which God is seen to present himself to us, is that of the Creator of the world. In the fulness of that knowledge which has become our heritage since He, who “at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” (Heb. i. 1), very few of us can appreciate the entire force and importance of this disclosure. The doctrine which it teaches, is to us so elementary, that it requires some knowledge and some thought to grasp the whole of its significance. Yet it is very important. We know not, indeed, any fact which so distinctly brings out the full extent of our privileges as this—that a doctrine so great, so solemn, so awful in old time; which was clearly known only to the chosen people; and which, if guessed at, as inherited remotely by the thoughtful men of other nations, was set forth only in dark hints, or muttered faintly to a privileged few under the shades of night, with fearful ceremonies, in caverns, and in solitary groves;—that this great ancient secret, has become in our days so common a possession, that we scarcely heed its value, any more than we do that of the air, in which, notwithstanding, our life lies.

Yes, this great doctrine, written as it were upon the posts of our doors, and proclaimed upon our house-tops, is among

the truths which many kings, and priests, and wise men of old, groped after darkly, if haply, they might find it, and found it not; and desired to see, but saw it not. But blessed are our eyes, for they see; and our ears, for they hear—not only this, but the more deep and hidden mysteries which even the angels of God, who shouted together for joy on the morning of Creation, desire to look into.

It is when we behold the highest intellects of ancient Greece perplexed in the inquiry—whether the world, in its present state, from all eternity existed; or whether the whole of this goodly fabric was not at some time formed by a fortuitous combination of pre-existing materials; and when we see the highest pitch to which human thought could reach, was that of the one or two who taught, that although the substantive matter of the world was eternal, it was moulded by an intelligent Deity into the form it bears;—we then begin to appreciate the clearness, if not the importance, of the belief which the ancient Hebrews received from the first sentence of Holy Writ:—“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;” and which at once placed the mind of the humblest peasant among them, high in divine knowledge above the most enlightened of the ancient heathen.

Even in our own day, those whose lot it is to dwell in the lands where pagan darkness reigns, can tell with what wonder and delight the youth in the schools hail the mighty doctrine which this verse discloses. To them, who had deemed it natural to believe that the world should be self-created, and had no intelligent Author,\* it is a great and astounding revelation—it lets in a flood of light upon the mind, to know, that, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

But it is not needful for us to explore the darknesses of an-

\* “The world appears to have been self-created, as it was natural at all times that the world should be self-created, and perish by itself. . . . It does not appear that this world has been created by any one.”—Upham’s *Buddhist Tracts*.

cient or modern Paganism, to know the importance of this doctrine. It is written with a sunbeam in the Old Testament; and it is well that we should strive, for our profit, to realize that vivid impression concerning it, which has perhaps been too much deadened by our familiarity from childhood with the sacred record which sets it forth. We all know that the Hebrew polity and doctrine was full of shadows, which were fulfilled in Christ; and that the ultimate object of the separation of the seed of Abraham from among the nations, was to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. Yet, we also know, that the immediate and manifest object of that polity was to maintain this great doctrine of the creation of the world by one independent and Almighty Being; and that it might never pass out of mind, one day in seven was set apart for the commemoration of it. Hence the Hebrew poetry and prophecy abound in allusions to this great truth, and the whole Scripture is replete with acknowledgment of this central fact; any remote allusions, even darkly hinting at which, have been sought with care in the ancient pagan writers, but have been found with difficulty.

Now, that to which God saw fit to give such prominence under the old law, must not be altogether forgotten by us, or, although acknowledged as a matter of course, excluded practically from our meditations and our devotions. Yet how seldom do we adore God as the Creator—in which capacity he saw fit to present himself so conspicuously to his elder children. Nor is this the doctrine of the old law only, but of the new. The new sets it before us in fresh and endearing relations. It shows to us, that He by whom the world was made, was no other than He who, in a later age, came down in sorrow and in suffering to redeem that world from its pollutions, and to repair the ruin which sin had caused in his own fair work. The Creation belongs no less to the New Testament than to the Old. The Gospel *connects* creation and redemption—the Creator and the Redeemer. They are one; and we shall do well to regard them, not separately, but together. In the beginning of the Old Testament

the Son of God is by us recognized in the Creator; in the close of the same, his approach as a Redeemer is announced. In the beginning of the New Testament the Son of God has come as the Saviour of the world; at the close of the same, another coming, for which creation groaneth, is announced; and happy are they who can from the heart hail that announcement in the words of the Evangelist—"Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

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## FIRST WEEK—MONDAY.

### THE CHAOS—GEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES.—GENESIS I. 2.

IN the first verse of Genesis we are assured of this grand truth, unknown to ages and to generations, that the visible heavens and the earth did not exist from all eternity, nor arose from accidental combinations of pre-existing matter; but had their beginning from God. *Wherever* that beginning was in time, or *whatever* it was in form, that beginning was God's creative act. This is the great truth concerning the creation which the Scriptures design to teach; and no other information is afforded, no details are given, but such as tend to establish and bear upon this doctrine. Yet these details form the information which God has given us concerning the origin of ourselves, and of the world which we inhabit. These are questions of great interest to us. There are indeed questions of higher interest—those which concern our future destinies; yet *these* questions belong to subjects respecting which the mind craves for knowledge; and all the information here afforded has, therefore, in every word been explored, examined, and discussed with the most sedulous anxiety, and the most minute and critical attention.

In the past days, men, receiving the record as from God, knowing that only He who made the world could have supplied the information of its origin, and having no idea

that any other sources of knowledge could exist on matters belonging to the time before men lived, were content simply to explore the meaning of the sacred record, and when they found a conclusion in which they could rest, they were satisfied. The conclusion in which men did rest was generally this—that the creation of the world, in its crude state, immediately preceded the work of the six days, and was in the first instance brought into that state of watery unorganized chaos, which was immediately after reduced into order.

But, in these latter days, men have found in the bowels of the earth, and in the sides of its mountains and its riven cliffs, new facts, new circumstances, which, as they conceived, went to show that the world had, under various modifications, existed thousands of ages before the creation of man, or at least before the comparatively recent date to which the record ascribes man's existence.

The pious man was alarmed at this, as adverse to those impressions respecting the creation in which he had grown up; and in his earnest but short-sighted zeal, he repelled the new science with abhorrence, as an unholy thing, and shut his eyes to the solid facts which it produced. And on the other side, the scoffer laughed, and exulted in a new weapon against the truth and authority of the Divine Word. These things have passed away. A new generation has grown up. And now certain facts in the science of the earth are seen to be indisputable, whatever doubt lies upon the various theories, successively pushing out each other, which have been founded on them. And yet God reigns; and yet the Bible is true; and yet the sacred record is not only unshaken in the war of theories, but stands firm—firmer than ever, strengthened by the very facts which once seemed to threaten its overthrow—a pillar of central truth, to which all these facts gravitate, and by the measure of their adhesion to which, their worth is tested.

Men began to separate the theories from the facts. The facts poured in from all parts of the world. The disclosures were not reasonings, nor conjectures, nor hypotheses—they

were facts of the least mistakable kind—disentrenched remains of ancient generations of the earth—remains tangible, visible, certain, and reconcilable with no hypothesis which allows no more ancient date to the earth than the commencement of the week which closed in the creation of man.

Then the wise—the men well-instructed in the things of God, began to consider. They began to see in these things a new law of God, a new disclosure of God's work and will, written in the stony tablets of the earth. They saw that truth is one; and that if these things were truths respecting God's work, they could not be at variance with the truths disclosed to Moses in times of old. The record was then more carefully examined, and enough was found to dispose the most careful men to hail the new science as, in its facts, not an opponent, but an auxiliary, of inspired truth; as a new commentary, left entombed for ages, but now at last brought to light, to show forth the hitherto hidden meaning of one portion of the sacred Word.

At first there was an inclination to suppose that the days of creation were not natural days, but long intervals of time, answering to the successive developments which had been found in the strata of the earth. But this was not quite satisfactory to any. On the one side, the theologian felt that some force was put upon the plain construction of the Mosaiical narrative; while, on the other, the geologist was not content with the most liberal concession which could under this interpretation be afforded to him, nor could he make the order of the Divine operations, during the six days, coincide with the succession of phenomena which the bowels of the earth disclosed.

The inspired record was then again examined with still closer attention; and it then appeared to many that that sacred source of authentic information does afford an interval, which may have been of any duration that the researches of the earth-explorers may exact. It is said that, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," that is, that the material of the world was not eternal, as some had



dreamed, but was, in its beginning, however remote, the work of God. The object of this revelation, then, being simply to record, for man's instruction, how the earth assumed its present goodly frame, and acquired its present inhabitants, nothing is said of its intermediate condition, in which it may have lain during long ages; but the inspired writer goes on to state that, previous to its existing organization, it lay, and had probably for a long time lain, "without form and void," a dark and empty confusion; and that this was of a watery nature, is shown by the immediately following text, which states that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of *the waters*."

That such an interval, which the discoveries of our own generation so nobly fill up, was provided in the sacred text, is not, however, an absolutely new discovery; nor has it altogether been extorted from the volume of inspiration by the demands of the new science. Ages before such discoveries were thought of, or such demands were made, it was conceived by several of the ancient fathers that a long period of time existed between "the beginning" of the creation and the beginning of the six days. No startling novelty is therefore offered in an interpretation which finds in the Mosaic narrative an interval of time, defined by no limit, and allowing full scope for all the succession of operations which modern science has brought to light. Whatever *facts* are recorded in the book of God, the volume of the earth confirms; and for the other facts, unrecorded in Scripture, which are written in His starry volume, a sufficient interval of silence and of time is afforded.

Do there remain difficulties? Let us have patience. Let us wait. The Mosaical narrative is still not without difficulties, which it doubtless remains for future time and advancing discoveries to clear up. We do not know that we as yet thoroughly understand the sacred record, that we have as yet fathomed all its depth. But we do know that geological science is not yet perfected, we know that it is continually advancing by new facts, by which previous views are often

considerably modified. And we do know that the more this science—the science of creation—has advanced, the more that it has become a truth, the more the apparent discrepancies between its facts and the teachings of the Mosaical record have diminished. Let us be taught by this experience. Let us rest assured that it will be thus even to the end.

Thus the wonderful book of God is never a thing of the past. It is ever in advance of us and of our science, and of the labors of our most ardent students and our highest intellects. The facts which are drawn forth, as time rolls on, from the firmament of heaven, from the bowels of the earth, and from the depths of the sea, are always found to be, *in their ultimate results*, in accordance with the sacred book, and serve to evolve the inner meanings, which were not suited to earlier times, and which antecedent ages and generations were therefore unable to discover.

---

## FIRST WEEK—TUESDAY.

### THE FIRST LIGHT.—GENESIS I. 3.

“AND God said, *Let there be light; and there was light.*” Striking and magnificent as these words are in the current version, their native force is much weakened by dilution. Here are eight words to translate four of the original. The Hebrew, expressed in English characters, is YEHI AOR; VA-YEHI AOR,—the letters being exactly alike in the two clauses, with the sole exception of the letter prefixed to the third word to express *and*. The Latin version expresses these grand words with almost the force and brevity of the original—“*sit lux! et lux fuit.*” The Greek version of the Septuagint is not equal in either of these qualities to the original or to the Latin: and yet it was from this version that the critic Longinus derived the impression—a heathen’s impression—of their surpassing majesty. And let us not say that our

own language is incapable of expressing the sacred text more concisely :—" And God said, ' Light ! be ; and light was, ' " would perhaps be as good a version as any language could produce. But in truth this wonderful sublimity lies not merely, not principally, in the *words*, but in the grand *idea*—the idea of the instant succession of light upon the utterance of the Almighty word. This was more striking to a heathen than to ourselves. The Scripture itself has from infancy furnished our minds with such grand conceptions of Almightyness, and made us familiar with so many wonderful manifestations of Divine power, that even such magnificent views as these impress our minds with less force than that with which they smote the thoughts of such of the heathen as became acquainted with them, and to whom the idea which they presented was altogether new. Yet even we, though familiar with the idea, and regarding the passage as a mode of expressing a fact not strange to our minds, cannot help pausing upon it, and regarding it as the most magnificent passage to be found embodied in the language of men.

We must not here overlook Milton's amplification of this text—

" Let there be light, said God ; and forthwith light  
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,  
Sprung from the deep ; and from her native east  
To journey through the aery gloom began,  
Sphered in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun  
Was not ; she in a cloudy tabernacle  
Sojourn'd the while."

And so an elder poet, Du Bartas, as translated by Sylvester :—

" No sooner said He, Be there light ! but, lo,  
The formless lump to perfect form 'gan grow.  
All hail, pure Light, bright, sacred and excelling,  
Sorrow and care, darkness and dread dispelling,—  
God's eldest daughter : O, how thou art full  
Of grace and goodness ! O, how beautiful !"

The greatest apparent difficulty in the history of the crea-

tion, arises from the production of light on the first day ; whereas, in the sequel of the narrative, the creation of the sun and moon seems to be ascribed to the fourth day. Geology, which was at first regarded as increasing the difficulties of a solution, may now claim the credit of having pointed out the true sense in which these intimations are to be received. If we admit that the earth existed, and was replenished with successions of animal and vegetable life, before the whole was reduced to that chaotic confusion in which we find it before the work of re-organization commenced, we must allow, also, that the light of the sun shone upon it in those more ancient times. It appears by the fossil remains of those creatures which then walked the earth, but whose races were extinguished before man appeared, that they were furnished with eyes as perfect and extraordinary as those of our present animals, and these eyes would, without light, have been useless ; and the vegetable productions, which are always found in connection with these animals, could not without light have flourished. Besides, the changes of day and night, which are described as existing before the fourth day, could not have existed without the sun, seeing that they depend upon the earth's relation to that luminary. Geology concurs with Scripture in declaring the existence of the watery chaos previously to the era in which man, and his contemporary animals, received their being. The earth then existed as the wreck of an anterior creation, with all its previous and interim geological arrangements and fossil remains ; but strangely convulsed and fractured, submerged in water and enshrouded in darkness. Thus it lay, probably for an immense period : life was extinct ; but matter continued subject to the same laws with which it had been originally endowed. The same attraction, the same repulsion, the same combination of forces, which, by the will of God, have ever been inherent in it, still existed. The sun then, acting by its usual laws upon so vast a body of waters, gradually, in the continuous lapse of ages, drew up a prodigious mass of dense and dark vapors, which, held suspended in the atmosphere, threw a pall of blackest

night around the globe. All things beneath it became invisible, and no ray of light could pierce the thick canopy of darkness. Layer upon layer, in almost infinite succession of closely-packed and darkling clouds, filled the atmosphere, and absorbed every particle of light long before it could reach the surface of earth; and in the fullest extent was the language of Scripture justified, that “darkness was upon the face of the deep.”

But when God saw fit, in the fulness of time, to commence the new creation, and prepare the desolate earth for the abode of man, this dense barrier which shut out the light, began, at His high word, to disperse, precipitate, or break up, and to let in light upon the waters. It was not likely to be, nor was it necessary to be, a sudden change from the depth of utter darkness to the blaze of sunny day, but the letting in of light without sunshine—the source of this light—the body of the sun not becoming visible until the fourth day, when its full glory was disclosed, and when once more its beams shone through the purged atmosphere upon mountains and valleys, and upon seas and rivers, as of old.

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### FIRST WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

THE FIRMAMENT—LAND AND WATER.—GENESIS I. 6–8.

WE are told that on the second day of creation, “*God made the firmament.*” (Gen. i. 7.) The primary meaning of the Hebrew word rendered “firmament,” is *expansion, outstretching, attenuation, elasticity*, which are the very properties of our atmosphere. But the word used by the Greek translators, together with the long prevalent notion, that the material heavens formed a solid hemispheric arch, shining and pellucid, in which the stars were set, led subsequent translators to render the word by *firmament*. This word, as well as the Greek (*στερέωμα*) is, however, admissible, if by solidity

is meant no more than that the fluid atmosphere has density or consistence sufficient to sustain the waters above it.

It is thus easy to apprehend what is meant by the sacred historian, when he tells us that this *firmament* "divided the waters that were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament." One portion of the dense watery shroud which had invested the surface of the earth—the lighter particles thereof—was exhaled, rarified and carried up into clouds, remaining suspended in the upper regions of ether; the remaining and heavier portion was at the same time forced down, and merged into the waters that covered the earth; and the expanse left void by their separation, is the expanse or firmament which formed the work of the second day. It is perhaps not correct to say, as some do, that our atmosphere now first existed. The pall of dense vapor, which is supposed to have previously invested the earth, implies the existence of an atmosphere. But it now first, at this time, existed as a *separating* expanse; and now divested of the gross, murky particles with which it was charged, it became transparent and respirable, the medium of light and of life to the surface of the earth. Let us not fail to note the historical mindfulness with which the expanse is described as separating the waters from the waters. We, describing it *now*, should speak differently; we should say that it lay between, or separated, the clouds and the *earth*. But the historian speaks as things would have appeared to a spectator at the time of the creation. A portion of the heavy, watery vapor had flown into the upper regions, and rested there in dense clouds, which still obscured the sun; while below, the whole earth was still covered with water, for the dry land had not yet appeared. Thus we see the exquisite propriety with which the firmament is said to have divided "the waters from the waters."

We have now a purer and a clearer sky; but still our earth is drenched with water, and inept for production. The water must be partly removed, and confined within proper bounds; and this is the work of the **THIRD** day of

creation. "And God said, 'Let the waters be gathered together into one place; and let the dry land appear.'" The historian adds, "And it was so;" but he gives us no details of the operation. We are apt to pass over this great incident of the hexæmeron more lightly, or with less observation, than its relative importance demands. It is, however, easy, with our advanced knowledge, to conceive that this act of creative power must, to be thus immediate, have been attended by a tremendous convulsion of the exterior portions of the globe, upheaving certain portions of the land, and perhaps depressing others (though the elevation of some portion is sufficient to give depression to the rest), thereby leaving vast hollows into which the waters diffused over the earth's surface receded, and within which they are confined. It is not impossible that many of the irregular and broken appearances, and traces of violent action which the surface of the earth exhibits, may be in part ascribed to this great event, to the agency of which the present condition of the earth's crust in the distribution of land and water must in a great degree be referred. Most sublimely does Milton describe the immediate effect of the Divine command which the third day heard:—

"Immediately the mountains huge appear  
Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave  
Into the clouds; their tops ascend the sky:  
So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low  
Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,  
Capacious bed of waters: Thither they  
Hasted with glad precipitance, uproll'd,  
As drops on dust conglobing from the dry;  
Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct,  
For haste; such flight the great command imprest  
On the swift floods. As armies at the call  
Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard)  
Troop to their standard, so the wat'ry throng,  
Wave rolling after wave, where way they found;  
If steep, with torrent rapture; if through plain,  
Soft ebbing: nor withstood them rock or hill,  
But they, or under ground, or circuit wide

With serpent error wand'ring, found their way,  
And on the washy ooze deep channels wore."

Nor in reference to this may be forgotten the noble words of the Psalmist, although it is not certain whether they allude to this event, or to the subsidence of the waters after the deluge—perhaps to both: "Thou coveredst it (the earth) with the deep as with a garment. The waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the noise of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth." (Psalm civ. 6–9.)

The waters having thus retired to their receptacles, and left a portion of the chaotic mass so dry, as to be fit for vegetation, now behold this earth is suddenly, at the Divine word, clothed with verdure, and replenished with all sorts of herbs and trees, with inherent powers to reproduce themselves, and to continue their propagation to the end of time. Most beautifully and simply is this great work of creative power expressed in the sacred record. Poetry comes not nigh it. Yet the noblest poetical account of these operations which we possess, that of Milton, is here peculiarly fine, and may be quoted.

"He scarce had said, when the bare earth, till then  
Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorn'd,  
Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad  
Her universal face with pleasant green;  
Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flower'd,  
Opening their various colors, and made gay  
Her bosom, smelling sweet; and, these scarce blown,  
Forth flourish'd thick the clustering vine, forth crept  
The swelling gourd, upstood the corny reed  
Embattl'd in her field, and th' humble shrub,  
And bush with frizzled hair implicit. Last  
Rose, as in a dance, the stately trees, and spread  
Their branches, hung with copious fruit, or gemm'd  
Their blossoms: with high woods the hills were crown'd;



With tufts the valleys, and each fountain side,  
 With borders long the rivers: that earth now  
 Seem'd like to heaven.\*

It is a very strong argument against the theory which assigns long ages to the "days" of Scripture, that the rays of the sun did not shine upon the earth until the fourth day; for if each day were a thousand or six thousand years, as some suppose, the vegetation of the world would have been left without that direct light and heat of the sun, which is essential to most of the forms of vegetable existence. It is clear that the plants to which the voice of God had given life, could not have matured their products, or maintained their being, had not the solar action been very shortly after produced. We have in this indeed a reason for the admission of the solar influence *next after* the creation of the green herb. An interval of time, equal only to the existence of the plant whose duration is the briefest, would have extinguished that plant from the new creation. It would have served no purpose. It would have been created in vain.

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## FIRST WEEK—THURSDAY.

THE GREAT LIGHTS.—GENESIS I. 16-18.

WHAT now is wanting to complete the scene of inanimate nature? The mountains lift their heads to heaven. The valleys lie in soft repose, traversed by rivers and by streams, which seem, in the various motions of their course, to give the only idea of *life* the earth is yet able to afford. The waters have retired to their ocean beds. The scene is in-

\* In this as in other parts of his description of the work of creation, Milton owes much to Du Bartas, whose curious work in the excellent translation of John Sylvester (time of James I.), scarcely deserves the neglect into which it has fallen. But Milton's hand turns to gold whatever it touches; and here we have set before us, with wonderful skill, the essence of many pages of Du Bartas.

vested with all the glories and all the beauties of vegetable life. What more is wanting? More light—by the full manifestation of those bright luminaries, which had, optically speaking, been hitherto veiled in mist, which their rays had not yet been able to dissipate and rarify into a pure azure sky. The light which had previously appeared is probably more intelligible to ourselves than even to the inhabitants of the east, who have but little, if any, twilight, and whose sun is seldom obscured from view. But we, with our long twilights, and with mists which sometimes constrain us to kindle lights at noon-day, can easily apprehend the kind of light which prevailed before the misty pall was, at the Divine word, drawn aside, and disclosed the moon, “walking in brightness” through the high heaven among the starry host; and when morning came, the sun, shedding a full blaze of light and glory, from the beautiful blue sky, upon all the work which God’s hand had wrought.

The sun and moon were not, of course, simultaneously, but successively, disclosed; and we place the moon first, because the fourth day, in which both appeared, was like the other days, composed of the night with the *following* day. If the sun had first appeared, the day would have closed when the sun set, and then the appearance of the moon on the following night would have belonged to another day. But seeing that they appeared both on the fourth day, and that the days are reckoned from evening to evening, and not from morning to morning, we may be sure that it was the moon whose rays first shone on the new earth. If man had then existed upon the earth, the appearance of “the pale regent of the night,” would have prepared his mind and his eye for the glory of that “greater light” which the day was to disclose.

But although man was not, it is ever to be borne in mind, that all these changes are throughout described as they would have presented themselves to his eye had he then existed. So now to him these luminaries would appear as if then first called into being—then first created. Indeed they may, ac-

cord. According to Scripture usage, be said to be "made," because they then first began to be visible in the exercise of their natural office with respect to the earth. It may be observed, that the word "made" is not the same in the Hebrew as that translated "created." It is a term frequently employed in Scripture to signify "constituted, appointed, set for a particular purpose or use." Thus it is said, "that God *made* Joseph a father to Pharaoh;" "*made* him lord of Egypt;" "*made* the Jordan a border between the tribes;" "*made* David the head of the heathen;" and so in numerous other examples. A critic, whose learning claims the respect which cannot be always allowed to his opinions, says, with regard to the clause "Let there be lights in the firmament," etc., "The words 'Let there be,' are in my conception equivalent to 'Let there appear;' and if I had allowed myself the freedom which some modern translators have taken, I should thus have rendered the verse:—'Let the luminaries which are in the expanse of the heavens, be for the purpose of illuminating the earth,' " etc. Let it be borne in mind that this author (Dr. Geddes) wrote before science had established a necessity for the pre-existence of the heavenly bodies. Thus, therefore, as it has been well remarked, "As the rainbow was *made* or constituted a sign, though it might have existed before, so the sun, moon, and stars may be said to have been made or set as lights in the firmament on the fourth day, though actually called into existence on the first, or previously. The same result had indeed been really effected by the same means during the previous three days and nights; but these luminaries were henceforth, by their rising and setting, to be the visible means of producing this separation or succession."\*

It may be, and has been, objected to this view, that it really assigns no specific work of creation to the fourth day—the operation of which is reduced to the clearing away of the mist, clouds, and vapors, and thereby rendering the atmo-

\* Bush on Genesis—This has become nearly the general sentiment of theologians with reference to the subject.

sphere clear and serene ; while the same terms are employed which are admitted to apply, in other instances in the same chapter, to the higher acts of creative power. But it is to be considered that the principle of life and action which was at first infused into the mass, would still be exerting its energies. The perfection of creation would be ever advancing on the fourth day, as on former days, until the hosts of heaven broke into view from behind the vanishing veil of cloud and mistiness. Appearing for the first time, and of course as new creations, they would be described as such in the same phraseology that has before been used. Besides, as already hinted, the principal point, in the mind of the sacred writer, is the purpose which they were destined to serve in this world, as organized for the habitation and use of man. It is not so much, therefore, their creation on the fourth day, as the use to which they were to be put, on which he insists. It is by no means, then, necessary to understand the sacred writer as asserting the creation of the heavenly bodies on that day, but only their development on that day as adapted to the purposes intended, the creation of them having previously taken place.

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## FIRST WEEK—FRIDAY.

### CREATION OF FISHES AND BIRDS.—GENESIS I. 20.

THE earth has now become a delightful abode, but it is entirely without inhabitants. Two days more shall people it with animals, and the water itself, which has hitherto been the obstacle of production, shall be first of all rendered productive. God said, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." And the effect of this creative word is recorded with some variations, which it may be well to note. "And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the

waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind."

In connection with the remark, offered yesterday as to the use of the word *made*, as distinguished from that of the word *created*, the reader will not fail to observe, that now again, when the statement has reference to a direct calling into existence of that which did not previously in any form exist, the latter word is again employed.

Milton scarcely anywhere, in so narrow a compass, indicates his profound knowledge of biblical lore, as in the version he has given of the first clause of the Divine mandate uttered on the fifth day of creation:—

"Let the waters generate  
Reptile with spawn abundant."

He knew that the word translated "moving creature," was not "moving," or "creeping" (as elsewhere rendered), but rapidly multiplying or "swarming creatures,"—in short, to all kinds of living creatures, inhabiting the waters, which are oviparous, and remarkable for fecundity, as we know is eminently the case with the finny tribes. In other passages of Scripture it is applied even to the smaller land animals and reptiles noted for their swarming abundance. The word translated "moving creature," is in fact the noun of the very verb which, in the same verse, is rendered "to bring forth abundantly." Thus we see, that the immense numbers of these creatures, the astonishing fecundity with which they were endowed, is the prevalent idea of this description. Indeed, there is no phrase in human language in which, both by noun and verb, this idea could be more forcibly expressed, than in the Hebrew original. And yet all language fails to convey an idea of the amazing extent of that "abundance" in bringing forth, with which these creatures were endowed on the day of their creation. This is, of course, more remarkable in some species than in others—and is most obvious to our notice in the immense shoals of herrings, pilehards, and mackerel upon our own shores. Many other species are

probably equally prolific ; but not being of gregarious habits, are not seen together in such vast numbers, and are in consequence less easily taken. But any one who attempts to estimate the number of eggs in the roes of various kinds of fish, may form some faint conception of the degree in which the sea generates "reptiles with spawn abundant." The old microscopist Leuwenhoek gave estimates which the mind could scarcely grasp. The greater accuracy of modern research has somewhat moderated his statements ; but enough remains to fill the mind with astonishment. Thus the roe of a codfish has been found to contain nine millions of eggs ; of a flounder, nearly a million and half ; of a mackerel, half a million ; of tenches, three hundred and fifty thousand ; of the carp, from one to six hundred thousand ; of the roach and sole, a hundred thousand ; of herrings, perches, and smelts, twenty and thirty thousand ; lobsters, from seven to twenty thousand ; shrimps and prawns, above three thousand. In fact, scarcely a month passes in which the reader may not gather, from the commonest sources, some facts showing the enormous productiveness of fish. At one time we are told that a hundred thousand mackerel are, in the season, brought weekly to the London fish-market (Billingsgate) ; another time we hear that herrings or pilchards have been caught so abundantly, as to have no market-value except as manure—for which purpose they are carted away, in tens and hundreds of thousands, by the farmers near the coast. Look, then, at the sprats, the white bait, the shrimps, and consider what hecatombs of these minute existences are sacrificed to help the dinner of a Dives, or to form the supper of a Lazarus.

Nor, if we look at the text, does this function of bringing forth abundantly, apply only to the inmates of the waters, but is extended to the inhabitants of the air. And how truly ! Look at the countless number—millions on millions—of the eggs of one species of bird only, that are consumed in the London market, and consider that nearly all these might, in the course of nature, become birds, did not man in-

terfere ; and hence form some idea of the marvellous productiveness of the feathered tribes. Still more, the vast shoals of fish have a most exact parallel in the immense flocks of some kinds of birds. The Passenger Pigeon of North America has been seen in flocks a mile broad, that took four hours in passing, at the rate of a mile a minute ; and which have been reckoned, on these data, to contain about two thousand and a quarter millions of birds. So Captain Flinders, in that remarkable voyage, one of the bird-facts in which a poet of our own day has immortalized,\* saw a flock of petrels, three hundred yards or more broad, and fifty to eighty yards deep, flying as compactly as their wings could move, and that took an hour and a half in passing, at the rate of thirty miles an hour. This immense body was reckoned to comprise a hundred and fifty millions of birds. So, in the Antarctic regions, the ground is sometimes covered to the extent of two or three miles, with millions of that strange bird, the penguin ; and when the purple gracule of America assembles for migration, a congregated multitude of many hundred thousands is at once present to the view.

A valuable writer, in a work which embodies a vast body of curious, but not well-digested, nor always accurate facts, well remarks on this subject,†—“The quantity of individuals of the various bird genera which are at any one time, and at all times, existing in our world, surpasses not only our usual supposition, but even all power of human numeration, at least as to any real distinct conception of the amount ; for we can only pen down the words millions, billions, trillions, quadrillions, and such other augmentative terms, in which all actual comprehension soon becomes lost in mere verbal sounds.”

Thus has been fulfilled, in these creatures, the great command, which became to them the law of their being,—“Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.”

\* James Montgomery, in his *Pelican Island*.

† Sharon Turner, in his *Sacred History of the World*

## FIRST WEEK—SATURDAY

## CREATION OF LAND ANIMALS.—GENESIS I. 24.

THE waters now are peopled ; the air is peopled ; and terrestrial animals alone are wanting. Accordingly, when the morning of the sixth day dawned, God is described in the sacred record as resuming his creative work, in the words :—“ Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind.”

There is evidently, from the variety of the terms employed, something intended as a classification of the various inhabitants of the earth. Yet it is remarkable that perhaps not one English reader in ten thousand has any distinct idea of the division denoted by these various terms, evidently meant to be distinctive. Few have spent a thought on the subject, or have taken the trouble to inquire—the great body of readers resting content in the knowledge that the several terms taken collectively must designate the various creatures by which the earth is peopled.

The term “ living creature,” seems to be merely a *collective* designation of the animals which are there indicated according to their kind.

Under the term of “ cattle,” are included the ruminant herbivora, generally gregarious and capable of domestication. To call them “ tame” or “ domestic,” at the time of their creation, as some do, would be absurd, seeing that their domestication was future ; but this is the class of animals in which are included most of the species which, in the prescient providence of the Creator, were designed for the more immediate use and service of the future man, and which were therefore endued with habits suited to their intended connection with him. But although this class comprehends all the animals essentially of a gentle nature and susceptible of domestication, it does not include all animals which are now regarded as tame or domestic—for there are some, such as the cat and the dog, whose domestication is of very an-



cient date, which were not originally natives of the more pacific genera, but are specimens of the wild tamed into the gentle.

Next, not in the order of enumeration, but in the order of nature and character, we come to the "beasts of the earth," which are the carnivora or beasts of prey in their various kinds. The name by which they are designated comes from a word signifying "life" or "living," and is well suited to the vivacious, active, and vigorous character which they display in comparison with the animals which crop the herb of the field. But were these animals indeed fierce and wild at their creation, and were their appetites even then such as to demand the immediate destruction, for their use, of the life which God had just given to other creatures? This is a hard question. The organization of these animals, their teeth, their feet, their intestines, are all adapted to the carnivorous and predatory existence; and it may at the first view seem that the life of other animals must from the beginning have been necessary to their subsistence. Yet the mind revolts from the idea of the new creation being at once disfigured by scenes of slaughter and death, before the sin of Adam had brought woe into the world. We know that many of these animals, perhaps all, can be brought to subsist on vegetable products, as man himself can subsist wholly on flesh, or wholly on vegetables, as he chooses; and the intimations in Genesis, so far as they go, are in accordance with the more pleasing and amiable opinion, that although these animals were in their organization adapted to what was to become their more durable condition, yet their fierceness was held in check; and, although more active in their movements, they were not more aggressive than other animals. This is the opinion of the poets; and it is pleasant to be of their opinion whenever we can. The prophetic intimations favor this interpretation; for that the beasts of prey shall be divested of their fierceness, is a prominent feature in their descriptions of the final restoration of the earth to its originally paradisaical condition. This hint our poets have not been slow to take.

“The lion, and the libbard and the bear  
 Graze with the fearless flocks ; all bask at noon  
 Together, or all gambol in the shade  
 Of the same grove, or drink one common stream.  
 Antipathies are none. No foe to man  
 Lurks in the serpent now : The mother sees,  
 And smiles to see, her infant’s playful hand  
 Stretch’d forth to dally with the crested worm,  
 To stroke his azure neck, or to receive  
 The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.  
 All creatures worship man ; and all mankind  
 One Lord, one Father.”—COWPER.

Old Du Bartas answers, under the same views, this difficult question :—

“ Lord, if so be Thou for mankind didst rear  
 This rich round mansion (glorious everywhere)  
 Alas ! why didst Thou on this day create  
 These harmful beasts, which but exasperate  
 Our thorny life ?

“ Pardon, good God, pardon me ; ’twas our pride,  
 Not Thou, that troubled our first happy tide.  
 Before that Adam did revolt from Thee,  
 And (curious) tasted of the sacred tree,  
 He lived king in Eden, and his brow,  
 Was never blankt with pallid fear, as now :  
 The fiercest beasts would at his word or beck  
 Bend to his yoke their self-obedient neck.”

Under the remaining class, rendered by “creeping thing” (in Hebrew, REMES), we have not only the minor quadrupeds that seem to creep rather than walk, and such as creep on many feet, but all that glide along the surface of the soil—the serpents, annelides, etc. The idea throughout this classification is that of *creeping*. In the Arabic language, the same word as the Hebrew is applied to long luxuriant grass, that seems to *creep* over the ground ; and in this sense it is still used in some parts of Scotland, in its original form, *Ramsh*.

## Second Week—Sunday.

THE IMAGE OF GOD.—GENESIS I. 26, 27.

THE great work of creation now approaches its close :—

“ Now heaven in all her glory shone, and rolled  
 Her motions, as the great first Mover’s hand  
 First wheeled their course: earth in her rich attire  
 Consummate lovely smiled; air, water, earth,  
 By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walked  
 Frequent; and of the sixth day yet remained:  
 There wanted yet the master-work, the end  
 Of all yet done.”—MILTON.

In approaching to the creation of man, the sacred narrative assumes a more solemn air, and more dignified style—“ And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over all the earth.” And then it is added :—“ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.”

It is impossible to read this account of the origin of our first parents, and not to acknowledge that it conveys an intimation of some eminent distinction, which has been exclusively conferred upon the human race. “ We are indeed,” says a fine writer on this subject,\* “ the beings of a day; incapable of counting on a single hour as our own; uncertain whether we shall be permitted to carry our slightest purpose into execution; exposed to a thousand perils; and liable to be diverted from our holiest and most steadfast resolution by the sudden gust of passion, or the unexpected temptation; but still, though weak and frail, we are invested with the highest dignity which can be bestowed upon any creature, for there is some portion of our nature which bears the impress of the image of the Creator.”

\* Rev. William Harness, *Sermons on the Image of God in Man*. 1841.

It is said that he still bears this image ; for, although some have urged, that whatever was intended by it, must have been lost at the Fall, we agree with this writer in thinking that there is Scripture evidence to the contrary. The Almighty, addressing Noah after the Deluge, and uttering this solemn denunciation against murder, says,—“ Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed ; *for in the image of God made he man.*” \* The reason here urged for respecting the life of man, could have been of no conceivable force, had the image of God been wholly or irrecoverably forfeited by Adam’s transgression. In what then did this image, by which man is likened to his Maker, consist ?

The old, and still too common, idea, that it consists in the lineaments and erect figure of man, although taken up by the poets and orators, and hence invested with images and ideas by which its real offensiveness is hidden, is painfully revolting to one who is enabled to realize a distinct conception of the great fact, that “ God is a Spirit.”

Does this image then lie in the “ dominion,” which is given to man over the inferior creatures ? Some think that it does, and have written largely on that view ; but if we examine with care the text on which that notion is founded, † we shall see that the dominion is a power which belongs to man because he bears the image of God, and does not in itself constitute that image.

Does it, then, lie in that immortality which is denied to all lower creatures, and which indeed invests man with a dignity which might certainly, under particular points of view, be regarded as the image of God ? Yet it would be still an incomplete image. The immortality of God is an eternity of past and future—ours of the future only. But above all, consider that Satan and his angels are also inheritors of an immortal being ; and it will not, surely, be urged, that the language in which the Scripture describes the nature of Adam, can be applicable to them, as must be the case if mere immortality constituted the image of God.

\* Gen. x. 6.

† Gen. i. 26.

More will tell us that it lies in man's intellect—his powers of reason, of thought, of invention, by which he is made only a little lower than the angels. Proud sinners that we are, to be thus ever prating about our intellect, the efforts of our genius, the wonders of our invention, the grasp of our thoughts! We forget that the devil and his angels have more of all this than we possess, and that so far from giving *them* the image of God, it probably only accelerated their departure from him. Reason is a fine thing; but let us not think too much of it. God does not. We know of a surety—we know on the authority of his Word—that all the proud and high things of man's intellect, are of infinitely less value in his sight than the humblest aspiration after mercy and truth—than the heart-uttered groan of a contrite spirit. Besides, there is no real likeness. God does not reason. God does not labor in thought. All truth, all knowledge, is intuitive to Him, is part of his own essence. Where, then, is the likeness in this?

Since, therefore, the image of God is not to be sought in the perfection of man's body, nor of his mind as the seat of the intellect, this holy endowment can only be found in his soul, the seat of his moral faculties. It must be a living energy in the human breast, reflecting the likeness of the God who made us. Surely, therefore, it is evinced in the capacity of resembling Him in moral attributes; of being holy as He is holy; of loving him with something of that love wherewith He first loved us. This is plainly intimated in the words of the Apostle, where he exhorts us to "put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."\* So also, when he exhorts the Ephesians to "put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness."† Nothing can be clearer than these two passages taken together; which both, indeed, have a most distinct reference to the very text of Genesis by which this inquiry has been excited.

\* Col. iii. 10.

† Eph. iv. 24.

It is therefore in the capacity for, or in the presence of, true "knowledge," of "righteousness," of "holiness," that the image of God is found; and, seeing that all these faculties have their root in love—love to God, a feeling of God's love to us, the love of God in the soul—it is in LOVE that the image of God is perfected; and he is most like God, sets forth most of God's image, who loveth most. There can be no doubt in this. To bear the image of God, is to be like him in that attribute in which chiefly He is presented to our view, and is related to us; and that is love. The book of God's hand in the natural world, and the book of his Spirit in the Scriptures, concur in setting forth his love in creation and in providence; while the latter discloses to us the special wonders of his love in redemption. "Love is of God," says the Beloved Disciple—"and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him . . . Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."\*

If, then, "God is love," to love Him, and love mankind—because they bear his image in the capacity for the same love of Him—is to be like God, is to bear that image of Him in which Adam was created. Not faintly did our Lord himself indicate this view, when he told the hopeful Scribe, that the essence of all the law and the prophets was comprised in the two great commandments—"Thou shalt LOVE the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy mind;" and in this other, "Thou shalt LOVE thy neighbor as thyself."† Let us therefore desire to bear more and more of God's image in love. Few men loved more than David; and it was in this, that he was the man "after God's own heart"—that is, after God's image. Yet he was continually aspiring to higher degrees of conformity to the Divine image. "I shall be satisfied," he says, "when I awake with thy likeness."‡ Let this also be our desire and prayer. May we also be satisfied with nothing less.

\* 1 John iv. 7-11.

† Matt. xxii. 37-39.

‡ Psalm xvii. 15.

## SECOND WEEK—MONDAY.

THE FOOD OF PRIMEVAL MAN.—GENESIS I. 29, 30.

WHEN God informs the newly created man, that he assigns to him for meat “every herb bearing seed, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed,” it seems impossible to resist the conclusion, that this is designed to point out to him the kind of food intended for his use, and that what was not so pointed out, is not designed to be food for him. To contend that the specification of herbs, grain, and fruits, can in any way comprehend the use of the flesh of animals, seems altogether monstrous; and it may be safely affirmed, that the flesh of animals is the last thing a man would think of eating, who has been told that his food is to consist of vegetables. It seems clear to us, that animal food, even to this day but sparingly used in the East, and in some eastern countries held in abhorrence, was not intended to be the food of man, at least in his original condition. Instinctively we recognize the fitness that it should not have been so. We know not what were the Divine intentions with respect to the state of man if he had not fallen; but it is reasonable to assume, that this rule respecting food would have continued in operation, and that his climate, and other circumstances, would not have been such as to create the need of, or appetite for, the flesh of animals. This appetite is, after all, as we have seen, much the effect of climatic influences; and it was probably not until mankind had spread into climes far distant from their first seat, that they began to transgress this rule of food; for we agree with those who think that the distinction of clean and unclean beasts, at the time of the flood, implies the *previous* use of animal food. From the permission to use such food, expressly granted to Noah after the deluge, it may be thought that Noah and other righteous persons had abstained therefrom in obedience to the paradisaical law; or at least that they had been troubled with

doubts on the subject, and were hence favored with the express permission to use the flesh of beasts. It is even more than possible, that the constitution of the earth underwent such changes at the deluge, as rendered meat, more than before, suited to be the food of man. In any case, it appears to us that the words then uttered afford a distinct reference to the original grant, and an extension of it—"Every living thing that moveth shall be meat for you; *even as the green herb have I given you all things.*" (Gen. ix. 3.) And if, as the language most clearly implies, the extension was now first made, and was necessary to satisfy the conscience of a righteous man, it is manifest that animal food could only, before the flood, have been eaten by those whose transgressions brought that awful judgment upon the world.

From this it seems clear, that whatever we say as to the period between the fall and the deluge, vegetable food only was allowed to, or used by, man in his first estate. The poets, therefore, are here again right in regarding vegetables only as

"The food of man,  
While yet he lived in innocence, and told  
A length of golden years unfleshed in blood,  
A stranger to the savage arts of life,  
Death, rapine, carnage, surfeit, and disease;  
The lord, and not the tyrant, of the world."—THOMSON.

This abstinence from animal food is in fact preserved in the traditions of all nations, as one of the characteristics of their golden age—the age of innocence. Some have thought that the restriction was designed for a temporary purpose, that there might be no check to the increase of the newly created races; but if so, it would have been equally necessary after the deluge, when only the few animals that had been saved in the ark remained.

It is not at all necessary to enter into the old and somewhat entertaining question as to the comparative merits of vegetable and animal diet. As it is certain that but little of the latter is used in warm countries, whereas large quantities



are consumed in colder regions ; and as we can observe in our own experience, that the inclination for flesh-meat is less active in summer than in winter, the matter seems to be in the result chiefly one of climate, men residing in the colder climate requiring a stronger nutriment than vegetables supply, to make up for the greater waste of animal heat. Be this as it may, there cannot be in the practice anything essentially wrong, or it would not have been expressly permitted by God himself after the deluge.

The objections as to the cruelty of the practice, sound well in poetry, but will not bear the test of reason. Myriads of animals have been called into being, and allowed the full enjoyment of the happiest period of animal life, cared for and well fed by man, that would not have existed at all, or could not have been maintained in existence, had they not been needful to him. What would be the result for the advantage of the domesticated animals, were they not thus needful to man? Most of the land now left for pasturage, would be brought under culture ; and the animals not been needed, and therefore not worth the cost of rearing, would not be allowed to increase ; or, being left to themselves, they would starve, or become the prey of ravenous beasts.

Even in the article of death the animals are not losers. Sickness and decay, softened by many tender circumstances to the human creature, is a horrible matter, is death by starvation, to animals constrained in a state of nature to seek their own food ; and the other alternative, death from beasts of prey, is accompanied by circumstances of dread, horror, and pain, in the pursuit, the struggle, and the torturing laceration, which are unknown under the hands of the butcher, who suddenly and once for all attacks the seat of life.

Doubtless there is more real humanity in the system which allows ten thousand animals to enjoy their youth, than in that which would, in proportion, only permit *one* to live, to exist to old age, and to die of slow decay. Of the fifty millions, or thereabout, of sheep in these islands, how many would be in existence, were mutton not an article of food ?

## SECOND WEEK—TUESDAY.

## ADAM IN EDEN.—GENESIS II. 8.

THE sacred narrative informs us that the newly-created man was placed in a garden, in the eastern part of a land called Eden. The land of Eden was in a well-watered, a fertile, and a pleasant country; and the best and choicest part of that land, planted as a paradise or garden, was to be the abode of the first man. Let not the reader be troubled. We intend not to inquire into the site of Eden. It may be doubted whether the changes wrought on the face of the earth at the deluge, have not placed the spot beyond discovery or recognition. But we are sure that it was a most pleasant place—pleasanter, without doubt, than the world has since beheld. Here, probably, all that was sublime and gentle in the scenery of the whole earth was exhibited in pattern, and all that could delight the uncorrupted tastes of the new man, with all that could excite the anxious inquiries of his mind, was spread out before him. He had labor to employ his attention without wearying him; and he had time, leisure, for his highest pursuits of knowing God, his will, and his works. There was no disharmony in nature to pain his soul. The birds sang sweetly to him as he walked, or wrought, or rested; and the beasts gambolled playfully around their master. He was endowed with a rational and immortal spirit; he was holy, and therefore happy; and he enjoyed sensible intercourse with God, and probably with angels. What a state of blessedness was this! To men imbued with the spirit of the fall, to whom the excitements of conflict and conquest are necessary, and who will not be happy unless they can “ride in the whirlwind, and direct the storm,” the paradise of Eden may seem insipid, and the loss of it no great privation, merely as a condition of life. But to those to whom the strifes of men are hateful; who faint beneath the cares of life; who are cut off from sun and air

by the necessities of daily toil; or who groan under the burden of their sins—the repose, the rest, the happiness of Eden, glorified by the presence of God, appears beyond all measure inviting, and well may they cry, “Oh, Adam, what hast thou done, to lose thy children so fair a heritage!” Yet even such may be of good cheer, for the second Adam has found for them a fairer home and a more blessed inheritance.

Much has been inquired regarding the condition of Adam in respect of knowledge. All accounts necessarily assign to him the utmost physical perfection of man’s nature. But in the view of some he was merely a naked savage, who had all things to acquire by experience. This is not from any intended disrespect to the father of mankind; but because it was an old theory that knowledge, intelligence, and the arts of civilization were progressively acquired in the first ages; and it was therefore necessary that the progenitor of the race should be in a state of ignorance, as it could not but be supposed that he would impart such knowledge as he possessed to his descendants. On the other hand, there are those who urge that Adam, instructed of God, must have been possessed of all knowledge of which the mind of man is capable, and have been deeply skilled in all the sciences and arts of civilization.

That both extremes are wrong we have no doubt. Adam was, at his creation, not a child; he was a man in the vigor of physical and mental life. There is no need of placing any limit to his powers of thought, of reasoning, of comparison, of imagination. He was taught of God, and not left to gather by slow experience all that he wanted to know. If Adam could talk at all, and we know that he could, language must have been supernaturally imparted to him. He had no means of acquiring it but from God. From the same source he must have derived the knowledge he possessed of the properties of the objects and beings around him. He had the employment assigned him of keeping and dressing the garden, and this involves the knowledge of many operations, and of many properties of plants, which, although they

may be, in our day, possessed by one man, are, nevertheless, the result of ages of experience. The commonest gardener who works for us, brings to his labor the progressive knowledge of many generations. If Adam had gone to work, without previous instruction, or without being on the instant inspired (as was probably the case) with the knowledge of what was proper to be done in every new circumstance, he would have soon made sad ravages even in the garden of Eden. To cultivate a garden implies a use of tools. These must either have been supplied to him, or he must have been endowed with the skill, and the knowledge of materials, necessary to enable him to make them for this purpose.

Again, that he was endowed with the knowledge of the common and more conspicuous qualities of animals, is evident from his being able to give appropriate names to the creatures brought under his notice. This was probably suggested to him, with the force of an intuitive perception, at the moment that his attention was directed to the species—for it would have required much and long-continued observation, to have done this without the aid of implanted perceptions.

But it does not, on the other hand, seem to us at all necessary to suppose that Adam was endowed with any other knowledge than was suited to the condition in which he was placed, and needful to the full enjoyment of its advantages. That he was learned in all science, and skilled in all art, there seems no reason to believe. Some make him greater than all his sons in astronomy, in zoology, in botany, in chemistry; and as well versed as they in the social and constructive arts. If this were necessary to him, we find no difficulty in believing that it would have been imparted to him; but as we cannot see that it was necessary, or that it belonged to his condition, we conceive that no such knowledge was in his possession. As much as the happiness of his condition required was given; and whatever else he might have required in his state of innocence, would doubtless, in like manner, have been imparted. But in the altered circumstances which eventually arose, and to which the law of Eden could not be

applicable, men were left to the slower teaching of experience and observation for their advance in knowledge and the arts.

In one thing the state of Adam in Eden must have been far different from that of which we have any conception. All the past, so fruitful to us in teachings and experiences, which comes to us laden with vast stores of accumulated facts and knowledges, and rich in the memories of young joys and parental tendernesses: all this was a blank to him. This alone must have made a serious difference between his state and our own; a difference so great, that it is scarcely possible for us to realize to our minds all the mysteries of his existence. It is as a *difference* solely that we point it out. We know not that the first of men was, even in this respect, under any *disadvantage*. He had no *need* of antecedents. God was all to him—his past, his present, his future.

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## SECOND WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

### ADAM NAMING THE CATTLE.—GENESIS II. 20

IN the progress of the sacred narrative, we are told that God said that it was “not good for man to be alone,” and declared his intention of making a suitable companion or “help-meet for him;” but instead of proceeding with the account of this creation, the record proceeds to a very different matter. “And out of the ground, the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam, to see what he would call them, and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.” What has this to do with the providing of an help-meet for the first of men? The narrative proceeds: “And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but,”—and here comes the secret—“but for Adam there was not found an help-meet for him.” It was, therefore, evidently

the design of the benevolent Creator, to enhance, in the view of the man, the value of the gift he was about to bestow upon him, by showing him that the existing races of animated nature, abounding as they did in elegant and beautiful species, did not afford any creature suited to be his companion, or to satisfy the yearning of his heart for the fellowship of an equal being. Nothing was better calculated to realize this impression, than to bring the various animal existences under the notice of Adam, and at the same time to endow him with that perception of their several qualities and natures, as is implied in his being able to give them distinctive and appropriate names. It is very possible that, being as yet ignorant of the Divine intention, Adam considered that he was expected to find out for himself a meet companion among these creatures. So Milton understood it, in a very remarkable passage, in which he seems to ascribe the power of reasoning to brutes:—God is represented as saying to Adam

“ Is not the earth  
 With various living creatures, and the air  
 Replenished, and all these at thy command  
 To come and play before thee? Knowest thou not  
 Their language and their ways? *They also know  
 And reason not contemptibly:* With these  
 Find pastime, and bear rule; thy realm is large.  
 So spake the Universal Lord, *and seemed  
 So ordering.*”

In previously describing the names of the cattle, Milton takes the same view as we do, that the knowledge involved in that act was conveyed by instant and supernatural enlightenment.

“ Each bird and beast behold  
 Approaching two and two; these cowering low  
 With blandishment; each bird stooped on his wing.  
 I named them, as they passed, and understood  
 Their nature; *with such knowledge God endued  
 My sudden apprehension:* but in these  
 I found not what methought I wanted still.”

Of course, modern rationalizing philosophy has found something in this remarkable statement on which to hang its cavils. It has been ascertained, it is urged, that animals are exclusively adapted to the regions which they inhabit, and that it would be contrary to their nature, and zoologically impossible, for them to leave their own climates, and to assemble in one place. It is certain that, if this did take place, as assumed, it was a supernatural impulse, which urged them to travel to one point; and we should think, that no believer in the existence and power of God, can doubt the possibility of such an impulse being given, whether he believes that it *was* given or not. Is that impossible to God, which is possible even to man, who can show us, in any of his large cities, animals brought together from all the climates of the earth, from the Equator to the Arctic circle? But again, how do we know that various climates did exist before the deluge? There is good reason to think, that before then the temperature of the earth was through all parts more equal than it has been since; and hence the animals would have no inducement to classify themselves into their climates, or any difficulty in passing from one part of the world to any other part.

But, again, was there any necessity for this migration of the animals of different climes to Eden? On what ground is it assumed thus quietly that animals were created in their different climates? Why might they not be created in the same locality in which man received his existence, afterwards dispersing themselves, as his own race did, to the several parts of the earth? If the climate before the deluge was equable, there could be no difficulty in this dispersion from a common centre; and if there *were* then various climates, the animals would gradually wander till they came to the region best suited to their natures, and there remain. It is only necessary to suppose that the creation took place in a medium climate, such as all animals could at least bear till they found their congenial localities. This is not altogether hypothesis, for it is the same course of dispersion, from a common cen-

tre, which as we know did take place after the deluge, and which may therefore well have taken place after the creation.

In fact, instead of being embarrassed by the difficulty of the subject, we may be confused by the variety of the explanations which occur to our thoughts, and any one of which will furnish a satisfactory solution of all that has been indicated as "hard to be understood" in the Scripture narrative of the circumstances.

If the animals were dispersed, before this, over the world, the sacred text does not impose upon us any inevitable necessity of providing for their migration to Eden, although we have done so; the text may be very well understood to refer to the animals in or near Eden. The Hebrew word rendered by "all" (*kol*), is not always understood in the largest sense of universality, but often of many, or of a large part; and that it was in this instance to be received with some limitation, is evident from the fishes not being specified. Supposing all the animals already dispersed, it is obviously unnecessary that such as were wholly unsuited to engage Adam's attention for the object in view, should be brought from their several localities for the purpose. Or, if they were assembled in one place previously to their dispersion, it would be equally needless that his attention should be engaged by animals he was never likely to see again, and which exhibited no qualities to suggest an even possible suitability for the purpose immediately in view.

We see no reason to suppose that more than single pairs of any species, as of man, were in the first instance created; in which case, and supposing that they dispersed as they multiplied, the land of Eden must at the first have been like a vast zoological garden, such a garden as man never formed, seeing that it contained the primeval representatives of *every* species. In this must that land have differed from all other lands, which have since contained many animals of a few of the different species of the earth, instead of a few animals of all the different species.

As these various creatures doubtless presented themselves



to the notice of Adam in pairs, he must the more deeply have been convinced of his own isolated condition. All these creatures had suitable companions, and he had none: each of them was already provided with a mate, and could be no help-meet for him.

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## SECOND WEEK—THURSDAY.

EVE.—GENESIS II. 21–24.

ADAM was not long left by his indulgent Creator to that feeling of disappointment which he must have experienced when he realized the conviction that there was not among the creatures of the earth one suited to be his companion. As he one day awoke from a deep sleep which the Lord had caused to fall upon him, he saw before him a creature whom he at once recognized as the being his heart had sought,—the one wonderfully suited by her bodily frame and mental constitution to fill up the sole void, the only want, of his happy existence. Whence came she? Adam knew: for when he saw her he said, “This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.” It is therefore probable that the “deep sleep” was supernatural, or a kind of trance, in which he had been conscious, although without pain, but rather perhaps with rapture, of the whole process of her formation. This is the idea generally entertained by the Jewish writers, and by the old Christian fathers, and it has been adopted and beautifully brought out by Milton:—

“Mine eyes He closed, but open left the cell  
Of fancy, my internal sight; by which  
Abstract, as in a trance, methought I saw,  
Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape  
Still glorious before whom awake I stood;  
Who stooping opened my left side, and took  
From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,

And life-blood streaming fresh ; wide was the wound,  
But suddenly with flesh filled up and healed :  
The rib He formed and fashioned with his hands ;  
Under his forming hands a creature grew,  
Man-like, but different sex ; so lovely fair,  
That what seemed fair in all the world, seemed now  
Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained  
And in her looks ; which from that time infused  
Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before."

This is in close conformity with the Mosaical description of our first mother's origin, which, however, it amplifies into circumstances. He says the rib was taken from the left side, probably for the poetical association of that part being nearer the heart ; but the Jewish Targumist makes it the right side, and says that it was from an odd or thirteenth rib on that side.

Many have been offended at this account of woman's origin, being unable to make out, or unwilling to receive, the circumstances as related. Some have rejected it altogether. With such we have nothing to do. To us the Bible is the Word of God ; and these pages are designed for the use of those who receive it as such, so that we are relieved from the necessity of discussing the cavils of unbelievers, though willing to notice the difficulties which occasionally embarrass the sincere inquirer. This is perhaps one of the passages which does offer such difficulties, whence some very well-meaning people have been disposed to regard the whole recital as an allegory. But we must not be too ready to admit of allegories, lest we give the enemy occasion to turn into allegory, or *myth* as they call it now, whatever he does not wish to be plainly understood. Besides, if we take this to be allegorical, what is there in this history of creation that we are to take as real ? If we admit the allegorical in one place, how can we shut it out in others, where we would less readily allow it ? Who is then to distinguish between the allegorical and the real ?

There seems to us no more difficulty in taking this part of the history of the creation literally, than in so understanding

many other parts of it; and sooner than allow an entrance for the dangers which attend the admission, that one portion of the same narrative is real, and another part allegorical, we should be inclined to allow the whole history of the creation to be an allegory. You might then allege that this, from the remote antiquity and peculiar nature of the transaction, needed to be veiled in allegory; but if you admit the account to be substantially literal, and yet admit of allegorical incidents therein, you preclude yourself from denying that there may be allegorical incidents in other and later portions of Scripture which you desire throughout to be literally understood. In this case, is there any greater difficulty in taking literally the creation of woman than the creation of man? Adam was made of the dust of the ground. Why? Had it not been quite as well that he should at once have started into being at the Divine word, without any intermediate process like this? It is a sufficient answer, that God thought fit it should be otherwise; probably because, all modes being equal to him, he chose that which might impress upon man a moral lesson, even by the physical fact of his origin: a lesson important to repress pride, even in the unfallen man; but which became terribly emphatic when, after the fall, man heard the awful words, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return!"

If we admit this to be sufficient in the case of man's creation, why not in that of woman? Whether there was some peculiar organization in Adam (such as an additional rib), in order to provide for the formation of woman, or that God substituted another rib for the one he had taken, it is not very important for us to know; but it is important to understand, that He to whom all modes are the same, chose one which should serve vividly to impress upon the minds of man and woman, their *peculiarly* intimate relation to each other. In other creatures there was no natural connection between the pairs in the very act of creation. The sexes were in them created independently of each other. But in the man the union was to be of peculiar solemnity and significance;

it was even to set forth, as by a symbol, the union between Christ and his church. The fact of her derivation from man—a part of himself, separated, to be in another form reunited to him, was calculated to indicate and to originate an especial tenderness in their nuptial state, and its indissoluble character. See how beautifully St. Paul works out these ideas; and understanding, as he manifestly does, the account of woman's origin to be literal, as given in Genesis, his inspired authority ought to be conclusive on the subject:—"So men ought to love their wives as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it, and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."—Eph. v. 28–31. Surely, to teach such lessons as these, was a sufficient reason for the mode of woman's creation. She was to be created in some mode or other, and however created, in *that* would have been the miracle. The mere mode was a lesser matter, and might be determined by circumstances *comparatively* unimportant; and indeed, when the world was new, it might have been difficult for the most astute of those who take upon them to question the ways of God, to have found circumstances more important for determining the mode of operation than those by which, in this case, it appears to have been influenced.

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## SECOND WEEK—FRIDAY.

### THE SERPENT.—GENESIS III. 1.

IN the sad history of the fall, there is scarcely any one incident which more exercises our thoughts than the nature of the creature, by whose baneful suggestions that ruin was brought to pass.

The sacred record, in the third chapter of Genesis, says plainly enough that it was "a serpent," described as being

more subtle than any beast of the field ;” and the final curse also indicates the serpentine condition—“Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.”

Hence, some have regarded the tempter as a serpent, and nothing more. This opinion has many more advocates than the reader might suppose ; or, rather it *has* had them, for there are few who *now* entertain this opinion. To the question, How could a mere serpent tempt Eve ? it is answered, that it lay in the repeated use by the serpent of the forbidden fruit in her presence, without any of the apparent effects upon him which she had been taught to dread. The influence of this example, and the thoughts that hence arose in her mind, are then represented, agreeably to the genius of oriental and figurative language, in the form of a conversation. The great objection to this is, that the alleged figurative style here, is adverse to the literal tone and character of the whole narrative ; and, what is far more conclusive, that another agent is clearly pointed out in the New Testament, and may, by the light thus afforded, be discovered even in the original account.

That agent is the devil, or Satan ; and the general opinion is that he employed, or actuated, the serpent as his instrument. Thus the latter appears to reason and to speak ; the woman converses with him ; and she is led, by the artful representations which the devil enables him to make, to break the Divine law. No mere animal could have taken the part this serpent did. But it may be doubted whether Eve knew this. It is possible that the intuitive perception of the qualities of animals which Adam possessed, was not shared by Eve, but was to be imparted to her by him ; and it is highly probable that he had not yet communicated to her all the knowledge of this kind which had been acquired by him before she had existence. It is far from improbable that the knowledge of this fact was among the considerations which induced Satan to apply himself through the serpent to the woman rather than to the man. She.

being continually making new discoveries in the animal creation, would be little surprised in at length finding one creature that could speak, and even reason. Or supposing she did know that animals could not do either, it has seemed to us possible that the serpent, by eating the fruit in her sight, may have led her to conclude that his superior gifts were owing to his having partaken of this sovereign food. This supposition is quite in harmony with the general drift of the fatal argument. The curse pronounced upon the deceiver is plainly addressed to an intelligent agent, designedly guilty of an enormous crime, and would have been unmeaning and unworthy of the Divine character, if addressed to a mere animal, which, in following the instincts of its nature, had unconsciously raised seductive thoughts in the mind of the woman.

That, however, the phraseology of the curse is in its outer sense applied to the condition of the serpent, while in its inner meaning terribly significant to the intelligent agent, seems to us very clearly to show that the serpent was really, and not figuratively, employed in this awful transaction. The more closely the language of the curse is examined, the more real its purport, as addressed to the intelligent agent of the temptation, under forms of speech adapted to the serpentine condition, will be apparent. The closing portion of it, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it (he) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," could have no significance with reference merely to the serpent; but to the real tempter it was of awful importance. They were words to shake hell, and to fill the arch-fiend with consternation. It is not at all likely that the fallen pair understood these words nearly so well as *he* did. Yet even to them it must have appeared that it promised some great and crowning triumph to "the seed of the woman," and perhaps a recovery from the fall, after the enemy had seemed for a time to triumph over him, and to "bruise his heel." But we know its meaning better, probably, than either the first pair or even Satan did then. We

can see that it was the first gospel promise, foretelling the sufferings of Christ and his final triumph over the evil one—his victory in our behalf, by suffering.

There is, however, another explanation, which supposes that there was no serpent at all engaged in this transaction but that Satan acted without any such instrument, being himself *called* the serpent, by way of contempt, and with reference to his insidious nature, just as Christ calls Herod a fox. This title is certainly applied to him in the *New Testament*; but it seems to us that the choice made by him of the instrumentality of the serpent in this transaction, and the curse pronounced upon him in the person of that creature, sufficiently explains his being so named in the later Scriptures.

But there arises the further question, If Satan did not use the instrumentality of the serpent, how did he act? Did he appear at all, or in what likeness did he appear? Some think that he did not make any visible appearance, and that the temptation was in the way of suggestion to the mind of Eve. But that a personal presence is expressed in the curse, and that, as we think, that presence *was* embodied in a serpent, we should deem this a reasonable explanation. We see no harm in it, but that we cannot think it true. Some, however, who agree so far as to hold that "the serpent" is merely an epithet to designate the great enemy of man, contend yet for his personal appearance, and consider that appearance to have been as "an angel of light." This seems to be founded on the text, 2 Cor. xi. 13, where Paul says, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." It seems very doubtful that this passage at all applies to the history of the temptation; or, if so, it admits of being applied to the serpent, for some species of these animals are very beautiful, and one gifted with speech and reason, must have seemed as engaging an object as creation could well supply. But that the presence of a serpent is too clearly set forth to

be evaded, many minds might rest with pleasure in this explanation. There is every reason to think that the walks of the first pair in Eden were cheered by the society of angelic visitants, and that Satan should have appeared as one of these to Eve, might seem a most reasonable and probable form of the temptation. But it is probable that the Almighty would not allow them to have the excuse of so plausible and forceful a temptation as this. At any rate here is the serpent in the third chapter of Genesis. We cannot but see a serpent there. It may have been a very fine serpent—a very plausible serpent—but still a serpent, we conceive, it must have been.

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## SECOND WEEK—SATURDAY.

### WESTERN TRADITIONS OF THE SERPENT AND THE FALL.

SEEING that all mankind are descended from the pair who were tempted to disobedience, under the enticements of the serpent, and whose disobedience

“Brought death into the world, and all our woe.”

we should expect to find throughout the world variously corrupted traditions of that event. The subject is a large one, and we may but touch upon it here. But the fact that such traditions do exist, and that in them all the main circumstances, as related by Moses, may be recognized, is of very material importance. The variations are not greater than might be expected to arise in the course of ages, among different nations, in different regions, under different degrees of cultivation, and within different systems of religious corruption. Indeed, taking these differences into account, the substantial agreement among them in the essential facts is wonderful, and can in no other way be accounted for than by the *literal* truth of the account of this event which the Scrip-



ture has given to us, and by the belief that, as Moses affirms, all the races of men have a common origin. It ought to have some influence upon our judgment, as to the actual instrumentality of a serpent, to find how that animal figures in these accounts. In this, and other points, had the relation we possess been merely a Hebrew allegory, we should be able to see how the traditions of the remote and ancient nations came to be in substantial agreement with that narrative. But all becomes plain everywhere, if we regard that account not only as true, but as *literally* true; for then the facts, as stated, must have been known to those who survived the deluge, and would be borne by their descendants to the various regions into which they dispersed.

Let us glance, very hastily, at some of the most remarkable of these traditions.

According to the simpler legend of Hesiod's "Weeks and Days," the ancient Greeks supposed that man originally lived wifeless and ignorant, but innocent and happy. Prometheus, however, steals fire from heaven, and teaches man its use. The incensed Jupiter threatens vengeance. He orders Vulcan to form a woman of clay, on whom the gods bestow every grace and beauty, but at the same time fill her heart with vanity, and cunning, and all violent devices. This woman, Pandora, Jove presents to Epimetheus, who accepts the gift and marries her, notwithstanding the dissuasions of Prometheus, his brother. From that moment disease and evil of all sorts have been the lot of men. Here there is much substantive coincidence. In both accounts, the unlawful thirst of forbidden knowledge (in this account represented by *fire*, and in our account by the *tree*) is the great offence, and in both the woman is the instrument by which evil is introduced.

We have before us the whole history of this transaction in an engraving\* from an ancient bas-relief; and what is most remarkable, there are two groups at each extremity of the tablet, offering, as it were, a biblical key to the whole scene.

\* See Creuzer's *Symbolik*.—pl. 158.

At one hand are a man and woman, standing naked under a tree, the woman in a drooping and disconsolate posture, the man with one hand raised to the tree, and the other directed towards the woman. It is such a picture that a child would at once say, "that is Adam and Eve!" At the other extremity is a sedate and august figure, seated upon a rock, and strangling the serpent with his outstretched hand.

In the history of the sacred persons of heathen mythology, many remarkable allusions to the same circumstances may be found, and they are the more remarkable for the intimations they afford that the promise of ultimate victory over the old serpent was not forgotten by mankind. Thus Apollo is represented as the son of the supreme God. Out of love to mankind he destroyed the serpent Python, by shooting him with an arrow. After his victory the conqueror underwent a lustration in the Vale of Tempe. Here also he was crowned with laurel, and, according to some, with that mysterious fruit, the gathering of which had proved the source of all evil, and occasioned the necessity for the defeat of the serpent.

So, of the garden of the Hesperides we read that, being situated at the extreme limit of the then known Africa, it was said to have been shut in by Atlas on every side by lofty mountains, on account of an ancient oracle that a son of the deity would at a certain time arrive, open a way of access thither, and carry off the golden apples which hung on a mysterious tree in the midst of the garden. Having procured access to the garden, the hero destroyed the watchful serpent that kept the tree, and gathered the apples. Here we have a strange mixture of the internal and external incidents of Paradise, the ideas of the primeval people viewing from without the Eden from which they were excluded, and coveting its golden fruits, mixed up with those which belong properly to the fall, the serpent, and the tree of life, or of the tree of knowledge—for in these old traditions the trees are not so well distinguished as in the Mosaical account. In this legend of Hercules, the idea seems to be that the access to the tree

of life is impossible, till the Son of God opens the way, and overcomes the serpent by whom that access is prevented. It deserves remark, that in most of these accounts of the dragon or serpent, whom the heathen regarded as the source of evil, and which could be vanquished only by the Son of God in human form, he is called Typhon or Python, a word which signifies "to over-persuade, to deceive." Now this very name Pitho, or Python, designates the great deceiver of mankind. When the damsel at Philippi is said to have been possessed by "a spirit of divination," it is called in the original "a spirit of Python;"\* manifestly showing that the pagan Python was and could be no other than "that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world."†

In engravings from gems and other ancient remains, many representations of this scene may be found. In all of them the Python is a serpent, and in all of them he is wreathed around the fruit-laden tree, exactly as modern painters represent him in their pictures of Eve's temptation. But in these are variations of the pictorial, as well as in the written legend. In some the fruit is gathered for the hero by one of the Hesperides, while another lulls the watchfulness of the serpent; but in others the hero takes the fruit by force, while the serpent covers his head in submission. In one, a very remarkable bas-relief representing this scene, the serpent hangs unwreathed and drooping on the tree, while Hercules deals one more tremendous blow to end the strife. We are to recollect that the worship of Hercules and the traditions connected with it, was avowedly derived from the east—and that the place where he was held in chiefest honor was Tyre. Let it also be remembered that Hercules is represented as the mortal son of the supreme God, and was attacked even in his cradle by two large serpents, which he destroyed.

Still more of Hercules. At Cadiz, which was originally a Phœnician colony, there was a pleasant garden, consecrated by mystic rites and ceremonies to idolatrous worship. In the

\* Acts xvi. 16.

† Rev. xii. 9.

midst of it were two very remarkable trees, which grew out of the tomb of another of the monsters (*Geryon*) whom Hercules overthrew. One of these was of a mixed nature, and it was affirmed of it that it distilled drops of blood. This seems to point to the tree of life, the living tree. Near this, upon an islet in a small lake, was a temple in which Hercules was worshipped under the name of the savior. From this sacred enclosure all women were driven away, as their sex was looked upon as the cause of all calamity and mischief. The whole temple was, moreover, guarded by lions and a flaming fire, which turned every way to forbid the approach of the unholy and profane. Within the sacred enclosure was also an altar dedicated to old age, and those who attended it are mentioned as the only persons who sang pæans in honor of death. Near this were three other altars, dedicated to poverty, hard labor, and to Hercules the savior. Here, surely, are too many coincidences to have been the result of accident.

Again, in the rites of Bacchus, who was worshipped as the first planter of trees and cultivator of gardens, the god is represented naked, drawn in a car by leopards, lions, and other beasts of prey, in manifest allusion to the primitive state of man, and the harmlessness of the wildest animals in that golden age. The persons who took part in the ceremony bore serpents in their hands, and waved them, shouting "Eva! Eva!" with frantic screams. When it is recollected that in the eastern pronunciation the name of Eve is always given in two syllables, there is little question that these orgies had some reference to the circumstances of Paradise.

There were other sacred enclosures of the same nature; but without pausing to describe them, let us notice that traditions of the same kind are embodied with still more remarkable distinctness, in the theology of the remoter north. Thor is represented, in the Edda, as the first-born of the principal divinity; and is exhibited as a middle deity—a mediator between God and man. He is said to have wrestled with death, and, in the struggle, to have been brought upon

his knees,—to have bruised the head of the great serpent with his mace ; and in his final engagement with the monster, to have beaten him to the earth and slain him. The victory, however, costs the life of the mediator-god ; for, recoiling back nine steps, he falls dead upon the spot, suffocated with the flood of venom which the serpent vomits forth upon him.

What shall we say to these things ? This : That the nations embodied in these traditions, the remembrances of paradise, of the fall, and of the promised deliverance. In respect to the past, they are tolerably distinct ; but they become vague, uncertain, and conflicting, when they darkly set forth their ideas respecting the promised Deliverer, who was to bruise the serpent's head, and respecting the nature of that deliverance he was to accomplish.

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### Third Week—Sunday.

THE VOICE OF GOD.—GENESIS III. 8.

THERE is something inexpressibly affecting to the mind in the circumstances of the first interview of the fallen pair with their kind Lord after their sin. As recorded in the simple and touching words of the sacred writer, the circumstances are not only of deep interest themselves, but every word abounds in matter for edifying thought.

When the guilty pair “heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day,” they went and “hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, among the trees of the garden.” That they thus, simply, hoped to hide themselves from Him whose presence fills heaven and earth, clearly shows the kind and condescending manner in which he had hitherto revealed himself to them, and had held intercourse with them. As a child hides himself from a

father he has offended, so hid they from Him. It was a "voice" they heard. It is clear that the tones of that voice had been of kindness and love. There is no reason to suppose that, as they now heard that voice, it was less kind than it had been, for the Lord had not chosen to appear to know their crime but from their own acknowledgment. It was the consciousness of sin that made all the difference—that made the presence most terrible that had hitherto been hailed with reverent joy and filial confidence. Sin did in them, as it does in all their descendants, create a cold and cheerless distance between the heart and God. And certainly their condition was very terrible. *We*, under our strongest experiences of sin as alienating the soul from God, know that there is a way of escape, a way of reconciliation, a way of hope. But this Adam knew not. He knew not, as we do, how it is possible that where "sin hath abounded, grace" may "MUCH MORE abound." The case must in his eyes have appeared most hopeless; and he could have expected nothing less than the death, which He who cannot lie, had declared to be the penalty of transgression.

But let us listen. What excuse does the poor man allege for hiding himself? "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked." Ah! not only naked, but poor, and miserable, and blind. He knew that—and we, in virtue of our sad heritage from him, know that also—keenly know it, are deeply conscious of it, at some time of our lives. What, then, is our course? To hide ourselves, like Adam, from his presence, *because* we are naked? Nay rather, for that very reason, to hasten to him. It was only when the naked prodigal cast himself at his father's feet, saying, "Father, I am not worthy to be called thy son!" that the father said, "bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." It is to the naked he says, "I counsel thee to buy of *me* white raiment, that thou mayst be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." For us, it is only when we know that we are naked, that we can dare to appear before God; that we may then receive of him the wedding gar-

ment, in which alone we can stand before Him, find in his house a mansion, and become the guests of his table.

In answer to Adam's declaration of his nakedness, the Lord demands—"Who told thee that thou wast naked?" Poor Adam knew not that this very consciousness betrayed him. A new faculty had come into play. He found that he had a judge within him, of whose presence, when all things smiled, he had not been conscious. Not, indeed, that he himself was well aware of its active presence, but the power within him was at work, and moved him as it listed. Not that he had yet a tender or an instructed conscience—but conscience was there—had awakened, to sleep no more. A new and terrible task-master held the scourge over him.

"Conscience, what art thou? Thou tremendous power,  
That dost inhabit us without our leave,  
And art within ourselves another self—  
A master-self, that loves to domineer  
And treat the monarch frankly as the slave."—YOUNG.

Conscience performed its part; it made the fallen pair miserable in the consciousness of sin. It filled them with shame and dread. It could do no more! and this was much. It is well that the conscience should be tender and watchful, and that it should smite and torment us, that it should allow us no rest, when we have sinned against God. But the right effect has been missed, unless we are thus driven *to* God, not *from* him, as was Adam; unless our souls are filled with grief, as a child is distressed at having offended a loving father, more than by the fear of punishment; and unless we cast ourselves, in deep contrition, at his feet, confessing that our only hope is in his pity and his love.

This was not the case with our first parents. Though they know and feel that they have sinned, they are far from contrite. They are sulky, evasive, stubborn. They will not humble themselves. Adam is even insulting. He reflects upon God himself—"The woman whom *thou gavest* to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Alas, wretched

Adam! how many of thy sons are like thee in this? However, let us not forget that any of them, in acting thus under the sense of sin, are less to be excused than Adam. To us all the mysteries of God's love in Christ are unveiled—are written before our eyes as with a sunbeam. We *know* that love to be boundless, and that we offend most deeply in distrusting its extent. Adam knew not this; and hence, and here only, is some excuse for him to be found—although one may think that the natural instincts of a child might have guided him better, and would have done so, had not the subtle venom of sin entered his very heart. It is by this conduct that he evinces the dreadful nature of his fall, which might have seemed less apparent, had his behavior been more becoming. It may be, that this hardness and impenitence of heart prevented any more distinct intimation of the Divine purpose than was afforded; and that it was thus obscurely veiled under a curse upon the serpent, whom they supposed to be, and were still suffered to regard as, the tempter. Let us not forget, that the terms of that dark utterance were designed for the first pair, and suited to their mind; and we may then more clearly understand why the obscurity which now tries our understandings, may have been designedly suffered to remain over the transaction. Look at their state of mind, and consider whether, when Adam was casting his crime upon Eve, and Eve upon the serpent, it would have been well to apprise them more clearly who that serpent was. It is certain that they would have regarded the higher quality of the tempter as more excusing their overthrow, and as lessening its shame. Alas! Adam is one of us; he is our father; and his enemy is also ours, and that enemy employs to-day, and will employ to-morrow, against us, the same tools with which he wrought so effectually six thousand years ago.



## THIRD WEEK—MONDAY.

## EASTERN TRADITIONS OF THE FALL.

THE Oriental traditions of Paradise, and of the fall, are less distinct than those of the West, with regard to the leading external facts; but the doctrine itself is more clearly announced, is more broadly recognized as an article of belief, and the influences by which the downfall of man was brought about, are more clearly indicated. The impression which this produces is of *greater* conformity with the scripture narrative in the eastern than in the western legends; although the former take comparatively small notice of the serpent, the woman, and the fruit. The western legends, in fact, dwell upon the *details* and incidents, which are *generalized* in the Oriental systems.

According to the Chinese, man in his original condition was obedient to the heavens; and his state was one of innocence and happiness. There was no disease, no death; he was good and wise by *instinct*; he was all spirit. But the inordinate thirst of knowledge, according to one author, or, according to others, flattery, or the temptation of the woman, was the ruin of mankind. Man held no more power over himself; lust and passion gained ascendancy over him, and he lost his intellectual pre-eminence. All beasts, and birds, and reptiles, now waged war against him; and as he acquired science, all creatures became his enemies.\* Thus, the original state of man is described as being nearly the same as we find it in the Hebrew records; and his downfall is ascribed to the same motives.

The traditions of the Lamaic faith give a length of days to the first of men, which throws the longevity of the Mosaical antediluvians quite into the shade—not less than 60,000 years. They were holy men, invisibly nourished, and pos-

\* *Memoires Chinoises*, vol. i. 107; De Guignes, *Chou-king*: Diss Prelim.

sessing the power of ascending at pleasure to the skies. In an evil hour the earth produced a kind of manna—a honey-sweet substance; a glutton ate of it, and seduced the rest of mankind to follow his example. From that time, man lost his happiness and innocence. His body became gross. His commerce with the skies was past. His days were shortened; and his stature no longer attained its original gigantic proportions. In time, the manna failed, and man resorted by degrees to food more and more gross; and, at last, all virtue fled the world, and wickedness prevailed. Eventually, the spontaneous increase of the earth no longer sufficed, and man began with labor and sorrow to till the ground.\*

Very similar, in some respects, to this, is the Buddhist doctrine, as held by the Cingalese. After the rising of the world from the waste of waters, some souls, who had ended their lives in heaven, descended upon the earth. They were without parts or passions; and reflecting from themselves sufficient light without the sun or moon, they were much delighted with their new situation. After a time these heavenly creatures became so much inflated with pride, and debased by lust, that they were changed into human beings of both sexes; and their resplendent properties having departed from them, they lived long in darkness, until at last the sun, moon, and stars shone forth. Their food was the sweet clay of the earth; but on account of their avarice in accumulating vast quantities for their pleasure, it was rendered insipid for their punishment. After this, they resorted to other kinds of food, which, one after another, they lost by the same means, their nature still degenerating, and their wickedness increasing, till they were at length driven to till the ground for subsistence.†

In the Hindu mythology the references to the fall become even more distinct. The facts narrated uniformly correspond, and the consequences are equally tremendous with those of

\* Pallas, *Travels*, i. 334, &c.

† Upham's *Buddhist Tracts*, pp. 16, 156; Joinville in *Asiatic Researches*, vii. 438.

the Mosaical account. In this mythology the king of the evil assoors, or demons, is called "the king of the serpents," of which poisonous reptiles, folded together in horrible contortions, their hell is formed. What is very remarkable is, that the name of the serpent monarch is *Naga*, and he is the prince of the Nagis or Nacigs, in which Sanscrit appellation we plainly trace the Hebrew NACHASH, which is the very word for the particular serpentine tempter, and in general, for all the serpents throughout the Old Testament.\*

The testimony of the Vishnu Purana—for a translation of which the public is indebted to Professor Horace Wilson—is still more to the purpose: "The beings who were created by Brama were, at first, endowed with righteousness and perfect faith; they abode wherever they pleased, unchecked by any impediment; their hearts were free from guile; they were pure, made free from soil by the observance of the sacred institutes. In their sanctified minds Hari dwelt; and they were filled with perfect wisdom, wherewith they contemplated the glory of Vishnu. After a time, that portion of Hari which has been described as one with Kala ('time'), infused into created beings sin, as yet feeble, though formidable, and passion, and the like. The impediment of the soul's liberation—the seed of iniquity—arose from darkness and desire. The innate perfectness of human nature was then no more evolved. All the perfections were impaired, and these becoming feeble, sin gained strength, and mortals became subject to pain."

Even this is somewhat too general; but let us look to the history of Khrishna. He was one of the incarnations of the Almighty in human shape. He had a fearful conflict with the great serpent *Kali Naga*, who had poisoned the waters of the river, and thereby spread death and destruction around. Yet some of the representations seem to exhibit the people as walking very deliberately into the very jaws of the devouring monster. Khrishna, casting an eye of divine compassion upon the multitudes of dead which lay before

\* Maurice's *Hindustan*, ii. 346; Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*.

him, attacked the mighty serpent, which soon twisted its enormous folds around his body; but Khrishna took hold of the serpent's heads, one after another, and set his foot upon them. The monster struggled in vain, and, after expending all his poison, found himself totally overwhelmed. This triumph of Khrishna is a favorite subject of Hindu paintings;—in whose history the mythologists discover the analogy to Hercules and to Apollo, but altogether overlook, or touch but lightly on, its bearing upon the history of the fall and the promise of a deliverer.

More distinct than all this is the doctrine of the ancient Persians, who seem in this, as in many other points, to have made nearer approaches to the truth than any of the ancient nations. Their doctrine, very briefly stated after the Zendavesta, is this:—The world itself was created during five successive periods, and during a sixth man himself received his being. After his production, man enjoyed a period of innocence and happiness in an elevated region which the Deity (Ormuzd) had assigned to him. But it was necessary to his existence in this state that he should be "humble of heart, and humbly obey the divine ordinances; pure he must be of thought, pure of word, pure of deed." And for a time the first pair were thus holy and happy. They said, "It is Ormuzd who hath given us the water, the earth, and the trees, and the stars, and the moon, and the sun, and all things pure." But at last Ahriman, the evil one, appeared, and beat down their good dispositions; and, under the influence of his glozing lies, they began to ascribe their blessings to him. "Thus Ahriman deceived them, and even to the end will seek to deceive." Emboldened by this success, Ahriman, the liar, presented himself again, and brought with him fruit, of which they ate; and, in that instant, of a hundred excellences which they possessed, all but one departed from them, and they became subject to misery and death. The legend goes on to state how they went on finding inventions and acquiring arts, but becoming more and more under the influence of the evil one—clearly alluding by this to the

fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Another form of the legend compresses the same leading ideas into the brief myth—That Ahriman, after having dared to visit heaven, descended to the earth, and, approaching the man in the form of a serpent, poisoned him with his venom, so that he died. From that time the world fell into confusion—the enemy of all good appeared everywhere, mixed himself with everything, and sought to do mischief both above and below.

If we put these two legends together, regarding them not as two accounts, but as one differently told, we have an account of the fall remarkably conformable to that of Moses. Of all the old traditions, it is the only one in which the intervention of the devil is distinctly recognized. Other legends have the serpent, but here alone in that serpent the evil one is seen. It is remarkable that the intervention of the woman is not distinctly recognized in any of these eastern traditions, though it is implied in some of them. Does this singular omission arise from the low position which woman occupies in the East, which rendered unpalatable that idea of woman's relation to man in paradise, which the fact of man's yielding to her temptation would suggest? In the account last noticed, the fact, though not expressed, is implied in the additional statement, that, upon the fall, discord arose between the man and the woman, so that they lived apart for fifty years.

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### THIRD WEEK—TUESDAY.

#### MAN AFTER THE FALL.

Who is there among us that would not give twenty of the best volumes from his shelves, for twenty lines which should acquaint him with the condition of our first parents during the first years after the fall, and their expulsion from paradise? This knowledge is withheld from us; yet, from what

does transpire, some inferences may be deduced, and some reasonable conjectures offered.

A question of deep interest is, Whether they repented of their crime, and humbled themselves before Him whom they had so deeply offended? From all that appears up to the time when judgment was pronounced, they were in a state of mind which God could not regard with pleasure, and which would have left little hope for their welfare in this world, or in the world to come, if they had remained in it. We therefore seize with eagerness every hint, however slight, which will allow us to hope that their hearts were touched and softened, by their being dealt with much more leniently than they could have ventured to hope. Death was indeed brought into the world, and woe; but the death was not immediately inflicted, and was divested of many of its terrors; and the woe, though awful, was attended with mitigating circumstances, and prospects of deliverance. They might have been extinguished from the face of the earth. But to what purpose? Should man's sin render the work of God of none effect? No; this race should still replenish the earth with intelligent inhabitants, fit to bear rule over all other creatures; punished, indeed, and degraded, but not consumed; cast down, but not destroyed. We are apt to regard the scene as one merely of punishment; but it was one of mercy also—of great mercy, of far greater mercy than Adam and Eve had any right or reason to expect. We, therefore, willingly embrace the opinion, that they did humble themselves under the mighty hand of God; and that the same hand which provided for the comfort of their now shivering frames, by covering them with the skins of beasts in lieu of the rudely intertwined leaves with which they had, in the first instance, covered their naked bodies, did also soothe their grief, and send comfort into their souls. This is the general belief of the Oriental writers, who furnish ample accounts of the remorse and lamentations of the first man. The Jewish writers enter into the same view, and even go so far as to ascribe to Adam the authorship of the twenty-

second psalm. We see no reason to concur in that opinion; but it must be admitted that the particular psalm has been selected with judgment. The poets are entirely on the same side. Thus Milton makes Adam, after some discourse (not all pleasant) with Eve, conclude thus—

“ We need not fear  
 To pass commodiously this life, sustained  
 By him with many comforts, till we end  
 In dust, our final rest and native home.  
 What better can we do, than, to the place  
 Repairing where He judged us, prostrate fall  
 Before him reverent; and there confess  
 Humbly our faults, and pardon beg; with tears  
 Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air  
 Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign  
 Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek?  
 Undoubtedly He will relent, and turn  
 From his displeasure; in whose look serene,  
 When angry most He seemed, and most severe,  
 What else but favor, grace, and mercy shone?”

Probably more than a hundred and twenty years of the life of Adam and Eve pass without record in the sacred history, save what relates to the history of Cain and Abel. These sons seem to have been born soon after the expulsion from Eden; and as Seth, who was born when Adam was a hundred and thirty years old, received his name in commemoration of the then recent death of Abel, we cannot suppose the interval much less than a hundred and twenty-five years, even allowing for some time in Eden before the fall. A period fruitful in experiences this must have been in the life of the first pair. Adam was to till the ground from which he was taken; and as he had previously dressed and kept the garden of Eden, he had a knowledge of the processes and implements necessary to this culture. He had also, as we apprehend, much knowledge of various kinds, brought with him from Eden, and was far from being the mere “noble savage” which some fancy him to have been. Still, in his new condition, with a sterner soil, a less genial climate,

and less pacific animal subjects, Adam would have many needs in food, clothing, and habitation, of which he had no experience in Eden; and it is our impression, that instead of being now, as before, inspired with all the knowledge necessary to his condition, he was left much to himself, to build up a mass of knowledge acquired by experience upon the basis of his attainments in Eden. In this, no doubt, he made great progress; for although no longer gifted with the very enviable faculty of acquiring knowledge by intuition, there is no reason to question that his intellectual powers were strong and active, and, with the advantage of his education in paradise, would readily suggest to him the uses of things, and the means by which the results he desired might be achieved. We do not know of any writer who has endeavored to fill up this blank in the history of Adam more fully and pleasingly, than the old French poet Du Bartas, whose work we have more than once had occasion to quote.

He thinks that at first Adam must have had rather hard work to get a living.

“E'er yet the trees, with thousand fruits y'fraught,  
 In formal chequers were not fairly brought;  
 The pear and apple lived dwarf-like there,  
 With oaks and ashes shadowed everywhere.  
 And yet, alas! their meanest simple cheer,  
 Our wretched parents bought full hard and dear.  
 To get a plum sometimes poor Adam rushes  
 With thousand wounds among a thousand bushes.  
 If they desire a medlar for their food,  
 They must go seek it through a fearful wood:  
 Or a brown mulberry, then the rugged bramble  
 With a thousand scratches doth their skin bescramble.”

They are then described as hoarding up nuts for their subsistence during the winter.

With regard to their clothing, Du Bartas conveniently chooses to forget that they had dresses of skin by the special providence of God, that he may have the poetical satisfaction of decking them out with leaves, which he does most



fancifully. While Adam is about foraging for food, Eve also collects all the fine feathers that fall in her way:

“ And then with wax the smaller plumes she sears,  
 And sows the greater with a white horse hairs:  
 (For they as yet did serve her in the stead  
 Of hemp, and tow, and flax, and silk, and thre ad):  
 And thereof makes a medley coat, so rare  
 That it resembles Nature’s mantle fair,  
 When in the sun, in pomp all glistening,  
 She seems with smiles to woo the gaudy spring.”

This splendid dress she works secretly, and when it is completed, presents it to her husband, and is abundantly rewarded by his applause and admiration, and by the magnificence of his appearance when he puts it on. This is a very fine fancy.

The approaching winter, with its frosts, creates the need of warmer clothing, and this the poet provides by making Adam meet with a flock of sheep, whose comfortable raiment suggests to him the feasibility and fitness of appropriating the fleece to his own use, which he does (we are sorry to say) by knocking the fairest of them down, and flaying it with a fish-bone.

Then as to their dwelling:—

“ A vaulted rock, a hollow tree, a cave.  
 Were the first buildings that them shelter gave.”

But finding the one to be too moist, the other too narrow, and the other “over cold,” a more commodious habitation was designed:—

“ Within a wood they choose  
 Sixteen fair trees, that never leaves did lose,  
 Whose equal front in quadran form prospected  
 As if of purpose nature them erected:  
 Their shady boughs first bow they tenderly,  
 Then interbraid and bind them curiously:  
 That one would think who had this arbor seen,  
 ’T had been true ceiling painted over green.”

From this they are eventually led to the construction of a still better habitation, a framework of dry boughs, walled with straw-compacted mud, and the poet leaves them somewhat comfortably lodged.

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### THIRD WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

#### CAIN AND ABEL.

It was natural that Eve should exult greatly when a man child was born unto her. At this day, when the earth is full of people, and the relations of mother and child are well understood before they are actually experienced, which of all Eve's daughters does not find her heart leap with joy, when her first-born son enters the world! How much more would this be the case with Eve! The whole matter was beyond the range of her experience and her ideas. It was all new, all mystery to her. The child that then received its birth, was not only her first-born, but the first child that had been born into the world, the first child that she had ever seen, the first infant that ever smiled in gladness or wept in grief. It is natural that she should therefore attach the utmost importance to this event. That she did so we know from the name she bestowed upon the child, Cain, which means an *acquisition* or *possession*, "because," she said, "I have acquired a man from the Lord." This pious recognition of the agency of the Lord in providing her with so great a blessing, is one of the circumstances which indicate that the first pair were brought to a right state of feeling after their fall and banishment. There are some who would translate the words by "I have gotten a man, the Lord," implying that she supposed this to be the promised seed, who was to bruise the serpent's head, and avowing her belief in his divinity by calling him Jehovah (the Lord); but this notion will scarcely bear examination, and it assumes a measure of religious know-

ledge which there is no evidence that Eve possessed. That she expected some great eventual blessing from that promise, and that she regarded the birth of her first-born son as a pledge of its accomplishment, is probable, that may well have formed part of her joy. If, as some suppose, this child was not bestowed until some time had passed after the loss of Eden, the first pair may have doubted whether any children would be given to them, or in what manner the promise was to be fulfilled. In that case many prayers would have been offered for this blessing, and when it came at last, well may Eve in the fulness of her heart have cried that at length "she had obtained a man-child from Jehovah."

The first of mothers, the first woman who ever dandled a babe upon her knee, or nourished it from her breast, would however soon learn that her new relation was not without its anxieties and trials, and that it involved duties perhaps more onerous to one who had never known childhood herself, but had at once burst into fulness of life, than to other women since. All her experience must have been founded upon what she had observed in animals, whose young became in a very short time active, frolicsome, and entertaining; and this would little have prepared her to expect the long and helpless infancy of her new-born child, with the restraints which it imposed, and the sedulous attention which it exacted; in all of which she, the sole woman upon the earth, had none of that aid from others which her daughters have always been able to obtain.

It is quite as probable from these causes as from any other that have been suggested, that the birth of the next son was not hailed with the same exultation—that the mother bestowed upon him no name of gladness, but one (*Abel, vanity*) indicating the vain and uncertain character of human expectations. As this name happened to correspond to the unhappy fate of this son, some have thought that it must have been given after his death; but this is altogether unlikely, since that of Cain his brother was manifestly given at birth; and life had already become to the first pair what it has been

since to all their descendants—so replete with troubles and disappointed hopes, as to render a name of sorrow always appropriate.

As the lads grew up, distinctive walks in life were chosen by them, or were assigned them by their father, doubtless in conformity with their tastes and habits of body and mind. Cain became a tiller of the ground, and Abel a keeper of sheep. This fact is valuable. It shows that the first men were not in that rude condition into which some branches of their descendants fell. The distinction of pursuits belongs to a certain state of civilization. The savage man has but one pursuit—or each man follows equally all the pursuits that collectively make up his form of life. But here the two first-born of men take up different and distinct pursuits, and doubtless applied all the inventive force of their minds to the improvement of their respective arts.

The tillage of the ground began in Eden, and had been carried on after the fall by the father of mankind. When Cain took it up, it had no doubt been brought into an advanced condition in many of its principal processes; and if Cain possessed any of the inventive ingenuity which distinguished his descendants, it must have improved materially under his hands. But that there is reason to fear that Cain's sin and fall had root in an inordinate appreciation of the results of his skill and toil—it would be pleasant to think of the delight and pride with which the strong young man would lay before his parents larger and more luscious fruits, finer and more juicy roots, and fuller ears of corn—the product and reward of his care—than *he* had ever seen in a state of nature, or than had met *their* view since the cherubim waved their flaming swords between them and paradise.

Adam had brought no small knowledge of animals from Eden, and this, imparted to Abel, must have availed him much in the commencement of his pursuit as a keeper of sheep. He does not appear, however, to have gone further than the domestication of sheep, and perhaps of dogs, as the guardians of his flock. The domestication of the larger cat-

tle, appears to have been the unaided invention of a later age. The charge of a flock has always been regarded as a more contemplative and gentle pursuit than any other, and more favorable to holy and prayerful thought. Many other pursuits, even agriculture, require the mind and hand to be intent upon its actual labor; whereas the care of a flock affords leisure for meditation. It is in conformity with this experience, that the more gentle and thoughtful character is usually, in our minds, ascribed to Abel, and the more abrupt and active to Cain; somewhat analogous to the differences between Jacob and his brother Esau; and the subsequent facts of their history are in accordance with this impression

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### THIRD WEEK—THURSDAY.

#### EARLY POPULATION.

THERE are two prevalent notions connected with the era of the death of Abel, both of which are doubtless wrong. One is, that Cain and Abel were both young men, some twenty or thirty years of age. But we have shown reasons for believing, that they were not less than a hundred and twenty-five years of age when that dreadful event took place; but it is yet true that they were young. When the life of man reached to nearly a thousand years, an age like this was youthful.

The other is, that besides their parents, Cain and Abel were the only persons in the world, or, at most, that there were besides merely their wives, and perhaps a few young children of theirs. But the fact, that so many years had passed, would alone render improbable what might have seemed likely under the notion that but a few years had elapsed. It is quite incredible that the pair, destined to replenish the earth, and who had children after that calamity, should have been without any in the long interval. Those whom we do know, are named only because there was

something remarkable to record of them; but that there were others not named, is certain, from the facts which imply, that there were other people in the earth at the time. We know there were daughters; and the fact, that their existence only transpires incidentally, expresses the probability of a similar silence respecting other children. Cain, we know, was married, which was probably the case also with Abel. They must, therefore, from the necessity of the case, have had sisters, with whom they contracted marriage, although neither their names, nor the fact of their birth, are recorded. One would like to have had some information respecting the first daughters of Eve. There is an old tradition, that Cain and Abel had respectively twin sisters, and that the twin of Cain became the bride of Abel, and the twin of Abel the bride of Cain. She who was born with Cain is, in Arabian tradition, called Achima, and she born with Abel, Lebuda; but the Oriental Christians know them as Azrun and Ovain.\* We have seen a calculation in Saurin's Dissertations, which makes it out that at the time of the death of Abel (which the writer supposes to have been in the year of the world 128), there might have been 32,768 persons, descended from eight children of Cain and Abel, born before the year 25; and that, adding other subsequent children of Cain and Abel, their children and children's children, there might have been 421,164 men descended from them, without reckoning women and children. But there is always some flaw in these round calculations. So in this case it is forgotten, that the antediluvians do not appear to have had children so early. In the genealogy, none of the persons named has a son before he is sixty-five, and some not till far past a hundred years of age. This implies that the period of childhood and adolescence was protracted in proportion to the duration of their lives, and renders it probable that the old patriarchal fathers were in appearance and constitution as young at sixty or sixty-five, as our youth at sixteen or seventeen. Still, even according to this rule, Cain and

\* D'Herbelot, art. *Cabil*.

Abel may have had a considerable number of children and grand-children at the time indicated ; and allowing for other possible children of Adam and Eve, there must have been at the time a considerable number of persons in the world—quite sufficient to account for Cain's dread of being slain for the murder of Abel ; and also for his building a city soon after his migration from the paternal roof.

Let us counsel the reader to be content with such broad facts as may assure us that, according to the intimations in Genesis, there may well have been a considerable number of persons in the world at the death of Abel, and a large population before the deluge. For exact arithmetical calculations there is no basis. The law of population itself is fluctuating, and is affected by a thousand circumstances which such calculations cannot embrace. Thus it is certain that if the population had gone on since the deluge in the ratio which certain calculations assume or endeavor to establish, the world could not by this time contain the inhabitants thus provided for it, and we should be standing in layers three or four deep upon each other's heads.

Having thus been led into the question of early population, we cannot but say how little reliance ought to be placed on such calculations as those of Bishop Cumberland, and, in later days, of Mr. Malthus, as to the rate of increase in population. The former learned calculator, reckoning the population after the flood, quietly assumes that every child born shall live forty years at least, and that every young man and woman shall marry when twenty years of age, and shall become the parents of twenty children in the next twenty years ; and this is supposed to be universal ; not one is allowed to die till his task is accomplished.\* All this is in opposition to known facts, as shown in the history of the patriarchs. If we may build upon the genealogy in the tenth chapter of Genesis, the allowance of children to a family seems not to have been materially greater than at present ; and historically we know, that Abraham's father had but three sons, one of whom died

\* Cumberland's *Essay on Populousness*.

prematurely ; that Abraham had no children till he was past eighty ; that Isaac did not marry till he was about forty years old, and had but two sons ; and that Jacob and Esau also (although they had more children), were above forty when they married. In view of facts like these, which occur in every age—and in the recollection of the wars, pestilences, and famines with which God scourges the pride of man—we cannot but assent to the remarks of a writer who had occasion to consider this matter closely.\*

“The increase of mankind seems to be, in an especial manner, kept by the Almighty under his own immediate sovereign disposal ; and so mysteriously, that we cannot calculate, nor even guess at, the probable produce of any marriage, under whatever circumstances of rank, wealth, health, age, or climate. The most healthy of every class in life are very often barren ; while we constantly see a numerous offspring from sickly, diseased, or even deformed parents. Uncertainty of this kind does not exist as to the lower orders of the creation ; as to their increase, we are allowed to calculate and speculate with tolerable exactness. This utter uncertainty as to the very root of population, involves the whole subject, more or less, in its consequences ; and with all our labors and tables, however useful and convenient we may find them for the present purposes of life, no sooner do we attempt to open vistas into futurity, than we find ourselves on ground forbidden to the children of men.”

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### THIRD WEEK—FRIDAY.

#### THE OFFERINGS OF CAIN AND ABEL.—GEN. iv. 3—7.

WE are informed that, “in process of time, Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof.” If the record stopped here, this proceeding would doubtless meet our approbation, as exceedingly suit-

\* Crosthwaite's *Synchronology* p. 247.



able and becoming. What could be more proper than that Cain, who was a cultivator, should bring his fruits, or that Abel, who was a shepherd, should bring his sheep—each offering perfectly appropriate to the condition and pursuits of the offerer.

But let us read on: “And the Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and his offering he had no respect.” This sets us to inquire where lay the root of offence in Cain’s offering, and of acceptance in Abel’s? Was the offering of Cain in itself objectionable, or was the offence in the mind and temper of the offerer? We must turn to the New Testament for more light on this matter. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, that it was “by faith” that “Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain;”\* and another apostle, evidently referring to this offering, plainly states, that Cain’s works were evil and his brother’s righteous.† Cain had, therefore, in this matter, an untoward disposition, and displayed a lack of faith. But, still, was this shown in the nature of the offering itself, or in the frame of mind with which it was presented? Whatsoever, in the things of God, is not of faith is sin; and, beyond question, Abel himself might have sinned by the deficiency of faith, even in offering a proper oblation. We are led to think, however, that God had appointed a certain manner of approach to him; and that to approach him in other manner than this was offensive and rebellious.

What strikes us first, is the remarkable fact of the existence of sacrifice at this early period, so soon after the fall. This implies further communications of God’s will to man than we have as yet been distinctly acquainted with. The usage of sacrifice—the idea that the life-blood of an animal could be an acceptable offering to God, could hardly have arisen in this early and unbloody age without a special intimation of some kind from Heaven. It is so repugnant to all the notions that we associate with that age, that the idea of its human origin at once strikes the mind as a moral impossi-

\* Heb. xi. 4.

† 1 John iii. 12.

bility. If, then, this rite had been so early inculcated—it would seem immediately after the fall—some idea of its meaning must have been afforded, that it might seem reasonable and proper—that it might become an expression of faith among a simple-minded people. If any explanation of its purport were supplied, that explanation could have been only one: that man was a sinner; that without shedding of blood there was no remission of sin; that although, indeed, the blood of animals could not take away sin, yet that thereby they could declare their guiltiness before God, and express their faith and hope in the atonement thereafter to be offered by “the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” We know that this was the purport of the sacrifices under the law, and as these sacrifices were the same which had previously existed, they had no doubt, then, the same meaning attached to them. Now the need of this form of faith was not peculiar to the keepers of sheep: it has been practised by men of all kinds of occupation, in all ages. With this clue, we may therefore be able to detect the causes of the ill reception which Cain’s offering found.

Was it not that he declined to enter into the spirit of the sacrificial institution; and while willing to bring a thank-offering in testimony of the Lord’s goodness, refused to offer that acknowledgment of sin, and to express that need of atonement by blood, which the animal sacrifice expressed? If we contend that the offence of Cain lay at all in the difference of his offering from that of Abel, we cannot see any other satisfactory explanation but that which this supposition affords. This explanation does not, indeed, as some allege, necessarily grow out of the mere difference; for although we must ever maintain that sacrifice had a Divine origin, designed to set forth the atonement by the death of Christ, yet having found existence, it was not always offered in that high meaning, but was often simply a thank-offering. As a thank-offering, the offering of Cain might have been as acceptable as that of Abel. If, therefore, we lay any stress upon the difference—and it is impossible to avoid doing so,

we must allow that the time when the offering was made—"at the end of days," for such is the meaning of the words rendered "in process of time"—was some commemorative day; perhaps of the fall, perhaps a Sabbath, in which a sacrifice of atonement was expected and usually rendered. That Cain refused to render this service, but brought his vegetable products, in which he may be presumed to have taken much pride—as if an acknowledgment of the Lord's goodness in the bounties of nature was all that could be drawn from him—seems to meet all the difficulties of the case, and to correspond to all the New Testament allusions to it.

But how did the Lord testify his approval of Abel's offering, and his rejection of Cain's? The mode most in accordance with scripture examples is that the accepted offering was consumed by supernatural fire. It may be that in these most primitive times, when the intercourse of God with man seems to have been still more immediate than it afterwards became, this sign of acceptance was always afforded, and perhaps this instance was the first in which it had been withheld. This would intimate that Cain had previously, under the influence of his father, made proper offerings, and now ventures upon a new and a wrong thing. If, as some suppose, and as the narrative seems to imply, the first family still remained in the neighborhood of Eden, in presence of the "flaming sword," or sword-like flame, which precluded all return to that happy seat, it is by no means unlikely, that this flame was regarded as the Shekinah, or symbol of the Divine presence, like the "glory of the Lord" in after times; and that the flame was darted therefrom to consume the accepted offering. There are many facts in the corruptions of Paganism which seem to owe their origin to the circumstances of man's second condition on the outside of Eden, but in presence of the sacred symbols—the cherubim and the flaming sword, by which it was shut in.

There does not seem to us anything to indicate that this was the first occasion that offerings had been made by Cain and Abel. Considering the length of time since the fall, all

probability is against that notion. There must, therefore have been something new—some innovation on the part of Cain—to account for the higher favor with which Abel's offering was received. It was probably an act of rebellion, the risings of a proud and haughty spirit against an act of humiliation and contrition for sin. The deep displeasure evinced by Cain shows that this was no common matter, and that some strong principle is involved. That it was of the nature which has been indicated, will be placed beyond question, if we receive an interpretation of the Lord's remonstrance, which has strong claims to consideration. In the common version, God says to Cain, "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, *sin lieth at the door.*" This rendering of the last clause has the advantage of a popular idiom in the English language, which gives it an adventitious force and signification. In the marginal reading it has, instead of "sin," "the punishment of sin;" but the Hebrew word means in many places a sin-offering, that is, an animal victim; and that being understood here, the words will admit, and we incline to think that they require, a signification which may be thus paraphrastically expressed—"If thou doest not well, lo, there now lieth at thy very door a lamb, by offering which for thy sin thou mayest acceptably express thy contrition and obtain forgiveness." This sense is not so new as some think it; and it has now obtained the sanction of many sound scholars and theologians; and it appears to settle the question involved in this offering in conformity with the view of the subject which has seemed to us the most probable.

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### THIRD WEEK—SATURDAY.

#### THE DEATH OF ABEL.—GENESIS IV. 8.

FROM the position which the account of the death of Abel occupies, immediately after the narrative of the sacri

fact, it has been always considered that the murder of his brother by Cain arose out of the envy and ill-feeling which the Lord's preference of Abel's offering engendered. This seems to us also probable; but unless the circumstance had a natural and obvious connection, the allocation would not make this clear, seeing that in this most concise and rapid narrative, events closely joined to each other in description, are often separated by intervals of many years.

It would seem, however, that there was some short interval, during which Cain nourished his wrath in his heart, and awaited an opportunity of testifying his resentment, without allowing his brother to perceive how deeply he was moved. One day he invited Abel in a friendly manner to walk abroad with him into the fields, as they had no doubt been used to do. The original as it stands—"And Cain said to (not talked with) Abel his brother," has no immediate grammatical connection with what follows, and in some of the Hebrew copies a blank space is left after these words, as if something had been omitted. This blank is filled up in the Samaritan copy and the Septuagint version, so that in them the text reads—"And Cain said to Abel his brother, Let us go forth into the fields. And it came to pass when they were in the fields, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." Whether Cain premeditated the result, when he invited his brother to walk with him, or whether it was suggested during the walk, and that Cain's smouldering passions were kindled into a consuming flame by something that passed between him and Abel, can never be known. The most natural and probable supposition is, that although he did intend evil, he had not contemplated the death of his brother; but as too often happens among men, the excitement of his un-governed passions carried him far beyond his purposes, and ceased not until his brother lay dead at his feet. It may be even doubtful whether Cain intended or expected to slay his brother when he lifted his hand against him. Such an intention implies far more than it would express at this day. To us the idea of human death is familiar. Scarce a month

passes in which some one whom we knew—scarce a year in which some one whom we loved—has not died; and from day to day our ears are filled with the reports of the death of man from violence, accident, or crime. But it was not thus when Abel died. The death of man was not yet numbered among human experiences. The eye had not yet seen, and therefore the heart could scarcely yet conceive, that most awful sight—a human corpse. That, therefore, Cain should have premeditated Abel's death, is scarcely to be imagined. If he did, it must have been like an invention to him. He knew indeed that man was to die; and he had seen animals dead. But it is open to question whether he even supposed man liable to death by violence. Considering man's higher nature and endowments, and in the absence of all experience of the matter, it seems more than probable that Cain could scarcely have supposed that the life of man might be as easily extinguished as that of an animal—and indeed more easily than that of most of the inferior creatures.

It is remarkable that oriental tradition, which is always ready at inventions to supply the deficiency of knowledge, ascribes the death of Abel to the direct instigation of Satan. Cain was, according to the Moslem legend, filled with envy and hatred towards his brother, but *did not know* how he might destroy his life. But one day Iblis (Satan) placed himself in Cain's way, as he walked with Abel in the fields, and seizing a stone, shattered therewith the head of an approaching wolf; Cain followed his example, and with a large stone struck his brother's forehead, till he fell lifeless to the ground.\*

The Jewish tradition recognizes the intervention of a dispute between the brothers; and this is in itself probable, though we may well question that it was at all of the character which is supposed. Cain and Abel, says this tradition, divided the world between them, the one to have the movable and the other the immovable things thereof. Upon this there arose a quarrel between them. Abel said to

\* Weil's *Biblical Legends*; D'Herbelot, Art. *Cabil*.

his brother, "Take off the clothes thou wearest, for they are part of the movables, and belong to me;" whereupon Cain said to Abel, "Avaunt; get thee up into the air, for the earth thou treadest is mine." And there arose a conflict between them, in which Abel was slain.\* This is simply puerile; and the Jerusalem Targum has a better legend,—That Cain denied with warmth the doctrine of eternal life, of a just judge, and of a judgment to come—but that Abel affirmed and vindicated these points; whereupon his brother arose upon him and slew him. We may rely upon it, that had the legendist, who makes these high doctrines the subject of dispute, himself understood the greater doctrine of an atonement as expressed in the act of sacrifice, he would have made *that* the subject of their discussion.

We are not told what became of Abel's body. Yet the first human death necessitated the discovery of some mode for the disposal of the corpse. This must have been a serious difficulty. No animals bury their dead; one species eats up the dead of another. But this mode of disposing of the dead revolts the feelings of an intelligent being. The mere idea of this, must have been most shocking to the person who stood before the first human corpse. It seems to us, that the first and most natural impulse must have been to protect the corpse from that common lot, by concealing it from the beasts of prey. Or if this did not in the first instance occur, the progress of decomposition would soon awaken the other natural feeling, of placing the remains of the dead out of sight. This might be done, either by placing the body in a cavern and closing up the entrance; by heaping up stones or earth over the body; or by digging a grave in which it might be laid. All these are natural suggestions, in which different forms of sepulture have originated; and it is hard to say which was most probably followed. It may further be asked—Was the body buried by the murderer or by the parents? Poets, who delight in picturing human emotion of the deepest class, adopt the notion that the body was found

\* *Midrash*, 11. Tr. *Amudeh Sheva*.

by the father, and laid by him in the grave. Oriental tradition takes another view. It states that Satan, having tempted Cain to slay his brother, changed himself into a raven, and having slain another raven, dug a hole in the earth with his bill, and laying the dead one into it, covered it with the earth he had dug up. Cain did the same with his brother. As for Adam, he long remained in ignorance of what had become of his beloved son; but one day his ploughshare struck against an obstruction in the field, and opening the ground he discovered the still distinguishable remains of his lost Abel. It is beautifully added, that "it was not until he thus fully learned what had befallen Abel, that he resigned himself to the will of God, and was comforted." This, the current Moslem tradition, is founded on a Jewish one, which states that "Cain was not aware of the Lord's knowledge of hidden things: he therefore buried Abel, and met the inquiry, 'Where is Abel thy brother?' by the bold question, 'Am I my brother's keeper?'" It certainly does seem to us, that both the inquiry and the answer become more emphatic on the supposition that Cain had actually concealed the body of his murdered brother.

There is, however, another Hebrew legend—not without beauty—which agrees better with the poets, and in which the Moslem raven appears: "The dog which had watched Abel's flocks, guarded also his corpse, protecting it against beasts and birds of prey. Adam and Eve sat beside it, and wept, not knowing what to do. But a raven, whose friend had died, said, I will go and teach Adam what he must do with his son! It dug a grave, and laid the dead raven in it. When Adam saw this, he said to Eve, Let us do the same with our child! The Lord rewarded the raven, and no one is therefore allowed to harm their young: they have food in abundance, and their cry for rain is always heard."



### Fourth Week—Sunday.

THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.—GENESIS IV. 10-16.

ACCORDING to the Scripture record, Cain, judged of God for his awful crime, is banished, and wanders forth into the country eastward of the land of Eden, in which it thus appears that the primeval family had hitherto sojourned. There is something more in this than meets the ear. Was this banishment so great a punishment? Cain thought so, and he could well judge. The *land* of Eden was not the *garden* of Eden, and though probably a fertile spot, there were doubtless other spots on earth as fair as that. He was banished from that which had been till now his home; and we may admit, that this was a greater punishment to the first-born man, than it has been to any since. Of the world that lay beyond that central spot, he had no knowledge. There is but a small portion of the earth with the condition of which we are unacquainted. The experience of innumerable travelers by land and sea is in our hands, to tell us what we may expect in any region to which we may go. But none had brought to the family in the land of Eden, the good or evil report of the world beyond; and, as the unknown is generally terrible, Cain may have conceived the outer world to be little better than a desolate waste.

But there was something more than this that made Cain feel this punishment to be greater than he could bear. He knew what that was, and he himself states it—"From thy face I shall be hid." It does not seem to us that this refers to the internal consciousness of God's favor and protection, which he felt that he should no longer possess. Cain could not be so ignorant as not to know, that this did not depend upon place, for it was within himself. He might have lacked this as much in staying as in going; and yet he speaks of it as that of which his departure would deprive him. We can only understand that he refers to some sensible and local

manifestation of God's presence, by which that spot was glorified, and from which distance would remove him. Having reached thus far, we are at no loss to find this manifestation in the sword-like flame, between the cherubim that kept the way of the tree of life. This we know was at the east end of the *garden* of Eden, and the garden itself was in the eastern part of the *land* of Eden. If, therefore, the first family remained in presence of the splendor and of the cherubim, they were on the east side of Eden, and one going directly therefrom would proceed eastward. And a corroboration of this view is afforded by the fact, that Cain is described as proceeding eastward when he "went out from the presence of the Lord."—Gen. iv. 16.

When it is borne in mind, that the Mosaical law was to a great extent a renewal of ancient patriarchal usages, which had in the course of time become corrupted or obscured, we derive a strong confirmation of this view, from the fact, that under that law the presence of God was manifested among his people in the supernatural radiance or Shekinah which rested over the arch, between the cherubim; and as, in the land of Eden, we in like manner find the radiance and the cherubim, it is quite natural and allowable to suppose, that these objects occupied relatively the same position in the one sacred dispensation as in the other. This was then, we may infer, the symbol of "the presence of the Lord" from which Cain went forth; and from it probably issued the Voice which then pronounced his doom, and which had before graciously reasoned with him. In this Presence worship was rendered, and sacrifices were offered; and from it the signs of the Divine complacency or displeasure were afforded. That Cain regretted the privation of any spiritual privileges in being cast forth from the Presence of the Lord, may be doubted. But having grown up before it, he had no idea of life apart from it, and he probably regarded it as essential to his safety and temporal well-being. His mind was gross; and it may be questioned that he could realize the idea of a spiritual presence apart from the symbol. This is indicated

in his attempt to conceal his crime from God, when asked what had become of his brother; and it has more than once occurred to us, that this fact is explained and illustrated by the supposition, that the murder was perpetrated in some spot where intervening objects—rocks or trees—hid the radiance from his view; and to which, therefore, he ventured to imagine that the Divine cognizance, embodied in that radiance, could not extend.

What state of mind Cain carried with him into his banishment, is not recorded in the sacred narrative, and cannot with certainty be known. That he repented of the murder of his brother—that a horror-stricken conscience attended him all his life long, that

“He found, where'er he roamed, uncheered, unblest,  
No pause from suffering, and from toil no rest,”

is probable, and may indeed be regarded as part of the doom denounced upon him. But that he truly repented—that there was any vital change in that evil of heart, which led to his sin, and entailed this punishment—there is no evidence to show. Indeed, the evidence inclines the other way; for, if he had clearly seen, and thenceforth eschewed the evil which had slain his peace, he could not but have brought up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But instead of that we find his descendants busy for the world, its policies, and interests—strong in arts and arms—but also “inventors of evil things,” filling the earth with violence, and urging on that deepening stream of corruption which eventually drowned the world.

Yet let us not ascribe all the evil of the old world to the race of Cain, or cast any needless stigma upon the great fathers of useful arts who are named as of his race. It was not until the times just before the flood that the corruption was universal; and then it was not confined to the seed of Cain, but extended to all but one small family of the race of the righteous Seth, not to speak of the descendants, probably numerous, of the other sons and daughters which the Scripture assigns to Adam. We may hope that in

the earlier ages, there were many, even in Cain's race, who lived and died in the fear of God. The family of Cain was, however, the first that went forth from the Presence of the Lord—and was thereby withdrawn from the paternal influence and instruction, as well as from the accustomed means of worship and incitements to obedience. The ordinary experience of life enables us to see that corruption and crime would *soonest* arise among such a people, and might from them extend to the other races of mankind.

The traditions and opinions of the Jews respecting the further career of Cain, as entertained at and about the time of our Saviour, are embodied in the statement furnished by Josephus, who alleges that Cain, so far from amending his life after his sentence, plunged into deeper evils, and went on from crime to crime—abandoning himself to his lusts, and to all kinds of outrage, without regard to common justice. The wicked became his companions, and he enriched himself by rapine and violence. By the invention of weights and measures, he corrupted the simplicity and plain-dealing of former times; and exchanged the innocency of the primitive generosity and openness, by new contrivances of human policy and suspicious craft. He was the first who invaded the common rights of mankind by bounds and enclosures; and the first who built a city, and fortified and peopled it. Although much of this is absurd, and seems based on that ancient superstition which identifies great knowledge with great wickedness, it indicates the current of ancient opinion respecting the after-career of Cain; and that opinion was probably correct enough in its substantial purport, however absurdly illustrated.

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#### FOURTH WEEK—MONDAY.

##### THE DISCOVERY OF FIRE.

THE Scripture, although it does notice various important inventions, has no record of the discovery of fire. Yet the

sacred history does afford some facts by which the investigation of the subject might be materially assisted.

There seems a general impression that fire was not known until after the fall. It never seems to have entered any one's mind that there could be need of fire in Eden. The happy temperature must have prevented the need of fire for warmth; and no one has ever supposed that the first pair had any other food in paradise than fruits in their natural state.

The fire which guarded Eden shows the *presence* of fire—but does not indicate that man had yet learned how to reduce that fierce element to his service. Nor is this proved even by the existence of sacrifice; for it has already been supposed possible, that accepted offerings were consumed by supernatural fire—perhaps from that which guarded the approach to paradise. All we can say with certainty is, that the use of fire must have been discovered before Tubal-Cain became an “instructor of every artificer in brass and iron.”

We have, however, little doubt that the use of fire was, if not known in Eden, discovered soon after the fall. In this we have both the traditionists and the poets on our side; and on a subject of this kind it is pleasant to listen to their statements.

We notice that the Moslem traditions regard the use of fire as a supernatural revelation—and indeed hold that most of the primary arts of life were taught to Adam by angels. This is the case even with fire. We are told that Gabriel instructed Adam and Eve how to make bread; and when an oven had been made under his direction, he fetched fire from hell with which to heat it. The angel, however, had the precaution to *wash* this fire seventy times in the sea, as otherwise it would have burnt up the earth and all that it contained.

Old Du Bartas handles this subject with remarkable ingenuity and poetical fancy. He relates that on some occasion, the winds blowing through the grove drove the trees against each other, till two of them caught fire by the concussion. A dam, who witnessed this, fled with terror when he saw the

ruddy flame arise from the copse, which was soon all on fire. The flame pursued him till a naked plain arrested its progress. Recovering his courage, Adam turned back, and observed with interest that cheerful glow which the heat imparted to his frame, and the speed with which it dried his damp clothing. Amid the cold of the ensuing winter, Adam often thought with regret of this, and since this fire was not again kindled among the trees, tried a thousand ways to achieve its reproduction.

“ While (elsewhere musing) one day he sate down  
 Upon a steep rock’s craggy-forked crown,  
 A foaming beast come toward him he espies,  
 Within whose head stood burning coals for eyes ;  
 Then suddenly with boisterous arms he throws  
 A knobby flint that hummeth as it goes ;  
 Hence flies the beast, th’ ill-aimed flint-shaft grounding  
 Against the rock, and on it oft rebounding  
 Shivers to cinders, whence there issued  
 Small sparks of fire, no sooner born than dead.

This happy chance made Adam leap for glee ;  
 And quickly calling his cold company,  
 In his left hand a shining flint he locks,  
 With which another in his right he knocks  
 So up and down, that from the coldest stone  
 At every stroke small fiery sparkles shone.  
 Then with the dry leaves of a withered bay,  
 The which together handsomely they lay,  
 They take the falling fire, which like a sun  
 Shines clear and smokeless in the leaf begun.”

Nor is the mother of mankind without some part in the operation. Here is quite a picture :—

“ Eve, kneeling down, with hand her head sustaining,  
 And on the low ground with her elbow leaning,  
 Blows with her mouth ; and with her gentle blowing  
 Stirs up the heat, that from the dry leaves glowing  
 Kindles the reed, and then that hollow kix  
 First fires the small, and they the greater sticks.”

Thus the poet, in the exuberance of his imagination, provides us with two modes in which the use of fire might have

been discovered ; and yet the two modes are skilfully connected, because if Adam had not experienced the use in the first instance, he would not have cared for the hint which the second afforded.

The friction of dry wood seems to be the mode most usually indicated as the probable source of the discovery. It is thus stated in the Phenician annals, as preserved by Sanchoniatho, though they refer the invention to the *third* generation. Genus (Cain), the son of Protogenus (Adam) and Eon (Eve), begets mortal children, whose names are Phos, Phor, and Phlox ( light, fire, and flame). " These found out the way of producing fire by rubbing two pieces of wood against each other, and taught men the use thereof." In fact this mode is that to which the Greeks also and the Chinese ascribed the origin of fire ; and the process has been noticed as actually in use among various savage nations.

Nature however offers other processes of combustion which might have suggested the mode of obtaining fire, and perhaps have disclosed some of its uses. Lightning not unfrequently kindles fires on earth ; and to incidents of this sort the discovery of fire was ascribed by the ancient Egyptians. Spontaneous combustion is often also produced by the fermentation of certain substances, heaped together, as we too often hear is the case with stacks of hay. Then, without speaking of volcanoes, we find natural fires in various places from the ignition of gases, or from some combustibile quality of the soil. Woods have also been kindled by the eruption of subterraneous fires.

Yet man might know fire as an element long before he thought that it might be rendered of some use ; and the ancient accounts have scarcely exaggerated the importance or difficulty of the discovery. This is indicated by the fact that various nations have been found to whom the use of fire was altogether unknown. This was the case with the inhabitants of the Philippine and the Canary Isles at their first discovery ; and also with various tribes in Africa and America, who consequently fed on raw flesh. The inhabitants of the Mariana

Isles, discovered in 1521, had not the least idea of fire. When they first saw it, as introduced by Magellan's people, they regarded it as a species of animal which fed upon wood. The first who approached were burnt, which inspired great fear of the terrible creature, which could thus painfully wound with its strong breath. A volume—and one of no common interest—might be written of the origin, the history, the traditions, the powers, and the uses of fire, which was of old worshipped in many nations as a god.

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#### FOURTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

##### THE FIRST CITY.—GENESIS IV. 17.

UNTIL Noah was instructed to build an ark, there is not in the sacred record any invention in art or handicraft ascribed to any not of the family of Cain. This is remarkable. Look at the two lists of the descendants of Cain and of Seth respectively. In the former are simply names, interrupted by a snatch of old verse, by the account of some equivocal proceedings of Lamech, and by a hint concerning the inventors of arts. In the genealogy of the line of Seth, the *persons* acquire distinct individuality. Not only the names are given, but how old they were when favored with a son, how long they lived after, and what was the sum of their age. These facts give the list the utmost importance as a chronological document, and it is only from it that we have our knowledge of the time which has passed since man's creation and the duration of the interval between the creation and the deluge. The interruptions in the list have no respect to inventions or any such matters, but have reference to the religious character or religious hopes of the individuals. The Cainite list is of the earth, earthy; the Sethite list has a savor of heaven, and yet is of the highest secular interest, being in fact the basis of chronology and history.

It is no doubt in a great degree from the facts of this



record, transmitted through the survivors of the deluge, that most of the traditions of mankind ascribe the great inventions of art to evil men. It may be that the decay of higher interests directed all force of mind in the Cainite race into the channel of invention and discovery, for the aggrandizement of this life; and led them unconsciously to furnish a fresh illustration of the truth learnt even in Eden, that

“The tree of knowledge is not that of life.”

The only fact we learn of Cain himself after his exile is, “That he built a city, and called it after the name of his son Enoch.” In considering this fact we must not forget the important evidence it affords that houses were earlier than tents, towns than encampments, and the settled than the nomade life; and in correspondence with it the origin of the tent-dwelling life is afterwards ascribed to a period long subsequent—the fifth generation from Cain. This is not the course which an inventor would take in recording the progress of mankind, nor is it in accordance with the hypothesis of those who contend that man advanced progressively out of the savage state. In such a calculation we see tents covered with the skins of beasts, regarded as being of earlier date than houses—a prior stage in human civilization. But in the true record, the first-born man builds a city, and the tent comes later by more than a thousand years.

We must not, however, allow ourselves to form any magnificent ideas of Cain’s city. We have no reason to suppose that it was more than a collection of low cottages or hovels—probably a wooden frame, wattled with reeds or twigs, and plastered with mud; or as probably substantially constructed with layers of dried mud successively deposited—a very ancient and still common mode of building in the East. The latter mode of construction may at the first view seem less likely than the other to be of early date. But it is in reality—if simplicity be required, much more simple, the operations being fewer, and scarcely any other implements being needed than the hands and the feet. It may also be noted, that

“houses of clay” or mud are the first where materials are mentioned in Scripture—if the book of Job be entitled to that ancient date which is generally claimed for it.\* It is possible that an Irish mud-cabin forms no inadequate representative of the buildings of Cain’s city. But the term implies the existence, scarcely perhaps of a wall, but of a fence, to protect the domestic animals from the depredations of beasts of prey, if not from the incursions of human enemies. This may also have been formed of mud, as many town walls still are formed in the East. It may even have been constructed of loose stones, if stones were found in the locality; but it may quite as probably have been a hedge of briars or of the thorny cactus, of which they are still constructed in the East, and are found to be not only impervious to beasts of prey, but to form a sufficient protection from the sudden incursions of predatory hordes. Jericho is at this day so defended, and many places on the coast of Palestine are hedged in with the prickly pear. In fact, a thinly dressed or half-naked people have much dread of strong thorny plants which tear the flesh; and this gives to them an adaptation for defence of which we, with our thick clothing, can scarcely form a conception.

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#### FOURTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

##### LAMECH.—GENESIS IV. 19–20.

IN going through the list of Cain’s descendants, we find nothing to arrest our attention till we come to Lamech, who was the fifth in descent from Cain, and who must have been about the same time with the Enoch of Seth’s line, or somewhat about six hundred years from the creation.† This

\* Job iv. 19; compare xxiv. 16.

† This is according to the common or shorter chronology, which, as that in general use, we feel bound to follow in a work of this kind, although strongly persuaded, with most scholars, that the longer chronology, as preserved in the Septuagint version, is the most correct.

Lamech seems to have been a very remarkable person, and out of seven verses devoted to the posterity of Cain, six are occupied by the sayings and doings of him and his two sons. Reserving the sons for separate notice, let us give our present attention to Lamech himself. The record concerning him is singular, striking, and abrupt. It comprises poetry, rhetoric, and history; and yet, although it suggests much, and sets the mind to work, there is little in it to satisfy the curiosity it excites.

First, we are informed that Lamech had *two* wives, called Adah and Zillah—beautiful names, and the first female names that occur since Eve. Why is this fact so pointedly mentioned, unless to intimate that the practice of having more than one wife was a new thing, and among the inventions of the house of Cain? This is the general sentiment of antiquity; and the early Christian writers who have occasion to allude to the matter, agree with Tertullian in regarding Lamech as the first man who reversed the order of nature and of creation, by taking two wives unto himself.

Adah bore to Lamech two sons, Jabal and Jubal, and by Zillah he had one, named Tubal-Cain—all famous inventors, of whom there will be more to say anon. “And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.” This is all we hear of *her*. It is remarkable that her name should be found at all in a record in which the names of so few women are preserved; and it is still more remarkable, that it is given without any circumstances to indicate the cause of its insertion. The name means *fair* or *beautiful*. Was her beauty her distinction? Did that beauty produce effects by which great families were united or broken? Beauty has, within the compass of historical time, moved the world. Did it in her person shake the old world also? Her brothers were the great fathers of social arts. Was her fame of the same sort as theirs? Some ascribe to her the invention of spinning and weaving; and others, who find in her brother the Vulcan of the Greeks, recognize in her Minerva, who had among her names that of

Nemanoun.\* But all this is bald conjecture. Her name was Naamah; her father was Lamech; her brother Tubal-Cain; she lived; she died. This is all we know of her. To what she owed her fame—a fame of six thousand years—must remain inscrutable. As one finds among the ruins of time, some old gray monument, too important and distinguished to have been constructed for a person of mean note, but discovers thereon only A NAME, which the rust of ages has left unconsumed—so it is with Lamech's illustrious daughter.

Lamech had his troubles, as a man with two wives was likely to have, and always has had; but whether or not his troubles grew directly out of his polygamy, is not clearly disclosed. We know them only through an address which he makes to his two wives. The subject matter of this address is hard to be understood; but there is no mistaking as to its form, which embodies the parallelism and other characteristics of Hebrew poesy. This is the most ancient piece of poetry in the world; the only scrap of verse that has come to us from the ages before the flood. Is its production intended, by an actual specimen, to indicate that, as one of his sons was the father of music, so was he the father of poetry? At any rate, the actual utterance of verse by the father, shows that, as we might expect, poetry was invented before music. Perhaps the former even originated the latter. What more probable than that the first efforts of the tuneful Jubal were made, in giving the sweet voice of music to his father's harmonious numbers?

The lines have been variously translated. We give them thus:—

“ Adah and Zillah, hear my voice !  
 Wives of Lamech, receive my speech !  
 If I slew a man to my wounding,  
 And a young man to my hurt :  
 If Cain was avenged seven times,  
 Then Lamech seventy times seven.”

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\* Plutarch, *de Iside et Osiride*.

This is not very plain as to the meaning—but we can only imitate the admitted obscurity of the original. To what do these words refer? Almost every possible sense which they can by any translation or interpretation be construed to bear, has been assigned to them by different commentators. The Jewish tradition preserved in the Midrash, is founded upon the mention of Cain, and upon the interpretation (which the best Jewish interpreters allow to be unfounded) that the promise to Cain was not that vengeance should be exacted seven-fold upon any one that slew him, but that vengeance should not be taken until the seventh generation—which generation Lamech represented. The story runs that Lamech being blind (to account for his not seeing “the mark” upon Cain), slew his ancestor with a dart or arrow, under the direction of his son Tubal-Cain, who took the movements made by Cain, lurking in the woods, for those of some beast. But when the truth was seen, Lamech, in his horror at the deed, slew the son whose misdirection had brought this crime upon his soul. His son was thus “the young man” to whom the verse refers. Now it is true that it was not promised to Cain that he should never be slain—but that if he were slain, seven-fold vengeance should be exacted for him. But for the rest, it is not likely that blind men went a hunting even before the deluge: and the story has other improbabilities too obvious to need indication. No more need be said.

Josephus did not receive this tradition, if it existed in his time. He gives a favorable turn to the whole matter, observing, that Lamech, who saw as far as any man into the course and method of Divine justice, felt great concern in the prospect of that judgment which he apprehended to hang over his family for the murder of Abel; and under the force of that apprehension spoke of the matter to his wives. It is on this hint that Shuckford, followed by others, appears to have founded his view of these verses. He thinks that the death of Abel had occasioned a complete alienation between the family of Seth and that of Cain—who, although living apart, were kept in constant apprehension that a bloody

vengeance would some day be exacted. But that Lamech, when he came to be the head of a people, sought to reason them out of their apprehensions by the argument contained in his words: understood to mean—if seven-fold vengeance were denounced upon the slayer of Cain who murdered his own brother, there must surely be a far sorer punishment for those who may attempt to destroy any of us on the same account. The fault of this is, that it is too vague and hypothetical, and has not a sufficiently pointed application to the words of the text.

It is an ingenious thought of some, that the wives of Lamech took alarm at the invention of more formidable weapons than had hitherto been seen, by Tubal-Cain, and fancied that they might be some day employed against his life; but that he here comforts them by the assurance that as he had never shed the blood of man—no one had an interest in destroying him.

On the other hand, many have thought that he had slain not only one but two (“a man,” and “a young man”), and that considering how Cain had enhanced his crime and punishment by obdurate concealment, he here openly avows his crime, and contritely confesses himself a greater sinner than Cain.

Our own impression, coinciding with that of Lowth, is, that Lamech had slain in self-defence some man by whom he had been assaulted and wounded. His wives would apprehend the exaction of blood-revenge by the friends of the man who had been slain, on which he puts his justifiable homicide on the proper footing by contrasting it with the murder committed by Cain, and urges that the difference of the offence rendered the danger of vengeance in his case but small. If the life of Cain were protected by the penalty of seven-fold vengeance, surely his by seventy times seven.

## FOURTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

JABAL AND JUBAL.—GENESIS IV. 20, 21.

ONE of the sons of Lamech by Adah was Jabal. He, we are told, "was the father of such as dwell in tents, and such as have cattle." This is a very important fact. It shows that man had existed thirteen centuries upon the earth before the nomade life, to which a large proportion of mankind have since been addicted, received its origin. There had been shepherds before, and sheep had before been kept; but it was not until the time of Jabal that pasturage was organized into a distinct form of social existence. The care of man was by him extended to larger animals than sheep—and they were taught to cast off the restraints which the habit of living in towns and villages imposed, and to betake themselves wholly to the pastures, dwelling in portable habitations, and removing from place to place for the convenience of pasturage. This is a mode of life frequently brought under our notice in the Scriptures, being essentially that of the patriarchs whose history occupies the greater portion of the book of Genesis. This circumstance, therefore, will come frequently under our notice, and will not need here any anticipatory description.

Jabal had a brother named Jubal, and "he was the father of all such as handle the harp and the organ." Had, then, the world been for above a thousand years without music, till Jubal appeared? Perhaps not. Man could scarcely for so long a time have been without some efforts to produce musical sounds; and the birds could scarcely for so many ages have poured forth their melodious throats to him, without some attempts at imitation. But hitherto, probably, all their attempts had been vocal, until Jubal discovered that instruments might be contrived to give vent to musical sounds of greater compass and power. We may conceive that he had many anxious thoughts, many abortive trials, until per-

severance conquered—as it always does—and he had brought his “harp and organ” to perfection. The “harp” was something of that sort which we call a lyre, and the form and character of which is better known to us from sculptures, paintings, and medals, as well as from poetical descriptions, than from actual knowledge, the instrument being virtually extinct. And let not “the organ” of Jubal perplex us with large ideas of pipes, and keys, and bellows. It was nothing more than a simple “mouth organ”—a bundle of reeds, a Pandean pipe, that is, such a pipe as the god Pan is seen to blow in ancient sculptures, and such as is often enough to this day witnessed in our street exhibitions.

Jubal has been, of course, a favorite with the poets, who strive to render due honor to the great promoter, if not the originator, of the sister art. Du Bartas, to whom we always refer with pleasure, very fancifully supposes that the idea of instruments for producing musical notes, may have been suggested by the regulated strokes of the hammer upon the anvil of his Vulcanian brother, and his companions.

“Thereon he harps, and ponders in his mind,  
And glad and fain some instrument would find  
That in accord these discords might renew,  
And th’ iron anvil’s rattling sound ensue,  
And iterate the beating hammer’s noise,  
In milder notes, and with a sweeter voice.”

Accident, such as only occurs to the thoughtful and the observant, who know how to take the hints which nature offers to all but the slow of understanding, enabled the son of Lamech to realize his hopes.

“It chanced, that passing by a pond he found  
An open tortoise lying on the ground,  
Within the which there nothing else remained  
Save three dried sinews in the shell stiff-strained:  
This empty house Jubal doth gladly bear,  
Strikes on those strings, and lends attentive ear,



And by this mould frames the melodious lute,  
That makes woods hearken, and the winds be mute,  
The hills to dance, the heavens to retrograde,  
Lions be tame, and tempests quickly vade."

Nor does he stop here:—

"This art, still waxing, sweetly marrieth  
His prancing fingers to his warbling breath:  
More little tongues to 's charm-care lute he brings,  
More instruments he makes: no echo rings  
'Mid rocky concaves of the babbling vales,  
And bubbling rivers roll'd with gentle gales,  
But wiry cymbals, rebeckes sinew twin'd,  
Sweet virginals and cornet's curled wind."

So a poet of our own day—whose very name is a word of honor—James Montgomery, in his "World before the Flood," renders due honor to Jubal, though he finds no place for Jabal or Tubal-Cain. There is a touching and beautiful conception with reference to him, which we should be reluctant to omit noticing.

"Jubal, the prince of Song (in youth unknown),  
Retired to commune with his harp alone;  
For still he nursed it like a secret thought,  
Long-cherish'd, and to late perfection wrought,—  
And still with cunning hand and curious ear,  
Enriched, ennobled, and enlarged its sphere,  
Till he had compass'd in that magic round,  
A soul of harmony, a heaven of sound."

He sings to his instrument of God, of man, and of creation. The song is given: then couched before him, like a lion watching for its prey, he beheld a strange apparition—

"An awful form, that through the gloom appeared,  
Half brute, half human, whose terrific beard,  
And hoary flakes of long dishevell'd hair,  
Like eagle's plumage ruffled by the air,  
Veil'd a sad wreck of grandeur and of grace."

Who was this? It was Cain, who had seven years since gone mad under the stings of conscience—

“Jubal knew  
 His kindred looks, and tremblingly withdrew ;  
 He, darting like the blaze of sudden fire,  
 Leap'd o'er the space between, and grasp'd the lyre :  
 Sooner with life the struggling hand would part ;  
 And e'er the fiend could tear it from his heart,  
 He hurl'd his hand with one tremendous stroke,  
 O'er all the strings ; whence in a whirlwind broke  
 Such tones of terror, dissonance, despair,  
 As till that hour had never jarr'd in air.  
 Astonish'd into marble at the shock,  
 Backward stood Cain, unconscious as a rock,  
 Cold, breathless, motionless, through all his frame ;  
 But soon his visage quickened into flame  
 When Jubal's hand the crashing jargon changed  
 To melting harmony, and nimbly ranged  
 From chord to chord, ascending sweet and clear,  
 Then rolling down in thunder on the ear ;  
 With power the pulse of anguish to restrain,  
 And charm the evil spirit from the brain.”

It had this effect upon Cain, who exhibits signs of returning consciousness and intellect :—

“Jubal with eager hope beheld the chase  
 Of strange emotions hurrying o'er his face,  
 And waked his noblest numbers to control  
 The tide and tempest of the maniac's soul ;  
 Through many a maze of melody he flew,  
 They rose like incense, they distilled like dew,  
 Pass'd through the sufferer's breast delicious balm,  
 And sooth'd remembrance till remorse grew calm ;  
 Till Cain forsook the solitary wild,  
 Led by the minstrel like a weaned child.”

From that time, the lyre of Jubal was to Cain what in later ages the harp of David was to Saul—

“The lyre of Jubal, with divinest art,  
 Repell'd the demon and revived his heart.”

And thus the poet concludes —

“Thus music's empire in the soul began :  
 The first-born poet ruled the first-born man.”

## FOURTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

TUBAL-CAIN.—GENESIS IV. 22.

THE SON of Lamech by Zillah supported well the renown of his family for discoveries in the arts. His name was Tubal-Cain. He was "an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron." For "brass" read "copper;" brass being a factitious metal of certainly much later invention. Was then the use of metals wholly unknown in the eight or nine centuries of not savage life which had passed since Adam received his being? Perhaps not. It is hard to conceive that extensive agricultural operations could have been carried on, that cities could have been built, or the useful and elegant arts brought into use without this knowledge. We might indeed conceive that the use of iron was of this late, or even later, origin. That metal is hard to find, and difficult to bring into that condition which fits it for use. It is usually the last of the metals to be brought into man's service; and nations which have possessed all the other metals have wanted that. This is not the case with copper. It is often found on or near the surface in its metallic shape; it is soft and easily wrought; and nations, whose instruments were only of this metal, have been known to execute great works, and to have attained an advanced state of civilization. All antiquity, indeed, vouches for the remotely ancient (but not earliest) discovery of iron; but all antiquity also affirms, that although iron was known, the difficulty of the first operations in rendering it available greatly restricted its use, and a large number of implements, utensils, and weapons, which we should expect to be of iron wherever that metal was known, are found to have been nevertheless of copper. On the other hand, it must be admitted, that the ancients, being obliged to rely so much upon copper, labored diligently in overcoming the inconvenience which its natural softness could not but occasion. By certain amalgamations and manipula-

tions, they seem to have succeeded in imparting to copper some of the hardness of iron: and it is certain, that with their tools of this material, they were able to perform operations which we cannot execute without instruments of iron. It is probable that the ancients possessed some secret in hardening copper, which has been lost since the more general use of iron threw it out of use for such purposes.

Not to pursue this theme further at this time, we may remark that copper is here placed before iron, and that, taking all things into account, the probability is that Tubal-Cain's improvements were more in copper than in iron. The text itself seems to intimate that great and important discoveries in the working of metals were made by him, rather than that he was the first to apply them to any use. He is not, like his brothers Jabal and Jubal, called "the father," or originator, of the art he taught, but an "instructor" of those that wrought in it. So strong is our impression respecting the earlier use of copper, and the comparatively limited employment of iron, that we would almost venture to conjecture that Tubal-Cain's researches in metallurgy, which led him to great *improvements* in the working of copper, also led him to the *discovery* of iron. Du Bartas, who, in his poem on *The Handicrafts*, has exercised much ingenuity upon the origin of inventions, appears to have felt great difficulty in accounting for the discovery of iron, and seems to have found it only possible to do so by supposing that it had been seen in a state of fusion, and afterwards hardening as it cooled, in the operations of nature.

“ While through the forest Tubal (with his yew  
 And ready quiver) did a boar pursue,  
 A burning mountain from its fiery vein  
 An iron river rolls along the plain:  
 The witty huntsman, musing, thither hies  
 And of the wonder deeply 'gan devise.  
 And first, perceiving that this scalding metal,  
 Becoming cold, in any shape would settle,  
 And grow so hard, that with its sharpened side  
 The firmest substance it would soon divide,

He cast a hundred plots, and ere he parts  
He moulds the ground-work of a hundred arts."

After describing Tubal-Cain's successful working out of the ideas thus suggested, the poet breaks forth into an eulogium upon this metal—which if merited in his time may now be uttered with ten-fold emphasis:—

Happy device! We might as well want all  
The elements as this hard mineral.  
This to the ploughman for great uses serves;  
This for the builder wood and marble carves;  
This arms our bodies against adverse force;  
This clothes our backs; this rules the unruly horse;  
This makes us dry shod dance in Neptune's hall;  
This brightens gold, this conquers self and all;  
Fifth element, of instruments the haft,  
The tool of tools, the hand of handicraft."

Certain it is that whatever was the precise nature and extent of Tubal-Cain's inventions in metallurgy, they were of such great use and service to mankind as rendered him famous in his day, and attached honorable distinction to his name in all succeeding generations, so that there is scarcely any ancient nation which has not preserved some traditional notices of his character and improvements. There is even reason to think that he was eventually worshipped by various ancient nations, and under names which, however different, signify an "artificer in fire." In the name and character of Vulcan, the blacksmith-god of the Greeks and Romans, it requires no great penetration to discover the Tubal-Cain of Genesis. Omitting the *Tu*, which was likely to be regarded as a prefix, and making the exceedingly familiar change of *b* into *v*, and you have Vulcain or Vulcan. This, and other analogies of a like nature, might tempt us into investigations from which we must at present refrain.

It is also worthy of note that the Mosaical narrative is not the only ancient record which ascribes the invention or improvement of metallurgy to this seventh generation of mankind. Thus the Phœnician annalist, Sanchoniatho, says of

this generation : “ Of these [the leaders of the preceding generation] were begotten two brothers, who discovered iron and the forging thereof.” He says that one of these was called Chrysor, “ who is the same with Hephæstos”—both names derived from “ fire.” The Hindu records—the Puranas—furnish no facts, but only names. Yet the names are significant, and in this seventh generation the name is Sumarti, a word which signifies a fiery meteor : and in this we have the brothers of the Phœnician annalist designated by terms which signify “ heating” and “ hammering.”

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#### FOURTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

##### ARTS BEFORE THE FLOOD.

It seems very clear to us that the antediluvians, commencing with the knowledge imparted to Adam before his fall and acquired by him subsequently, did make high improvements in the arts, and attained to a state of considerable civilization. If this be true, there is consequently no foundation for the notion of man’s gradual progress from the savage to the civilized condition. Indeed, how any one who believes in the sacred origin of the book of Genesis can take that view, is inconceivable. According to that account, the various nations of the world are descended from the men who survived the deluge, and who were certainly not an uncivilized family. They built a large and capacious vessel, and their doing this implies the possession of tools suited to so great a work ; they were also skilled in agriculture ; and Noah betook himself to the culture of the ground as soon as he quitted the ark ; the successful management of so many diverse animals that were committed to his care in the ark, implies much knowledge of cattle. All this we know ; and knowing this, it is not too much to suppose that the various members of this family possessed all the arts which existed before the deluge, and of which we have already taken some notice. Indeed there

is evidence of this in the great undertakings of their descendants, previous to their dispersion into nations and languages.

But it will be asked, if this were the original condition of mankind, how came so many forms of savage life to exist? How is it that some of the commonest social arts are unknown to many nations—that there are those to whom (as already shown) the use of fire is unknown, and that many are in their entire condition but a few degrees above the beasts that perish? Is it possible that these are descended from civilized ancestors, have lost much that their primeval fathers knew, and have retrograded rather than advanced in the scale of civilization? Painful as it may be to those who uphold the doctrine of human progress, the affirmative is, we apprehend, not only probable but certain; and might be illustrated by a cloud of examples in which nations have gone back in civilization, and have lost arts which were in former times known.

A very sensible and thoughtful writer\* has expressed this fact perfectly in accordance with the view we have long entertained. “The first men were not wandering and ignorant savages, although those who wandered from the parent stock and ceased to have any connection with it, generally fell into a state of barbarism and ignorance, as in Africa, America, and the Asiatic and other isles. Science, arts, and civilization were confined to those who maintained their connection with the central stock of the first men, or departed in numbers sufficient to enable them to exercise and carry along with them the subdivisions of art and labor necessary to civilized life.” Besides, many of the separated parties in the course of their migrations arrived at regions in which, from the difference of products, of climate, and of the physical circumstances of the country, some of the arts cultivated by the original families were no longer needed, and would therefore cease to be cultivated, and be in a few generations forgotten.

The arts of useful life, which were lost in the process of dispersion, are known to have been recovered in the course of time, either by re-invention, under the same condition: 27

\* Robert Forsyth, in *Observations on the Book of Genesis*.

those in which they were first discovered, or by renewed communication with those branches of the human family which still retained possession of them. The latter process is indicated by the numerous traditions of various ancient nations, who traced the origin of their arts and civilization to some stranger who came to them from the sea, and imparted instruction to them. And as to the former process, it is clear that families which lost the arts belonging to their original condition, when that condition became changed, often recovered them when, by the lapse of time, the population had so increased, and other circumstances had so arisen, as to restore the need for them. Hence we find the invention of various arts claimed by different nations, which could not, since the original dispersion, have had communication with each other.

Upon the whole, it seems to us that the civilization and knowledge in art of the antediluvians, and of the postdiluvians up to the dispersion, have been greatly underrated, by our views having been too much directed to the progressive civilization of particular branches of the human race, which had greatly degenerated from ancient knowledge. Indeed, when we consider the advantages which length of days afforded to the earliest generations of mankind, giving to one man in his own person the accumulated knowledge and experience of a thousand years, it seems difficult to over-estimate the advancements that may have been made, and the knowledge in art that may have been acquired. We think much of the advantages we possess in books, which give to us the knowledge of the past. But their advantages were greater. There are few books of more than two or three centuries old, from which we derive any knowledge, in at least the material arts, of any avail to us; but then fathers could impart, by the living voice and by the living practice, the knowledge of a thousand years, to sons who might build up the experience of another thousand years upon that large foundation. If man had gone on advancing to this time, at the same rate, upon the knowledge possessed by the antediluvians, it is inconceivable to what he might not have attained; or if, in-



deed, we had only progressively advanced upon the knowledge possessed by the ancient Assyrians, Egyptians, Babylonians, and Phœnicians, or even upon that of Greece and Rome. But God has put limits to human progress, lest man should be exalted above measure. The shortening of human life, the confusion of tongues, and the consequent dispersion, did, in primeval times, the work which has since been accomplished by less direct agencies, and which have successively said to man in the highest state of his advancement, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther; and here shall thy proud mind be stayed."

Thus it has come to pass, that one nation after another has become highly civilized; has fallen; the arts it possessed were lost or discontinued; dark ages followed; then arose other nations, gradually recovering these old arts, and perhaps inventing some new ones; but not more perhaps than serve to counterbalance the old ones that have *not* been recovered. We too much overrate the present, because we know it better than the past. But ancient histories, and monuments older than history, disclose to us that there were, two, three, and four thousand years ago, nations scarcely less advanced in material civilization, and in the arts of social life, than ourselves; and who certainly possessed arts that we do not, and were able to execute works which we cannot surpass, and some that we cannot equal, sufficient to counterbalance our possession of arts which they had not acquired, and our execution of works they had not imagined. It has been proved that many, and it may prove that more, of our inventions and improvements, are but revivals of old things. This was felt twenty-seven centuries ago, by one who knew the primeval history as well as we do, if not better; and there is deep truth in the words of the Preacher:—"The thing that hath been is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done, and there is no new thing under the sun."

From such catastrophes, which have from time to time thrown back the tide of human advancement, and prevented

man from fully gathering the fruit of the tree of knowledge, for which his soul has hungered ever since the fall, we think ourselves exempt by means of the printing press, which has embalmed our inventions and discoveries beyond the possibility of loss. It may be so: but let us grant that whatever advantage in this respect we possess, was enjoyed more abundantly by the primeval fathers, by reason of the length of their lives; so that it is morally impossible but that their material condition should have been one of high and progressive advancement, during the period which is now under our survey.

In further corroboration of the argument, that the recent invention of many arts, and the savage condition of many nations, is not adverse to the conclusion, that the fathers of mankind were not a barbarous but a cultivated people, let us listen to the hypothesis built by Plato upon natural and thoughtful reasoning from known facts. He admits that men, in these ancient times, possessed cities, laws, and arts; but desolations coming in the shape of inundations, epidemics, malaria, and the like, those that escaped betook themselves to the mountains, and kept sheep. Most of the arts and sciences which were formerly common, were then more and more disused and forgotten among them. But mankind afterwards multiplying, they descended into the valleys; and, by degrees, mutual conversation, the necessities of their condition, and the due consideration of things, gradually revived among them the arts, which had been lost by long intermission.

Sir Matthew Hale, who, in his profound work on the Primitive Origination of Mankind, incidentally touches on this subject, says:—"We are not to conclude every new appearance of an art or science, is the first production of it; but, as they say of the river Tigris and some others, they sink into the ground, and keep a subterranean course, it may be for forty or fifty miles, and then break out above ground again, which is not so much a new river as the continuation and re-appearance of the old: so many times it falls out with

arts and sciences, though they have their non-appearance for some ages, and then seem first to discover themselves, where before they were not known, it is not so much the first production of the art as a transition, or at least a restitution, of what was either before in another, or in the same, country or people: and thus also some tell us that guns and printing, though but lately discovered in Europe, were of far ancients use in China."

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### Fifth Week—Sunday.

“ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD.”—GENESIS V. 22.

THE fifth chapter of Genesis is chiefly a list of names and ages—a genealogy that seems at the first view to offer little to engage the peculiar interest of the devout mind. But let us not be discouraged. Let us examine it closely. Lo, we are well rewarded. Here, hid among these names, is a sentence more precious than gold: “Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.” How this came to pass we know not, and we need not care to know. We know that God graciously removed him from the evil to come, and we know why—“He walked with God.” Well, then, what is this walking with God? Was this a peculiar privilege of the antediluvian saints? We read but of two who “walked with God,” and these were both born before the flood. Enoch, he walked with God, and God took him; Noah, he walked with God, and God did *not* take him, but preserved him *in* the world when all else perished, and made him the second father of mankind. This, therefore, is surely a high privilege, being visited with such distinguished honor. Who is there among us that will not covet it, strive after it—and mourn for it, if it should prove to be among the honors of a past condition?

But let us not mourn. This privilege is indeed ours—is as open to us as it was to the fathers before the flood—and is at this day as highly considered by God, as it was in times of old. And do not our hearts burn within us to know this? Do we not instantly resolve to gird our pilgrim loins, and walk with God for the rest of our life's rough and troubled way? Alas! too many of us have small care about it. Too many of us hear with but languid interest, with but half-concealed indifference, that it may be our privilege to walk with God as truly as Enoch walked, as truly as Noah walked, with Him.

And is it an easy matter to walk with God? Alas! nothing of the spiritual life is easy to the proud natural heart of man; but when the Spirit of God has made that heart soft, to walk with God is an easy and a pleasant thing; and to tread the rough paths of the world by his side, and under his protection and upholding grace, becomes the highest and most cherished privilege of our pilgrim state.

And what, then, is it to walk with God? If thou art a father, take thy little son by the hand and walk forth with him upon the breezy hills. As that little child walks with thee, so do thou walk with God. That child loves thee now. The world—the cold and cruel world—has not yet come between his heart and thine, and it may be hoped that it never will. His love *now* is the purest and most beautiful he will ever feel, or thou wilt ever receive. Cherish it well; and as that child walks *lovingly* with thee, so do thou walk lovingly with God.

But he walks *humbly* also. He looks up to thee as the greatest and the wisest man in the world—and in *his* world thou art such. He has not seen thee subject to the proud man's contumely—he has not witnessed thy visage become pale before “the cold charities of man to man;” he comprehendeth not the foolishness of thy wisest things. He only knows thee in thy strength, where thou art lawgiver and king, and where thy master is far away. Thus conscious of thy greatness and unconscious of thy littleness, he walks *humbly*

with thee ; and thus humbly as he walks, do thou walk with Him whose strength is real, for it can bear even the burden of thy sins ; whose wisdom is real, for even thy foolishness cannot perplex it.

And thy little son has faith in thee—he walks *confidingly* with thee. The way may be long, and rough and trying—but he knows that if he wearies, his father can carry him through in his arms. The way may to his thought be dangerous ; he deems that there may be evil beasts in the wood, or evil men by the road. But he fears not. He feels that his father's strong arm is between him and all danger, and he believes that no harm can befall him by his father's side. How happy is he, how free, how joyous in his trust in thee ! The trials that perplex thy life are unfelt by him. The griefs that rend thy heart touch him but lightly. Thou bearest all his burden. His life's welfare rests upon thy going in, and thy coming out ; and he knoweth it not. He needs not know it. He feels with unmisgiving faith, that thou art his shield, and rests in gleeful peace behind that broad protection which shuts out all care and thought of the rough world from his view. Thus *confidingly* as thy son walks with thee, walk thou with God. Believe that

“Thou art as much His care, as if, beside,  
No man or angel lived in heaven or earth.”

Believe of Christ that—

“On thee and thine, thy warfare and thine end,  
Even in his hour of agony He thought.”

And believe that if thou walkest trustingly, and lovingly, and humbly with God—even as thy son walketh with thee—thou walkest with him as Enoch walked, and shalt not fail of as high a recompense.

There is no way of walking with God but as a little child. To the world we may offer a bold and resolute front, for there is much to try us, much to battle with there. But to God we can only turn with child-like trust and love, crying to him in the certainty of his love, in reliance upon his power.

and in the humbleness of our hearts—"My father, thou art the guide of my youth!"

Furthermore, to walk with God as Enoch walked, is under all circumstances to realize his presence with us. When Moses asked of the Lord, "Show me thy way"—meaning the way the Lord would have him to go through the toilsome wilderness—what was the answer? Did he describe the way to him? No; but he told him something far better—"My Presence shall *go with thee*, and I will give thee rest." What needed Moses to know more of the way than that? In all his walk and travel, God would be ever present with him, to guide all his steps—the light before him, the shade at his right hand. This was enough for Moses; and it is enough for us in our no less perilous journey through the waste, howling wilderness. If we walk with God, if we enjoy his presence in all our way, it is well with us—we are safe, we have rest. All men walk not alike with God. Some

"Leap exulting like the bounding roe,"

in the joy of their hearts, and the fulness of their grace. Others move on with strong, but staid and steady pace; and some walk lamely, and struggle on with pain and labor; but they all walk—and if they keep God's presence with them, they are all safe—for all walk with God.

Is not this in fact the test of one's walk with God? To walk with God, is to walk as in God's presence. If, therefore, the feeling that he is ever present with thee, that his eye is always upon thy heart, be a trouble and not a joy to thee, a terror and not a hope—there is ground for fear, that thou hast not yet attained to the blessedness of walking with God as Enoch walked, and as the saints in all ages have walked with him.

FIFTH WEEK—MONDAY.

ANTEDILUVIAN NAMES.—GENESIS IV. 17, 18; v. 5-32.

It is observed by Dr. Chalmers that he had “met with no remarks upon the similarity of names between the two families of Cain and Seth. Enos, Enoch; Irad, Jared; Mehujael, Mahalaleel; Methusael, Methusalem; and at length both pedigrees terminate in Lamech.”

The real reason that no one has made remarks upon this similarity is, that it does not exist. The apparent resemblance is merely an incident of transcription. In the original they are, with one or two exceptions, wholly different in *signification*, and considerably more different in *form*, than as they now appear in our English Bibles.

The subject however is curious and important, and well deserves attention.

It is quite clear, from the reasons assigned for the names which Eve gave to her sons, and from that which the Sethite Lamech gave to his son Noah, that the names are all significant, and expressed the views and hopes with respect to their children, of those by whom these names were imposed. Many of them are holy and good names, and some of them contain the sacred name of God; and seeing that *such* names occur in the line of Cain as well as in that of Seth, it may be questioned whether the opinion (founded chiefly on a doubtful interpretation respecting the “sons of God,” and “daughters of men”), that Cain’s race were all unholy and evil-minded people, is founded in truth. It may indeed be urged, that for some unknown reason, the Cainites borrowed such names from the race of Seth. But, in the first place, only two of the names are at all identical, and these occur much earlier in the line of Cain than that of Seth; for it is to be remembered that the line of Cain is carried down not more than seven generations, for the apparent purpose of introducing Lamech and his famous sons. But the line of Seth is

carried down ten generations—connecting the generations before and after the flood. Although, therefore, Lamech is the penultimate name in both series, the Cainite Lamech must have been born two or three hundred years before the Lamech of Seth's line.

The first of the analogies indicated by Dr. Chalmers does not exist. The names Enoch and Enos are altogether different, both in orthography and in the meaning of the four Hebrew letters composing each of these names. This would have been apparent even in English transcription, had the former been given more exactly, as Chanoch, the difference between which and Enos is at once apparent. There is no resemblance but in the two middle letters *no*. But although Seth does not give to his son the same name nor even a similar one, to that which Cain's son had before received—that name does yet appear in Seth's line as possessed by the man who "walked with God."

The farther consideration of these names is of some interest—especially if they help us to some information respecting the hopes or fears of the race of Cain. Respecting the race of Seth, we have such distinct information of another kind, as renders any that may be derived from this source of less importance.

Cain, then, called the son, first born to him after his expulsion, by the name of Enoch, which means *dedicated*. The value of this name depends upon the nature of the dedication. When we meet with the same name in a later age, as that of a man whom God permitted to escape the world without tasting of death, we readily understand that his pious parents dedicated him to God, when they set that name upon him. Have we a right to give it a different meaning in the case of the son of Cain? May we not rather be permitted to regard it as the expression of his wish or hope that his son might be a wiser and a holier man than the father had been?

The next name in the Cainite line is Irad—similar to, but not the same as that of Jared in the line of Seth. The latter



name means simply a *descent*; but the former combines therewith the word for a town, and seems to be rightly explained by Jerome (who undertook to interpret, but not always correctly, the names of Scripture) to mean a *low-lying* or *descending city*. It may suggest, that even as Cain built a city, and called it after the name of his son Enoch; so Enoch built a town in a lower site, or on the declivity of a hill, and gave to his son a name descriptive of its situation.

In the next generation, the Cainite name is Melujael. This is a touching and sorrowful name. It sounds like the groan of a broken spirit. It means *smitten of God*. Whatever gave occasion to it, whatever calamity, whatever grief, it acknowledges the hand of God, and expresses none of that obduracy and hardihood in evil which we are apt to ascribe to all the sons of Cain. The Sethite name of Mahalaleel, which Dr. Chalmers couples with it, is altogether different. Leaving out the final syllable (*el*) which expresses God—there is (in the original) but one letter alike in the two, and the meaning (*Praise of God*) is also wholly different.

The next name in the Cainite line, Methusael, has a deeper significance than any we have yet reached. It means, *a man of God*. Such a name in the leading line of Cain—even more directly religious than any name to be found in the line of Seth—is deeply suggestive of better things in that line, than we have been accustomed to seek therein. We have no right to assign any other interpretation to it, than we should give if it were found in the line of Seth; and we think those critics are greatly to be blamed for unfairness, who, in their determination to find nothing good among the Cainites, suggest that the name of God in this and the last name bears some reference to a profane use of that name in magical superstitions. We may add that this name has no analogy or resemblance to that of Methuselah, which Dr. Chalmers couples with it. That name has not even the name of God in it. The signification of it is, *a man of the dart*—a name of entirely secular meaning, in whatever circumstances it may have originated.

The next name among the Cainites is that of Lamech, to

whom already one of our Days has been appropriated.\* It means *humbled*, and is a good name for any man to bear, though we cannot even guess at the precise circumstances in which that name originated. It is the same as that borne in the Sethite line by the father of Noah, being the only real analogy of the several supposed by Dr. Chalmers, and one of the only two that actually exist.†

Among the names at which we have glanced, all seem to be proper and becoming. Among these names, all that are not humble are holy, with the exception of one (Irada) which bears an indifferent local sense. Out of five names two contain the name of God—whereas, out of eight names in the longer line of Seth, only one contains that name. We find not among these names one that is arrogant, boastful, or defiant—such as our notions respecting this family might lead us to expect. All are just the reverse, and are such as would not have disgraced the line of Seth. This is assuredly a point worthy of notice, with respect to an age in which names expressed sentiments.

This is touchingly shown in the case of the name which the Sethite Lamech imposed upon his son. “And he called his name Noah (comfort, rest), saying, This shall comfort us concerning our work, and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.”—Gen. v. 29. By which it would appear, that men still retained a lively recollection of what they had heard from Adam and Eve respecting the blessedness of Eden, and were conscious of the contrast which the outer earth presented. If men lived entirely on vegetable produce at this time, they must have consumed the more of it, and the labor exacted in the culture of the soil must have been the greater in proportion; and now, when the population had so largely increased, must have be-

\* Fourth Week—Wednesday.

† The other is that of the two Enochs, which escapes Dr. C., who rather dwells upon the similarity (which does not exist) between the Enos of the one line and the Enoch of the other. We cannot comprehend how these remarkable oversights arose.

come the more onerous. Therefore Lamech, exhausted and fatigued by the labor he is forced to bestow upon the soil which the Lord has cursed, rejoices that a son is born to him who may share his labors, comfort him when he is worn out, and provide for him when he is old and feeble.

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### FIFTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

#### LONGEVITY OF THE ANTEDILUVIANS.—GENESIS V.

THERE has been much speculation respecting the longevity of the antediluvians. Out of nine men whose ages are recorded, one reached to nearly a thousand (969) years; and with the anomalous exception of Noah's father, who was cut off prematurely at the age of 777, the lowest of the nine reached 895 years. The average of life, reckoned upon the whole nine, is 912 years, and upon the eight, when the anomalous example has been omitted, 926 years.

In the midst of all the reflections which this marvellous length of days awakens—the mind is led to dwell with reverent admiration upon the wisdom of God in making this remarkable and temporary provision for the increase of the human race. It had been as easy to his infinite power to have in the beginning created many pairs of human beings as one, and by that means to have ensured the more rapid peopling of the earth. But it was his gracious purpose to make of one blood all the nations of men that dwell upon the face of the earth—that the tie of brotherhood might the more intimately subsist among them by their derivation from the same ancestors; but that the peopling of the world might not be retarded by this limitation, he gives an immense duration to the lives of the primeval generations, whereby the population of the earth goes on as rapidly as if he had in the first place given existence to twelve or fifteen pairs of human beings. Thus, before the flood, one woman bears several hundreds of

children, and might in her lifetime see thousands of her descendants.

We have already intimated our belief that no materials exist for any exact calculation of the population of the antediluvian world, seeing that there may have been then, as there always have been since, some disturbing or counteracting forces by which the laws of geometrical increase are in part neutralized. Nevertheless, making the largest allowance for the possible operation of such disturbances, it is difficult to suppose that, where the deaths were so few in proportion to the births, and where the circumstances were probably at least as favorable to the natural development of the population as they are in America at this moment, it may seem a moderate calculation to assume that the world was at the time of the deluge scarcely less populous than at present. This is but allowing for the population before the deluge a rate of increase but twofold greater than it has been since—although the duration of life rendered the advantages for increase manifoldly greater.

The brevity of the historical narrative, and the fewness of the generations which cover the space of time, tend to prevent us from realizing with distinctness the great duration of the period between the creation and the flood. We forget that it exceeds by more than four hundred years the length of the period from the birth of Christ to this day—that is, according to the longer or Septuagint computation, which is generally regarded by chronologers as the most correct; but even the shorter computation makes the period little more than two centuries less than the time since the birth of our Lord—a vast period of time, during which the whole face of Europe and of a large part of Asia has been changed—and nations have grown to greatness which were at its commencement scarcely known by name. The nearly equal period before the deluge, we are apt to regard too much as a fixed point—and the recorded facts concerning it are so few, that “the antediluvians” form, as it were, but a single idea in the mind. But it was a period of great increase of popula-

tion—of large improvement in the arts—of terrible conflicts—of gigantic crimes—of extraordinary virtues—of miraculous interpositions—all of which are dimly hinted at in the Divine record. Through the whole runs the great fact of the longevity of the generations before the flood—which connected by so few living links the extremities of this long period of time, and which must have produced conditions of human experience so materially different from those, which our brief space of existence enables us to realize.

The importance of this consideration, in thinking of the arts and sciences of this period, has already been hinted at. Touching on this theme, it is well remarked by Mr. Forsyth:—“A man of talent in those days, commencing with all the knowledge communicated to Adam, and directing his attention to any art, such as the cultivation of corn, and the taming and breeding of animals, the working of metals, the art of music, the manufacture of cloths, &c., could afford to employ five or six hundred years in his favorite occupation, or in his favorite experiments. In that time he might make more progress than a succession of men can now do in a succession of ages, because each can only afford a dozen or two of years to his favorite pursuit, and then leaves the unfinished task, not perhaps to be immediately taken up by a successor. This accounts for the rapid progress of the arts in the antediluvian world.”\*

It seems to us that the purpose of God in replenishing the earth, sufficiently accounts for the longevity of the primeval man; and to find an adequate reason for it, is the only difficulty it offers. Whether in case the sins of mankind had not brought on the purgation of the deluge, man's life would have continued of the same duration—whether the physical circumstances of the earth were more favorable to length of life before that event than they afterwards became—are points that cannot now be ascertained: but if the effect of longevity upon the increase of population be considered, we should think that the duration of life must in any case have

\* *Observations on Genesis*, p. 47.

been shortened, or else the world, not yet fully peopled, would long ere this have been crowded with a more dense population than the earth could maintain. It is possible that the duration of man's life, and the resulting increase of population, has, in the depths of the Divine wisdom, been adjusted with reference to the duration of the present state of the world, so that the world shall not over-swarm with people before "the time of the end."

Some have imagined that the years in which the antediluvians' lives are stated were shorter than ours—that in fact they were lunar years, or months. This involves the question in greater difficulties than are removed by it—and above all, it would make the duration of the world shorter than even historical evidence allows.

In fact the longevity of the primeval generations is corroborated by many ancient traditions. Josephus could appeal to them. After stating the particulars in conformity with the Mosaical account, he says, "I have, for witnesses to what I have said, all who have written antiquities both among the Greeks and barbarians; for even Manetho, who wrote the Egyptian history, and Berosus, who collected the Chaldean monuments, and Mochus and Hestæus, and, besides these, Hieronymus the Egyptian, and those who composed the Phœnician history, assent to what I here say: Hesiod also, and Hecataeus, Hellanicus and Acusilaus, and, besides these, Ephorus and Nicolaus, relate that the ancients lived a thousand years."\*

This appeal shows, that such accounts were actually possessed, although most of them have been lost to us; and being possessed, they must either have come down as traditions from remote times, or have been derived from the books of Moses at a very ancient period—supplying in the latter alternative, a piece of evidence for the antiquity of those books. Tradition is, however, the most probable source; for we find the same accounts of primeval longevity in the records of China and Hindustan. Extending not be-

\* *Antiquities*, i. 3.

yond the flood, the Chinese annals give to the eight generations following Noah, nearly the same duration as the Hebrew historian; and Hoang-tee, who reigned in China seven hundred and thirty years after the flood, is described as remarking the gradual decline of the term of human life, and as inquiring how it came to pass, that the lives of the ancients were so long, and the life of man so short in the age in which he lived? The Institutes of Menu, also, state that in the first ages (after the flood), the life of man extended to four hundred years.

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### FIFTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

#### THE SONS OF GOD.—GENESIS VI. 2.

WE are informed in the beginning of the sixth chapter of Genesis, that when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, “the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.” And again, “There were giants (*nephilim*) on the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men that were of old, men of renown.” It is to be regretted that a passage, calculated, if rightly apprehended, to throw considerable light upon this obscure period, is in itself very difficult to comprehend. One broad fact, which is perhaps the only one that is really important for us to know, stands out, however, with sufficient distinctness—that much evil, much irreligion, apostasy, violence, and wrong-doing, resulted from incongruous unions between two classes, distinguished as “the sons of God,” and “the daughters of men,” from whom spring “giants,” who became “mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”

The question at once presents itself, What were the two classes whose union produced this powerful and mighty race,

distinguished as the NEPHILIM or “giants,” who acquired such bad eminence in the primeval world?

The first impression of the reader would seem to be, that the “sons of God” were angels, and “the daughters of men” human females; and this is the view of the subject which has been entertained by many, both in ancient and modern times.

But against this it is urged, there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage among the inhabitants of heaven, with whose spiritual nature earthly pleasures are incompatible.

If these “sons of God” are not angels, who then are they? One set of expositors, observing that in the Old Testament the children of Israel are sometimes called the children of the Lord, and the Moabites, the people of Chemosh, and strange women, the daughters of a strange god, conclude that the expression “sons of God,” is but a figurative expression for the worshippers of God,\* the Sethites, who are thus placed in opposition to those who worshipped no God whatever (“the daughters of men”), the descendants of Cain. Another body of commentators, however, look to the genius and idiom of the Hebrew language for an explanation. They call to mind that a great rushing wind is called “a wind of God;” a lofty mountain, “a mountain of God;” kings and mighty men, “sons of God;” and they urge the words which are translated “sons of God,” should be rendered “sons of the mighty;”† and that the passage then means, that the antediluvian chiefs and nobles took wives of all the handsome inferior women that they chose.

We must not conceal that these explanations appear to us far from clear of difficulties. They have the forced aspect of being framed for a purpose—the purpose of avoiding the view which lets in the angels; and they do not account—neither of them account, for the giants and mighty men of old, who are said to have been the issue of these marriages;

\* Deut. xiv. 1; Num. xxi. 29; Malachi ii. 11.

† So actually rendered in De Sola’s recent Jewish translation of Genesis.



or they account for them irrationally, by assuming that a race, whose physical and mental (though not moral or spiritual) superiority is very emphatically denoted in the text, was obtained by grafting a pure or noble, on an impure or inferior stock.

To the interpretation which makes the "sons of God" the family of Seth, it may be further objected, that although the Israelites are called the *children* of God, they are not called the *sons* of God, and that hence the alleged analogy does not exactly apply. If, also, the Cainite females were intended by the "daughters of men," and the Sethites by "the sons of God," we might expect the terms to have been more general, probably "children," as intermarriages would in all likelihood have taken place, as well between daughters and sons, as between sons and daughters. Again, it is said at the outset, that "*men* began to multiply on the face of the earth;" and this, doubtless, applies to all the race of mankind; and it may therefore be urged, that the "daughters of men," in the immediate context, are the daughters of the same men, that is, mankind without distinction.

As to the other explanation, which makes the "sons of God" to be chiefs espousing inferior women—besides being open to the general objections which apply to both interpretations—it may be remarked, that no such stigma as is here assumed, is attached in the Bible to the marriages of exalted men with women of inferior rank and position; nor does it consist with the ideas and usages of the East, where the great are not held to disgrace themselves, if they do sometimes honor the poor, by taking their wives from among them.

The fault of this age lies in too strong a disposition to bring all ancient and remote things, existing under unknown conditions, down to the square and level of present ideas and known conditions. Taking the text as it stands, and trying to comprehend what it means to state, without any wish to extort from it a meaning which might consist better with our own ideas, we are bound to say, that the intrinsic evidence appears to us to be in favor of the opinion—that the sacred

record means to tell us, that beings not of mortal race attached themselves to the daughters of men. The way to reach the meaning of terms of uncertain interpretation, is to see what sense the same terms bear in books of the same or nearly the same age. Now very general consent ascribes the book of Job to the same age, and even to the same pen as the book of Genesis—and in the introduction of that book we have these remarkable words:—"There was a day when the SONS OF GOD came to present themselves before the Lord, and *Satan came also among them.*" There the sons of God are various non-human beings, angels in their various degrees, fallen and unfallen; and it is manifest that they are called "sons of God" in the same sense in which Adam is in the genealogy of Luke (i. 38), called the "son of God"—namely, because he had no human father, but was created directly by God. In the same book of Job, which is more important than any other for the interpretation of Genesis, the same phrase once more occurs, and is again unmistakably applied to angels: "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." (Job xxxviii. 7.)

The objection drawn from the nature of angels is scarcely valid—for we know not what the nature of angels is. They may have, and probably they have, bodies of some kind; there may be, and probably are, various degrees of them, more or less spiritual. We know that angels are capable of evil, and have committed it; are capable of falling, and have fallen. If these "sons of God" were angels, there is no evidence whether they were fallen or unfallen angels—for, in the passage to which we have referred, the term seems to be applied to both with regard to their higher nature as derived directly from God.

Although it would not be wise positively to assert this to be the only possible interpretation of this obscure transaction, it certainly has the advantage of simplicity, and of taking the text in its obvious meaning. The interpretation is also ancient. It is embodied in the apocryphal book of Enoch, which is ascribed to the first century before Christ, and is

supposed to comprise fragments of ancient truth, and certainly indicates the notions in such matters of the age to which it belongs. The "sons of God" are there expressly said to have been angels, the inhabitants of heaven. It accords well, also, as might be largely shown, with the views of all ancient nations, which are full of legends of such intercourse of higher natures with the daughters of men— notions which doubtless had their origin in many colored traditions of the same fact which the sixth chapter of Genesis records.

Let us not overlook the fact that this interpretation throws a clearer light upon the history of the deluge. The earth, which received its present goodly frame for man's use, becomes occupied by an intrusive race more powerful than man, and oppressing and destroying him—a race essentially wicked; whose evil nature no time can change, no circumstances ameliorate, and whose very existence counteracts the designs of the Creator, and one which, therefore, in order that man may again replenish the earth, it became necessary to destroy utterly, while yet one family of pure race existed. In connection with this point, it is well worthy of notice that Noah, who had no children at the time that God declared (120 years before the event) his intention to destroy the world, although then nearly five hundred years old, soon after had his eldest son, and then the others—suggesting that he had contracted marriage, perhaps under Divine direction—with some special view to the preservation of a race of unmixed blood.

This subject is undoubtedly difficult, and will perhaps never be clearly understood; but there is no safer or wiser course than to strive to understand what the Scripture *means to teach*, apart from all our notions of the probable, the possible, or the proper. In this record lies our only information of things and times so remote; and, receiving it as the word of God, our only thought must be to grasp the simple meaning of its communications.

## FIFTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

THE ARK.—GENESIS VI. 14-16.

WAS the ark built by Noah the first example of naval architecture? did the art of the shipwright originate in this remarkable structure? We think not. It is scarcely credible that man had been so long upon the earth without discovering some means of floating upon the rivers and the seas. Are we to think so low of the state of the arts among the antediluvians—with all the peculiar advantages they enjoyed—as to suppose that they had not discovered an art known in modern times to the most savage and barbarous nations? Indeed, the instructions given to Noah for the making of the ark are so general as to imply that they were addressed to one who knew how to work out the details. These instructions do not enable us to define the form of the vessel, or to have more than a very obscure notion of its arrangements. This is because we lack the previous knowledge which Noah and those who wrought with him possessed, and which enabled them with the very same instructions to produce the intended fabric.

It is remarkable that the Phœnician annals ascribe the origin of the ark to the fifth generation—just in the middle period between the creation and the deluge. According to that account the discovery took place in this manner: “Usoos having taken a fallen tree and broken off its boughs, was the first who dared to venture on the sea.”

Let us look to the description: “Make thee an ark of gopher-wood.” This is generally understood of the cypress tree. “Chambers shalt thou make in the ark;”—these chambers were doubtless cells or stalls for the different kinds of animals—and it appears from what ensues that these cells were arranged in three stories. “And pitch it within and without with pitch”—probably bitumen, the substance of all others best adapted to exclude the water

“And thus shalt thou make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.” These dimensions will presently be noticed. “A transparency shalt thou make to the ark;” not “a window”—but collectively the means of admitting light, and at the same time excluding the water. Had the antediluvians the knowledge of glass? The word may, however, mean translucency merely, and not necessarily transparency. It does, however, indicate something *shining*. The words of the next sentence but one, defining that the doorway was in the side of the ark, indicate that the translucency, or series of windows, was at the top—and it was indeed needful that it should be very high, to prevent the waves from breaking in. “And to a cubit shalt thou reduce it at the top,” is a difficult phrase. We are not sure that we understand it: but it seems to mean that the roof, in which the translucency was set, sloped to a ridge of about a cubit wide. “And the doorway of the ark shalt thou place in the side thereof.” This clearly shows that it was not a decked vessel. The door must have been of some size to admit the larger animals, for whose ingress it was mainly intended. The door was no doubt above the highest draught-mark of the ark—and the animals ascended to it probably by a sloping embankment. A door in the side is not more difficult to understand than the port-holes in the sides of our vessels. Yet the sacred writer is aware of the apparent danger of a large door in the side, and therefore satisfactorily relieves our anxiety by informing us that “the Lord shut him in:”—and, in all ages, he whom the Lord shuts in is safe indeed. “With lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it;” which shows that no space in this vast fabric was wasted; but every cubit of its enormous area, from floor to ceiling, was laid out in receptacles for the various animals. In all probability, the larger animals were kept in the lower floor, and the birds in the upper.

Such is the description of the ark. Of its shape nothing is said. But we have the dimensions. Taking the cubit at

the usual estimate,\* these give it the length of five hundred and forty-seven feet; the width of ninety-one feet two inches; and the height of forty-seven feet two inches. This is nearly three times the size of the largest British man-of-war, and to make a vessel of these colossal proportions—a floating world—must clearly have required no small amount of practical as well as scientific knowledge.

The proportions simply as stated suggest the idea of an immense oblong square box or chest, and many have thought that this was its actual shape. They consider, it seems to us rightly, that the ark was not framed for any other purpose than to *float* safely, and keep steady upon the waters. It had not necessarily to make any progress from point to point; it may be doubtful if it had even to contend with strong winds or heavy waves; and if, at the worst, it were at times driven before the wind, acting upon the vast surface it presented, no great harm could come of this—as by striking against shores or rocks—seeing that all the world was under the water.

The form, therefore, usually given to the ark by painters, who have in view its *progress* through the waters, is probably erroneous, and is framed to meet conditions which did not actually exist. That figure is, indeed, in itself preposterous, and contrary to all the rules of naval architecture. We see nothing to prevent us from conceiving that the ark was shaped something like a house, secured upon a strong raft-like floor. It is right, however, to observe that the “ark of the covenant,” which was certainly a chest, affords no ideas which can aid our apprehension of the structure of Noah’s ark. The words are altogether different in the original—the one being *TEBAH*, and the other *ARUN*.

Whatever be our ideas as to the *form* of the ark, there is no question but that its *dimensions* were well adapted to the

\* That is, 21,888 inches. We adopt it merely to avoid the incidental discussion of a large subject; but we think the reader may very safely, in his current computations of Scripture measures, regard the cubit as half a yard.

object in view. There were formerly some experiments made in Holland and Denmark, with the same proportions of parts. About 250 years ago, in particular, a Dutch merchant, named Peter Jansen, caused a vessel to be built for him in the same proportions as (but of smaller dimensions than) Noah's ark. It was a hundred and twenty feet long, twenty broad, and twelve deep. Jansen happened to be a Mennonite; and while his work was in progress, it was regarded as the enterprise of a fanatical visionary, and he was exposed to quite as much sport and derision as Noah himself could have encountered. But it was afterwards found that a vessel like this was well suited to commerce in times of peace, as it would take in a third part more lading than any other vessel, without requiring a greater number of hands. Accordingly, the name of *Navis Noachica* was, by some, given to this kind of vessel. The account of this matter is preserved in a letter written to Petrus Reinerus, who married the daughter of the person who built this vessel, on the supposed model of Noah's ark, for Jansen, and which is to be found in one or two old books on Noah's ark. In one of these works, the author, Reyher,\* states that the like experiment had been made in his own country; and affirms that the kind of vessels called *Fleuten* or "Floats," have almost the very same proportions as those of the ark.

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#### FIFTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

##### THE DELUGE.—GENESIS VII.

God, who in the midst of judgment remembers mercy, gave the old world ample space for repentance. A hundred and twenty years was the time in which the appointed judgment was suspended. And here we may point out the incidental corroboration this affords to the duration which the record ascribes to human life before the flood. All circumstan

\* In his *Mathesis Mosaica*.

ces which do transpire are proportioned to that duration. A hundred and twenty years would have been too long, according to the present duration of life; for many who were not born when the judgment was first denounced, would have died before it was accomplished; and so long a delay of judgment would have weakened the force of the denunciation, and would have allowed most people to view it as a thing not to happen in their time, and which, therefore, they would but lightly regard. But a hundred and twenty years was less than the eighth of the average duration of antediluvian life: and, in respect of warning, was not more to that generation than nine years would be to us. It was, therefore, an interval just long enough for effective warning, without being so long as to allow any man that lived, to deem that he might neglect that warning without danger.

Noah himself seems to have been the instrument of making this warning known, and of preaching repentance. St. Peter calls him "a preacher of righteousness"\*—from which, as well as from the probability of the case, we gather that he labored diligently to make known the purpose of God, and to exhort that untoward generation to flee from the wrath to come. But the construction of the ark was in itself a warning the most impressive. It evinced the sincerity of Noah's conviction, that the judgment he declared really impended over mankind; and as its vast proportions slowly rose before the eyes of man, the rumor of this immense and strange undertaking must have spread far and wide, not unaccompanied with the report of the reasons which the builder gave for its construction. Thus "the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing."† Did it wait in vain? We cannot wholly say that. In the interval of a hundred and twenty years many must have died, among whom there may have been some who were suitably impressed by the threatened judgments of an offended God.

But we know, that of those that were alive just before the

\* 2 Pet. ii. 5.

† 1 Pet. iii. 20.



flood came, there were none that took these things to heart. Our Saviour himself, in a few awful words, describes their condition. "In the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not—UNTIL THE FLOOD CAME, AND TOOK THEM ALL AWAY."\* We see too much around us, to be greatly astonished at this. We see at this day how few there are in the world, on whom the prospect of a judgment to come makes any serious impression; and we are assured by our Lord himself, that as it was in the days before the flood, so shall it be in the day when the Son of Man cometh.

There was a pause of seven days after Noah had entered the ark, before the flood of waters came. How awful that pause! Were there any who were *then* smitten with fear—any on whom the striking spectacle of the animals passing into the ark, and the Noahic family last of all entering, and all being then shut securely in, made any salutary impression? Our Saviour says that they were obdurate until the day that Noah entered into the ark—were they *all* obdurate the day after—the seven days after? We cannot know. If any one *then* bethought himself of the evil of his way, and his heart turned to God, it was well for him, well for his soul; but it was too late for this world—the door of the ark was shut.

Even then the judgment was not instant. The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the rain fell not in drops but in cataracts; yet it was not immediately that the lower levels were filled. Thus it was forty days before the ark floated, and a hundred and fifty days before the waters rose to their highest point, which was twenty-three feet above the highest mountains. Thus were the various tribes of creatures driven, day by day, from one resource to another, until none was left. The men who hoped that the waters would soon subside, or whose retreat from their towns and villages was cut off by the surrounding water, may be con-

\* Matt. xxiv. 38, 39.

ceived to have retreated to the towers and the trees, watching with horror the gradual rise of the waters, and dropping off, one by one, in fatigue and want, from the extremest boughs into the encroaching flood, even before its waters reached them. For those who retreated to the high lands, there was even a more terrible lot than for those whom the waters soonest slew. Thousands, who had succeeded in reaching the mountains, must have perished with hunger, even before the waters swept off the miserable remnant of their numbers. With them, how soon did the joy of escape to a station of fancied safety from the waters, give place to the consciousness that they were without food or the means of obtaining any, upon the mountains, and must speedily perish there unless the waters soon subsided? But they did not subside. They rose; and in their rise narrowed day by day the area of possible existence. The young and tender died—the aged died—men in their prime died—till at last, some sole survivor, who had seen all the dear companions of his prime perish before his eyes, stood alone upon the mountain, and rushed to meet the flood in his frenzy, or sunk into it in the listlessness of his despair.

The horrors of this most fearful judgment that the world has ever yet seen are imperfectly realized, if we think of it, as we usually do, as a sudden visitation. It was slow—dreadfully slow; and during the months in which the waters rose, the scenes of agony and despair which one day after another presented in different quarters, are such as strike terror into the heart, and sickness into the soul of him who suffers his mind to dwell upon them and to picture forth the horrible details. The eye shrinks from the backward view at the righteous judgment of God—and the ear vibrates with torture at the cries of children, at the sobs of women, at the groans of men, and at

“The bubbling cry  
Of some strong swimmer in his agony.”

## FIFTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

## EXTENT OF THE DELUGE.—GENESIS VII. 19.

It has been much urged of late that the deluge was not universal, but was confined to a particular region which man inhabited. It may be admitted freely that, seeing the object of the flood was to drown mankind, there was no need that it should extend beyond the region of man's habitation. But this theory necessarily assigns to the world before the flood a lower population, and a more limited extension of it, than we are prepared to concede. Our reasons for believing the world to have had a large and extended population before the flood, have already been given. Let us now add, that when we consider how widely the population descended from Noah had increased and spread within a period after the flood greatly shorter than that from the creation to the deluge, with advantages very far below those which the antediluvians possessed, it is simply incredible that it should at the time of the deluge have been confined within the limits required.

It appears to us, that a plain man sitting down to read the Scripture account of the deluge, would have no doubt of its universality; and although our interest lies not in reasoning upon the greater or less probabilities of the case, but in ascertaining what the word of God means to teach to us—it is gratifying to believe that the greater amount of even human probability is in concurrence with the more obvious meaning of Scripture. As to that meaning, what limitation can we assign to such a phrase as this—"All the high hills that were UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN were covered." If here the phrase had been "upon the face of the whole earth," we should have been told that "the whole earth" had sometimes the meaning of "the whole land;" but as if designedly to obviate such a limitation of meaning, we have here the largest

phrase of universality which the language of man affords—  
“under the whole heaven.”

Furthermore, if the deluge were local, what was the need of taking birds into the ark, and among them birds so widely diffused as the raven and the dove? A deluge which could overspread the region which these birds inhabit, could hardly have been less than universal. If the deluge were local, and all the birds of these kinds in that district perished—though we should think they might have fled to the uninundated regions—it would have been useless to encumber the ark with them, seeing that the birds of the same species which survived in the lands not overflowed, would speedily replenish the inundated tract as soon as the waters subsided. It is altogether a most remarkable circumstance, that the only creatures of those contained in the ark which are named, are those whose existence upon earth would not have been affected by any deluge much less than universal. And if the waters of the deluge rose fifteen cubits above all the mountains of the countries which the raven and the dove inhabit, the level must have been high enough to give universality to the deluge.

We yield our judgment to what appears to us the force of these arguments as to the meaning of Scripture. Apart from these reasons, we should have been inclined to regard the deluge as partial, though extensive, for it must be allowed that the doctrine of the flood's universality has, on its side, considerable difficulties—but which do not seem to us insuperable. We believe, further, that when once the real meaning of the Scripture is ascertained, we shall have gained the standard of truth as to these great facts; and all true science will then be found to be reconcilable with its statements, if not confirmatory of them.

The subject is a large one, and we may not here discuss or even state it fully. But there is one branch of it possessing great and peculiar interest, to which some attention may be given. We mean the traditions of the deluge which have been found to exist among all nations.

It used to be urged that the universality of these traditions proved the universality of the deluge. But it must be allowed that they prove nothing, either way, on the subject. Those who have taken such great and laudable pains in collecting the traditions of tribes and nations deponing to the fact of an overwhelming deluge in the days of their remote ancestors, and who have inferred from the existence of such traditions in every quarter of the globe, that the deluge had belonged to every region in which such traditions were found, appear to have overlooked the important fact, that as all men sprang from Noah, their traditions are to be traced to their origin, and that they would naturally carry these traditions to any region in which they might afterwards settle. Commentators have erroneously reasoned as if the traditions had originated in the various regions in which every diversity of the human species has been found. Dr. J. Pye Smith and other able advocates of a partial deluge, successfully remove this stumbling-block from their path. But it is clear that although the argument for a general deluge loses this support—that for the partial deluge gains nothing by it.

These traditions are however important as showing two things in corroboration of the scriptural account. They show that there was, as Scripture affirms, a flood by which all mankind, except one righteous family, were destroyed; and they prove, in further conformity with the Scripture record, that all the existing tribes and nations of mankind are descended from that one family which survived the flood. In this point of view they are of high interest; and after tomorrow we will consider some of the more remarkable coincidences which they offer. It will be seen in them, that, as was natural, the tradition of every settled nation makes its own land and its own mountains the scene of these circumstances—the traditions of a settled people being always localized. On that ground alone the traditions of a nomade people, as the Hebrews were, with respect to localities, would be entitled to preference, even had they no higher claims.

Such nations had no local, but only family attachments—and hence, while every other tradition makes the ark rest upon some high mountain in the land where that tradition reigns, the Hebrew account assigns the ark to a mountain far away from any land with which that people were connected, and which it is not at all probable that any of them had in the time of Moses ever beheld.

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### Sixth Week—Sunday.

“GOD REMEMBERED NOAH.”—GENESIS VIII. 1.

CONSIDER the condition of Noah and his family in the ark, with numerous beasts, some of them of savage natures. Five months had he been pent up from the sweet freedom of nature, and the fresh products of the ground. Five months had the waters gone on increasing, with no prospect of abatement, although long since, as far as he could see, the object of the flood had been accomplished, and mankind had perished from the face of the earth. How long was this to go on? When might he hope for release? Since the Lord had shut him in, he had received no communication from Him. Had he no misgivings? Noah was a man as we are, though good and holy; and his faith was greatly tried. It scarcely detracts from the glory of that faith to suppose that there were moments in which he feared that God had forgotten him.

But “the Lord remembered Noah,” and his covenant with him: He had never forgotten him; and although he gave no sensible token of his presence, he had never been absent from him. Speaking after the manner of men, the Lord is said to remember him, whom he had at no time forgotten, when the time had come that he should *manifest* his knowledge of him, his kindness for him, and his remembrance of him.

“Strange to our ears the church-bells of our home,  
 The fragrance of our old paternal fields  
 May be forgotten; and the time may come  
 When the babe’s kiss no sense of pleasure yields  
 Even to the doting mother; but thine own  
 Thou never can’st forget, nor leave alone.”

Let not the fact, that “God remembered Noah,” pass unregarded as a matter of no concern or profit to us. Let us see farther, that Noah was not alone remembered, but He also remembered “every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark.” Not the smallest creature in that large ark was forgotten by him. “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?” asked our Saviour; “and yet, not one of them is forgotten before God,” he added.

How many are they, to whom the consideration of these facts suggests needful and profitable reflections? How many are they who, “shut in” upon themselves, and shut out from the world by privation, poverty, or pain, are tempted to think the Lord has forgotten them, because he has not yet moved for their deliverance? Daily have they cried to him, and asked a token for good—some sign that they are still the objects of his care, that they are still unforgotten by him, even if the time for their deliverance has not yet come. The world has left them. They know that by-and-bye, when the morning light again shines, the Dariuses of the world will come to ask them, “Hath the God whom thou servest continually been able to save thee out of the mouth of the lions?” and they burn with desire to be enabled, not less for God’s glory than for their own comfort, to return the proper answer—that when men had forsaken them, and left them to pass the long and weary night alone, the Lord had taken them up, and made them more than conquerors over toil, and pain, and care.

But they have not yet this comfort. To task the care and thought of others for us, is hard. For in this age man, like Martha of old, “is careful and troubled about many things.”

The world is a hard task-master to one who devotes himself to its affairs, and but seldom

“Leaves him leisure to be good.”

Besides the complications of our social system, the hardness which the intense world-worship of the age engenders, tends more and more to narrow the circle of human sympathies and affections; and we are fallen upon times in which man heeds but little, or heeds but briefly, the sorrow that does not touch the bones and marrow of his own house. How often, therefore, do we meet, away in solitary corners, those whom the world has forsaken, and who sit there waiting for God to appear in their behalf? Their hope from man has ceased. They have tried the world, and have sorrowfully learned the value of its promises and hopes. They now, therefore, rest wholly upon God. They know his power. They call to remembrance his loving-kindness of old. They have not forgotten the days of the right hand of the Most High. Many a time have they been before brought low, and he has helped them. But he does not come at their call. He does not hasten at their prayers. Then grows the thought—Has he also forgotten them—is he also weary of them—will not even he come to their help? “O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted,” be of good cheer—he hath not forgotten thee, he is nigh, intimately nigh—

“He sees thy wants, allays thy fears,  
And counts and treasures up thy tears.”

Behold, he has graven thee upon the palms of his hands; behold, thou hast his seal upon thy forehead; behold, he shall yet lay thy stones with fair colors, and thy foundations with sapphires. O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? But so it is:—we are creatures of sense. We will not believe that God is nigh, unless we see him; that he has not forgotten us, unless he is continually affording some strong sign of his remembrance. Yet is his presence and carefulness not less truly shown in the silent watchings of his love,



than when he stretches forth his hand to pluck the brand from the burning. Yet he often condescends to our infirmity, remembering that we are but flesh, and grants to us the sign our feeble faith requires. To Noah the assurance, that He who never forgets, remembered him, was conveyed to him by the wind that blew over the waters, and before which they assuaged.

There was a prophet of old, who knew more of the ways of God than most men. He was led to expect the manifestation of God's presence. There arose a mighty wind that brake the rocks in pieces; and after the wind there was an earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire—to all this the prophet stood motionless. But after that, "a still small voice" was heard; and then the man, whom the wind, the earthquake, and the fire, had not moved, "wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out;" for he knew that God was there. Alas! how few are they who would not rather expect the presence of God in the wind, in the earthquake, or in the fire, than in the still small voice!

Let us not, therefore, be in haste to think ourselves forgotten of God, or think less of the insensible than the sensible tokens of his remembrance of us. An anecdote will point our meaning.

A minister was once speaking to a brother clergyman of his gratitude for a merciful deliverance he had just experienced.

"As I was riding here to-day," said he, "my horse stumbled, and came near throwing me from a bridge, where the fall would have killed me; but I escaped unhurt."

"And I can tell you something more than that," said the other; "as I rode here to-day, my horse did not stumble at all."

## SIXTH WEEK—MONDAY.

## TRADITIONS OF THE DELUGE.

It is difficult to condense within the limits which are here appropriated to it, the substance of the traditions which are found among various nations with reference to the flood. We shall however attempt to state the leading points of coincidence, and shall at the close indicate to the reader the sources from which more extended information may be obtained. In going thus cursorily through the subject, it will not fail to be noticed that in proportion as we recede from the Ararat of Armenia, the traditions become less distinct, and more mixed up with extraneous matters—and this seems to us a strong argument in favor of the general conclusion that this was the mountain on which the ark rested, and therefore the cradle of the human race—the centre from which mankind diverged into all lands, as population increased after the deluge.

The Chaldeans believed that during the reign of Xisuthrus, the *tenth* king of Babylon (corresponding to the tenth generation of mankind, in which it really happened), the deluge thus took place: The god Chronus appeared to this Xisuthrus in a vision, and warned him that on the fifteenth day of the month Dæsius there would be a flood, by which mankind would be destroyed. He therefore enjoined him to build a vessel, and take with him into it his friends and relations; and to convey on board everything necessary to sustain life, together with all the different animals, both birds and quadrupeds, and to trust himself fearlessly to the deep. In obedience to these directions Xisuthrus built a vessel five stadia (about three quarters of a mile) in length, and two in breadth; into which he put everything he had prepared, and last of all went into it himself, with his wife, children, and friends. After the flood had been upon the earth, and was in time abated, Xisuthrus sent out birds from the vessel,

which, finding no food or place for rest, returned to him. After some days he sent them forth again, and they returned with their feet tinged with mud. Subsequently he made a third trial with them, and they returned no more, by which he judged that the surface of the earth had appeared above the waters. He therefore made an opening in the vessel, and on looking out found that it was stranded upon a mountain, which he afterwards found to be in the land of Armenia.\*

The tradition of a general deluge was also found among the ancient Persians. The subject is only wildly alluded to in the Zendavesta,† but among the ancient books of the Parsees (who inherit the worship and ideas of the ancient Persians) is one which states that the world having been corrupted by Ahriman, the evil one, it was thought necessary to bring over the world a universal flood of waters, that all impurity might be washed away. Accordingly, the rain came down in drops as large as the head of a bull, until the earth was wholly covered with water to the height of a man, and all the khanfaters (the creatures of the evil one) perished. The waters then gradually subsided, and first the mountains and then the plains appeared once more. In this tradition there is the remarkable deficiency of a family preserved in an ark, which we find in even remoter regions. But it is stated that after the flood there was a new creation of men and animals.

It is usually stated that the Egyptians had no tradition of the deluge. But this is not correct. We have the means of knowing that they were acquainted with the doctrine of a general deluge, though the details of their belief have not been transmitted to us. The Egyptian historian Manetho, as quoted by Syncellus and Eusebius, speaks of certain inscribed pillars which were set up by the Thoth, the first Hermes,

\* This tradition in full may be found in Cory's *Ancient Fragments*, from Syncellus and Eusebius.

† The Boun-dehesch, of which there is a translation by Anquetil du Perron, the translator of the Zendavesta.

and the inscriptions on which were *after the deluge* transcribed into books. Plato also stated in his *Timæus*, that having questioned a certain Egyptian priest on the subject, he was informed that the gods, wishing to purify the earth by water, overwhelmed it by a deluge. On this occasion certain shepherds and herdsmen were saved upon the tops of the mountains—but those who dwelt in towns were swept away by the rising waters. It might be doubted whether this statement applied to the general deluge, were it not that the religion of the ancient Egyptians abounds in Noachic memorials, which fix the true purport of such statements; and it is also true that men in later ages became disposed to localize in their various nations the general traditions of the deluge.

The famous tradition of Deucalion's deluge, as preserved among the Greeks, has the closest coincidence with that of Noah, so that the accounts which we possess seem to read like amplified reports of the record in Genesis. Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, who was well acquainted with both sacred and pagan literature, plainly affirms that Deucalion was Noah; and of this there can be no question. We have two accounts of this deluge: one by Lucian, and another by Ovid. The latter is the most poetical and the most full in descriptive details—but the former is the most consistently in agreement with the Mosaic details *throughout*. The great variation is that Ovid does not provide for the safety of any animals, and Lucian does; the substance of the account given by the latter is this: There was another race of men before the present, which owes its origin to Deucalion. The first race of men were a fierce and haughty people, who committed most heinous iniquities. For this a horrible calamity came over them. All at once the waters burst forth from all parts of the earth, and floods of rain came down from above, till the earth was covered with water, and all mankind perished. Deucalion alone was preserved, on account of his piety and uprightness, for the propagation of a new race. He had a very large chest, into which he packed his wives and children, and last of all went in himself. Just as he was

entering, there came running to him all kinds of wild beasts and creeping things, *pair-wise*. He took them all in, and Jupiter instilled into them such peaceful dispositions that they did him no harm, but lived in the most peaceful accord together, and were thus preserved in the chest as in a ship so long as the flood lasted.

The chief variation in Ovid's description of the same deluge is, that Deucalion and his wife (not wives and children, nor animals) escape the flood in a small skiff, which is stranded upon Mount Parnassus. But in his account the incidents are finely brought out, and the Divine intervention more strongly indicated. Strikingly does the poet represent the unbounded riot of the ocean covering the hills, and the strange waves dashing on the mountain tops, and the birds falling into the water from fatigue, because there was nothing left on which they could alight to rest their wings.\* He does not, indeed, specify the exact duration of the flood at its height; yet he supposes that it lasted long, because he makes hunger, from the absence of all food, destroy all those whom the water spared; namely, such as availing themselves of rafts or boats contrived to float above the flood, but being taken unprepared for such a voyage, necessarily died of famine.† This is indeed a very satisfactory solution of the only objection of apparent weight, that could have been urged, against the reasons we have adduced for the strong persuasion, that vessels for floating upon the water, existed among the antediluvians before the ark of Noah was constructed.

Proceeding to remoter regions, we find in the far East the

\* "Obruerat tumulos immensa licentia ponti  
Pulsabantque novi montana cacumina fluctus."

† "Quæsitisque diu terris, ubi sidere detur,  
In mare lassatis volucris vaga decidit alis."

OVID, *Metam.* i. 309 and 307.

† "Maxima pars undâ rapitur: quibus unda pepercit  
Illos longa domant inopi jejunia victu."

OVID, *Metam.* i. 311.

He had before spoken (*Ibid.* 249) of some sailing over the tops of the houses, and swimming where they used to plough.

same substantial traditions. The earliest sacred books of China contain frequent, although not very precise, notices of the deluge. The waters are represented as covering the hills on every side, and overtopping the mountains, and reaching even unto heaven, and the people as struck with terror and perishing.\*

In India the traditions are more copious. In ancient time, the god Vishnu appeared to the sun-born monarch, Satyavrata, in the form of a fish, and said,—“In seven days all creatures that have offended me shall be destroyed by a deluge; but thou shalt be preserved in a capacious vessel miraculously formed. Take, therefore, all kinds of medicinal herbs and esculent grains for food, and, together with the seven holy men, your respective wives, and pairs of all animals, enter the ark without fear.” Satyavrata conformed himself to these directions, when, after seven days, the floods descended and drowned the world.†

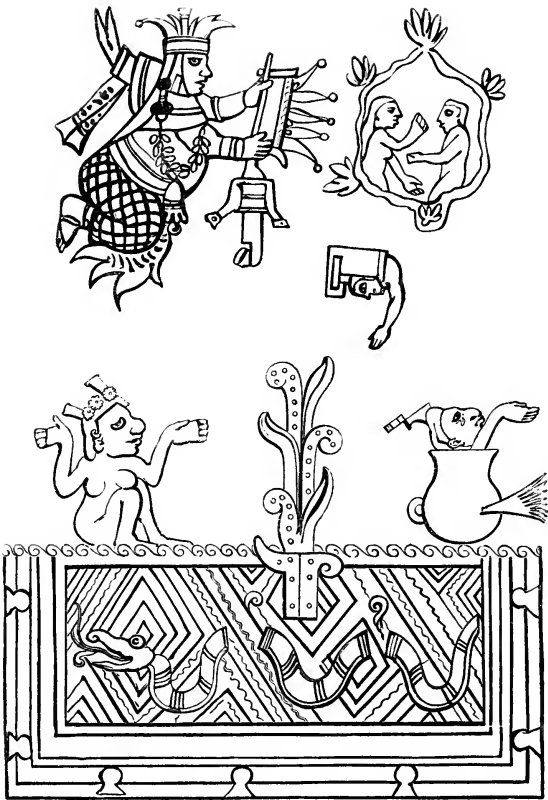
Going now to the extreme west, we observe, with surprise, that the traditions of the deluge exist among all the various tribes and nations of the American continent, where, from the great remoteness, we should expect to find but faint traces of that event. The Mexicans had traditions of a deluge that destroyed all animals with the exception of one man and his wife, who escaped in the hollow trunk of an *ahahuete* or cypress (gopher) tree. The children born numerously to them after the subsidence of the waters were dumb, until they received the gift of speech from a dove, which came and perched itself upon a lofty tree. There are Mexican paintings of this event extant, in which Coxcox, the Noah of the Mexicans, and his wife Xochiquetzal, are seated in the trunk of a tree, covered with leaves, and floating amid the waters,‡ while the goddess of water, called Matalcueje or Chalchiuhege, pours down her floods upon the earth. In

\* Sir William Jones in *Asiatic Researches*, ii. 376.

† Ibid. ii. 116, 117; see also i. 230.

‡ Humboldt's *Vues des Cordilleras* pl. 26, pp. 206, 207; also Herrera, to the same effect.





SIXTH WEEK, 2d DAY.



the different representations of this scene, men are seen swimming and perishing in the waters, and birds are seen fluttering and dying upon the surface, where they have fallen exhausted.

In an allegorical painting, which may be found in plate 15 of Humboldt's *Vues des Cordilleras*, a serpent cut asunder, but still living, is seen shut up in a tank full of water, from the midst of which a plant arises. To the left is a woman crowned with a garland, probably the voluptuous Tlamezquimille; while to the right is seen a man shut up in a kind of jar. A personage is also represented to whose victorious arm the miserable condition of the serpent is to be ascribed. The allegory thus pictured has reference. Humboldt says, to the serpent which poisoned the water—the source of all organic life; to the victory over him, like that of Khrishna over the dragon Kaliya; to the seduction of the world, and to its purification by water. In this we cannot fail to see the deluge, and more exact inquiry into the tradition would probably furnish still more exact Scripture analogies.

The Mechoachans, a people contiguous to the Mexicans, believed that mankind, becoming forgetful of their duties and origin, were punished by a universal deluge, from which the priest Tezpi, and his wife and children, were alone preserved. He shut himself up in a large chest of wood, into which he put all kinds of animals and useful seeds. When the Great Spirit ordered the waters to subside, Tezpi sent out a bird called aura,\* which, finding food in dead carcasses, returned; then several other birds, till at length the humming bird returned with a branch in his beak.†

In North America, there are more or less obscured traditions of the deluge among most of the tribes. The most distinct is, perhaps, that among some of the lake tribes, who hold that the father of all their tribes originally dwelt to-

\* The zopilote, a species of vulture (*Vultur aura*), an American substitution for the raven.

† Humboldt's *Researches*, ii. 65; Clanigero, *Hist. Mex.* i. 204; Herrera, *Hist. Mex.*; *Hist. Gen. des Voyages*, xviii. 590.

wards the setting sun, where, being warned in a dream that a flood was coming, he built a raft, on which he preserved his own family, and the whole of the animal world. The raft drifted for many months upon the waters, till at length a new earth was made, and man and the animals placed upon it.\* The traditions of Peru, of Terra Firma, of the Guancas, of the Cubans, and many others might be mentioned, but they all resemble some of those which have been cited. The Brazilians had a very peculiar tradition of a deluge, which grew out of a quarrel between two brothers, and which rose till the earth was entirely covered. All mankind were destroyed except these two and their wives, who were saved by climbing to the tops of the mountains.

Is it credible, or even possible, that such numerous and wide-spread traditions, embodying so many pointed coincidences, and in which the ark and the dove so frequently appear, could have been founded on merely local deluges; and not rather on that from which the second father of all mankind was saved?†

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## SIXTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

### MONUMENTS OF THE DELUGE.

OUR attention was yesterday given to the consideration of the direct traditions of the deluge, as existing among all or

\* Thatcher's *Indian Traits*, ii. 148, 149.

† The reader who is disposed to pursue this inquiry, will find ample information in the works named below,—Bryant's *Analysis of Ancient Mythology*; Faber's *Origin of Pagan Idolatry*; and *Mysteries of the Cabiri*; Catcott on the *Deluge*; Harcourt's *Doctrine of the Deluge*. The traditions are also stated in portions or chapters of Sharon Turner's *Sacred History of the World*; by Professor Hitchcock in the *American Biblical Repository* for 1836; and more fully in Smith's *Sacred Annals*. Bochart in his *Phaleg* also collects some of the traditions. The interest of the subject is far from adequately represented by the brief indications we are here enabled to afford.

nearly all the nations of mankind. But there is another kind of tradition, not less significant and impressive, which commemorated the same great event in names, and buildings, and ceremonies; and by means of which the memorials of the deluge were wrought into the entire structure of heathenism.

We cannot undertake to present to the reader a tithe of the copious information which exists on this subject; but it may be in our power to indicate its general purport.

It appears, then, to be very certain that the prominent features of the life and character of Noah are incorporated with the history and attributes of many of the deities worshipped in the heathen world. As it is not our intention to occupy our space with a branch of the subject which has been so often indicated as this, we shall be content to point out the names of Osiris, Bacchus, Saturn, Uranus, Deucalion, Minos, Janus, and the northern Bore; and recommend the reader to explore the points of resemblance for himself, the materials being easy of access.

In looking to the mere external monuments of the deluge, it is a curious confirmation of the view which identifies the Egyptian Osiris with Noah, to find that the most famous temple of this god was at Theba (Thebes), or rather that the temple itself was so called, and the city was then named from it. Now THEBA is, as we have already shown, the very name of the ark, by which it may appear, that the temple itself was meant to represent the ark in which Osiris was shut up by Typhon, and cast upon the waters. With this should be connected the boat-like shrine, which appears to have been the most sacred object in most of the Egyptian temples, and which has an obvious connection with this tradition.

The same kind of memorial is to be observed in other countries, where some kind of ark or ship was introduced in the mysteries, and carried about in procession upon the sacred festivals. In a series of pictures representing ceremonies in honor of Bacchus, found in the lava-whelmed city of Herculaneum, appears, what may be supposed with some probability, to offer the form which the ancients supposed the ark

to have; and which agrees well enough with the idea we have been led to form of it. A woman is carrying upon her shoulder a square box, having a projecting roof, and at the end a door. Being carried in a commemorative procession, it is clearly a sacred Thebet or ark. Its door at the side, and projecting roof, declare that it was not a mere chest; while the absence of the usual characteristics and the occasion of its use, show that it is not a model house or a votive offering.

More striking still, as a direct memorial of the deluge, is the famous Apamæan medal. It was struck during the reign of Philip the Elder, at the town of Apamea in Phrygia. The city is known to have been formerly called Kibotos, or "the ark;" and it is also known that the coins of cities in that age exhibited some leading point in their mythological history. The medal in question represents a kind of square vessel floating in the water. Through an opening in it, are seen two persons, a man and a woman, the latter wearing a veil. Upon the upper verge of this chest or ark, is perched a bird, and over against it another, which seems to flutter with its wings, and bears a branch, with which it approaches the ark. Before the vessel is a man following a woman, who, by their attitude, seem to have just quitted it, and to have got upon the dry land. These are doubtless the same pair, shown in a different action. Whatever doubt might be entertained as to the purport of this representation, seems to be removed by the letters engraved upon the ark itself, beneath the persons enclosed therein. These represent the word  $\text{ΝΩΕ}$ , Noe—being the very name of Noah in its Greek form—which form is the one it bears in the New Testament. This is a most surprising circumstance—not the representation, for we have others nearly as distinct, but that the very name of Noah should have been so long preserved among the heathen, in nearly its original form.

There seems to be little doubt that the various sacred mountains which we find in various lands, are commemorative of the mountain on which the ark rested, and which was

venerated as the spot of ground, once isolated among the waters, to which the nations of mankind may all trace their origin. We find such sacred mountains not only in America, but in Polynesia, Africa, India, Arabia, and among the Jews. The "high places" on which the latter were wont to offer their worship appear to have had the same reference. So strong was the veneration for the holy mountain, that those who in the course of their dispersion came to extensive and unbroken plains, erected enormous masses of building designed to represent or symbolize the mountain from which their fathers had gone forth—hence, probably, the pyramids of Egypt, and hence, still more assuredly, the tall masses of broken masonry that still appear in the Babylonian plains, whether or not the tower of Babel is to be reckoned among the number.

It was a natural consequence of this veneration for mountains, by which they were thus appropriated to purposes of religion, that imitations of them in miniature should be constructed to answer the same purpose, with the advantage of greater convenience. Hence arose those sacred heaps of earth or stones, in valleys as well as on the heights, denominated by the Hebrews Bamoth, by the Greeks Bomoi, and by the British Cairns.

Kern or Karn signifies, in Arabic, the top of a mountain higher than the rest. They could only therefore be so called mystically and emblematically, when they were constructed, as they frequently were, on plains. In fact, they were more needed in level tracts of country by those who wished to have sacred places, and continue the rites to which they had been accustomed among the mountains. Having no natural hills to which they could resort, they were under the necessity of making them in miniature near the places of their residence; and then it may be supposed that every tribe, and almost every distinguished family, would have an oratory, or place of worship, of its own. The vast number of them which appear in such situations, needs no other explanation. They are mostly of a conical shape, unless in such situations

or of such materials as to have been worn down by the weather; and the most perfect of those which have in different countries fallen under our own notice, bear considerable resemblance to the summit of Ararat—the whole figure of which is deeply impressed upon our memory, having had it constantly in view for many days. They are found everywhere in the old world, and are scarcely less frequent in the new—not less than three thousand of them having been counted in North America alone, the smallest of which are twenty feet high. It has been thought that the circles of stones, commonly called druidical circles, have the same reference. The circle marks the limit of the space enclosed to represent the diluvian mountain, while the larger stone in the centre indicates the summit itself. In some cases, these stones actually do encircle a mound, upon the top of which the central stone is placed, or some other stone objects, such as cromlechs, kistvaens, or shapeless rocks, the separate diluvian or arkite\* import of which we may now consider.

Cromlechs, as most of our readers know, are composed of a large flat stone, supported in a horizontal position by others that stand upright. They are generally placed on elevated grounds; sometimes on the natural soil; sometimes on the top of cairns, or artificial mounts; sometimes in a circle of upright stones. The kistvaen, or “stone-chest,” as the name means, differs only from the cromlech by the upright stones being broader, so as to have the covered space less open—enclosing it, in fact, like a chest. These are much rarer than cromlechs. The most perfect specimen in this country (Kits Coty House, near Aylesford, in Kent) is of oblong figure, the back stone being the broadest, and it is open in front. But in examples of similar structures, which are found in Palestine, beyond the Jordan, the front is also closed by a large stone in which there is a door. In all cases, they are of rough unhewn stones; and the whole are kept in form by the great weight of the covering stone. The kistvaens have

\* A word used to denote the various forms of worship or veneration connected with the traditions and monuments of the ark and the deluge

been often supposed to be tombs ; but this is disproved by their interior length being less than that of a man. The general belief is, that they were designed to represent the ark of Noah, and we regret that space does not allow us to produce the reasons which are supposed to establish that opinion. Cromlechs have been conceived to be altars by many who admit the kistvaens to have been arkite memorials. But many of them are, from their form and height, so utterly unsuited to the purposes of an altar, that it is much safer to regard them as a somewhat different mode of representing the ark. Both were not only monuments but instruments of ritual service. In the ark, mankind passed, as it were, from the old sinful world, to a new world, unpolluted by sin. Hence, in process of time, when the traditions of the deluge became mixed up with human inventions, the ark was regarded as a symbol of purification from sin. It is on record, that devotees, remaining cramped up in the purposely narrowed bounds of these stone arks for a period of time, supposed to represent that of Noah's confinement, came forth expurgated from the taints of their former condition. We think it might be shown that, commencing with those that were most close and narrow, the devotees progressed through a series of these arkite enclosures, till at last they *passed merely through* some one of those that were more open, to signify their final passage out of their old into their new condition.

There seems some evidence to show that the isolated hollow towers which are found in various parts of the world are, in like manner, symbols of the mount and the ark, and that a sojourn within their narrow bounds, followed by the passage out, was regarded as an act of purgation, if not of regeneration. The round towers of Ireland have received many worse explanations. Natural caverns have in many lands been esteemed sacred under the same ideas. In all these cases—under all these varieties of circumstances—it appears that the sojourn in the ark was regarded as a state of death to the old man ; and of the coming out through the door of the ark

a passage to a new life in a regenerated condition. The ancients, stumbling among the dark mountains, sought thus to express their obscure traditions and obscurer hopes, in matters which have, through God's mercy, become noontide facts to us

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## SIXTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

### ARARAT.—GENESIS VIII. 4.

THE mountain which the general consent of western Asia and of Europe regards as the Ararat on which the ark rested, is the mountain of Ara Dagh in Armenia. One would think there could be no question as to the identity of Ararat, seeing that the Scripture says distinctly that it was in Armenia, and in that country there is no mountain comparable to this. It is in all respects a most noble mountain—the finest, perhaps, in the world, and well worthy of the distinction assigned to it, as the cradle of the human race, and of the place it holds in the monumental history and the religion of the world. He whose mind is imbued with such conclusions as were yesterday exhibited, and regards this as the source and centre of the stone religion and stone history of the world, must look upon it with an interest greatly enhanced by all the considerations which that view of it opens. When our own eyes first beheld the “dread magnificence” of Ararat, we had already seen the loftiest and most remarkable mountains of the old world; but yet the effect of the view of *this* mountain was new and surprising. The reason appeared to be this—most of the loftiest mountains of the world are but peaks of the uppermost ridge of mountain chains. It is these, perhaps, only, that are visible in the distance—and by the time you come near enough to look directly up to the summit, your ascent, however gradual, has been such that you are surprised at the small apparent height of the peak above you. We recollect to have experienced this effect very sensibly on reaching, after a long ascent, the village of Kasbek, at the foot of the



highest peak of the same name in the Caucasus. The snowy height seemed so small, that one could scarcely believe this to be the same mountain which had been visible a hundred miles off, shining gloriously among the clouds of the morning; and it required an effort of recollection, upon all the ascending way we had for many days passed, to apprehend how high indeed it was.

Now Ararat is not by any means in actual altitude so high as the Caucasian summit; yet the view of it is far more grand and impressive. The reason is, that it is not merely a summit of a ridge; it is a whole and perfect mountain. Whether you view it distant or near, the whole of its noble proportions, from the level of the plain to the summit, covered with snow even in the height of summer, are taken in at one view. It is, in fact, the culminating point, the gigantic corner-stone, of the ranges of the mountains which bound the three great empires of Russia, Turkey and Persia. Never had nations a more noble boundary, nor is there, perhaps, another object on earth, which, from its mere natural aspect, would seem so worthy to be regarded as a monument of the greatest event in the world's history—the bridge between the antediluvian and the postdiluvian worlds. "Nothing," as Mr. Morier well remarks, "can be more beautiful than its shape; more awful than its height; all the surrounding mountains sink into insignificance when compared with it; it is perfect in all its parts; no hard, rugged features, no unnatural prominences, everything is in harmony, and all combines to render it one of the sublimest objects of nature." The valley from which it rises is that of the river Aras, the ancient Araxes. The rise of the mountain from its broad base is gradual, till it reaches the region of perpetual snow, which is somewhat more than one third below the summit, when its shape becomes more conical and steep. The cone is surmounted with a crown of ice, which glitters in the sun with peculiar brightness, and becomes the cynosure of the traveller's eye for many days. This peak is, however, not alone in all this glory. It has near to, and arising from, the

same broad base, "another self,"—alike most nearly, but lower and smaller in all its proportions; although, if not overlooked by its tall neighbor, it would be reckoned among high mountains. Hence, perhaps, it is, that the sacred text speaks of the "mountains of Ararat," rather than of a single mountain.

The taller summit of Ararat is 17,750 feet above the level of the sea, and 14,573 feet above the level of the plain; the lesser summit is 13,420 feet above the sea, and 10,435 feet above the plain. Many attempts were made in former times to attain the summit, access to which the native Armenians believe to be supernaturally interdicted; yet with strange incongruity, they sell to pilgrims relics from the wood of the ark, which is still believed to lie upon the summit. It was not till 1829 that a successful attempt\* was made by Professor Parrot, a German, acting under Russian auspices. Twice was he repelled by the snowy crest; but in the third attempt he succeeded, and stood upon the mountain of the ark! He found himself on a slightly convex and almost circular platform, about 220 feet in diameter, which at the extremity declined rather steeply on all sides. This was the silver crest of Ararat, composed of eternal ice, unbroken by a rock or stone. On account of the immense distance, nothing could be seen distinctly. The whole valley of the Araxes was covered with a gray mist, through which the towns of Erivan and Sardarabad appeared as dark spots. To the east-south-east was the lesser Ararat, whose head, as viewed from this higher point, did not appear like a cone, as it does from the plain, but like the top of a square truncated pyramid, with larger and smaller rocky elevations at the edges and in the middle. In that case it must have presented much of the appearance of a druidical circle, with its central object; and this is a curious fact, when taken in connection with the notion which some entertain, that the ark in fact rested on the lesser Ararat; as it is not easy to see how the in-

\* The success of this attempt has, however, been much questioned, and is stoutly denied by all persons in the neighborhood of the mountain.

mates of the ark, including heavy cattle, could have descended from the higher summit.

The party spent three quarters of an hour on the summit, and then, after planting an oaken cross thereon, descended. In descending, "it was a glorious sight to behold the dark shadows which the mountains on the west cast upon the plain, and then the profound darkness which covered all the valleys, and which rose gradually higher and higher on the side of Ararat, whose icy summit was still illuminated by the beams of the setting sun."

It remains to be added, that Ararat has since been the scene of a fearful visitation, which in a few moments changed the entire face of the country. This was a dreadful earthquake, which commenced in June, 1840, and continued at intervals till September in the same year. As the most destructive shock occurred in the day-time, the loss of life did not exceed fifty; but the destruction of property was great, and traces of the calamity will be borne down to future ages in the fissures and landslips of the district. Even the aged mountain did not escape. Vast masses of rock, ice, and snow were detached from the summit and lateral points of the mountain, and thrown, "with horrid ruin and combustion down," at a single bound, into the valley of Akhori, where the fragments lie to this day, scattered over an extent of several miles.

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## SIXTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

### THE DISPERSION.—GENESIS X.

THAT all the tribes and nations of mankind have a common origin, is the doctrine of Scripture, and that doctrine has been abundantly confirmed by the most learned and able researches into the physical history of man. This being the case, it is impossible to account satisfactorily for the great and essential diversity of languages but by a miracle. The sacred record

does account for that diversity, and account for it by miracle. It even acquaints us with the circumstances which rendered that miracle necessary, to secure a great and important end.

It seems that as mankind increased in the land in which the ark rested after the flood, a principle began to manifest itself among them, wholly adverse to the Divine intentions. It was the will of God that the fair regions of the earth should not be left unoccupied, during the many ages in which it would take mankind to reach them, under the slow process of certain portions of the surplus population being successively driven out, from the common centre, by the pressure of their wants. All the scriptural intimations sustain the explanation to this effect given by Josephus, that they were required to send forth colonies to people the earth; and there can be no doubt, that the Divine intention in this matter was fully known to the leaders of the people. It was certain that mankind would eventually spread itself out over the different parts of the world. But it is clearly intimated in Scripture, that they were intended to disperse themselves according to their families, that is, in a regular and orderly manner; whereas, if they remained together until their wants compelled them to spread forth, only the needy outcasts and desperate characters would go out, and then a confused mixture of all the families, for as yet they all spoke the same language. By keeping together, also, the population of the world would not increase so rapidly as by this dispersion. Nothing is more clearly established, than that population increases far more rapidly in new countries, where the resources of the land are without limit, than in old ones, where men keep together in masses, whose numbers press closely upon the means of subsistence. These family colonies, if they had gone forth, as they were eventually *compelled* to do, would have become the nucleus of a rapidly growing population in the lands to which they went. There is a very old tradition, that, when the population had considerably increased, Noah, who lived long enough after the flood to see that increase, was commanded to give the needful directions for their mi-

gration, dividing the world, as it were, among them. That something of this kind formed the Divine plan with respect to the dispersion of men, is shown by the fact, that it was what actually took place when the obstinacy of men, in refusing to follow the course indicated, rendered coercion necessary; for it is evident, that the compulsion eventually laid upon them was for no other purpose, than to constrain them to take the very course which they had without compulsion declined to follow.

Well, then, we find the several families of Noah's descendants perversely keeping together, leaving many fair regions of the world without inhabitants. Eventually, we find that the population of the still united families, had extended itself so far as the land watered by the Tigris and Euphrates, and had come, whether by succession, or consent, or violence, under the chieftainship of "a bold, bad man," of the name of Nimrod. Concerning the *possible* character of this man much has been written; but we really know nothing more than that he was a strong, forceful, and unscrupulous character, a leader of men in his generation, and the first founder of the Assyro-Babylonian empire, which, however small in its beginning, was destined, ages after, to overshadow the nations.

Having come thus far, and finding nothing beyond them to the south and west but inhospitable deserts, they may easily have supposed that their extension had already reached the bounds of the habitable earth, and that to disperse, in order to explore those seemingly uninhabitable regions, would be to peril their existence. These apprehensions coincided with the policy of their leader, whose ambition seems to have aimed at nothing less than the rule over mankind, which could only be secured by keeping the families of Noah together. They, therefore, perhaps at his suggestion, concluded to make their stand against further dispersion in the fertile land and by the abundant rivers to which they had come. But coming, as they did, from a land of mountains, and from the sacred shade of Ararat, into flat plains seemingly as

boundless as the sea; and observing that in this plain—the unexplored extent of which must have been greatly exaggerated in their minds—any marked object, such as a tree, could be seen from a great distance, they concluded to set up a lofty tower which would at once, as a common centre, be to them what the mountain of the ark had been; and would at the same time declare their purpose not to disperse, and by affording a signal landmark from afar, protect them, as they thought, from being lost or accidentally dispersed in the illimitable plain. In this we may recognize the natural actions of men who, having these objects in view, find themselves for the first time without those landmarks and objects of distant recognition which mountains afford.

So they set about to build a city, and therein “a tower whose top should reach unto heaven.” They used for this purpose the materials still employed in the same country, where there is no stone, and where the dryness of the climate prevents the need of burnt bricks. They constructed their works of sun-dried masses of mud, cemented and strengthened with the bitumen which is abundantly produced in the same region. Two mighty heaps are found on the desolated site of Babylon, formed of the foundations and fallen superstructure of great ancient works thus constructed; and it is thought by some that one of these (either the Mujelibe or the Birs Nimroud) may present the foundations of the very building which those men undertook, but were prevented from completing, although in later ages it may have formed the basis of the tower which counted among the wonders of the ancient world.

“He who sitteth in the heavens” derided this foolish attempt to frustrate his councils. Hitherto they had all spoken the language of the antediluvians, and of their father Noah. This, indeed, had alone rendered possible the union which they were so anxious to preserve. But God “confounded their language,” so that they could no longer understand each other, and they were not only constrained to abandon their work, but their continuance together became

no longer practicable or convenient. As the researches of the most learned philologers have appeared to show that the languages of men may be traced to three principal roots, it is enough to suppose that the result was the formation of two new languages, which, with that already existing, would give one to each of the families of Noah—thus constraining their separation, their dispersion, and the fulfilment of their destinies. But if any one thinks this number of languages inadequate to the proper distribution of mankind—we contend not. It is quite possible that each of these three stems of language might have run into branch dialects unintelligible to those by whom the other dialects were spoken. A very limited degree of experience suffices to show how unintelligible the different dialects of the same language may become to all but those who use them. Du Bartas, whom we formerly had occasion to quote, gives a graphic and curious account of the immediate effect of the confusion of tongues upon the operations of the builders of Babel:—

“Bring me, quoth one, a trowel, quickly, quick;  
 One brings him up a hammer: Hew this brick,  
 (Another bids), and then they cleave a tree:  
 Make fast this rope; and then they let it flee.  
 One calls for planks; another mortar lacks;  
 They bear the first a stone—the last an axe.  
 One would have spikes; and him a spade they give;  
 Another asks a saw, and gets a sieve.  
 Thus crossly-crost, they prate and pant in vain;  
 What one hath made, another mars again.”

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### SIXTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

ABRAHAM.—GENESIS XI. 27–29; XII. 1–5.

AFTER the flood, the sacred narrative rapidly conducts us to the man, the history of whose descendants—their sins, their sorrows, their excellences, their rewards, and their punishments—forms the great theme of the remainder of the Old

Testament. It seems that in ten generations after the flood, mankind had again corrupted its way, and had fallen very far into forgetfulness of God. Yet God would not again destroy the earth for man's sake. The purpose of the Most High was to choose a man, and in him a family and a nation, to be his witness upon the earth, and the repository of ancient truths, and of Messianic hopes, until the fulness of redeeming time should come.

The person on whom this choice fell was Abraham,\* the son of Terah, of the line of Shem, whose native place was "Ur of the Chaldees." Besides Abraham, Terah had two other sons, Nahor and Haran. Haran, though named last in the sacred text, was plainly the eldest, as was Abraham the youngest of the three—although for dignity named first; for the father was 70 years old when the first of his sons was born, but he was 130 years old at the birth of Abraham, seeing that his son was 75 years old when his father died at the age of 205. Haran, however, died prematurely, "before his father;" and from the emphasis with which this is mentioned, it seems to have been in that age a most extraordinary thing for a man to be cut off in his prime. He left two daughters, named Sarah,† and Milcah. The former became the wife of Abraham, and the other of his brother Nahor. The son, whose name was Lot, became famous from the connection of his history with that of Abraham. The great seniority of Haran is shown in the fact that his daughter Sarah, who became Abraham's wife, was but ten years younger than Abraham, and his son Lot seems to have been about the same age as the patriarch.

In "Ur of the Chaldees," the word of God came to Abraham, when he was seventy years old, saying, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the

\* Or rather Abram, as he was at first named: but we find it convenient to give him throughout the name he subsequently acquired, and by which he is generally known.

† Or rather Sarai, as she was named at first: but we shall call her throughout by her later name.



land that I shall show thee," Acts vii. 3. The country to which he was to go was not indicated—he was simply required to detach himself from all the ties of kindred and country, and proceed in a direction to be indicated. This was a hard command; but Abraham obeyed it, and forthwith quitted his native land. His father and brother were, however, willing to go with him. But they halted on the way, at Haran, in Mesopotamia, from some unknown cause, till the death of Terah, when the command to Abraham was renewed, and the country to which he was to proceed was clearly indicated. This was the land of Canaan—destined to become the possession of this man's descendants. It may be conjectured that the Divine intention was to isolate Abraham and his seed completely, by removing him to a strange land; it did not consist with that purpose that he should thus be accompanied by his family into Canaan; but that, in regard to his filial affection, Abraham was graciously permitted to remain at Haran, and lay his father's head in the tomb, before any further indication as to the course of his journey was afforded.

It is painful to state, that there can be no doubt that the family of Terah was involved in the general idolatry of the age and country. This is expressly affirmed in Joshua xxiv. 2: "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood (the Euphrates) in old time, even Terah the father of Abraham and the father of Nachor, and they served other gods." It is even asserted by Epiphanius and others that Abraham's father and grandfather were makers of idolatrous images. Bishop Newton and others question that men had descended so low in idolatry at this time as to employ images in their worship. But we do not feel so clear on this point, knowing that Laban, a member of this age and family, had images (the teraphim) which he called "his gods," and which were at least used for divination, if not for worship.

Ancient story and tradition undertake to fill up the blank in the early history of Abraham, by informing us of his search after the true God, his discovery of the impotence of

idolatry, and of his persecution for righteousness' sake. It happens that the name of the place from which Abraham came (Ur) means "fire," on which simple fact is doubtless built the legend of his being cast into the fire by Nimrod (!), and miraculously delivered therefrom.

Nevertheless, seeing that Abraham must have already known the God who required him to quit for his sake all that he held dear, and whom he even to that extent obeyed; and seeing that he had acquired this knowledge while the member of an idolatrous family, he had doubtless meditated much on these things, and had been favored with special communications by that God who intended to make his name great, and to render him a blessing to many nations.

A specimen or two of the early researches after truth, which Oriental or Jewish tradition ascribes to Abraham, may not be unpleasant to the reader. The Jewish legend is this:—Terah was an idolater, and as he went one day on a journey, he appointed Abraham to sell his idols in his stead. As often as a purchaser came, Abraham inquired his age, and when he replied, "I am fifty or sixty years old," he said, "Woe to the man of sixty who would worship the work of a day!" so that the purchaser went away ashamed.

One day a woman came with a bowl of fine flour, and said, "Set it before them." But he took a staff and broke all the idols in pieces, and put the staff into the hands of the largest of them. When his father returned, he inquired, "Who hath done this?" Abraham said, "Why should I deny it?—there was a woman here with a bowl of fine flour, and she directed me to set it before them. When I did so, every one of them would have eaten first; then arose the tallest and demolished them with his staff." Terah said: "What fable art thou telling me? have they any understanding?"

Abraham replied, "Do thy ears hear what thy lips utter?"

Whereupon Terah took him and delivered him to Nimrod, who said to Abraham, "Let us worship the fire!"

"Rather the water that quenches the fire."

“Well, the water.”

“Rather the cloud which carries the water.”

“Well, the cloud.”

“Rather the wind which scatters the cloud.”

“Well, the wind.”

“Rather man, for he endures the wind.”

“Thou art a babbler,” said the king. “I worship the fire, and will cast thee into it. May the God whom thou adorest deliver thee thence!” Abraham was then cast into the burning fiery furnace, but was saved by the power of the Lord.

The Mohammedans have also large traditions on the same subject, from mixed Jewish and old Arabian sources. They enter largely into the contest between Abraham and Nimrod, of which we can only give the outline.

Nimrod, forewarned of danger from the birth of a boy, commanded all the male children born at that time to be slain. Abraham was however preserved, and nourished secretly by his mother in a cave, but was sustained far more by miraculous food. There he grew and flourished. On stepping out the first time beyond the cave, he saw a beautiful star, and said, “This is my god, who has given me meat and drink in the cave.” But soon the moon arose in full splendor, and made the star look dim. Then he said, “That is not my god, I will worship the moon.” But when, towards morning, the moon waxed pale, and the sun appeared, he acknowledged the latter for his god, until he also sank below the horizon. He then asked his mother, “Who is my god?” and she replied, “It is I.”

“And who is thy god?” he inquired further.

“Thy father.”

“And who is my father’s god?”

“Nimrod.”

“And Nimrod’s god?”

But his mother had by this time got to the end of her resources, so she struck him on the face, and bade him be silent. He was silent; but he thought within himself “I will ac-

knowledge no other God than he who created heaven and earth, and all that is in them.”

Then follows the affair of his destroying the idols, nearly as already given, his being brought before Nimrod, and condemned to the flames. A month was the pile in preparation, and every one who contributed wood to it, thought that he did his god service. “The women,” it is said, “were especially active. They washed, or did other work for hire, and with their earnings bought wood wherewith to burn the blasphemer.” Nimrod, after one more effort to convince Abraham of his own title to divine honors, consigns him to the fire. But God made the flames cool around him. They seemed to burn, but had lost all their warmth. Seven days was his faith tried in the fire, “and,” it is beautifully said, “these seven days Abraham, in later times, frequently called the most precious of his life.”

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## SIXTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

SARAH IN EGYPT—ROYAL RIGHTS OVER WOMEN.—  
GENESIS XII. 10—20.

ABRAHAM had not been long in Canaan before a severe famine in that land constrained him to withdraw into Egypt. The scarcity, as usual in that country, was doubtless occasioned by a season of drought; and the exemption of Egypt, then and in after ages, from a visitation, which afflicted all the neighboring countries, must be ascribed to the fact that its productiveness depends, not upon rains, but upon the periodical overflowings of its river. It was doubtless owing to the same physical advantages that Egypt had already become the place of a wealthy, if not of a great nation, and the seat of an organized kingly government and of a luxurious court. The intimation of these facts, which we owe to the mention of Abraham's visit to that country, is abundantly confirmed by its own authentic monuments.

But now a new and strange matter comes to light. Abraham, who had dwelt without fear in the thinly-peopled land of Canaan, whose unappropriated lands were still open to nomade pastors, and which seems to have been subject to a number of petty princes or chiefs, not singly more powerful than himself, became alarmed for his safety in going down to Egypt; and the cause of his fear enables us to see that woman had already fallen to that low place—valuable only as the property of man—which she has ever since occupied among the settled nations of the East.

Abraham knew that his wife was very beautiful, and his judgment in that respect is confirmed by the dangers into which more than once she was brought by her comeliness. Some persons have ventured to make themselves merry with the idea of Sarah's dangerous beauty at the mature age of sixty-five, and again, much later, when she was ninety years old. Such sneerers forget Ninon de l'Enclos—they forget also Madame de Valentinis, of whom Brantome declares that at the age of seventy her countenance was as beautiful, as fresh, and as engaging as if she had been but thirty years old. But it is not necessary to suppose that Sarah was the De l'Enclos or De Valentinis of her age. The life of man was still twice its present length, and according to that, a woman at sixty, or even ninety, years old, was still in the prime of life. We are also to remember that Sarah was childless, and had therefore been exempt from that wearing down, which the bearing and nutrition of children produce. Nor is it to be forgotten that she came from a region where the women have fresh and clear complexions, which was likely to be a rare endowment and singular attraction in the eyes of the dusky inhabitants of Egypt, who, if their own monuments do not belie them, were a copper-colored and not remarkably handsome race.

The apprehension of Abraham was no less than that he should be put to death by some of the great ones in Egypt, who might desire to obtain possession of his wife. This apprehension appears to indicate, that he knew there was such

a respect for the conjugal tie, as would prevent the hand of power from taking his wife by violence from him; and it was more to be feared that they would dissolve that tie, by making her a widow. This is illustrated by the existing practice of the East, where, although the sovereign may take possession of the sisters or daughters of a subject at his pleasure, and without being regarded as having committed an unseemly act of power—to take a man's wife from him against his will, would be such an outrage, as even the oriental habit of submission to sovereign power, would not long endure.

In this emergency the faith of Abraham failed him, and he resorted to an unworthy expedient, which the emergency may palliate, but cannot justify. He desired his wife to declare that she was his sister. Now it is true that she was the daughter of his half-brother Haran; a relationship which might, according to the eastern usage, be properly so described, even as Abraham himself elsewhere calls his nephew Lot his "brother." But the declaration was intended to be taken as a denial that she was his wife, and it was so taken; and it cannot therefore be regarded otherwise than as an equivocation, unbecoming the high character of the patriarch. The Jewish writers themselves, who are naturally very anxious to defend the character of their great ancestor, do not generally rest their defence on this ground. They allege that he went down into Egypt without authority of God; and that, thinking he had no special claim to the Divine protection out of the land of Canaan, in which he had been commanded to sojourn, he was, from the influence of this doubt, led to expedients of human policy and prudence. From this, if true, an important lesson might be drawn; but it is merely a conjecture, founded upon the absence of any intimation that Abraham received express permission to take this important step.

Abraham had not misapprehended the character of the Egyptian court. The arrival of such a large camp as that of himself and Lot, could not but excite attention. "The

princes of Pharaoh" saw Sarah, and "commended her before Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house." "Of how large a picture," says a recent writer, "may these be faint outlines!" The princes of Egypt are struck by the beauty of Sarah; but they are courtiers—they know no passion but that of gain—they feel no desire but that of standing well with their king—and to his presence they hurry. They tell him of the fair stranger; they speak of her with the warmth of lovers; their words burn, though their hearts be cold; they are poets in her praise, and the devoted slaves of their sovereign. And what is their object? What their motive? They seek to supplant some favorite sultana, or to supply her loss; to give to a Maintenon the place of a Montespan, or to find a Barry for a Pampadour, and thus to work their way to court honors, court favors, and court pensions. In these princes of Pharaoh we may see the prototypes of the titled valets of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Louis; and in this short verse the character of the court memoirs of the seventeenth century.

This which had happened was clearly beyond the calculations of Abraham. He had feared that some powerful and lawless noble might be attracted by the beauty of Sarah, and endeavor to get rid of him if it were known that she was his wife; but that, by passing for his sister, any such person would make proposals to him for her; and he probably reckoned that he might temporize with the suitor, on questions of dower and other matters, until the famine ceased. But if he could have foreseen that the king himself would have sought her, he would have known it to be safer that she should appear as his wife than as his sister. The king, in his high public capacity, would hardly have dared to outrage public opinion, by rending a wife from the bosom of her husband. But a sister he might, as public opinion went, take without offence, without the consciousness of wrong-doing, and without parties having any right to complain. We see this more clearly still, in the later but quite parallel case of Abimelech king of Gerar, who, although he must certainly have taken

Sarah away, under the same apprehension, without seeking the consent of either party, is acknowledged to have done this “in the integrity of his heart, and the innocency of his hands.” Awful it is to think, that such grievous infractions of personal liberty, and encroachments upon the dignity and delicacy of women, should, even in this early age, have come to be regarded as a public right. It is probable, however, that Pharaoh felt he had stretched his power rather strongly, in dealing thus with a great pastoral chief, who was no subject of his, and had only come to sojourn for a short time in his land. And this consciousness may account for his princely munificence to Abraham, whom he treated well for his sister’s sake, and bestowed upon him a large abundance of property suited to his condition—sheep, oxen, asses, camels, and slaves.

But although Abraham, by his resort to human policies, had made too light of God’s protection—that God had not forgotten his servant, nor left him to the consequences of his own acts. The house of the Egyptian king was smitten with a disease which made him see that he was under a Divine judgment. His inquiries, probably, led Sarah to disclose that she was Abraham’s wife; and on learning this fact, he forthwith sent to him, and the words which he uttered must have been felt by the patriarch as a strong rebuke: “What is this that thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she is thy wife? Why saidst thou ‘she is my sister,’ so that I took her unto me to be my wife: but now, here is thy wife, take her and go.” And in fact he was hurried out of the country, with all belonging to him; the king being apparently fearful that it should transpire among his own people that he had, even unwittingly, taken away a man’s wife from him.



## Seventh Week—Sunday.

### GOD'S PURPOSES, AND MAN'S DEVICES.

IF we look closely into that portion of Abraham's history which has lately engaged our attention, we shall find much matter for profitable thought therein.

It is among the sayings of the wisest of men—"There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." (Prov. xix. 21.) Not only Scripture history, but the history of the world, is full of evidences of this serious and important truth: it is written as with a sunbeam throughout creation and in the whole state of man. Yet there is scarcely any truth which we so habitually forget or overlook. It is well, therefore, that we should suffer our minds to dwell upon every circumstance in our experience or our reading, and especially in our reading of God's Word, which may serve to impress so great a fact in man's history—so great a fact in the history of every one of us—as this, upon our remembrance. We have had before us a circumstance of this character;—for it seems that Abraham, acting without sufficient reference to the will of God, which he might have ascertained, marks out for himself what must have seemed a very sagacious and politic course of proceeding; but this course of conduct not only does not produce the effect he contemplated and desired, but is in all respects attended by the very results which he most dreaded and labored to avert. Nothing of all that had been devised remained unshaken, save the counsel of God.

Thus, in the first place, by leaving the land of Canaan for Egypt, the patriarch expected that he might abide there in tranquillity until the period of the famine had passed away. But the result was far otherwise. He was compelled to quit Egypt after a very short stay, and to return to the famine-stricken land, where God—"whose eye is upon them that

fear Him, upon them that hope in his mercy, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine" (Psalm xxxiii. 18, 19),—sustained him and his numerous family in ease and plenty.

Again, the evil which Abraham apprehended with respect to Sarah, did indeed happen—but it was brought about by the very means he had taken to avert it ; and there is every reason to suppose that, had he from the first boldly declared that she was his wife, relying upon the protection of God, nothing of the kind would have taken place ; as it was, this very device of passing her off for his sister, which was designed to secure his safe sojourn amid the plenty of Egypt, became the very instrument of compelling his return to the dearth of Canaan.

Now, let us not whisper to our own hearts that we are, in this at least, wiser than Abraham. Alas, it is not so. There are few of us whose wisest things are wiser than the foolishness of Abraham. Do we not every day speculate with confidence upon the results of this or that undertaking or course of action ? Do we not every day calculate, with little misgiving, that this or that course of proceeding towards another, or with reference to particular circumstances, can hardly fail to produce the effect we have in view ? But does it ? Seldom more so than in the case of Abraham. There are few, if any, whose course of action in any particular matter has produced the effect they had in view, or has yielded all the fruit they expected to gather from it. There are few, if any, whose prosperity, whose comfort, whose safety, has grown out of their own carefully planned and deliberated measures ; few, if any, who do not know that their advantages have proceeded from circumstances which they never had in view, which formed no part of their own plans, and over which their own course of action had no conceivable influence. Many of us may have been enabled to do something wiser, greater, better, than ever entered our mind—but this has not only often been without the consent of our

own judgment, but upon strong compulsion and contrary to the tendencies of our will.

What shall we say to these things? There is nothing better than that a man should live in the feeling that it is not to be his purpose, but the purpose of God, that must stand sure. He may have plans and designs—indeed the business of life cannot well go on without them; but he must know that God is not bound by his plans, and is under no obligation to bestow His prospering blessing upon them. God has a plan of his own for every one of us. If our plans agree with his, well—He may bless them; but if not, He will either make them promote the purpose which He intends, and which we did not intend, or will try our faith by blasting our beloved plans altogether—that He may bless us in his own way, and lead us to safety, to usefulness, to blessedness, by paths that we know not of, and by ways that never did enter or could enter our minds. Let us not, therefore, be discouraged, if our plans do not answer to our minds—if everything turns wrong upon our hands. We know that He is not unkind; we know that He does not forget us; and we have reason to hope that He only brings our own small plans and devices to naught because He has something of his own—something larger—something far better—in store for us. How many are they to whom God has not spoken comfortably, until He lured them into the wilderness, where the soul, withdrawn from amid the ruins of its broken plans and frustrated hopes, is alone with Him, sees Him alone, leans on Him only.

Oh, for the blessedness of that man who has been enabled to realize the most entire conviction—and that not as a theory but as a practical truth—that God doeth all things well, and that His work is perfect! The grinding and low cares of this life, have no place with him. He knows that all his affairs are guided by One who cannot err—that he is watched over for good by One who is never weary. Human friends may weary of him, and shake him off, if he becomes troublesome by his wants; but he heeds it little—his God invites, solicits, is gratified by the entireness of his dependence, and

by the full and undivided burden of his cares. Strange it is that we are so slow to claim the rights thus given to us, and which we ought to regard as inestimable privileges. Yet how few are they, known to any of us, who do truly realize the many precious promises and gracious invitations to do that which can alone make this life tolerable. How few are they who realize experimentally the declaration of the prophet: O Lord, *I know* that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.\* Or this: "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He giveth his beloved sleep."†

May God give to us that sleep—that perfect rest amid all the labors, turmoils, and cares of life, which only his beloved can know, because they only have unreserved confidence in Him, and can trust their bodies no less than their souls to his care.

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## SEVENTH WEEK—MONDAY.

PATRIARCHAL WEALTH.—GENESIS XII. 16; XIII. 2.

It is well that we should entertain some distinct ideas respecting the real condition of the patriarchal fathers as to wealth and power. The history dwells so little on these matters, that it requires some experience of the corresponding condition of life, as it still subsists in the East, to apprehend the force of the few intimations which do incidentally transpire.

There are probably few readers who conceive further of Abraham's establishment, than that it consisted of one, or at most two or three tents, with some half-a-dozen servants, and flocks of sheep and other cattle feeding around. Now this is altogether wrong. His encampment must have formed, so

\* Jer. x. 23.

† Psalm cxxviii. 1, 2.

to speak, quite a large village of tents, with inhabitants equal to the population of a small town or a large village. Great numbers of women and children were to be seen there, and some old men; but not many men in their prime, these being for the most part away, from a few to many miles off, with the flocks, of which, immediately around the tents, there was probably less display than the lowest of the common estimates of Abraham's station would assume.

We are told that Abraham was "very rich," and it is stated of what his riches consisted; but we are not told of the quantities of these riches he possessed. However, by putting things together, we may arrive at some notions not far from the truth.

We have the strong fact to begin with, that Abraham is treated by the native princes and chieftains of the land, as "a mighty prince," an equal, if not a superior, to themselves. Then we learn that his house-born slaves, able to bear arms and to make a rapid march, followed by a daring enterprise, were not less than 318. A body of such men can be furnished only by a population four times its own number, including women and children. We can, therefore, not reckon the patriarch's camp as containing less than 1272 souls; and this number of people could not well have been accommodated in so few as a hundred tents.

Now as to the cattle. One of the most tangible statements we can find, is of the wealth of the same sort, which, in or about the same age, rendered Job "the greatest of all the men of the East,"—making some allowance for the fact, that Job was not exactly a nomade shepherd, but cultivated the ground also, and had a fixed residence. His wealth consisted of 7000 sheep; 3000 camels; 1000 (500 yoke of) oxen; and 500 asses. Now it appears to us, that the wealth of a camp whose chief numbered above a thousand dependants, could not well have been less. Let us, however, test this by another computation. Jacob, when he was returning to Canaan with the pastoral wealth he had gained during his twenty years' sojourn in Padanaram, set apart a selection

from his stock of animals wherewith to placate his offended brother. Now, as we know the number of the animals in this costly offering, we should have something to go by if we could tell what proportion this present bore to the whole. Was it a tenth, the proportion which Abraham thought a fit offering to a king? We think it was probably more, because Esau feared to impoverish his brother by taking so much from him, and was only prevailed upon to do so, by Jacob's declaring that he had still enough. Take it then, at one fifth. Now it is hardly to be supposed that the wealth which Jacob had been able to acquire by his twenty years' service in Mesopotamia, was at all comparable to that which had been formed by Abraham in the course of more than thrice the time, on the basis of a large inheritance, and enhanced by his acquisitions in Egypt; and still less to the same property as increased during a long lapse of years by Isaac; and least of all, to the property which was formed when Jacob's own separate acquisitions were added to the paternal stock. Let us therefore make what, under the circumstances, is a very moderate calculation—let us assume that Jacob's offering to Esau was one-fifth of his substance; and that Jacob's whole substance was equal to one third of the patriarchal property of the same kind in Canaan—under this view, the first column in the subjoined table shows Jacob's offering to Esau; the second column gives that amount quintupled; the third exhibits the latter amount trebled; and the fourth column shows Job's property of the same kinds, for the sake of comparison:—

	Esau.		Jacob.		Patriarch.		Job
Goats,	220	....	1100	....	3300	....	
Sheep,	220	....	1100	....	3300	....	7000
Camels and colts,	60	....	300	....	900	....	3000
Oxen,	50	....	250	....	750	....	1000
Asses and foals,	30	....	150	....	450	....	500

These calculations appear to us to be corroborated by their near coincidence with the account of Job's wealth. The only serious difference is in camels, and that is very great. The

difference as to sheep is more apparent than real; for although Job had twice the number of sheep assigned to the patriarchal family, he has no goats; and the patriarchal goats and sheep together, form a number only 300 less than the 7000 sheep of Job.

The chief difference is caused by either the extraordinary abundance of camels in the account of Job's wealth, or the extraordinary deficiency of these animals in the stock of Jacob. We have counted the foals in the estimate of the latter, and yet the number is small in proportion to that of other animals. Upon the whole, we incline to think that Jacob, coming from Mesopotamia, where to this day camels are few in comparison with those possessed in and on the borders of Arabia, had not the usual proportion of these animals, and that, with respect to them, the estimate formed on the basis of his present to his brother, does not adequately represent the wealth of the patriarchs in Canaan. There is every probability, that the number possessed by them was as large in proportion to their other cattle, as in the case of Job.

It cannot fail to strike the attention of the most cursory reader, that horses, which form so important a part of the modern Bedouin's possessions, are altogether absent in the statements of the same kinds of wealth belonging to Abraham, Jacob, and Job. It is scarcely possible that the animal should have been unknown to them. In fact, although Job did not possess horses, his book contains the most magnificent description of a war horse that has ever been given (Job xxxix. 19). Again, although there is no mention of horses among the animals which Abraham received from the king of Egypt, this cannot well have been owing to the want of them in that country; for they are found in the most ancient sculptures, and are in this very book mentioned as present in the funeral procession of Jacob from Egypt to the land of Canaan. The truth probably is, that horses were in these early ages used entirely for warlike purposes, and that the powerful patriarchs were averse to the responsibility attached to the use or possession of such animals, especially

in a country like Canaan, to which the use of horses, even for war, does not seem to have at this time extended. This view of the exclusively warlike character of the horse in early times, throws some light upon the injunction in the law against the use of horses. (Deut. xvi. 6.)

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## SEVENTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

### THE TENT.—GENESIS XIII. 3.

It is an interesting fact, which we had occasion to notice before the deluge—that the house was earlier than the tent, and the settled than the migratory condition of life. No sooner, however, did man betake himself to that mode of life which obliged him to move often from place to place in search of pasturage, than he found the necessity of devising some kind of portable habitation. It would be interesting to trace, were it possible, the stages by which tents reached the form and texture which they have now for many ages retained in South Western Asia. This limitation is necessary, for the nature of these portable habitations depends very much upon the climate, and other local circumstances, of the country in which they are found. It is by no means probable, that the tents invented by Jabal before the deluge, were in all respects the same as those which formed the encampment of the patriarchs in the land of Canaan—even apart from the question, whether the climate of the region in which Jabal wandered, was not materially different from that in which Abraham sojourned.

Thus, in well-wooded countries the temporary habitations are often, in various parts of the world, formed of the interwoven branches of trees, constructed so rapidly, and with so little cost of labor, as to be abandoned without regret when the station is quitted; and if a return is made thereto, new dwellings are formed in the same manner, while the dry ma-



terials of the previous encampment, left formerly on the spot, then become useful as fuel. It is by no means clear that the patriarchs did not resort to this plan, perhaps as an agreeable change, when the nature of the country allowed. What else were the "booths" that Jacob dwelt in for a time on his return from Mesopotamia?\*

It is even likely that the Israelites during their forty years' wandering did not live wholly in tents. In their annual commemoration of their pilgrimage in the feast of tabernacles, they lived not in tents, but in booths made of the green boughs.† This would have been very inappropriate, had not such habitations formed, in some part at least, the dwelling of the Israelites during the time of their sojourning; for a tent would have been, in many respects, better suited for commemorative use, as a family that once possessed it could retain it many years for that service. A tent is, however, a better habitation than a booth; and since in every large encampment, as in a large town or village, there must be some indigent persons, it is likely that these possessed no tents, but constructed for themselves, at each removal, temporary habitations of such materials as could be found on the spot, and these would frequently be booths of green branches.

In some parts of the East, as among the Hindoos, the tents or huts are of bamboo or osier reeds, and easily portable. We have ourselves seen the encampments of Arabian and Kurdish tribes wholly formed of reeds; but this is chiefly on the banks of rivers where such materials are easily obtained.

Portable habitations may even be rendered suitable to the exigencies of severe climates. Thus, the Samoede constructs a somewhat warm habitation with the bark of trees, sewed together and covered over with skins. This is, however, a later invention, when men got into climates where they found that the tent of skin alone was an insufficient protection from the severity of the cold.

Perhaps the most perfect and convenient habitation of this

\* Gen. xxxiii. 17.

† Lev. xxiii. 42.

class, at least of all the different kinds with which we have ourselves had occasion to become acquainted, is that of the Kalmuck Tartar. It owes its completeness, probably, to its being required, not only to afford shelter from the heat of summer, but from somewhat severe cold in winter. These tents consist of a number of parts, which are easily put together and taken to pieces. They are round, with a funnel-shaped roof, and blunt at the top. The frame-work is composed of willow laths about an inch thick, perforated where they cross, and fastened with leathern thongs. Six or eight frame-works, when fastened together with woollen bands, compose a circular wall of lattice-work not quite the height of a man. The door-way is inserted separately in its own frame, and consists of two small folding valves. From this lower frame-work proceed a number of poles on every side, which tend to meet in a common centre above, where they are intercepted by a sort of hoop, into holes made in which their extremities are inserted. Over these poles a few woollen girths are passed crosswise, and attached to the frame-work below. The whole of the skeleton is then covered over with coarse, porous, unfulled felts, of considerable size, secured by woollen girths and bands.

Seeing that this kind of habitation originated in the pastoral life, we incline to think that the original tents were covered with skins—the skins of sheep or goats, at first probably with the wool or hair on, but eventually the skin alone, separated from the hair, and, in time, prepared with various leys and earths, so as to resist the influences of heat and wet. When men became hunters—for the pastoral preceded the hunting life—they, for the most part, retained this form of tent, with the difference, that it was covered with the skins of the beasts of their pursuit, instead of those they tended. Hence the tent or wigwam of the North American Indian is covered with the skins of bisons, instead of the skins of sheep. This is about the sole difference. There is a trace of this usage of skins for the covering of tents in the Pentateuch; for one of the coverings of the splendid tabernacle constructed



SEVENTH WEEK, 3d DAY.



in the wilderness, was of "goats' skin dyed red." Why "dyed red?" Doubtless the skins were prepared with some red ochreous matter to prepare it for throwing off the rain, and thus of protecting the more costly inner coverings.

At the present day, and as far back as historical intimations can be formed, the tents of South Western Asia have been of wool or goats' hair, usually dyed black, if not naturally of that color, or else in broad stripes of black and white. They are, in fact, of cloth, woven in the camp by the women from the produce of the flocks. Such, without doubt, are most of the tents mentioned in Scripture. The women in the wilderness spun and wove goats' hair coverings for the tabernacle;\* and in Solomon's Song,† black is the color ascribed to Arabian tents.

Still, it is not very clear whether the patriarchal tents were of skin, or felt, or cloth. As tents of skin were the earliest, the continued use of skin coverings, together with those of woven cloth in the tents of the wilderness, may be thought to imply that the latter were a comparatively recent invention, seeing that it had not yet wholly driven out the older usage. Nevertheless, we incline to think that the patriarchal tents were much the same as those which we now find among the Arabian tribes. These are mostly of an oblong shape, and eight or nine feet high in the middle. They vary in size, and have accordingly a greater or lesser number of poles to support them—from three to nine. If the sheikh or emir is a person of much consequence, he may have three or four tents for his own purposes,—one for himself, one for his wives, one for his immediate servants, and one for the entertainment of strangers. It is more usual, however, for one very large tent to be divided into two or more apartments by curtains; and this is the model followed in the holy tabernacle.‡ The patriarchal tents were probably not of the largest class. We find that the principal members of the family have each a separate tent—as Sarah, Rachel,

\* Exod. xxxv. 26.

† Solomon's Song i. 5.

‡ Exod. xxvi. 31–37.

Leah, and the maid-servants.\* That they consisted of but one apartment may seem probable, from the fact, that the camel furniture in the same chamber with the sick Rachel excites no suspicion; † and that apartment, except perhaps in the rainy season, may seem to have been used for sleeping merely, as Abraham at Mamre receives and entertains the three strangers outside his tent. ‡ Yet these tents, whatever their size or quality, were considered valuable, for “tents” are mentioned among the possessions of Lot. §

As the whole camp belonged to the patriarchs, and consisted of persons for whom they were bound to provide, these were all doubtless accommodated in the tents. This is not so in ordinary encampments, and hence there are many who are too poor to have any tent. Such contrive to shelter themselves from the inclemencies of the weather by a piece of cloth stretched out upon poles, or by retiring to the cavities of the rocks. This was also the case in the patriarchal age; for Job describes the poor as “embracing the rock for want of shelter.” || Trees have become too scarce in those regions to afford booths to such persons now; but as the shade of trees is very agreeable in a very warm climate, the Bedouins, like the patriarchs, are at great pains to find out shaded situations for their encampment. Abraham’s tent at Mamre was under a tree, ¶ and at Beersheba in a grove. \*\*

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## SEVENTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

### THE FIRST WAR.—GENESIS XIV.

THE fourteenth chapter of Genesis is of deep interest to the student of ancient usages. It contains a brief and rapid, but suggestive history, not indeed of the first war, but of the

\* Gen. xxiv. 67; xxxi. 33.

† Ibid. xviii. 4, 8.

‡ Job xxiv. 8.

† Ibid. xxxi. 34, 35.

§ Ibid. xiii. 15.

¶ Gen. xviii. 4.

\*\* Ibid. xxi. 33.

first war of which any record has been transmitted to us. The history itself implies the existence of previous wars; and the manner in which this war is conducted, evinces that men had already gained much experience in the art of afflicting and destroying their fellows.

It appears that certain kings from beyond the region of the Tigris and Euphrates, whether independent, or acting under some great power, is uncertain, had at a former period invaded the country formed by and extending along the east side of the valley of the Jordan and of the hollow valley called the Arabah, which at the present day reaches from the Dead Sea to the eastern arm of the Red Sea. It is difficult to account for their confining their operations to this line, without making any attempt upon the comparatively rich country *west* of the Jordan, without assuming that its object was to obtain the possession or the command of a line of country which was at once a natural frontier westward, and an important military and commercial route. If at the same time this power held possession of Egypt, as some suppose, and constituted the intrusive dynasty known in history as the Hyksos, or shepherd kings, the necessity of keeping open this line of communication with that country must be apparent.

Whatever were the precise objects of the expedition, or the nature of the power brought into action, it was successful, and all the tribes and nations upon this line were brought into subjection.

Under this subjection they continued for twelve years, and then ventured to throw off this foreign yoke. They were in due time called to account for this. It was in the thirteenth year of their subjection that they rebelled, and in the fourteenth their former conquerors re-appeared in the north, and pursuing their victorious march southward along the western border of the valley, from the sources of the Jordan to the Red Sea, returned along the country west of the Arabah,\*

\* The prevalent name of the broad valley which extends from the Dead Sea to the eastern arm of the Red Sea.

subduing the tribes by which that district was inhabited. Approaching still further north, they descend into the valley, purposing to reduce the towns in the enclosed plain, which now forms the basin of the Dead Sea, but which was then beautifully fertile and well inhabited. The principal towns were five:—Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar. In the first of these Abraham's nephew, Lot, had his abode; for soon after their return from Egypt, the great increase of their substance, and the consequent quarrels of their shepherds about rights of water and pasturage, had constrained them to separate. One would think that the invading force was not large, for the inhabitants of these towns and neighboring villages determined to give it battle, although returning victorious and laden with the spoil of conquered places.

The conflict was soon, however, decided in favor of the invaders. The beaten citizens of the Pentapolis fled before them, and many of them lost their lives in the "slime pits" which were at that day visible, and which still, under the deep waters, throw up their asphaltum. The conquerors then plundered the towns, and crossing the plain, passed out of it on the east side laden with spoil, and followed by a train of captives destined for bondage. Among the captives was Lot, and his substance was among the spoil.

Abraham was no farther off than Mamre, near Hebron, and yet, as the invaders had carefully avoided trespassing on the proper land of Canaan, to which the vale of Siddim (as it was called) was not regarded as belonging, the transaction does not seem to have engaged his attention till one of the fugitives brought him the intelligence. No sooner did the patriarch learn that Lot was among the captives, than he at once decided to pursue the conquerors, and rescue his nephew from their hands.

For this purpose, he armed as many of his slaves as were fit for the service. They were three hundred and eighteen, and were exclusively such as had belonged to him from their birth ("born in his own house"), as he could better rely upon their zeal and devotedness than on that of the slaves who had



been presented to him (as in Egypt), or "bought with his money." Considering the distance from Hebron, the pursuit probably took three days, as the enemy were not overtaken till they reached the sources of the Jordan. Here they lay for the night, free from all suspicion of danger, weary probably with the rapid march they had made, and burdened with spoils and captives. Abraham's manner of dealing with a force doubtless much greater than his own, was similar to that of Gideon in a later age, who, indeed, may very possibly have taken the hint from this memorable action of his great progenitor. In the darkness of the night, he divided his force, and directed an assault to be made upon the secure and sleeping host, at once on different sides, probably with great outcries. The enemy, confused by such an unexpected attack, which must have led them to entertain most exaggerated ideas of the assailants' force, soon fell into disorder and fled, hotly pursued by the victors, who did not give over the pursuit until they had reached the neighborhood of Damascus. All the spoil that had been taken away was thus recovered; and of all the persons, not a woman or a little child was lost.

Night attacks of this nature are still common in the East, and are generally successful, if the assailants can so contrive that the enemy shall have no intimation of the intention. The movements are usually so timed, that the assailants arrive on the ground late at night, or rather towards morning, when it is certain that the men of the camp against which the expedition is aimed, are in their deepest sleep. Such operations are also much facilitated by the great and extraordinary neglect of keeping watch at night, which is still the characteristic of eastern military or predatory operations, and of which there are most remarkable examples in Scripture.

By the usage of the East, all the spoil that had been recovered belonged to him by whom it had been recaptured, while the persons returned to their former condition. Accordingly, the kings of the plundered towns, who met their

deliverer on his returning march, proposed to Abraham, through the king of Sodom, that he should retain the goods, and return the persons to them. But the truly great patriarch, whose disinterestedness in this respect can only be truly appreciated by those, who have studied the class of sentiments which belong to that condition of life in which he moved, declared that not a particle of all this vast spoil should remain with him; and to preclude all remonstrance, he said that he had already taken a most solemn oath to that effect:—"I have lifted up mine hand (in the act of taking an oath) to the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine." And why not? what was the special motive that influenced him? It was the becoming pride of independence. He did not conceal it. It was, he said, "Lest thou shouldest say, 'I have made Abraham rich.'" This he could not endure, at least not from strangers with whom his relations were not peculiarly amicable, whose character was indeed objectionable, and whom he had served merely for the sake of Lot.

This transaction must however greatly have enhanced the credit and influence of Abraham in the land of his sojourning; and it doubtless materially contributed to procure for him that respect and consideration, with which we subsequently find him treated by the native chiefs and princes of the country.

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## SEVENTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

### KINGS AND KINGDOMS—MELCHIZEDEK.—GENESIS XIV.

SEVERAL kings of Canaan are mentioned in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis. We must not allow ourselves to entertain any large ideas of their power and greatness. In the area of the present Dead Sea alone, which if not even then,

as some suppose, occupied by a lake, did not exceed some of our lesser English counties in extent, there were no less than five "kings;" and at even a considerably later period there were not fewer than thirty-one, in that portion of this small country of Canaan which Joshua was enabled to conquer. The fact clearly is, that each of these kings was no other than the head man, sheikh, or chief, of every considerable town and the district belonging thereto. They seem to have been independent of each other in their own particular affairs; but, as in the case of the kings of the plain, the princes of a particular district appear to have combined in such matters as were of general concernment to them all. Whether, with respect to such outside affairs, they allowed a sort of superiority to one of their number—say the chief of the most important town in the locality—cannot with certainty be stated. But we think that this was the case; not only because it is seen that this is the course which small tribes or communities are led by experience to regard as the best in times of war and trouble, but because there appears, even in this narrative, some faint indication that the king of Sodom was during this transaction regarded as the leader of the five kings of the plain. We know also that at the later period to which we have just referred, and in the same neighborhood, one of five "kings" of this description assumed the leadership of the others in a time of danger, and directed the movements of their united force (Joshua x.). Such power was probably only temporary, for we find that under analogous circumstances, among the Syro-Arabian tribes, great and jealous care is taken to exact the entire abdication, on the return of peace, of all the authority of leadership conceded, for the common good, in time of war and trouble. It is indeed highly probable that the eventual formation of larger dominions, originated in the successful attempts of such leaders to retain permanently the power thus temporarily entrusted to them.

It may be stated that, even at the present day, the same and the neighboring countries offer some tolerable analogies

to the state of things indicated. Every town and village has its sheikh, by whom almost all its concerns are managed, with the aid and counsel of the other principal inhabitants. If the country is not in a well-organized state, he makes war with other towns, and enters into alliance with the wandering tribes that frequent the neighborhood, and on him devolves the duty of entertaining strangers. He is accountable to the general government; but he is rarely interfered with, so long as he provides the taxes due from his place, and so long as the inhabitants make no complaint against him. Suppose this sheikh independent, instead of subject to a general government, we have in him, as it seems to us, one whose situation very nearly corresponds to that of the kings of Canaan. In fact, except in the Syro-Arabian provinces of the Turkish empire, these chiefs are called *sultans*; and we can well remember the surprise which the large ideas attached to this title, as appropriated by us to the grand signior, created when we *first* heard its application to a rough old man, nowise distinguishable in manner, appearance, dress, or mode of living, from the other inhabitants of the place. Now here is a perfectly analogous instance to the scriptural one, of the same title being applied to the chief of a village and the lord of an empire. Our own small island once formed many kingdoms; but the kings of the Heptarchy were, in regard to extent of dominion, mighty sovereigns compared with the ancient kings of Canaan.

A disorganized society falls back into the same state as an unorganized society; and when the general government is weak, the local chiefs become almost or wholly independent. Hence we read, in William of Tyre, that during the crusades, when King Bohemund laid siege to Arsur, "several kings" came down from the mountains of Samaria to the plain of Antipatris, bringing with them bread and wine, and dried figs and raisins. These "kings" were doubtless such as we have described, and such as the ancient kings of Canaan were.

This incident is in itself strikingly analogous to what happened to Abraham, for we are told that Melchizedek, king

of Salem, "brought forth bread and wine" to him, on his victorious return from the slaughter of the kings. The simple fact of the similarity, not only of the act, but of the refreshments offered, is the best answer to the opinion advanced by some of the old Romanists, and lately also by other writers, that "the bread and wine" were emblematic of the eucharistic elements. Figs and raisins were probably also included, in the one case as in the other, for, in the language of Scripture, "bread and wine," as the chief articles of meat and drink, represent all kinds of food.

Melchizedek himself, who brought these presents to Abraham as his troop arrived at, or passed near his town, is a remarkable person in Scripture. It is said that "he was priest of the most high God," and he bestows a solemn blessing upon Abraham in the name of "the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth;" and which is more extraordinary, Abraham gives to him "tithes (or a tenth) of all." Who was this Melchizedek, who is honored with such high titles, and whom Abraham treats with such respect? The question is a large one, upon which volumes have been written. The union, in his person, of the royal and sacerdotal characters, excites no surprise, as this was usual in ancient times. The Jews generally think that he was Shem, for their short chronology of the period would allow him to have lived down to this time. But without now questioning that chronology, it may be asked, how came Shem to be living and reigning here, among people of the Canaanitish race? and if it were Shem, how is it that Abraham, who had now been a considerable time in the land, had no previous intercourse with his venerable ancestor? Besides, why should Moses speak of Shem by another name than that by which he had previously described that personage? and if he were known to be Shem, how could Paul say that his parentage was unknown (Heb. vii. 3), seeing that we are very well acquainted with the genealogy of Shem? The probability seems to be, as Josephus indicates, that Melchisedek was a Canaanitish prince, belonging to the older long-lived generation, who

maintained the worship and knowledge of the true God; which, indeed, does not seem to have been, up to this time, so generally lost in Canaan as in the land from which Abraham came; for we find no traces of idolatry, and we know, from Scripture itself, that the iniquity of the Canaanites was not full, until four hundred years later. The essential difference of their religious training, while both adored the same God, is shown in the fact, that while to Abraham God is known as Jehovah, or simply as Elohim, with Melchizedek he is the "Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth;" and it is not a little remarkable, that Abraham himself adopts the same title, for that once only, when naming God in the presence of Melchizedek, or rather combining it with his own more usual designation of the Almighty—"I have lifted up my hand to Jehovah, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth."

There is, and must always remain, great obscurity upon the history of Melchizedek, and upon some important points in Abraham's intercourse with him. It seems to us far from improbable that Moses, writing under Divine direction, was withheld from furnishing further information respecting Melchizedek, for the very purpose of his being rendered the more efficient type of Christ in his priestly office; and of enabling sacred writers in later ages to find the means of illustrating, from what is known, and more from what is not known, of Melchizedek, this important feature in the official character of the Divine Redeemer.\*

Some of our readers will have heard, that the Salem, of which Melchizedek was king, was no other than Jerusalem. But we see no proof of this. It seems far more likely that Salem was some town between the lake of Gennesareth and the Dead Sea, as was indeed formerly understood. Jerusalem is indeed called Salem, in Psalm xlvii. 2; but this, probably, is no more than a poetical contraction. All the circumstances of the history are in favor of a more northern position. The interview between these illustrious personages

\* See Psalm cx. 4; and Hebrews vii.

took place in "the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale;" and we are referred to the parallel text (2 Sam. xviii. 18), "Absalom had reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's dale." But this passage throws no light on the geographical position of the "king's dale;" and to assume that it is near Jerusalem, is to beg the only point in question.

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## SEVENTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

THE COVENANT.—GENESIS XV.

ABRAHAM is rich ; Abraham is prosperous ; Abraham is victorious ; Abraham is great ; Abraham has won an illustrious name, and has entitled himself to a nation's admiration and gratitude.

But as we know that in the life of man—that in our own life—the moments of our highest exaltation are often followed by those of our deepest humiliation and heaviness—as we know that the thorn in the flesh is seldom wanting to prevent man from being exalted above measure—it is no surprise to us that the next thing we learn of the patriarch, after all this glory, is, that he is exceedingly cast-down, and greatly in need of special encouragements from God.

This case is not difficult to understand. Abraham, a man of peaceful tastes and habits, had been roused to an unwonted course of action ; but now, as he walks in the solitude of his own tents, and all the recent excitement has passed away, there is a strong reaction. Human regrets and fears press him down ; and solemn and earnest thoughts overwhelm him. How does he know that the defeated kings, overcome by surprise, may not return in overpowering force, and exact a bloody price for the victory he has won ? Then, what is his reward for all the toil and labor he has undergone ? Lot, whose alienated heart he had probably hoped to win by so great a service, is still as far from him as ever. For the sake of the fat pastures and well-watered lands of Sodom, he is

content still to dwell among men, whom he must by this time have known from experience, to be “sinners before the Lord exceedingly.”

In the midst of these thoughts, the voice of God falls upon his ear:—“Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward;” or rather, “thy reward shall be exceeding great.” These great words, so well suited to refresh and strengthen a troubled and weary spirit, failed not of their effect upon Abraham. Still, the nothingness of human greatness pressed heavily upon his heart. It was true, that he had all this greatness, this honor, this wealth. But what did it avail him? He was among strangers; the attachment of his only relative, within some hundreds of miles, he had failed to win; he was approaching life’s farthest verge, and no child had yet been given to him. Soon his accumulated wealth would pass into other hands; and, no son of his taking down his name and race to future days, his memory would utterly perish from the earth. Under the influence of these feelings he said—“*What wilt thou give me?*” As much as to say—“Thou hast already given me in abundance all thy outer blessings; and what can more of the same avail, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus.” This he afterwards explains by saying—“Lo, one born in mine house is mine heir.” This was an old and attached house-born slave, in whom he had confidence, and who, in the absence and alienation of all natural ties, would become the possessor of his substance. But although this man was worthy, and although his tried faithfulness was a comfort and a blessing, he was not a son; and his heirship could give the patriarch none of those hopes and interests in the great future which he had been led to expect.

But God told him plainly, that not Eliezer, nor any stranger, but a son of his own, should be his heir. It was night; and he was drawn forth into the fields, and bade to look upon the stars, and to count them if he could; for so countless as they should his posterity become. The sight of the heavenly host may not have been without influence in convincing him, that



what God had promised he was able to perform. He lost all doubt and fear. He and his wife were both old; both had reached that time of life at which men and women were wont to see their grown-up sons and daughters around them, and to dandle their children upon their knees. But Abraham "staggered not at the promises of God." There were difficulties, to human judgment insuperable; but they were to him as dust in the balance against the promise of God. He believed with all his heart that it would be as God had said. This was Abraham's faith. It was no milk and water faith. It was strong faith—faith to live by. He believed; and God counted that belief to him for righteousness.

To reward this faith, the Lord condescended to renew, in the most solemn manner, his other promise—which was to give to his descendants the possession of that land in which he was himself a pilgrim and a stranger. Abraham immediately asks, "Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" This has seemed to many a sad lapse from the strong faith he had just indicated. But we do not so view it. He saw the land already containing a large population, which must be greatly increased in number long before his posterity could be increased into a nation fit to possess this heritage; and like Mary at the salutation of the angel, he asks, not "*Can* this thing be?"—he knew that it could—but "*How* shall this thing be?" Chrysostom, in his Homily on this place, seems to have hit the sense rightly. He paraphrases the words thus:—"I firmly believe that what thou hast promised shall come to pass, and, therefore, I ask no questions from distrust. But I should be glad to be favored with some such token or anticipation of it, as may strongly affect my senses, and raise and strengthen my weak and feeble apprehensions of this great matter."

The way in which the Lord chose to meet his wish is, in all respects, remarkable. He entered into a formal ritual covenant with him, after the manner of men. It was the most solemn of all forms of ratifying a treaty or covenant among divers ancient nations, and, among the rest of the

Chaldeans (as may be seen from Jer. xxxiv. 18), to divide the carcass of a victim, as butchers divide a sheep, into two equal parts lengthwise, these are placed opposite to each other, and the covenanting parties entering at the opposite extremities of the passage thus formed, met in the middle and there took the oath. Accordingly, Abraham was directed thus to divide and lay out a heifer, a she-goat, a ram, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon. These he watched to protect them from birds of prey, and to wait the expected manifestation. As the sun was going down, the great and darksome horror, and the partial unconsciousness—unconsciousness of his clayey burden—that fell upon him, disclosed to Abraham that God was sensibly near. He heard a voice declaring to him the destiny of his sons for four generations, after which they should come triumphant from bondage to take possession of that land. The voice ceased—the darkness deepened—and, lo, a flaming fire in the midst of what seemed like the smoke of a furnace, passed between the pieces. This was the well-known symbol of the Divine presence; and thus was the covenant ratified by the most solemn sanction known in ancient times among men.

To estimate the full effect of this awful solemnity upon the mind of Abraham, it should be borne in mind what solemn importance was, in ancient times, attached to oaths and covenants, in almost all nations, even those who, in the ordinary intercourse of life, were by no means remarkable for truthfulness. The judicial legislation of the East does at this day recognize a false oath as a moral impossibility; and hence, among some of the most mendacious people in the world, an accusation on oath is held to be true, in the absence of other testimony, and unless the accused will consent to purge himself by a counter oath. Even in ancient Greece, where a lie was a small matter, to distrust an oath seems to have been regarded as a high crime. The same sentiment is indicated in the special judgments from heaven, which were expected to await the breaker of treaties, on the man who had sworn falsely. So, in the *Iliad*, when the truce has been

broken by the act of Pandarus. Agamemnon comforts his wounded brother thus—

“The foe  
Hath trodden under foot his sacred oath,  
And stained it with thy blood. But not in vain  
The truce was ratified, the blood of lambs  
Poured forth, libation made, and right hands joined  
In holy confidence. The wrath of Jove  
May sleep, but will not always; they shall pay  
Dear penalty.”—COWPER.

And further on, he says to the Greeks—

“Jove will not prosper traitors. Them who first  
Transgressed the truce, the vultures shall devour;  
And we, their city taken, shall their wives  
Lead captive.”

We may compare with this the more oriental notion expressed in the Institutes of Menu—“He whom the blazing fire burns not, whom the water forces not up, or who meets with no speedy misfortune, must be held veracious in his testimony on oath.” This implies that God is so sure to punish him who has no regard for his oath, that the absence of punishment is an assurance of truthfulness.

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## SEVENTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

### SLAVES.

In the history of Abraham, the existence of slavery, that is, the absolute right of property which one man holds over another, meets us at every turn; and, subsequently, throughout the Scripture, it frequently comes under our notice as a large and important fact in the history and condition of nations.

As in the history of Abraham, we may recognize almost every species of slave that existed in later ages, the fact must

in his time, have been of long standing. Whether it existed before the deluge or not, cannot be said; but the probability is, that it did; for the same causes existed before that event, that produced it within so short a time afterwards. The men who, before the flood, filled the earth with violence and with crime, were not likely to neglect this encroachment upon human rights. The knowledge of the existence of this practice before the flood, would facilitate and hasten its reproduction after that event.

Abraham himself possessed many slaves; indeed, there is no reason to doubt that his encampment was wholly composed of such persons—male slaves with their wives and families; all equally the property of their lord, but becoming such under different circumstances, which practically produced some difference in the estimation in which they were held, if not in the treatment they received from their master.

The first were house-born slaves, that is, slaves born the property of their master, being the children of all the other kinds of slaves previously possessed. We are told that we ought to view these matters in the same light as the ancients and the orientals. We see not the necessity of this. We may view the conduct of men by the light of their age and country—and we may judge leniently of practices respecting which we have ourselves been very slow and very late in coming to a right judgment. But, having now, at last, in the nineteenth century of Christ, come to that right judgment, there is no reason why we should not, and every reason why we should, exercise it in judging of ancient things. So judging, the presence of house-born slaves seems to be the most revolting particular in the whole system. We can understand that a man might forfeit his personal liberty by crime or by misfortune—but that his children and his children's children should to all generations be involved in the same doom, merely because they are his children, and without any taint derived from him, is most horrible—and seems the most atrocious invention that ever entered the minds of men. Most things of this nature are, however,

worse in principle than they appear to be in practice. The house-born slaves, whose condition seems at the first view the most degraded, are, in fact, the most privileged, trusted and favored. Their services are the lightest and most confidential; they are nearest the person of their master; growing up under his eye, they learn to regard him in some sort as their father; and taking into view the extent of paternal authority in the East, and the respectful distance at which children are kept, the demeanor of the house-born slave towards his master is, in its combinations of deference and attachment, scarcely distinguishable from that of his own children. Except in the utmost extremity of evil fortune, no man will part with a slave of this class. It is counted disgraceful to sell him. And although theoretically this bondage is eternal—it very seldom lasts for two generations. It is very usual for a master to bequeath liberty to all his house-born slaves at his death. He frequently bestows freedom upon some of them in his life-time, if they will accept it, or if he finds an occasion of thereby advancing their welfare. An accomplished and faithful slave often receives the hand of his master's daughter, and thus becomes a free member of the family.\* Not seldom the master, if childless, adopts a slave of this class for his son, and brings him up as such; or at his death leaves all his possessions to one of them who has won the most of his favor, or whose attachment has been the most tried. In the case of Abraham, we see it is only the house-born slaves that he arms for the pursuit of the five kings; and in the contemplation of dying childless, he clearly indicates the intention of making his house-born slave Eliezer his heir. He had probably acquired many slaves of this sort by inheritance, and a portion were the progeny of these and of his other slaves.

\* An instance of this occurs in 1 Chron. ii. 34, 35—and that too with reference to one who was not, it would seem, a house-born but an acquired slave. "Sheshan had no sons, but daughters; and Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian, whose name was Jarha. And Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant to wife."

Some of his slaves, Abraham held by right of purchase. They were "bought with his money." (Gen. xvii. 12.) There seems, indeed, to have been a regular traffic in the persons of men. We have an instance of this in the case of Joseph. When the unnatural brethren were deliberating upon taking away his life, the approach of a company of travelling merchants on their way to Egypt suggests to them the idea of selling him for a slave. The proposal was made, and the transaction completed, without any apparent emotion of surprise, or any nice inquiries into the right of disposal. Had the dealers been in the habit of paying any heed to circumstances, or to the representations and complaints of those offered to them for sale, they would not have purchased Joseph for a slave. We are not, however, to suppose that Abraham had any concern in acts of this questionable nature. Such slaves passed from hand to hand, and doubtless Abraham's purchased slaves were acquired not at first hand, but in the market—perhaps in Egypt, which, from the earliest historical time, was a great mart for slaves.

Many of Abraham's slaves were, however, presented to him. Of these, we know that he received some from the king of Egypt; Hagar may have been one of the number, for she is called "an Egyptian." Was she so called because she was acquired in that country, or because she was a native Egyptian? If the latter, how did she become a slave in her own country? And how came a native Egyptian to be given or sold to a foreigner like Abraham? There seems a difficulty in this; and also one still greater in the fact (as appears by the case of Jarha, just noticed) that the Israelites could hold Egyptians as slaves, even in Egypt. As natives of the country in which they were slaves, these could not have been captives taken in war, who formed by far the greater proportion of slaves in all times. In early wars, a captured enemy was regarded as having forfeited his life, and was accordingly put to death—until it was found more advantageous to preserve his life for the sake of his labor, or for the sake of the money that might be obtained from those to whom his ser-

vices might be useful. This, which was in the first instance the effect of wars, eventually produced wars; for the captives were thus rendered so profitable, that wars were often made, and aggressive expeditions undertaken, for the sake of the captives and spoil, as is at this day the case in Africa.

Again, the paternal authority in ancient times was such, that the father possessed the most absolute power over the life and condition of his children. It was, and still is in some countries, optional with him from the first, whether the child shall live or not. If it lived, he had a perfect right, under any exigency that might arise, of casting forth, of selling, or even of slaying his child. Many were sold, especially in times of famine, when the parent, being no longer able to find food for them, would consider that he rendered them a kindness by selling them, and all his rights in them, to those able to provide for them. This occurs in our own day. We have with our own eyes beheld parents, in "the straitness of the famine and want of all things," offering their children for sale in the streets, and asking but the veriest trifle for them.

Then, in countries where there is no legal provision for the poor, a man will often, in time of scarcity, or under some pressing want, sell himself, for the purpose of obtaining food or money. This slavery was sometimes for a limited time, as in the case of Jacob, who served Laban fourteen years for his two daughters—and in that case this condition approaches that of our servants. But it is oftener absolute, as in the case of the Egyptians who sold themselves for bread to their king. Genesis xlvii. 23.

Then, again, creditors had the right of seizing the children of a debtor, and himself also, and of selling them in payment of his debts. The children were, indeed, liable to be sold for the debts of the parent even after his death, as we find by the case of the widow who complained to Elisha that, being unable to pay the debts of her deceased husband, the merciless creditor threatened to take her sons for bondmen. 2

Kings iv. 1. With this, other cases, in Neh. v. 1-5, and Matt. xviii. 25, may be compared.

Men were also enslaved as a punishment for their crimes. But in general, and except in Egypt, where human labor was much in demand for public works, this was confined to cases in which restitution for a wrong might thus be made. In other cases, the punishments of crime were, in old times, generally personal—death, mutilations, tortures, stripes—as is still the case in the East.

We thus see that persons might become slaves even in their own country; and in view of the instances of Egyptians being slaves to foreigners, to which we have referred, it is very possible that the law of Moses aimed at the correction of this sort of grievance, when it forbade that a native Israelite should be sold to a foreigner out of his own country. In his country a stranger might be his master, although in that case his friends, or other Israelites, had the right of redeeming him out of that alien servitude.

From the character of Abraham, as well as from the generally mild tone of Eastern slavery, we must conclude that all his slaves were treated not only with justice and humanity, but with paternal kindness and consideration; and in many cases their being brought into his family must have been a great blessing to them, as the means of bringing them to an acquaintance with God. Living in times when slavery was the usual form of servitude—and knowing that by themselves the power was humanely and conscientiously exercised, even the patriarchs would be slow to perceive the evil principle that lurked in this absolute power of man over man, and would fall into the practice as affording the *only* mode in which the services they needed could be obtained.



## Eighth Week—Sunday.

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM.—GENESIS XV. 6.

“HE believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness.” It is very important for us to understand rightly what was the nature of that faith in Abraham which God “counted to him for righteousness.” That faith does not belong to things that have passed away. Abraham exercised it, and it was counted to him for righteousness, before he was under the covenant of circumcision. Although there be different degrees of faith, they are but different measures of the same thing. The faith that justifies (which is what is meant by its being counted for righteousness) is that faith which saves; and saving faith has ever been of one nature, and has always had one object. This is placed beyond a doubt by the fact that Saint Paul more than once sets before Christians the faith of Abraham as the model for their own. In the patriarch, therefore, we have an example of that faith which is needful to ourselves, and it thus the more behoves us that this example should not be misapprehended.

The history of no man that has lived is known which shows stronger faith than that of Abraham. He is called to abandon his friends and country, and he obeys; he goes forth, “not knowing whither he went.” God promises to him a son; and he believes, although he is already old, and the accomplishment is many long years delayed. God promises that his posterity shall be as the sand that is by the sea shore innumerable; and he believes, although he is childless. God tells him that the land in which he is a stranger shall be the heritage of his children; and he believes, although he sees not *how* so great an event can be brought to pass. The promised son is born, and grows up, when he is commanded to slay him in sacrifice; and he forthwith proceeds to obey

that commandment, although he regarded that son as the medium of all the blessings promised to him and his. What more do we require than this? Is not this sufficient to constitute the faith which justified and saved his soul? Alas, no. Abraham himself knew this very well. All this does not constitute the faith which the Gospel requires of us, and which we are assured is the same faith that Abraham held. From all that appears in the stated facts, the faith of Abraham consisted in his belief that it was God who spoke to him, and that whatever that God had promised he was able to perform. His strong acts of obedience were proportioned to the strength of his belief. But is this saving faith? We find many who exhibit strong trust in God's providence and care, and who exhibit much energy in acts of obedience to his commandments, but who do not and cannot claim to have received the anointing from the Holy One. There are many such, not even nominally Christians. They are good men and true in their order; but their order is not in Christ, and they are none of his. Even the faith that can remove mountains is not in itself the faith that saves and justifies, and it is to be feared that many who have had *that* faith alone will utterly perish. We write these words with awe; for they form a sentence of condemnation against many from whom the heart cannot withhold its love.

Since, therefore, that Abraham had saving faith, and seeing that such faith is not inevitably connected with such acts as those which his history sets before us, why is not its real nature and object more clearly pointed out to us? It is clearly pointed out; although *not* in the history. The sacred volume comes to us as a whole, and the information not given in one part of it is generally to be found in another. The gospels and the epistles clearly tell us wherein lay that faith of Abraham which was counted to him for righteousness. If it be asked, why this is not set forth in the history itself? it may as well be asked, why the doctrine of redemption is not as clearly set forth in the Pentateuch as in the prophecies of Isaiah. It is indeed as fully set forth, now

that we can read with anointed eyes the types and symbols under which it was at once veiled and expressed. It was not the purpose of God that the mysteries of his kingdom should be fully unveiled until the fulness of time was come. He gave more and more, stronger and stronger light, dispersing gradually the morning shades, until we reached the noon-tide splendors of that day in which Christ rose from the dead. All was then known.

What, then, is this essential faith which, according to the testimony of Christ and his apostles, Abraham possessed, and through which alone he could be justified—justified, not as *being* righteous, but as being “*counted* righteous” before God? We will give the answer from the able but neglected book of a clear-minded writer.\* “Faith is a grace wrought in the soul of a sinner by the Holy Spirit, whereby being emptied of all opinionative thoughts of his own righteousness, strength, and fulness, he is enabled to look to Christ, to betake himself to him as his only Saviour, to receive him, to rest and rely upon him for the remission of his sins, for a righteousness to justify him in the sight of God, for strength to enable him to perform duty, to follow after holiness, and to encounter spiritual enemies; and for eternal life, when his work of faith and labor of love is ended, and when he comes to finish with joy his course. This is the Scripture notion of saving faith: and it has God for its fundamental and principal object, as he is a God of truth reconciled to sinners; but it has Christ for its immediate object, for it is only by his mediation that a sinner can come to God.”

Had Abraham this faith? There can be no question of it. There can be no question that he was enabled to find in the Divine promises made to him, far more than met his ear. He had a spiritual perception of their purport, and apprehended through them a hope of heaven, and an interest in its blessedness. As this can be only realized through Christ,

\* *A Practical Treatise of Saving Faith.* By Abraham Taylor. 1730  
It is remarkable, however, that this writer does not once allude to the case of Abraham.

this alone would be evidence that his faith had reference to the promised Messiah. But we are not left to any conjecture in this matter. Our Lord himself says: "Abraham longed to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." John viii. 56.

This means that Abraham earnestly desired to have a distinct conception, a clear representation, of the work of the Messiah—his promised seed in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed; and that this privilege was in a special manner afforded to him, and filled his heart with gladness. In Christ, therefore, and in his great redeeming work, his faith centered. This was in his view the ultimate object of all the promises he received; and while he did look forward to a numerous posterity through Isaac, he was also permitted to behold in faith the far larger heritage which should accrue to him through that great Son—the heirs of his faith, the inheritors of the blessings belonging to his spiritual seed—numerous as the stars, and not less glorious.

These are not fancies. As the words of our Lord disclose to us the nature of Abraham's faith, so the words of the apostle indicate the sense we have given, as that in which our Lord's words are to be understood. Saint Paul, in the fourth chapter of Romans, treats largely of the nature of Abraham's faith, showing that the promises made to the patriarch had, besides their natural meaning, a spiritual one which he fully understood. He shows that Israel had no exclusive inheritance in the promises made to Abraham that he should be "the father of many nations," and the "heir of the world;" and whether the large views which we are thus led to take of these promises and facts were opened to him or not, there is every reason, from the declaration of our Saviour, to conclude, that his faith did embrace these spiritual views, and that in the degree of light imparted to him, his faith was the same in its essence as our own.

In his epistle to the church in Galatia, the same apostle returns to a subject obviously full of interest to him. He

declares plainly that the Gospel—nothing less than the Gospel—was preached to Abraham, when it was declared to him that in him all nations should be blessed. “So then,” he adds, “they that be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”

It must be admitted, that on the surface of the narrative, the expectation and the hopes of Abraham are temporal, and the promises also. It is refreshing to be enabled thus, by the aid of the later Scriptures, to penetrate to their inner meaning, and find that they were not such. Through faith, his views, like our own, extended beyond the grave, and rested not short of heaven. His portion was not in this world. He was thus well content to dwell in a strange country, without any abiding place, because, as the same apostle assures us, he looked not in this world, but in the world to come, “for a city that *hath foundations*, whose builder and maker is God.” Heb. xi. 10. Truly and beautifully applicable to him, are, as intended to be, the lines of the poet:—

“No foot of land do I possess ;  
 No cottage in this wilderness ;  
     A poor wayfaring man,  
 I lodge awhile in tents below,  
 Or gladly wander to and fro,  
     Till I my Canaan gain.  
 Nothing on earth I call my own,  
 A stranger to the world, unknown,  
     I all their goods despise ;  
 I trample on their whole delight,  
 And seek a city out of sight,  
     A city in the skies.”

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## EIGHTH WEEK—MONDAY.

HAGAR.—GENESIS XVI.

It is worthy of note, that Abraham's wife had female slaves of her own, or at least one such, over whom the master

had little if any power. This is still the case in the East, with respect to all such slaves as by gift, or purchase, or dower, are the actual property of the mistress. Where, indeed, there is none but domestic female slavery, the mistress assumes the entire control of even the female slaves bought by the master for the service of his house; but, where such slaves are employed in out-door service, such as the tending of cattle, the power of the mistress is limited to those engaged in domestic service, while the others are under the more direct control of the master. This statement may serve to illustrate the relative conditions of the doubtless numerous female slaves in the camp of Abraham.

One of these women, named Hagar, was Sarah's own slave, apparently in the highest sense, as having been presented to her, or bought by her. As this woman was an Egyptian, and was the personal attendant of Sarah, there may be reason to suppose, that Hagar had been given to her as an attendant by the king of Egypt, while she was detained in his house. When the monarch gave her "brother" men-servants and maid-servants for her sake, he was not likely to leave Sarah without some such tokens of his consideration.

Abraham had no doubt acquainted Sarah with the various promises from the Lord, which had been made to him. But she was less disposed than he to await God's own time and mode of accomplishing the purpose he had declared. A most notable device entered her mind, which seems strange to us, but which was probably in conformity with existing customs, and such as still subsist in India and China. She proposed that Abraham should take her maid as a kind of secondary wife, so that if any children came from this union, they might, as the children of her handwoman, be accounted hers. There was nothing in this that could have appeared wrong to Abraham, though to us it wears an unpleasant aspect; and in any case, he ought to have waited in faith the fulfilment of the high promise he had received. It, however, claims to be noticed, that although Abraham had received

the assurance of a son, he had not yet been told that Sarah was to be its mother; and he may have supposed that the course which was taken was in full accordance with the Divine intention. It is clear, that Sarah herself had altogether abandoned the hope of giving birth to a child, and that it was at her urgency Abraham consented, probably against his better judgment, to become a party to this expedient. It is, indeed, remarkable, that of the three patriarchs, the two who gave their sanction to the practice of polygamy, did so not of their own free will, but were driven into it by the contrivance of others.

The evil of this measure soon appeared in its effects. It was not long before it was evident that Hagar would become the mother of a child. The prospects which this condition opened, so worked upon her mind, so exalted her in her own sight, that Sarah no longer received from her that respect to which she had been accustomed. Every indication of this sort would appear in the darkest colors to the naturally jealous mind of Sarah, who, if we do not misjudge her, by the reaction not seldom seen in human character, regarded on her part with dislike the woman who had been made the instrument of her own designs, as soon as it appeared that she would shortly enjoy that advantage, so long denied to herself, of becoming the happy mother of a child. It is far from improbable, that the whole transaction became hateful in her eyes, when its objects appeared likely to be fulfilled. That all the blame is not on Sarah's side, appears more than probable, from the way in which she assails her husband on the subject, and lays at his door all the blame of a transaction which was entirely of her own devising. To pacify her, Abraham, who manifestly hated domestic strife, and generally avoids it by letting Sarah have her own way, told her, "Behold the maid is in thy hand, do to her as pleaseth thee." This she could have done without his permission formerly, while Hagar was simply her own slave; but the woman had now acquired a new character, which, although it did not take her wholly out of Sarah's power, precluded

the latter from disposing of her without his consent. But his words restored to her all her original power over her handmaid, and divested him of all right of interfering, even should her conduct towards Hagar be utterly averse to his own inclinations and wishes. It does not appear that Abraham had any knowledge of these dissensions in the interior of the women's tent, till he was acquainted with them by Sarah; and being informed by her, in her own way, of the assumptions of Hagar, and being asked, whether he was inclined to support her in her pretensions—it does not appear to us unnatural, that he decided the matter in favor of her who had been hitherto the sole companion of his life, and the repository of all his hopes and fears—entitled, by the double tie of consanguinity and marriage, to all consideration and kindness from him. It was, therefore, doubtless under a strong impression of duty to her that, even at the risk of losing his child, he admits her full authority over her own slave. He hoped, perhaps, that her jealousy would be allayed, and Hagar's growing arrogance repressed by this strong measure; which certainly does, under all explanation, seem unduly harsh towards Hagar, or, at least, not duly considerate for her, seeing that he divested himself of all power of interfering for her under any treatment she might receive. It is necessary to keep this fact in view, as it accounts for his subsequent passiveness. The reader may remember the incident in ancient Persian history, that when Amestris asked her husband Xerxes to give her the wife of his brother, the king, obliged by custom, consented. He foresaw the treatment which awaited his sister-in-law; but having placed her at his wife's disposal, he took no precautions to avert the cruelty of Amestris, which was worse than barbarous. The story may be found in the ninth book of Herodotus.

So Sarah now uses her power so unsparingly, that Hagar abandons all her high prospects and aspirations, and determines to seek relief in flight. She withdrew into the southern wilderness, probably intending to find her way to Egypt. But one day; as she rested by a well of water, the angel of



God found her there, and conveyed to her the comforting assurance that she was not forsaken. He told her to return to her mistress, and behave with submission to her; and to encourage her obedience, he proceeded to disclose the destinies of her unborn child. "Thou shalt bear a son, and shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. He shall be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

It was no doubt well understood by her, that this character was designed to describe, not merely the individual, but the race to spring from him. Taken in that point of view, it is a most extraordinary prediction. The character which it describes was too common in an unsettled age to excite special attention. What is remarkable in the prediction is, that this, in the case of Ishmael, was to remain, as it ever has done in the person of his Arabian descendants, the character of a race. Other nations have changed their habits of life, and not one retains its original character. The sole exception is in the descendants of this man, in accordance with a prediction published at a time when no human knowledge could foresee, nor any human power ensure, the certainty of its fulfilment. The wilderness, which is incident only to a certain stage of man's social history, has become permanent with them; and, although they have been compacted and embodied as a nation for more than three thousand years, they have resisted those changes of habits, which it is the effect of civil union so long continued to induce. Still, as we shall ourselves have ample occasion to show, does the Ishmaelite exhibit in his manner of life, the characteristics impressed upon him by the words spoken to the run-away bondswoman in the wilderness of Shur. Nor is this all—his race was always to remain in the possession of the land originally acquired; for so the expression, that he should dwell in the presence of all his brethren, is usually interpreted. And how wonderfully true has this been of the Arabian, while other nations and tribes have again and again changed their habitations, or

have become subject to strangers in their own lands. But the Arabians have occupied one and the same country. "They have roved like the moving sands of their deserts; but their race has been rooted while the individual wandered. That race has neither been dissipated by conquest, nor lost by migration, nor confounded with the blood of other countries. They have continued to dwell in the presence of their brethren, a distinct nation, wearing, upon the whole, the same features and aspects which prophecy first impressed upon them."\*

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## EIGHTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

## PASTORAL HOSPITALITIES.—GENESIS XVIII.

THERE is, perhaps, no chapter of Genesis which brings so vividly before us the actual circumstances of patriarchal life, as the eighteenth. One might muse over it for hours with untiring interest, and volumes might be written upon the text which it offers.

The aged patriarch is sitting in his tent door in the heat of the day. There, while shaded from the sun by the tree beneath which his tent is pitched, he may receive refreshment from the air, that may at such time be in motion. He is absorbed in thought. His eyes are fixed upon the ground, as he muses probably on the destinies of his race, on God's covenant with him, and on the qualities which his son Ishmael, by this time a grown-up boy, begins to develop. Suddenly he is aware that three strangers—wayfaring men—have approached near to him unobserved. He starts from his seat, and hastens to meet them. He bows himself very low before the one who seems to be the chief among them; he asks no questions, but presses upon them the hospitalities of his tent. They accept them as freely as they are offered. They seat themselves beneath the tree; and while water is brought to refresh their travel-stained feet, the patriarch hastens to tell

\* Davison, *Discourses on Prophecy*, p. 498.

his wife to bake bread upon the hearth ; then he speeds to the herd, and singles forth the fatted calf. With his own hand he prepares the feast—with his own hand he sets it before them ; and, as becomes his place, he stands by them under the tree, ready to minister to their wants, while they do eat his butter, his milk, his bread, and his meat.

How beautiful this hospitality—how grandly courteous this demeanor ! It strikes us the more strongly from the difference of our own usages. A man of the existing pastoral tribes, or even of the rural districts of the East, would simply see the truthfulness of the picture, and would recognize usages in all respects similar to his own.

In every Arabian encampment, the sheikh or chief regards it as at once his privilege and his duty to entertain strangers. All who come are freely received, usually in a tent set apart for the purpose. Luxuries are never indulged in except on some festivals, or on the arrival of a stranger ; and it is only on such occasions that animal food is ever eaten, even by the possessors of numerous flocks and herds. Nor is it every stranger that is treated with animal food. For a common guest bread is baked, and served up with the *ayesh* (or flour made up with sour milk and boiled), which forms the standing daily fare of the people. If the guest be of some consideration, coffee is prepared for him, and *behatta* (or bread with melted butter). It is only for a person of some apparent rank that a kid or a lamb is killed. When this occurs, the lamb is boiled with *burgoul* (a sort of malted corn) and milk, and served up in a large wooden dish, around the edge of which the meat is placed. As there is no means of obtaining a joint of meat but by slaughtering an animal, the whole of which must be consumed, the people of the camp get what the strangers do not eat, and, therefore, fare the better for such visits. We thus see how it is always in Scripture, that the lamb, the kid, or fatted calf, is killed for the entertainment of strangers—or on any occasion of high rejoicing.

It should be remarked that no questions are asked ; but after the stranger has dwelt in the tent three days and four

hours, he is expected to state his name, his tribe, and his business; and if his stay appears likely to be prolonged, he is reasonably expected to take part in the duties of the camp. It was thus that Jacob in the first month of his stay with Laban, which he certainly did not mean to be of such long duration as it proved, was enabled to evince the importance and value of his services in all the duties of those who have flocks and herds. Gen. xxix. 14, 15.

As to the washing of the feet of the travellers, we know not that this custom exists in the desert, where water is scarce and precious—nor, perhaps, did it exist there even in patriarchal times. But it is still found where water is plentiful. In India it is considered a necessary part of hospitality to wash the feet and ankles of the weary traveller, and this service is usually performed by servants. Even in Palestine this interesting custom is not extinct. Thus, when Dr. Robinson and his party arrived at Ramleh, they repaired to the abode of a wealthy Arab, whose second son, in the absence of his father, did the honors of the place. Soon after they had arrived, “Our youthful host proposed, in the genuine style of ancient oriental hospitality, that a servant should wash our feet. This took me by surprise, as I was not aware that the custom still existed here. Nor does it indeed towards foreigners, though quite common among the natives. We gladly accepted the proposal, both for the refreshment and the scriptural illustration. A female Arabian slave accordingly brought water, which she poured upon our feet over a large shallow basin of tinned copper; kneeling before us, and rubbing our feet with her hands, and wiping them with a napkin. It was among the gratifying minor incidents of our whole journey.” It seems to us that the *comparative* decay of the custom arises from the fact that travellers now seldom journey on foot, but ride on horses or camels. Where foot travelling is still usual, so is the washing of feet.

Nothing that has been used at one meal is kept for another in the East, but no more is prepared than the meal or the day requires. The climate would not indeed allow this. Hence,

although larger quantities are prepared for a family of consideration than the family can consume, the remains are forthwith eaten up in the household or camp, or given to the needy. Thus it is that there is always new preparation, even to the baking of bread, when a friend or stranger arrives; and hence the coming of a stranger, considerable enough to have slaughtered for him an animal, especially if a sheep or camel (for Arabs have no oxen), is a most acceptable matter to the camp, however burdensome to the sheikh. But the sheikh himself is glad to show his hospitality on any proper occasion. A reputation for hospitality is scarcely inferior to that of military prowess in the East. It gives influence and distinction; and Arabian chiefs have on this account been known to perform such acts of prodigal hospitality as excite our astonishment. Such facts evince the diffusion of this quality among a people; for very few will care thus to waste their own substance, unless they know that there are others who will do the same. Yet this hospitality is scarcely reckoned as a virtue in the East, so much as the want of it is regarded as a vice, if not a crime.

The reader is probably a little astonished to see the great and wealthy Abraham so forward in doing himself what so many of his slaves might as well have done, and that with her own hands Sarah bakes the cakes upon the hearth. But so it is now. A Bedouin sheikh, who may be the master of five hundred horses, does not disdain to saddle and bridle his own, or to give him his feed of barley and chopped straw. In his tent the wife makes the coffee, bakes the bread, and superintends the dressing of the victuals; while his daughters and kinswomen wash the clothes, spin and weave the wool, and go with pitchers on their heads, and veils on their faces, to draw water from the fountain.

We are apt to ascribe much of the peculiar respectfulness of Abraham, to his perception of the high quality of his guests. But there is no sign that he did perceive it, until it was made known by themselves; and all the marks of obedience and respect are such as are still common in the East.

Even the deference shown by him in *standing* by while his guests partook of his food, without presuming to take part with them, has been more than once witnessed by ourselves in eastern lands. We have noticed instances in which, when the host was a man of rank and consequence, he has brought in, with his own hands, some principal dish, and remained standing, or in attendance, during the whole meal, directing the operations of the servants in removing and in laying on. It is rude to take notice of this, or to press him to share the meal, because, although he may comply, it lays him under a kind of necessity of committing what he feels to be an indecorum. No one can, however, take him for a servant; the deference of the real servants to him—the authority with which he directs their proceedings—the manner in which the guests receive his attentions—and the tone in which they speak to him, clearly enough indicate who he is. Although painful to the feelings of Europeans, when it first comes under their notice, it is a beautiful and significant act of humility and deference, most gracefully becoming in an Oriental. With ourselves, in so different a mould are our habits cast, it would be difficult to prevent a similar usage from becoming ridiculous, although we apprehend that something analogous might be produced from among our old customs.

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## EIGHTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

LOT IN SODOM—INTERCESSION.—GENESIS XVII. XVIII.

THE strangers whom Abraham entertained, became known to him before they went on their way. He whom the patriarch had instinctively recognized as their chief, soon disclosed himself as the Lord himself, and is, indeed, distinctly named in the sequel as JEHOVAH, and the others are in the event seen to be angels. This disclosure was made by the manner in which the Lord began to speak to Abraham about his promised son; and it is now first that he learns with cer-

tainty, that this child of promise is not to be Ishmael, but the son of Sarah; and further, that this child should be born very soon. Sarah, who overheard this declaration as she stood within the tent, laughed in her heart, as at a thing impossible to credit. But the Lord heard that silent doubt, and taxed her with it; ending with the unanswerable question—"Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Abraham, on a like occasion, had himself laughed, and was not rebuked. But the difference of feeling in this matter between him and his wife, is shown by the circumstance, that he forthwith prostrated himself before the Lord; whereas Sarah, when charged with her laughter, denies that she had laughed at all. The circumstance affords the reason for the name of Isaac, which was given to the son; for the meaning of that name is *laughter*.

The custom of the East required Abraham to escort his guests a little on their way; and as he proceeds, the Lord makes known to him, that a dreadful visitation impends over Sodom and the other cities of the plain, for their awful iniquities. Abraham avails himself of this previous intimation to plead for these cities. If there had been but the very few righteous persons that he supposed might he found in Sodom, the place would have been spared, at his desire, for their sake; and it had been well for them that they had such an intercessor—how well, then, for us who have *always* an intercessor at God's right hand on our behalf! We have heard much about the efficacy of prayer, and many pious minds have been exercised as to the degree in which they may venture to pray in respect of temporal things. But there can be no question with respect to intercession. If any one doubts on that subject, we know no better solution than is to be found in this intercession of Abraham. In the tenderness of his heart, and in his firm conviction that God does not willingly stretch forth his right arm in wrath over a guilty world, he ventures to come with boldness before the throne of grace. Let us take the intended lesson from his example; and come, as we are invited, with boldness before God in prayer, that

we may obtain mercy for ourselves and others, and find grace to help in time of need.

Abraham at first thought it probable there might be sixty righteous men in Sodom, and he prayed that the place might be spared for their sake. This the Lord freely granted. The patriarch then had a misgiving, that there might not be so many, and he ventured, with great humility, to make successive intercessions for the reduction of the number, until at last he thought he had ensured the safety of the place, when the Lord had graciously promised to spare the town, if but *ten* righteous men were to be found therein. How little do the men of this world know the extent of even their worldly obligations to the righteous? How often has not the Lord spared great cities from plagues, pestilences, famines—from earthquake, fire, and sword, for the sake of the little sanctuary he has therein, among those to whom his Name is dear? They may be passed unregarded by, in the market and in the street; but they are the salt, they are the leaven, that keeps the mass from corruption. They are His own now, and they shall shine forth more eminently His, in the day when he maketh up his jewels; and it is for them that a blessing rests upon the place where iniquity abounds; and it is for their sake that the curse and the ruin are averted from it. In the belief that the duty and privilege of intercession is too much neglected among Christians, we do earnestly recommend this case of Abraham's intercession for Sodom to the consideration of the reader. It shows that the Lord is very pitiful and of great mercy; and it demonstrates that intercession has power with him, and can prevail.

Abraham could not have been unmindful of Lot, who was in Sodom. The more the reader thinks of Lot, the more difficult his case seems to us. From all that appears in the history, there was nothing very lovely in his character; for even his being eventually saved, was more for Abraham's sake than for his own. He appears, from his history, to present to our view a very weak and selfish character. On the return from Egypt, he seems to have taken part with his



herdsmen in their quarrels with those of Abraham; and when at length the latter proposes a separation, for the sake of peace, and leaves him the choice of situation, he has not the grace to decline the generous offer of his elder and uncle; but takes it eagerly, and adopts for his home the fat pastures of Sodom, although he well knows that the men in that quarter were the most wicked in the land. At first he did not intend, however, to mix with the citizens, but to live in his tent. But it is dangerous to palter with duty, or to venture too near the strongholds of sin. Even as the moth careers merrily and thoughtlessly around the flame, and at last is overcome by the fascination, and plunges therein to his ruin—so Lot, ere long, has left his tent, and has got a house in Sodom. There he forms family ties; there his daughters marry, and he gradually gets more and more entangled. So strong is that entanglement, that even his capture, and rescue by Abraham, do not suffice to break the chains which the world has cast around him. He goes back to Sodom, and tarries there; and it would appear, that this was under circumstances which inflicted much pain upon Abraham, and probably offended him greatly. It is else difficult to see how, in looking to the possibility of dying childless, he refused to regard Lot as his heir.

One of Lot's measures, or suggestions, when the angels who went to destroy Sodom were with him, seems to show that although still a good man, his moral sense had been somewhat weakened by daily intercourse with the ungodly people with whom he had fixed his home; and his reluctance to leave Sodom, and the enormities into which his too easy nature was led, after his escape to the mountains, are facts of the same purport—and speak with trumpet-tongue of the danger of this intercourse with sinners. No good can ever come from such intercourse—in his day or in ours; and let none of us, as he perhaps did, rely too much on his own strength, for who can daily touch pitch without being defiled? If Lot had been altogether right-minded, not the finest pastures of the world, not all the conveniences and apparent

advantages for the settlement of his daughters, which a residence in the town presented, would have induced him to go or to stay there. Rather would he have fled the place—rather would he have plunged at once into the desert. There was nothing to prevent him; for he was not, like his uncle, under any command to remain in the land of Canaan.

For all that appears in the history, we might have strong fears for this man's state. But St. Peter calls him a just man, and says, that while in Sodom "he vexed his righteous soul, from day to day, with the filthy conversation of the wicked." This relieves us, by showing that his character was still *substantially* true. But it does not altogether clear him from these imputations. It shows that he had good feelings and perceptions; but was a feeble-spirited man, lacking the strength to act on his own convictions. He was content to mourn over the guilt he saw; and would rather passively sit down amid the certainties of danger, and the probabilities of judgment, than rouse himself to one great and energetic effort to be free, and, at whatever sacrifice, depart from the abominable and tainted place.

Let us profit from the example, which is less different than it may seem from the experience of many of us. Still there are Sodoms—and still there are Lots who think that, with a religious profession, they may live in the world, and pursue its profits and its pleasures without danger. Let them beware. They are in great peril. If we be indeed God's people, let us come out of the world, and touch not the unclean thing—remembering that the church of God is not mixed up in the world, and to be left undistinguishable from it; but is indeed—

"A people walled around,  
Chosen, and made peculiar ground;  
A little spot enclosed by grace  
Out of the world's wide wilderness."

## EIGHTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

THE PILLAR OF SALT.—GENESIS XIX. 26.

ONE of the most remarkable incidents in the history of the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, is, that the wife of Lot, looking and probably lingering behind, “became a pillar of salt.”

The explanation of this now usually current is that of Bishop Patrick. The reader has, no doubt, seen it in many varied forms of phraseology, and we may therefore present it in the words of the author. The Bishop thinks, then, “that some of that storm which overwhelmed her country, overtook her; and falling upon her, as she stood staring about, and minded not her way or guide, suddenly wrapped her body in a sheet of nitro-sulphurous matter; which, congealing into a crust as hard as stone, made her appear, they say, as a pillar of salt, her body being, as it were, candied in it.” This explanation is, however, older than Patrick, though he may be regarded as having made it current in this country; for this view of the subject had been before entertained by many Jewish and Christian writers.

We have no explanation to offer that seems to us better suited to meet the recorded circumstances. From the nature of the case, and from the peculiarly bituminous and saline character of the locality through which this phenomenon was produced, we must not expect to discover many parallel instances which might be quoted in illustration. Accordingly, we find that the illustrative parallels which have been diligently sought out by old commentators, have rarely any real bearing on the subject; being, for the most part, accounts of persons frozen to death, and long preserved in that condition uncorrupted, in the boreal regions; or else of persons first suffocated, and then petrified by the mineral vapors of the cave in which they were hid; or otherwise, of persons “turned to stone,” and found, generations after, standing in the

postures wherein they met their death. The only instance that we have met with that seems appropriate, and to rest on the authority of a contemporary of fair credit, is related by Aventinus, who states that, in his time, about fifty country people, with their cows and calves, were, in Carinthia, destroyed by strong and suffocating saline exhalations which arose out of the earth, immediately upon the earthquake of 1348. They were by this reduced to saline statues or pillars, like Lot's wife, and the historian tells us, that they had been seen by himself and the chancellor of Austria.\*

It is to be noticed, that the word translated a "pillar" does not express any particular form, but denotes any fixed standing object. The probability seems to be, however, that by the rapid cooling of the nitro-sulphureous crust which enveloped the woman, she became fixed in a standing position, which might become a nucleus for more of the same materials, leaving an object of considerable bulk, widest at the base, but probably of no considerable height.

It would scarcely seem that such a saline body was likely to be of long duration, in a very humid climate, subject in winter to heavy rains, and the action of water-courses. If God designed that it should be preserved as a monument of the transaction, there is no difficulty in supposing that it was so. But this does not appear to have been the case. There is no allusion to any such monument, as still subsisting, in the whole Scripture; and the usual formula "unto this day," by which the sacred writers, in the history of great transactions, usually indicate the continuance to their own time of ancient monuments, is in this instance omitted. Besides, the whole appearance of the district, and of the lake which now covers the vale of Siddim, is, to this day, a most grand and standing monument of the whole of that dreadful judgment of which the death of Lot's wife was one incident; and of the woman herself the record in the book of Genesis is itself the most striking and ineffaceable memorial.

Nevertheless, when men acquainted with this history found

in the neighborhood something like a pillar, or some erect figure, composed of salt, they immediately concluded that they had found the pillar into which Lot's wife was turned. Some necessity was felt to account for its preservation for so many ages; and while, on the one hand, it was alleged that it was preserved by the miraculous reproduction of the wasted parts; on the other, it has been held sufficient to suppose, that all waste was naturally repaired by the deposits of the dense exhalations with which the air was impregnated.

The first notice of its existence—supposed existence—is in the apocryphal Book of Wisdom, written in the first or second century before Christ. Speaking of the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, the writer says: "Of whose wickedness even to this day the waste land that smoketh is a testimony, and plants bearing fruit that never come to ripeness: *and a standing pillar of salt is a monument of an unbelieving soul.*" Wisd. x. 7. This shows clearly enough the opinion prevailing among the Jews in the time of the writer of the Book of Wisdom.

Josephus declares that it was standing in his time, and that he had seen it with his own eyes. This is conclusive that he had seen a pillar of salt by the Dead Sea, and that he believed it to be the one into which Lot's wife was changed; but we have no evidence which can satisfy us that his impression was correct. Any actual transmitted *knowledge* of such a monument, must have been broken during the sojourn in Egypt, for some generations; and ever afterwards, and indeed always, the monument, if it still existed, lay in a quarter away from all travelled routes, and but rarely visited by Jews, even when Palestine was fully peopled. Clement of Rome, a Christian contemporary of Josephus, also states in one of his epistles, that the pillar of Lot's wife was still in existence; and Irenæus, in the next century, repeats the statement, with the addition of an hypothesis as to how it came to last so long with all its parts entire.

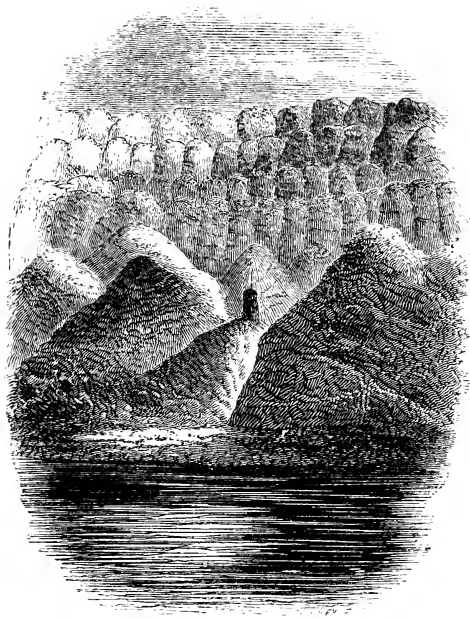
The statement of Jewish rabbis and Christian fathers is to the same effect; but as they merely repeat these earlier

statements, little is really added to the weight of testimony. At length travellers began to inquire after this remarkable monument. The success of their inquiries may enlighten us as to the source and origin of the earlier accounts; and may well suggest that the natives of the region and neighboring shepherds have in all instances imposed upon the credulity of travellers, by following their usual practice of answering leading questions in accordance with the assumed wish of the inquirer, and even by pointing out any object that could be made to pass for what the traveller sought. We have been at some pains to make, for our own satisfaction, a collection of instances; and we find that hardly any two of them agree as to the locality in which the mysterious pillar was shown to them, or in which they were assured that it existed. Some find it on the east side of the lake, others on the west side; some near the northern extremity, others at the southern; some find it upon a rock, or cliff, or slope; others upon the beach, or in the water, or under the water. In proportion as inquiry has become more exact, our accounts of this pillar have been fewer, and most of the best travellers who have been in this quarter for the last two hundred years, have left the subject altogether unnoticed.

The researches of the recent American expedition to the Dead Sea have thrown new and interesting light upon the subject. The course of their survey could hardly fail to bring under notice every marked object upon either shore; and one they did find, an obviously natural formation, which—or others in former times like which—might readily be taken by persons unaccustomed to weigh circumstances with the precision we are now accustomed to exact, for the pillar of Lot's wife.

Among the salt mountains of Usdum,\* on the *west* side of the kind of bay which forms the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, the party beheld, while boating along the shore, to their great astonishment, a lofty round pillar, standing apparently detached from the general mass, at the head of a

\* An apparent transposition of Sodom.



EIGHTH WEEK, 5th DAY





deep, narrow, and abrupt chasm. They landed, and proceeded towards this object over a beach of soft, slimy mud, encrusted with salt; and at a short distance from the water, covered with saline fragments and flakes of bitumen, the pillar was found to be of solid salt, capped with carbonate of lime, *cylindrical in front, and pyramidal behind*. The upper or rounded part is about forty feet high, resting upon a kind of oval pedestal or mound, from forty to sixty feet above the level of the sea. It slightly decreases in size upwards, crumbles at the top, and is one entire mass of crystallization. It is not isolated, though it appears so in front. A prop or buttress connects it with the mountain behind, and the whole is covered with debris of a light stone color. It is added by the narrator of the expedition, that "its peculiar shape is, doubtless, owing to the action of the winter rains."

It had previously been heard from the Arabs that such a pillar was to be found somewhere upon the shores of the sea; but their reports in all other matters had proved so unsatisfactory, that little attention had been paid to them in this instance. Lieut. Lynch, the officer who was in command of the expedition, and who has written the account of its discoveries, does not suppose he has here found the pillar of Lot's wife, nor does it appear that even the Arabs had stated it to be such; but it is very properly pointed out that it was probably a pillar of this sort, produced by the action of water upon one of the masses of rock salt, which abound towards the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, that the ancient writers had in view, and which they supposed to be that into which Lot's wife was turned. We now see the natural process by which such pillars are formed. It seems to us that the pillar of Lot's wife must have been on the opposite side of the lake, for the fugitives were proceeding to Zoar, which lay in that direction. And it does not escape our notice, that the unhappy woman appears to have been overtaken by her death in the plain, whereas this pillar stands upon a hill from forty to sixty feet above the beach, with loftier mountains immediately behind. The pillar itself also

is forty feet high, which we should suppose to be considerably taller than either Lot or his wife. Yet all these circumstances would in ages of less exact observation have had no weight, and this very pillar would assuredly have been pronounced as being beyond all doubt or question, "the monument of an unbelieving soul."

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### EIGHTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

#### DEAD SEA DIFFICULTIES.—GENESIS XIX.

It is probably the general impression among the readers of Scripture, that the vale, or enclosed plain, now covered by the waters of the Dead Sea, was formerly dry land, and formed, as a whole, the fertile vale, "well watered everywhere," which Lot sought for its exuberant pastures. On looking more closely, however, a difficulty is seen in this which may at the first view elude our notice. It is clear that the Jordan must always have come into this vale as it does at present; and the general impression doubtless is that it was then traversed by that stream, which contributed greatly to its beauty and productiveness; besides which there are other lesser streams—lesser, but still considerable, particularly in winter—which must then, as now, have entered the same basin, adding their waters to the Jordan.

This, altogether, forms a very large body of water, continually passing into the vale; and the question was, What became of it after having passed through this enclosed plain, before there was a lake to receive it? There appeared no satisfactory solution. It was seen that it could not have gone off westward, or south-westward, to the Mediterranean, on account of the height of the intervening district; and the same objection appeared to apply to its progress to the Red Sea. Some thought it might have been absorbed in irrigation; but the water would have been far more than sufficient to irrigate a greatly larger area than that of the

vale, had every inch of it been under cultivation; and that it was far from being wholly under cultivation is shown by the fact, that Lot repaired to this vale with his abundant flocks and herds for pasturage. It was then thought by some, that the river must have had a subterraneous outlet to the Mediterranean; and although this was objectionable as a purely gratuitous hypothesis, there appeared no other mode of surmounting this very serious difficulty.

So the question rested, until the researches of Burckhardt in this region, in the year 1816, brought to light the very important and interesting fact, that a broad valley, like the bed of a river, extends along the foot of the mountains of Seir, all the way from the Dead Sea to the eastern arm of the Red Sea, anciently known as the *Ælauritic Gulf*, and now as the Gulf of Akaba. We had thus at once provided for us a most satisfactory solution of the difficulty. What could seem more plain and evident than that, previously to the formation—in that day when the Lord overthrew Sodom—of the lake now called the Dead Sea, the river Jordan, enhanced by tributary streams, made its way down this valley to the Red Sea?

Having ourselves personally felt a deep interest in this question, and having so long rested in this as a most satisfactory and beautifully simple elucidation of a great geographical problem, it was with real disappointment, and with something not unlike grief, that at a later period we felt that this explanation must be given up, in the face of the serious difficulty which a more recent explorer brought against it. This was Dr. Robinson, of New York, who, in his "*Biblical Researches*," urged that the Jordan could never have flowed down the valley in question, seeing there is not a descent in that valley towards the Dead Sea, but an *ascent* from the lake to it; and that in fact the waters of this vale (called the Arabah), do, in the northern part, direct their course *towards* the Dead Sea, and not from it. This discovery, while it throws a great and apparently insurmountable obstacle in the way of the previous hypothesis, enabled Dr. Robinson to

dispose of the waters of the Jordan, by leading him to conclude that a lake, receiving the waters of the south as well as of the north, did always exist in the plain; but it was supposed that the waters were, before the destruction of Sodom, sweet and wholesome, and that the lake was of less extent than it afterwards became. In fact, it seems to be assumed, that the increase was formed by the submersion of that comparatively small portion (about one fifth of the whole), which now forms the southern extremity or bay of the lake, separated therefrom partly even now by a peninsula.

With this we were obliged to be content, though far from satisfied, as there still remained some considerable difficulties. It had always been felt, that the whole basin of the Dead Sea was but a small area for the dominion of the five kings; that thus they are driven into a mere corner of the space previously allowed them. All the five cities must have been in this contracted area. They were at least considerable cities for that age; and, when a country is still thinly peopled, we do not find towns so near one another. Within this space, their very gardens and orchards (which commonly extend to a considerable distance around even small towns in the East) must have touched each other, without a provision for arable fields. How, then, was there so much free pasture, that Lot removed into the plain with all his herds to enjoy it? Again, it is clear, that in Genesis xiii. 10, the plain to which Lot went is called "the plain of the Jordan," implying that the Jordan flowed through it; whereas, if a lake had been previously there, that lake lay between him and the Jordan, seeing that he must have been in the land at the southern extremity of it. Again, it is said that the land to which Lot went, this "plain of the Jordan," was "well watered everywhere before the Lord destroyed Sodom; like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar," or rather, "as far as unto Zoar" (the southernmost of the five cities). "Well watered," indicates a river, not a lake; so does the comparison to Egypt and its Nile; and how could the whole district, from north to south,

be like the garden of the Lord, if three fourths of the whole surface were covered by the waters of a lake ?

In view of these difficulties in the new theory, we longed to see our way back to the perfect satisfaction and comfort of the anterior hypothesis. And we rejoice to say, that this seems to have been found, or, at least, indicated by the late American Expedition to the Dead Sea. The narrator of the expedition (which explored this lake, as well as the Jordan, in all its parts) considers the inference from the Scripture account to be, that this entire chasm was a plain, *sunk* and "*overwhelmed*" by the wrath of God ; and this he considers to be sustained by the extraordinary character of the soundings obtained. From these it was seen, that the bottom of the lake consisted of *two* submerged plains, an elevated and a depressed one. The former, which is merely the southern bay, is at an average of thirteen feet below the water. The other, or northern part, forming the great body of the lake, lies fully thirteen hundred feet below the surface. Through this largest and deepest portion, *in a line corresponding with the bed of the Jordan*, runs a ravine, which again seems to correspond with the Wady-el-Jeib, or ravine within a ravine, at the south end of the Dead Sea. The obvious inference from this is, that the channel of the Jordan through this plain, with the plain itself through which it flowed, *sank down*—leaving the ancient bed of the river through the middle still distinguishable. Thus, of course, would be formed a deep basin to receive and retain, with a sufficient expansion for their passing away by evaporation, the waters which formerly passed onward through the plain. This depression seems to have been not wholly confined to the present bed of the Dead Sea, which was thus but an expanded part of the valley of the Jordan, but to have extended its influence certainly to the higher, or northern, and probably to the lower, or southern, portion of the Jordan's bed. The narrator says :—"Between the Jabbok\* and this sea, we unex

\* The Jabbok enters the Jordan about twelve miles above the Dead Sea.

pectedly found a sudden break-down in the bed of the Jordan. If there be a similar break-down in the water-courses to the *south* of the sea, accompanied with the like volcanic characters, there can scarcely be a doubt that the whole Ghor (or valley of the Jordan, including the Dead Sea), has sunk from some extraordinary convulsion; preceded probably by an eruption of fire, and a general conflagration of the bitumen which abounded in the plain."

Apart from all other considerations, it is, indeed, difficult to account for the most wonderful depression of the bed of the Dead Sea, to the depth now ascertained, without a convulsion thus extensive and terrible, and all the signs of which are still exhibited on the spot. As it satisfactorily answers all the objections which we have indicated, it best agrees with the Scriptural statement; and here, therefore, also, as in all other cases, the more precise and certain our discoveries become, the more they are found to be in unison with the Scriptural accounts.

Many collateral corroborations of this conclusion, are set forth by Lieut. Lynch in his book.\* Of these, there is but one we can here mention, which is, that the mountains around the sea are older than the sea itself; or, in other words, that their relative levels have not always been the same that they are now. A most important fact, quite obvious where it exists to such as know how to observe the appearances of nature.

The writer concludes his account with these important words:—"We entered upon the sea with conflicting opinions. One of the party was skeptical,† and another, I think, a professed unbeliever of the Mosaical account. After twenty-two days' close investigation, if I am not mistaken,

\* Narrative of the United States' Expedition to the river Jordan and the Dead Sea. 1849.

† So the Americans invariably spell "sceptical"—and the alteration is an improvement in the eyes of those who regard the analogy of language.

we were unanimous in the conviction of the truth of the Scriptural account of the destruction of the Cities of the Plain.”

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### EIGHTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

SARAH'S VEIL.—GENESIS XX. 16.

THE destruction of Sodom, the shock of which must have been felt even in the camp of Abraham, and the effects of which he went out to view from the hills the following morning, could not but make a deep impression upon the mind of the patriarch, who had hoped that his earnest intercession would have sufficed to arrest the overthrow. It was probably, however, not long before he learned that Lot had escaped; for when he heard that Zoar had been spared, he would naturally send one of his servants thither for intelligence. But as Zoar was on the other side of the scene of this fearful visitation, which, with the consternation created by the calamity, would probably for some days prevent intercourse, it is probable that Lot had left Zoar, and withdrawn to the mountains before Abraham's messenger could arrive; for it is clear that his alarm prevented him from making any stay in that place. This may explain what has seemed to many a difficulty—that even this calamity did not bring these near relatives together.

It was probably owing to the confusion into which the country was thrown by this awful judgment, that Abraham soon after removed his encampment to a more distant place than he had visited since his return from Egypt. This was in the territories of Gerar, over towards the Mediterranean. The people here were, even thus early, Philistines, and had a king named Abimelech. Here the very same thing took place, with respect to Sarah, as had happened in Egypt; and she was delivered from the danger by the same means. Indeed, there is much, in other respects, very similar in the state of things, and in the condition of regal power in this

country and in Egypt, at the time of Abraham's journey thither; and if the people who then ruled in Lower Egypt were, as there is reason to think, the intrusive dynasty of conquering strangers known to history as the Hyksos or Shepherd kings,\* there is abundant reason to infer, that the Philistines were, in their origin, a branch of the same race which had extended itself in this direction. We find in both a more orderly regal government than among the princes of Canaan. On entering both, Abraham is led to deny his wife, from fear of the regal power. In both, he communicates directly with the kings; both monarchs knew and feared, in a certain sense, the name of the Lord; both spoke the language of Abraham (which the native Egyptians did not, Gen. xlii. 43); both exercised the same rights over women, and both make use of them in the case of Sarah. The differences arise chiefly from the character of the men; and Abimelech is the more interesting character of the two. He indeed, like Pharaoh, loads Abraham with gifts of slaves, oxen, and sheep, in atonement for his unknowing injustice; but he does not send the patriarch away, but says with princely courtesy:—"Behold my land is before thee; dwell where it pleaseth thee."

His remonstrance with Abraham is also highly dignified and becoming; and the neat sarcasm, too complimentary to wound, with which he closes that remonstrance, is highly worthy of attention. In our Bible it is read thus—it is to Sarah he speaks:—"Behold, I have given thy *brother* a thousand pieces of silver; behold he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other."

\* In corroboration of this opinion, it may be pointed out, that there is a most marked difference between the Pharaoh of the time of Abraham, and him of the time of Joseph—in language, religion, and court usages. By that time also nomade shepherds had become an abomination to the Egyptians, on account of the memories of that race from whose tyrannies they had been lately delivered. In Joseph's time, all is Egyptian, implying that the native race of kings had then recovered its power, and expelled the intruder.



Thus, adds the sacred historian—"thus she was reproved." It must be confessed that this does not read very intelligibly. It is generally agreed, that the words rendered "a covering for the eyes," or "eye-covering," denotes a veil: and it appears to us, that Abimelech means to say, that having given this money, she may procure therewith a veil—such as, according to the custom of towns, may hide her fatal beauty; or such as may indicate her wifeness, that she may not again be taken for an unmarried woman. It is under this view that a learned German translator thus renders the text:—"Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand shekels of silver: with it buy thee a veil, and wear it before all that are with thee, and before all other, so that thou mayst be distinguished." The words undoubtedly denote an "eye-covering;" and we think it has not been clearly explained how this should come to denote a veil. It is, as it seems to us, because there is a kind of veil or head-wrapper used in the East, which does not cover the eyes, but leaves exposed so much of the face as lies between the forehead and the mouth, and it was not this kind of veil, but one which should cover the face wholly, and therefore, the eyes also—that Sarah was counselled to wear.

In further explanation, it is to be observed that, even at the present day, unmarried females among the pastoral tribes do not wear any kind of veil. The married women do *partially* veil the face by means of a kind of kerchief, passed around the head, with the ends drawn round the neck, and covering the lower part of the face below the mouth. In towns the face is wholly covered; and this custom is so far adopted among the tribes which lie near large towns, and have much intercourse with them, that the men compel their women to appear veiled before strangers. Now, if these usages anciently existed, as there is every reason to suppose, Sarah, when passing as Abraham's sister, must have gone unveiled, when seen at all. As a married woman, she would have worn the head-dress which covered part of the face; but now Abimelech counsels her, not only to do that—not

only to assume the veil proper to her order, but, while near the town, to shade her dangerous attractions altogether, even to the extent of covering her eyes with the kind of veils worn by the women of towns. Thus understood, the words of Abimelech afford a very fine example of a compliment, wrapped up in a good-humored reproof.

It has been urged against this interpretation, that the sum named is too large for the purpose. We do not, however, know the precise value of these pieces of silver. But the whole amount could not have been very considerable; and the higher class of veils are at this day very expensive. But granting that it were more than the occasion required, there is surely an obtuse literality in exacting, that the money should have so precise a relation to the object indicated by the king. How often do we see a sum of money presented, which is suggested in a gay or off-hand manner, to be for the purchase of a nosegay or a ribbon, although sufficient for a much more large and costly appropriation. In our own case this is regarded as a graceful under-valuation of the offering—and why not so in the case of Abimelech?

There is a wedding custom among the Bedouins, which strongly illustrates the distinction made by the veil between a married and unmarried woman. The custom has not come under our own cognizance, and it rests on the high authority of Burckhardt, who states, “that the bride is taken to her father’s tent by her young men, who there place her in the women’s apartment; and one of the bridegroom’s relatives immediately throws over her an abba or man’s cloak, completely enveloping her head, and exclaims, ‘None shall covet thee but such a one!’” This also brings to mind poor Ruth’s supplication to Boaz, that he would take her matrimonially under his protection:—“Spread thy skirt over thine hand-maid.”

It appears from all this, that the use of the veil as a covering for the face of women, had already come into use in towns, but was not employed any more than at present, among the pastoral tribes, nor does it appear to have been at

any time in *general* use as a covering for the face among the Hebrew women.

Mr. Fordyce, in his excellent *Observations on Genesis*, is clearly wrong in supposing, from the facts stated, that veils were *not* yet in use; but he rightly accounts for the origin of the practice:—"It appears to have been introduced in consequence of the want of regular government, or the mismanagement of the country. A man who had a beautiful wife or daughter, desired her to cover herself with a veil, lest she should be coveted and carried off by violence. The veil was thus a mark of beauty, or that the woman was in danger on account of her good looks. Hence women of more ordinary features were led to covet it, that they, too, might get credit for beauty; and so the veil became fashionable, all women used it, and use it to this day in these countries. It never was in general use in Europe, where polygamy did not exist, and the free and bolder spirit of the people rendered such proceedings dangerous on the part of the chiefs."



### Ninth Week—Sunday.

"GOD OPENED HER EYES."—GENESIS XXI. 19.

WHEN Sarah at length gave birth to a son, the event doubtless diffused a general gladness through the camp of Abraham. Yet the joy was not universal. Hagar, the bond-woman, beheld with sorrow of heart the frustration of the hopes she had cherished respecting her son, as the future heir of Abraham. This feeling strengthened into jealousy and dislike, which she seems to have also imparted to Ishmael, who was about twelve years old at the birth of Isaac. Sarah, also, on her part, was, by the birth of a son of her own, freed from the considerations which had probably hitherto

restrained and regulated her conduct towards them; and from one so much older as Ishmael, and of a resolute and intractable character, she might reasonably apprehend some danger to the heritage, or even to the safety of her son, in case Abraham should depart from life during his nonage. These feelings on both sides came to an explosion on the occasion of a public festival, held three years after the birth of Isaac, to celebrate his weaning. The hostility and rancor of Hagar and her son were so undisguisedly manifested on that occasion, that Sarah cast off all restraint, and insisted with Abraham, that both mother and son should be forthwith sent away. But "the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight, because of his son." It is not said because of Hagar—for it will be remembered that he had given up all right of control over her to Sarah; but it might be questioned that she had the right to demand that his son should be expelled from the camp; and there seems a probability that, on this point, he would have resisted his wife's behest had he been left wholly to himself. But he was not left to himself. The word of God came to him, assuring him that this demand of Sarah, harsh as it seemed, was in conformity with the Divine purposes concerning his sons, and would be eventually best for both of them. It is, indeed, not difficult to see that much strife and danger must have arisen from the continued presence of Hagar and Ishmael in the camp. Once assured of the will of God, the patriarch no longer hesitated. He "rose up early in the morning," and after providing them with such refreshments as they were likely to need on the journey, he sent them away.

So they went forth, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. Hagar, in the blindness of her sorrow, seems to have lost her way; and the water which she had in a skin bottle, was spent long before she came to any well, or to the tents where hospitality would have been extended to her. The young Ishmael, unused to hardship and weariness, was the first to break down. He could go no further, and seemed likely to die in that hot wilderness of thirst. His

mother, who had hitherto sustained his fainting steps, at length laid him down under the shelter of a shrub, and withdrew a little way off, that the sight of her irrepressible grief might not disturb his last moments. "She sat down over against him, and lifted up her voice and wept." Did she cry to God? He had before met her in that very wilderness, and had spoken comfortably to her, and she might think that he would not forsake her now. There is not, it must be confessed, any sign that she remembered this—and too often in our extremest need, do we, like her, forget what most it behooves us to remember. But if she had forgotten God, He had not forgotten her. In that moment of her deepest despair, when she sat most forlorn of hope, a voice which she had reason to remember, called to her with paternal tenderness, "What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not." There was a gentle rebuke in this. Had she but faith in the promises made to her of old respecting the future destinies of her son, she might have known and felt that she had nothing to fear for him. She was then encouraged to rouse herself from this crippling despair, and bestow upon the lad the soothing attentions of her motherly love; and the promise that he should yet become "a great nation" was emphatically renewed.

At that moment, "GOD OPENED HER EYES; and she was a well of water." All care, all trouble was over now. She hastened to fill her skin-bottle, and brought drink to her son, to whom that refreshment soon imparted new life and strength.

To the piously thoughtful mind, there is much that suggests serious reflection in the closing incident. The well saw there all the time—its refreshing waters were all the time within her reach—but she saw them not until "the Lord opened her eyes." So with us, it is our blindness that is the cause of all our grief. And our blindness is proportioned to our unbelief. It has been most truly said, that

"Unbelief is blind;"

but it is more than blind, it is blindness. What avails it to

the blind man who is hungry, that food is close before him? he sees it not. What profit to him, when worn with long travel, that there is a resting place by the way-side at his right hand? he sees it not; and being unseen, it is the same to him as if it were a thousand miles off. What boots it to him, that when dangers surround him, and he fears to set one foot before another in dread of stumbling upon "the dark mountains," a guide who never misleads is walking before him; and that a strong arm that will not suffer a hair of the head to perish, is stretched out over him, to watch him from all peril? Alas! he is blind. All these things are as if they were not, to him. He is athirst and hungry—not because there is not abundance of meat and drink, but because he sees not his Father's storehouses and barns; because he considers not that his Father's cattle are upon a thousand hills; and because his world-shaded eyes behold not the fountains of living waters which spring up throughout his Father's land, to quench all thirst, and to refresh all weariness.

He feels ready to perish because of the long and weary way—not because there is not rest, but because he sees not the beckoning hand, because he hears not the hailing voice—"Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you REST!"—not because there is no safe path among the sands, but because the guide is not seen, and the voice is unheard that cries, "*This* is the way; walk ye in it!" He lives in terror of soul for the dangers around him—not because there is no safety, no deliverer, no tower of hope, but because these things are hidden from weak and unbelieving eyes. The fortress of our strength is to such eyes invisible: although it rises gloriously upon the hills, strong in bulwarks, and beautiful with banners. But men pass trembling on, not seeing the glorious citadel. They are blind, and they are also deaf; for they hear not the strong but silvery voice that rings clearly through all the valleys, "Turn to the stronghold, all ye prisoners of hope."

May God open our eyes, and keep them open. Ah! what sights should we behold; what assurance against all

the trial, and doubt, and fear that sadden life, should we possess, were our eyes anointed with spiritual eye-salve, that we might see. Should we not, with Hagar, behold wells of refreshing water in the wilderness? Should we not, with Jacob, see the angels of God ascending and descending on errands of mercy to mankind? Should we not, like the servant of Elisha, behold the hosts of heaven engaged for our defence? Should we not, if we could look up steadfastly to heaven like Stephen, see the glory of God, and Jesus standing at his right hand? And were our eyes thoroughly opened, as faith can open them, might we not view, as distinctly as did the disciples, that Jesus loved "that great city, the holy Jerusalem," in which not only the "abominable," but "the *fearful* and the *unbelieving*" can have no part.

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### NINTH WEEK—MONDAY.

THE GROVE.—GENESIS XXI. 33.

IN the history of Abraham's descendants, the use of groves is continually represented as objectionable and idolatrous; and on entering the land of Canaan, they are particularly enjoined to cut down the groves of the inhabitants, or to burn them with fire. It is named among the most serious offences of the kings of Israel, and some of those of Judah, that they planted groves, or did not cut down the groves;\* and those kings by whom groves were destroyed, are greatly applauded. †

Yet we see Abraham planting a grove at Beersheba, where his camp had for some time been established, and which became afterwards one of the chief stations of his tribe. What can be more natural, it may be asked, than that a man should

\* See Exod. xxxiv. 13. Deut. xii. 13. Kings xiv. 15.

† 2 Kings xviii. 4; xxiii. 14. 2 Chron. xiv. 3; xvii. 6; xix. 3; xxxi. 1; xxxiv. 3.

plant a grove for shade and refreshment near his camp. Yet it is not so. Planting trees is among the very last objects that a pastoral chief would think of, had he no farther views. And, indeed, it is expressly stated, that he *had* a religious object. "Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there upon the name of the Lord, the everlasting God." How, then, did that, which was harmless or laudable in Abraham, become a crime to his descendants? The answer is not difficult to find.

We must regard Abraham, not as an isolated individual, but as the chief and master of many hundred persons, who worshipped God with him by sacrifice and prayer. They must have met together for these acts of worship, which the patriarch doubtless himself conducted. One tent could not have contained them all; but a grove of trees would afford all the shade and shelter required. Hence, when men had no fixed abodes, or afterwards, when they had not yet learned how to construct edifices large enough for many to join them in an act of worship, groves of trees became their temples—the first temples of mankind. It was also, it would seem, regarded as becomingly reverent, that the altar appropriated to sacrificial worship, should not stand out among the common objects of the way-side, but should be decently veiled from careless notice by a screen of trees.

This seems obvious and natural, and is alone sufficient to account for the use of groves in worship. But as things rapidly tended to corruption in those early ages, the worship in groves became idolatrous, and ideas came to be connected with them which were in the eyes of God abominable. It was then as with the brazen serpent, which in the first instance was preserved as a monument of a memorable transaction, but which, when it began to be looked to by the people with idolatrous eyes, was very properly destroyed by the good king Hezekiah. 2 Kings xviii. 4.

So, the worship in groves was no harm in itself. It was even usefully solemnizing; and it appears to have involved a recollection of Eden, to which, as simply understood, it would



be difficult to ascribe any other than a salutary and useful influence. But when gross idols arose around, and the groves were considered proper to their worship, it behooved God to make a distinction between his worship and theirs; and to show that he had no fellowship with the powers of darkness. Therefore groves were forbidden to be planted near his sanctuary or altar, and those which had been polluted by idol worship were to be destroyed. Let it also be recollected that it was in the highest degree important to check, among the Israelites, the universal tendency to multiply gods, and to localize them—which would have unfitted them for that testimony to the Divine unity which it was their special calling to bear, and for which they had been set apart among the nations. It was, therefore, strictly enjoined that there should be in their land but one altar, and one place of ritual service. Had groves and altars been allowed to be set up in every place that men thought proper, it is not difficult to see that a separate and distinct god would soon be assigned to every shrine; and the great doctrine, to uphold which Israel was made a nation, would in no long time have been utterly lost, so far as their agency in its conservation was concerned. Nothing but a stringent and absolute interdiction could have met the danger. Looking at the subject in this view, we find ample reasons, not only for the prohibition of groves near the altar of God, but for their general suppression throughout the land. With regard to the former interdiction, it may be added, that the existence of a grove near the sanctuary might not only have seemed to assimilate the Lord with the idols of neighboring lands, but may have tended to bring down his worship to a level with theirs. Nothing is more notorious than the shameful orgies that were celebrated in these sacred groves; and it might well be feared that the presence of a grove would soon bring around the sanctuary a crowd of idle devotees, coming, not to worship, but to enjoy themselves, and where the leafy screen and the cool and pleasant shade would soon allure to all kinds of licentious freedom. The many allusions to the subject in Scripture,

show how general and how ancient was this addiction to worship in groves; and the difficulty with which the Israelites were kept from it appears throughout the sacred history. Indeed, so common was the practice, that the geographer Strabo, who lived in the century before Christ, states that in his time "all sacred places, even where no trees were to be seen, were called groves."

That this practice probably originated in the traditions of the garden of Eden, and of the trees of life and of knowledge, we have had a former occasion of indicating,\* and some remarkable corroborations of this were then pointed out. From the nature of the case, the analogies of this kind are to be sought in the actual practices of the heathen, and not in the short allusions, mostly prohibitive, of Scripture. There is, indeed, one text which has been thought to bear strongly on this view. It is in Isaiah lxvi. 17. "They that sanctify themselves and purify themselves in the gardens, behind one *tree* in the midst." But the text will not bear this stress. The very word ("tree") which is most important to this view, is not in the original, but is supplied; and the "one in the midst" does not appear to be a *tree*, but a *person*, behind whom the other worshippers in the grove arranged themselves, and whose worship he conducted. It is still the usual practice of worship in the East for a person to set himself in advance of the others, as a sort of fugleman, whose acts and motions are imitated by the others. In this, as in many other cases, support for particular views has often been sought in texts, which are seen to have a wholly different meaning when they come to be rightly understood.

It claims to be noticed that, although Beersheba is the only one of Abraham's stations in Canaan where he is said to have planted a grove, yet there is evidence that there were trees at two of the three other stations which he frequented in that land. His first station on entering the land was near Shechem, under or hard by some great and famous tree, or collection of trees; for the place called the *plain* of Moreh,

\* Second Week—Saturday.

means properly the terebinth tree (or grove) of Moreh; and there is evidence to show that this spot was regarded as a place peculiarly appropriate to the worship of God. To this source may, indeed, be traced the figure which Shechem makes in the sacerdotal history of the Old Testament—probably long after the original terebinth grove in the neighborhood had ceased to exist, and when any attention to the place as a grove would have been against the law.

Then, again, at Mamre, by Hebron, the presence of a grove is clearly indicated. In Genesis xiii. 18, it is said, "Abram removed his tent and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre." The word translated "the plain" is plural, and accordingly, in xviii. 1, we read, "the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre." The plural would be awkward if the word really meant *plains*; but it means *trees*—the same as at Moreh, that is terebinth trees—though some think oaks. In fact, immediately after, we read that the patriarch invited his guests to rest "under the tree"—that is, as we may conceive, the nearest, and probably the most conspicuous, near which his tent was pitched. In fact, the tree of Abraham at this place is historically famous; and on the spot there is still a most noble tree, locally regarded as representing that beneath which the angels were entertained by the patriarch.

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## NINTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

### HEROIC FAITH.—GENESIS XXII.

It is well remarked by an old writer, "that the labors or trials of Abraham's faith would afford a very fruitful subject for a philosophical and theological essay upon the nature and powers of heroic faith."\*

Of this "heroic faith," Abraham's unflinching obedience,

\* Parker, in his *Bibliotheca Biblica*, a valuable work, published anonymously, in 5 vols., 4to., in 1720.

when the Lord saw fit to subject it to a great and fierce trial, by exacting from him the sacrifice of the son of so many promises and hopes as Isaac, is a most signal example. The world's history presents nothing like it. The instances which have been sometimes cited as parallel, will not stand comparison with it. The Lord's own estimate of its importance and value is shown in the crowning recompense of his high approval and blessing—a blessing the most full, emphatic, and solemn ever pronounced by God upon man.

Isaac, the heir of the promises, has grown up to be a young man, probably not less than twenty years of age; and the father rests happy in his tents, blessed with the favor of God, and beholding in this his son the accomplishment of all his hopes. Suddenly the command comes: "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Every word was fit to rend his heart, and did doubtless rend it. And what did he say? Nothing. We may conceive much that he might have said—that *we* might have said in the like case. But Abraham *said* nothing: he *did* as he was commanded. He was not only obedient, but he was prompt and forethoughtful in his obedience. There might be no suitable materials for the intended sacrifice at the spot to which he was going, he therefore prepares everything before he sets out; even the wood to form the fire which is to consume his son, he prepares and takes with him. Abraham appears to be anxious that there shall be on his part no sign of reluctant, lingering delay. "Early in the morning" he rises, and saddles his ass for the journey; and with his son, and attended by two servants, speeds on his way.

Two days they journeyed, and on the third, Abraham lifted up his eyes, and beheld the place afar off. This place was "a mountain in the land of Moriah," and Moriah being, as we know, the name of one of the hills of Jerusalem, there can be little or no question that it was in or near the site of the future city; and seeing that so long a journey to this

particular spot was not likely to have been ordered without a special object, it is far from improbable that the spot which was indicated as the scene of this transaction was the very same on which, at a later day, a Father greater than Abraham offered up a Son more illustrious than Isaac.

Here the servants were bidden to wait; and the father and son went on: the son bearing on his strong shoulders the wood which was to consume him; and the father, having in one hand, the fire with which the wood was to be enkindled, and the knife with which the son he loved was to be slain. But where was the victim? Abraham knew, but Isaac did not, and naturally asked his father the question; and the answer was:—"My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." This would seem to intimate that he expected some such substitution as actually took place; and we do know, that so assured was he, that God would faithfully perform the promises to which the life of Isaac was essential, that, although he knew not how, he was satisfied that his son could not be eventually lost to him. As it cannot be doubted, that he was fully determined to carry out his obedience, even to the extent of sacrificing his son, he must, as the apostle intimates, have expected that God would even raise him from the dead, rather than that his promises should be of no effect. He was prepared to believe anything, rather than that God could be unfaithful to his plighted word.

They arrive at the spot; the altar is made; the wood is laid on; and Isaac is bound, and laid upon the altar. The father's hand is uplifted to fall upon the life of his son—but it fell not. The stroke is stayed by a quick and sudden word from heaven—"Abraham, Abraham! Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." With fingers tremblingly glad, did the father then unbind his son; and with what rejoicing spirits did not both father and son join in offering up the victim which the Lord *had* provided—a ram caught by the horns in a thicket hard by! Then came down

the great and rewarding words:—"BY MYSELF HAVE I SWORN, saith the Lord; for because thou hast done this thing, and has not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." Nor, perhaps, was this all his reward. It is supposed by many that it was on this occasion that Abraham saw the day of Christ, and was glad, John viii. 56,—his eyes being opened to behold the purposes of God in that great and solemn act of atoning sacrifice through his well-beloved Son, which this transaction might very well typify or represent. If indeed Abraham was thus instructed—as the words of our Lord permit us to suppose—there seems no other occasion in the whole history of the patriarch, on which it was so likely to be afforded. The obvious preparation for the disclosure, in his being directed to go to the very neighborhood where our Lord suffered, seems to point in this direction—while there are obvious reasons why the sacred historian may not have been authorized to make known the precise nature of the communication which made the heart of Abraham glad.

The prevalence of child-sacrifice in the ancient pagan world is known to the reader. It is, indeed, frequently indicated in Scripture—and it certainly existed in Canaan and the neighboring countries in the time of Moses. Lev. xx. 2-4. Hence arises the question, whether or not it existed before the time of Abraham. Some think that it did; and hence the demand did not strike him with the astonishment it would have done, had the offering-up of a son been previously unheard of. He would then also have felt that it became not him to withhold from the Lord the costly offering which the idolaters offered to their gods, in the earnestness of their zeal to yield up that which they valued most. But on the other hand, it is urged by some that all the sacrifices of this sort among the heathen had their origin in mistaken

inferences from this act of Abraham. It is difficult to decide this question—nor is it of much importance to do so. But even supposing that child-sacrifice did not previously exist, it is difficult to imagine that it could originate in the interrupted sacrifice of Isaac. A sacrifice so silently resolved upon, so unostentatiously prepared, and the execution of which was so solemnly and so strikingly prevented—was but little calculated to induce other nations, even neighboring nations, to imitate it and adopt it into their rites. It seems to have been far better calculated to discourage such sacrifices than to originate or encourage them.

Many parallels from ancient history and poetry to this remarkable transaction have been produced. The most striking is that of Agamemnon in offering, or rather in consenting to offer, his daughter Iphigenia at the demand of the oracle. But this transaction altogether lacks the simple virtue and “heroic faith” of Abraham’s behavior. Agamemnon was a “king of men,” and a mighty warrior; but in true heroic force of character, he is not to be named with Abraham. Agamemnon is quite unmanned by grief and distraction, whereas Abraham is perfectly composed and equable; he is not only fixed and resolved in his obedience, but is prompt and ready in all the needful preparations. Agamemnon, sorely against his will, complying with the demand of the oracle, hides his face with his mantle, that he may not see the last moments of his daughter; but Abraham, in obedience to the demand upon his faith and duty, waves with his own hand the weapon which is to take his child’s life away. Again, the Grecian king seems to have been moved to compliance by the fear of provoking or discouraging his subjects and soldiers, and, by that means, of incurring failure or disgrace in all the objects of glory, ambition, or revenge, involved in the war in which he was embarked. But Abraham had no country to win or lose, no objects of human ambition to fulfil. His one object was to obey God, regardless of men’s opinions. The only human opinion in which he had concern, was that of his own house, which would probably have con-

demned him, and made his entire life bitter, had the deed been consummated. Further, the sacrifice of Iphigenia was public—in the presence of a host of armed men—of generous-hearted soldiers, from whose compassion the father might have hoped a rescue when things came to the worst: for he must have often seen that other interests, views, and passions, are overruled and brought to naught by some sudden gush of human pity. But Abraham's proceedings were altogether private. Not even the servants were allowed to behold the deed, nor was even Isaac himself acquainted with it till he came to the very place where he was to die. Besides, Agamemnon probably had other children; Abraham essentially but this one. Agamemnon's wife was not barren, and probably not old; Abraham's was both. Neither this one, nor any other of the hero's children, were sent to him as earnest or pledges of extraordinary promises or blessings, much less of such high and glorious privileges as appeared to be bound up in the life of the son thus doomed to die. Thus the comparison fails at every point, except that of human tenderness, and not perhaps in that; for Abraham loved Isaac very dearly, and never did he love him more than in that moment when his hand was lifted up to smite him down.

Let it not, also, escape our notice, that Isaac himself was a willing victim. There can be no question, that in the last awful moments, Abraham communicated the truth to his son, and that he consented to yield obedience to the command of God, and the authority of his father. This is implied in the fact of his consenting to be bound; for he was grown to strength and manhood, and if he had but thought fit to struggle for his life, we cannot doubt that he might easily, without violence, have escaped from his father's hands and fled away. Much may be allowed for the absolute authority of a parent in those ages, even to life and death, over his own son; but still, to the young, life is very sweet; and but for the high sense of duty to God, which such a son was likely to acquire from such a father, Isaac would scarcely have been so passive in this transaction.



## NINTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

## THE SEPULCHRE.—GENESIS XXIV.

THE twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis is one of the shortest in the book; yet it is so full of circumstances illustrative of primitive customs and ideas, that every verse in it might form a sufficient theme for one of our daily illustrations. We must, however, be content to point out the general tendency and result of these institutions.

The chapter relates the death of Sarah, and the negotiations of Abraham with the people of the land for a burial place. Sarah died at the encampment at Mamre, near Hebron, at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven years. It is remarkable, that Sarah is the only woman whose complete age, death, and burial are mentioned in the Scripture. This was no doubt partly to confer special honor on the mother of the Hebrew race; but is also necessary, not only to form a proper introduction to the ensuing relation of the purchase of a hereditary burial place, but to inform us that it was vouchsafed to her to live thirty-seven years after having brought forth Isaac at the age of ninety, and to see him grown up to man's estate.

We first see Abraham mourning for his dead. He leaves his own tent and goes to that of Sarah, and sits upon the ground before the corpse, mourning, and not only mourning, but weeping for her. Some here interpose the remark, that the Hebrew mourning was for seven days, implying that Abraham sat for so many days before the corpse. This is absurd. However long the mourning, the burial of the dead has always taken place very soon in the East, seldom later than the day after dissolution. It was, therefore, with the freshness of his grief still upon him, that Abraham had to consider how his dead should be buried out of his sight. This is a question which is seldom in the East left to be considered in these awful moments. But Abraham was a

stranger in Canaan, and had not acquired possession so much as of a sepulchre in the land destined to be his heritage. This possession he had now, in this trying hour, to seek; for both propriety and feeling required that the wife of Abraham and the mother of Isaac, should not be placed in any but a separate and appropriated family sepulchre, well secured from future application to any other use.

There was in a field near Hebron a cave, which from its name of Machpelah appears to have been double, and on this Abraham had set his mind. It belonged to a person of wealth and distinction among the Hethites (or Hittites), who then occupied Hebron. The most obvious course would, according to our own usages, have been to go to this person and ask him to sell his cave. But our ability to do this with safety, arises from the perfection of the legal securities which may pass privately between man and man. In ancient times, no security was felt, especially in matters connected with the sale and transfer of land, but in publicity and the presence of witnesses. Hence, we see, throughout the Scripture, all transactions of this nature conducted in public, and usually in the gate of the city.

In the absence of buildings devoted to public business, and perhaps at first in the want of such paramount authority in any one magistrate or elder, as justified him in expecting the attendance of the others at his own house, the town-gate was the most natural and obvious place of concourse. Here a sufficiency of witnesses to every transaction could be obtained: here the men whose evidence was required, could attend with the least hindrance, as they passed morning and evening to and from their fields and their labor; and here, at such times, the parties whose presence was especially needed, could be called, as they passed by, without any need of an apparitor. We see an instance of this in the book of Ruth. Boaz goes to the gate, and when the person whom he requires, passes him, he calls to him—"Ho such a one! turn aside, sit down here." Ruth, iv. 1.

So, now, having this object in view, Abraham proceeds to

the gate of the town, at the time that he knew the elders of the place would be there assembled. He was received with attention and respect; and on stating his wish to obtain possession of a burying place, the answer was:—"Hear us, my Lord: thou art a mighty prince among us, in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead." They did not seem to understand that he wanted an appropriated sepulchre, and supposed they met his wishes by thus offering him permission to deposit the body of Sarah in any of their own tombs. But this, although a very handsome offer, according to the notions of the East, did not meet the views of Abraham. He, however, courteously acknowledged their civility, by rising from his seat and bowing to the people of the land.

He wanted the cave of Machpelah, and he saw the owner present; but being apparently doubtful that a person in such good circumstances would be willing wholly to alienate a part of his possessions, he does not propose the matter to him directly, but requests the elders that they will intercede with Ephron, that he may sell the cave to him for its full value in silver. Ephron who, if so inclined, could not decently refuse a request thus tendered, by such a man as Abraham, appears, nevertheless, in the eyes of those whom experience has taught to see through the outward shows of eastern character, to have been determined to make the best bargain he could, consistently with the necessity of preserving the appearance of liberality and deference. Abraham wanted only "the cave at the end of the field;" but Ephron, while professing three times in one sentence, to make the whole a free gift to Abraham, takes care to intimate, that he will be expected to take not only the cave, but the field in which it stood, probably in the feeling that the value of the field to him would be deteriorated by the presence in it of a sepulchre belonging to another. But Abraham understands this show of boundless generosity very well: and he could not but know that the acquisition would cost him dear, if he consented to accept it as a present, and lay himself under the obligation of meeting the future expectations of Ephron, as to a

suitable return of the favor. Besides, the proud independence of the man who refused to allow the king of Sodom the shadow of a ground for saying that he had made Abraham rich, would assuredly prevent him, in any case, from accepting a favor of this sort from any inhabitant of Canaan. He rose, and bowed himself once more, not to Ephron, "but to the people of the land." But his words were addressed to Ephron, and without objecting to the inclusion of the field in the bargain, he insisted on paying the full price for the whole property.

Nothing now remained but for Ephron to name the value, which he does with all the polite artifice of a modern Oriental; for his words virtually amount to this: "Why should friends and wealthy men like us, use many words about a piece of land worth only four hundred shekels of silver?\* Bury thy dead, and thou canst pay me this trifle hereafter." But having got him to name his price, Abraham at once paid down the money in the presence of the witnesses, Ephron's own countrymen; thus securing the purchase beyond all question.

In the record of this concluding part of the transaction, we are told that "Abraham *weighed* to Ephron . . . . four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant." In these few words several important facts meet our notice—that silver had become the standard of value and the medium of exchange; but not yet, perhaps, absolutely to the exclusion of other but less perfect mediums; for Abraham clearly states (as in the original) his intention to pay the full value *in silver*, as an advantage to the party of whom he makes the purchase. That which silver had thus already become, it remains throughout the Scripture—for gold was never in ancient times more than a costly commodity, not the standard of value; and, indeed, it is not such at this day in scarcely any country but our own. Other countries may have some small proportion of coins in gold, but the bulk of

\* About fifty pounds.

the currency is in silver, and silver only is the standard of value.

The next point that engages our notice is, that the silver was *weighed*. How does this consist with its being "current money with the merchant?" If it were current money, what need of its being weighed? That it was weighed at all, would suggest to most minds that it was not coined money—and various considerations would seem to show that it was not. Among these circumstances we do not, however, count the absence of any central authority—in Canaan, for instance—whose stamp should give authenticity to the coin; because if such a power existed anywhere, in Assyria or in Egypt, the coins of that power would doubtless circulate beyond the limits of its own territory, just as Spanish dollars are at this day current over nearly all the world. The probabilities are that the silver was cast into forms convenient for commercial interchanges, and these receiving some mark or stamp which showed that the metal was of the commercial standard of purity, became current money with the merchant—the quantity being still determined by weighing. It is even possible that the mere shape of these pieces of silver was taken to determine the purity of the metal; and that shape may have been in rings, which appears from the monuments to have been the earliest form of money among the ancient Egyptians.

But although it seems to us probable that money was not in this early age properly coined, the fact of the silver being weighed is by no means conclusive evidence against its being so. At this day coined money is weighed in all the markets of the East; and even among ourselves, when any of our readers has had occasion to receive a sum in gold at the Bank of England, he will have had the sovereigns weighed out to him in bulk. In the latter case this is merely to save time, counting being a much slower process than weighing. But a saving of time is the last thing ever thought of in the East; and the weighing there of coined money is to secure that the pieces shall be of just weight. This point is admirably

illustrated in an anecdote given by Mr. Fordyce. Before the time of Lord Cornwallis, the silver rupee, for example, in Bengal, was of considerable thickness, and bore a stamp on each side; but it was not stamped, or, as it is called, "milled," around the edges. Hence it could be easily pared or cut in the edges, so that the ordinary rupees were not all of one weight, in consequence of fraudulent operations on them. The stamp showed the purity of the metal, so as to render it current coin; but not being milled or stamped around the edges, it was necessary to weigh it, in order to ascertain that the proper weight in silver was delivered. Lord Cornwallis, when governor-general, put an end to this inconvenient kind of money, by establishing a mint at Calcutta, in which *thin* pieces milled round the edges were coined, in order to ascertain, as with us, *both* the quality and quantity of the coin, and so to supersede the necessity of weighing the money. We doubt if this simple contrivance has even yet, in the East, extended beyond India. Some of the most valuable eastern coins, in gold and silver, that we were a few years ago in the habit of seeing daily, had scarcely any edge at all, but exhibited irregular masses of metal around the border, dropping beyond the margin of the impression made by the die, in such excrescent shapes, as absolutely to suggest the idea of clipping, as an improvement to the figure of the coin.

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## NINTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

## THE JOURNEY.—GENESIS XXIV. 1-10.

THE marriage of Isaac is the first of which we have any particulars in Scripture. Yet, instead of being short and meagre, as all the illustrations of social manners are in the most ancient histories of every other nation, this, which is the earliest, is also the fullest marriage narrative that the large volume of Scripture contains. One of the longest

chapters in Genesis is devoted wholly to it. The narration is beautifully simple, and like all the other social narratives of the book, is invested in the fullest degree with that indescribable charm of *naturalness*, which to every rightly constituted mind speaks more clearly for the authenticity of the book in which they are found, than whole volumes of argumentative evidences. The manners described are wholly different from ours; yet they have throughout, in even the smallest incidents, that obvious and coherent truthfulness, which is invariably recognized even by those, who may not be thoroughly informed that the same system of manners and usages still subsists in the East.

The first thing that strikes us is the great and absorbing anxiety of Abraham that his son should not marry among the native women of Canaan, or among any but his own family, away in Mesopotamia. This is usually ascribed to his wish to keep the blood of the chosen seed, from which the Messiah was to come, from foreign intermixture. This may have had some weight in *his* estimation perhaps: but it was of little real consequence, as we find women of alien blood among the ancestresses of the Lord Jesus; and, singular as the fact may appear, the names of none but such alien females do find place in his genealogy, as given by Matthew. Without, however, overlooking this, we have a plainer and more satisfactory explanation in the general anxiety which we find among the Arabs at this day, that marriages should run in the same tribe or family; and that among them, as among the Jews, a man is held to have a right prior to all others to the hand of his female cousin.

As Abraham cannot undertake this matter in person, and as he probably considered himself precluded from allowing the heir of the promises to return, even temporarily, to the land of his nativity, he was obliged to confide the business to the hands of the chief servant and steward of his household, identified by some with Eliezer of Damascus, whom we have previously seen as the person looked upon by Abraham as his heir before the birth of Ishmael. The patriarch had the

highest confidence in this man's fidelity; he trusted all his substance into his hands; yet, on an occasion so momentous, he solemnly swears him to execute faithfully the mission entrusted to him. The danger that Abraham apprehended was, lest this person, to save himself the fatigue and trouble of so long a journey, should bring a woman from some nearer and more accessible quarter, and introduce her as having been brought from the family in Padanaram. It is difficult to see that Abraham could have apprehended anything else, and that he apprehended this—and that such an imposition was regarded as possible, implies that such a woman would not from any obvious circumstances in her appearance, manners, or speech, be at once detected; and it therefore shows, that there could have been no very essential difference, in these respects, between the women of the remoter and the nearer country.

The servant is worthy of such a master as Abraham. He is conscientiously anxious to understand the nature of his enterprise, before he swears to carry it out. He suggests the possibility that the woman may not be willing to follow him. What does Abraham answer to this? Does he tell him to set forth the wealth and power of his master, to dwell upon the glorious promises of which Isaac was the heir, to expatiate upon the dignity and influence which will belong to her as the lady of this noble camp? Nothing of the kind occurs to his thoughts. "The Lord," said he, "before whom I walk, will send his angel before thee, and prosper thy way." What glorious freedom from all anxiety and care about events is there in such a thought as that! How happy are they who can enjoy—as all may that will—such blessed repose. This conviction and assurance inspirited the servant. He at once took the oath, and hastened his preparations for the journey.

At a future day the grandson of Abraham takes the same journey on foot, and crossed the Jordan with a simple staff in his hand, Gen. xxxii. 10; but the servant of Abraham takes with him not less than ten camels. These, with the



necessary attendance, would give the mission a respectable appearance in the eyes of the intended bride and her relatives, and stand in evidence of the wealth of Abraham. The animals would also carry the provisions required by the ambassador and his men for the journey; with the presents intended for the bride and her friends: and the number doubtless included the dromedaries to bring her and her suite, and two or three spare camels—of which a proportion is required in every considerable journey, to provide for the contingency of any of them falling lame or ill, or of being lost or stolen.

It will be observed, that this is the first historical notice of actual riding upon camels. These animals are so useful for other purposes than riding, that their mere presence in the patriarchal flocks would not alone assure us that they were employed for this purpose. But the information respecting this journey, leaves us satisfied that the camel had already come to be engaged in those services of transport and of travel, for which it is to this day used; and for which it is well adapted by a physical constitution, which gives it extraordinary power in resisting thirst, which enables it to endure much fatigue with little sustenance, and which renders the scant herbage of the desert its choicest food; and by the possession of a foot, specially adapted, in the wise providence of God, for traversing the sandy wastes and arid tracts which, but for its aid, would be impassable. The journey which Abraham's servant took was not, however, through a *sandy* desert, being, for the most part, where not green, over hard gravelly ground, for which, even better than for soft sand, the foot of the camel is adapted. This journey is one which is usually performed on horseback; and would, in this instance, probably have been so, had the horse been at this time brought into use for such common purposes.

Having been led to mention the camel thus particularly, we may notice, that with all the frequent reference to the animal in Scripture, and with all the existing evidence of its great usefulness, there is not a word in its commendation

throughout the sacred volume, which is not sparing in the praise of many other animals seemingly less useful. There is a reason for this. If the matter be looked at, it is seen that all the most glowing eulogiums on the camel come from those who know it least, and who transfer, unconsciously perhaps, the impression created by its great usefulness to its temper and character. But it is only in the descriptions of western travellers that the camel bears the same character, of a

“Patient, honest, guileless animal.”

which the poet ascribes to the ox. But, alas, the camel, although it may be reasonably honest, is anything but patient or guileless. On the contrary, of all the animals which have been domesticated for higher purposes than to serve mankind merely as food, the camel is, past all doubt, the most churlish, irascible, revengeful and self-willed. We have heard of strong attachments between man and all other domestic animals; but never between a man and his camel. Of all the creatures promoted to be man’s companion in travel and in rest, no one so unloving and unloved as the camel exists. Its very countenance, which the inexperienced call patient, is the very impersonation of malice and ill-nature—even when its eyes are not kindled up into active spite, and when its mouth does not quiver with burning rage. Even among themselves quarrels are frequent; and he who has been summoned by their sharp and bitter cries to witness a camel fight, will not easily forget the scene.

It is by the sheer force of important services that the camel has won his way into man’s esteem, in spite of the evil qualities of his nature.

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## NINTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

A MARRIAGE.—GENESIS XXIV. 11–17.

THE visit of Abraham’s servant to Padanaram is interesting and important, not only in its incidents, but from intro-

ducing us to the acquaintance of the stationary branch of Abraham's family, and with a phase of life and manners somewhat different from that which the Hebrew patriarch led. This family does not dwell in tents; but has a fixed abode in a town of some importance. Yet all its habits are essentially pastoral; some of the flocks and herds, being kept near home, but the greater part being sent out, under the care of shepherds, to distant pastures, according to the exigencies of the season. It is nearly the condition of life to which Lot came, when he had settled himself in the town of Sodom; and has much resemblance to the form of life exhibited in the book of Job. Whatever other arguments there may be against the early date usually ascribed to the book of Job, the one derived from the fact that Job had a fixed abode, has therefore no weight, seeing that others, contemporaries and relatives of Abraham, dwelt in towns without abandoning the pastoral life.

The family, it should be remembered, is that of Nahor, the brother of Abraham and Haran. Nahor had eight sons by his wife Milcah, the daughter of his deceased brother Haran. One of these sons was Bethuel, who had a son called Laban, and a daughter named Rebekah. Thus, through the late period of life at which Abraham became the father of Isaac, the branch of the family in Haran has gained one generation in advance of the emigrated branch. Indeed, as Nahor was considerably the elder brother of Abraham, it seems likely, that his son Bethuel was not much younger than Abraham himself. For, at this time, he appears to be a very old man, who, although named as living, leaves everything to the direction and management of his son.

The family has clearly become among the first, if not the very first, in the town of Haran; and Abraham's servant could doubtless have proceeded to the house at once to declare his errand, if he had so pleased. But having arrived at the place, he first sought an interval for deliberation, and for prayer. His camels needed water; and having come to the well outside the town, he made them kneel down, in their

posture of rest. The well was probably secured ; but if not, and if he had the power, it would have been a great offence to the people of the place, to take the water before they came to draw it for their own use, and without their permission. Observing the evening shades begin to fall, he knew that some would soon be there to draw water. So he sat down meanwhile, to consider how he might best execute the commission with which he had been entrusted. He concluded to leave the direction of the matter in the hands of God. He prayed, therefore, that among the many damsels of the place, who would shortly come for water, the one who should respond, in the mode he indicated, to his application for drink, should be the lady intended for his master's son. It is remarkable that he did not fix the sign upon the one who shall first offer her services, but upon the one who first willingly grants the service asked of her. In this he proceeds warily, conceiving, it would seem, that the maid shows no maidenly spirit who, unasked, tenders so slight a service as a drink of water *at the well* to an apparently wealthy stranger ; and deeming, perhaps, that attentions so paid, might be an excuse for curiosity, and an evidence rather of officious forwardness, than of a well-natured disposition. In so plain a matter as that which lay before him, it may be doubted that this man was altogether right in thus appointing a sign to God, nor should we be wise to follow the example. There are peculiar circumstances in this case, however, which might well make a slave shrink from the responsibility of proceeding entirely upon his own judgment, in choosing a wife for his master's son ; and God, for Abraham's sake, accepted the sign, and made it indicate the right person—the very same, so far as appears, who would have been obtained, had he gone straight to Bethuel's house.

If such a mission were at all possible under our own system of manners ; it would certainly not be among the girls gathered round the village pump, that the messenger would expect to find a match in all respects suitable for the son of

his wealthy and well-born master. But in that age, when, as now in the same countries, the young females of the most honorable families discharge the commonest domestic offices, and to whom the fetching of water from the well outside the town, was a service in which peculiar pleasure was taken, from its enabling them to meet their companions; the servant knew that the young females whom he might shortly expect to see at that place, must include the very class from which his choice was to be made.

He had scarcely formed his resolution and uttered his prayer, when a very beautiful young damsel was seen advancing to the well, with her pitcher on her shoulder. The women now usually carry their water vessels on their heads, in western as well as in eastern Asia; but in India it is the privilege of females of high caste to carry their vessels on the shoulders, and if this should have been the case in the times which now engage our attention, the fact would be curious and interesting. As is frequently the case in the East, when the water does not lie deep in the well, there was here no apparatus for drawing up the water, but some steps led down to it, and those who came thither went down and filled their vessels. As the damsel he had noted came up with her full pitcher on her shoulder, the servant of Abraham ran to meet her, and said: "Let me *sip*,\* I pray thee, a little water out of thy pitcher." But she said promptly and kindly, "*Drink* [not *sip*], my lord;" and she hastened to let down her pitcher upon her hand, that he might quench his thirst. Had she stopped there, she had not become one of those who "did build the house of Israel." But he had no sooner finished, than of her free and open-hearted bounty, she added, "I will also draw for thy camels, till they have done drinking;" and without awaiting his answer she proceeded to execute her intention. Now it is easy to offer that which costs us nothing. But this truly well-bred lady offers her trouble, her labor, to oblige a stranger. And, indeed, it was no slight labor to go up and down these

\* Such, and not "drink," is the meaning of the original word.

steps, bearing each time a pitcher of water, which she emptied into the trough (frequently still found near such wells), until the camels had received enough. This was the very sign the man had appointed; and one more proper for his purpose—more becoming, could scarcely have been devised.

The man was astonished that the matter had turned out so circumstantially as he had wished; but still, until he learned who the damsel was, he feared to think he had so soon been fully prosperous. However, as an acknowledgment of the attention he had received, and as an introduction to the inquiries he was about to make, the steward presented to her a nose-ring of gold—such as is still worn by the women of Arabia, and which, it is remarkable to observe, are among the ornaments presented to a bride on her betrothment. Nor was this all; for he also gave two golden bracelets, of much higher value than the nose-jewel. Such ornaments are still very generally used in the East—not on extraordinary occasions, but for every-day wear. Indeed, ornaments of this kind are, as fixed property, highly valued; and are much more sought after than articles of mere dress. It is not unusual to see a woman clad comparatively in rags, but adorned with bracelets, anklets, nose-rings, and other ornaments, worth many rich dresses. The bracelets are seldom gold; more frequently of silver; sometimes of amber or coral; while poor women content themselves with bracelets of silvered steel, of copper, or of brass. Several pairs are frequently worn on the arms at the same time, and it is not unusual to see the space between the wrist and elbow almost covered with them. The most ancient specimens are flat—as in the monuments of Egypt; but those now generally in use are round and bulky, like manacles, but are for the most part hollow, and therefore not heavy in proportion to their bulk. The bracelets presented by the servant to Rebekah appear to have weighed about five ounces of gold, and could not, therefore, have been worth less than twenty pounds—exclusive of the nose-ring, the value of which cannot be well estimated.

The servant then ventured to ask the maiden whose daughter she was, and whether there was room in her father's house for him and his people to pass the night. With a glad heart he learned, that she was the daughter of the son of his master's brother; and the damsel failed not to inform him, that there was ample room for his entertainment, and abundance of "straw and provender" for the camels. On this, the man saw that the Lord had indeed prospered him, and his first and most becoming act, was to bow down his head and prostrate himself before the Lord God of his master Abraham, who had led him in the right way to the house of his master's kinsman. This he said aloud, as is usual throughout the East; and no sooner had the maiden, whose name was Rebekah, caught the purport of his words, than she sped off to make them known at home. On hearing this, her brother Laban repaired to the well, where Abraham's servant still remained with the camels. Laban addressed him with the cordial words:—"Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels." So he followed him, and having seen the camels ungirded and fed, and the feet of himself and men having been refreshed with water, he was pressed to eat; but, mindful of the service on which he came, he declined to taste food until he had told his errand and received his answer. He recited all the circumstances from the commencement, and clearly indicated his opinion, that Rebekah was the damsel destined of God to become his young master's wife. Bethuel and Laban were of the same opinion, and their answer expressed that conviction. "The thing hath proceeded of the Lord: *we* cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee. Take her and go; and let her be the wife of thy master's son, as the Lord hath spoken."

On hearing this, the pious servant again bent himself in thankfulness before the Lord, who had thus brought his mission to a successful close. Many precious things, "jewels of gold, and jewels of silver, and raiment," he brought forth

from his treasures, and presented to Rebekah, and to her brother and mother—the latter being probably of the nature of the dowry usually given for a daughter. With heart at ease, the servant and his men feasted themselves well that night; but, next morning, he declined to make any longer stay, and was at length suffered to depart, with Rebekah and her maidens mounted on camels.

It was an anxious moment to both the servant and Rebekah, when, as they approached the end of their journey, he saw Isaac in the distance. He had, in accordance with his quiet and contemplative character, gone “forth into the fields to meditate at eventide;” but when he looked up, and saw the camels coming, he hastened to meet them. Seeing him approaching, Rebekah put on her veil, which females usually assume in the presence of a stranger; but on hearing the servant say, “It is my master,” she alighted from her camel, in testimony of that respect which is still marked by the same action in the East. Having heard the particulars of the journey from the servant, Isaac conducted his fair cousin to the vacant tent of his mother, thereby installing her as the lady of the camp. She thus became his wife, and in her love he found comfort for the loss of his mother, which, until now, he had not for three years ceased to mourn.

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## NINTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

### THE BIRTHRIGHT.—GENESIS XXV.

THE careful and thoughtful reader of Scripture has many gratifications which escape him whose reading is but cursory. Thus, the consideration of dates and ages is wholly overlooked by readers of the easy class; but these are carefully noted by the true student, who derives from them much interesting information. Let us see, for instance, how this applies here. Abraham survived Sarah thirty-eight years. Isaac was thirty-seven years old when his mother died; and as he was forty years old when he married Rebekah, we



learn that the camp of Abraham remained for three years without a mistress. Again, Isaac was sixty years of age before his sons Esau and Jacob were born. Thus, for more than twenty years, the heir of the promises remained childless; and Abraham, but for his faith, must have been sorely tried by this second long protraction of the hope he most cherished. This is, among the trials of his faith, not recorded, and only discoverable by the comparison of dates. Again, as Abraham's death is recorded before the birth of Isaac's sons is mentioned, nine readers out of ten probably consider that Abraham was dead before his grandsons were born. But by looking at his age when he died, and comparing it with the age of Isaac when his sons entered the world, we see that Abraham not only waited twenty years before his grandsons were born, but actually lived to see them seventeen or eighteen years old; so that it is almost beyond a doubt that Jacob and Esau did, and certain that they might, have had much intercourse with their venerable grandfather. Whether the elder of the two profited much by this advantage, does not appear; but it is probable that Jacob, the younger, owed much of his strong faith in the Lord's providence, to the example and instructions of the patriarch.

Although distinguished as elder and younger, the two lads were in fact twins—Esau having simply been the first to enter the world in the same birth. Yet if the distinctions of elder and younger are of value for social or other privileges, a few moments' priority is as good as a priority of years. It is remarkable, however, how little value seems to be attached to these distinctions in the counsels of God. In fact, it is observable how very frequently, in cases of preference and selection, the choice falls upon the younger sons. The righteous Abel is the youngest son of Adam; Abraham is the youngest son of Terah; Jacob is the youngest son of Isaac; Joseph is the youngest but one of Jacob's twelve sons; the favored Ephraim is the youngest of Joseph's sons; Moses is the youngest of Amram's sons; David is the youngest of Jesse's sons; and Solomon is the youngest of David's sons.

The intended preference of the younger over the elder—of Jacob over Esau—was disclosed to the mother before the children saw the light, and was probably the source of the special regard in which she always held that son, while the feelings of the father inclined as strongly to his first-born.

The character of the two men, as they grew up, is very strongly distinguished, following remarkably the difference observed in their persons even at the birth. The eldest was rough, ruddy, and hairy—a description which implies great bodily strength, and a temperament which would incline him to exciting and hazardous pursuits. The juvenile appearance of Jacob is not described, but the silence implies that he was the reverse of his brother—smooth, tender, and feminine. As they grew up, the difference of character was shown in their pursuits. The quiet occupations and interests of pastoral life, which suited well the quiet temper of Jacob, became hateful to his more ardent brother, who gave his days to the chase, the excitement and violent exertions of which supplied the kind of rough stimulant which his impulsive temper required; and the bodily exercise which his strong and active frame demanded.

The character of Jacob will come often enough under our notice in the course of the ensuing days; but that of Esau, which will less require our attention, may be indicated in the words of a very able American writer:—"Esau, it would seem, belonged to the class of rough sensual natures—men who, acting under the influence of present impulse, have no steadiness of character. They are distinguished by an imposing directness of conduct, the very opposite to anything deceitful or cunning. They have feeling and kindness; they readily forget an injury, and cherish no malice. Those amiable qualities are associated, however, with levity, sensuality, and passion, leading to acts of violence as circumstances may prompt."\*

This man, returning one day unsuccessful, weary, and fam-

\* Dr. Samuel H. Turner, in his *Notes on Genesis*. Here, however, he much follows a German writer of high repute, named Dreschler.

ishing from his hunting, saw Jacob preparing a most savory mess of red-looking pottage. It was made of those red lentiles which at the present day form a dish highly relished in Syria and Egypt. Esau knew not its name, for his rough roving life left him but little knowledge of domestic cookery. But the sight of it was pleasant, and the odor overpoweringly engaging to a man ravenously hungry. He cried impatiently, "Give me some of that red—that red!" It is so rarely that any choice cookery is seen among those who dwell in tents, that it may be well understood that the mess was as valuable in the eyes of Jacob as it was tempting in those of his brother. Still Jacob was not personally a selfish man in small matters, though in large matters he sometimes sought, not by the most direct policies, the means by which his interests might be advanced; and we may therefore believe that he would not have grudged the loss of his choice meal, had it not occurred to him that the occasion might be employed for securing an object he had much at heart. Truly, he must have had no very exalted opinion of his brother's sense of self-control, when he made to him the extraordinary proposal of exchanging this mess of pottage with him for his birthright. But he knew the man—he knew him to be of those to whom the present is all, and on whom the remote and the ideal make no impression.

The result does more honor to Jacob's penetration than to his brotherly love. Esau closed with the proposal. "Behold," said he, with a hunter's exaggeration, "behold I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" The full effect of this declaration has not been well understood by those unacquainted with the East. We are apt to think he might have taken some bread and cold meat,—anything in the way, to refresh himself, and stay his appetite, till a more substantial meal should be got ready; and hence the whole burden of his declaration is made to rest on his special fancy for Jacob's red pottage. Now, it is true that he liked the pottage; but it would seem that his great desire for it was, from its being the only food to be obtained,

with which to appease his rage of hunger. We have already explained (p. 217), that there is never anything ready in eastern tents, and scarcely in the houses, for a sudden demand; all has to be prepared, if a demand arises between the times of meals. Hence Esau knew that unless he obtained this pottage, he should have to wait some time—an age to a famishing man—until some food was prepared for him, or until the next meal-time came round. Probably, as Esau was returned from hunting, this was the last meal of the day, and it had been so usually expected that he would provide for himself from the game he had shot, that no preparation had been made for him; so that unless he obtained Jacob's supper, or endured the delay of preparing another for himself at an unseasonable hour, he would have got no food until the morning. This was enough to act upon the mind of a man who lived so much for the present, and had so little value for his birthright as Esau. He consented; and, at Jacob's demand, confirmed the transfer of his birthright by an oath.

It is impossible to approve of Jacob's conduct in this matter. It was sinister and unfraternal, and it was more—it was unfaithful. He knew that all he sought had been promised to him by One, of whose faithfulness in all his promises he must often have heard from his grandfather. It was therefore his duty to have left the accomplishment to Him, in his own time, without seeking to aid, by paltry underhand policies, the purposes of God. But we must view the character of Jacob in its progress of development and formation. It is our fault that we view men at all times as one; whereas there is often as little resemblance between the same man in youth and in mature age, as there is between any two individuals who pass along the road. So the Jacob of advanced life—taught of God at Bethel, Mahanaim, and Peniel—matured by experiences, and tried by sorrows—is found to be a different man, in many respects, from the Jacob dwelling in his father's tents, and under the influence and training of a sharp and unscrupulous mother.

But what was this birthright which Jacob so greatly coveted, and which his brother so lightly esteemed? The ordinary privilege of the first-born consisted in precedence over the other brothers, and in a double share of the paternal estate.\* To this, some add, upon doubtful reasoning, the privilege of the priesthood. But the early Jewish writers, who naturally felt much interest on the subject, and were well able to investigate it, think that the privilege which Jacob desired and obtained had nothing to do with present secular advantages, but had reference to that heritage of the promises made to Abraham, which was supposed to go to the eldest born. They appeal to facts which are decidedly in their favor. "As to power and authority," says one of the writers (Abarbanel), "Jacob never exercised any over Esau, but, on the contrary, humbly and submissively addresses him as *my lord*, and styles himself Esau's *servant*, Gen. xxxii. 5. And as to the double portion of Isaac's property, so far from obtaining it, Jacob not only declares, *with my staff I passed over this Jordan*, but surrenders a considerable portion of his own property in the shape of a gift to Esau." In fact, Esau, who "despised his birthright," received his possessions earlier than Jacob; and he founded a nation without subjecting his progeny to any disgrace, like that which the Israelites sustained in Egypt.

To be the heir of the promise—to acquire possession of Canaan—to be associated with God in Abraham's covenant—and, under it, to be the instrument of imparting a blessing to all the earth, were matters on which Jacob's thoughts were fixed. It was not his own personal worldly advantage to which he looked: but the future welfare—temporal, spiritual, and eternal—of his progeny; and inasmuch as the man, inspired by exalted hopes and purposes, he who holds "large discourse, looking before and after," is more entitled to our respect than the impulsive, sensuous creature who says, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," we cannot, even in this transaction, rightly understood, hold Jacob in

\* See Gen. xliii. 3, 4. Deut. xxi. 17. 1 Chron. v. 1, 2.

light esteem, however deeply we may deplore and censure the unkind and ungenerous manner in which he acquired a human claim to that which had been his by divine right, before his birth.

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### Tenth Week—Sunday.

“GATHERED TO HIS PEOPLE.”—GENESIS XXV. 8.

SUCH a chapter as the twenty-fifth of Genesis, composed chiefly of names, is apt to be passed through too rapidly by unstudious readers. Yet, even the most lax attention will be fastened by such a verse as the eighth—“Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered unto his people.” Here is a remarkable collection of epithets applicable to death and burial, every one of which is well worthy of consideration, and may suggest some profitable thoughts.

By “giving up the ghost,” we now understand giving up his spirit, as by “ghost” we usually suppose “spirit” to be meant. We doubt if the translators intended it to bear this sense; but apprehend, that they rather meant it to express the giving up the breath of life, or *breathing out* one’s life, which is the true meaning. It is there simply equivalent to the modern and usual phrase, “he expired.” The term is thought by Jewish writers to express death by old age only, without previous sickness or pain. This is the kind of death which results from the natural dissolution of the body, when the radical heat and moisture, by degrees dry up and wear away. Such a kind of death was that *Euthanasia*, that good and easy departure, which was greatly desired by the ancients, and which was indeed desirable, when old age was really venerated, and treated with solicitude and respect—with far more of both than, we fear, it finds under the influences and activities of modern civilization. This kind of death, this

gentle sliding out of life, had been promised to Abraham as a blessing. "Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace. Thou shalt be buried in a good old age." Gen. xv. 15. And we are now informed that this took place, to show that there was no point, however comparatively inconsiderable, in which the promises of God were left unfulfilled. The conviction which Abraham, in life and in death, was enabled to realize of the Lord's faithfulness to his promises, must have been the source of his highest joys and deepest consolations. And it may be so to us. We have still better hopes and promises from God, than those that were given to Abraham; and we shall be happy here, or miserable, in proportion to the intensity with which we are enabled to realize the conviction, that all the promises of God in him (Christ) are yea, and in him amen."

But Abraham is also said to have "died in a good old age." Not only in old age, but in a *good* old age. The old age, which the sacred writer calls good, is very different from the sad, broken, fretful, and weary old age, of which these latter generations seem to furnish more examples than were dreamt of in old time, which invariably speak of old age as a good and a blessing. But this old age is good, because healthful, sound, long in coming, leaving the senses still in perfection, and free from that peevishness and moroseness, which make old age unpleasant in and to so many. We are sorry to record an observation we have made, that age seems to be generally more sound, vigorous, and cheerful in eastern than in western lands, in which old age has almost ceased to be regarded as a blessing. Perhaps, it is not altogether such under the New Testament dispensation, as it was under the Old, which looked far more to this life and its blessings than we are authorized to do. He who is enabled to know that he belongs to Christ, has little inducement to wish for a prolonged stay in this house of his pilgrimage. To depart and to be with Christ—to take possession of the mansion prepared for him in his Father's house—and to join his kindred in heaven, who, as life advances, be-

come more numerous than those who remain on earth—will seem to be well exchanged for length of days.

He was “an old man.” He was a hundred and seventy-five years of age. His great-grandfather had reached to two hundred and thirty years, and his father to two hundred and eight years: yet so rapidly was life falling, that although Abraham died at a comparatively early age, he was an old man among his contemporaries. Fallen as the duration of life had, his years passed by a hundred, the ordinary limit at which human life has now stood for many ages. He had seen the years which few of our people survive, before he entered the land of Canaan, and one hundred years he had passed in that land. He was, however, not only old; he was “full of years.” The word “years” is not in the original; and the word rendered “full,” is to be satisfied, satiated, or filled, and is often in Scripture applied to a person having had enough of food or of drink. It may, therefore, here well signify, that Abraham had lived as long as he desired; had finished the business of life; and was quite willing to die. He was satisfied with life; he had had enough of it; and stood with girded loins, ready to depart.

Finally, “he was gathered unto his people”—a striking phrase, over which the mind lingers. What, however, does it really mean? It is commonly interpreted to apply to burial—to sleeping in the grave with one’s kindred and friends. But this is not the sense here, it would seem. *His* people were not here, nor was he here buried with them. Sarah was the only one belonging to him that had died in this land, and with her he was buried. What, then, can this gathering to his people mean, but that his soul was gathered to theirs? The phrase is certainly more appropriate to the soul than to the body; for the body is gathered to corruption, but the soul to glory and blessedness. It is usual to say, that in the Pentateuch there are no indications of a life to come. Is not this one such indication? The usual form of the expression is “to be gathered to one’s fathers;” yet in other instances, as in this, it is applied to those who could



not be said to be gathered to their fathers in the grave. It is also spoken of as a blessing to those who were so gathered. It must, therefore, it would seem, imply not only their continued existence, but their existence in a state of blessedness. In other words, those to whom Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others, were gathered or assembled at death, must be to some then really existing; for to those that had no form of being, there could be no such gathering. It appears, therefore, that there could hardly be any plain foundation for the phrase, if well examined, but in the belief that the fathers, to whom they were at the death of the body assembled, had *then* a real existence. It is really of some importance to obtain even this piece of evidence, to the existence of a belief in the immortality, or even in the survivance, of the soul, of which, it has been strongly denied by many, that there is any evidence in the books of Moses.

So, then, it is seen, that these patriarchal fathers had the same desire, and the same hope, of being gathered at death to all they had in past times venerated, loved, and lost, that we have. Indeed, it stands to reason that they should have had it. The condition of any people would seem scarcely tolerable without it.

“The seasons as they fly,  
Snatch from us in their course, year after year,  
Some sweet connection, some endearing tie.  
The parent, ever honored, ever dear,  
Claims from the filial breast the pious sigh;  
A brother's urn demands the filial tear,  
And gentle sorrows gush from friendship's eye.  
To-day we frolic in the rosy bloom  
Of jocund youth—to-morrow knells us to the tomb.”

These things were the same in old time as now; and is it credible that men who then walked with God, and were honored with direct communications from him, were left in the dark on matters so essential to their comfort? that when they followed their dead ones to the tomb, they could not say that they should ever again behold them; and that in

due time—in a time not long to any—they should themselves be gathered to the great assembly of those who died once, and are yet alive for evermore? Did David, when, in a later day, he said of his lost child—“ I shall go to him, but he will not return to me,”—speak of the grave only, or of something beyond the grave? Let the heart answer.

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## TENTH WEEK—MONDAY.

### THE BLESSING.—GENESIS XXVII.

It is surprising how little we know of Isaac, in comparison with his father and son. He makes no stir in the world; no noise; he excites no emotion. We only catch glimpses of him now and then, sufficient to enable us to recognize him as a dutiful son to his father, a loving son to his mother, an affectionate and uxorious husband, a partial father, and a pious but weak old man. He seldom speaks. He wants force of character; and soon subsides into an instrument in the hands of others, who use him for their own purposes. It is the destiny of such to be acted upon, rather than to act upon others. So we never meet with Isaac in positive and decisive action; but commonly find him in some instrumental position or other. He seems to have also been of a weakly constitution. We read of infirmity or illness in none of the other patriarchs, till they came to their death-beds; but at an age far short of that which his father, and even his son, attained, we find him blind and feeble, confined to his bed, and expecting to die.

By far the most important and most fully recorded incident of his life occurs while he is in this condition; and as thus the fullest picture of him is given,

“ In age and feebleness extreme,”

we perhaps derive therefrom an impression of his character, different from that which might have been entertained, had

we been permitted to behold him as distinctly in the prime and vigor of his days. We would suppose that the quiet and home-staying Jacob was more likely to be a favorite with such a father than the rough, boisterous, and rambling Esau. But we constantly observe that persons manifest the greatest liking for those whose character and habits are least similar to their own. Esau, and not Jacob, was the favorite of Isaac. Believing death to be near, he privately desired this beloved son to procure him, by his hunting, some food, such as he was particularly fond of, that after partaking of it, he may bestow on him the paternal benediction. This is overheard by Rebekah, whose skilful cunning contrives to pass off Jacob upon him for Esau; and thus the blind old patriarch is led to believe that he is invoking blessings upon his elder son, when it is in fact the younger whom he addresses. The details of this scene of unprincipled deception—the more shocking from such advantage being taken of the infirmities of a father—are familiar to the reader, and we may gladly be spared following the particulars which the Scripture necessarily, for the coherence of the narrative, relates. By sparing ourselves this pain and regret, we obtain room for a few observations on some remarkable circumstances in the narrative.

It is the mother who suggests the device, and who, in fact, seeks to ease the alarm of Jacob's conscience by taking all the consequences upon herself. It is quite possible that she thought she was doing a duty. Knowing that the blessing Isaac was about to bestow on Esau belonged, in the purposes of God, to Jacob, and was his also as a portion of his purchased birthright, she might easily conceive that she was preventing a wrong—was only doing evil that good might come. It was "a pious fraud;" and when we consider how dubious great authorities—favored with all the light of Christian morality and doctrine—have been on the subject of such frauds, we need not too greatly wonder that Rebekah and Jacob failed to see the path of right and duty clearly. It appears to us that Rebekah felt all to be right—both

means and end ; and that Jacob thought the end to be right, but was staggered at the means, until his mother succeeded in soothing, if not in extinguishing, his alarms. Jacob was, however, not a child. He was full forty years of age, and very well capable of exercising an independent judgment in a matter which concerned him so nearly. All the responsibility of the transaction cannot be shifted to the mother, willing as she was to take it upon her.

Rebekah, with only a kid, prepares for Isaac "savory meat," intended to be passed upon him—and which does pass upon him—for the very same that he loved, and desired as the produce of Esau's hunting. How is it that he, the possessor of numerous flocks, should depend upon his son's hunting for a feast, which might thus easily be prepared to his liking with his own kids? And what kind of game might that be, for which the flesh of a kid could be taken? In answer to this, it suffices to refer to a former statement—that an animal from the flocks or herds is rarely killed and eaten, save to entertain a stranger; and the possessor of untold herds and flocks would deem it unheard-of extravagance to slay an animal to supply a meal for himself. Hence the Israelites, with all their cattle, in the wilderness groaned for the taste of flesh, and had to be supplied with game by miracle. Particular objection is also felt to the slaughter of young animals, regard being had to the value to which they will grow if suffered to live. In fact, this is regarded among pastoral people in the same point of view, as that in which living upon capital is regarded in this commercial country. Thus a stray wild animal, or bit of game, is as highly prized and as eagerly sought after by them as by any people. It may thus appear that Isaac, at a hundred years old, scarcely knew the taste of kid's flesh. Or if he did, the flesh of a kid is not unlike that of a young gazelle, and, prepared in the way that both are usually dressed in the East, might easily be taken for one.

Esau must have been a formidably hairy person—for, that Jacob may pass for Esau, in case Isaac should *feel* him, the

skin of the kid is placed by Rebekah upon his hands and "the *smooth* of his neck." If he were thus equipped to resemble Esau's smoothness, what must Esau's roughness have been? The smooth of his neck, however, means the part not covered by the beard. There is no doubt that Esau's hairiness was very extraordinary—he being, even at birth, described as if invested all over with a hairy garment. There is, however, perhaps no animal whose skin might be so easily taken for that of a very hairy man as the skin of a kid. It is well known that the long silky hair of the Angora goat was used among the Romans as an artificial succedaneum for human hair. Wigs made of Angora goat's hair are mentioned by the Roman satirist Martial. Besides, it is to be borne in mind that the senses of Isaac appear to have become obtuse with age, which had produced the failure of his sight.

It is an interesting fact, that Jacob was clad in a dress of Esau's, which, notwithstanding that he had several wives, and therefore a home of his own, his mother had in her charge. The object seems to have been, that the fresh smell, which the garments had imbibed from the herbs of the field, might assist the deception. Isaac expressly alludes to it,—“Behold, the smell of my son is the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed.” Some think the garments were perfumed,—but if so, this could not have been distinctive of Esau. Others apprehend that the odor was that peculiar one which the dress of a hunter contracts, from his handling the skins and furs of animals. But, it is surely enough to suppose, that the fragrance of Esau's garments proceeded from the herbs and flowers of the field, his constant abode. Ancient writers concur with modern travellers, in speaking with delight of the aromatic odors of the Syro-Arabian meadows and plains. The natural odors of Lebanon are frequently mentioned in the sacred Scriptures.

It is remarkably true that every scene of deception, however well planned and artistically managed, fails in some point or other. The ordinary reading or experience of every

one will supply examples of this. So, in the present instance, while Rebekah and Jacob had so carefully disguised the outward man of the latter, the necessity of disguising the voice had been wholly overlooked. This single oversight had nearly exploded the entire plot. The suspicions of Isaac were violently awakened at hearing a voice, which he recognized as that of Jacob, speaking in the person of Esau. At the first sound of that voice, he asks, "Who art thou, my son?" and still not satisfied with the assurance, "I am Esau, thy first-born," he says, "Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be really my son Esau or not." An alarming moment was that for the deceiver—a moment of agony, almost a sufficient punishment for his crime, when his father passed his hands over him. "The voice," said the old man, "is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." But he was satisfied; the feel of the hands and fresh smell of the raiment, prevailed over the misgiving which the voice had awakened;—and the much-desired blessing was bestowed.

## TENTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

### BETHEL.—GENESIS XXVIII.

WHO is this solitary traveller striding on from the way of the southern wilderness? His loins are firmly girded—a strong staff assists his steps—and he has naught else with him, unless that it be that his small wallet contains a little oil, some bread, and a few hard dates. This is no common man. Mighty destinies hang around his head. A special and peculiar Providence watches over him. Angels bend from their starry heavens to look upon him. It is Jacob, the son of the wealthy Isaac—the undoubted heir of glorious promises—the chosen and loved of God. And how is it thus with him? The servant of Abraham travelled this

way before, bent on the same journey, with ten laden camels and many men. Could not even one camel, one ass, one servant, be spared for Isaac's son? Alas, he flees for his life, and must leave no track behind. Hence he goes alone, stealthily, and poor. He flees from a deeply wronged brother, whose wrath threatens nothing less than his life, as soon as he shall no longer be restrained by the dread of breaking his father's heart. He is going to Padanaram, to spend a few weeks with Laban, until his brother's anger has passed away—and he is not without hope of finding a wife there, as his father had done before. Alas, he little knows what lies before him—nor how many long years shall pass before he sees again his father's house; and little did his mother think, when she bade him farewell, that her eye should never again rest upon the son she loved so well, and for whose sake she had burdened her soul. Both were punished.

The traveller, as the shades of evening lengthen, comes to "a certain place," and there he resolves to spend the night. He unbinds his girdle—he anoints his joints with oil—he takes a little of his hard fare—he drinks water from the stream. Now he craves rest. But how shall he sleep? That is easy; he selects a stone for his pillow, and his bed is made. His thoughts had been troubled. Looking at the consequences that had flowed from his proceedings, he could not but doubt that he had acted well or wisely, or that he had any title to expect the blessing and care of Abraham's God. But that God had not forgotten him; and now is the moment—now, when he is alone with his own heart—that the Lord saw fit to commence the course of teachings and encouragements which ended but with his life, and by which he profited well. It does not appear that Jacob had hitherto received any communications from God. And he, who was eventually destined to enjoy awfully near approaches to the Divine presence, must first be taught in vision. He dreams on that hard stone. He sees a ladder extended from earth to heaven—and thereon the angels of God are passing up and

down. He is thus taught that he is not alone, but is regarded with attention by the very angels of heaven, who employ themselves in his concerns. Some interpret it to signify God's care of the world and its affairs. We interpret it to signify God's care of Jacob and his affairs. The top of the ladder was in heaven, but its foot rested on the spot where he, the son of Isaac, lay. That he might be at no loss to collect the purport of his dream, God himself appeared above all, and he heard His voice. Yes, God spoke to him, and made himself known as "the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac." He then proceeded to give him the words of the covenant, and to acknowledge him as the true heir of the promises. Nor was his personal welfare below God's thought. "Behold, I am with thee," he said; "I will keep thee wherever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land: for I will not forsake thee, until I have done that which I have promised to thee."

Jacob awoke deeply awed. "How dreadful," he said, "is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." His first act brings to our notice a new and remarkable custom. He takes the stone which had served him for a pillow, and sets it up as a monument, and pours some of his oil upon the top of it. This was an act of consecration. It showed that the spot was to be considered holy. Setting up the stone merely, was the natural act of one wishing to identify the spot when he came that way again. But the pouring out of oil, was at least a formal and devout acknowledgment of the fact commemorated, if it did not, as we think it did, set apart the spot as one hereafter to receive an altar, and to become a place for sacrifices. In doing this, he called the place by a new name. It had been called Luz; but he named it Bethel—the house of God; and it is remarkable that the consecrated stones, which in following ages we find among the ancients, bear the analogous name of Baitulia. It would lead us too far to inquire how this analogy arose. The custom does not appear to have been a new one, when Jacob gave us the first recorded in-



stance of it. It is known by the testimony of various writers, that it was a very ancient custom among the Phœnicians, the Greeks, and the Romans, to set up stones as memorials of remarkable events or places, and to pour oil, or wine, or blood thereon, as a consecrating libation. In the East, the custom is not yet extinct. The object of Jacob is further shown by the vow to which he at the same time gave utterance: "If God will be with me, and keep me on this way that I am going, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on; so that I return again to my father's house in peace, and the Lord will be my God; then this stone which I have placed for a monument shall become God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely tithes it unto thee." We have adopted in this place Dr. Raphall's Jewish translation. Here we see, that in conformity with the results of careful criticism, the most essential point of the vow is divested of the unseemly conditional character which the authorized translation gives to it. "If God will be with me, \* \* then shall the Lord be my God," etc., which is always read with pain, and mars the effect of this beautiful and impressive vow. The single Hebrew letter as a prefix, which is translated by "then," is more generally rendered by "and," and ought to have been so given in this place.

It is worthy of notice how moderate Jacob's wishes are for himself—how low the personal ambition of the man who had dared so much for the great future. All that he asks is to be supplied with what is absolutely and indispensably necessary—food, however hardly earned, so that it sustain life; clothing, however coarse, so that it but cover his nakedness. He is ready to submit to every privation and suffering, so that he may be sure that he shall eventually return in peace to his father's house. What a chapter is this, for those who go forth even in our own day to battle with the world!

The Lord did for Jacob far more than he ventured to ask; and Jacob, on his part, redeemed his vow, when he repaired to the place, after his removal from Shechem, and built an altar there. The words he then used are remarkable. "Let

us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way that I went." The spot thus consecrated was afterwards further distinguished as, for a time, the seat of the ark of the covenant and of the tabernacle; and it was here that Samuel sat in judgment.\*

As to the tenth, which Jacob vowed to give, we can have no doubt that he kept his vow. But how, we know not. There was never any establishment for worship at Bethel in Jacob's time that required this appropriation, and we find not any person to whom he could give the tenth, as Abraham did to Melchizedek. That instance, however, shows that it was an ancient oriental custom, with which Jacob promises compliance. We are inclined very much to approve the suggestion of an eminent Jewish commentator (Aben Ezra), who interprets the words to mean, "I will bestow it on whomsoever is worthy to receive it for the glory of God," and that consequently Jacob redeemed his vow by appropriating the tenth of all his increase to works of charity and beneficence. That "he who giveth unto the poor lendeth unto the Lord," is a truth known as early as the time of Jacob at least.

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## TENTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

### HARAN.—GENESIS XXIX.

CHEERED by the vision at Bethel, Jacob went on his way rejoicing. The refreshment of his spirits quickened his steps, and gave vigor to his tread. This natural effect of a gladdened heart is lost in the translation, which merely tells us that he "went on his journey;" but the original (as in the margin) states, that "he lifted up his feet," which in Eastern language still signifies to walk quickly, to reach out, to be in good earnest, not to hesitate. Probably the heaviness of his

\* Judges xx. 18-26. 1 Sam. x. 3.; viii. 16.

heart on quitting his father's tents and separating himself from his mother's love, had up to this point made his steps reluctant and slow ; but now the knowledge that God is with him in the way that he goes, and has promised to bless him, makes him press forward with new hope and strength—with more thought of what lay before him, and with less of what lay behind.

On his arrival at Haran, the incidents are exceedingly similar to those which took place when Abraham's servant went to seek a wife for Isaac. The servant, however, when he came to the well outside the town, had camels, attendants, and stores of precious things ; but the son stands by the same well alone, and empty of all things but his claims and his hopes. Jacob also tarries by the well, till the damsel destined to become his spouse appears ; but she comes not, like Rebekah, to fetch water for domestic use from the well, but to water the home flock of her father Laban, which is under her care. Here, also, Jacob, as became his youth and appearance, waits not to receive the notice of the maiden, as did the steward of Abraham, but hastens to show her manly and becoming attention, by rolling away the stone which covered the well's mouth, and by watering the flock for her. He knows who she is, for as she approached, the shepherds at the well had told him that this was Laban's daughter Rachel. There was much to awaken strong emotion—the damsel was the daughter of “his *mother's brother* ;” the sheep were “the sheep of his *mother's brother*.” It is not without purpose that his mother is thus presented to us. It apprises us that his mother was present to Jacob's mind. He pictured to himself, that just as that maiden appeared there before him, so, in that very place, had his mother appeared before Abraham's servant some forty years before—and that now he was among the scenes of *her* youth, of which she had often spoke to him. We can therefore well understand how, when he kissed his fair cousin, and told her who he was, “he lifted up his voice and wept.” This is a fine touch of nature ; and had the faults of Jacob been much greater than they

were, we could forgive them for those tears. We begin to feel that there is truth in this man, of whom we have not yet seen much that is good. Our hearts begin to go with him. We begin to like him. His future career begins to interest us.

Notwithstanding the selfish and ungenerous character which Laban evinces in the sequel, his conduct on the first arrival of Jacob was by no means wanting in that hospitality and warm affection for kindred, which even at the present day, distinguish the eastern people. He no sooner heard from his daughter that his sister's son was out by the well, than "he *ran* to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house." Some commentators have striven to make out interested influences even from the first in the conduct of this man. But no selfish man is invariably selfish—no mean-spirited man always mean. We may therefore suppose that Laban was properly affected by the arrival of his sister's son, by whom he might hear tidings of her welfare, without allowing himself to be influenced by Jacob's humble and destitute appearance, or by his obvious inability to offer those rich presents which might be expected from Isaac's son. When he heard Jacob's story, he simply remarked, "Surely thou art my bone and my flesh;" as much as to say, "Although thou camest empty-handed, and hast no immediate resources; yet thou art my near relative, dear for my sister's sake, and art truly welcome here."

During the month which followed his arrival, Jacob made himself so very useful in the business of the flock, and showed so much skill in the management of cattle, that Laban began to think of establishing an abiding interest in his services. We must confess, that there is much in the narrative of this twenty-ninth chapter, which we can only explain on the supposition, that Jacob had, during this month, heard from home, through some channel or other—perhaps by a caravan—that there, circumstances were not likely to admit of his return so soon as had been expected; that Esau was still so implacable, that he could not prudently either return, or claim any separate settlement for himself out of the pater-

nal estate; and that his father's health had been so far re-established, as to afford no likelihood that his death would, for a good while to come, make any change in the posture of affairs. When, also, we consider that the patriarchal wealth was not in money, but in cattle; and that even money existed only in the form of precious metal, difficult and dangerous to transport in bulk, we may understand, that if Jacob did hear this, he would have inferred that he had little aid to expect from home, and that he had only to do the best he could for himself in Padanaram, until, after the lapse of some years, circumstances should admit of his return.

It was probably the arrival of news of some such tendency, that induced Laban to make him an offer to engage his services at an adequate remuneration. On this, he offered to serve his uncle seven years for the hand of his daughter Rachel, whom by this time he tenderly loved. That he made an offer to pledge his services for so long a time, shows that, from some cause or other, he had by this time abandoned the hope with which he left Beersheba, of any speedy return to his own home. This period of service was to be in lieu of the remuneration, or, as it is now plainly called, the *price*, which a father has always in the East been entitled to expect for his daughter, and which, indeed, it would be discreditable in a husband not to pay, in some shape or other. Personal servitude to the father, is still, in some parts of the East, including to this day Palestine, the mode in which this price is paid by young men who have no other means of providing what the parent has a right to expect; and seven or eight years of such servitude, during which the man receives only food and clothing, is still regarded as but a fair remuneration for the daughter of a person of any consideration. It appears to us, that this arrangement was not so absolute in its condition of servitude, but that, had circumstances arisen to alter Jacob's position, and to afford him the means of direct payment, he might so have redeemed from Laban any portion of his term of years that might then remain unexpired.

By an infamous trick, when the time came that Jacob should receive his wife, another and elder daughter of Laban's, named Leah, was substituted by the father. This was apparently done in the calculation, that Jacob loved Rachel too well thus to part with her, and that he would offer another term of his valuable services to obtain her also. So it came to pass. He offered another seven years for Rachel; and thus, only on the hard terms of fourteen years' service, could obtain the only bride he desired to possess. Yet he thought her not too dearly purchased by his long service; and he seems to have felt an honest pride in being thus enabled to show the depth of the love he bore to her.

It is remarkable how much against his will, and against his eventual peace, Jacob, who would have been content and happy with Rachel only, was absolutely driven, by the force of circumstances, to take not only two wives, but four. Having got the wrong wife in the first instance, he could only obtain the right one, by taking her as an addition to the first. Then, as the beloved one proved childless, he could not refuse her importunities to take her handmaid Bilhah, as Abraham had taken Hagar, that she might, through her, obtain children, and be put on equality with her fruitful sister and rival, Leah. Having done this, and the plan having produced the desired results, he could not, in justice, refuse Leah the same advantage, and was obliged to take her handmaid, Zilpah, in like manner. Thus Jacob became encumbered with four wives at once, all though his first disappointment, by the culpable contrivance of Laban. With respect to these handmaids, it should be observed, that they were slaves, whom Laban had presented to his daughters, as their own peculiar property at the time of their marriage, and who were entirely at their disposal, and free from the control of the husband. Such handmaidens had before been given to Rebekah, and had accompanied her to the land of Canaan. We meet with these dotal servants frequently in the ancient and modern East, and even among the classical ancients.

Their condition, indeed, among the Greeks and Romans, seems to have been in all respects similar to that in which it here appears. Many curious instances might be collected, from the dramatic poets in particular. Take one or two as examples. In his *Iphigenia in Aulis*, the tragic poet Euripides represents Clytemenstra as preparing all things for her daughter's marriage, and she says—"I, as the bride-leader, am present; let, therefore, the dotal maids, whom, as part of the dowry I bring, go forth out of the chariots," etc. And again, in the same tragedy, the queen thus says to one of her confidants—"I know you to be an old servant in my family." "And know you not," this her servant answers, "that king Agamemnon received me as part of your dowry," or, "as one of your dotal servants."

Again, king Phalaris, in one of his epistles, gives orders for four of such dotal maidens to be sent, for the service of the bride at a marriage he had appointed. In the *Asinaria* of Plautus, also, one of the characters, old Demænetus, is told by his slave that his wife had brought him such a dotal servant, as had more in his hands than even he himself had. Furthermore, Cato writing to enforce the *Lex Voconia*, produces the case of a rich lady who had brought a great fortune to her husband, but had reserved to herself part of the estate, out of which she lent a considerable sum to her husband. But some difference arising between them, she ordered her dotal and reserved servant, to go and demand of her husband all that he had borrowed of her, and unless he paid it, to commence a suit against him for it. On which case, it is remarked by Aulus Gellius, that as none of her husband's servants could be commanded by her in this affair, she was obliged to make this, her exempted and reserved slave, to be her solicitor for the money, he not having been given away by her, but retained by the marriage-contract under her sole and separate jurisdiction.

By these instances, we see that the dotal servants of the wife, whether male or female, were at her entire disposal, and that the husband, apart from her, had not the slightest

authority or control over them. This is still the case throughout the East, as we could show by many instances, if space allowed.

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## TENTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

## THE FLOCK.—GENESIS XXXI.

WHEN we reflect upon Rebekah's conduct in the mode of obtaining Isaac's blessing for Jacob; when we consider Jacob's own proceedings in securing the birthright and the blessing; when we regard Laban's scandalous deceit in respect of Jacob's marriage—in which his daughter Leah took part; and when we look to the various proceedings of the two sisters as rival wives; with the theft of her father's images by Rachel, and her readiness at lying and deception to conceal that theft—we have, taken altogether, about as full an amount of immorality and lack of truthfulness as it would be easy to find in any one family. How is this? We fear that we cannot withhold our concurrence from the opinion of Dr. Chalmers, who, in his pain at the apparently low moral sense of even persons entitled on many grounds to respect, more than once alludes to the matter. "We cannot help thinking," he says, "that this family at Haran must have been a wily, politic, deceitful set. Laban was characterized by it all over—Rebekah had her full share; and we can detect no small spice of it in their descendants—as in Jacob on the one hand and Rachel on the other. There seems to have been a very unformed morale among them."

Previously, in regard to Abraham's deception in Egypt, recorded without any animadversion on the evil of it, he remarks: "Though morality is, in the abstract, unchangeable, it looks as if, in the concrete, there was a progressive morality from one era to another—an accommodation to the earlier and ruder periods of humanity, distinctly intimated by our



Saviour, when he tells of polygamy being allowed before the times of the Gospel, because of the hardness of their hearts." He adds: "It is worthy of remark, that there is no example, as far as I can recollect, of any deception or imperfect morality of any sort being recorded of Christian disciples in the New Testament, without a prompt and decided condemnation." And again, in reference to Jacob's dealing with the cattle of Laban, Dr. Chalmers remarks: "Altogether, our notion is very much confirmed with regard to the low standard of virtue in those days—not that we have a higher morality, but a higher rule of morality, than in the patriarchal ages of the world. 'You have heard that it was said'—not done, but said—'by them of old time; but I say unto you,' etc. They had a worse system of virtue in those days, even though at present we should fall short of them in practice. They had an inferior schooling to what we now have—a dimmer moral light—whether they were before or behind us in actual observances."

All this is admirably just and true, and our readers cannot do better than carry these ideas with them, in considering the doubtful conduct of some personages in the early scriptural history. With regard to Jacob's bargain with Laban, which he was enabled by his superior craft to turn to such advantage, as greatly to enrich himself from the produce of Laban's flock—we have been accustomed to regard it as entitled to serious reprehension. But, on further consideration, we incline to think that the transaction admits of an interpretation which, without leaving the conduct of Jacob altogether free from reproach, may leave it doubtful, whether he be liable to *all* the blame which on this account has been laid at his door. We are indebted for the outlines of this view to the Hebrew commentators, whose observations on the subject have been collected in the commentary on Genesis, published in 1844, by the Jewish ministers, De Sola, Lindenthal, and Raphall; but it is right to state, that even among Jewish expositors there are some who take quite as unfavorable a view of Jacob's conduct in this affair as

any Christian interpreters have ever done. We must embody this view, presented, in the work indicated, in detached notes, in the form of a connected statement.

The fourteen years which Jacob had agreed to serve Laban for his two daughters, expired about the time that Rachel—who had so long been childless—gave birth to a son named Joseph. As soon as mother and child were sufficiently strong to undertake so long and fatiguing a journey, Jacob asserts his right and declares his wish to return to Canaan. The happy return to his native land, which had been promised to him at Bethel, was the end and aim of all Jacob's hopes and wishes; and the Jews have an opinion, or tradition, that Rebekah about this time fulfilled her promise of sending for him, as soon as he could return with safety, Gen. xxv. 14, which made him the more desirous to return. As anticipated, Laban received this intimation with much disturbance. He knew well the value of Jacob's services, and now that he can no longer command, he bends himself to entreaty and acknowledgment: "I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes, tarry; for I perceive that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake." He also said: "Name to me thy wages, and I will give it."

In this proposition, Jacob sees the means of securing an independent provision for his family—for now, after fourteen years' services, he has no wealth but four wives and twelve children. It was usual in that age, and is still usual in the East, for those to whom the charge of a flock is intrusted, to obtain their remuneration from the produce or increase of the flock, and Jacob shapes his proposition for the remuneration of his future services on that basis.

Sheep are generally altogether white in the East, and goats wholly black. Sheep of the latter color are very scarce, but some of a dark red are found. Such as are parti-colored, are very rare indeed—far rarer than even with us. Jacob proposed that all the parti-colored young, hereafter born in the flock intrusted to his charge, should be his perquisite—after all the present lambs and kids thus marked had

been removed, and placed under separate care. Thus far it would seem that Jacob relied on the blessing of God upon the natural increase of the animals thus distinguished, under the condition, to his own disadvantage, that the parti-colored young should be removed. Laban consented to this arrangement. But the very day that it was completed, Laban caused to be separated from the flock not only the parti-colored young of the sheep and goats, as Jacob contemplated, but all, whether old or young, that had any variation of color in them; and placing the small flock thus composed under the charge of his sons, directed that it should be removed three days' journey apart from the large flock that Jacob fed. This is alleged to have been a clear infraction of the agreement, since Jacob had only consented to the reduction of his probability of large gains, by the removal of the parti-colored *young*, but required the old bucks and ewes to remain in the flock, as without this there was little human probability of his reaping any benefit from the contract. The proportion of spotted or parti-colored animals born in an oriental flock is usually very small; and by removing the few spotted rams and ewes, the proportion was reduced to nothing. This first great deviation of Laban's from the original terms of the agreement, compelled Jacob, it is urged, to abandon those fair and regular means which he at first contemplated, but of which Laban deprived him by removing the rams and ewes.

The means he did resort to, was of acting upon the imagination of the animals, by placing parti-colored rods before their eyes, so as to induce the production of parti-colored young. It was quite successful. The question is, whether, at the time he entered into his contract, he knew that he possessed the means of turning it to his advantage, to an extent which Laban could not foresee, and would not have allowed. If he did, and if he entered into the contract with this intention, his conduct deserves the worst things that have been said of it. But it is assumed by one class of vindicators, that it was one part of the agreement between Laban

and Jacob, that the latter was to be at liberty to employ any means in his power of increasing his own remuneration, and that Laban consented to these terms, in the conviction that no artificial means could be available for producing such a result as Jacob eventually succeeded in obtaining.

But others, without insisting upon any such understanding, urge, that Laban's removal of the rams and ewes was such an infringement of the treaty, as, by depriving Jacob of any hope of remuneration by ordinary means, reduced him to the necessity, either of using reprisals, or of submitting a second time to be the dupe of his unprincipled uncle. He was then driven to the resources supplied by his intimate acquaintance—acquired by long and intelligent experience in pastoral pursuits—with the nature, instincts, and susceptibilities of the animals under his care. But although his knowledge might have led him to conjecture, that the means which occurred to him might be effectual; yet, as the experiment had never been tried, it was, at the best, a very hazardous one, which he could not in the first instance have contemplated, and which he did not employ until Laban's selfishness and injustice left him no other choice. The conclusion drawn from this view of the case is, that “although Jacob's conduct on this occasion may not be praiseworthy, it does not merit the harsh interpretation with which it has been assailed.”

It must be admitted, that there is sufficient in this explanation to permit us to regard the case as doubtful. But allowing Jacob all the benefit of the doubt, and all the advantage of this explanation, it may be asked, Why the injustice of Laban rendered his case so hopeless, as to drive him to this questionable expedient? His refuge from Laban was with God, who had *promised* to make his way prosperous. It is to be feared that in this case, as in that of the blessing, Jacob was but too prone to find expedients for *helping* God to accomplish His own purposes. Then, again, if all the rest were right, or at least not blamable, what shall we say to the eagerness which urged him so to manage his proceedings,

by subjecting only the strong ones to the operation from which he was to reap advantage, that all the strong animals became his, and all the weak ones Laban's? This is revolting; and we do wrong if out of respect to the character of a man whom the sacred Scripture represents to us with all the light and shade of natural character, we suffer our young ones to receive the impression, that right and wrong are matters of conventional interpretation, and not clear and certain facts, to be known and read of all men. Our rising generation must not thus learn the lessons which the Bible was given to teach. We love Jacob with all his faults; we love him more as he grows older. But it is better that Jacob's character should suffer, than that one of these little ones should perish, through any unwise attempts to prove that his wrong was right.

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TENTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

THE DEPARTURE.—GENESIS XXXI.

THE increase of Jacob's sustenance was in sheep and goats, yet we are told that at the end of the six years, that is, of twenty years in all, he had "much cattle, bondmen and bondwomen, camels and asses." How were these obtained? Some have found a difficulty in this which we are unable to perceive. Obviously, he sold part of his increase in sheep and goats, and bought other property with the proceeds. He has now enough. He has provided for his household, and the wish to return home revives, and is strengthened by circumstances.

The substance of the thirty-first chapter of Genesis, is composed of a statement of—

Jacob's reasons for departing,  
 His wives' reasons for concurring with him,  
 And Laban's reasons for opposing.

Jacob's reasons are imparted to his wives, whom, for greater privacy, he summons to the fields for the purpose of conferring with them together, as they lived separately. Here, it is worthy of remark, that the two secondary wives are not consulted in the matter. This is a mark of their inferior condition. There is no distinction made in any way between the sons of these women, and those of Rachel and Leah—though the mothers are thus unfavorably distinguished. The reason is, that the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, the handmaidens, have been adopted by Leah and Rachel as their own, and have been recognized by Jacob as his sons. This removes all distinction between them, but does not render their mothers equal to Jacob's free wives.

Jacob's reasons were, that God had commanded him to return; that he had been very badly treated by Laban, whom, to the best of his power, he had faithfully served; and that now, the increase of wealth which God had given to him, was viewed with jealous eyes by Laban and his family.

The wives' reasons lay, first, in their assent to Jacob's own reasons. But, beside this, they had special reasons of their own. They had clearly, they said, nothing to expect from their father, who treated them as strangers, belonging to Jacob rather than to himself. And, furthermore, by selling them for Jacob's services, he had appropriated all the advantages to himself; for if he had been paid for them in goods or money, custom would have required him to have employed some part of it in gifts to them; which, in the way he had proceeded, was avoided, whereby they were left without the separate means to which they were, by their rank in life, entitled.

Having obtained the concurrence of his wives, Jacob delayed not his departure. He had reason to fear that Laban would attempt to detain him or his property by force; and he, therefore, stole away secretly, while Laban was engaged, three days' journey off, in shearing his sheep. The women and children were mounted on camels, and soon the whole

of the flocks, and herds, and people, were on the march for the land of Canaan. Jacob might have hoped that the conviction, that he had six days' start, would discourage Laban from attempting a pursuit. But if so, he was mistaken. Laban, travelling without encumbrance, might yet hope to overtake, before reaching the Jordan, a large and impeded caravan, going slowly, and making short stages, on account of the young cattle, the women and the children. And, in fact, Laban did overtake them on the wrong side of the Jordan, among the mountains of Gilead. It might have gone ill with Jacob, for Laban had his kinsmen with him; but God had not forsaken him, and Laban was warned in a dream to do him no harm. Still, however, he did not avoid the interview with Jacob. That interview is exceedingly characteristic. When Laban came up, Jacob had encamped in Gilead; and Laban having encamped in sight, went over to the camp of Jacob. It is remarkable that Laban, in his complaint, says not a word about the property; but having been prevented from the proceedings he contemplated, he makes the offence rest upon the unfriendly distrust evinced by this secret departure. He complains that his daughters had been carried away like captives taken with the sword. And again, he had not been suffered to kiss his daughters, before what was meant to be a final separation. The poor man is full of his daughters; for whom, according to their own account, he has no real regard at all. Let him, however, have the credit of the feelings he claims. It is a hard thing for a man to part with his children forever, even though he may have slighted them while they were near. The slow depths of even the worldly heart, are stirred by such an occurrence; old paternal memories revive, and the fatherly sympathies awaken in their force. We shall, on these grounds, always be most safe in according to every one that degree of paternal affection, which he exhibits or claims under such circumstances.

Once more—"Wherefore didst thou abscond secretly, and steal away from me, and didst not tell me, that I might have

sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?" This is interesting. The harp or lyre has before been mentioned as among the instruments invented by Jubal; but this is the first mention of the "tabret." The original word is *toph*, meaning a kind of hand-drum or tambourine. The same instrument is, at this day, known by the corresponding name *doff* in Syria, Egypt, and Arabia. This, with other instruments of music, together with songs and cries, are still used when a person of any note sets forth upon a long journey in the East. The "songs," were probably such vocal sounds as are still used in the East on the like occasions by the women, to express joy, exultation, or any not decidedly mournful emotion. This is the *Ziraleet*, which consists of the words *lillé, lillé, lillé*, repeated as often as the person can utter them in one breath; and being uttered very rapidly in a shrill tone, the sound is heard to a great distance. It is preceded, on such occasions as this, and on some other occasions, by a stanza of four lines, recited by a single voice, expressive of thanks to God for benefits received, or of supplications, or good wishes. These are usually extempore, and, therefore, the more precisely appropriate to the occasion and the circumstances.

Furthermore, and to clench all the rest, Laban makes the astounding charge, that Jacob had stolen—his gods! It is clear that Laban knew and acknowledged the Lord, but with the worship of Him, he had mixed certain strange gods, or, at least, certain superstitious images, such as elsewhere occur in Scripture under the name of *teraphim*; and which appear to have borne the human figure, and to have been used chiefly for purposes of divination. Josephus says, with probability, but with reference to a different matter, that it was the custom of the Mesopotamians to have all the idols they worshipped in their own houses, and to take them with them on their journeys. Aware of the possibility that these images may have been taken, Jacob, although shocked at the charge, does not venture to assert positively that they may not be in the camp, but he gives Laban leave to seek for them, and







TENTH WEEK, 6th DAY.

declares, that he may put to death any one in whose possession they may be found. Alas! he little thinks that it is his beloved Rachel who has them. She had stolen them before her departure. For what purpose is not clear; but it is to be feared, for superstitious uses. Had Jacob known where they were, he would have trembled when he saw Laban, in his search, enter Rachel's tent. But he need not have feared. Laban's daughter was a match for her father, even in his own line, and fairly outwitted him. She had these images under "the camels' furniture," upon which she sat in the tent; and professing to be too ill to rise to pay her proper respect to him, by standing in his presence, he hurriedly and considerably abstained from insisting upon her rising, that he might examine her seat. What "this camel furniture" was, has been questioned. Some think it was the small tent or cradle which is thus termed; but these are only used on the camel's back, and never for seats. We see no reason to alter the opinion we have had other occasions of expressing: that it was the camel's pack-saddle, which is peculiarly appropriate to the purpose of a seat, or rather of a cushion, against which a person seated on the floor may lean; these saddles, commonly made of wood, are high; and the concavity, usually filled by the convex back of the camel, would have formed a good hiding-place for the images. If any object to this, that the saddles are not usually removed from the camels' backs at the end of merely a day's journey, it may still be suggested, that the teraphim may have been concealed by Rachel under the *hesar*, which consists of carpets, cloaks, cloths, and the like, heaped upon the saddle to form a comfortable seat for such women as do not ride in the cradle. These things are always taken off at the end of the day's journey, and form a kind of mattress in the tent upon which a person may sit or lie down. Between these parts of the camel's furniture the alternative seems to lie.

When Laban returned from the last tent unsuccessful—Jacob at length spoke out. He spoke like a man of sense and spirit, and his words were words of weight. He de-

manded with warmth why he had been so hotly pursued. He set forth his services and sufferings; and he declared his conviction that, "Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the Revered One of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst now sent me away empty. God hath seen my affliction, and the labor of my hands, and rebuked thee yester night."

Laban did not, could not, directly reply. He said, vaguely, that all Jacob had, all the substance spread upon the hills before him, was virtually his; but insinuated that he waived his claim to it in consideration of his daughters and grandchildren. He proposed that there should be a covenant of peace between them, and that a monument should be set up in testimony of the transaction. Jacob, as he had done at Bethel, set up a large stone as his memorial—while Laban and his friends piled up a large heap of stones. The covenant proposed by Laban, and consented to by Jacob, was, that seeing (as he alleged) the property was his, it should not be allowed to be shared by others, by Jacob's taking any other wives besides his daughters; and that they were neither of them to pass the boundaries defined by these memorials for harm to the other. In this point of view, these became boundary monuments, analogous to others of the like kind found in various countries. Witness that mentioned in the treaty of peace between England and Scotland, as recited by Holinshed: "That Malcolm shall enjoy that part of Northumberland that lieth betwixt Tweed, Cumberland, and Stainmore, and do homage to the kinge of England for the same. In the midst of Stainmore there shall be a crosse set up, with the king of England's image on the one side, and the king of Scotland's on the other, to signify that one is on his march to England, and the other to Scotland. The crosse was called the Roi-crosse, that is, the cross of the kings." The intention of the cross, and the pains taken to defend it, seem, as Sir Walter Scott remarks,\* to indicate that it was

\* In *Rokeby*.

intended as a landmark of importance. In this case, the two images represented the two contracting parties, shown by different kinds of memorials in the transaction between Jacob and Laban.

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## TENTH WEEK—SEVENTH DAY.

THE FIRST PRAYER.—GENESIS XXXII.

THE natural curiosity which we experience to know what Esau had been doing during the twenty years of Jacob's absence, is in part gratified. Still it is merely a glimpse of him and his condition that we obtain. He resided chiefly among the mountains of Seir, which was then occupied by the Horites; and by the power which he acquired, through the gathering around him of persons of like bold and hardy character and habits, eventually strengthened by the pastoral wealth which he received on the death of his father, his children were enabled to establish a paramount influence in the country, and to become its sovereigns. Even at the time of Jacob's return, Esau's power had become very great; for when he received a submissive and most respectful message from Jacob, making known his return, he was able to command the services of four hundred men, at whose head he set forth to meet his brother.

What his intentions were in taking this step, he did not disclose to the messengers. It might be friendly; for, according to the custom of the East, the attention paid to a person is in proportion to the extent and splendor of the train sent forth to meet him. But Jacob feared, and had reason to fear, that his design might be hostile, although it does not often happen that men of Esau's impulsive temper retain their anger for twenty years. But the angels of the Lord encamp round about those that fear him; and Jacob had been encouraged by a vision, in which he beheld the protecting angels, in two hosts, at Mahanaim. Still, his heart was

moved by the intelligence his messengers brought ; and as a measure of precaution, he divided his people and flocks into two companies—the one to be in advance of the other, that if the foremost were smitten by his brother, the other, containing the women and the children, might have the opportunity of escape. What more could he do? He prayed. This prayer is the first on record—for the intercession of Abraham for Sodom was more of a remonstrance or argument than a prayer. Many prayers had been offered before the time of Jacob, but this is the first of which we have any knowledge ; and since the most ancient remaining example of any human act and thought, is deemed worthy of peculiar notice and consideration, the first human prayer that has reached us is entitled to attention. It is short, emphatic, comprehensive, and strictly appropriate to the exigency. “ O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord who saidst unto me, ‘ Return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee ;’ I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant : for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau : for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.”

It does not seem that there could be a finer model for a special prayer than this, the most ancient of all. He first claims his interest in the broad covenant with Abraham and Isaac—just as we might, and indeed ought, to set forth our interests in the mercies covenanted to us in Christ ; then he urges the covenant of personal mercies and promises ; then he humbles himself into nothing before God, confessing, with most affecting emphasis, his utter unworthiness of the blessings that have been showered upon him—yet venturing, notwithstanding, to hope deliverance from the danger that lay before him. His prayer was heard. Mysterious encouragements were given him that very night, when he remained alone, after he had sent his people over the river Jabbok. **An**

unknown traveller engaged, as it were, in a struggle with him, in the course of which it seems that the stranger suffered not his spiritual nature to transpire, but allowed his opponent to seem the stronger, until at length he put forth an atom of his shrouded strength, and, by a simple touch, caused the sinew of Jacob's thigh to shrink. Then, knowing that his conflict was not with flesh, Jacob yet retained his hold, and with the strong importunity and boldness of conquering faith, cried: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." And he was blessed. And not only so; but he received a new name—the name of ISRAEL—intended to denote his power with God, and, therefore, to assure him and his against any cause of dread from the power of man.

The whole scene, which some do not hesitate to regard as the most important event in the life of Jacob, seems to us like the spiritual struggles to which we are all subject, that some have doubted whether there is more in this than the representation of mental thought and conflict under the figure of bodily action; while others have supposed that Jacob, having remained behind, wrapped himself up in his mantle and slept—then undergoing in vision the conflict which is described. There is not, in the nature of things, any intrinsic objection to this—for we read in Genesis of divers communications made to man in visions, but we shall not always be safe in regarding that as a vision which Scripture records as a fact. Besides, that Scripture records some things as visions, and others as facts, renders it the more difficult to regard as a vision that which the text describes as a fact. If we admit this, it must become uncertain what is visionary and what is true, unless we contend that a vision is not less true than a fact. And it may be so; yet in the case of a fact, we can ourselves judge of it; whereas in a vision the judgment of another, in the interpretation of that vision, is interposed between us and the simple truth. Besides, in those ages, God taught mankind by more sensible manifestations and representative actions than are now, with our fuller light, required; and it seems to us, that we are precluded from regarding

this as a vision, by the fact that, when Jacob resumed his journey, he actually “halted upon his thigh,” where the angel had touched him—a physical fact, physically commemorated by the Israelites to this day, in their abstinence from the particular part of the animals they eat, which answers to “the sinew that shrank” in the thigh of Jacob. Men do not get lame in visionary conflicts. With the greater or lesser probability of real and of visionary conflicts, we have nothing to do. We are to see what it really is that Scripture teaches or communicates. Rightly apprehended, the circumstance, whether a vision or a fact, is full of matter to awaken thought and to afford encouragement. Let those who wish to see how it may be applied, and what sweetness may be extracted from it, read Charles Wesley’s noble hymn, beginning—

“Come, O thou Traveller unknown,  
Whom still I hold, but cannot see!  
My company before is gone,  
And I am left alone with thee:  
With thee all night I mean to stay,  
And wrestle till the break of day.”

And ending thus—

“Contented now, upon my thigh  
I halt till life’s short journey end;  
All helplessness, all weakness, I  
On thee alone for strength depend;  
Nor have I power from thee to move—  
Thy nature and thy name is Love.”

This encouragement to rely upon the Divine protection, did not seem to Jacob to require any alteration of the arrangements he had previously made, with the view of propitiating his brother. This consisted of the noble present from his own flocks and herds, which he proposed to send on in advance in different droves, the leaders of which were instructed severally to declare, when questioned by Esau, that “These be thy servant Jacob’s; it is a present unto my lord Esau; and, behold, he also is behind us.” This is the first direct



case of making presents which we find in the Scripture, but which we often meet with afterwards; and the case is in entire conformity with the existing usages of the East. No one dreams of approaching a superior without a gift; and the respect and consideration he means to evince, is estimated by the value of his offering, due regard being had to his circumstances. In this case it was not only a mark of attention, but an acknowledgment of inferiority.

After all this preparation, it was still a trying moment when the two brothers, the cautious Jacob, and the rough but warm-hearted Esau, came in sight of each other, after so long a separation. Jacob, who was probably riding, dismounted when Esau appeared, and adopted the form of advance which a subject uses in approaching a prince in the East. He stopped, at intervals, seven times, to bow very low—"bowed himself to the ground"—as he advanced. The seventh pause, the seventh bow, brought him very near to his brother. They saw each other face to face once more; and although "a brother offended is harder to win than a strong city,"—Esau was won. He yielded to his heart's impulse, and rushed forward to give the embrace of a brother to his father's son. "He ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell upon his neck and kissed him; and they wept."

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### Eleventh Week—Sunday.

BENONI.—GENESIS XXXV. 18.

OF Jacob's twelve sons all but the youngest were born in Padanaram. That youngest, the only one native to the land of promise, was also the child of the well-beloved Rachel, whose earnest and not always reasonable craving for children had rendered much of her husband's life uncomfort-

able. At last her desires were gratified. She had one son in her own country. That was Joseph. And now, when Jacob was on the way from Bethel to join his father at Mamre, just before coming to Bethlehem, another was given to her. But this blessing was won at a costly price. She died in giving him birth. In her dying agony she gave her child the name of BENONI, "the son of my sorrow;" but Jacob changed this name to Benjamin, "son of the right hand."

Thus Jacob lost, soonest of all, and still young, the wife he loved most, and probably the only one to whom he felt bound by any other tie than that of duty. That loss—and the deep pang it gave, he remembered well—it was always present with him to his dying day. Witness that touching incident in his last discourse with Joseph—the abrupt transition of ideas with which, while discoursing of other matters, he suddenly and sorrowfully remarks: "As for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan, in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath; and I buried her there, in the way to Ephrath."

How is it that the favorite of Heaven should thus suffer? Except David—also highly favored of God—and scarcely excepting him, there is no man in all the Scripture so deeply tried in his affections as Jacob. That which he most loved—on which his heart was most fixed, is constantly torn from him, and more than once he had occasion to ask,

"Could not the grave forget thee, and lay low  
Some less majestic, less beloved head?"

First he lost Rachel, whom he loved so that his seven long years of service for her, "seemed to him but a few days for the love he bore to her." Then the son of the lost Rachel twines himself around his heart, and that son is also suddenly reft from him. He sees his bloody robe; he believes him torn of beasts; and when his sons and daughters rose up to comfort him, he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I

will go down to the grave unto my son mourning." Next his Benjamin, the sole remaining relic of that beloved wife, is demanded from him, and he gives him up in the strong fear that he shall see his face no more. He resists long in this instance: "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him in the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." But stern necessity compels. He yields him up—he suffers him to depart, with the sad words which strike the ear like a groan, "If I be bereaved, I am bereaved." Gen. xlii. 38; xliii. 14.

It was, therefore, in his most treasured affections—in the things that touch the heart most dearly—that it was the lot of Jacob to be tried. We all have our trials—one after this manner, another after that. This was *his* trial. And it is the hardest to bear. What is the wrath of man—what is the loss of substance, of comfort, of health—compared with such trial, such loss as this? The deceitfulness of Laban was hard: but he had a spirit that rose above it, that trod it down, that turned it to good. The fierce threats of Esau were terrible: but his heart was in God's hands—he might relent, he did relent. But the grave knows no relenting—the dead come back no more. All other loss is remediable—but such as this never, while the heart lives to suffer. Besides, as in this case, it is the most loved that is soonest lost. Too strong earthly love—and even love not all earthly—seems to blight its object. It is burnt up suddenly, as by the very warmth of our affections, or it wastes silently away before their glowing heat.

But *why* was the man chosen of God, even in his mother's womb, thus tried, where he would feel most severely? It may be for the very reason that this *was* the point in which he would feel most acutely, and in which, therefore, he might be most effectually corrected. He needed correction. There was much in him—as in all of us—of the earth, earthy, which needed sharp fires to burn it out: and *this* was the fire in which God tried him, because it would best purify

him. Even the inordinancy of his affections needed correction. He was one of those men whose affections are not expansive but concentrative. There were many objects—wives and children with claims upon his affection; but he must have some object to love pre-eminently, while the rest were less regarded. First there was Rachel, then Joseph, then Benjamin. But this inordinancy of special affection is often a snare to the soul. It borders on idolatry. It sets a rival on God's throne, and establishes a conflicting interest between earth and heaven. This must not be. It is dangerous and soul-destroying; and, therefore, often does God, out of mere kindness and pity, take away the desire of our eyes with a stroke. The wit of man can find no other reason than this most authentic one, why it is that the objects we cherish most are soonest lost.

Again, we may observe in this the necessity of submitting our desires to God. Rachel made her own life and her husband's unhappy by her deep anxiety for children. Well, she has children, and she dies. Had children still been withheld from her, she might have lived many years, enjoying the society of him whose love was to her better than ten sons. How often thus are we judged and punished, by the gratification of our choice desires. We are not content to rely upon the Lord's judgment of what is best for us. We weary him with complaints as to what he sends, or what he withholds—till at last he says, "They are given to idols; let them alone." Our wish is granted—and we perish, or find that we have won only sorrow or shame.

Happy they who, in the midst of such afflictions, from the loss of friends by death or circumstances, can say, with chastened hearts—

"As for my friends, they are not lost:  
The several vessels of thy fleet,  
Though parted now, by tempest tost,  
Shall safely in the haven meet."—BAXTER.

No one can fail to be much struck by the deep significance

of the change of the child's name from Benoni to Benjamin. Having regard to the significance of these names, the fact is wonderfully suggestive. There are few whom it will not remind how often that which came as a grief remains as a joy and a blessing—how often, within their own experience, the son of their sorrow has become the son of their right hand. It had been something to change the name for one of neutral meaning—that it might not remain as a memorial of grief; but it is more, when it is changed into a name of strength—a name of gladness and of power. We have known the cases of men greatly bowed down by some affliction, which threatened to make life a blank and a burden to them—but God enabled them to endure. God gave them strength; and in that strength they arose triumphant over privation and pain. Their very sorrow they seized, and made it an instrument of power. Their cross, when manfully taken up, became a sword in their hands, with which they went forth conquering and to conquer; and the thorny crown became a diadem of glory and beauty upon their brows. These are the Jacobs whose Benonis became their Benjamins.

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### ELEVENTH WEEK—MONDAY.

#### MOVEMENTS.—GENESIS XXXV.

THERE is some difficulty in understanding the movements of Jacob on his return to Canaan. When he parted with Esau, he expressed an intention of following him at his leisure to Mount Seir; but this intention he did not at that time execute. Seeing how sorely he had longed after his father's house, we expect he would have gone forthwith to his father; but this was by no means the case. And, considering the vow he had made at Bethel, we supposed he would hasten to redeem it when he had returned in peace; but this

he does not do. He goes to the valley of Shechem, to which he had, so far as we can learn, never been before. He had doubtless a reason. We may recollect, that this was the place of Abraham's first encampment, when he entered the land of Canaan; here the place in that land where God first appeared to him; and here the place of the first altar that he built. Here, also, was the tree, the trees, or the grove of Moreh; and, putting all these venerable recollections together, it may not be difficult to discern the reasons which led Jacob to direct his steps in this direction, like the grandfather, the promises made to whom he inherited, and in whose steps he desired to tread. It may appear that the tree, with the altar, combined with these recollections, made this a sacred place; and how much this was honored in after times, we know. This spot was doubtless included in "the field" which Jacob at this time bought of the people of the land; and which he afterwards bequeathed as "one portion above his brethren," to Joseph, whose bones, brought up from Egypt, were buried there. Abraham had not needed to purchase this spot, and the land being then more thinly peopled, the place was not appropriated. But when Jacob came here, one hundred and sixty years after, the population had become less sparse. A town had been built in the valley; and a spot like this, in the near neighborhood of the town, could no longer be secured as an exclusive possession, but by distinct purchase from the inhabitants.

To Bethel Jacob did not proceed, until he received the Divine command to do so. This was after his sons had made their name odious in the neighborhood, and their longer stay unsafe, by the cruel revenge which they took upon the people of the town, for the dishonor which their emir had inflicted upon their sister Dinah.

We are startled at the terms of the order which Jacob issued to his camp, in announcing his intention to proceed to Bethel, that he might "build there an altar unto God, who answered him in the day of his distress." It was in these words:—"Put away the strange gods that are among you;

and be clean, and change your garments." What strange gods were these? We know, but did Jacob know, that Rachel had her father's images, which he called his "gods;" and did he know or suppose, that similar superstitious objects had been brought by others from beyond the Euphrates? We are reluctant to think that Jacob would have tolerated such things through a period of some duration, and only now thought of putting them away. Therefore we are inclined to suppose, that these "strange gods" were idolatrous and superstitious objects of which his sons had, as he knew, just before acquired possession, when they pillaged the town of Shechem—valuable for the materials of which they were composed, but which Jacob feared might in the end prove dangerous.

The part of the injunction which directs the people to purify themselves, and to put on clean vestures, is remarkable as the first example of the personal cleanness which was afterwards regarded as essential to a becoming appearance before God in worship—a salutary observance, which became a matter of ceremonial law under Moses, but which, like many other observances of the law, had its origin in earlier times.

In obeying this injunction we learn that they not only gave to Jacob all "the strange gods that were in their hands," but "all their ear-rings which were in their ears." This is the first mention of ear-rings in Scripture, for the "ear-ring" which was given to Rebekah was in reality a nose jewel. We may be surprised to find these mentioned here as among idolatrous objects. This was probably on account of their bearing the form of idolatrous images or of superstitious symbols, and of their being used at least as charms. But in whose ears were they? It is scarcely credible that Jacob had allowed his people to wear these things, which he now saw to be objectionable, before his eyes every day. We incline therefore to the opinion of the best Jewish interpreters, that these ear-rings had been taken from the ears of the slain and the captive Shechemites, and are now required to be given up, notwithstanding their value. In the time of

Moses we find ear-rings among the spoil taken from the Midianites ; and it is generally supposed that they had been taken from the bodies of the slain, and were therefore worn by men. This may have been the case, as it may be collected from ancient monuments that ear-rings were in ancient times much worn by men of various nations ; yet, in this instance as in the case of the Shechemites, there were numerous female captives, from whose ears, quite as probably as from those of the slain men, the pendants might have been taken. Ear-rings are not now worn by the men of Western or Mohammedan Asia, doubtless by reason of the sumptuary law of their religion, which forbids the use of gold and silver ornaments to men. The existence of the practice in the lands of the Bible under the operation of a law of such comparatively recent origin, therefore, contributes no illustration to the subject, which is better understood from ancient examples as collected from ancient Egyptian monuments.

The use of ear-rings as amulets or charms, formed into idolatrous or astrological symbols, seems to have been carried by the Phœnicians into Africa, where it still remained among Christians in the time of Augustine, who speaks of them with detestation.\*

Jacob's disposal of all these things is somewhat remarkable. He "hid them under the oak which was by Shechem," which was without any reasonable doubt the very oak or rather terebinth tree at Moreh, which we had a former occasion to notice ;† and the very same standing by the sanctuary of God, beneath which in a later day, a stone was set up by Joshua in testimony of Israel's covenant with God.‡

At Bethel Jacob performed his vow by building an altar. He does not seem to have made a very long stay in the place, but before he left it a remarkable incident occurred, being the death of Deborah, his mother Rebekah's nurse. The

\* In his Second Book, *De Doctrina Christiana*.

† Ninth Week—Monday.

‡ Josh. xxiv. 26.



nurse still in the East, as among the classical ancients, remains attached to the family of the children she has nourished, and follows the fortune, of the one who has been the special object of her charge, being regarded with a consideration scarcely less than that of a mother. Thus Deborah had accompanied Rebekah when she left her home to become the bride of Isaac ; and we are somewhat surprised to find her now in the camp of Jacob. We may entertain the reader by mentioning a few of the conjectures that have been brought to bear on the subject—for there is scarcely a single historical point which the Scripture has left in doubt, that has not become the subject of numerous conjectural explanations. A very favorite opinion among the Jews is, that Rebekah had sent Deborah to Padanaram to invite Jacob to return, according to her promise that she would send to fetch him home. But women are not now, nor do we suppose that they have ever been, employed on such missions in the East. Some, however, conjecture that as Jacob had many small children, his mother had sent him her old nurse to assist his wives. Others are more disposed to imagine that Jacob, before he finally settled with all his family at Hebron, had paid a temporary visit to his father, on which occasion, Deborah had returned with him to live with his wives, who were her countrywomen. But another is of opinion that Deborah had, after Rebekah's marriage, returned to her own country, and now intended to avail herself of the opportunity to see once more her old mistress. This, however, is averse to eastern customs. Besides, Rebekah appears to have been by this time dead ; and if we may add a conjecture of our own to these, it would be, that Deborah had on that event received permission either to return home, or else to join Jacob's camp after his arrival in the land of Canaan. It is not to be supposed, but that some intercourse, by interchange of communications and messages, was kept up between Isaac and his son, although the fact is not particularly mentioned. The estimation in which this aged and attached dependant was held, is shown incidentally in the striking fact that the tree

under which she was buried at Bethel was called "the oak of weeping," on account of the great mourning which was made for her.

It was shortly after this, and from this place, that Jacob at length journeyed southward to join his father—Rachel dying on the way, under the circumstance which yesterday engaged our attention.

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## ELEVENTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

### DREAMS.—GENESIS XXXVII. 5-10.

It is difficult to avoid distinguishing the one most beloved by some marks of special favor. It may not be always possible for a parent to avoid loving some one of his children more than the others; and elder children are usually tolerant of the special tenderness commonly shown to their younger brothers or sisters, seeing that it is demanded by their comparatively helpless condition. But a wise father will not, after his younger children pass the age of privileged infancy, allow this feeling to appear. He will not suffer it to influence in any serious way his conduct; and still less will he invest his attachment with invidious distinctions. Joseph was dear to Jacob for his mother's sake—and he was also dear, apparently, for his engaging qualities, his intelligence, and his personal beauty. This might be; but to distinguish his favorite by a finer, richer, and more showy dress—"a coat of many colors," was unwise and foolish. It was even dangerous in a family composed like his of children by different mothers, whose small jealousies and spites against each other were assumed and shared in some degree by their sons.

This might, however, have passed. But the lad began to have dreams of distinction and honor, confirmatory of the pre-eminence with which his father's partiality had seemed to invest him. He not only dreamed, but told his dream—and

that, probably, not without some degree of juvenile exultation. These dreams, like all others to which a representative significance is attached in Scripture, were symbolical; but the symbols were, even at the first view, more easily intelligible than in the dreams of Pharaoh's servants, of Pharaoh himself, of Nebuchadnezzar, and of Peter, and even, perhaps, than that of Jacob himself at Bethel. The brethren were binding sheaves in the field, when their sheaves bowed down to his sheaf, or fell to the ground while his remained erect. Another dream was stronger still—the sun, the moon, and the *eleven* stars did obeisance to him. Even Jacob, who easily interpreted this to mean himself, his wife, and his eleven other sons, was not altogether pleased at this; as for his brothers, these dreams strengthened into positive hatred the dislike with which Joseph was already regarded.

In our day, or rather among ourselves, such dreams would be but little considered, and we are therefore the more struck by the serious attention with which they were in ancient times regarded. Which was right—our long neglect of dreams, or the strong attention which they received in former days, and do still receive among many nations? There can be no question respecting the dreams of Scripture. They were certainly prefigurative—they were true, they were important, and the attention they received was most proper. There can be no doubt of this; the question, therefore, really is, Whether dreams have ceased to be significant—whether this door of intercourse with the future has been closed? The view of dreams set forth in Scripture, and which pervades the sacred books, is, that God does sometimes make known his will to man, and disclose his purposes in dreams:—"God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not—in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men,\* in slumberings upon their bed, then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction; that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man." So also the prophet Joel, quoted by Peter in the great day

\* Job xxxiii. 13-17.

of Pentescot, regards dreams as a form of prophetic intimation—"Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."\* The question is, Whether these things have ceased? It may be so; miracles have ceased; prophecy has closed; why may not significant dreams also have ceased? They may; but have they? Few of the dreams of Scripture, scarcely any, have reference to spiritual matters; and some of them are of no importance but to the dreamers, affecting them only as individuals. We cannot therefore say that they would be discontinued from any spiritual reasons; and still less can we say, that the state of man requires them less now than of old. If we believe there is a spiritual world, why should we be eager to shut up almost the only door of intercourse with it? The state of man may often require intimations more distinct than can be conveyed by *impressions* upon the mind. These more distinct intimations can only be conveyed by words or signs; oral communications have ceased. The voice of God walks not now in our gardens, and is not heard upon our mountains; but a most fitting mode of symbolical or pictorial intimation is left, when the world is shut out, the bodily senses are dormant, and the mind is alone awake, and is capable of receiving any impression that may be made upon it. We can not only see, but hear. There is nothing that man can learn in his waking state, which may not be imparted to him in a dream. The fact is, probably—more than probably—that God still speaketh once, yea twice, in dreams, yet still "man perceiveth it not." It may be, that the circumstances of our high civilization are unfavorable to such perceptions. "A dream," says the wise man, "cometh through much business," Eccles. iii. 5. By multiplying our ideas, by increasing the objects of interest and attention to us, the materials of mental association become so various, and the activity of the mind is so much awakened, that ordinary dreams are probably much more numerous than in older and simpler states of society, and the impressions they make more

† Joel ii. 28-32. Acts ii. 16, 17.

faint. The late rising, and the number of hours devoted to rest, among us, is also favorable to the increase of puerile dreams; whereas men leading a less wildering waking life, sleep regularly and shortly, but soundly; and, rising early in the morning, have but comparatively few dreams. It is well known that dreams seldom arise during sound sleep: and all the sleep of men of simple oriental habits is sound. Hence dreams being more numerous and less vivid, they make less impression on the mind, and those among them that may be really significant, become less heeded. Nevertheless, history, biography, and the experience of most of us, supply not a few modern instances, in which dreams have been most important for warning, for guidance, or for the detection of crime. Those of the latter class are not, perhaps, the most frequent in themselves; but they are most generally and authentically known, as their evidence is necessarily produced in the investigation of the case. Yet even in these cases, there has seemed a general disposition to underrate their importance, for which we feel unable to account, but from the general disposition among the men of the world to discountenance the idea of a particular Providence. This idea is necessarily involved in the belief, that God speaketh to man in dreams; and this very reason, which renders the belief distasteful to the world, should recommend it to the earnest consideration of those to whom that doctrine is dear.

Many of our readers will remember a case which filled the newspapers some years ago. One point in it, which was only mentioned, because it was historically necessary to complete the case, engaged our attention greatly at the time. A young woman was murdered in a barn, and buried under the floor. She was thought by all who concerned themselves about her to be still alive in another place: and the murder remained not only undiscovered, but unsuspected at the time, when the young woman's mother was warned *repeatedly* in a dream to search the barn. She did so; the murder was thus discovered, and the murderer (Cordor,) condemned and executed. Now, from what other cause than a supernatural

action upon the mind of the mother, could this dream have been produced? But men *would* not perceive or acknowledge this. The counsel on both sides, the judge, the reporters, the editors, all, with one consent, pushed this most prominent feature of the case aside. It did not elicit one serious reflection, one pious remark. It was to them only a dream. To us it was the finger of Providence; it was the voice of God, responding to the cry of innocent blood.

Other cases, perhaps more striking, might be produced to show that God has not ceased to speak to man in dreams, whether he will perceive it or not; and that Pilate's wife's message to her husband:—"Have thou nothing to do with that just person; for I have suffered many things this night in a dream because of him;"\* and Paul seeing in a dream a man of Macedonia praying to him for help,† are not the last examples of such communications to mankind.

It would be curious to trace the ideas of dreams entertained by different nations. We have scriptural evidence that, among the Egyptians and Babylonians, dreams were more seriously regarded, and the task of interpreting them intrusted to a distinct and learned profession.‡ Great importance was attached to dreams among the Persians; and it is reported, that Cyrus was cast forth at his birth, because a dream of his mother's was interpreted to promise him universal empire. In the *Chou-king* of the Chinese, it is in dreams that the sovereign of heaven makes his will known to the sovereign of the earth. In Homer, dreams came from Jove; and by both Greeks and Romans it was believed, that in the solitude of caves, and groves, and temples, the gods appeared in dreams, and deigned to answer in dreams their votaries. Among the Hindus, dreams give a coloring to the whole business of life. Men and woman take journeys, perform arduous penances, and go through expensive ceremonies from no other cause than a dream. Among the North American Indians *all* dreams are of importance, but some are of

\* Matt. xxvii. 19.

† Acts xvi. 19.

‡ Gen. xli. 8. Dan. iii. 2; iv. 7.

mysterious fatality to the dreamer, so intimately connected with his well-being, and even his existence, that to obtain their fulfilment, becomes the one object of his thought, and the aim of all his endeavors. Among the Moslems, good dreams are held to be from God, and bad from the devil. Good dreams were held by Mohammed to be one of the parts of prophecy. He is reported, in one of the traditions, to have said—"A good dream is from God's favor, and a false dream is from the devil. Therefore, when any of you dreams of what he likes, he must not tell it to any one but a friend; but when you see anything you dislike, you must seek protection with God from its evil, and from the wickedness of the devil, and spit three times over your left shoulder, and not tell the dream to any one; then, verily, it never will do you any harm." The injunction not to tell bad dreams is curious. Perhaps, there was a similar feeling of old; for Pharaoh's butler and baker seem to have been both reluctant to tell their dreams. The point is particularly insisted upon by Mohammed; we read, "A man once came to the prophet, and said, 'I dreamed my head was cut off.' Then his majesty laughed, and said:—'When the devil plays with any one of you in his sleep, do not mention it.'" In another place he denounces nothing less than hell-fire against those who, to serve a purpose, invent and relate a dream they have not had.\*

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### ELEVENTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

EGYPTIAN SLAVERY.—GENESIS XXXIX.

It smites the heart with pity to behold the change which renders the young Joseph—beloved and cherished of his father, and honored by him with enviable distinctions, reduced to the condition of a slave in Egypt.

Sent by his father to inquire after the welfare of his brothers, who were away with the flocks, they knew him afar

\* *Mischat ul Masabih*. Book 21, ch. 4, part 1.

off by his coat of many colors, and plot not only against his welfare, but his very life—regardless, not only of the bond of brotherhood between them, but of the anguish of soul they knew that the deed they contemplated would inflict upon their father. At the suggestion of Reuben, they do, however, shrink from actually murdering him on the spot; but determine to cast him into one of the cisterns which still abound in Palestine, and which are generally dry in summer, and leave him there to perish. The providential passage of a caravan of Arabian merchants, going down to the great market of Egypt, with their camels laden with the drugs and spices which have always found a ready sale in that country, suggested an equally secure and more profitable mode of disposing of him, by selling him to these merchants for a slave. This would also burden their conscience less; for bad as they were—they gradually shrank from more crime than appeared to them needful to ensure their object. The bargain was soon completed; for as their purpose was only to get rid of an obnoxious brother, they set no high price upon him, and the merchants had him for twenty pieces of silver—not so much as three pounds, if the pieces were, as generally supposed, equal to shekels of silver.

The Ishmaelite merchants knew that they carried the youth to a good market; for Egypt has always, from that day to this, remained the seat of a great mart for slaves. We have but little knowledge of the ancient condition of slaves in that country. Those who were captives of war seem, indeed, to have been badly treated; and like the Israelites eventually, had hard task work imposed upon them, under the superintendence of men who plied the stick freely when not satisfied. But the case of domestic slaves, bought with money, seems to have been very different; and in most respects similar to that of the same class at the present day in the same country. Some facts, therefore, in illustration of their present condition, may be suitably introduced here, as tending to throw some light on the position which Joseph occupied. It is to be observed, however, that white slaves, male or female,



are comparatively rare in Egypt at the present day, and the statements refer chiefly to the deep brown colored slaves from the country of the Gallas, and negro slaves from Eastern Africa. Whiteness of complexion, though making a difference, less regarded in the East than with us, does better the condition of a slave, because white slaves have, from the influences of civilization, become more scarce and valuable; but as these were formerly as common in those countries as black ones are now, and perhaps more common, the condition of the white slave in ancient times was probably not materially different from that of a colored one at present.

It may be doubted from the instance before us, whether a regular slave-trade existed as at present. In other words, we cannot collect that it was then a regular business for men to go into a country for the express purpose of buying up slaves, and conducting them in gangs to the place where they are to be sold. It seems rather, that the collection of slaves was an incident of general traffic, rather than a distinct pursuit.

Joseph was about seventeen years of age. This was a good age for his value as a slave. If anything, a better price would probably have been obtained for him had he been younger, for there is a general feeling in both Egypt and Arabia, that little dependence can be placed upon slaves that have not been brought up in the family; and hence, there is a great reluctance to the purchasing of grown-up slaves for domestic purposes. Such as are above the age of fifteen, do not, at this day, bring much more than the price that was given for Joseph; and they are bought chiefly by the Bedouins, who employ them as shepherds.

The slave-dealers are said to pay great attention to the origin of the slaves, experience having taught them, that there is little variety of character among individuals of the same nation. This may be so with respect to the nations from which slaves are now usually made, which have but a few simple ideas and pursuits; for it would seem, that individuality of character among persons of the same nation, is

in some degree the result of the various circumstances and influences which civilization produces. But it may be, that this discrimination of the slave-dealers, has regard to little more than the few leading points of habit and temper, which constitute what is called national character.

It may be noted, that the Mohammedan inhabitants of these countries change the names of the slaves who come into their possession, unless they have already acquired a name from a previous master. The name of Joseph was eventually changed for an Egyptian name, Gen. xiv. 45; as those of Daniel and his companions were changed for names of Babylon, Dan. i. 7.

As the dealer is afraid lest the condition of his slave, and consequently his salable value, should be deteriorated, he usually treats him well during the journey, and while he remains in his possession. They usually call him *Abouy* (Hebrew, *Abi*), "my father," and are seldom beaten, are well fed, spoken to in a kind manner, and not over-worked. This, however, is less from humanity than to prevent them from pining, or from attempting to abscond. Those, however, who are grown up, or whose disposition has not been tried, or cannot be depended upon, are kept closely confined, well watched, and often chained. On the journey, slaves of this sort are tied to a long pole, one end of which is fastened to a camel's saddle, and the other, which is forked, is passed on each side of the slave's neck, and tied behind with a strong cord, so as to prevent him from drawing out his head. In addition to this, the right hand is also fastened to the pole, at a short distance from the head, thus leaving only the legs and left arm at liberty. In this manner he marches the whole day behind the camel; at night he is taken from the pole and put in irons.

There are few families in Egypt that do not possess one or two slaves. In that country, as well as in Arabia, it is rarely that a slave remains in a respectable family for a number of years, without being made free, and then he is either married to a female slave of the family, or remains

voluntarily as a servant, and receives wages. It is thought a mean action to sell a slave after he has been long resident in a family; though, before he reaches the hands of the master who retains him, he usually passes through several hands. Male slaves are for the most part treated like children of the family, and always better than free servants. Female slaves are not so well off, as they suffer from the jealousy of their mistresses. If a slave behaves ill, he is degraded from domestic service, and sent into the country to labor in his master's fields.

A slave brought up in the house, like Eliezer of Damascus,\* at least in southern Egypt and the lands beyond, thinks himself superior to every other person in it except the master. He is admitted to all the family councils; he is allowed to trade, or to engage in any business, on his own account; and he may, in fact, do just as he pleases, provided he proves himself a bold fellow, who may be relied upon as ready and able, in case of emergency, to wield a sword in defence of his master.

If a slave kill a free man, his master is obliged to pay the price of blood, otherwise his own family becomes exposed to the retaliation of the relations of the deceased; for the death of a slave is not considered an adequate atonement for the blood of a free man.

In Arabia and Egypt the law gives the slaves one great advantage against the harsh conduct of a master. If they are discontented, and decidedly determined not to remain with him, they have a right to insist upon being sent to the public slave-market to be re-sold. They must make this demand in the presence of witnesses, and if persevered in, it must be granted.

In connection with the abduction of Joseph, which he himself describes as his being "stolen out of the land of the Hebrews," Gen. xl. 15, it may be observed, that it is not at this day in Egypt regarded as a crime, to be punished by the judges, to steal a free-born child, but it is such to steal

\* See Seventh Week—Saturday.

a slave. The reason is, that the latter is property, and the former is not.

In this land of Egypt, Joseph was no doubt taken to be sold in the slave-market of the metropolitan city, where he was purchased by Potiphar, one of the king of Egypt's officers.

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## ELVENTH WEEK,—THURSDAY.

### CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.—GENESIS XXXIX. 1.

IF the reader looks to the marginal reading of his English Bible, he will see that the office of Joseph's master, which is described in the text as that of "captain of the guard," is indicated as being more literally "chief of the slaughtermen;" a dreadful and sanguinary title, calculated to give an unpleasant idea of the nature of Joseph's employments. We are afraid to say how much has been written upon the simple question,—What was the real character of the office thus described? If this personage was "chief of the slaughtermen," what did his men slaughter—men or beasts? The title is certainly very equivocal, and its meaning is only to be gathered from analogical researches. The inquiry is not only interesting in itself, as showing under what circumstances Joseph spent many years of his life, but as bringing some curious old customs under view.

The Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) having been made in Egypt, is thought to have a peculiar value for the elucidation of the passages of Scripture which relate to that country. The title these translators give him is *Archimagiros*. Now as to the *magiri*, of whom he is here said to be chief, they are found to have been of two sorts—those who provided the meat, and those who prepared or dressed at home the meat thus provided. The standing of the latter was much higher and more honorable than of the former—and if Joseph's master belonged to this

class, he would be master-cook, or intendant of the royal kitchen—an officer of no mean importance in ancient times. In the curious work of Athenæus, of which we trust the English reader will not much longer lack a translation, a person of this class is introduced as enforcing the consideration due to his place and station, by urging that he had served Seleucus, king of Syria, in the quality of clerk of the kitchen. Hence some have supposed that the Seventy intended to represent Potiphar either as having the chief direction or prefecture of the royal kitchen, or else as presiding over all the inferior officers and men who belonged to the king's slaughter-house. But it is now generally conceived that this was not the office of Potiphar; nor is it now universally supposed that the Seventy meant by the term they employed to allege that it was such.

It is seen, from the intimations respecting the nature of his office, that Potiphar was really, as in the text of his authorized version, the "captain of the guard"—that is, of the military force especially employed in the service of the court. Why such an officer should be called "chief of the slaughtermen," or "executioners," must be explained by reference to the fact that in ancient times all penal inflictions commanded by the king—from scourging to death—were executed by the soldiers forming the royal guard, under the orders of their chief. In his house was also the prison, in which accused persons were confined till their cases should be determined; and this military custody was a high and responsible function, belonging only to an officer of the highest rank. There are several incidents in Scripture which throw light upon the nature and functions of this office.

The prophet Micaiah, having displeased king Ahab by his boldness, is sent to Amon, the governor of the city, and to Joash, the king's son, to be put under confinement, 1 Kings xxii. 26, 27; showing that Amon's post and authority in the matter was subordinate to that of the prince-royal; and from this it appears that the administration of the military custody was a very distinguishing trust of honor and power, which the

nearest branches of the royal family did not regard as beneath them. Jehu's commission to the fourscore men, called "the guard and the captains," for slaying the worshippers of Baal,\* gave them the same kind of authority and commission that we have in view as possessed by the guard. A more striking instance we have in Solomon's sending the illustrious Benaiah, the chief captain of the guard, to put to death Joab and Adonijah.† Nebuzaradan, who held this post under the king of Babylon, actually commanded the army by which the temple and city of Jerusalem were destroyed.‡ In Herod's massacre of the infants at Bethlehem, a body of military men, probably of the royal guard, was engaged. Of the same class was the executioner sent by Herod the tetrarch to behead John the Baptist in prison;§ as well as those who were employed in imprisoning, scourging, and putting to death our Lord and his apostles.||

Many instances to the same effect might be produced from the profane historians; and from all this it clearly enough appears that the administration of the penal law, in all its forms, belonged to military men, and in particular to the guard immediately about the person of the king, whose chief might, therefore, well be called the chief of the executioners. The custom, no doubt, arose from the judicial and executive powers possessed by the kings, whereby they were in the constant habit of ordering the infliction of summary and capital punishments, for the execution of which the military guard, always present, were the most efficient and readiest instruments. Besides, men whose trade lay in the shedding of blood, always seemed the fittest, by their acquired indifference to human suffering, to be the agents of corporeal punishments; and in ancient times, as still in the East, nearly all punishments were corporeal—and, therefore, barbarous, in the view of modern and European civilization, although by summary inflictions all the difficult and complicated questions respecting imprisonment and transportation, which perplex

\* Kings x. 24. † 1 Kings ii. ‡ 2 Kings xxv. § Mark vi. 27.

|| Matt. xxvi.; Acts xvi. 27; xxii. 24; xxvii. 1; xxviii. 16; xii. 6.

the minds of modern statesmen, were avoided. However, between beheadings, cutting off feet, hands, noses, and ears, plucking out tongues and eyes, and inflicting the bastinado—the men of the royal ancient guards had enough savage work to go through, and were subject to a kind of hardening discipline, which scarcely prepares us for the apparently mild and forbearing character which Potiphar exhibits.

What was Joseph's first employment we do not exactly know, further than that it was about the house, not away in the fields. The Orientals, who are greatly taken with the history of Joseph, and repeat it in tale and song, with ample embellishments and numerous variations, give us to understand that Potiphar, who was childless, bought the Hebrew lad with the intention of adopting him for a son, and that he was employed in the garden, where he had a separate lodge for his abode. This is probably because that, with their present habits, which are much less free with regard to women than were those of the ancient Egyptians—of whom they knew nothing—they find themselves unable to account in any other way for the evidently easy access to his mistress which he enjoyed. This mistress makes no mean figure in the Eastern poems founded on this history, in which she bears the name of Zuleekah; and concerning her many particulars are recorded which are quite new to plain readers of the Bible.

It is interesting to observe to what consideration a purchased slave might in a short time rise in ancient Egypt. Joseph must soon, although still so young, have evinced to his master those engaging qualities, and high intelligence in the conduct of affairs, which marked his illustrious career. Potiphar learned to like him, and to repose the utmost confidence in him, eventually making him steward of his household, and leaving all his affairs in his hands. This was the Lord's doing; for it was the consequence of its being seen that everything prospered to which he put his hand, that he obtained advancement and consideration. If he had begun to despair, in his affliction, of the fulfilment of those hopes

which his dreams had awakened, this must have strengthened his heart, by the assurance that he was not forgotten. There is nothing in the East that tends more to one's advancement than the opinion that he is a man in whose hands all business prospers; hence the emphasis with which it is declared that his master discerned Joseph to be "a prosperous man," or, in the more homely but not less exact language of the elder versions, "The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a luckie felowe;"\* or, as another—"became a luckie man."† The reputation of being "lucky," arising from the observation that matters habitually go right in a man's hands, will in the East, and perhaps in the West, make any man's fortune, apart from any considerations of goodness or rectitude; but when, as in the case of Joseph, this reputation is enjoyed by one of irreproachable manners and unsuspected conduct, the claim to consideration becomes invincible. Potiphar had some reason to think the purchase of that Hebrew slave the best bargain he ever made.

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## ELEVENTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

### EGYPTIAN CRIMES AND PUNISHMENTS.

THE Apostle Paul lays down a beautiful law for the conduct of servants, that they are to discharge their duties to their masters on earth as in the view of their Master in heaven, "with good-will doing service as to the Lord, and not unto men." Eph. vi 6, 7. No man ever more faithfully exemplified this rule of conduct than Joseph. So, when his mistress tempted him to sin, he starts from the idea of thus returning the kindness and confidence of his master; but his still more absorbing thought is, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Here we have the secret of his admirable conduct, his integrity, his virtue, and, by consequence, of his prosperity, and of the blessing of God

\* Roger's Version.

† Bishop's Bible.



attending all his steps. The world, as usually happens, was content to know him as "a luckie felowe;" but all his "luck," his "good fortune," his prosperity, his high advancement—was the effect of a certain cause. He lived as in the eye of God; and he discharged his duties and regulated his conduct in the feeling that there was One above whose approbation was of more importance to him than all the world. Such a man could not but prosper. Still it is hard to be misunderstood—hard to rest under injurious imputations in the minds of those who have laden us with favors, and whom we respect and love. It is hard for the innocent to bear this—but it would be harder to bear it, if not innocent. Joseph, when cast into prison by his offended master, on the accusation of a revengeful woman, was no doubt deeply pained; but he would, and doubtless did, take comfort in the thought that his father's God knew him to be a good and faithful servant, and would not fail, in due time, to vindicate his righteousness.

It is not, however, our intention to dwell on the *incidents* of this or any other parts of Joseph's story, seeing that no repetition of them that we ever saw, preserves half the force of the original narrative. We shall be content to illustrate some remarkable or obscure points of it, and to gather up the indication of Egyptian usages which it affords.

In the narrative of Joseph's temptation, what strikes one as greatly different from modern Egyptian usage, is the free access which Joseph and the other men-servants have to their mistress. This surprises the Eastern reader of the narrative; but to us it seems natural, being much in accordance with our own customs. Now this circumstance, so adverse to oriental notions, is remarkably in accordance with what we know of the Egyptians, and supplies one of the many incidents found in the history of Joseph, to confirm the verity of the sacred record. Indeed this history must be regarded as the most remarkable and interesting account of the ancient Egyptians that we possess, and in fact the only account of such ancient date, if we except perhaps some of their own monuments.

It is, then, admitted, on the evidence of the ancient historians, confirmed by the history of Joseph, and by that of the monuments, that the women in Egypt were indulged with greater privileges than in any other country; and this we may certainly accept as an evidence of their higher external and social civilization. The Greek historians seem, indeed, to ascribe a certain superiority in Egypt to the women over the men; but this does not seem to have been true, although the statement may be accounted for, by considering the impression which the polite and formal obeisance of men's strength before woman's weakness and delicacy—such as exists also in modern Europe—would make upon Greek travellers, whose usages were so very different. It is just as if an Oriental should infer, from the deferential attention, which females receive from men under our social system, that women here rule over men, and should deem his discovery confirmed by the fact that a lady reigns over the land. The same phenomena might, indeed, even to this extent, be witnessed in Egypt, where the royal authority and supreme direction of affairs, were intrusted, without reserve, to women. Even the mistakes into which the ancient writers fell, in viewing the customs of the Egyptians regarding women, from their being so precisely similar to those into which an Oriental would fall respecting those of civilized Europe, serve to show us where the truth lay. That the wife of Potiphar was enabled from day to day to converse with Joseph, and that the male servants of the household could come before her at her call, is a fact as astonishing to an Oriental as anything he would witness in our own customs. It shows that the ladies of Egypt enjoyed quite a European measure of freedom at home. Nor, probably, were they subject to modern oriental restraints abroad. On this point there are few facts; but at a later period we find the king's own daughter walking down to the river, with her maidens, with such freedom and unreserve as allowed of her being accosted by a stranger. Exod. ii. 5-7.

At some of the public festivals it is known that women

were expected to attend—not alone, like the Moslem women at a mosque—but in company with their husbands and relations. Josephus, indeed, states that it was an occasion of this kind, when it was the custom for women to go to the public solemnity, “that the wife of Potiphar, having pleaded ill-health, in order to be allowed to stay at home, was excused from attending, and availed herself of the absence of her husband to make her last and deliberate assault upon the virtue of Joseph.”

In this instance, also, it is seen that the Egyptian, although a person of high office, and evident wealth, has no more than one wife. We are informed by Diodorus that the Egyptians were not restricted to any number of wives. But it would appear from the testimony of Herodotus, that it was nevertheless customary to take but one; and the numerous scenes in the ancient mural paintings illustrative of their domestic life, confirm the testimony that a plurality of wives was exceedingly rare. So it is also among the Mohammedans of the present day, who, although allowed by their law to take four wives without sin, very rarely have more than one. Such was, and indeed is now, the case among the Hebrews themselves, who are not by their law restricted in this respect, but among whom a plurality has been and is the rare exception, and not the rule.

Some people have wondered that when Potiphar listened to his wife's accusations, he did not at once put Joseph to death, seeing that he had power to do so, as the offender was his own slave, and the offence a capital crime. It has been urged, indeed, that Potiphar had a two-fold right over Joseph's life, not only as his slave, but as being captain of the guard, which is thought by some to have given him an absolute power of life and death over all his own servants, and all connected with the court. The latter is a great mistake. The sovereign alone—or those invested with delegated sovereign power as governors of provinces—have ever had such power in the Egyptian, or have it in any oriental court. All cases but such as the sovereign himself decides—and his

power is absolute in his own court, and over his own household—must go before the courts of justice. If, therefore, Potiphar had wished to inflict death upon Joseph, he could only have done it by bringing the matter before the king, or before the judges, and as an officer of the court, the former would probably have been his alternative. Then, as to putting him to death as his slave, that was not allowed by the laws of Egypt—just laws for the most part, which, while they sanctioned slavery, forbade the master to put the slave to death. Furthermore, notwithstanding the assertion too often made, that the crime of adultery was punished with death among all ancient nations, it was not so punished by the Egyptians. The punishment of the woman was to have her nose cut off, and of the man to receive a thousand stripes. If, indeed, it were proved that violence was used towards a free woman, the man was indeed subject to a cruel and inhuman punishment, but was still not to be put to death.

These facts help us to understand the conduct of Potiphar, and show us why, when Joseph was charged with this dreadful crime, he did not slay him, or subject him to any immediate punishment, beyond casting him into the prison in his own house, in which persons accused of crimes within the verge of the court, were detained until their cases could be investigated.

He *could not* put him to death; and thus is explained what some have been unable to account for, but by supposing that Potiphar did not really believe the charge brought against Joseph by his wife. But the Scripture expressly says, that he did believe her; for it states that “his wrath was kindled” by her recital, and that it was in consequence of this kindling of his wrath that he cast Joseph into prison. This was, in fact, all that he could do, unless, perhaps, to cause him to be beaten, which, at the time, might scarcely seem to him an adequate punishment. He reserved him for something worse. But as he detained him so long in prison, without bringing the matter to an investigation and punishment, which it was only possible for

him to do in consequence of his position as master of the prison; it would seem, that on cooler reflection he had some misgivings on the subject, or felt reluctance to make the affair a matter of public scandal, and was, therefore, well content that Joseph should remain in prison, especially when he found that, even there, he had made himself useful, and that he could be there kept in a quiet manner, out of the way of his wife.

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## ELEVENTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

THE ROUND-HOUSE.—GENESIS XXXIX. 20.

THE prison into which Joseph was cast, and which was undoubtedly within the premises of his master, is called in the text by a term which signifies the "house of roundness," or "the round-house." It is a curious fact, that the temporary prisons of the constable or police, in which persons are detained until their cases can be investigated by the magistrates, were formerly called "round-houses" throughout our own country, now exchanged for the more recent name of "police-station." It is difficult to see how this name became appropriated to such structures, unless from the originally round form of the prison. In the present case, the term very probably implies an edifice, or portion of the official mansion, mostly subterranean, of which the roof or vault, rising immediately from the surface of the ground, was round, or shaped like an inverted bowl. That it was of this nature, may be inferred from its being called in chap. xli. 15, the "dungeon." Such dungeons are still, under similar circumstances, used in the East, and they have usually an aperture at the top by which some light and air are admitted, and through which the prisoners were let down. These, or any other place of detention, are always upon the premises of the chief of the guard, or of the magistrate. In Persia, for instance, every magistrate invested with a charge of criminal judicature, engages generally the services of certain persons to act as guards

or constables. He commonly prefers such as have been in the service of his predecessor, and have therefore experience in their business. He does not pay them. On the contrary, they render him a considerable annual rent, in consideration of the profit they manage to draw from their employment. To these persons, the officer or magistrate assigns a suite of apartments, consisting of three or four chambers in the outer part of his mansion. Here they detain such criminals as come into their custody. The doors of the chambers are kept shut; but, like other doors of the country, they have little strength, and might be burst open with the foot. Yet, from the construction of eastern buildings, little anxiety is felt about the escape of the prisoners, nor are any unusual precautions taken to prevent it; the porter, always at the gate of the house, being the only fixed jailer. Yet the custody is secure enough, and the prisoners are as uncomfortable as they could be in any public prison. They are not allowed to see any persons but those who have them in charge; and the chambers, besides being often crowded, are purposely left in a filthy and unwholesome condition, that the prisoners may be induced to purchase, at a high price, the enjoyment of the air, and the privilege of some addition to their comfort. If any one is detected in an attempt to escape, he is punished on the spot by a great number of blows with a stick, inflicted by the sole order of the jailer, or the chief of the men who have charge of the prison. To him, or to these men, the prisoners are entirely left by the magistrate, who troubles himself no farther about them, the person who has them in charge acting just as he likes towards them, his sole responsibility being to produce them when required. Hence, we see the importance to Joseph, that he gained the good-will of "the keeper of the prison," whom, for want of a clear perception of the nature of a practice so different from our own, some have regarded as no other than Potiphar himself in whose house the prison was.

It is thus by no means an advantage to prisoners that there are no public prisons, which can only exist where imprison-

ment is a punishment, and not simply a means of detention. In Joseph's case, through his being the slave of the officer who had the prison in his house, the detention was long enough to have the effect of a punishment; and he might probably have been kept in confinement any length of time his master had seen fit, had not the Lord prepared a way for his deliverance.

It would seem that he was at first harshly treated. The Psalmist says of him, "Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in irons," Ps. cv. 18. This was probably under the first wrath of the master; and that, however painful while it lasted, it was not of long duration. It can scarcely be questioned, that the keeper of the prison was previously well acquainted with Joseph, who had long acted as sole manager of his master's household. He was probably, also, sooner than Potiphar himself, convinced of Joseph's innocence; for he was not subject to the same influence which led that person to credit the story his wife had told him; and previous intimations of the character and designs of this woman had probably come to his notice, which the husband himself would be the last to learn. Joseph, also, as a slave, possessing nothing but what depended on the favor of a master, who had become his enemy, was not of the class whose circumstances could offer to the governor of the prison any gainful inducements to harsh or extortionate conduct. Nothing was to be gained by using him ill; while a man of his tried abilities might be in many respects useful, even in a prison, if properly treated. It speaks well for Joseph, that in the position of command in which he had been placed, and which is one usually distinguished by the insolence of those who fill it, he had made, not enemies, but friends. Had it been otherwise—had an ill feeling been excited against him in his former office, there would have been little disposition in the prison to trust him, and to treat him with consideration. But we must not forget, that this was the Lord's doing. It was He who "gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison."

The prison was, however, not that of an ordinary magistrate, it was that of the captain of the guard; and in it the court prisoners were confined. The office of keeper was, therefore, one of most serious responsibility. Yet, great as that responsibility was, the keeper, in the fulness of his reliance upon Joseph's integrity and good conduct, soon committed the whole management of the affairs of the prison into his hands; "and, whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it;" or rather, perhaps, "he directed to be done." With how many strange facts of courtly life he must then have become acquainted; for, doubtless, among those who abode for a time in this place, were many persons, high in rank and office, from whose complaints or statements, much high and strange matter might be learnt, calculated to be of much use to Joseph in the future career which the providence of God had marked out for him, and for which therefore this imprisonment was no bad training. By this means he must have eventually come to the court possessed with no imperfect knowledge of the state of parties—if there were such things as parties in those days; and of the standing and character of the leading persons in the king's service. We know that the great personages, who found their way to this prison, did converse freely with Joseph; and as political reserve is a thing utterly unknown in the East, it is beyond doubt that he learned much from them, not only respecting themselves and their own affairs, but respecting many other high persons who never themselves came under the care of the keeper of the prison.

The chief butler and the chief baker (or rather cook) of the king of Egypt, were among those who were brought to the prison, while Joseph had the management of it. These were very high offices, especially the former. We had occasion two days ago to indicate the importance of the latter office. The former was not less important, and it has retained its distinction much later than the former, even in western courts. The noble family of Butler, in this country—which formerly held the now extinct dukedom of Ormond, owes



its foundation to a person who exercised this office at court, and, we believe, held an hereditary claim to it. We have even a scriptural instance in the case of Nehemiah, who was cup-bearer to the Persian king, and was manifestly a person of high consequence, as indicated not only from his receiving the appointment of governor of Judea, but from the immense wealth which enabled him to sustain at his own cost, for several years, the charges of that expensive office. So also, Rab-shakeh, one of the chief generals of the Assyrian host, was, as his name imports, *chief cup-bearer* to his king.

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### Twelfth Week—Sunday.

“REMEMBER ME WHEN IT SHALL BE WELL WITH THEE.”—  
GENESIS XL. 14.

SOME have thought, as will be shown in to-morrow's paper, that Joseph's anxiety to find a place in the remembrance of the chief butler, when he should become prosperous, was not altogether free from objection. It must be confessed that his words have a worldly sound. But since God so generally works by means, and does signally so work throughout the history of Joseph, it may be thought that he was right in taking such means as appeared to him proper for effecting his deliverance; nor is it needful to suppose that he thereby abandoned his trust in God. It may, however, be written here as one of those instances of human weakness, from which the history of no one of the patriarchs is wholly free. We incline to this view. Joseph desires the influence of this man, to speak on his behalf to the king; which does not appear, as if it was then strongly present to his mind, that he had direct access to a greater King than Pharaoh, who, he had full reason to suppose, had a special regard for him, and would not suffer a hair of his head to perish. If this be a correct view of the case, we are not, nevertheless, to be hard

upon Joseph ; but the fact should be pointed out, lest that which may be regarded as a temporary failure of his faith, should be hastily deemed a rule of conduct. The strongest faith has at times wavered ; and if in this instance Joseph's faith was for a moment shaken, it may be said in his behalf, that very few, perhaps none, have lived whose faith would not, under the same circumstances, have been shaken far more. It was a trying moment—when he had to tell this man, who had been but a short time a prisoner, that in three days he would go forth from his dungeon, and be restored to light and honor—and to feel that for himself, who had lain in bonds so much longer, there was no such prospect. Ask any one who has been shut up in the prison-house, whether at any time the sense of bondage is so strong and painful, and the craving for liberty so intense, as at that moment when a fellow-prisoner goes forth to freedom. It was under the influence of this strong and natural feeling that the captive Joseph spoke.

But again, although God works by means, it is by means of his own choosing. There is not one point more clearly taught by the history of Joseph than this. Every human plan and contrivance—every calculation of probabilities, come to naught, or if attended with any effect, that effect is altogether different from what was intended—is even adverse to it. God, in his own time, is seen moving the hearts of men, and turning their devices to accomplish his own high purposes—and even the fierce and proud wrath of man is constrained to glorify his providence and grace.

Without, however, inquiring further, whether Joseph was right or wrong in bespeaking the interest of the great man whom the Lord had given him an opportunity of obliging, let us see how exactly the words he employs are such as form the general rule of conduct in the world : “Remember me, when it shall be well with thee.” Are not these the words which, although not uttered in the streets and high places, are muttered in the world's universal heart ? Is there any one of our readers who can look around him—who can

look at home—without being able to instance this insatiate craving to be remembered, thought of, favorably considered, by those who stand well with the world? What anxiety to hold a place in their esteem! How proud to claim the honor of their acquaintance! What struggle to obtain their notice! What labor to win their interest! How highly prized, how boasted of, how exaggerated their slightest attentions! Have they expectations?—what trouble to bespeak their remembrance when it shall be well with them! Are they prosperous?—how eager to know them, now it is well with them! Have they wealth?—how ready to bow down and worship, to lick the very feet of the golden god! Have they rank?—what solicitude to obtain some notice; how inordinately a nod, a smile, a word is prized! Oh, this terrible world-worship, which defiles the very church of God, and which eats as doth a canker the soul of man! Will it stand the fire which is appointed to burn up all the hay, the straw, and stubble of the world?

When did we ever hear of people anxious for the remembrance of those on whom the world has frowned, or whom it has not favored? How rarely is it said—if it ever be said—“Remember me when it shall be *ill* with thee!” Yet the remembrances of the afflicted and cast-down are of infinitely more real value, for this world and for the world to come, than all the recognitions of the prosperous and the powerful, which men prize so highly. Is not the prayer of the poor and the afflicted swiftly heard in heaven? Is not their blessing powerful for good to him who is honored with it? Indeed, if we knew how dear that prayer, how precious that blessing is in the sight of God—if we lived less for this world, and more for the world hereafter—the beck of nobles, and the smiles of Cæsars would seem most worthless in the comparison.

This is a matter in which it cannot be said that the Scripture utters any uncertain sound. Yet how few are they who plainly and from the heart act in the spirit of this text: “If there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in

goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here, in a good place, and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool, are ye not partial in yourselves, and become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my Beloved brethren! Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor." James ii. 2-5. Never was anything more plainly expressed than this; and it forms part of that high law which God, in the fulness of his mercy, has given for a lamp unto our feet. Yet never was there anything uttered or written more habitually neglected—and not only neglected, but contravened—than this; and that by us—by those who, by their covenant with God, undertake to make it the rule of their conduct. And let us be plain. We have among us the ark of God, and do enjoy most peculiar and valuable spiritual privileges among the nations of the earth. Yet, speaking as having ourselves seen no small part of the wide world, we solemnly declare our conviction, that there is not upon earth any Christian people—and certainly not any heathen or Moslem people—who are so pitiably as ourselves absorbed in the worship of the world—its greatness, its wealth, its splendor—who so flagrantly "*despise the poor,*" and so little cherish their attachment, or value their blessing—a blessing which brings down not only more of spiritual refreshment, but more of temporal advantage, than all that the interest or power of the great can give. Nor is this all. We learn, that in the sequel, the butler, "did not," in his prosperity, "remember Joseph, but forgot him." No doubt he had promised all that Joseph asked; but he forgot it all. He did not simply *neglect*, he *forgot*; the matter did not seem worthy of a place in his remembrance. All this while sat poor Joseph in his prison, expecting, from day to day, to receive some token of his illustrious friend's remembrance and intercession. Hour after hour hid he watch for the messenger of deliverance—but no deliverance came. He

invented excuses for him—a thousand things, he would think, might have prevented the butler from at first acting in his case. He was doubtless absorbed in the congratulations of his friends, on his coming out of prison. Arrears of business had accumulated in his department, which required all his attention. Many things had gone wrong in his absence, which his time was occupied in adjusting. No doubt he was watching for a favorable opportunity of mentioning his prison friend to the king. How many hours of anxious thought were spent in speculating upon the possible movements in his behalf of the man who, all the time, did not move at all—who, all the time, did not remember—not even remember—Joseph, but forgot him. Long was it before the poor prisoner could allow a doubt to cross his mind respecting the great man's solicitude in his behalf. Bitter was the first doubt that rose—bitterer the fears that followed—bitterest the conviction, which came slowly and last of all, that he was altogether neglected and forgotten.

Does our wrath rise against this butler? Let us refrain. This is not an Egyptian custom. It is not an ancient usage of four thousand years ago. It is the way of the world in all times and ages. It belongs to ourselves and to our fathers. It is a thing of yesterday and to-day. It is part of the great and cruel system of man's hardness against man; which serves, as much as anything else—and perhaps more than anything else that is not of a spiritual nature—to demonstrate the great and terrible Scripture doctrine of man's fall from his first estate, and the corruption of his heart. As sure as the low, the afflicted, and the poor, are anxious for a place in the remembrance of the high, the prosperous, and the rich—so sure are the latter to neglect and to forget them. The wrong is mutual; too much is expected on one side—too anxiously expected; and too little is done on the other. These two things fret the great sore of life, and leave the heart of man without rest, but in God. And this is well. Here is the good out of all this evil.

## TWELFTH WEEK—MONDAY.

## THE BUTLER'S DREAM.—GENESIS XL. 1-13.

THE profession of the two court officers, who came under Joseph's charge in the prison, has suggested the notion that the offence of which they were suspected was an attempt to poison the king their master. There is positively no other foundation for this than the nature of their employments. This, however, makes it a sufficiently obvious conjecture; and it is in some degree corroborated by the severe punishment—no less than that of death—inflicted upon the one eventually found to be guilty; for the Egyptians were by no means given to inflict that punishment hastily, or for light offences.

It is always curious to see how an Oriental imagination *supplies* the details which the Scripture does not furnish. The Mohammedan account of this matter is, that a foreign king, then at war with Egypt, sent an ambassador, ostensibly for the purpose of negotiating a peace, but in reality only to seek the means of slaying the Egyptian sovereign. A woman of his own country, living in Egypt, whom he consulted, advised him that the best course of proceeding was to bribe either the chief cook or the chief butler to poison his master. The ambassador therefore made the acquaintance of both, but finding the chief cook the most tractable, he cultivated a closer intimacy with him, until he succeeded at last by means of a few talents of gold, in gaining him over to his purpose. He then prepared for his departure, but previously visited his countrywoman, with the view of communicating to her the chief cook's promise. But as she was not alone, he could merely say that he had every reason to be gratified with his success. These words of the ambassador soon reached the ears of the king; and as they could not be referred to his ostensible mission, since the negotiation for peace had come to nothing, a secret of some kind was

suspected. The woman was led before the king, and subjected to torture, till she confessed all she knew ; but as she could not say which of the two was guilty, the king commanded both the chief cook and the chief butler to be cast into prison, until it should be ascertained which of them had taken this crime upon him.

The observations on dreams which we made a few days since, relieve us from any necessity of remarking largely upon those with which these two persons were visited, while they lay in the prison. Joseph noticed that they looked unusually sad and depressed one morning, and found that it was on account of dreams which had troubled their minds during sleep. If people allowed all dreams to trouble them, life would be miserable ; but it would seem that in this case they were disturbed because the dreams were so connected and coherent, and had respectively such relation to their different employments as to show that they were not the mere fancies of a disordered imagination. This may indeed be one rule for distinguishing a significant from a worthless dream.

The butler's dream involves some points of interest. He saw a vine, with three branches, which, while he looked at it, went through the processes of budding, of blossoming, and of producing ripe grapes. These grapes he took in his hand, and pressed the juice into the king's winecup, which he then presented, as in times of old. Some have pretended to doubt, that the vine was formerly cultivated, or even grown, in Egypt ; but the frequent notice of it, and of Egyptian wine, in the sculptures, and the authority of ancient writers, sufficiently answer these objectors, and confirm the intimations of the butler's dream. Indeed the regrets of the Israelites in leaving the vines of Egypt, Num. xx. 5, prove them to have been very abundant, since even people in the condition of slaves could procure the fruit. In the mural paintings at Thebes, at Beni-Hassan, and at the Pyramids, some of which are supposed to be as ancient as the time of Joseph, there are representations of vineyards and vine arbors ; of the ripe

clusters being protected by boys from birds, whom they frighten away with the sling and by the sound of their voice; of the gathered clusters being carefully deposited in deep wicker baskets, which men carried either on their head or shoulders to the wine-press; but when intended for eating, deposited like other fruits, in flat open baskets, and covered over with leaves. It might be inferred from the text before us that the crude juice of grapes only was drunk, mixed, perhaps, with water, as a kind of sherbet. This may have been the case in the present instance; for if the dream is to be on this point literally, and not symbolically, taken, the drink offered to Pharaoh by his butler was not wine but sherbet. But that this was the sole form in which the juice of the grape was used in Egypt, is disproved, not only by the ancient accounts, which describe the qualities of the wines of Egypt, but most abundantly by the ancient paintings and sculptures, in which all the processes of wine-making, and even the effects of wine upon men and women, are most curiously and accurately represented. The chief mode of making the wine was, as afterwards among the Hebrews, by treading with the feet, in the wine-press; but sometimes the wine-press was simply a bag, into which the grapes were put and squeezed, by means of two poles, turning in contrary directions, or by one pole when the bag was fixed in a frame; a vase being placed below to receive the falling juice. The twisted bags were perhaps used to subject the grapes to a further and more stringent pressure, after being taken from the foot-press. After fermentation, the juice was dipped out of the vats, and placed in large jars, or amphoræ, after standing in which for a time, the jars were closed with a lid resembling an inverted saucer, covered with liquid clay, pitch, gypsum, and other composition, which was stamped with a seal. They were then removed from the wine-house, and placed upright in the cellar. We specify these processes, not merely because they are Egyptian, but also because they appear to be in all respects the same as those in



use among the Hebrews, to which there are frequent allusions in the poetical books of Scripture.\*

Joseph, speaking, as he declared, by the inspiration of God, pronounced the three branches to mean three days—and that within three days the king would restore the butler to his place. He took the opportunity of bespeaking the kind remembrance of the butler; and implored that, when restored to his office near the king, he would make mention of his case—which he describes with great tact and delicacy, so as to set forth his grievance without compromising any of those who had been the instrument of his affliction. It was necessary, indeed, that he should vindicate his innocence, lest the butler, deeming his slavery and imprisonment the just punishment of his crimes, should decline to interfere in his behalf. He says, first, that he was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews—that is to say, that he was of a superior class to that from which slaves were usually taken, and had been kidnapped; but he studiously avoids accusing his brethren of the theft, and much less the Arabs who had sold him to Potiphar. Again, he declares that he had “done nothing for which he should be put into this dungeon;” but refrains from mentioning the criminal conduct of his mistress, which had caused his incarceration, or the selfish policy of his master in detaining him there, although he must, by this time, have been almost certain of his innocence. This reluctance to throw blame on others is an amiable trait in the character of Joseph, well worthy of imitation. It had important results in this case—for it may be much questioned whether the king would have been, in a later day, so favorably disposed to Joseph's brethren, had their former misconduct towards their brother come to his knowledge

Neither the Jewish nor Mohammedan writers are quite satisfied that Joseph was right in thus anxiously imploring the kind offices of the butler. They consider that he ought to have left the matter of his deliverance entirely in God's

\* The reader who feels interest in the matter may find ample information in Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, ii. 142-169.

hands, without this anxiety to secure a human interest and influence. It was, besides, wholly abortive—for although he did eventually obtain his deliverance through the butler's mention of him at court, that personage had, meanwhile, wholly neglected his request; and when he did think of him, would have remembered him quite as well had not that request been made. The Jewish tradition affirms that Joseph remained yet two years in prison, because he had asked the butler to remember him. The Moslem tradition, which had previously stated that God had changed Joseph's cell into a pleasant and cheerful abode, by causing a fountain to spring up in the midst thereof, and by making a tree grow at his door, to afford him shade and refreshing fruit; now declares that, on his making this request to the butler, his tree withered, and his fountain dried up, "because, instead of trusting in Allah, he had relied upon the help of a feeble man." This is a fable, of course—but it lacks not a moral.

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## TWELFTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

### THE BAKER'S DREAM.—GENESIS XL. 16–19.

THE chief baker's dream is no less remarkable than that of the butler.

He dreamed that he was carrying upon his head three wicker baskets. In the upper basket were all various kinds of baked meats for the king's table; but, as he went along, the birds of the air came and eat them out of the basket. Taking this to be a representation of circumstances with which this man was familiar in waking life, it offers some points which deserve to be noticed.

We observe, first, that the meats were carried not in wooden trays, as would be the case with us, but in baskets. This agrees with the indication which the ancient Egyptian monuments afford, of the varied and extensive applications

of basket-work, natural in a country where wood was scarce, but on the bank of whose river reeds and rushes abounded. Indeed, there are actual specimens of such baskets in the British Museum; and which furnish a very favorable idea of the basket-work of these ancient times. Some of them are worked ornamentally with colors. But, although we have referred to these, from the interest attached to them as actual specimens, the Egyptian paintings and sculpture show a much larger variety of all kinds of baskets, many of them flat and broad, and therefore well suited to this use. The stronger and larger sort of these baskets seem to be made of the mid-rib of the palm-frond, as is still the case in the palm countries of the East, and the finer sorts with the leaves of the same. Not unfrequently they are of rushes; but not so often of reeds. This is still the case, not only in Egypt, but in regions of similar physical constitution, such as the lower Euphrates and Tigris, where also the palm tree is plentiful; and in its frond-rib and leaflets, furnishes the chief material for different kinds of baskets.

Then the baker had three baskets, one upon another, and all carried upon his head. We are told what was in the upper basket, but not what was in the two underneath. The contents of the upper basket are no doubt stated, because that only was exposed to the depredations of the birds. The other basket probably, however, contained dressed meats of the same kind as the uppermost, for Pharaoh's table. As to their being carried upon the head, there might seem to be no need of any illustration of this; for such as are inhabitants of our own towns, may see every day the bakers pass with their baked meats upon their heads, on trays; and it is obvious that they could not conveniently carry more than one dish in any other way. In this way they can carry many dishes in a perfectly horizontal position, without any other care than to keep the tray steady, which those who are used to this mode of bearing burdens, can manage without difficulty. It is certainly the best and least laborious mode of carriage for anything that *can* be so carried; and on going

to the East, one is at first surprised to observe how habitually this is preferred to every other mode of bearing a burden. Even women generally bear their pitchers of water upon their heads, although, from the shape of the vessels, this would seem peculiarly difficult. It has indeed been thought, that the eastern damsels owe their peculiarly erect and graceful carriage, to the habit created by the necessity of holding the head erect and steady in carrying their water vessels.

It was the same among the ancient Egyptians, with whom, as we discover from the monuments, this mode was preferred to every other, when the nature of the burden rendered it available. We may, however, be surprised to see, that the chief baker carries not a single basket, but three baskets upon his head at once. One would think, that one basket of baked meats would be a sufficient burden: and yet we have seen burdens quite as great as the three baskets could possibly be, carried freely upon the head. Nor need we go to the East for illustration of this. Scarcely a day passes in the season, in which we do not see, going by on the other side of the road in which we dwell, men and women with baskets of flowers upon their heads. The weight of them, or rather of the mould and the pots, is very considerable—much greater in fact than the spectator might imagine. This we have had occasion to know, from having been in the habit of receiving the like baskets full of plants from the florists. Yet such baskets as we could scarcely lift from the ground, and, singly, doubtless far heavier than the three baskets of the Egyptian baker, were borne along by these people without apparent oppression; although we remember that a man lately urged us to purchase some of his plants, on the ground that he was anxious to lighten his too heavy burden.

How is it that the baker was carrying the king of Egypt's dinner through the open air, and without, as it seems, a covering to protect the dishes from birds and insects? We should not relish this here; and much less would it seem desirable in a country where the air swarms with winged vermin, always ready to fall upon whatever has the appear-

ance or the odor of being eatable. We can only explain this, by supposing that the Egyptians were not so particular in these matters as we are; and by stating, that in all the eastern houses in which we have ourselves lived, the kitchen is on the opposite side of the court to that which contains the principal apartments, so that the dishes have to be carried across the court to the dining-room. There can be no doubt that this was the case in Pharaoh's palace.

As to the birds, that which seems a strange incident to us, is a very common one in such countries as that of Egypt, where the air teems with animal life. It may be doubted whether, in this case, the birds were kites, who make nothing of carrying off large joints wholesale, or lesser birds, who were content to pick away what they could not carry off. We incline to the former interpretation, as we observe, from the mural paintings, that the Egyptians had not much taste for made dishes, but had their tables supplied chiefly with joints and large birds (such as geese) dressed whole, very convenient, therefore, for kites to carry off. Their doing this is a matter of constant occurrence, and it is still a common complaint that such a man has lost his dinner through its having been seized and carried off by a kite, as he bore it upon his head, or even in his hands, through the open air. Those who have read the *Thousand and One Nights*—and who has not?—will remember some instances of this. There is, for example, the case of Cogia Hassan Alhabbal, which is no doubt such as the writer of the tale knew to have often occurred. "I went to the shambles, and bought something for supper. As I was carrying the meat I had bought home in my hand, a famished kite flew upon me, and would have taken away my meat, if I had not held it very fast; but the faster I held the meat, the more the bird struggled to get it, drawing me sometimes on one side, sometimes on another, but would not quit the prize, till unfortunately, in my efforts, my turban fell to the ground; the kite immediately let go its hold, and seizing the turban before I could pick it up, flew away with it." Two friends to whom he told this, felt no surprise at

the attack on the meat, but were astonished that the bird made off with the turban. One said, "What have kites to do with the turbans? They only seek for something to satisfy their hunger." But the other thought even this part of the affair probable, and "told a great many as surprising stories of kites, some of which he affirmed that he knew to be true."

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### TWELFTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

#### THE BIRTHDAY.—GENESIS XL. 20.

IN Egypt, the birthdays of the kings were celebrated with great pomp. They were looked upon as holy. No business was done upon them; and all classes indulged in festivities suitable to the occasion. Every Egyptian attached much importance to the day, and even to the hour, of his birth; and it is probable that, as in Persia, each individual kept his birthday with great rejoicings, welcoming his friends with all the amusements of society, and a more than usual profusion of the delicacies of the table.\*

Such a day, the birthday of the king, came round at the end of the three days to which Joseph had limited the fulfilment of Pharaoh's imprisoned officers' dreams. We are told that, on that day, "Pharaoh made a feast to all his servants;" and the absence then of two so eminent as these, could not fail to be much noticed. Besides, the very nature of the festivities of that day, were well calculated to remind the king of the absence of those whose services had usually contributed much to the enjoyment of them. He determined to inquire at once into their case, and the result was, as Joseph had predicted, the butler was restored to his office, and the baker was put to death.

Some speculation has been founded upon the *mode* in which this functionary was executed. Joseph, in his inter-

\* Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, ii. 45.

pretation of the dream, says:—"Within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee." Sir J. G. Wilkinson infers from this, that hanging was in use among the Egyptians as a capital punishment. But this is a mistake. Everywhere in the Old Testament, except in the book of Esther (the scene of which is in Persia), hanging means the gibbeting of the body, after death has been inflicted by the sword or other means. Of proper hanging—that is, death by suspension—as a punishment, we find no instance but in the case of Haman, and in the Persian decree in Ezra.\* The case of Judas in the New Testament was one of suicide.† The text just quoted suggests decapitation, and the subsequent gibbeting of the body on a tree. The striking incident of the birds eating away the flesh, indicates the nature of the "hanging up" intended. We cannot but feel some surprise, that Sir J. G. Wilkinson infers from the instance before us, not only that hanging was a capital punishment, but that gibbeting was *not* practised. If the object is merely to deprive of life by hanging, the body does not remain long enough for the flesh to be eaten by birds; and if it be left sufficiently long for that, it is gibbeting, whatever the mode of death may have been. It is clear that the mind of the chief baker was familiar with the idea of bodies thus exposed to be devoured by birds of prey. It was probably in the fear lest their acquaintance with this frightful practice in Egypt should lead the Israelites to adopt it, that they were expressly forbidden by the law to expose bodies in this manner longer than till the sunset of the day of the execution. Deut. xxi. 22. This regulation evinces a degree of humanity, and of regard for public decency, unexampled in any ancient code of laws, and which modern civilization, even under Christian influences, has been slow to imitate. Even in this country, which is apt to boast of its distinguished humanity and enlightenment, it is within the memory of man—and of not old men either—that the land was disfigured with these

\* Ezra vi. 11. Esther v. 14.

† Matt. xxvii. 5.

fatal trees, with the bodies of murderers left to corruption upon them. It is not clear, even, that this kind of "hanging," after death, as mentioned in Scripture, even means suspension by cords. It means simply any kind of suspension; and the only thing of the sort that we can recollect to have seen represented in ancient painting or sculpture, is among the recently discovered Nineveh sculptures, one of which shows three dead men *stuck* under the ribs upon the sharpened tops of as many poles driven into the ground; their heads and arms hanging down in a manner very painful to behold.

Before quitting the transactions of this day, we may direct attention to what seems a slight, but is really a very significant, variation in the interpretation, and consequent accomplishment of the dreams. To the butler Joseph says, that Pharaoh shall "lift up thy head;" and to the baker, "shall lift up thy head *from off thee*." The first of these phrases occurs also (in the original) in Exod. xxx. 12, and Num. i. 49, in the sense of numbering; and in this sense it agrees well with the words used in describing the fulfilment: "he lifted up the head of the chief butler and the chief baker in the midst of his servants." It might then be translated literally, "shall take thy poll," that is, in recounting his officers, Pharaoh shall remember thee, and, as it follows, shall restore thee to thy station.\* To the same phrase in the interpretation of the baker's dream, a different meaning is given by the addition of the words (or rather word, for it is but one in Hebrew) "from off thee"—signifying, shall put thee to death, and that probably, but not certainly, by beheading.

This may suggest that the kings of Egypt revised the lists of their court officers on their birthdays, and that the appointments were nominally annual, though in most cases actually during pleasure. It may still require explanation how such a phrase as "lifting up the head" came to denote an enumeration. We meet with an explanation of Junius Piscator's in Parker's "Bibliotheca Biblica," which has, at

\* See Turner's *Notes to Genesis*, p. 340.



least, the merit of being curious and ingenious. "The ancients in keeping their reckonings, or accounts of time, as days, months, years, and their lists of domestic officers and services, made use of tables with holes bored in them; in which they placed a sort of pegs or nails with broad heads, exhibiting their particulars, whether numbers or names, or whatever it was. These nails or pegs, the Jews called *heads*; and the sockets of these heads they called *bases*. The meaning, therefore, of *lifting up the head* is, that Pharaoh should take up the peg that had the butler's name on the top of it, read it, and will *restore thee*, that is, thy peg, into its place, there to stand good."

On the other hand, there are those who dismiss all these views, and teach that the phrase "to lift up the head" in the chapter before us, is elliptical for the full expression "to lift up thy head out of prison," such places of confinement being usually under ground. And here we are referred to 2 Kings xxv. 27, where the words occur in reference to the king of Babylon and his captive, the king of Judah, whom he released from a long imprisonment. Here the idea of taking the poll would seem to be inadmissible; and it is most probable that it, therefore, denotes removal from prison, and restoration to liberty. A great authority\* gives this explanation. But he has overlooked the simple fact, that Egypt being simply the valley of a river, by whose waters the land is periodically inundated, is the very last country in which phrases derived from *subterraneous* constructions could exist. All is above ground in Egypt, and necessarily so, as any constructions below the ground would be constantly full of water. The Egyptians were too intent upon contrivances for keeping their land above water, to dream of going below ground for any purpose whatever. From this, in a very considerable degree, arises the peculiar character of Egyptian buildings and architecture. Even Babylon, to which the explanation also refers, was in this respect considerably like Egypt. We cannot, therefore, receive this explanation.

\* Gesenius in his *Hebrew Lexicon*.

## TWELFTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

## THE RIVER NILE.—GENESIS XLI. 1.

WE have had the dreams of Joseph, the dream of the chief butler, and the dream of the chief baker, and now the time is come for the king himself to dream. The dream is altogether a state dream, and the dreamer dreams it officially, as the head of the state. Given to any other person, it would have wanted its due weight, and would have secured less attention. It was all of God. The time was come for Him to show himself for the thousands of Egypt, for the tens of Israel, and for the slave in his prison. There were, in fact, two dreams following each other, in which, although the symbols are varied, the purport is so obviously the same, as to command attention among a people not accustomed to suffer dreams of apparent significance to pass heedlessly by.

In both dreams the king stood by the river Nile. In the first dream, he saw come up out of the water seven thriving kine, which fed upon the reed-grass beside the river. Presently came up, also, seven starving kine, which stood near to the other on the river's brink, and shortly devoured them up. In the second dream, seven full ears of corn, rank and good, came up upon one stalk; but soon seven parched and withered ears came up after them, and devoured, or absorbed, all the rich and exuberant ears.

There are some points in this that demand attention. The most prominent fact in both dreams is the river. The king is by the river; all takes place on the brink of the river; and both the fat and the lean kine come up from the stream. Every one knows that the existence of Egypt depends upon the river. There is little or no rain. But for the river, which periodically overflows the lands, and renders them fit for culture, and fertilizes them by its deposits, the whole country would be a barren, sandy, and uninhabitable desert. A few feet more or less in the rise of the river at the ap

pointed time, makes all the difference between "a good Nile" and "a bad Nile,"—between abundance and starvation. Hence the deep attention and profound anxiety with which everything connected with the river is regarded.

These facts have been so often recorded in prose, that we are glad to be able to report them here in the language of a recent poetical traveller :\*—

" Scarce with more certain order waves the sun  
 His matin banners in the eastern sky,  
 Than at the reckoned period are begun  
 The operations of fertility ;  
 Through the long swamp, thy bosom swelling high  
 Expands between the sandy mountain chains,  
 The walls of Libya and of Araby,  
 Till in the active virtue it contains,  
 The desert bases sink, and rise prolific plains.

See through the naked length no blade of grass,  
 No animate sign, relieves the dismal strand.  
 Such it might seem our orb's first substance was,  
 Ere touched by God with generative hand ;  
 Yet at one step we reach the teeming land  
 Lying fresh-green beneath the scorching sun,  
 As succulent, as if at his command,  
 It held all rains that fell, all brooks that run,  
 And this, O generous Nile ! is thy vast benison."

Seeing what the Egyptians owed to this stream, that their prosperity and very existence depended on it, the poet thinks it no wonder

" That gratitude of old to worship grew,  
 That as a living god thou wert address'd,  
 And to itself the immediate agent drew  
 To one creative power the feelings only due."

To this he adds in a note—" In the oldest form of Egyptian heology, of which we have cognizance, the Nile is a god.

\* R. Monckton Milnes, in his *Palm Leaves*.

. . . The Egyptian theologians also imagined divisions in heaven similar to those on earth, and could conceive no paradise without a celestial Nile.”

To the lines—

“For in thy title, and in nature’s truth,  
Thou art, and makest Egypt,”

a note is also appended, in which the writer truly remarks that “the ‘Egypt’ of Homer is the river, not the country: all the other Greek names of Egypt are derived from the Nile. Its Coptic name was Phairo—hence probably Pharaoh. In somewhat the same sense is India derived from the Indus.”

It is far from unlikely that the king supposed himself in his dream visiting the Nile in discharge of some of the duties connected with the idolatrous worship rendered to that stream. There were many such. The most important was the Niloa, an annual festival for invoking the blessings of the inundation. This was one of the principal of all the Egyptian festivals. It took place about the summer solstice, when the river began to rise; and the anxiety with which they looked forward to a plentiful inundation induced them to celebrate it with more than usual honor. It is stated that the rites of this solemnity were deemed of so much importance by the Egyptians, that unless they were performed at the proper season, and in a becoming manner, by the persons appointed to the duty, they felt persuaded that the Nile would refuse to rise and inundate the land. Their full belief in the efficacy of the ceremony secured its annual performance on a grand scale. Men and women assembled from all parts of the country in the towns of their respective homes, or shires, grand festivities were proclaimed, and all the enjoyments of the table were united with the solemnity of a holy festival. Music, dances and appropriate hymns, mark the respect they felt for the deity, and a wooden statue of the tutelary deity of the river was carried by the priest through the villages, in solemn procession, that all

might appear to be honored by his presence and aid, while invoking the blessings he was about to confer.\* If the dreams of Pharaoh followed the day of such a solemnity as this—as seems to us highly probable—they could not fail to have been regarded as peculiarly significant and important.

The modern inhabitants of Egypt, being for the most part Mohammedans, do not now worship the Nile after this fashion; but, after their own manner, they do still look upon it with great respect and veneration; and whatever be the place of their sojourning, the natives of the Nile still speak of its waters with the most enthusiastic regard. The poet we have lately cited, finely touches on this:

“And now, in Egypt’s late degraded day,  
 A venerating love attends thee still,  
 And the poor Fellah, † from thee torn away,  
 Feels a strange yearning his rude bosom fill;  
 Like the remembered show of lake and hill,  
 That wrings the Switzer’s soul, though fortune smile,  
 Thy image haunts him, uncontroll’d by will,  
 And wealth or war in vain the heart beguile,  
 That clings to its mud-hut and palms, beside the Nile.”

In fact, a peculiarly luscious, refreshing, and nutritive quality is ascribed by the natives to the waters of the Nile; and it is almost affecting to hear the expressions of intense longing, with which a native who has been any time away from Egypt speaks of the Nile water. One would think that it was at once meat, and drink, and medicine to them.

In one of the tales of the *Thousand and One Nights*, some merchants of Mosul, who had seen much of the eastern world in their time, are represented as speaking of the wonders they had seen in their various travels. “Say what you will,” said one, “the man who has not seen Egypt has not seen the greatest rarity of the world. . . . . If you speak of the Nile, where is there a more wonderful

\* See Wilkinson’s *Ancient Egyptians*, ii. 293.

† Peasant.

river? What water was ever lighter or more delicious? The very slime it carries along in its overflowing fattens the fields, which produce a thousand times more than other countries that are cultivated with the greatest labor. Observe what a poet said of the Nile, when he was obliged to depart from Egypt: 'Your Nile loads you with blessings every day. It is for you only that it comes from distant lands. Alas! in departing from you, my tears will flow as abundantly as its waters. You are to continue in the enjoyment of its sweetneses, while I am constrained to forego them against my will!' '\*

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TWELFTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

THE ROYAL DREAMS.—GENESIS XLI. 1-30.

YESTERDAY we pointed out the considerations suggested by the presence of the Nile in the king of Egypt's dreams. There are some other matters in these remarkable visions which will this day demand our attention. If the incidents of the dreams were, as we have supposed, substantially such as might be witnessed in actual life—although not in the same combinations—it may seem a strange circumstance that cattle should appear to come up out of the river. That they should appear to do so, was needful to give the symbols their proper connection and significance. But for that purpose, it would have been sufficient that the animals should come up out of the river's bed; and cattle which had been down to the water to drink, might every day be seen coming up as it were from the river itself—that is, from its bed. But if any will contend for a more literal analogy, it is sufficient to state that buffaloes, a variety of the ox well known anciently in Egypt, delight to stand in the water in hot

\* The tale of the *Jewish Physician*. Lane's translation has merely the skeleton of the passage, which is preserved more fully in the old translation.

countries, and seem to be almost amphibious. These animals, male and female, will remain for hours in the water, with all their bodies immersed except the head; and the most broad and rapid rivers are swam by them with great ease. The sight of horned cattle coming up actually out of a river is, therefore, by no means an incident of rare occurrence. The animals were in the present instance kine—not oxen for labor, but cows for milk—well, therefore, suited to a symbolical representation of plenty.

It is said in the common version that the animals “fed in a meadow;” a better translation would be “on the reed grass.” The word so translated is apparently an Egyptian one, *achu*; and a considerable amount of learned investigation has been bestowed upon it. It may be doubtful that the meaning of the term has been even yet ascertained. Professor Royle seems doubtful that any specific plant is intended—but supposes that if it be such, it is perhaps one of the edible species of *scirpus* or *cyperus*; “or it may be a true grass; some species of *panicum*, for instance, which formed excellent pasture in warm countries, and some of which grow luxuriantly in the neighborhood of water.” This learned botanist adds: “But it is well known to all acquainted with warm countries, subject to excessive drought, that the only pasturage which cattle can resort to is a green strip of different grasses, with some sedges, which runs along the banks of rivers, or of some pieces of water, varying more or less in breadth, according to the height of the bank, that is, the distance of water from the surface. Cattle emerging from rivers, which they may often be seen doing in hot countries, would naturally go to this green herbage, as intimated in this passage of Genesis.”\*

All was natural enough thus far; and so likewise it is that, when the lean kine came up also, and found that there was nothing left for them to eat, they should stand beside the others, without attempting to seek nutriment in the now close-cropped and parched ground. But it was altogether

\* Art. *Аснѹ*, in *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*.

unnatural and most surprising, that the lean kine should, even in the extremity of their hunger, fall upon their obese fellows. Such things, however, happen in dreams. But it is not at all wonderful that a circumstance so extraordinary shocked and startled the royal dreamer, and awoke him from his sleep.

The seven ears of corn on one stalk, in the second dream, was not, as some suppose, an extraordinary or unnatural circumstance—the wonder lay in the extraordinary fulness of each of the seven ears, and in the recurrence of the number seven. There is a species of bearded wheat, not only now and anciently, grown in Egypt, but supposed to be native to that country, and hence known by the name of “Egyptian wheat”—otherwise, “many-spiked wheat.” It is allied to the summer or spring wheat,\* but the spike is four times as large, and a hand in length, formed of spikelets, in two rows, from nine to ten in number,—the lower ones shorter, and the upper most erect and large. If this, as is probable, were the species seen by the king in his dream, the circumstance to strike him was—that all the spikelets or ears were large and full, which is not ordinarily the case, and that the number of them was seven, which is by no means a usual number of spikelets or ears in this variety of wheat.

It is not easy to see how, even in a dream, the seven lean ears of corn could eat up the full ones. Therefore, although the Hebrew word is the same in both cases, our translators have in this instance wisely adopted the more general term of “devoured.” In horticulture, we continually see one plant consumed by another planted too near to it, and exhausting its nourishment; and this, we should suppose, was the kind of devouring witnessed by the king in his dream—only with greater rapidity, and with more immediate results, than is ever seen in nature.

The dream, on the whole, has some analogy to that of the Roman knight in Tacitus, who beheld the emperor (Claudius) crowned with a wisp of straw, with the stalks bent back

\* *Triticum aestivum*. Linn.



ward or downward—which was understood to prefigure a scarcity.

There was certainly enough in these dreams to trouble the mind of Pharaoh. As with the egg of Columbus, these dreams seem so easy to understand, now that we have Joseph's interpretation before us, that we are inclined to wonder, not that the court interpreters and wise men could not explain it, but that they were so simple as to miss the interpretation. It is probable that they got astray from the plain and obvious significance, in seeking after one more remote, by the rules and calculations of their art—a case not very uncommon. The Jewish rabbins amuse themselves with speculations in this matter; and tell us, that the interpretation which they reached by the rules of their art was, that Pharaoh's seven daughters (for that number they make him to have had) were to die, and that seven others should be born to him in their stead. But this, as may be supposed, was not at all satisfactory to their lord; for the new daughters would, according to the dream, have been but an indifferent compensation for the old ones. It is more likely that, as Josephus apprehended, they continued silent, and did not even pretend to offer an explanation. If we suppose the dream so plain, that an interpretation of some kind would at least be offered, it must be answered, that the minds of the Egyptian interpreters were probably, for the moment, so confounded, that the whole matter appeared as a dense mystery to them—the Lord having purposed, in the omnipotency of his will, and for the designs of his providence, to give the honor of the interpretation to Joseph, and make it the means of that high advancement which he had, even in boyhood, been led to expect. It must be admitted to speak well for the integrity of the Egyptian "wise men," that they did not, so far as appears, attempt to satisfy the mind of the king by some invention, which might serve to explain his dreams. False as their art was, they believed it a truth, and would not act, when its rules afforded them no result on which they could rely.

## TWELFTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

EGYPTIAN CLEANLINESS.—GENESIS XLI. 14.

ALTHOUGH it is but too easy to account for the chief butler's forgetfulness of Joseph, on the common principles which operate among men, we cannot but recognize the providence of God, in preventing the *accident* of his remembrance, until the time when his recollection could not fail to be attended with effects of great importance. The whole matter had been doubtless appointed for the hour, which was at length come. For this, Joseph had been cast into prison—for this, he became known to the chief butler there—for this, that person and his companion had their dreams, that, by the interpretation of them, Joseph might impress a fact concerning himself upon his mind, which, although for a time forgotten, he would not fail to remember in the important hour, when his royal master should be perplexed by the want of an interpreter for his dreams. In that hour, he *did* remember the Hebrew youth, and spoke to his master of the circumstance which had occurred in the prison.

On hearing this, the king sent in great haste to have Joseph brought from the prison. Yet, urgent as was the occasion, care was taken that he should "shave himself and change his raiment," before he was introduced to the presence of the king. In the ancient courts, no one could enter the royal presence in a slovenly or offensive garb or appearance. See another instance of this at the Persian court, in Esther v. 2. This seems so natural to us, as an instinct of natural etiquette, that we are apt to overlook some of the illustrative points which it bears in this case. These things are now little heeded in the East, except at formal audiences, and at such highly ceremonial courts as those of Persia and China. A man called or admitted in so great an emergency, would be introduced much as he had been found. Another matter requires notice. In any country mentioned in the Bible, ex-

cepting only Egypt, dressing the beard or the hair, instead of shaving, would have been the kind of preparation required. But in Egypt, and in Egypt only, a man put himself into decent condition by an operation which, in any other country, would have been ignominious. But this is one of the minute touches by which the exact historical truth of the narrative is established; for the testimony of all antiquity, as well as the sculptured and pictured monuments, concurs with this intimation, in describing the Egyptians as a shaven people. It is mentioned by Herodotus, among the distinguishing peculiarities of the Egyptians, that they were commonly shaved, but in mourning allowed their beards to grow. This agrees with the sculptures, as well as with the present text: "So particular, indeed, were they on this point, that to have neglected it was a subject of reproach and ridicule; and whenever they intended to convey the idea of a man of low condition, or slovenly person, the artists represented him with a beard. It is amusing to find, that their love of caricature was not confined to the lower orders, but extended even to the king; and the negligent habits of Remeses VII. are indicated, in his tomb at Thebes, by the appearance of his chin, blackened by a beard of two or three days' growth. But it is likewise given as the test of hardships undergone in a severe campaign; and the warlike character of Remeses the Great is pointed out in the same manner."\*

The Egyptians did not, like the Romans of a later age, confine the privilege of shaving to free-born citizens, and compel slaves to wear their beards and hair long, as a badge of servitude. Foreigners brought to Egypt as slaves, had usually beards on their arrival in the country; but as soon as they came into the service of this civilized people, they were obliged to adopt the cleanly habits of their masters; their beards and heads were deprived of hair, and they adopted a cap.

Among this people the priests shaved not only the beard but the head; and others, if they did not, like them, and like

\* Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, iii. 357.

the modern Orientals, shave the head with a razor, were accustomed to wear the hair very short. The abundant and long hair which sometimes covers the heads of some of the figures on the monuments, seems to have been false, like our wigs. Indeed, actual specimens of such wigs have been found, and may be seen in museums of Egyptian antiquities. This practice respecting the hair and beard is known to have been regarded by the neighboring nations, and especially by the Asiatics, as peculiar to the Egyptians.

Wilkinson, in connection with this subject, remarks that "barbers may be considered as the offspring of civilization." So many will continue to think; although, on that view, the increasingly hirsute appearance of modern Europe, since this was said, might argue a backward stride towards barbarism.

The extreme personal cleanliness of the ancient Egyptians is indicated, not only in this shaving of Joseph, but in his change of raiment; and perhaps, also, as Wilkinson imagines, in "the changes of raiment" which Joseph gave to his brethren when they set out to fetch their father and families to Egypt, Gen. xlv. 42. The attention which the priests, in particular, paid to this matter, is mentioned by divers ancient authors. But it was not confined to their order. "Every Egyptian prided himself," says Wilkinson, "on the encouragement of habits which it was considered a disgrace to neglect." We can therefore readily account for the disgust they felt in seeing the squalid appearance and unrefined habits of their Asiatic neighbors, whose long beards were often the subject of ridicule to the Egyptian soldier; and for their abhorrence of the bearded and long-haired Greeks, which was so great that, according to Herodotus, "no Egyptian of either sex would, on any account, kiss the lips of a Greek, make use of his knife, his spit and cauldron, or taste the meat of an animal which had been slaughtered by his hand."

But although the beards and long hair of the Greeks may have contributed to this result, it is not, as Wilkinson seems here to imply, stated by the historian, that this was the proximate cause of their abhorrence; but by reason of their

treatment of cows, which the Egyptians, in regard to Isis, "worshipped with a more profound reverence than any other cattle;" and they hold the Greek mouth to be defiled by the eating, the knife by the cutting, and the crock by the boiling of the flesh of kine. Hence the apprehension of the Israelites in a later day, that they should be stoned if they sacrificed "the abomination (idol) of the Egyptians before their eyes." Exod. viii. 26.

This imputed uncleanness of those who are eaters of forbidden food, and users of their utensils, exists at the present day in the East, both among Moslems and heathen. Among many examples of this that occur to us, we give one of very recent occurrence. It is from Lieut. Lynch's account of his expedition to the Dead Sea:—

"In the evening some of the tribe of Ta'amirah came in, a little more robust, but scarcely better clad than the Raschayideh. They were warm and hungry, from walking a long distance to meet us. They had no food, and I directed some cooked rice to be given to them. They had seated themselves round the pot, and were greedily about to devour it, when one of them suggested, that perhaps pork had been cooked in the same vessel. They rose, therefore, in a body, and came to the cook to satisfy their scruple. I never saw disappointment more strongly pictured in the human countenance, than when told that the vessel had often been used for that purpose. Although nearly famished, they would not touch the rice, and we could give them nothing else."

Such facts as these have no unimportant bearing upon the scruples of the Egyptians to eat with the Hebrews—the inferences to be deduced from which will soon require our separate attention.

## Thirteenth Week—Sunday.

GOD IN ALL.—GENESIS XLI. 51, 52.

It is well worthy of our special notice, that every circumstance in the prosperity and glorious estate to which Joseph is now advanced, is as it were confronted with some other circumstance in his former adverse and calamitous condition. His brethren despised and hated him, and subjected him to most injurious treatment: but now the king of Egypt and his princes delight to honor him, and advance him to high place among themselves. His exile is turned into exaltation. All the slavish work of his hands is now exchanged for the royal signet on his finger. The coat of many colors, torn by violence from him and defiled with blood—the garment left in the hand of the adulteress—are exchanged for vestures of fine linen from a king's hand. For irons on his feet, he has now a chain of gold upon his neck. Before he ministered to prisoners, now to a monarch. The splendor of the king's second chariot succeeds to the darkness of his dungeon. Before, he was one trampled upon; but now the nation is called to bend the knee before him. He was scarcely known by name before, but now the king bestows a name of honor upon him. And now he who fled with horror from the solicitations of another man's wife, is made happy in a union with a noble consort of his own. How did all these circumstances affect him? In old time, men expressed their feelings in the names they bestowed upon their children. Now Joseph had two sons, and the names he gave to them embody the sentiments which he desired to connect with these transactions, and to form standing memorials of them.

The first son he called **MANASSEH**, which means *forgetting*—or, which may, as a substantive, be rendered *forgetfulness*. And why? “For God, said he, hath made me to forget all my toil, and all my father's house.” It is a beautiful and interesting circumstance in the history of Joseph, that he has

God ever before his eyes. When tempted to sin, his cry is, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" When the court officers in prison were troubled by their dreams, he said, "Do not interpretations belong to God?" When the king tells him that he had heard of his skill in the interpretation of dreams, he is anxious to turn the credit from himself to God—"It is not in *me*: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." When the purport of the royal dreams becomes clear to him, he again sees God in them—"God hath showed Pharaoh what he is about to do." "The thing is established by God; and God will shortly bring it to pass." So, when he discloses himself to his brethren, and they are overwhelmed with shame and compunction, he says, "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life;" and, "God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So it was not you that sent me hither, but God." Again, in the message sent to his father, "God hath made me lord of all Egypt." Also, in the address to his brethren after the death of his father, "Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it for good." At last, he dies in the conviction that "God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land;" and so assured is he of this, that he takes an oath of them that they will carry his bones with them to the land of their future possession. It was this constant reference to God in all things, before all things, and for all things, that forms the real characteristic of Joseph's history, and is the true secret to all his glory and success. So here, in the name of his first-born son, he erects what he knows will be, and what he means to be, an imperishable monument of his conviction that it is God who has made him to forget all his misery, and all his father's house.

Now, it is the infirmity of our flesh that we look too much to the immediate instruments of our blessings, and forget God in them, or content ourselves with a cold and formal

acknowledgment. It is well for us when, like Joseph, we are able—or rather, when we are enabled—to make the consciousness of God's presence and intervention in all our affairs, a vital principle of action—a law of life unto ourselves. Nor shall we be therefore the less grateful to the instruments of our mercies. Far otherwise. For he who most clearly sees God as the source of all his blessings, is of all others the man most grateful to the agents through whom these blessings come to him.

Joseph's mention of the fact, in giving his son the name of Manasseh, shows the sense in which he is to be understood as having forgotten his toil and his father's house. It does not mean that these things were obliterated from his mind—for the very act is one of remembrance. It was, in fact, his duty and privilege to remember them; for his impressions of the Divine goodness would have become weak, had he forgotten the evils from which he had been delivered. But in one sense he had forgotten the misery of his former state. He did not allow the memory of it to embitter his present advantages. He cherished no resentful remembrances against those who had been the instruments of his affliction. The memory of his troubles was comparatively lost in the happiness that had now succeeded. So, also, in what he says of his father's house. His subsequent conduct shows that he had a most lively recollection of his father, and of all the tenderness which had been showered upon his early years. Neither had he ceased to remember the cruel treatment of his brethren; but he ceased to lay it to heart; all that was painful in the remembrances of the past was expelled from his mind. It was with him as with the captives of Babylon—"When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: Then said they among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord *hath* done great things for us, whereof we are glad." Psalm cxxvi. 1-3.

So shall it be with us one day; but not yet, not here.



When the Lord shall turn the captivity of our Zion—when the church militant has become the church triumphant—when a King greater than Pharaoh shall put in our hands victorious palms, and array us in more glorious vestments than Joseph wore—then shall we also forget, or remember as a dream, the toil through which we have passed, and all the afflictions of our earthly house.

To his other son Joseph gave the name of *EPHRAIM*, which means *fruitfulness*, for which he gives the strong reason—“For God hath made me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction,” in that very land in which he had endured so much trouble and disgrace. No man had ever more occasion than Joseph to know the fruitfulness of affliction; and his history is a striking manifestation of what we have all, more or less, occasion to experience—that God, in the dispensations of his providence and grace, cuts even to the quick the branches of the vine that he wills to bear much fruit. We may search history, we may explore the knowledge and experience of our own lives, in vain, for any instance of much fruit for God or for man, having been yielded by unafflicted men; and, in general, the ingathering of useful fruits has been proportioned to the intensity of the affliction—short of crushing the soul. May God give it to all of us to be fruitful in the land of our affliction—always remembering that there are better lands beyond, and better days to come.

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### THIRTEENTH WEEK—MONDAY.

JOSEPH'S HONORS.—GENESIS XLI. 38–43.

THE advancement of Joseph to the highest place in the realm of Egypt which a subject could hold, in consequence of his interpretation of the king's dream, and of the sagacious counsel which he founded thereon, is far more surprising to us than it would be to an Oriental. When we consider that he

was a prisoner and a slave when he came into the presence of the king, and that he departed from that presence the second man in the kingdom, the transition is so vast, that with us it appears too greatly at variance with probability to be tolerated, even in a romance. In the East, however, this is all different; and an advancement so great and so abrupt is still, although not common, of sufficiently frequent occurrence, that instances, more or less analogous, would, in the reading this history, occur to every eastern mind. But although such an advancement to a person of low station, even for a slave, as Joseph was, is still common, it is certainly not often so quick and so abrupt—simply because the opportunity of distinguishing himself by some such act of valor or wisdom, as may justify such advancement, is, in the nature of things, not often afforded to any man. But the Scripture itself supplies us a parallel instance in the case of Mordecai at the Persian court, twelve centuries later than this occurrence. Indeed the circumstances, and still more the ceremonies of investiture, are so singularly analogous, that the reader may with great interest and advantage compare the forty-first chapter of Genesis with the sixth chapter of Esther.

Before proceeding to notice the circumstances of the investiture, it may be as well to indicate that Joseph's high and sudden promotion arose not merely from the conviction of his wisdom, and of the singular political sagacity and administrative judgment which his counsel indicated, but from the conviction that he enjoyed the special favor of God, and was therefore likely to prosper in whatever he undertook. *What* God thus favored him, none were probably very solicitous to inquire. It was enough that it was the powerful God who was able to impart to the king important warnings—and to afford his servant the interpretations which the most renowned of the wise men of Egypt had been unable to produce. This is clearly indicated in the words of the king: "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is?" And again in his words to Joseph: "Forasmuch as God hath showed thee this, there is

none so discreet and wise as thou art." This was a great thing for the king to say to a foreigner, for Egypt was so famous of old time for its knowledge and learning, that the wisest in other lands thought it not beneath them to repair thither in search of wisdom.

In looking into the terms of this appointment to high office, we see that the authority conferred is of the most absolute kind that even an ancient eastern king could confer. It made him, in fact, vizier of Egypt, or what in Europe is termed "prime minister." "At thy word," said the king, "shall my people be ruled: only on the throne will I be greater than thou." And again: "See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt." The utmost authority the king could give was indeed necessary to enable Joseph to carry out with effect the large and comprehensive scheme that he had shadowed forth. The fact is, however, of great interest, as showing that the practical administrative functions of royalty were, even at this early period of the world's history, intrusted to a chief minister.

The first ceremonial act of the king, in conferring this high honor, is very significant. "He took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand," a circumstance which suggests to one of our elder commentators\* that the "honors conferred upon Joseph partly resembled those of a Lord Privy Seal with us." The ring was no doubt the signet of sovereignty with which the royal acts were to be sealed, and which rendered them authentic and authoritative. It empowered the person who held it to enforce his measures by the royal authority; he remaining responsible to the sovereign for the manner in which he used the high powers thus intrusted to him. In modern European states, the royal signet is used only under the direction of the sovereign or his council; but in the ancient East the possession of the royal signet—which was equivalent to the sign manual with us—gave to him who held it a power only less than sovereign, in that it was a responsible authority, which might at any time be

\* Parker, in *Bibliotheca Biblica*.

taken away. The ring, doubtless, contained the name or insignia of the king; and we are not to imagine that it was, as with us, employed in sealing with wax. Nothing of that sort can be used in so warm a climate as that of Egypt. It must have been employed in impressing the royal name, *with ink*, upon the documents to which it was applied. In this employment of the signet ring, the thick ink, which resembles that used by printers, is rubbed over the whole surface, so that the body of the impression therefrom is black, while the engraved characters are blank, or white. We are well acquainted with the signet and other rings of the ancient Egyptians, as many specimens have been found. They are usually of gold. The form of the scarabæus, or sacred beetle, was that usually preferred for this purpose. In some cases the stone, flat on both faces, turned on pins, like many of our seals at the present day; and the ring itself was bound round at each end, where it was inserted into the stone, with gold wire. Sir J. G. Wilkinson states, that one of the largest signets he had ever seen was in the possession of a French gentleman at Cairo, which contained twenty pounds worth of gold. "It consisted of a massive ring, half an inch in its largest diameter, having an oblong plinth, on which the devices were engraved, one inch long, six tenths in its greatest, and four tenths in its smallest breadth. On the face was the name of a king, the successor of Amunoph III., who lived about B.C. 1460;\* on the other a lion, with the legend 'lord of strength,' referring to the monarch: on one side a scorpion, on the other a crocodile." Here we have an undoubted specimen of a royal signet, little more than three centuries posterior to the time under consideration.

Joseph was next "arrayed in vestures of fine linen," which was not only a high distinction, as coming from the king—thereby constituting it a dress of honor, still conferred as a mark of high favor by the sovereigns of the East—but denoted the rank and station to which he was exalted, as it appears that dresses of this fine fabric were only allowed to be

\* Not long after the death of Joshua.

worn by persons of the highest rank and distinction in Egypt. We shall not here inquire whether the word rendered "fine linen," really does denote linen or cotton. The general impression seems to be, that cotton was not so early known, even in Egypt, and that therefore the alternative chosen by our translators is correct. It is certain that the more delicate textures of the Egyptian looms were costly and highly prized. An unfavorable impression has been formed of the Egyptian cloths from the comparatively coarse texture of the specimens in which the mummies are enfolded, and which have been ascertained to be commonly, if not universally, of linen. But it would not, at the present day, be considered right to seek the finest specimens of textile manufactures among the vestments of the dead, and we know not that the case was formerly different. Among the Egyptians, it was very possible that the finer cloths were regarded as unsuited to form any part of the cerements in which the dead were enveloped. Nevertheless, some very fine and delicate specimens have been occasionally found; and in the paintings which represent the dresses of the living, it is seen from their transparency, and from their folds, that they were, among the higher ranks of people, of very fine and delicate texture. Sir J. G. Wilkinson declares, that he has in his possession actual specimens of Egyptian "fine linen, the quality of which fully justifies all the praises of antiquity, and excites equal admiration at the present day—being to the touch comparable to silk, and not inferior in texture to our finest cambric."

The dress of persons of rank in Egypt consisted of a kind of apron or kilt, sometimes simply bound round the loins and lapping over in front, but generally secured by a girdle, or by a sort of sash, tied in front in a bow or knot. It was sometimes folded over, with a centre-piece falling down in front, beneath the part where it overlapped. Over this was worn a loose upper robe of the "fine linen," with full sleeves, secured by a girdle around the loins. Or else the dress consisted of the mere apron, and a shirt with short close sleeves, over

which was thrown a loose robe, leaving the right arm exposed. The dress of the king himself seems to have differed only in the apron and head-dress, which were of peculiar form, and belonged exclusively to his rank as king.\*

Besides these vestures, Pharaoh put a chain of gold around the neck of Jacob's son. In reference to this mark of distinction, the existing monuments of Egypt afford us abundant information. In the tombs at Beni-Hassan many slaves are represented, each of whom has in his hand something that belongs to the dress or ornaments of his master. The first carries one of the necklaces with which the neck and breast of persons of high rank are generally adorned. Over it stands, "necklace of gold." At the same place there is also a similar representation, in another tomb, of a noble Egyptian. By the *form* of the necklace, the distinction of individuals, with regard to rank and dignity, was probably denoted. Men of the common order seldom wear such ornaments, while the pictures of the kings and of the great are constantly adorned with them.†

In fact, the use of gold chains among ourselves, as marks of civic, judicial, knightly, and courtly honors, leaves little need for remote or foreign illustration of the subject. It seems to us highly probable that among the articles of dress with which Joseph was invested, we are to seek in the necklace and the signet-ring the special insignia by which the high office to which he was appointed might be recognized.

It was necessary that his recognition should be public, and that it should therefore be openly proclaimed throughout the city. We ensure adequate publicity by announcements in the Gazette. But the Egyptians, with all their wonderful advances in civilization, possessed not this valuable organ of publicity, and therefore the general expedient of a public parade and proclamation through the streets became neces-

\* Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, iii. 119, 347-351; *Cyclop. of Biblical Literature*, Art. SHESH.

† Hengstenberg's *Egypt and the Books of Moses*, pp. 31, 32. American edition.

sary—an expedient still kept up partially in our own court, and in our civic ceremonies, though no longer exacted by the conditions in which it originated. This was also done at the court of Persia, in the case of Mordecai. Esth. vi. 9. In the procession of Mordecai, however, the object of honor appeared on horseback—on the king's own horse; but in Egypt,—where men rode rather in chariots than on horseback—Joseph appears in the second state chariot of the realm. The Egyptian chariots were a species of gig, drawn by two horses. They were of light and elegant construction. On grand occasions the horses were decked with fancy ornaments; a rich striped or chequered housing, trimmed with a broad border, and large pendent tassels, covered the whole body, and two or more feathers, inserted in lions' heads, or some other device of gold, formed a crest upon the summit of the head-stall. But this display was confined to the chariot of the monarch or high military chiefs. And as Joseph rode in the monarch's chariot the horses were no doubt thus decorated.

In this high state was Joseph paraded through the chief streets of the royal city, while the heralds that went before him cried ABRECH!—an Egyptian word, the meaning of which is not well known. The English version renders it by “Bow the knee!” some by “Bow the head!” while others, of no mean authority, apprehend that it proclaimed him to be “a native Egyptian,” notwithstanding his foreign extraction. At all events that he should be publicly recognized as a naturalized subject, must, however effected, have been a consideration of no small weight with a people so jealous of foreigners as the Egyptians.

## THIRTEENTH WEEK—TUESDAY.

THE CORN POLICY.—GENESIS XLI. 34—36, 47—57; XLVII. 13—26

THE policy which Joseph recommended to the Egyptian king, and which he carried into effect when invested with the requisite power, well deserves our attention.

During the seven years of plenty, Joseph caused one fifth of all the produce of every district to be hoarded up in its towns—every town containing, in immense granaries, the redundant produce of its district. The proportion is remarkable. It might seem inadequate, seeing that this fifth part of the produce of each year was to sustain the whole population during a year of famine. But when we consider the enormous export of corn from that country, which continued even to later times, when Egypt was the granary of Italy, it may readily be apprehended, that one fifth of the produce of an extraordinary fertile year might be made to suffice for consumption during one year of famine. It is somewhat of a question how the crown acquired possession of this corn. Some think that the whole produce was taken up by the government, in order to ensure the economical use of it—and then was doled out to the people. Others understand that merely a certain calculable surplus was taken and stored up: and there are those who think it probable, by the light of subsequent events, that the produce-tax of one tenth, usually paid to ancient governments, was at this time doubled, and made one fifth, which constituted the surplus treasured up for future years. As this was afterwards *sold* to the people, some infer, that the corn was bought up by the crown; and to account for the ability of the court to meet the outlay needful for the purchase of such countless stores of food, it is remarked, that this might be done at a comparatively small cost, in a time of abundance. This is true; and the prospect of a gainful return would encourage this outlay; besides, that the king could not but be influenced by the desire to pre-



serve his people. It may be hard to say what was the precise nature of the transaction. We must confess, that we have not that conviction of the freedom and generosity of the Egyptian government, which some have derived from the glowing descriptions of Diodorus Siculus. All the facts and language known to us seem to indicate a government of the most absolute character. The most despotic king the East ever yet produced could not speak a language more unreservedly despotic, than that which the Egyptian king uses in bestowing upon Joseph his high commission: "I am Pharaoh; and without thee, shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." However, looking at the course which affairs take under such exigencies, we consider the probability to be, that either the people were serfs to the crown, for which they cultivated the land—and that hence the government took, as of right, all the produce they did not require for their subsistence; or else, that the ancient, like the modern government of the country, claimed, and in this instance exercised, the right of purchasing, at *its own price*, as much as it required of the produce of the land, leaving sufficient for the sustenance of the producers. The mere existence of such a right is sufficiently hard; but we must judge these matters by the light of other days and of other lands than our own. The Orientals have never troubled themselves much about abstract rights. It is the harsh or mild exercise of powers, whether these powers be formally recognized or not, which they chiefly regard; and they seldom question any power a monarch thinks fit to assume, so long as its application does not press insupportably upon the individual. In the present case, it is quite probable that the extreme importance and urgency of the occasion was regarded as justifying the utmost exertion of the royal power, without greater regard for private rights—if any such rights were recognized—than we usually find among Eastern nations. The mission of Joseph was to provide for the famine; and this he was bound to do in conformity with the existing ideas and institutions of the nation—with which a residence of twenty-three years must

have made him well acquainted, without embarrassing his operations, by raising new questions of government and political right.

The case may have been somewhat different when the years of famine came, and all the food of the land was in his hands—food which would, without his care, all have disappeared during the years of plenty, and the people left to remediless starvation. The nation then lay at his feet; and seeing that a man will give all that he hath for his life, he had the power of acting as seemed good in his eyes. Whether he had some regard to the advantage of the people, or to that of the crown, whose servant he was, may be a question with us. But it was probably no question with him, in whose view the advantage of the king and the people were doubtless one. Under the deep study which the principles of government and of political economy have of late years received, the conduct of Joseph, in this trying position, may be considered with advantage, and in freedom from those crude notions of unbounded state profusion which people were wont to admire, but which are now seen to form, in their results, a curse to any people.

The state had corn in abundance, and the people had no food. What was the state to do? However people might talk fifty years ago, as if it were the duty of the state to open its stores, and feed the people during all these years without cost, few thinking men would now take this to be the wisest course. It was the duty of the state to see that none should perish from want, while there was food in the land; but it was not the duty of the state—it would not have been wise or prudent—it would even have been mischievous—to have supplied corn without cost to those who had the means of paying for it, in money or in money's worth. This is now so well understood, that during the recent famine in the sister country, the government taxed its ingenuity to find means that those who had nothing but their labor to sell, should give that labor in exchange for the food which the care of the state provided. The whole care and solicitude of

the government was to avoid the appearance, and, as far as possible, the reality, of *giving*, of its mere bounty, the food for which it had ransacked the world. No doubt, the men who spent their days in mending, or in seeming to mend the roads, would have been better pleased had the food been given them without this cost; but the wise thought differently. And if so much danger was in this case apprehended, from the precedent of feeding a people gratuitously for a few months, how much greater would have been the danger of doing this during the seven long years of famine in Egypt! It is not too much to say, that seventy times seven years would scarcely have enabled the nation to recover from the shock which its character and its industry would, during these seven years, have sustained. Instead, therefore, of Joseph's plan of *selling*, instead of *giving*, the corn to the people being a matter of reprehension, we ought to be astonished at a course of proceeding which anticipated the discoveries of the nineteenth century of Christ; and at the strength of mind which enabled the minister of the Egyptian crown to forego the vulgar popularity which profuse but unreasoning bounty can always obtain. We have ourselves had, at intervals, frequent occasion to examine the conduct of Joseph in this transaction very closely, and we must acknowledge, that the more we have examined it, the better we have understood it, and the more laudable, the more wise, and the more free from objection, it has appeared. And we have reached this judgment quite independently; for we are by no means bound to conclude, that all that Joseph did in this matter was right. The Scripture, as usual, records the proceedings, without passing any judgment upon them; and considering the influences by which he was surrounded, and the age and circumstances in which he lived, it would be surprising indeed to find all his proceedings conformable to modern European notions of political justice. It would be enough to find, that his measures were such as would in his own age be considered just and wise; and if, in any point, as in the one we have noticed, his ideas were in advance of his

age, he is entitled to the greater credit ; for we cannot rightly expect more from him than the spirit of his own age demanded.

Let us now indicate briefly the true character of the action, without pausing to discuss the merits of every in the operation.

When the famine commenced, Joseph opened the store and began to sell the corn, not only to the Egyptians, but to such foreigners as came for it ; and that foreigners did come from all the neighboring lands to Egypt to purchase corn, shows that it was not offered at an exorbitant or monopoly price to the Egyptians. The foreigners clearly came in the hope of sharing in the benefits enjoyed by the people of Egypt, by purchasing corn at the price it was sold for in that land. At first the payments for corn were made with money ; but this at length became exhausted ; and as, from the universal character of the visitation, there were none to give money for other property, Joseph consented, on the application of the people, to take property in exchange for corn. They began with their cattle. As they had not the means of feeding their live stock, and they must have been anxious that their horses, flocks, herds, etc., should be in hands that could preserve them from perishing with hunger ; and as the number must have been greatly diminished during the previous period of famine, we need not be surprised to learn, that this resource lasted but one year, at the close of which, all the cattle in Egypt had passed into the possession of the crown. What resource then remained ? These were not times for lending or borrowing—of putting the evil day far off—of any of the common resources by which men seek to avert present evil. The questions before men then, were questions of life and death. They came to Joseph, and showing that they had nothing left but their persons and their lands, they offered both as the price of their subsistence during the remainder of the famine, with seed-corn for the time when the operations of agriculture might be resumed. This offer was accepted by Joseph. He did not make the

proposal. It was one that he would, perhaps, have hesitated to make; but, being offered by the people, and even pressed upon him, he yielded to their urgency, and without nicely inquiring into the extent of their meaning, accepted it in the same large terms as offered; the particular limitation being then in his hands, and the liberal translation of these terms being well calculated to bring credit to his master.

However, the offer, as made, is not to be understood under the popular acceptation of buying and selling—the application of which, to this transaction, is calculated to mislead the judgment; as Joseph's phrase, in speaking to them, "I have bought you this day, and your lands, for Pharaoh," tends to excite a feeling to the disadvantage of his character. It means little more than "acquired," just as anciently, and indeed at the present day in the East, a wife is said to be "bought," and the money that passes between the husband and her father, is called the "price." This is far from implying that she has become a slave. So, in the present case, although the people relinquish their lands, they do not expect to cease to occupy or cultivate them. They are indeed anxious that the land shall not be desolate; and one of their stipulations is for seed-corn, all of which would have been idle, had they become mere slaves or serfs. Had the land, under their offer, become absolutely that of the king, they had little reason to care about it. *He* would know how to care for his own land; and they might safely leave to him the providing of seed-corn for its culture. And so, had the condition into which they came been that of slaves, he would have been bound to care for them; and it could to them matter but little whether the land lay desolate or not. What they did expect was clearly, that they should henceforth become tenants of the crown, instead of free proprietors. This they call being "servants,"—a term which merely implies that they were under obligations short of absolute freedom. There is no word in Scripture answering to "tenant." The tenant is called the "servant" of the proprietor; and, according to this phraseology, our own tenant-farmers would

be called servants, seeing that they cultivate lands not their own, and are bound to render to the landlord a large proportion of the value of the produce as rent. Although, therefore, Joseph's language, "I have *bought you* this day, you and your lands for Pharaoh," must sound harsh to us, it is well to understand, that the true signification of what he says is this—"Having this day acquired for Pharaoh certain rights over you and your lands, I shall now proceed to inform you to what extent these rights will hereafter be enforced." He then states, in accordance with the explanation we have given, that they are to remain in occupation of the lands of which the king had become, by their cession, the proprietor, and that they were to pay one fifth of the produce as rent to the sovereign as their landlord, in lieu of all other imposts and charges whatever. When we consider that, in all probability, a tenth at least had previously been paid to defray the expenses of government, the real *additional* charge is ten per cent.—in all twenty per cent. This is certainly a heavy charge; but it is as nothing in comparison with what is paid for rent in almost any country in Europe at the present day; and still less bears comparison with the *combined* charges of rent and taxation, which this charge in Egypt appears to us to represent. It is somewhat remarkable, that amid the vicissitudes to which that country has been subject, the compact between the ruler and his subjects, entered into by Joseph, has always subsisted there in principle. To this day the fellah, or peasant, in Egypt, cultivates the land for his sovereign, and receives a portion of the produce for his own wants. But, amid the grasping exactions of our own age, and the harsh oppressions to which he is subject by the government and its officers, he has much reason to regret, that the moderation of Joseph does not actuate its present rulers. Mr. Lane, in his excellent book on the Modern Egyptians, declares with emphasis, that "it could scarcely be possible for them to suffer more, and live."\*

\* In Burckhardt's curious book of *Arabic Proverbs*, there is a calcul

The true view of Joseph's proceedings must be taken from the point of view of the age in which he lived. It is therefore well that we have the means of knowing, not merely how it was viewed by his contemporaries generally, but how it was regarded by the very people themselves, whose harsh treatment some writers have affected to condole. Let it be remembered that the proposal was their own; and that when Joseph had accepted their offer, under a more liberal construction than they had perhaps expected, their language was not that of complaint, but of warm and admiring gratitude:—"Thou hast saved our lives!"

It deserves further to be noted that, although in accepting the offer, he uses the same broad terms in which it had been tendered; yet, when the law in which he embodied the results of this transaction is given—nothing is said about the *persons*, only of the lands—the edict itself, liberally and gracefully waiving the point which was most liable to abuse, which had formed part of the bargain. If it was to be enforced, or had any other significance beyond that we have ascribed to it, the law is the very place in which to seek it; but the law only says, that the fifth part of the produce was to be the king's, without one word of personal servitude, or of persons in any way.

lation of the cost and produce of the culture of seventeen acres in Egypt. It may be thus summarily stated in piastres—

Total produce,	. . . . .	1802
Total expense,	. . . . .	993½
		<hr/>
Clear produce,	. . . . .	808½
Government taxes,	. . . . .	493
		<hr/>
Remainder for cultivation,	. . . . .	315½
		<hr/>

This shows that the taxes alone levied by the modern government, amount to about seventy per cent. of the clear produce of the farm.

## THIRTEENTH WEEK—WEDNESDAY.

## THE ENTERTAINMENT.—GENESIS XLIII. 16-34.

WHEN the sons of Jacob came the second time to Egypt to purchase corn, they naturally went to the public office, where the business connected with the distribution of grain was transacted under the superintendence of Joseph. He had, no doubt, been long expecting their return, and he had no difficulty in guessing that the stranger who now appeared among them was his own brother—the son of his mother. He, however, restrained all present emotion, and directed “the ruler of his house” to take them home, and “to slay, and make ready” a suitable entertainment for so many guests, as he meant that they should dine with him at noon.

There are in this some intimations that deserve attention. One is, that even in the metropolitan city, animals are slaughtered at home, instead of the meat being purchased in the market. This seems hard to understand. In a village or small town, we might explain it by supposing that there being no demand sufficient to carry off, so promptly as a warm climate requires, any animal that might be killed for sale, none were so killed, but every one who wished for a joint of meat, had to slay an animal in order to obtain it. This we have often witnessed ; but it can hardly apply to a great city. Yet, even in a large city, we have known a gentleman who wished to give an English entertainment, obliged to purchase an ox, and have it slain on his own premises. This was simply, that beef was not eaten by the people, and therefore not to be found in the market of even a large town. We should have been almost inclined to think that Joseph was minded to give his brethren an entertainment different from that which the markets of Egypt would supply, but such as they had known in Canaan ; were it not, that the fact of cattle being killed in the premises where an entertainment is given, is proved to have been usual by the subsisting monu-



ments of Egypt. The cause of this remarkable circumstance, which seems to imply, that what we call butcher's meat, was not to be had at shops or market, remains to be found. We have representations of poulterers' shops, but whenever we find the slaying of quadrupeds for food, it is in a private house. It may be that, as there is indeed reason to believe, poultry, fish, and vegetables formed the chief food of the people, and that flesh-meat was seldom used but at entertainments, which created a demand so uncertain and irregular, as to deter any tradesman from attempting to supply it, in a land where meat will not keep more than a few hours. It may be also, that they desired the blood for their culinary operations. It was clearly received in vessels for this purpose; and it is probably with reference to this Egyptian practice, that the use of blood was by the law forbidden to the Israelites.\*

From all the representations that exist, it is, then, seen to have been the custom in Egypt, in conformity with the incidental intimation of the fact here given, to take the animal into a court-yard near the house; to tie its four legs together, and then to throw it upon the ground. In this position it was held by one or more persons, while the butcher, sharpening his broad knife upon a steel attached to his apron, proceeded to cut the throat, as nearly as possible from one ear to the other, sometimes continuing the opening downward along the throat. The head was then taken off, and was usually given away to some poor person, unless there were foreigners to whom it could be sold. They then proceeded to flay the animal, beginning with the head and the neck; and the carcass being then cut up, the joints were taken in trays to the kitchen, where the cook seems to have at once commenced his operations upon them. This last fact is indeed implied, in the narrative before us, as the meat that was to be eaten at noon, had still to be killed in the forenoon when Joseph gave this order. This mode of dressing meat

\* Deut. xv. 23. The prohibition was, however, also of earlier date, although thus renewed. See Gen. ix. 4.

before the warmth of life has passed from it, is almost necessary in a hot climate. This is partly shown in the practice of our own butchers, who, in winter, kill their animals several days before they cut up the carcasses, but, in summer, kill only the day before, or even the same morning. These matters are determined by habit and climate; and the Orientals, under such influence, think as hardly of our practice as we can do of theirs; for they regard with disgust and abhorrence, the length of time meat is kept by Europeans before it is cooked. In their view, it is no better than carrion. One consequence is, however, that meat dressed so soon after killing, requires to be completely over-dressed in order to be tender; and from this arises some of the most peculiar forms of eastern cookery.\*

It is stated, that on their arrival at the house, Joseph's brethren had water brought with which to wash their feet. This custom we have already had occasion to notice.† Yet it is known from ancient writers, that they washed their hands before dinner; but the washing of the feet was probably confined to those who desired it, or who had come from a journey. There are, indeed, no representations of these operations in any of the ancient Egyptian paintings; but ewers, not unlike those used at the present day, are represented, with the basins belonging to them, in the paintings of a Theban tomb. It is certain that basins were kept for the purpose of washing the hands and feet of the guests, and that in the houses of the rich they were of gold. Herodotus mentions a gold basin belonging to Amasis, which he and the guests who dined with him used for washing their feet. But it is probable, that those who lived near their host, were expected to perform their ablutions before they left home, and this, perhaps, accounts for no representations of the process being shown in the paintings.

\* Those of our readers who desire to acquaint themselves further with the details of Egyptian culinary operations, should consult Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, ii. 364-406.

† Eighth Week—Tuesday.

It will also be observed, that the dining hour was noon, an hour which, although in many respects inconvenient, as coming in the midst of the day's labor, has singularly maintained its place as that in which the great mass of people in most nations take their principal meal. It is probable, however, that, like the Romans, they also ate supper in the evening, as is still the custom in the East.

The table used by the ancient Egyptians, is very similar to that of the present day in Egypt. This is a small stool supporting a round tray, on which the dishes are placed. These tables were sometimes brought in and removed with the dishes upon them. Occasionally, each guest had a table to himself. From the mention of persons sitting in rows, according to rank, it has been supposed by some that the tables were of a long figure. This, Wilkinson thinks, may sometimes have been the case in Egypt, even during the Pharaonic period, since the brethren of Joseph sat before him, the "first-born according to his birth-right, and the youngest according to his youth," Joseph himself eating alone at another table. We quite agree, however, with this writer, in thinking it by no means certain, that the table was in this instance long, or in any way different from their usual round table, since people might even then be seated according to their rank, and the similar modern Egyptian table is not without its post of honor, and fixed gradation of rank.

The brethren are represented as *sitting* at table. Hengstenberg, in his clever book on *Egypt and the Books of Moses*, notes here a variation from the patriarchal practice of reclining. We have some doubt that the text to which he refers, Gen. xviii. 4, "rest yourselves," will bear the stress he lays upon it. But it is certain from the monuments that the Egyptians did, as has been represented, sit at meals. All the modes of sitting upon the ground now in use in the East—cross-legged, crouching, and upon the heels—may be found in the paintings and sculptures. But the Egyptians sat also on chairs and stools. In the paintings representing meals, we sometimes see the guests sitting on low stools, or else

upon the ground ; but we notice that one peculiar mode of sitting upon the ground is invariably adopted as best suited to give command of the table at dinner. The person kneels on the left knee, and he sits upon the heel of the same leg, while the foot of the sole of the right foot is planted on the ground, and the leg correspondingly raised.

Although Benjamin, as the youngest, has the lowest place, Joseph shows him the special favor of sending to his table messes five times as large as any of the others receive. To present choice morsels with the hand to those at the same table, and to send dishes from his own table to that of any other person (always understanding that every two or three have a separate tray and table), is still the highest and most flattering distinction which an eastern host can show to the guest he delights to honor. And this was doubtless the nature of the attention which Joseph showed to his mother's son. This disproportion of five to one must, however, have been very astonishing to the other brothers, and even to the Egyptians, if, as Herodotus tells us, the distinction in such cases to the kings themselves at public feasts and banquets, was no more than a double mess. Agesilaus, when in Egypt, used to have a double portion brought to him, one for himself, and the other to bestow wherever he felt inclined to confer a mark of his favor. Other instances of the kind are frequent in antiquity. Although in Europe, at least in modern times, the delicacy of the parts we give at table is more considered than the quantity, yet the tradition of these two customs are essentially the same. Indeed the antiquity and curiosity of many of the intimations which bear on so small a matter, may warn us to count nothing little that illustrates the prevalence and descent of ancient usages.

## THIRTEENTH WEEK—THURSDAY.

THE SHEPHERD KINGS.—GENESIS XLIII. 32.

THE declaration that to “eat with the Hebrews was an abomination to the Egyptians,” opens questions of considerable interest, which have not failed to engage the attention of the scholars of this and former generations. One obvious cause has already been suggested\* in the fact that by the Hebrews and other pastoral tribes the cow, which was almost the only animal *generally* worshipped in Egypt (the worship of most others being local), was offered in sacrifices, and the flesh eaten without scruple.

But there was yet another, and perhaps a deeper reason,—the previous occupation of Egypt by a pastoral race, who had committed great cruelties during their occupation of the country. The precise date of this invasion has not been, and perhaps never will be, ascertained. But we are strongly disposed to agree with Sir J. G. Wilkinson and others in thinking that “the already existing prejudice against shepherds, when the Hebrews arrived in the country, plainly shows that their invasion happened previous to that event.”† This is the view the present writer may claim to have always taken; and although it has of late years been most formidably opposed by recent continental writers, there still seems to him no other theory that is so probable in itself, and certainly none which so well harmonizes with *all* the Scriptural intimations. We cannot here trace that view so fully as might be wished; but the leading points of it are—That the intrusive dynasty, called the Hyksos, or “shepherd kings,” were in Egypt at the time of Abraham’s visit to that land: that they had recently been expelled when Joseph attained to honor in that country, and that the Pharaoh of his history is a native Egyptian prince. Hence Joseph, appearing as an

\* Twelfth Week—Saturday.

† *Ancient Egyptians*, ii. 16.

Egyptian, speaks to his brethren by an interpreter; hence the dislike of the Egyptians to eat with a pastoral people; hence the fact that the fertile pasture district of Goshen happened to be then vacant for appropriation to the Israelites; for, according to the history of that invasion, this was the very district in which the Hyksos made their last stand, and in which they had for a good while maintained themselves, after their expulsion from the rest of Egypt. The king of a later age, who "knew not Joseph," and who oppressed the Israelites, had, according to this view, no connection with this change, but was the first of a dynasty from Upper Egypt, who placed upon his head the crowns of the upper and lower country, until his time held apart, and who had little knowledge of the services, or care for the family, of Joseph, but looked upon them as a branch of the great pastoral family, from which Egypt had formerly suffered so much, and which it had still reason to regard with apprehension.

The other view assumes a later date for the incumbency of the shepherd kings. It holds that they were in the height of their power in Egypt in the time of Joseph, and that the change which eventually took place in the treatment of the Israelites settled in Goshen, arose from the expulsion of the intrusive dynasty, and the succession of the native sovereign, who would naturally regard the Israelites as merely a branch of the same obnoxious race. Although we cannot receive this view, we have no desire to underrate the learning and ability with which it has been advocated. It has, however, this fault, that we cannot reconcile it so well as the other with the facts of Scripture, and that it does not satisfactorily meet any one of the requisites which we have described as originally recommending the earlier date to our preference.

As the English reader has not had much opportunity of becoming acquainted with the grounds on which the later date is advocated, the leading points may be stated for his information. As, however, the statements of this view by

- different writers vary in circumstances, we shall chiefly follow that of a German writer by whom it has been most ably advocated.\*

Entertaining the view, then, that the king who knew not Joseph, was the first native king who reigned after the expulsion of the shepherds, who had dominated over the country for 260 years, it is also held that the shepherds were Shemites, descended probably from Eber, and allied to the Israelites in spirit, language, and occupation, which very circumstance would make the latter hateful to the Egyptians. This agrees with the apprehensions of Pharaoh, that the Israelites, who had become exceedingly numerous, might avail themselves of the occasion of a war, to leave the country, and increase the number of hostile neighbors. Exod. i. 10.

The settlement of the Israelites in Egypt must, if this view be correct, have taken place soon after the commencement of that dynasty. This is deemed to be corroborated by the narrative of Joseph, which supposes the reader to be acquainted with Egyptian history. In the first place the term Hebrew is applied, without immediate reference to Israel,† whose family was small, to the whole body of the shepherd people, who were so much hated by the Egyptians. This agrees, it is urged, with the opinion that they had conquered the country, and that the ruling monarchs were selected from their number, and forced upon the people, by whom they were held in detestation, though they did accommodate themselves to Egyptian usages.

It is next urged that it was only under a foreign dynasty, in such circumstances, that Joseph could have been raised to distinction. Hence the cup-bearer mentions him as a Hebrew youth, able to interpret dreams; and hence the

\* Jost, in his *General History of the Israelitish People* (*Allgemeine Geschichte des Israelitischen Volks*). It is also advocated by Heeren in his *Historical Researches* (*Ideen*); and M. D. J. M. Henry in his *Pharaonic Egypt* (*L'Égypte Pharaonique*).

† Gen. xxxix. 14; xl. 15; xli. 12; xliii. 31. Exod. i. 16; iii. 18; viii.

king, of the same stock originally, determined to send for him, as the Egyptian wise men gave him no satisfaction. The advice of Joseph was gladly taken, because the king perceived immediately that the establishment and independence of the people would be promoted by it. To have a Hebrew in his service as administrator of the kingdom, would be agreeable to his dependents; and his foes, the priests, were conciliated by being exempted from civil burdens, and secured in their revenues. And although he conferred the right of citizenship on Joseph, giving him an Egyptian name, and bringing about his marriage with the daughter of a priest of the sun, yet he did not venture to violate the feelings of the people, and Joseph did not sit at the same table with the Egyptian lords, because they would not eat with the shepherd race.

Again, when Joseph's brethren came to Egypt, they undoubtedly recognized him as a Hebrew, for his story must have been generally known; but it never occurred to them that he was their brother, whom they had sold, for there were certainly many Hebrews in the land, and some of them men of distinction. He confirmed their error by employing an interpreter. It is only on this supposition that he could affect to regard his ten brethren as spies; for while the shepherd race held the power, it is very conceivable that their jealousy should be excited by the apprehension of further inroads from the same stock. Such a feigned charge, preferred by a governor acting under the authority of a really Egyptian family, would be altogether inexplicable.

Lastly, it is stated that Pharaoh was pleased with the account of Joseph's family. But were he an Egyptian, would he have allowed such men, hateful to his people, to settle in Egypt? But if he himself were of the same stock, his own satisfaction and that of his courtiers, is what might be expected from the characteristic hospitality of the race. Thus the Israelites were connected with the government, but hated by the Egyptian people. The remains of Jacob are embalmed, and, agreeably to his last will, committed to his own



sepulchre, accompanied by many Egyptian lords—solemnities which it is not to be supposed that the enemies of the shepherd race would have allowed. The place in Canaan where the mourning ceremonies of the funeral were performed was called by the inhabitants Abel Mizraim (mourning of the Egyptians)—not necessarily because they were really Egyptians, but because they came from Egypt, and the ceremonies were conducted in the manner of the country.

That among these various suggestions there are none of any weight, it would be hard to say; but we grievously miscalculate the penetration of our readers, if they will not be able of themselves to disprove most of these arguments on the basis of the indications we have already afforded. It will not fail to be seen that the state of feeling which, according to all but such as adopt this view, arose out of the long and oppressive occupation of the land by the shepherds—is throughout quietly assumed not only to have existed, but to have been manifested, even at court, *during* the period of their dominion, and, indeed, what must have been very soon after its commencement. It will also be perceived that even the most probable of the facts adduced, become more probable still under the explanation that the court of Egypt, in the time of Joseph, was a native Egyptian, the intrusive pastoral dynasty having been then expelled. Even the fact that Joseph affected to take his brethren for spies, which is triumphantly alleged to be inexplicable under a native dynasty, is, in fact, more easily explained under that hypothesis; for if the shepherds had been at a recent date driven out of the country, it was quite natural that a careful watch should be kept over persons of the same order entering the land, who might be suspected of some attempt which might be made by the expelled pastoral tribes to recover the power they had lost. It may also be remarked, that the assertion that Joseph and his family, though favored by the court, are hated by the people, is not only unsupported by Scripture, but is at variance with the general tendency of its intimations. Look, for instance, at Deut. xxiii. 7, “Thou

shalt not abhor an Egyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his land ;” a passage which is justly held by Hengstenberg to imply that the Israelites received, in some respect, better treatment from individuals of the Egyptians than from the state ; so that the Israelites had cause for grateful regard to them in return, since the phrase, “for thou wast a stranger in his land,” is not a sufficient reason for the command, “Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian,” unless it means that the Egyptians performed the offices of hospitality to the Israelites, and earned for themselves the claim of reciprocity.

It seems to us that the disposition to assign the later date to the shepherd dynasty of Egypt has arisen from the wish to account, in what might seem the most satisfactory manner, for the change of policy which took place when a dynasty, comparatively insensible to the ancient services of Joseph, came into power in lower Egypt. But this is sufficiently accounted for by the succession of a king from the upper country, who had previously reigned in the distant province of Thebes, and who would be naturally inclined to look upon the Hebrews with the same distrust and contempt with which foreigners, and especially pastoral foreigners, were usually treated by the Egyptians. Accordingly, it is at this time, sixty years after the death of Joseph, that Wilkinson, in his Tables, fixes the accession of the Theban dynasty in the person of Amosis, whom he, with reason, regards as “the new king who knew not Joseph.”

There is one point, incidentally produced, as to the origin of the shepherds, which may require a word of notice. The notion that the term, Hebrews, applies to the whole body of the shepherd people, including the Israelites, is now maintained by great authorities. If the name Hebrew be derived from Eber, as seems to be generally understood, there is no reason that it should not be applicable to any other descendants of Eber besides the family of Abraham. The strongest passage for this interpretation is that in which Joseph says he was stolen from “the land of the Hebrews,” which, it is urged, is scarcely applicable to the family of Jacob. It may

be allowed that there is a difficulty ; but the difficulty is as great the other way—as it is by no means easy to see in what sense the land of Canaan, then in great part a settled country, could, in this wider sense, be called “ a land of pastoral tribes ;” and, as far as appears, Abraham’s family was the only one of Shemitic origin in the land. Still, this objection has much to recommend it, although the proof is less satisfactory than might be desired. Some evidence may yet be found to settle this difficult question ; but while the opinions of intelligent and learned men differ so greatly, it must be held that the materials for a positive conclusion do not exist. Wilkinson at first held that the Hyksos were from Assyria ; but now, or lately, regards them as a Scythian tribe. Some bring them even from India ; others find them in the Berbers of Africa ; and many seek them in the neighboring pastoral tribes of Shemitic origin. Perhaps the last view is the safest to be entertained, till a more positive conclusion can be reached.

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### THIRTEENTH WEEK—FRIDAY.

#### DIVINING CUPS.—GENESIS XLIV.

WHEN Joseph, in pursuance of his plan of dealing with his brethren, directed his steward to put his silver cup into the sack of Benjamin, and then, when they had departed, to pursue and charge them with the theft, his object, probably, was to ascertain the state of their feeling towards Benjamin, and whether they extended to him—the only other child of his mother—the dislike which had led them to contemplate his own death, and which induced them actually to sell him for a slave. If the state of their feelings were not right towards Benjamin, they would doubtless leave him in the hands of the steward, and make their own way home ; but if they were true men, they would not abandon him to his fate, but would make every effort to save him from that slavery, the penalty of his assumed offence, to which they had so readily

consigned his brother. Nobly did they stand the test. They rent their clothes in grief, and returned with their brother, to plead for mercy before the austere governor of Egypt. The result of Judah's noble and manly appeal, which moved Joseph to tears, is well known. What would have been the result had they given way in this trial, may be easily conjectured. Joseph, having possession of his beloved brother, would doubtless have disclosed himself to him, and have provided well for him in Egypt. But it is very doubtful if he would have cared any further for his recreant brothers; and the migration of the whole family into Egypt would not, humanly speaking, have taken place. But doubtless, even in that case, on learning from Benjamin the difficulty with which the aged Jacob had consented to his departure with the others, and the serious consequences which his not returning might be expected to produce, Joseph would have found means of communicating to his father the intelligence that *both* the sons of his beloved Rachel were alive and prosperous in Egypt.

But what strikes the reader most, perhaps, in the account of this transaction, and what seems more to need explanation than almost any other point in the narrative, is that, to enhance the importance and value of the cup, and to deepen the enormity of the offence, the steward is instructed to declare that this was the cup whereby his lord practised divination; and personally, when they came once more before Joseph, he turns to this point himself in the stern question—“Wot ye not that such a man as I would certainly divine?” As we believe this to convey the correct meaning, we shall not trouble the reader with an account of the various interpretations the words have received. It is well known that the ancient Egyptians had a kind of divination by cups, called in Greek *kulikomantia* or *kyadomanteia*; and it is remarkable, that in the translation of the Old Testament into Greek by the Seventy, the word *kondou* is employed, and it is observable, that the sacred chalice of the Hindu priest is to this day called *kundi*.

However, we should do wrong to suppose that Joseph really practised divination, from his instructing his steward to make the charge in this form. We, with our high Christian standard of truthfulness, cannot altogether approve of his using this pretence; but it is in keeping with the whole transaction, which was a feint throughout. Joseph was supporting the character of an Egyptian of rank, and as it was known that such a person would daily consult his divining cup for the good or evil auguries of the day, the prompt detection of the alleged theft would be the more readily accounted for.

Now, in explanation of this practice of divination by cups, we learn from ancient authorities, that prognostics were drawn from the figures reflected by the rays of light in the clear water which the cup or basin contained. Another, and perhaps less ancient, mode of divination is said to be thus:—Small pieces of gold or silver leaf, or thin plate, were thrown into the cup, intermingled with precious stones, on which certain characters were engraved. Then the inquirer repeated certain forms of adjuration, and invoked his gods. The answer was variously given. Sometimes a voice was heard; sometimes certain of the signs engraven on the stones were seen reflected in the water; and sometimes the image of the person respecting whom inquiry was made, appeared therein. This mode of divination is said to have been common to the ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans.

It was also known among the Persians. Nothing is more famous in their history than the cup of Jemsheed. It is from the cup, indeed, that this great king is said to have derived his name. In digging the foundation of the city of Istakhar (Persepolis), a torquoise vase or cup was found in his reign, capable of containing a quart of liquor. The valuable properties of the cup were soon ascertained; it was called Jemsheed, or vase of the sun, and many suppose, that from the possession of this valuable article the monarch took his name. It seems to us more likely, that the story is an in-

vention to account for so remarkable a name as that which the monarch bore. Nevertheless, it is certain that cups or vases named Jem or Giam,\* are very famous for their occult qualities. The Orientals make this sort of vase of all kinds of metal, as well as of glass or crystal. They are of various forms, but all make some approach to a spherical figure. They are called not only cups, but mirrors, and celestial globes. The idea connected with them is that, when consulted with proper ceremonies, the matter concerning which any information was desired, was pictorially represented. The cup of Jemsheed was of this sort, and Alexander the Great had another of the kind, by means of which they acquired an exact knowledge of all mundane affairs, nor were the secrets of the supernatural world hidden from them.

We recognize the same notion among the Greeks, in Homer's description of the cup of Nestor. From the East it travelled westward, and the "crystals" with which those conversant with the occult literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are well acquainted, were no other than such vases or globes—were the same as the Oriental divining cups; and the information sought from them exactly the same, and obtained, or alleged to be obtained, in the same manner. This sort of utensil is well described by Spenser. It was made by Merlin, and was given by him to king Ryence for his protection. The king's daughter, Britomart, finds it in her father's chest, and obtains therein a view of a matter which concerned her nearly.

"It vertue had to show in perfect sight  
 Whatever thing was in the world contain'd,  
 Between the lowest earth and heven's hight,  
 So that it to the looker appertaynd :  
 Whatever foe had wrought a friend had faynd,  
 Therein discovered was, we ought mote pas,  
 We ought in secret from the same remaynd ;

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\* This is the orthography of D'Herbelot, from whose *Bibliothèque Orientale* (arts. *Giam* and *Giamshid*), the particulars in this paragraph are chiefly taken.

Forthy it round and hollow-shaped was,  
Like to the world itself, and seemed a world of glas.”\*

Even at the present time something of the kind, that is to say, the occult or superstitious use of vases or cups, may be found in different countries. Its continued existence in Egypt is shown by a remarkable passage in Norden's Travels. When this author and his companions had arrived at Derri, the most remote extremity of Egypt, or rather in Nubia, where they were able to deliver themselves from a perilous position only through great presence of mind, they sent one of their company to a malicious and powerful Arab to threaten him. He answered them—“I know what sort of people you are. I have consulted my cup, and found in it that you are from a people of whom one of our prophets has said—‘There will come Franks under every kind of pretence to spy out the land. They will bring hither a great multitude of their countrymen, to conquer the country and destroy the people.’”

But we find the divining cup even in the South Seas. At Tongataboo, one of the Friendly Islands, Captain Cook bestowed upon the king a pewter plate which he had been observed particularly to notice. He received the gift with undisguised satisfaction, and remarked that, whenever he had occasion to go to any of the other islands, he would leave this plate behind him at Tongataboo, as a sort of representative in his absence, that the people might render to it the same obeisance as to himself in person. On being asked, what he had usually employed for that purpose before this plate came into his possession? “we had the satisfaction of hearing from him,” says the Captain, “that this singular honor had hitherto been conferred upon the wooden bowl in which he washed his hands. Another extraordinary use to which the king meant to apply the plate in lieu of his wooden bowl, was, it seems, to discover a thief. He said, that when anything was stolen, and the thief could not be found out,

\* *Faerie Queen*, iii. 2.

the people were all assembled together before him, when he washed his hands in water in this vessel, after which it was cleaned, and then the whole multitude advanced, one after another, and touched it, in the same manner that they touch his foot, when they pay him obeisance. If the guilty person touched it, he died immediately upon the spot; not by violence, but by the hand of Providence; and if any one refused to touch it, his refusal to touch it, was a clear proof that he was the man."

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### THIRTEENTH WEEK—SATURDAY.

#### JACOB'S OBSEQUIES.—GENESIS L.

THERE are in the fiftieth chapter of Genesis various particulars, in the account of the obsequies of Jacob, which well deserve attention, from their bearing upon the usages of Egypt, and as showing the writer's true acquaintance with that country.

In the first place, we learn that Joseph commanded "his servants the physicians to embalm his father." In speaking of almost any other country, one physician would have been thought sufficient for even so great a man as Joseph; but this was peculiarly appropriate to Egypt. What Herodotus says of the healing art among the Egyptians, is here in point: "The medical practice among them is divided as follows: each physician is for one kind of sickness, and no more; and all places are crowded with physicians; for there are physicians for the eye, physicians for the head, physicians for the teeth, physicians for the stomach and for internal disease."

It ought not, therefore, to appear strange, that Joseph had a considerable number of family physicians. "Every great family, as well as every city, must, as Herodotus expresses it, have swarmed with the faculty. A multitude of these domestics would now appear an extravagant piece of state, even in a first minister. But then, we see, it could not be



otherwise, when each distemper had its proper physician.”\* The Egyptian physicians were renowned in ancient times. Cyrus had a physician sent to him from Egypt; and Darius† always had Egyptian physicians with him.

Something of the kind seems to grow up in every highly advanced nation. We have ourselves oculists, aurists, dentists, &c.; and although the general body of physicians and surgeons profess to attend to all diseases, many of them rest their fame upon their peculiar study of particular classes of maladies.

The embalming is here performed by the servants of Joseph, the physicians. But, according to the accounts of classical authors, the embalmers were a hereditary and organized class of men in Egypt, in which different duties were assigned to different persons. If, however, a proper distinction of time be observed, there is here no contradiction. It is entirely natural to suppose, that the operation was performed by those to whom each one communicated it. But, afterwards, when the embalming was executed more according to the rules of art, a distinct class of operators gradually arose.‡

The antiquity of the custom of embalming the dead in Egypt is well known. Mummies have been found with the names of the earliest Egyptian kings. Various reasons have been given for the practice. An eminent French physician, celebrated for the extent of his knowledge, and for the zeal with which he has often confronted death in the pursuit of science, Dr. Pariset, attributes the origin of embalming to the care in preventing the bodies of the dead from undergoing putrefaction, which, in a country like Egypt, would often give birth to the pestilence. To this he ascribes the absence, anciently, of the plague in Egypt, of which it has since become the head-quarters. But this seems to be a pure conjecture; and it has not the advantage of any support from facts. If the Egyptians did embalm the bodies of the human

\* Warburton's *Divine Legation*, iv. 2, 83. † Herodotus, iii. 1, 129.

‡ Hengstenberg, *Egypt and the Books of Moses*, p. 71.

species, and of the animals accounted sacred, they buried the remains of others, and that, too, at such little depth below the surface, that in burying the carcasses of oxen, the horns were allowed to appear above ground.\* The plague, the first appearance of which cannot be traced back further than to the fifth century before our era, then desolated all Egypt before it passed into Greece, although the practice of embalming was then in full activity. It is clear, also, that the ancients ascribe to this scourge no such origin; for Strabo speaks of the pestilential maladies of Egypt, as being caused by the exhalations from the marshes of the Delta.

It may also be pointed out, that the religious ideas attached to the preservation of the human body are by no means peculiar to the Egyptians. That which may be conceded to them is the practice of a more costly and elaborate embalment than was known among other nations. There is, indeed, scarcely any part of the world in which traces of this usage have not been found.† The mode adopted by the Egyptians in the preservation of the body, belongs to, and expresses the nature of the soil which they inhabited, and was different from that of the Ethiopians, from among whom it is now generally supposed that they came. The land produces no resinous trees; but natron is found in great abundance. This, therefore, was the material principally employed by them, in place of the vegetable resins in use among most other nations. This seems to have been alone practised during the earliest times; but the knowledge of foreign aromatics, introduced more lately a kind of luxury into the embalmments of the rich and great, while the bulk of the people were disposed of by the more simple process—the inequality of *ranks* being thus manifested even in the tomb.

It is stated in the text, that “forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those who are embalm-

\* Herodotus, ii. 41.

† See a curious collection of examples in Henry's *L'Egypte Pharaonique*, i. 328, 329.

ed." This is rather obscure; and we think that the Jewish translators of Genesis have understood it rightly by translating—"And they [that is, the physicians] finished it for him in forty days, for this completed the days of embalming." The number of days here mentioned as required for embalming, agrees with some codices of Diodorus, though Herodotus speaks of seventy days as required for the more expensive and durable process of embalming. But this account has reference only to the method followed at Thebes, while the text speaks of that employed at Memphis; and modern research has demonstrated, that the mummies of Thebes greatly excel those of Memphis, and must therefore have required greater care and longer time in the preparation. It is moreover probable, that the corpse of the patriarch was simply so embalmed, as to stand the journey to Canaan, and did not pass through the process of making a mummy, as described by Herodotus; though that of Joseph himself, of whose embalmment we hear further on, doubtless was prepared in the most perfect manner then known.

The Egyptians mourned for the father of their vizier, during seventy days. This included, doubtless, the forty days of embalming. The family mourning continued until after the body had been deposited in the sepulchre; and at the place of sepulchre, the Egyptians joined in the grand and final act of lamentation. The classical writers give full details respecting the solemn mournings of the Egyptians for the dead, especially for those of high rank. The demonstrations of grief were of the most clamorous and violent kind; and the representations on the monuments confirm the information of the historians. "When a man died in a house, that is, if one of rank, all the females of his family, covering their faces with mud, and leaving the body in the house, ran through the streets, girded up, and striking their bare breasts, with loud lamentations. All their female relations joined them. The men beat their breasts in like manner, and girded up their dress." Diodorus gives substantially the same account; but adds, that they went about the streets in

this manner until the body was buried ; that they abstained from all pleasant and ordinary food ; and also neglected their persons, and appeared in sordid raiment. Many of these ceremonies of mourning have been inherited by the modern Egyptians.

The embalment of the body prevented the need of haste in the actual interment. It was not, therefore, until the sixty days of general mourning had expired that Joseph applied for permission to carry the body of his father for burial to the land of Canaan, alleging that Jacob had, on his death-bed, made him swear to do so. The king in his answer, "Go up and bury thy father, as he hath made thee swear," gives us reason to suspect that, but for this oath, he would have hesitated to allow Joseph to depart. On this the Jewish annotator, Dr. M. J. Raphall, remarks : "Jacob's foresight, prudence, and worldly wisdom, appear unimpaired, when he is at the brink of the grave. He knows that the jealousy with which foreigners are regarded in Egypt, is strongly against their quitting the country, after they have once been permitted to reside in it, and that communication with, or return to, Canaan might be considered particularly objectionable. He therefore exacts from Joseph an oath, which he knows the religious feelings and scruples of the Egyptians will not call upon him to violate. Thus Jacob not only secures his end, but Joseph stands exonerated from all blame, as the circumstance which compels him to solicit leave of absence is so solemn and so sacred, that it places him above all suspicion."

This must have been a very grand funeral procession—and that for three hundred miles—such as the world has seldom seen. There were not only the family of Israel—and not only the officers of the court, "the servants of Pharaoh"—but "the elders of Egypt," or the grandees of the empire. There were also chariots and horsemen, so that, with the attendants taken with them by so many high persons, the camp was very great, as the text itself states. The terms would seem to suggest that the party was strong in a military point

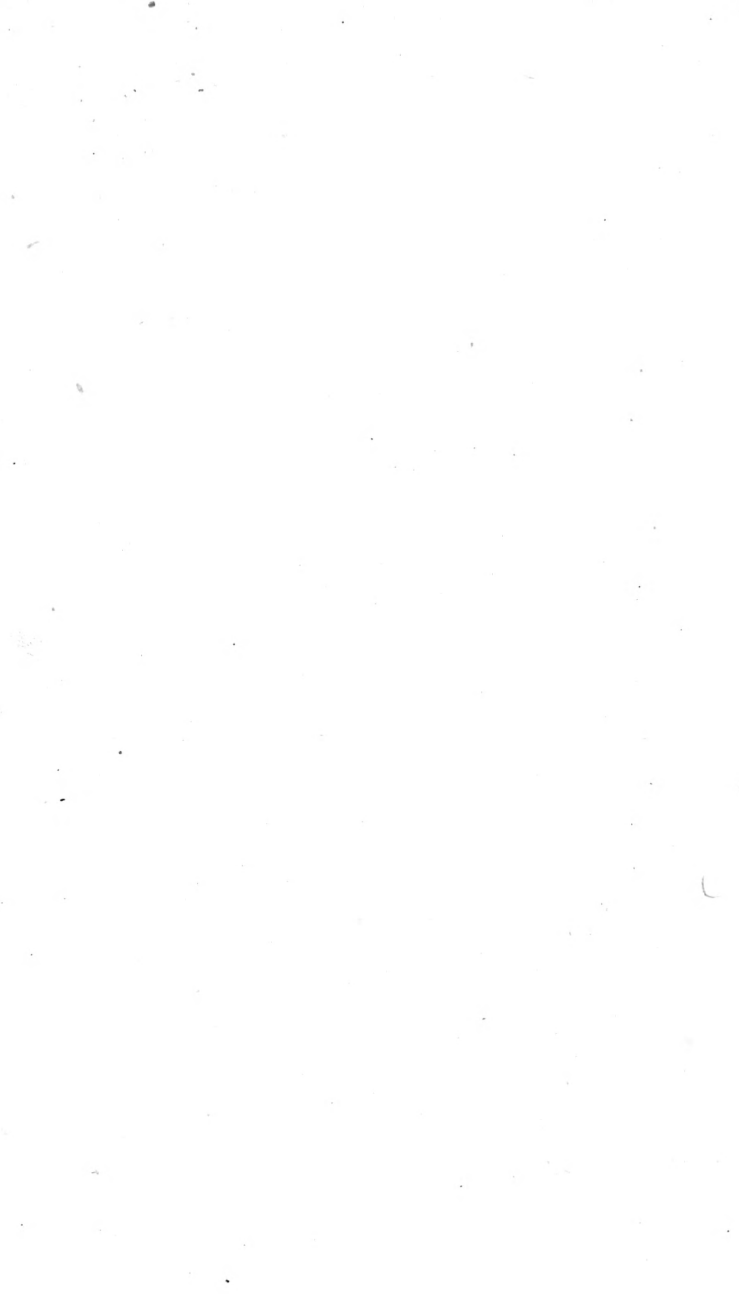
of view. There is a tradition among the Jews that Joseph contemplated the possibility of an attack from the family of Esau, which also claimed the cave of Machpelah; and that it actually came to a battle between the two parties, in which Joseph was victorious. Even in the present age, so rich a caravan could not pass through those countries without an armed escort, sufficiently strong to protect it against the predatory attacks of the desert Arabs. The object of the sacred historian is, however, simply to indicate the grandeur and magnificence of Jacob's obsequies, which, indeed, seem to be without a parallel in history.

“What hitherto has most affected me in the comparison,” says Parker, “was, indeed, the noble obsequies of Marcellus, as Virgil has described them.\* But how do even these, with all the parade of poetry about them, fall short of the plain and simple narrative before us! Let the *Campius Martius* be as honorable among the Romans as they please. Let the honors there paid to that heroic youth, whom Augustus had adopted for his heir, be tenfold superior to what at the best they were: What parallel can there be between the procession and magnificence of both? What are the six hundred beds, for which the Roman solemnities on this occasion were so famous, in comparison with that national itinerant multitude, which swelled like a flood and moved like a river—to all Pharaoh's servants; to the elders of his house; and all the elders of the land of Egypt; all the house of Joseph and his brethren, and his father's house, the chariots and horsemen, and the whole retinue, conducting their solemn sorrows for near three hundred miles into a distant country?”

\* *Bibliotheca Biblica*, i. 977.















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